ESTONIAN IDENTITY, ESTONIAN NATIONALISM: IMPACT OF EUROPEAN UNION ACCESSION

by

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Abstract

Estonia’s history, like that of many European and non-European states, has been marked by years of foreign rule, domination and occupation. These processes have had a tremendous impact on the shaping and the development of Estonian identity. It is through the process of interaction and contact with various other groups, nations and actors, that a given nation is able to define itself, both in relation and in contrast to these various other groups. Identity formation and the respective identity narratives to which the Estonian people prescribe have a great impact in the way that the Estonian nation has been constructed. By identifying these various narratives, and by situating the Estonian experience among them, we are then able to gain a clearer understanding of what ‘Estonian’ means to the people of the country, and how the international community may interpret it. From this starting point, we are then able to turn to the study of nations and nationalism and to then situate the Estonian experience within the literature. By drawing on the works of both Anthony Smith and Rogers Brubaker, we see how the process of nationalism in Estonia has changed over the past hundred or so years. Smiths’ work on the importance of using ethnie to define a nation, and in turn develop nation-building processes has been critical to the historical development of the Estonian nation-state. Meanwhile, in the post-Soviet Union period, this model does not adequately capture the reality of the Estonian society, and thus by looking at Brubakers’ triadic nexus, can we then begin to understand the complexity of nationalism in present-day Estonia.

With the recent move towards enlargement of the European Union, significant changes are occurring across Europe. These changes will have a huge impact on both the applicant and the current member states. Estonia has been classified as one of the favourites for early EU accession, yet this view is held primarily among the scholars and the elite of the population. Public opinion about EU accession remains relatively low for the average citizen. It is my belief that only by understanding the process of identity formation and it’s impact on Estonian nation-building can we begin to interpret what drives these fears of EU accession, and ultimately what EU membership will mean for the people of Estonia.
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ESTONIA UNDER SWEDISH RULE,
c. 1629

(source: Raun 2001: 26)
The Eastern Boundary of Western Civilization

(source Huntington 1996: 205)
## CHRONOLOGY

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<td>1950</td>
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March 30 1990 ESSR Supreme Soviet abolishes ESSR, becomes Supreme Council of Estonia and declares start of transitional period leading to the restoration of independence
April 1990 Edgar Savisaar becomes Prime Minister
January 1991 Russia under Yeltsin recognizes sovereignty of Estonia
August 20 1991 De Facto restoration of the Republic of Estonia
September 6 1991 USSR recognizes Estonian independence
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November 1991 Law on Citizenship
January 1992 Tiit Vahi becomes prime minister
May 1992 Estonia signs trade and co-operation agreements with EU
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(adapted from Smith, D 2002 and Taagepera 1993)
For my parents
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

For years, people have been asking what Estonia is and where it is located. My answer typically begins with the following; Estonia is a small republic located west of Russia and south of Finland. For centuries, it has held a strategic maritime location; for decades it was the dividing line between the civilizations of east and west. Due to their location, the Estonian people have had to deal with well over seven hundred years of occupation. By the 1800s, the territory of the present day Estonians was divided into two autonomous regions within the Russian Empire, northern Livland and Estland. The previous occupations had left their mark on the demographic and social hierarchy within the territory. The privileged economic position of the Baltic Germans was in direct contrast to the peasant way of life of the Balts. Alexander I’s arrival as Tsar of Russia marked the beginning of drastic changes that would impact deeply on the way of life of the Baltic peasants. His implementation of more liberal policies, including land reform, resulted in a situation in which the Baltic peasants finally had the opportunity to openly question the social, economic and political hierarchy in the Baltic region. These changes, in combination with the more liberal intellectual ideas flowing throughout Europe, would ultimately lead to the flowering of the Estonian national awakening, resulting in the Estonians identifying themselves as a people and as a nation and, by the early 20th century, to the emergence of Estonian nationalism.

The study of Estonian history and identity has become more widespread in the last decade, and now includes the works of Estonians in Estonia. While the study of the country has been, and continues to be, primarily conducted by individuals of Estonian
descent, it has moved beyond the North American continent. Estonian-American scholars such as Toivo Raun and Rein Taagepera have written for decades on the history of the Estonian people. Both scholars have done historical surveys to discuss the fate of the Estonian people, and have attempted to put the experience of the last fifty years into perspective. Estonians such as Aksel and Marika Kirch and Marju Lauristin have tried to explain how the fifty years of Soviet occupation have resulted in the current ethnic situation that we see today. They use various ethnic relations models to explain, and to forecast what Estonia will have to do to meet EU accession criteria. Merje Kuus looks to the geo-political aspects of Estonian identity within the larger framework of Estonia’s accession to both the European Union and to NATO. Two recent American scholars Gregory Feldman and Vello Pettai have also added significantly to the literature at hand. Gregory Feldman is concerned with the process of identity formation in Estonia in light of the new political realities facing the country. Vello Pettai has moved beyond any one of the above-mentioned areas and discusses the emergence of Estonia as an ethnic democracy and how this will influence the ethnic situation within the country.

Methodology and Approaches to the Study of Estonian Nationalism

The approaches to the study of Estonian nationalism have been mixed and varied. Vello Pettai is concerned primarily with the political realities of Estonia as an ethnic nation. Pettai’s premise is that Estonian nationalism as it developed during the end of the Cold War was largely influenced by the Western governments’ policy of non-recognition of the 50 years of Soviet occupation of Estonia. The policy of non-recognition of the occupation allows us to understand the legal basis for the restoration of Estonian state,
based on the principle of legal continuity, which Pettai sees as causing the ethnically centered policies of the restored state (Pettai 1993b). With this as a starting point, Pettai frames the idea of nationalism in light of a multi-level approach to group dynamics. At the lowest level is the struggle by individuals to assert their ethnicity. The second stage is one where nations are formed and become the focal point around which struggles occur. This nationalist struggle is what Estonia encountered in the early years of independence, and it took on an ethnic focus. Finally, the third level moves beyond the realm of the nation, becoming more inclusive. This level, concerned with the interaction of groups within a society is captured by what Pettai terms, 'ethno politics' (Pettai 1998). Present day Estonia is in a phase of transition between the second and third stage, attempting to become a more inclusive society that will reflect the interests of the different groups within the country (Pettai 1998).

Marju Lauristin takes a slightly different approach to the study of nationalism within the country, relating nationalism to the phenomena of ethnic relations. She believes that there is a strong need in Estonia to overcome the 'defensive' ethnic nationalism that has characterized the early years of independence, and to become a more multicultural, civic-based nation (Lauristin and Heidmets 2002: 20). Lauristin highlights the achievements made in the changing values of Estonians surrounding ethnic relations in the last ten years, moving from a group, ethno-centric perspective in the early years, to a more individual, pragmatic approach as Estonia moves towards EU accession.

Finally, Gregory Feldman (forthcoming) looks to the process of ethnic integration, centered on language policy, in evaluating the level of nationalist thought in Estonia. The situation in Estonia is one in which the state, while advocating liberal
policies, essentially acts in the best interests of the ‘core’ nation, thus enabling the
country to become a state for the Estonian nation. In addition, Feldman notes that the
European Union accession process acts as a legitimizing factor in the ethnically centered
policies seen within the country.

This thesis is an attempt to draw from the work of the above mentioned scholars
and to develop a coherent understanding of the impact that identity formation has had on
Estonian nationalism and how this affects the public perception of the EU in light of
present day accession negotiations. I will combine a historical-empirical account of
Estonian national awakening within a theoretical framework. Only by combining the
empirical with the theoretical can we begin to understand the importance of the situation
at hand. Looking only at theory or at the empirical evidence would leave readers with
only half the story. They would be asking questions of why this work is important or
relevant. It is my hope that by looking at the empirical evidence of the Estonian national
awakening in light of the theoretical basis which I will develop, I will be able to gain
some relevance to the emergence and evolution of Estonian nationalism.

The quantity of literature surrounding the study of nationalism is extensive. By
first assessing, the theories behind nationalism, we can obtain a framework through
which we can begin to approach the discussion at hand. By combining historical analysis
of nation building and identity formation amongst the citizens of Estonia, both in the mid
nineteenth century as well as in the post-Cold War period, we can begin to see what
being ‘Estonian’ means to the people of the country, and how this sense of self-awareness
might be challenged with the process of EU accession looming overhead.
Theoretical Background

Samuel Huntington’s Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order has been critical in scholarly debates regarding the process of identity formation within Estonia. Huntington has identified Finland and the Baltic countries as being on the historical dividing line between the major civilizations of the past (see map 3). Huntington believes that the construction of the world into various competing civilizations is the only way to properly understand the current global tensions, believing that “a civilization is a cultural entity” (1993: 23). In addition, “A civilization is thus the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have... it is defined both by common objectives elements, such as language, history, religion, customs, institutions and by the subjective self-identification of people (1993: 24).” We have thus moved beyond a global order where tensions are defined on an ideological basis, rather, according to Huntington, the divisions in the world should be based on culture. Elements such as language, history and religion are the cultural traits which, in Huntington’s approach are important as identity markers. The dividing line of civilizations, the East-West dichotomy, has been essential to the traditional formation of Estonian identity. As noted above, the Estonian nation rests on the border of the two civilizations. They have for centuries resisted the imposition of cultural traits from the Eastern civilizations. Now in this post-Cold War period, the Estonians have used history as a means of relating to the world that they no longer belong under the Iron cloak of Eastern civilization, as presented by Huntington’s approach and they need to return to their rightful place in the West. Huntington’s model has its merits as a means of understanding the desires of the newly independent government to achieve certain goals
of liberal democracy and a market economy. Huntington's work has been central to the debate over identity formation and ethnic relations in Estonia. While his may not be the most open-minded approach, Estonian academics and politicians have used it as the paradigm influencing the early years of Estonian ethnic politics. It was influential because it dealt with the perceived reality in Estonia in the early years of independence and provided a framework for the interpretation of cultural differences existing within the Republic. Huntington's work was then able to provide the theoretical basis for the Estonian conception of national identity, which stemmed from their desire for their newly formed state to 'return to Europe'. My intention is not to present Huntington's work as the only means of assessing the Estonian situation; rather, I am reflecting upon how the Estonians themselves have situated their experience within Huntington's paradigm. I am acutely aware that his approach is based entirely on exclusion. It emphasizes the 'us' versus 'them' that leads to the creation of a hierarchy of cultural values, placing the West on top, and criticizing the rest. For this reason, Huntington's ideas, although they have been useful for the Estonians, may not be the most culturally sensitive means of identifying the process of identity formation, and they encourage others to seek more open and inclusive approaches.

Today, theorists are attempting to move away from exclusionary narratives to ones that are more inclusive. Akhil Gupta's The Song of the Nonaligned World: Transnational Identities and the Reinscription of Space in Late Capitalism is one attempt. He uses the process of decolonization to move beyond the traditional exclusionary identity narrative. By treating nations and nationalism as a narrative, Gupta's work looks at ideas of place/space making and identity formation at the transnational level in order to
gain a sense of how nations and nationalism as modernist phenomenon are imagined and situated (1992: 70-71).

...we need to study structures of feeling that bind space, time and memory in the production of location. By this I mean processes by which certain spaces become enshrined as “homelands”, by which ideas of “us” and “them” come to be deeply felt and mapped onto places such as nations. On the other hand, we need to pay attention to those processes that redivide, reterritorialize, and reinscribe space in the global political economy. Only then can we understand why the naturalized division and spaces that we have always taken for granted become problematic in certain circumstances, and only then can the “problem” of nationalism be posed adequately (Gupta 1992: 76).

By moving beyond the level of the nation to incorporate new modes of identification, by understanding the similarities between different cultures and societies, as opposed to the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ distinction made by Huntington, it is possible that groups are able to gain a greater understanding of who they are, and the role that they will play in the international system. In a more practical sense, by recognizing that the Estonian people have similarities with their Nordic neighbours and specifically with the Finns, we can see that identity formation goes beyond the confines of the nation. Emphasizing the importance of transnational and supranational identities will have a profound effect on the discourse of nationalism and how it is developed and expressed. Gupta’s arguments are especially useful in light of the depth of the EU’s policies, and in the creation of a ‘borderless’ Europe and the corresponding identity that goes along with this new idea of Europe. This desire to transcend the nation, to become more embracing and all-encompassing is something Estonia will have to consider in light of identity narratives within the country. While Gupta’s work will not be used for the basis for this paper, I believe that Gupta’s arguments will become more relevant for Estonia as the country continues to deepen their integration with the European Union.
How to characterize Estonian identity?

One may ask how does one characterize Estonian identity today, and why specifically is this characterization important? By exploring the literature on identity narratives, and by situating Estonia’s experience within the existing narratives, we come to a better understanding of how Estonians view themselves, and how this self-identification is thus reinforced in various expressions. These expressions can be political, social or even economic in nature. This idea of self-identification is also crucial to understanding how Estonian nationalism has manifested itself in the past and in the present. An understanding how Estonians view themselves might offer suggestions as to the shape that Estonian nationalism will take in the future. Only by understanding what constitutes the ‘we/us’ in the Estonian case, can we then gain a greater understanding of what distinguishes ‘us’ from ‘them’.

