

“NATIONAL IDENTITY” VS. “IDENTITY MOVEMENT” – THE LGBT MOVEMENT IN LATVIA

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Abstract

Since Latvia joined the European Union in 2004 there have been attempts to celebrate a Pride parade. Participants of the first Parades in 2005 and 2006 had to deal with counter marches by Christian fundamentalist and fascist organizations, Latvian politicians, and local people, who were demonstrating against the visibility of LGBT people. Homosexuality – and this term includes all non-heteronormative forms of relations – is seen as a threat to the nation’s existence and as incompatible with the Latvian national identity.

Therefore, the question arises how LGBT activists managed to bring about a LGBT movement and how they kept it alive. To answer these questions, I undertook a case study, using social movement theory, especially the resource mobilization theory, as the theoretical framework. I took a look at the social movement organization “Mozaika” by interviewing two of its founding members and by analyzing documents of the organization.

I could exemplify that Latvia’s joining the European Union played a major role for the movement’s organizational resources and also influenced the way it reached its aims. Since the dominant (political) discourse places LGBT people outside the national community, hence denying LGBT people social and political participation, working towards social and political inclusion are important aims the organization is working towards. According to my findings, Mozaika now pushes political rights for LGBT people more than working to increase social inclusion.

However, it remains an open question how to change the prevailing negative attitudes and prejudices against LGBT people in Latvia.

Keywords: gay and lesbian movement, national identity, European Union, Latvia, social and political inclusion

1. Introduction and assumptions

During my studies at the University of Latvia in the beginning of 2006, I became interested in the interrelation between national identity, European Union and the LGBT movement¹. Thinking about a topic for my Bachelor’s thesis, I decided to go back to this topic to clarify how these are connected. This paper describes a piece of Latvian social movement history and adds new insights to the so far rather poorly researched area of social movements in Eastern Europe. LGBT movements in general tend to play a marginal role within social movement research (Adam 2002). It gets even worse when it comes to studies of these movements in (Middle) Eastern Europe².

The LGBT movement is one special type of the broad category of social movements. It is also labelled as “identity movement” based on the fact that sexual orientation is one of many possible characteristics which can create a sense of identity³. As the abstract suggests, homosexuality and Latvian national identity are displayed as incompatible by public and political

discourse. LGBT persons are constructed as not belonging to the national community; in fact, the majority of Latvians regard the very existence of homosexuals as a threat to the survival of the nation.

I assume that this exacerbates the work of the Latvian LGBT movement, whereas Latvia’s joining the European Union facilitates its work. My first assumption is discussed through analysis of existing literature; the second one is answered through my own research. Information gathered during two expert interviews with founding members of the organization “Mozaika”, a Latvian LGBT organization, suggests that the European Union has a positive impact on the resources of the organization and influences its strategy.

2. Latvian national identity and homosexuality

Latvia’s history of occupations and especially the experiences during Soviet occupation fostered the construction of a society based on ethnicity and are responsible for the fact that describing the existence of the Latvian nation as “endangered” is so resonant.

The massive promotion of Russian culture and identity as superior to Latvian culture (Pabriks 2003:45 et seq., Schmidt 2004) reinforced an identification with ethnic Latvianness. In spite of its national heterogeneity, Latvia sees itself as a nation state with ethnic Latvians as the constitutional population⁴

¹ LGBT means lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual. This term is currently the most common in Europe as it is more inclusive than homosexuality/homosexual or the term gay and lesbian movement. Though in Latvian public discourse only homosexuality is used (see Makarov 2006), I will use the term LGBT as Mozaika also identifies it as such.

² About Poland see Graft (2006), about Romania, Hungary and