There have been numerous scholastic debates regarding how to identify/characterize Estonian identity. Some of these discussions are relative in nature, situating Estonian identity in relation to some other form/expression of identity. One of the leading relational narratives is Estonia as European. This narrative, as discussed by Gregory Feldman (2000: 414-416), stems from the desire from the Estonians’ perspective to distance themselves from Russia. This ties into the need to highlight the distinction between ‘East’ and ‘West’. This East-West dichotomy is captured by Samuel Huntington’s work Clash of Civilizations. Huntington’s work captures the differences between the ‘developed, modern West’ and the ‘backward, Orthodox East’. Previously, due to its incorporation into the Soviet Union, Estonia was cast under the Eastern label. It appeared as though the Baltic countries were critical in the discussion, being somewhat of
a border area between East and West and having been described by many as the edge of Europe, even before the beginning of the Orthodox world. With newly found statehood, the desire to incorporate a narrative that emphasizes Estonia’s ‘rightful’ place in Europe was openly sought, not only by Estonia itself, but also through the recognition of this fact by the international community.

Estonia as Nordic is another commonly held identity narrative. In this case, Nordic identity is constructed in a way that captures the essence of being ‘European’ but narrows this idea to encompass the cultural traits held by Estonia’s Nordic neighbours (Waever 1992, Feldman 2000: 417-418, Ruutsoo unpublished). The historical and cultural connections with the Nordic countries (namely Sweden and Denmark) are numerous. Both the Danes and the Swedes were occupiers of the lands now belonging to Estonia. The Swedish cultural influence had an important impact on the Estonians in the early 17th century, emphasizing the need for the Estonian people to learn to read and write in their native language and to improve their education. The Swedes saw the potential of the Estonian people, and believed that they were not to be thought of as inferiors, but rather with some level of equality. Today, both Sweden and Denmark are presented as political and social role models for the Estonian people, providing them with a goal to strive for. Both countries are large investors in the development and reconstruction of Estonia, hoping to act as an incentive for the Estonian people to ameliorate their situation and to encourage them to become a full member of the European community.

Estonia as Finno-Ugric is also an important narrative to discuss (Feldman 2000: 416-417). The idea of Finno-Ugric identity narrative revolves around the understanding
of the distinct religious and linguistic patterns of these people. They are often linked based on their similarity of language. The Finno-Ugric language is markedly different from the remainder of the European languages and commonalities between the Finns and the Estonians have been stressed for centuries. The second aspect of this identity narrative is the role that shamanism played during the Reformation. The Finno-Ugric peoples, while they may have publicly ‘accepted’ the religious conversion that took place, nevertheless had a deep found attachment to land and the practices outlined by their shamanistic beliefs. In many respects, they held onto the fundamentals of these beliefs and practices until the end of the nineteenth century.

The other category for identity narratives relate to more attitudinal aspects of a groups identity. Within this sub-category, some of the most commonly held narratives refer to Estonian identity as it relates to security, or as a return to Europe (Kuus 2002a, c, d, Feldman, 2001; Feldman 2000: 413-414). I feel that in order to understand the topic at hand, Estonian nationalism in its present context, and how it relates to EU accession; it would be best if the interpretation of Estonian identity was a combination of two commonly held positions. On one hand, I believe that it is important to situate ‘Estonian’ identity within the larger European map. In the current post-Soviet and pre-EU period, Estonia has been making a concentrated effort to distance itself from its southern ‘Baltic’ neighbours. Meanwhile, it has used a lot of energy in relating and attempting to tie itself with its Nordic neighbours, namely Finland and Sweden (Piirimäe 1997). The discussion revolves largely around the notion that ‘Baltic’ is a concept that is primarily used by non Europeans when talking about Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in regards to their shared fate over the last half a century. Estonians themselves, quickly point out the differences
between themselves and their neighbours, with language being the common marker of distinction. This language marker is the strongest link when attempting to link Estonians with their northern counterparts, the Finns. The other aspect linking Finland and Sweden with Estonia is their high rate of investment within the country. A public relations campaign last year focused on the need to change both the Estonian flag and the name of the country (Eesti Päevaleht Online 2001; Postimees 2002). It was felt that the flag was not ‘Nordic’ enough, and that Estonia would garner increased international support if it too adopted the form of a cross on its flag. This same campaign proposed that the ending of the name ‘Estonia’ made the international community think of other Eastern and Central European countries such as Slovenia or Slovakia, and that this might indicate a backwards or less developed nation-state. By changing their name to Estland, the Estonians could promote the use of the word ‘land’, making their name similar to Deutschland or Finland, thus hopefully inspiring more confidence within the world community.

The other identity discourse, which I feel is highly relevant in discussing Estonian nationalism and EU accession, is the idea of Estonia as a reconstituted state (Feldman 2000: 413). This idea relates to the continuity of the Estonian state from its first period of independence, and that it identifies the period of Soviet occupation as illegal. Thus, now Estonia is having to redefine itself based on what it once was (that being an independent European state) and what it is no longer (an illegally occupied nation within the Soviet Union). In my opinion, a combination of these two modes of thought accurately describes the current situation in Estonia. While the Estonian people are actively attempting to regain their place on the international stage, they do so in a manner that clearly
distinguishes 'them' from the 'Soviets/Russians' and then relates 'them' to being historically a part of Europe, with close ties and connections to the Nordic European states.

For the sake of clarification in this thesis, the term 'Russian speakers' will generally encompass those individuals who speak Russian as a first language and remain outside of the political decision making process unless otherwise stated. Presently, the majority of the Russian speaking population remains outside of the citizenry in Estonia and citizenship requirements are onerous. This situation will ultimately impact the results of a referendum if one were to be held on EU membership; the assumption being that those excluded from the citizenry would not be eligible to vote in a referendum but would be affected by the results whatever they might be. While the debate over the acceptability of the citizenship laws is beyond the scope of this thesis, an overview of the complex ethnic situation is necessary for this paper.

The Soviet annexation of Estonia resulted in not only drastic economic, political and social changes to the citizens of the republic, but also drastic demographic change (see Appendices 1 and 2). Estonia was often viewed as the most prosperous of the Soviet republics, resulting in a major influx of Russian settlers to the territory. The reasons for migration were many; better access to jobs and housing, military control, and blind resettlement, many of the effects remain. The arrival of the Russian speakers resulted in a significant demographic shift in which the Estonian population declined from a high of 97% of the population in 1944 to a low of 62% in 1989 (Viires 1999: 134). These new settlers in Estonia were quite different from the native population, in terms of language, culture and religion. Integration did not occur within the Estonian republic and the
formation of two distinct communities emerged, especially in areas such as Tallinn and
other industrialized cities of the north east where the concentration of new settlers was
greatest. As a result, two distinct nations living within the confines of one single small
territory emerged. While part of the Soviet Union, this ‘ethnic’ distinction led to a
disparity between the two communities for such things as access to jobs and housing,
with the Russian settlers having the more privileged position.

With independence, the Estonian people were anxious to level out the playing
field and to return their culture, language and customs to the forefront of the republic. By
various law and policy changes enacted in the early years of independence, a societal
transformation occurred in which Russian speakers were removed from their prestigious
dominant positions, and replaced with native Estonians. The transformation was also
partly a result of the suspicion held by many Estonians of the non-Estonians within their
country. They questioned their loyalty and felt they posed a threat to national identity and
territorial integrity (Berg 2002: 115). These changes resulted in a reversal of privileges
between the groups; a situation which continues today and creates the present ethnic
situation.

Chapter Two will look first to the theory behind nationalism itself, defining terms
such as nation and nationalism and will then discuss the topic at hand within a given
perspective. In the last fifty years, ideas relating to the study of nations and nationalism
have become more widespread and diverse. Various approaches to this field of study
have been developed, and this thesis will outline the three major paradigms in nationalist
literature: the modernist approach, the primordialist approach and the ethno-symbolic
approach, in addition to a fourth and unique perspective proposed by Rogers Brubaker.
The process of situating a given country or group within a larger theoretical framework is no easy task, as the countries or groups do not follow such rigid guidelines as the theories propose. Works of Benedict Anderson and Max Weber will be consulted for the contribution they have played to the literature. However, my analysis will draw on the work of two important scholars, as I believe it is not possible to use one theory to explain over one hundred years of nationalistic sentiment in Estonia. The work of Anthony Smith is critical to the understanding of the historical process of nation-building and national awakening in the Estonian example, and will be used extensively to draw conclusions on the ethnic form of nationalism that has been seen within Estonia. From a post-Soviet perspective, the work of Rogers Brubaker will be used to attempt to analyze the complex situations that have been left in the former Soviet republics because of fifty years of occupation. His ‘triadic nexus’ looks to the interplay of three forces that contribute to create a situation with a dominant nation, a subjugated minority and the homeland of this minority group.

From this starting point, Chapter Three will look more specifically at the process of Estonian national awakening, and how this process eventually becomes more nationalistic in nature. This movement has undergone profound changes since the early years of national awakening to the first period of independence, and then while under Soviet occupation and finally into the present day situation in which Estonia is faced with a complex ethnic relations situation. It is on this present situation that the remainder of the paper will focus, and how specifically nationalist thought is manifested and represented within the country.
Chapter Four begins as an overview of Estonian-European Union relations, and how their relationship has developed over the last ten years. It will show how the public opinion in Estonia was initially quite favorable for EU membership, but as the negotiations progressed, public opinion began to wane. The citizens of Estonia are feeling disillusioned with the accession process, strongly believing that decisions are being made for them by the elite in Tallinn or by the large bureaucracy in Brussels. The overall shift in nationalistic policies amongst current EU member-states is starting to be reflected in the applicant states, as fear of outsiders and immigrants leads these states to try to develop more restrictive policies. Estonia is no different, and has been put under watch for its current policies in the treatment of its ethnic minorities. This section will also attempt to analyze and evaluate what the EU means for the people of Estonia, what sort of identity changes it will have for the people of the country and how the ideas of being 'Estonian' might change in order to be a part of the larger European family of nations.
Chapter Two

What Constitutes a Nation?

Prior to an analysis of the idea of nationalism, which in itself is highly debated in the academic community, I feel that it is necessary to attempt to understand some key concepts that relate to the study of nations and nationalism. The term ‘nation’ has been highly contested by various scholars in the past, with numerous definitions existing. The focus of this first section is to gain a sense of a workable definition of ‘nation’ that will then be used to help explain ‘nationalism’ as it exists within literature and within the thesis at hand. Ideas regarding what constitutes a nation, will be drawn from a variety of sources including, but not limited to Renan, Stalin, Weber, Anderson, and Smith.

One of the earliest and most cited sources in nationalist literature is the work of Ernest Renan. He approaches the idea that in order to capture the essence of what constitutes a nation, you must have some sort of spiritual element, which he translates as the soul of the nation (Renan 1994: 17). By beginning with this idea, we move beyond the realm of the tangible, into the intangible. This idea of intangibility is important in understanding the term at hand, because it demonstrates that this ‘soul’ is different for each group in question. The soul is something unique and special to each different group that calls itself a nation, and has been developed based on some shared history or past. The soul thus enables a group to distinguish themselves from its neighbours. One final interesting aspect to Renan’s interpretation, is that he believes that nations are both subject to change, and that they are not timeless; they have a beginning and they will have an end (1994: 18).
Weber, like Renan, believes that a nation does not need to be defined based on empirical qualities, and that the essence of the nation may not be observable. The nation is comprised of a group which shares a common feeling about its shared history and community (Weber 1970: 176). Neither common blood, nor the use of a common language, is essential in his definition (173, 178). Weber does however, stress the importance of self-identification in the term, and believes that the political element is critical to its understanding, maintaining that the essence behind the collective goal is the attainment of their own state (176).

An interesting addition to this discussion is the definition proposed by Joseph Stalin. Like Renan, he believes that there is a definite beginning and end to all nations, but also recognizes some other important traits. Stalin believes that “a nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture (Stalin 1994: 20)” Stalin’s definition of nation blends the tangible with the intangible and moves beyond those proposed above. By emphasizing these more tangible aspects of nation, the borders between ‘us’ and ‘them’ might be easier to draw. Stalin firmly believes in the presence of all the attributes listed above, and feels that only if all the attributes are present, can a group then declare itself a nation.

Finally, the work of Anthony Smith, which will be critical in our evaluation of early Estonian nation-building, defines a nation as “a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members (1996b: 384)”. Clearly, Smith’s definition goes beyond the realm of the intangible, to describe the multi-
faceted construction of national identity. Smith goes beyond the term nation, and believes that to properly understand which ‘groups’ will begin to identify themselves as nations, a better understanding of their ethnic connections is necessary. Within his work, we can see that the general basis of the above-described theories has been captured. This definition in and of itself will be critical for our understanding of what constitutes a nation, and it is from here that I believe that we should proceed.

Is there a coherent and workable definition of nationalism?

Other than the term ‘nation’ there seems to be no other term that is as difficult to clearly define as ‘nationalism’. Scholars have been working for decades in an attempt to draw some conclusions about this phenomenon, but until this day remain deeply divided. The number of paradigms in the literature is unparalleled, and for this discussion, I will begin with an assumption that there are three leading paradigms in the study of nationalism. The first group, the modernists, views nations and the expression of nationalism as an entirely modern phenomena. Resulting from modern advances and technological changes, the ‘nation’ came into being after the French Revolution (Gellner 1983, 1997; Hobsbawm 1990; Breuilly 1993; Greenfeld 1992 and Anderson 1991). Benedict Anderson defines nationalism as “an imagined political community-and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign (Anderson 1991: 6)”.

It is imagined since most people will never know most of their fellow members; there is still an inherent existing element which ultimately binds them together (sense of community). It is also imagined as being limited because there are finite boundaries to nations, with other nations existing beyond these boundaries. Finally, it is imagined as sovereign, stemming from the more traditional modernist approach in which it was conceived. While not being
used as the theoretical basis for the discussion at hand, Anderson’s work has been well cited in recent years. His work is important for this study for the contribution and importance he places on language and print capitalism in the emergence of nationalist thought.

The second group are those who view nationalism as primordial. The primordialists claim that nations are natural units of history, often stemming from groups sharing a common language, tradition, religion or territory. Stressing the importance of these objective elements of identity, the primordialists believe that nations often evolve from kinship groups, but are by no means solely modern in nature (Kedourie 1961; Geertz 1993).

Finally, we have the third group, who will provide us with part of the theoretical basis for the discussion at hand. The ‘ethno-symbolists’ believe that in order to understand present day nationalisms, one must consider the role of ethnic communities in the formation of nations (Armstrong 1995; Connor 1994; Smith 1986, 1991, 1996).

Leading modernist scholar Ernest Gellner and Anthony Smith engaged in discussion over the phrase ‘Do nations have navels?’ (Gellner 1996, Smith, A 1996a) This question in and of itself could be the topic for many theses, however, I am interested in what was meant by the term ‘navel’. For Smith, the navel is reflective of the beginnings or origins of a nation. Gellner, however believes, nations do not have navels; from his perspective present day nations emerged through modernization and technological changes. Smith believes that the roots to nations and their ideological expression as nationalism, lies much deeper. *Ethnie* or ethnic community for Smith has been defined as:
a social group whose members share a common name; myth of ancestry; shared historical memories; differentiating elements of culture; association with a specific 'homeland' and feel a sense of collective uniqueness and solidarity (Smith 1986: 22-30, 1991: 21)

This idea of *ethnie* is central to his answer to the question of whether nations have navels. Smith’s reply is that all nations do have navels, and that it is these navels that are responsible for the development of nations of today. In addition, it is the navel which provides the framework around which the ideological expression of nationalism are manifested. For Smith, *ethnies* are a nation’s navel. For this reason Anthony Smith’s *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (1986) and *National Identity* (1991) will be used as the starting point for our discussion on nationalism. Drawing from his definition of nation, “a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members (1996b: 384)”, combined with the his definition for *ethnie*, we are able to identify the key characteristics that Smith believes are vital for the creation and development of nations. Moving beyond the ‘nation’ into that of nationalism, Smith believes that:

Nationalism is an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or ‘potential’ nation (Smith 1991: 73).

Central to Smith’s definition of nationalism is having a defined population which has termed itself as a real or a ‘potential’ nation, which we already know that Smith believes develops from an ethnic community. We can therefore assume that those movements that become nationalistic in nature will also develop from an ethnic past.
We have seen in Smith’s definition of nationalism that his emphasis is on unity and identity of a named group. It is this sense of commonality, stemming from his belief that nations have emerged from *ethnies* that really captures the essence of his argument. Smith believes that it is these *ethnies* or navels, which are the critical elements in deciding which groups, will be able to develop into nations, and which ones will not. It is also his use of *ethnie* which will be critical in understanding the transition of the Estonian *ethnie* into a nation and then gaining momentum as an ideology. However, the move from *ethnie* to nation did not capture the essence of nationalism. In the context of Estonia, they required the ideology, the political momentum of the October Revolution to come together, through the process of nationalism, to assert their independence from Russia.

By focusing on the idea of ‘attaining autonomy’ we can begin to see how Smith’s definition is useful in the Estonian example. We can interpret the mid nineteenth century as a period of nation building culminating in the creation of an Estonian state. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 and the annexation of their autonomous state into the Soviet Union resulted in a new period of national awakening for the Estonian people.

Smith notes:

> Only by grasping the power of nationalism and the continuing appeal of national identity through their rootedness in pre-modern ethnic symbolism and modes of organization is there some chance of understanding the resurgence of ethnic nationalism at a time when ‘objective’ conditions might appear to render it obsolete (in Feldman 2000: 408).

Once again, there was a desire and a movement towards the re-attainment of an independent Estonian Republic, which was realized for a second time in the early 1990s.

This process of striving for autonomy has been of central importance during the past hundred and fifty years for the Estonian people. Smith’s work, by emphasizing the
centrality of *ethnie* captures the Estonian experience of national awakening during the late 1800s and nationalism in the 1980s.

We will now turn to another aspect of Smith’s interpretation of nationalism. His belief that there are two distinct processes of nation building that result in the development of two distinct forms of nations— either a civic nation or an ethnic nation. While both types of nations developed from an *ethnie*, the ultimate political expression of these nations in the form of nationalism will be quite different.

**Ethnic vs. Civic Nations**

Smith’s interpretation of different nation building processes moves beyond the traditional ‘West/Civic’ vs. ‘East/Ethnic’ model presented by fellow ethno-symbolists such as Armstrong (1995). This first ‘lateral’ approach is based on the idea that the elite and the upper echelons of society ultimately created nations. The creation of these nations was often centered on the various ruling houses. The transmission of the sense of belonging was gradual as it drifted down the social scale. This process of nation building resulted in power resting with the bureaucracy, and has led to what we would now term a civic-based or ‘Western’ nation. Smith notes that events leading to the creation of these ‘nations’ developed early, potentially as early as the 14th century in parts of England, while slightly later on the continent (Smith, A 1991: 52-59). Often these territorial nations were the result of European colonization, and as a result “the state actually ‘created’ the nation, that its activities of taxation, conscription and administration endowed the population within its jurisdiction with a sense of their corporate identity and civic loyalty (Smith 1991: 59)”.

Graham Smith notes that civic nationalism is more universal, granting rights to all members, regardless of their ethnicity (Smith, G. 1996a:
These forms of nation are distinguished by their primary focus on the territory which they occupy, and France is often portrayed as the most 'typical' prototype for the territorial nation. Kymlicka notes that civic nations do not attempt to distinguish groups within the citizenry based on their ethnic identification, but are largely 'neutral' and their membership in the group is based on achieving the commonly held beliefs of democracy and justice (2000: 30).

Smith believes that there are different paths for the expression of civic/territorial nationalism that depend upon the political goals and the starting point of the movement. Prior to independence, we see the anti-colonial nationalism whose goal is to remove foreign rulers and to substitute a new nation-state for the former colonial territory (1991: 82). A second expression occurs in the integration movements that begin after independence is achieved. These movements attempt to bring together a wide group of individuals from various ethnic groups to form a territorial nation out of a former colonial state (82).

Smith’s second version of nation building is based on a more vernacular, bottom up approach. This version is markedly different in that it relies upon the self-identification of the lower echelons of society into a defined group (1986: 89-91). The process of nation building rests in the hands of people who were typically excluded from the political process. Because of their inferior position in society, they need some aspect of commonality around which they can identify. Typically, as Smith notes, it is often a common ancestry, language or religion, which they then use to distinguish themselves from those in power (1986: 141).
This ‘ethnic’ form of nation building has been criticized in the past, viewed as both backwards, less democratic and inferior to the process that took place in Western Europe. This ‘eastern’ type of nation building is said to create ethno-centric states, promoting the rights of the dominant ‘ethnie’, while at the same time ignoring or denying rights to minority groups within the state. Smith is careful to point out that it is possible to find nations in the ‘east’ who developed along the lateral ‘civic’ approach and vice versa in the ‘west’ (1991:81). Kymlicka sees the process as a matter of multi-culturalism. He believes that most nation-states developed from a common ethnic community, and that with external forces such as migration and globalization, they become much more multi-cultural in composition (2000: 32-33).

The combination of Smith’s ‘nations having navels’ and his interpretation of ethnic nationalism is central for the discussion at hand. The emphasis he places on the transition from ethnie into nation could be reflective of the emergence of the Estonian national awakening and the transformation into the Estonian nationalism seen in the early 20th century. Smith’s account is useful in describing the evolution from the mid nineteenth century until the beginning of the 1990s, as Estonia develops first, as an ethnie, then as a nation and finally achieves a state of its own through the expression of nationalism. However, Smith’s paradigm does not explain everything. It fails to capture the reality of the post-Cold War period in Estonia. His approach neither addresses the complexity of the ethnic situation within the country, nor the existence of a significant ethnic minority. Smith does not incorporate the role and function of minority groups into this discussion of the emergence of nation building, and thus his model falls short of providing a theoretical explanation of the new reality facing Estonia.
To begin to address the reality of the post-Cold War period, it will be necessary to consult the work of a second scholar, Rogers Brubaker, in order to develop a more comprehensive explanation of present day Estonian nationalism. Rogers Brubaker has developed an approach to the study of nationalism that is markedly different than that of the previously mentioned paradigms. In brief, Brubaker's approach stems from the interplay of three independent nationalisms to form what he has termed a 'triadic nexus'. I believe, that by using Brubaker's 'triadic nexus', we can begin to fill in the blanks of the ethno-symbolic approach outlined above. Only then can we adequately begin to understand the complex development of Estonian nationalism and how it is ultimately expressed through the process of ethnic relations in Estonia as we have moved into the 21st century.

**Triadic Nexus**

A fourth and unique approach to the study of nationalism is that of Rogers Brubaker. Brubaker's perspective stems from a critique of the realist approach of the primordialists and modernists. He argues that the realist perception that nations are real and given is not a fair assumption. Brubaker follows a more social constructivist approach that does not assume that nations exist as real entities. His 'new institutionalism' supposes that nations are abstract concepts and that "nations should be treated as practical categories, institutionalized forms or as contingent events. 'Nation' is a category of practice, not a category of analysis (1996: 7)." His approach therefore, is considerably different from that of modernists, primordialist and ethno-symbolic paradigms that we have previously discussed, and he feels that the literature is lacking a "theoretically sophisticated eventful analysis of nationness and nationalism (1996: 19)."
These previous paradigms, according to Brubaker are all realist in nature and take for granted that the world is a ‘world of nations’, a view with which he strongly disagrees.

Brubaker’s premise is that:

we should focus on nation as a category of practice, nationhood as an institutionalized cultural and political form, and nationness as a contingent event or happening, and refrain from using the analytically dubious notion of ‘nations’ as substantial enduring collectivities .... By the analytical task at hand, I submit, is to think about nationalism without nations (1996: 21).

This approach, removing the idea of ‘nations’ from the study of nationality and nationality, is far beyond the theories proposed by Anthony Smith. However, I do feel that Brubaker’s work is important to the discussion of Estonian nationalism. His recent work has focused on the dynamic changes that have been occurring among the former republics of the Soviet Union (1993). He has developed a theory to explain the situation in the post-Cold War era, however it was not developed as an explanatory tool for this time period alone. It has also been used to explain the situation in the interwar states of Eastern and Central Europe. His premise revolves around a ‘triadic nexus’, which he terms as an inter-play of three distinct and equally unfriendly nationalisms (1996: 4). The first part of his theory rests on what he has termed ‘the newly nationalizing states’. He understands the nationalizing states as being the newly independent states attempting to establish a nation-state around a specific core nation. “The core nation is understood as the legitimate ‘owner’ of the state, which is conceived as the state of and for the core nation (Brubaker 1996: 5). Language seems to play a crucial role in this undertaking, legitimizing the belonging to the nation. There is some reason for the core nation to undertake nationalist policies, often stemming from some sense of weakness, be it
economic, cultural or demographic (Brubaker 1996: 83-84). There is also the belief that
the core nation will attempt to portray the national minority in a negative light,
emphasizing their allegiance to the homeland or as disloyal to the new state (Dorodnova
2000: 14).

The second factor in the nexus is the presence within the state of a significant
national minority. The national minorities are the permanent residents of these
nationalizing states, who are not considered to belong to the core nation, either ethnically
or politically. The national minorities often represent a considerable portion of the
population, but often find themselves removed from the citizenry. Prior to the creation of
the new state, they often held a sizeable role, economically, politically or
demographically in the territory, and now have to adjust to this change in status. Within
the new nationalizing state, they are seeking some sort of cultural or territorial autonomy
in order to be able to assert their own rights. This tends to create tension between the
minority and the core nation, as the core nation may interpret this as a sense of disloyalty
(Brubaker 1996: 48-51).

The third component in Brubakers' triad revolves around the external national
homelands, which take it upon themselves to make known on a larger level, the situation
affecting the minorities in these nationalizing homelands. They believe that by drawing
international attention to the plight of their former citizens, effective pressure can be put
on the nationalizing states to change the status quo, and ameliorate the situation at hand
for the national minorities. Means of ameliorating the situation could take any number of
forms, be it easier access to citizenship, cultural autonomy in a given region and or
greater political representation (Brubaker 1996: 51-54).
By devising an approach that is linked so closely to, and draws from the experiences of the Soviet regime adds to the importance of Brubaker’s work. Brubaker highlights that at an official level, nationalism did not exist within the Soviet regime, however, he notes “it went further than any other state before or since in institutionalizing territorial nationhood and ethnic nationality as fundamental social categories. In doing so it inadvertently created a political field supremely conducive to nationalism (1996: 17).” The results of years of Soviet policy have left many ethnic groups in new and different locales having to adapt to new state borders and new circumstances that were beyond their scope of comprehension just 12 years ago. Brubaker’s triadic nexus is unique in that it has been developed to assist in identifying the processes that are taking place in many former Soviet republics, and it provides a framework for better understanding the tensions that do exist in this area of the world. Brubaker’s approach fills the void left by Anthony Smith’s perspective as it deals specifically with the reality of an ethnic minority, and how this minority group influences the political decisions of the state. For the Estonian example, it provides a framework that makes sense of the ethnic situation, and it provides incentives to find a solution that is agreeable to all three parties involved.
Chapter Three

National Awakening and Re-Awakening

This section will detail chronologically the process of national awakening as it occurred in Estonia, from its beginnings in the nineteenth century up until the present day and examine the forces that led to the emergence of present day nationalism and the Estonian ethnic state. As chapter 2 indicated terms such as nation and nationalism can be quite difficult to define. For the purpose of this paper we will proceed with Smith’s definition of nationalism:

an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or ‘potential’ nation (Smith 1991: 73).

As the initial goal of the Estonian people was not political independence, but recognition, equality and autonomy within the larger Russian empire, it is not feasible to use the term ‘nationalism’ to define the origins of nation building in Estonia. The term ‘national awakening’ is more commonly used to describe the second half of the nineteenth century in Estonia; a period in which the Estonian peasants began to distinguish themselves first socially and culturally, then economically and finally politically from their Baltic-German masters and the Tsarist regime in St. Petersburg (Page 1970:21-26; Taagepera 1993:31-37; Raun 2001: 57-80; Uustalu 1952). The social and cultural revolution which took place in the mid nineteenth century was critical in bringing about the changes which would enable the Estonian people to act on their distinctiveness, and to begin a process of self-identification. By identifying themselves as a distinct ethnic community within the Russian empire, the Estonian people drew from
their shared historical past; their different language and customs were successful in creating an ethnically based Estonian nation (Penikins 1985: 29). By using Smith’s definition of *ethnie*:

a social group whose members share a common name; myth of ancestry; shared historical memories; differentiating elements of culture; association with a specific ‘homeland’ and feel a sense of collective uniqueness and solidarity (Smith 1986: 22-30, 1991: 21)

I will demonstrate using Estonian examples how Smith’s definition acts as a model of the consolidation of the Estonian people as an ethnic community and how this was tied to their national awakening in the 19th century, thus allowing for the future creation of an Estonian nation.

Kemiläinen notes that oppression was a major factor in the development of national sentiment, and it is clear in the Estonian case oppression has been a major factor throughout history, and could be seen as a factor leading to the emergence of their national awakening (1985: 6). Historians have identified two external factors contributing to the emergence of the Estonian national awakening (Raun 1981a, b, c 2001; Uustalu 1952; White 1996, Page 1970). First, the emancipation of the serfs between 1816-1819, and second, the process of Russification that began in the 1880s.

In the early 19th century, there was still no sense of ‘Estonians’ as people or as a nation. The term *maarahvas*, or ‘people of the country’ was used to identify all those who were not ‘Baltic-Germans’ (Raun 1981a, b, 2001, Kahk 1985, Tall 1985). The decision made by Tsar Alexander I to free the serfs; in 1816 in Estland and in 1819 in Livonia, allowed them to possess personal freedoms for the first time (Uustalu 1952: 102, Raun 1981a: 288, White 1996: 15). Hiden and Salmon note that although the Baltic-Germans did much to suppress the rights and opportunities of the *maarahvas*, they did provide the
cultural and economic framework for the "‘awakening’ of Baltic nationalism in the 18th and early 19th centuries (1994: 16)." What did this mean for the peasants in Estonia? The emancipation, while granting the right to move more freely, had not changed the laws regarding land ownership for the peasants, and thus the maarahvas remained economically enslaved to the landowning Baltic Germans (Page 1970: 13, Raun 1981a: 288-89). Although the maarahvas were forced to continue to work for the Baltic Germans, the emancipation allowed the more educated of the maarahvas to explore ideas of social mobility and group identity. This resulted in the expression that the maarahvas were a ‘people’, with a distinct language and culture, and they had the potential to be more than simple land labourers, they had the ability to become a nation.

The second enabling factor in the process of national awakening was the process of Russification that began in earnest in the 1880s (Raun 1981b, 1981c). Tsar Alexander III began to fear the influence of the Baltic Germans over the peasants of the Baltic territories. He believed that unless the privileged position of the Baltic lands within the Empire was changed and the position of the Baltic Germans reduced, the mass of the population would be Germanized, which would ultimately lead to increased intolerance of the Russian empire (Seton-Watson 1977: 85-86). Alexander III felt by strengthening the Russian presence within these territories, it would alter the position of the Baltic nobility, and simultaneously reduce the nationalistic sentiments of the peasants crushing any sense of national awareness that may have developed (Uustalu 1952: 137, Hiden and Salmon 1994: 15). While the Tsar implemented a policy of promotion of the Russian language, culture, religion and administration, he aimed to curb the powers of the Baltic German nobility, as much as the peasants (Page 1970: 23). The impact of Russification
was mixed. In one sense, you could say that it had the desired effect of limiting the national awakening process for the time being; however, more importantly it did drastically impact on the position of the Baltic Germans within this area. Russification reduced the gap between the Baltic Germans and the Estonians, and this would eventually result in the ability of the Estonians to have more control over their lives and their future.

I believe it is important to look at why the process of Russification did not work to curb the nationalistic feelings of the Estonian people. First, I feel that the importance of a distinct language had an impact on the failure of Russification. It is here where we see the beginning of the formation of Estonian identity, stemming from the roots of Finno-Ugric language and culture. This cultural distinctiveness has remained until the present as a key marker of 'us', the Estonian people, vs. 'them', the others, distinguishing first between the Estonians and the Baltic-Germans, and then between the Estonians and the Russians. Smith believes:

Cultural uniqueness is also important for ethnicity. The ethnie in question should appear to be, not only distinctive, but incommensurable, either by having a language which is unrelated to other languages, or a religious community entirely to itself. . . (Smith, 1986: 27-28)

Language was the starting point around which the Estonians could distinguish 'us' from 'them', and then to ultimately build upon this idea as the basis for self-identification. Kemiläinen notes that it is “one of the most important factors in national feeling (1985: 8)”. Clearly, for the Estonian people, language has and will continue to be an important part of defining who they are. Their ability to retain their distinctive language, and to resist assimilation into Russian or German cultural groups attests to the strength behind this movement.
By the mid 19th century, the Estonians could lay claim to the publication and widespread distribution of Estonian language newspapers. Johann V. Jannsen began *Pärnu Postimees* in 1857, and then moved on to produce *Postimees* out of Tartu just a few years later (Uustalu 1952: 121, Raun 1981b: 298). Jannsen was the first to print the term 'Estonian people' instead of *maarahvas*, thus symbolically raising the status of the Estonian people (Raun 1985: 395). Smith notes the importance in the use of a collective name for an *ethnie*, “In general, collective names are a sure sign and emblem of ethnic communities... [A] name summons up images of the distinctive traits and characteristics of a community in the minds and imaginations of its participants and outsiders... (1986: 23-24).” Janssen’s ability to use the term ‘Estonian’ acts as an important indicator of their collective consciousness. Janssen also strongly believed in the importance of publishing in his native language, to guarantee that the paper would be accessible to the average farmer. The newspaper could then be used as a means of disseminating information to the people about their history, their culture and their distinct status from the Baltic Germans, thus greatly contributing to the process of national awakening (Uusatlu 1952: 123, Raun 1981b). Janssen’s path during the national awakening never led him to openly challenge the Baltic Germans. He strongly believed that the only means of assuring Estonia as a distinct nation was by cooperation with the Baltic Germans against the Russian threat (Raun 2001: 63-64; Page 1970: 21-22; Uustalu 1952: 123-124).

A second outlook was the Slavophile perspective led by Jakob Hurt and Carl Robert Jakobson, who sought to distance themselves from the Baltic Germans and to align themselves with St. Petersburg (Uustalu 1952: 125-126; Raun 2001: 64-5, Page 1970: 22-23). While the Baltic Germans had economic control over the territory, there
was very little they could achieve politically. They felt aligning their movement with the leaders in St. Petersburg would ensure greater success to the Estonian national movement (Uustalu 1952: 125-27, Raun 1981b). As early as 1868, Jakobson delivered the “first of his ‘Three Fatherland Speeches’ (Raun 1981b: 297)”, in which he described the various phases of Estonian history, beginning with the period of ‘light’ prior to arrival of the Germans, then a period of ‘darkness’ while subjugated to German domination, and finally a period in which he termed, ‘dawn’ in which the Estonians saw a thaw with the emancipation of the serfs (Raun 1981b). Smith notes the importance of a shared history:

A sense of common history unites successive generations, each with its set of experiences which are added to the common stock, and it also defines a population in terms of experienced temporal sequences, which convey to later generations the historicity of their own experiences (1986: 25)

By mobilizing around their history of oppression, Jakobson was the first to coin the idea of freedom for the Estonian people, giving them a focal point around which they could unite (Jansen 1985: 50). His ideas were promoted through the publication of his popular newspaper *Sakala*, and overall, his approach was much more politically charged than that of Janssen (Page 1970: 22-24; Uustalu 1952:125). This split in loyalties is a common theme in the process of Estonia’s national awakening and their re-awakening in the early 1990s.

Aside from the newspapers, other publications in Estonian were also crucial to the process of national awakening. At the forefront would be Kreutzwald’s national epic the *Kalevipoeg*. The *Kalevipoeg* was critical as it was the first major work that would act as a motivating and unifying piece for the Estonians. Initially started by Frederick Faehlmann, but completed by the poet Kreutzwald, it was based on a compilation of both Estonian folktales and folksongs (Page 1970: 21, Viires 1991, Raun 1981b: 294-95).
Kalevipoeg’s major impact was that it was able to bring this dispersed group of people together by presenting them with a unifying story of their (apparent) history. Page states, “the ‘epic’ did much to focus Estonian interest on the national past; thus, it contributed to the consciousness of a national existence (1970: 22).” By giving the Estonian people a text in which their people and their nation had times of glory and triumph, assisted in the construction of a more positive identity narrative, much like another aspect of Smith’s ethnie that of a common myth of descent. “Myths of origins and descent provide the means of collective location in the world and the charter of the community which explains its origins, growth and destiny (Smith 1986: 24).” In reality, the epic had largely been based on the Finnish epic Kalevala. This does not in fact diminish its impact on the Estonian people, but rather increases its importance. Formulating their national epic on the Finnish model, indicates just how important Finnish culture and ideas were in this period. The Finns were seen as an inspiration to the Estonian people for their ability to stand up to the Russian Empire and to demand certain benefits (Raun 2001: 56; Uustalu 1952: 121; Taagepera 1993: 30). It allowed the Estonian people to recognize that they did have a history as a people/nation, and the Kalevipoeg provided the hope that one day the Estonian people might take their place in Europe as a nation.

In addition to the publication of the Kalevipoeg, the beginning of the Estonian song festivals began in the late 1860s. Janssen and his daughter Lydia Koidula planned on holding Estonia’s first song festival in 1869, to be based upon similar festivals held in both Germany and Finland. The hope of such a song festival was to bring the people together to celebrate Estonian culture by means of song (Uustalu 1952: 129; Raun 2001: 75-76; Puhvel 1999). The Tsarist government was hesitant to allow a festival with
nationalistic overtones to occur, so Janssen chose to use the festival as the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Tsar Alexander I’s abolition of serfdom. Over 10,000 would attend the first festival, held in Tartu, with over 80 choirs performing (Puhvel 1999, Raun 1981c: 331, Tall 1985). The coming together of Estonian peasants from around the country served to tie together the achievements of Janssen and to promote the idea that the Estonians were able to self-identify as a people giving them what Smith terms, a “sense of solidarity”:

An ethnie in my terminology is not just a category of population with a common name, descent myths, history, culture and territorial association. It is also a community with a definite sense of identity and solidarity which often finds institutional philanthropic expression. (Smith 1986: 29)

The unifying ability of the song festivals resulted in subsequent festivals being held in 1879 and 1880 which would continue onwards into the present day. Even through Soviet times, song festivals would be critical in the expression of national sentiments, acting as a unifying force for the Estonian people (Tall 1985)

Other noteworthy cultural advances that contributed to the overall sense of nation building included the Estonian Alexander School (Eesti Aleksandrikool) and the Society of Estonian Literati (Eesti Kirjameeste Selts). The Eesti Aleksandrikool was initially set up in 1871 as a series of fundraising activities to support the first Estonian secondary school. People from every corner of the Estland and northern Livland contributed to these projects, and by the mid 1880s over 100,000 rubles had been collected (Raun 1981c). Eesti Kirjameeste Selts began as a literary society in 1872. While aimed at the Estonian intellectuals, its “primary purpose was the development of educational literature in the Estonian language, its activity gradually broadened to include linguistic reform and the collection of Estonian folklore (Raun 1981c: 328)”. We now begin to see how the process
of national awakening began to spread throughout Estland and Livland. This once unnamed group had developed into an *ethnie* through the publication of the *Kalevipoeg*, the creation of song festivals, and the promotion of Estonian literature. In addition, we can begin to observe the importance of Finno-Ugric model of identity formation, in contributing to the Estonian *ethnie*. This period would prove critical in terms of cultural impact for the future and in the Estonians' self-identification as a people. During the Soviet occupation, it provided a positive period to which the Estonian people could look back, a period in which their culture and identity were allowed to develop.

**Political Advances**

While little was achieved politically prior to the end of the century, the catalyst for change was clearly the Revolution of 1905. Led by Jaan Tõnnisson and Konstantin Päts, the move towards increased autonomy for the territory was sought (Uustalu 1952: 147-148; Raun 2001: 81, 83-86). Again Smith emphasizes the importance of an association with a specific territory:

Territory is relevant to ethnicity...not because it is actually possessed, nor even for its 'objective' characteristics of climate, terrain and location, though they influence ethnic conceptions, but because of an alleged and felt symbiosis between a certain piece of earth and 'its' community.(1986: 28)

Soon after the October Manifesto, Tõnnisson was able to establish the Estonian National Progressive Party, Estonia's first political party in Tartu. For the first time it was able to bring issues of importance to the Estonian nation to the forefront of the political debate (Von Rauch 1970: 13, Raun 2001: 84-86). Political progress was occurring, with the election of Estonians to Tallinn City Council and as representatives at the Duma in St.
Petersburg. The liberalization of policies within the Russian empire allowed the expression of political goals of autonomy for the first time (Raun 2001: 85). While the future of the Empire itself was somewhat uncertain, the appeals by Tõnnisson and Päts for an improvement in the political representation of the Estonian people is interpreted as a major triumph. The combination of new political freedoms with the cultural ideas from the national awakening created the necessary preconditions to seek out independence when the time was right.

**First Period of Independence**

Following the 1917 October Revolution in Russia, the members of the provisional government (*Maapäev*) began to seriously discuss the options available to them. Raun (2001: 104) notes that options included a Scandinavian alliance, a Finnish-Estonian partnership, inclusion in a non-Bolshevik Russian federation, or outright independence. The government’s deep seated fear of the political platform of the Bolsheviks, and the increased pace of their advance through Russia, required that steps be taken to ensure the democratic future of the Estonian people. Thus, the provisional Estonian government led by Päts, with the support of the majority of Estonians, declared Estonia’s independence on Feb 24 1918 (Raun 2001: 104-105; Taagepera 1993: 43-45; Misiunas and Taagepera 1993: 8). Independence was short lived however, as advancing German armies captured Tallinn the next day. The arrival of the Germans was seen as a blessing by the Baltic Germans, who believed the rightful place of Estonia was under a German empire (Raun 2001: 106, Taagepera 1993: 43-45). The intense German occupation ended in the fall of 1918 with the end of the First World War. This event would make the beginning of the
War of Independence in Estonia. The Estonian Bolshevik followers believed their place was within Soviet Russia and supported the advance of the Red Army into Estonia. With assistance from both Great Britain and Finland, the Estonian army overcame huge odds and secured independence from the Bolsheviks. Finally, on February 2, 1920, representatives from Estonia and Soviet Russia signed the Tartu Peace Treaty in which Soviet Russia recognized the sovereignty and independence of Estonia forever (Raun 2001; Taagepera 1993: 46-47).

During the 1920s, the process of state building began with the development of a democratic parliamentary system. A priority of the new government was to undertake major land reforms, which resulted in land being transferred from the old Baltic German landowners to the people of Estonia (Hope 1996: 47-48). This process created a negative sentiment among the new German minority in the country, although most chose not to leave until the German occupation in the Second World War. By the 1930s, authoritarian regimes were spreading across Europe and Estonia was no different. In 1934, President Päts declared a state of emergency in Estonia, and transferred power to himself (Taagepera 1993: 55; Raun 2001: 118-123). Andres Kasekamp (2000) explores the issues of authoritarianism in Estonia and its impact on the subsequent political events that led to the occupation of Estonia by Soviet forces. In 1939 the Soviet and German governments signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, including a secret protocol that called for the division of Eastern Europe among themselves. The pact would give the Soviet Union control over the Estonian territory (Raun 2001: 139-141, Taagepera 1993: 132-133). As the distribution of territory occurred through a secret protocol, Päts would have no idea
that allowing Soviet troops to station themselves on Estonian soil in 1940 would drastically change the course of events for the people of Estonia (Pettai 1993a: 121).

**Period of Soviet Occupation**

The Soviets were concerned over the possibility of unrest and uprising in the Baltic provinces in their first (1940-41) and second periods of occupation (1944-1991). They sought out means to curb any possibilities of insurrection. On June 14 1941, the deportation of upwards of 10,000 Estonians occurred at the hands of Soviet authorities (Kukk 1993: 369). They sought to remove all traces of national sentiment by deporting all who might not conform to the image of the new ‘Soviet citizen’. This included cultural figures, politicians, lawyers, doctors, essentially anyone who possessed leadership capabilities (Kukk 1993: 369-370; Raun 2001: 154). On this fateful night, the Soviets rounded people up in cattle cars and sent them to collection points, where in turn the majority was sent to labour camps in Siberia. In addition to this first deportation, a second followed in 1949 in which close to 60,000 people were removed (Kukk 1993: 370).

The Communist government in the Soviet Union developed specific policies to deal with nationalities. Their goal was to achieve a society without national differences, but united for the goal of ‘Soviet ideal’ (Lapidus 1984: 562-565). They established a multiethnic federal state, with a particular system of Union republics based on ethnic categories. Brubaker notes that the Soviets developed what he terms ‘institutions of territorial nationhood’ which “established nationhood and nationality as fundamental social categories sharply distinct from the overarching categories of statehood and citizenship (1996: 23)”. Although these republics were intended to be ‘autonomous’
regions in which the native language would be used, this was all done under the umbrella of the ‘Soviet man’ (Lapidus 1984: 564). The following quote was found in an edition of the communist party’s journal Kommunist:

> Each Soviet nation and nationality brings its own weight contribution to the successful construction of the new community. In the process of creating communism they attain an all-around flourishing and ever closer rapprochement with one another. For all nations the common characteristics increase in all spheres of material and spiritual life of the Soviet people. *However, the rapprochement of nations and their international unity should not be viewed as a merger. The elimination of all national differences is a long process, and it is possible only after the complete victory and consolidation of communism in the entire world* (Lapidus 1984: 563-64, italics in original)

Stalin initially sought to rule the Union by means of terror tactics, hoping to abolish the ethnic differences and realize a true socialist state based on Lenin’s nationality policy (Giordano 1997: 181). Stalin’s tactics revolved around his desire to remove all remaining traces of ‘bourgeois nationalism’ that remained in Estonia (or elsewhere in the Union), and this was to be achieved through denationalization of the people, by removal of both their political and cultural leaders, and through a process of assimilation that would result in a process of ‘sovietization’ which would ensure the loyalty of the Estonian people to the greater good of the Soviet Union (Vanamo 1999).

Witnessing the disappearance of their cultural and political leaders, the Estonian people were relatively reluctant to openly show their nationalistic feelings. One important exception to this was the radical resistance to Soviet rule found among a group of men known as the metsavennad ‘forest brothers’ (Laar 1992; Raun 2001: 174-175; Taagepera 1993: 79). These men formed groups of armed resistance from the first period of Soviet rule in 1940-41, hiding out in the many forests and swamps within the country. They did not accept the occupation by the Soviets, and attempted to return the Estonian territory to
the Estonian people by means of series of armed attacks against the Soviet authorities. According to Mart Laar’s (1992) account, as many as 15,000 men took to the forest between 1944 and 1957. The metsavennad did not act alone, and were actively aided by the many farmers and countrypersons who were more than willing to provide these ‘freedom fighters’ with food, drink and shelter. The Soviet policy of collective farming put in place in 1949 and the respective deportations of the same year were intended by the Soviets to stop the aid by farmers to the metsavennad, in hopes of ending their open resistance (Laar 1992, Raun 2001). Other than the presence of the metsavennad, there was relatively little open dissent amongst the Estonian people in the early years of Soviet rule (Raun 2001: 195-196, Taagepera 1993: 88-89). There were a few daring individuals who sought to commemorate the graves of the leaders of the War of Independence, or who displayed the Estonian flag on national holidays but overall, the Stalinist period was marked by quiet or home level dissent; more commonly remembered for its fear or terror. It is important to note however, that nationalistic ideas had not evaporated, but had simply been removed from center-stage to more private venues in which the prospect of being discovered was far less.

Even with the more relaxed policies of Khrushchev, very little changed for the people of Soviet Estonia. The older generations were quite fearful of the Stalinist legacy, and the younger generation, really did not comprehend the severity of the situation. Under Brezhnev’s leadership, life became challenging once again, as a new period of Russification began (Smith G. 1996b: 122-23). This time, the policy aimed to destroy any remaining sense of national identification that may have survived the Stalinist terror, and replace it with a Russian orientation. Those who were interested in promoting Estonian
national ideas had to work underground, and often resorted to works of art and literature to express their ideas. Vihalemm (1999) notes that although the Soviets attempted to 'sovietize' all aspects of culture, cultural and literary figures were used in Estonia as a means of quiet dissent. Because of the language difference between the Estonians and the Russians (very few top communists fully grasped the language), the Estonians were quite successful in getting their work past the censors. This emphasis on language ties into the important role that Finland played for the people of Estonia. Ruutsoo writes "Finland was Estonia's alter ego, the existence of Finland sustained the idea of a republic of Estonia, keeping alive the Estonians vision of what the country might have been, had they stood up to the Russians (Ruutsoo 1995: 177)." Because of the geographic and cultural proximity of these two countries, Estonians were successful in bypassing Soviet censors, enabling them to receive Finnish television and radio programming (Raun 2001: 214; Taagepera 1993: 99-101). Not only did this allow the Estonians to gain an understanding of what was going on outside the Soviet Union, but also it provided the necessary incentive to maintain their distinctive national identity despite the pressures placed upon them by the repressive Soviet regimes.

Re-Awakening

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, there was an overall shift in the national consciousness. This arose out of the 1975 CSCE Helsinki Accord, in which the Soviet government committed itself to the idea of human rights and the self-determination of peoples (Hiden and Salmon 1994: 135; Clemens 1997: 150). The forum provided the two Estonian nationalist organizations, The Estonian Democratic Movement and the Estonian National Front, the necessary framework for the Estonians to seek out an international
audience to appeal their illegal incorporation into the Soviet Union. Letters were written to the UN Secretary General and the European Parliament in which their plight was identified, as was their desire for the international community to challenge the Soviet Union regarding their forceful and illegal incorporation into the Soviet Union (Forgus 1979: 204, Kukk 1993). The Helsinki Accord provided the spark that would ignite the flame of Estonian’s second national awakening.

The ideas that were brought to international attention in 1975 started the momentum for the process of national self-determination among the Estonian people once again. However, it was not until the election of Gorbachev in 1985 that real progress was visible to the average citizen. There seems to be a common way of thinking that Gorbachev’s policy of *perestroika* was the turning point for the Soviet Union, and the beginning of its collapse. While intended to increase the legitimacy of the Union, the economic focus of *perestroika* opened the necessary doors for drastic change to occur (Virkkunen 1998: 10, Ruutsoo 1995, Taagepera 1993: 161-164, Misiunas and Taagepera 1993, Raun 2001). For the first time in the history of the Soviet Union, issues of nationalism and national self-determination were being brought to the forefront of political discussions and policy making. The failure of the nationalities policy developed by Lenin and enacted by Stalin appeared to be coming back to haunt Gorbachev. The result of Estonia being kept together at the level of ‘republic’ within the Soviet Union, assisted the Estonian people in their ability to re-assert themselves as a nation. At the same time, the Soviet leadership was quite naïve about the strength of nationalistic sentiment among the people and they underestimated the impact that a policy like *perestroika* would have on the various republics. The citizens of Estonia were not as
ignorant. They were able to see the opportunities granted by this policy, and ultimately used it as a starting point to form groups and associations once again (Kirch and Kirch 1995; Clemens 1997). These associations, would become pivotal in the process of asserting independence, and then play an important role in the newly independent Estonia. “With the dawning of perestroika, Estonians recognized the unique opportunity for separation and for strengthening their ethnic identity. Estonians as a subjected nation, aspired towards national and political self-determination, towards the restoration of a linkage between nation and state (Kirch and Kirch 1995: 440)”

With the changes granted first by perestroika and then later by glasnost, these independence movements were able to organize and to make public appearances for the first time. The citizens of all three Baltic States chose a common theme around which to base their newfound ability to openly protest the Soviet regime. They were able to rally around the cause of environmental degradation that had occurred under the severe Soviet industrialization policies, and use this environmental problem as a base from which to voice their protest (Raun 2001: 223; Taagepera 1993: 120-123; Furtado and Hechter 1996; Smith G 1996b). As a cover for national sentiments, the Estonian people used environmental concerns to both attract increased international attention to Soviet policies, and to form a collective group around which they could promote areas of interest. The Estonians openly protested over the prospect of phosphate mining in the northeast (Furtado and Hechter 1996: 179, and Smith G. 1996b: 131, Virkkunen 1998: 11, Kirby 1995:430). The Soviet officials were relatively helpless at this point, as they could not argue with the need to protect the environment, but they were also powerless in stopping these groups from branching out from the environment into issues of national autonomy.
The environment was also a cause with which the younger generations could identify with. It became a catalyst in developing a new awareness of national pride that had not been allowed under the strict Soviet regime. Thus, by using a neutral aspect like the environment, the ground for the re-awakening of Estonian nationalism was in place.

From this beginning, issues pertaining to Estonian autonomy and independence became much more widespread. In 1987, there were open public displays of protest for the anniversary of the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (Clemens 1997: 145; Raun 2001: 223; Taagepera 1993: 124-125). This was the first time that Estonians, as a collective group, openly protested this event. Clearly, by now the stage had been set. The abolition of Article 6 of the Soviet constitution resulted in the end of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union’s (CPSU) monopoly on political power, and first opened the door for political alternatives (Furtado and Hechter 1996: 175) (see appendix 3). This drastically altered the perception of the power held by the Communist Party. They began to see that their way of ruling from the center, ruling by fear and intimidation, was not what the people wanted. The newly established parties were able to draw on the views of the constituents, something that had not been done since the early years of the Communist Party. By April 1988, Estonian Popular Front was established by Edgar Savisaar to represent the views of the Estonian people (Clemens 1997: 142, Raun 2002: 225, Furtado and Hechter 1996: 178-79). Their outward stance was to support Gorbachev’s policies of reform, but inwardly, they provided the necessary opportunity for people to congregate around the idea of achieving an independent Estonian nation once again. The Soviets themselves were responsible for some of the changes. In June 1988, the Soviet government, aided by protests from grass roots organizations, replaced
the much-disliked Estonian Communist Party First Secretary Karl Vaino, with the first Estonian born Secretary, Vaino Väljas. They knowingly put an individual who openly sought Estonian rights and protested against the hard line policies of the center into the most powerful position in the republic (Smith G 1996: 131, Metcalf 1996: 217).

Although, he did not publicly support out-right independence, he was able to institute much more agreeable policies that enabled the Popular Front to become a political party to reckon with:

That the popular fronts so quickly became separatist in their aims and in the process were able to convince their peoples so easily of the rightness of their cause were in one way or another linked both to the way in which powerful national symbols were drawn upon and equated with a pre-Soviet past and of the material benefits which such sovereignty might again provide (Smith, G 1996b: 132).

By August 1988, other parties surfaced, proposing more radical alternatives; one of interest for this discussion was the creation of the Estonian National Independence Party (ENIP) created by former political prisoners and dissidents, who sought to re-create the Estonian nation-state as it had existed prior to their forceful incorporation into the Soviet Union (Virkkunen 1998: 11). Their platform clearly rested on the notion of descent and in creating a purely ethnic state, to be led by Estonians, for Estonians (Smith,D 2002).

Sovereignty was first proclaimed in November 1988, and nationalist policies could be seen as early as January 1989 with the introduction of a new Language Law, reinstating Estonian as the only official language of Estonia (Taagepera 1993: 145; Raun 2001: 227-228; Hiden and Salmon 1994: 152). By early 1990, it appeared that independence was assured, but due to divisions between the two major nationalist groups, how and when it would be achieved was uncertain. This split into two factions mimicked
the split that was seen in the first period of national awakening. The split could have been disastrous for the independence movement, however they realized that their goal of providing political alternatives for the people of Estonia in the hopes of achieving independence was more important than in the methods used in achieving their goals (Lauristin and Vihalemm 1997: 92-93). In looking at Table 1 (page 49), one can observe how opinions regarding the future of Estonia changed dramatically over time for both ethnic groups. From this point onwards, there was no turning back. The stage had been set for complete independence from the Soviet Union, although this would not formally occur until 1991.

**Re-independence**

The radical wing was successful in their desire for legal restoration. After securing independence from the Soviet Union on August 20 1991, only those individuals who had been citizens of the interwar republic and their descendents became citizens of the new Republic. All others wishing to become citizens of the new Estonian state would have to naturalize. This has led to the creation of what Vello Pettai has termed an 'ethnic democracy' (Pettai 1993b, 1995. 1998).
Table 1  What kind of political status would you want Estonia to acquire in the future? (In percentages)

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<td><strong>Estonians</strong></td>
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<td>A union republic within the present federation (USSR)</td>
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<td>An independent state within a confederation (USSR)</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>An independent state outside the USSR</td>
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<td>81</td>
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<td>96</td>
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<td>Can't Say</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Estonians</strong></td>
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<td>A union republic within the present federation (USSR)</td>
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<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>An independent state within a confederation (USSR)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td>An independent state outside the USSR</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can't say</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
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Source: Lauristin and Vihalemm 1997: 91
Results of public opinion polls conducted by EMOR, sample size unknown.

Essentially in the first years of independence due to the citizenship policies, political power rested in the hands of the ethnic Estonians. The Estonians were still angry about their period of incorporation into the Soviet Union, and this anger was ultimately expressed in terms of nationalist policies creating a mono-linguist and a “mono-ethnic space (Giordano 1997: 188)”. Herd and Lofgren note, “for threatened societies, one obvious line of defensive response is to strengthen societal identity (2001: 280)”.

The focus after independence was to re-define the Estonian identity and to promote the Estonian nation (Kirch and Kirch 2001: 131). Thus, in the period directly before independence and immediately after, construction of the Estonian state proceeded from
an ethnically based definition. The Estonian government's focus is on the preservation of their nation, and in the post-Communist period, this has taken on an ethnic connotation (Kuus 2002d: 402). While the moral arguments against the development of an ethnic state can be quite persuasive, the Estonian government did not see it as a moral problem. They were much more concerned with the continuation of their people and their nation, and if this had to be accomplished through ethnic nationalistic policies, then so be it.

It became clear following this immediate move towards an ethnic state that the government had neglected to take into account the realities of the Estonian situation. In order to gain an understanding of that situation the work of Rogers Brubaker must be taken into account, and how his 'triadic nexus' is able to capture the present-day situation more clearly. The Estonians themselves are the 'core nation' and as the 'nationalizing state', the Estonian government has chosen policy options, in the post-Soviet period that do much to restrict the political involvement of the Russian minority. However, Raun notes that this group of 'Russian speakers' cannot be characterized as a 'typical' minority group. Most migrants arrived during Stalin's rule, as either the new political elite or for the economic benefits (Raun 1994: 162). By applying Brubaker's model of 'triadic nexus', we can begin to understand the interplay between the various forces and the rationale behind their positions. In the Estonian example, it is clear that the Estonians themselves represent the core nation, and that given the political history, the Estonian state has in essence, been re-instated for the promotion of the Estonian people, their language and their culture, much as it had been envisioned in the interwar period. The protection of the national culture was a major concern in Estonia, primarily related to the demographic shifts that had occurred with Soviet rule. The Soviet pattern of settlement
tended to group the Russian speakers together, segregating them from the Estonian speaking population; thereby creating two distinct societies within one state. What has resulted is the creation of a Russian dominated region in the republic’s northeast, with a number of cities in which the Estonian population is less than 10 per cent (Kirch, A 1994) (see Appendix 1). Although the policies instituted in the post cold war period may be deemed as detrimental to this minority group, they clearly are in line with the preservation of the Estonian nation, essentially the reason behind the re-instatement of the Estonian state.

The second aspect of Brubaker’s ‘triadic nexus’ is the Russian minority, who Brubaker refers to as the ‘nationalizing minority’. This group has been in flux, as many did not anticipate that the creation of the Estonian republic would be akin to moving to a new country. Independence has thus created a situation in which a former majority group, at least in terms of power, has been transformed into a minority. The demographic situation in the northeast has become one of tension among policy makers stemming from a threat to the viability of the Estonian language and culture. However, for the Russian speaking community the situation is much different. They perceive the north-east as an area which enables them to have an enclave where they can be Russian; they can speak their language, follow their Orthodox religion, while continuing to be part of the larger Estonian state.

And finally, the third element as defined by the triadic nexus is the ‘nationalizing homelands’. For Estonia, this has been primarily expressed by the Russian governments’ international condemnation of Estonia’s ‘human rights abuses’—their citizenship policies, the Language Law and the Aliens Act. Hoping that the international community
will put pressure on the Estonian government to do more to integrate the Russian-speaking minority, Russia has demonstrated that it has a continuing interest in the national policies in Estonia. The Russian government has also attempted to tie the removal of Soviet troops stationed in Estonia to the granting of citizenship, two essentially un-related political acts. In 1998, they also doubled the tariffs on Estonian imports to protest the situation, hoping that this pressure would encourage the Estonians to reconsider their citizenship policies. The Estonian government, however, sees the Russian use of international organizations as an attack on Estonian sovereignty. It feels that many are merely spokesperson for Russian interests. The Russian perspective, that of the homeland, is further complicated by the fact that in the initial period of independence it was trying to come across as the ‘empire saver’, and in essence re-create the Soviet Empire in a new fashion, clearly under Russian leadership (Raun 1994: 163).

The Estonian government’s desire to seek membership in the EU has dictated policy agendas and it has attempted to appease the European Union as much as possible, at least on paper. While there has been pressure put on the Estonians to create a more civic based nation-state and the Estonian government has enacted a plan to integrate the Russian speaking minority into the citizenry, in reality, little has been achieved. The enactment of these changes has been slow to happen, and in reality and in everyday life the changes have been minimal. The elite of Estonia, those who are most supportive of the EU are the ones in the decision making positions. The attempt by the EU to ‘encourage’ the Estonian government to amend its citizenship laws will only make the public perception of Estonia’s place in the EU decrease (Kuus 2002d: 401). It is this very intrusion from outside agencies that is feared most in light of sovereignty discourse in
Estonia. This will be an important variable in light of Estonia’s desire to join the European Union, a topic to which we will now turn.
Chapter 4

Estonia and the EU

Integrating into the EU represents the culmination of Estonia’s road back to Europe and Estonia’s road forward to its rightful place as a well functioning modern nation-state” (quoted by Ilves, in Kirch and Kirch 2001: 140)

Estonia’s relationship with the European Union hasn’t been a long one. Once independence was re-gained in 1991, the Estonian government quickly made strides to move the country out of the ‘Soviet sphere’ and back into its rightful place in the European family of nations. However, the family of nations in Europe had undergone major changes; the Europe that Estonia left when incorporated into the Soviet Union had become a much different entity during the past fifty years. The creation of the European Union as a supranational entity to bring together the sovereign nations of Europe to benefit each other economically, socially and eventually politically, would be a drastically different structure than had been in place prior to the Second World War. Estonia needed to develop some sort of strategy to deal with this new entity in Europe, and has since made joining the European Union as one of its primary foreign policy goals (Kuus 2002a: 95, 2002c, Feldman, M 2001: 6). In fact, so much attention has been put into achieving Estonia’s place in the new Europe of nations, that the process of state building has been established around the necessary legal framework required for inclusion into such a Union. This desire to be included among Europe’s ‘club of nations’ has had a serious impact on the process of identity formation and its expression through the policies of subsequent governments. The introduction of this thesis presented an overview of various identity discourses that are being expressed by academics and
politicians in Estonia. This chapter is going to begin with a historical overview of
Estonian-EU relations, and then will explore the dichotomy of Estonia’s desire to be
included in this ‘club of nations’ and the subsequent expressions of discontent that have
developed among the people of Estonia in light of the identity discourses.

**History of Estonia-EU relations**

How have the negotiations progressed? Initially the European Union was
skeptical about the inclusion of a former Soviet state into its family of nation-states, and
therefore proceeded with small steps designed to assist in the integration of Estonia into a
world capitalist system. Unlike the former East European states, who were able to
negotiate Association agreements with the EU in the early 1990s, the first level of
cooperation for Estonia involved the negotiation of a Trade and Co-operation Agreement
in May 1992 (Arnswald 2000: 30-31). The European Commission would not discuss
further integration until the removal of the remaining Soviet military personnel occurred.

By mid 1994, with the final removal of Soviet troops, the European Commission
set out to replace the Trade and Cooperation Agreement with a more all encompassing
one. The Estonian-EU Free Trade Agreement came into force January 1 1995, and moved
beyond the realm of trade, by requiring that Estonia abide by the commitments set out at
the Madrid, Vienna and Copenhagen Summits (Arnswald 2000: 33). However, at this
stage, there still had been no mention of the possibility of Estonia becoming a member of
the Union.

Sweden and Finland’s accession to the EU on January 1st 1995, would mark a
turning point in Estonian-EU relations. These two Nordic countries rallied behind the
Baltic States quest for membership (Raun 2001: 252-253). By April 1995, the most
inclusive agreements to date were set in place. The Europe Agreement was a multidimensional agreement moving beyond the realm of economics to specify areas of cultural and political cooperation between Estonia and the EU (Mannin 1999). This agreement replaced the Trade and Cooperation Agreement and was a supplement to the Free Trade Agreement. For the first time in the negotiation process, the prospect of future membership was a reality. By November of the same year, the EU received Estonia’s formal application for membership (Arnswald 2000: 35-37). The European Council established the Copenhagen Criteria in 1993, outlining the requirements of future memberships:

(i) stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and protection of minorities;
(ii) a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within the Union;
(iii) the ability to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union (Moussis 1999: 543)

The third point above involves the adoption of the acquis communautaire, the entire body of EU legislation and treaties, a major undertaking in itself, but even greater for countries attempting to re-emerge from the Soviet Union. By mid 1997, the European Commission came up with ‘opinions’ on each state’s readiness for joining the EU, based upon the fulfillment of the above mentioned criteria. In cooperation with the Council, the Commission believed that formal accession negotiations should initially proceed with 6 states, including Estonia. This was a big step for the Estonians, and it was believed that Estonia’s rapid economic progress was key in its early inclusion among the ‘frontrunners’ (European Commission-Regular Report 2001). This has been a brief overview of the process of negotiations between Estonia and the European Union. Since 1997, annual
Action Plans are developed by the applicant states and then evaluated by the European Commission. The Opinion of the Commission outlines both the achievements and the concerns. It identifies areas in need of both immediate and medium term attention by the applicant countries, in order to fulfill the obligations of membership. In addition, the Commission has kept track of the "chapters" closed in negotiation process. This refers to the ability of the Estonian government to implement or negotiate provisions for implementing the 31 "Chapters" of the *acquis* (European Commission-Regular Report 2001; Arnswald 2000). The discussion of how many chapters each applicant state has 'closed' is often viewed by interested international community as a means of assessing who is progressing the most rapidly towards membership.

**Why seek EU membership?**

This section is going to identify the key reasons presented by subsequent Estonian governments for their desire to seek out EU membership as one of their primary foreign policy objectives. In the post-Cold War period, security was of utmost importance to the newly formed governments in the Former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The uncertainty and instability of Russian politics had an impact on development of Estonia’s foreign policy (Berg 2002: 114). Dorodnova notes that Moscow will always be a security threat to the Baltic countries due to their historical desires for conquest (2000: 18). Former President Lennart Meri quotes “On one side Europe, on the other side Russia... we are on the border, and therefore only a small push is needed to make us fall over to one side or rise to the other (quoted in Kuus 2002b)”. Estonia's strategic location in the Baltic Sea has been cited as a reason for the 700 years of occupation, and given the fear
and proximity of Russia, Estonia needed to seek out alternatives for their security. In addition to Estonia’s location, its size is also a factor in its desire to protect its security (Behr 2001). In a speech given at an Estonia-EU conference, former President of the Parliament, Toomas Savi said, “If we want our children and grandchildren to live in peace and welfare we can no longer guarantee this within the boundaries of one individual state (cited in Riigikogu 1999)”. By seeking out security in international organizations such as the European Union, the protection of small states against aggressive neighbours can be ensured, and given Estonia’s history, they are not taking any chances.

A second factor mentioned briefly above is Estonia’s desire to return to Europe. The Estonian politicians have been quite vocal about their need to clearly distinguish between Estonia’s future identity from that of the former Soviet Union (Kirch, M 1994). This desire to ‘return to Europe’ and become a functioning democracy with a market economy was foremost in the goals at the outset of independence. Kirch and Kirch note that “Estonia aspires to be a full member of a united Europe and the European image and the real European identity of Estonia can be demonstrated by the general acceptance of the European idea (2001: 139).” As previously noted, the Europe that Estonia wishes to join is not the same ‘Europe’ that Estonia left in the 1940s. The European Union has been portrayed as the hallmark of democracy and market economies; Estonia by virtue of desiring to belong to such a group of nations would clearly be claiming to express similar values. The importance of being among similar cultures, economies and political systems, is directly related to Huntington’s idea of clashes of civilizations. Only by moving beyond the iron cloak, can Estonia hope to become a fully functioning modern nation-
state, and to finally distance itself from its communist past. In addition, the European Union provides the necessary framework to assist in the necessary modernization of the Estonian infrastructure; something that is needed after being part of the Soviet Union (Kirch and Kirch 2001: 135).

Levels of Public Support

While the government and the elites are enthusiastic about their future within the European Union, the public on average is not. While most Estonians are clear in their desire to distance themselves from the fifty years of occupation and to become more like a West European country in terms of cultural, economic, social and political development, they are unsure as to whether the European Union is the way to achieve these objectives. The problem of low public support is not exclusive to Estonia, but can be seen among most of the accession countries. However, the three Baltic republics do seem to be the most reluctant of the applicant countries to proceed with membership (Albi 2000: 10) (see Tables 2 and 3). The opinion polls in Estonia have varied over the years; initial support in the early 1990s was relatively high, but fluctuations have been occurring and it appears as though the peak of support was reached in 1995-1996 (Kirch 2000). The closer Estonia gets to membership, the more reality sets in and these doubts are expressed through uncertainty in the polls (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2002: 13) (see Appendix 4).

Recently the European Union conducted in depth polling in the applicant countries and has determined that only 33% of Estonians, lowest of all the applicant countries, think that membership in the European Union is a good thing for the country
(See Table 2). This statistic is followed by only 38% of the Estonian population who would vote in favor of EU membership for their country. More worrisome to the government is the number of individuals who would either not vote or are unsure how they would cast their ballot (See Table 3 on page 61).

**Table 2**

Generally speaking, do you think that (Country)'s membership of the European Union would be...?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AC 13</th>
<th>Czech</th>
<th>Hungarian</th>
<th>Latvian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A good thing</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A bad thing</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither good nor bad</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK/No answer</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lithuania</th>
<th>Malta</th>
<th>Poland</th>
<th>Romania</th>
<th>Slovakia</th>
<th>Slovenia</th>
<th>Turkey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A good thing</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A bad thing</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither good nor bad</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK/No answer</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(source: Eurobarometer 2001: 67)

(1000 interviews conducted by Saar Poll, of permanent residents of Estonia over the age of 15, spanning the entire territory of the country)
Table 3

And, if there were to be a referendum tomorrow on the question of (country)’s membership of the European Union would you personally vote for or against it?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AC 13 Average</th>
<th>Bulgaria</th>
<th>Cyprus</th>
<th>Czech Republic</th>
<th>Estonia</th>
<th>Hungary</th>
<th>Latvia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>47</td>
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<tr>
<td>Against</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would not go to vote</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK/No answer</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lithuania</th>
<th>Malta</th>
<th>Poland</th>
<th>Romania</th>
<th>Slovakia</th>
<th>Slovenia</th>
<th>Turkey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Against</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would not go to vote</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>DK/No answer</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(source: Eurobarometer 2001: 62)
(1000 interviews conducted by Saar Poll, of permanent residents of Estonia over the age of 15, spanning the entire territory of the country)

The following question was asked in a poll conducted by EMOR research group in June 2001.
Table 4

Küsimus 2: Kui referendum Euroopa Liiduga ühinemise otsustamiseks toimiks järgmisel nädalal, siis kuidas Teie isiklikult hääletaksite? (kõik vastajad)

Question 2: If a referendum for joining the EU takes place next week, then how would you personally vote?

(all respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Percentage</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hääletaks poolt (for)</td>
<td>26,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hääletaks vastu (against)</td>
<td>24,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poleotsustanud(neutral)</td>
<td>48,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(source: Europa Liidu Infosekretariaat June 2001- my translation)
(972 people from across Estonia polled by EMOR research group-no information regarding ethnic identification given)

The commonalities of the previous three tables are the low numbers in support for EU membership in conjunction with the relatively high numbers of uncertain/neutral stances. As previously stated, it is the uncertain and absentee voters that are most troublesome for the Estonian government. There is no clear sense of which way these individuals would vote, given a referendum, thus causing concern for those in power. These figures also indicate that there are deep-seated reasons why the people of Estonia are unwilling to join the European Union, thus indicating that the accession process is lacking in legitimacy (Albi 2000: 10). The following section looks at some of the most commonly held fears of the Estonian people.
Why are levels of support so low?

Examining the most common fears of the Estonian people will assist in explaining why the levels of public support have been relatively low in the past few years. The most visible reason for euro-skepticism is multi dimensional and relates to the fear of being part of another ‘Union’ so soon after independence from the Soviet Union (Talts 1998; Behr 2001). In the late 1940s, Soviet propaganda advocated to the Estonian people that belonging to the Soviet Union was in their best interest, and that only through the Soviet Union could their security be ensured. Now seventy years, later bureaucrats in Brussels are attempting to present a similar platform regarding the transfer of areas of sovereignty to the European Union. The Estonian nation waited for fifty years for the ability to once again become a sovereign state, and now, a mere ten years later, politicians are discussing the prospect of once again transferring sovereignty away from the people of Estonia. The Estonian nation has had only ten years in which to develop a state for the promotion and protection of their national interests. The current “Estonian Constitution does not allow EU membership because accession would violate the principle of inalienable independence and sovereignty (Kuus 2002d: 399).” This has created a situation in which a national referendum would have to be held to change the Constitution in order for the Estonian Government to proceed with membership (Albi 2000: 2). However, in 1999 at his Independence Day address, then President, Lennart Meri expressed his views on the topic, “. . . that the EU is not ‘another federation’ membership in which would undermine Estonia’s identity and sovereignty (quoted in Feldman, M 2001: 8)”. The Estonians are fearful that given the current level of integration in the EU, membership would transfer decision-making power in areas of national importance to Brussels. In doing so, the key
function of the state, being of and for the people, might cease to exist, thus posing a threat to the cultural and national identity of the country.

Stemming from the idea of sovereignty, another factor contributing to euro skepticism is the need to protect their national identity. Again, this point has to be taken in light of the historical consequences of fifty years of incorporation, where the freedom to express their national consciousness and to develop as ‘a nation’ had been severely limited. Now that this constraining factor has been removed, the Estonian people desire to be able to express their national identity. Herd and Lofgren note, “The greater the threat to the identity, the stronger the identity, and the determination to preserve the identity become: societal security, ultimately concerns the survival of a society (2001: 275)”. Because of their size, Estonians may fear the possibility of cultural or linguistic assimilation by the larger states in Europe (Jonnem 2002). With EU membership, comes an open border policy among the member-states. Freedom of movement is a fundamental right of the European Union, and as such, Estonians fear for the future of their national identity. “In March 1996, 42% of ethnic Estonians in Estonia agreed with the statement that being a part of ‘borderless Europe’ may result in the ‘dissolution of Estonia (Feldman 2001: 14)’”. I have taken the term ‘dissolution of Estonia’ to mean the destruction or transformation of Estonian identity:

A more important issue is whether the partial waiving of sovereignty is worth becoming a member of the European Union. The main issues for Estonia are: will the adding of a new dimension of identity bring along confusion with the old ones, or, vice versa, will it result in increased quality; and which changes will result from EU accession in the not yet clearly developed identity of the non-Estonians (United Nations Development Programme 2000)
In a period where the Estonians are still unsure of their own external identity, the goals of joining a supranational entity such as the EU might overshadow domestic concerns. Eiki Berg notes that “self-reliance, ecological reproduction, rural lifestyle, national and cultural identities are the most obvious key words to characterize living in ‘our own space’ and resisting global swings (2001: 119).”

As we have seen, the need to protect the Estonian identity was central in the creation of an Estonian state. Policies enabling this to occur have been in the forefront of political debates since the first years of independence. The decision to not automatically grant citizenship to the large Russian speaking minority highlights the ethnic conflict within the country, and the desire of the Estonian people to preserve ‘their’ nation-state from an influx of outsiders. The European Commission has called attention to these very laws during the last four years, in hope that the Estonian government will do more to integrate the large numbers of Russian speakers into the citizenry (Vetik 2001, Dorodnova 2000: 5). The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) concluded that Estonia’s citizenship laws were not in violation of any human rights; yet we see a situation in which the European Union is already attempting to dictate national policies prior to membership. The pressure by the European Commission on the Estonian government to integrate these individuals has resulted in a situation in which citizens of Estonia fear “that rapid international integration could undermine Estonia’s cultural identity (Feldman, M 2001: 8).”

One must also examine the impact that the media has had on public opinion in Estonia. Until the accession of Sweden and Finland into the EU in 1995, very little was
discussed about Estonia’s relationship with the European Union. The media was inadequate in disseminating information to the people regarding the foreign policy objectives of the government. The government in Tallinn was negotiating Estonia’s future within the EU, yet very little information was ever passed onto the citizens:

For the people of these three former Soviet republics, NATO is considered an important safeguard against Russia and seems simpler to understand. In contrast, they feel uninformed about EU membership (indeed, they feel less informed than anyone else in the region), and view EU integration as complex and distant and as having less clear-cut benefits (Szilagyi 2002).

While in recent years, the media has taken a more active role in the presentation of information to the people, there is still as sense among the people that the correct information is not being presented. In a June 2001 poll conducted by EMOR research group, the following question was asked in Estonia:
Based on the survey above it is clear that the citizens of Estonia do not have a clear understanding of what the cost and benefits of membership might be. As the media is the means of disseminating information throughout a society, and given the low levels of public knowledge, it is safe to assume that either the media is not presenting information in a manner that is understood by the general public, or is not presenting the correct information to enable the population to make an informed choice about EU membership.
The question of who will ultimately benefit from EU membership is a final reason for the low levels of public support. The process of state building and foreign policy rests with government officials and with an elite group of Estonian society. The average citizen is far removed from the negotiation process and in appreciating the benefits associated with joining the EU. Kirch et al notes that even results from opinion polls are to be taken with caution, as it is the elite who are most likely to respond (1998). “Aspirations for EU membership are not driven by a natural craving for independence which emotionally involves the entire population but rather by geopolitical and economic interests imposed by the élite from above (United Nations Development Programme 2000).”

Table 6. EU and Public Opinion in Estonia Jan 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Income Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Supporters</td>
<td>Up to Age 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>69% for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Opposers</td>
<td>Age 50-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53% against</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Uncertain</td>
<td>Age 65-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28% unsure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

500 residents from across Estonia polled

In looking at Table 6, it is possible to ascertain that those in highest support for EU membership represent the elite or upper echelons of Estonian society (also see Appendix 5). Typically, the youngest and richest members of Estonian society, they perceive
improved personal advantages in joining the EU. On the other end, we see an older group of individuals; those who might find it most difficult to adapt to integration (Ruutsoo and Kirch 1998). They are still in the workforce and could fear an influx of skilled workers, who might threaten their jobs and their standard of living. They are also the poorest of society. Either way, both the poor and older working class being far removed from the decision makers in Tallinn, fear that EU membership will only widen the existing disparity between rich/urban and poor/rural.

Problems Associated with Membership

The Estonian people have created an interesting and ironic situation for themselves. We have seen that in the post Cold war period the Estonian people have been highly concerned with regaining their own state for the promotion of the interests of the Estonian nation. Kuus notes, “The authority and legitimacy of the Estonian state is thereby grounded in the nation: the continuation of the nation is the central mission of the state and the absolute sovereignty of the state the existential prerequisite for the survival of the nation (2002d: 401)” The Estonians have sought to distance themselves from their Soviet past, by attempting to secure their ‘rightful place in Europe’. This in itself is not surprising, however, when the return to Europe involves the process of EU accession, things become more complicated. The Estonian government is attempting to shape external identity around this concept of ‘returning to Europe’; however, by joining the European Union, they are calling into question the very existence of the Estonian nation. Because the state exists to support the nation, in the passing of sovereignty to this supranational entity, the nation ceases to be the focus of the state. The very nature of the Estonian Constitution does not allow for this transfer of sovereignty, as it undermines the
state (see Appendix 6). Yet, the government is forging ahead with negotiations, banking on the fact that in a national referendum, the people will knowingly pass their hard fought sovereignty to a group of bureaucrats in Brussels. Kuus also states, “the notion of sovereignty functions both as a reason for European integration and as a result of integration. In both lines of argument, the total sovereignty of the nation-state is the ideal and the loss of sovereignty is a more or less necessary downside (2002d: 403).” Thus, we see a situation in which the Estonians are striving for membership in an entity that essentially changes the existence of the state that they have fought so very hard to reclaim. This duality has manifested itself in the reluctance of the Estonian people to support EU membership. The low levels of public support reflect the Estonian’s desire to retain their sovereignty and national identity, protecting the ethnie from incorporation and assimilation in Europe. Nationalism as we have seen, has played a key factor in the re-creation of the Estonian state; yet, it also remains the ideology behind which the Estonian people can hide in order to protect their nation from absorption into the European Union.
CHAPTER 5.

Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to bring together the concepts of Estonian identity and Estonian nationalism and to examine their interaction and impact upon Estonia’s present day accession negotiations with the European Union. The Estonian people have progressed from a nameless group into a viable nation during the past hundred and fifty years. By drawing from the works of Anthony Smith and Rogers Brubaker, working definitions of ethnic community, nation and nationalism were developed. Using the work of these two authors, as the theoretical basis for the thesis, provides additional legitimacy to the argument at hand.

Smith’s idea of ‘nations having navels’ was critical to understanding the period of Estonian national awakening in the mid-late nineteenth century. Smith would say that the Estonian people developed first as an ethnic community or ethnie, by identifying and drawing from their shared history, culture and language to become the Estonian people who exist today. This transition from group to ethnie and then into an Estonian nation culminated in the establishment of an independent Estonian nation-state following the First World War. This state was created for the protection of the Estonian nation as a distinct people among the European family of nation states. The forceful annexation of Estonia into the Soviet Union resulted in yet another period of darkness for the Estonian people. Estonians would once again have to come together as a nation to try to re-assert their claim to a legitimate and sovereign state on the international scene. Their efforts were successful in the late 1980s, as nationalistic forces were intent on reconstituting the
inter-War Republic of Estonia. By 1991 the results was achieved; an Estonian state for
the Estonian nation. This has ultimately created a situation in which national and ethnic
sentiment have been allowed to play a decisive factor in national politics. Smith’s
paradigm has explained the Estonian transition from a nameless group into a viable
nation. It has also explained the ideological movements which were striving for the
attainment of a sovereign Estonian state. However, Smith’s paradigm does not tell the
entire story. His approach fails to understand the complex reality of the ethnic
demographic situation that has remained in Estonia as the Soviet legacy. His approach to
the study of nation building and nationalism does not deal with the presence of ethnic
minorities within a nation-state and for this reason, the work of Rogers Brubaker was
consulted in order to begin to understand the realities facing the Soviet successor states.

The approach taken by Rogers Brubaker emphasizes the unique circumstances
within the former Soviet republics, by relating the present day nationalist movements to
the national policies pursued during the Soviet period. Brubaker goes beyond the realm of
the nation in capturing the essence of present day Estonian nationalism, believing it is a
result of an interplay of three distinctive nationalistic forces. The ‘triadic nexus’
demonstrates that Estonian nationalism can only be explained by looking at the
interaction of the Estonian core nation, the Russian-speaking minority, and the Russian
homeland. The interaction among these three entities has been central to the political
landscape in Estonia, covering such issues as border disputes, citizenship rights, language
law and even accession into the European Union. The complexity of the issues is
compounded by an identity crisis in Estonia, as it attempts to move beyond the iron cloak
of the Soviet Union and return to what it perceives as its rightful place in Europe.
Identity narratives in Estonia have mirrored the work of Samuel Huntington. Drawing from his work, the Estonians clearly distinguish between their backward, orthodox past with the Soviet Union, and their desire to return to the ‘civilized’ world of the West; be it Nordic, Baltic or European. Distinguishing between ‘us’, the Estonians and ‘them’, the Russians, Estonians are able to influence national policies to ensure that they are represented as the nation for which Estonia was re-established, and in the process, marginalizing the Russian-speaking minority within the state.

At the official level, EU membership is of utmost importance to the government, yet the people remain unconvinced. Benefits of membership include security from the perceived Russian threat and re-affirmation of Estonia’s return to its ‘rightful place in Europe’. Dichotomies exist however; while Estonia is seeking out membership in this supranational entity, which requires a transfer of sovereignty, the Estonian people are attempting to re-assert themselves as the Estonian nation. While their quest for external identity entails a return to Europe, this return also compromises their existence as a nation. The Estonian people still believe that the power of the Estonian state should rest with the Estonian nation and that the transfer of sovereignty to the decision makers in Brussels could be responsible for the destruction of their culture and national identity. What remains uncertain is the outcome and the future of Estonia is far from decided.
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</table>

Source: Lautis in et al. 1997: 305

Ethnic Structure of the Population in the Baltic Countries (1897-1995)

Census data (data for 1995 are estimates)
Appendix 2


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Estonian</th>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>Ukrainian</th>
<th>Belorussian</th>
<th>Finnish</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<td>1959</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.4</td>
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<td>1970</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
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<td>1979</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>1989</td>
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<td>30.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(source: Raun 2001: 233)
Article 6

(1) The leading and guiding force of the Soviet society and the nucleus of its political system, of all state organizations and public organizations, is the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The CPSU exists for the people and serves the people.

(2) The Communist Party, armed with Marxism-Leninism, determines the general perspectives of the development of society and the course of the home and foreign policy of the USSR, directs the great constructive work of the Soviet people, and imparts a planned, systematic and theoretically substantiated character to their struggle for the victory of communism.

(3) All party organizations shall function within the framework of the Constitution of the USSR.

(source: http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/r100000_.html)
If a referendum concerning the accession of Estonia to the EU would be held tomorrow, how would you vote? (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>in favour</td>
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<td>47</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>34</td>
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<td>Against</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>I would not vote</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>Undecided</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>46</td>
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</table>

(source: Kirch, Aksel, Iris Brökling and Mart Kivimäe 1999: 12)
(sample size and ethnic composition of respondents unknown)
Appendix 5

Benefits from Accession for Various Groups in Estonian Society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>More Advantages (+)</th>
<th>More Disadvantages (-)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who speak foreign languages</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Large businesses</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Politicians</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young People</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All nationality</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhabitants of capital</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some regions more than others</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed people</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory workers</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SME’s</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil servants</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle aged people</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural population</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The unemployed</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensioners</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elderly people</td>
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<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who don’t speak foreign languages</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minority people</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-employed, craftsmen</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office workers in private sector</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Managers in Private sector</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10</td>
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</table>

The difference between “+” and “-” and 100 is the percentage of “don’t know”, “no answer” and “as many advantages as disadvantages” (not shown).

(source: Eurobarometer 2001: 63)

Polling conducted by Saar Polls, 1000 interviews conducted of permanent residents of Estonia, over the age of 15, spanning the entire country.
Appendix 6

Selected parts of the Estonian Constitution
Adopted in June 28 1992

Preamble

Unwavering in their faith and with an unswerving will to safeguard and develop a state which is established on the inextinguishable right of the Estonian people to national self-determination and which was proclaimed on February 24, 1918, which is founded on liberty, justice and law, which shall serve to protect internal and external peace and provide security for the social progress and general benefit of present and future generations, which shall guarantee the preservation of the Estonian nation and its culture throughout the ages, the Estonian people adopted, on the basis of Article 1 of the Constitution which entered into force in 1938, by Referendum held on June 28, 1992 the following Constitution:

Chapter I General Provisions

Article 1 [Sovereignty]

(1) Estonia is an independent and sovereign democratic republic wherein the supreme power of the state is held by the people.
(2) Estonian independence and sovereignty is interminable and inalienable.

References:


http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/estonia/htm

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg10/epo/aceb_en.html


http://www.elis.ee


http://www.eumap.org/articles/content/50/503


http://www.postimees.ee/index.html?number=3308op=lugu&id=4527


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_____. The Estonian Identity of the Small Nations in Past and Present. Unpublished manuscript


http://www.undp.ee/nhdr00


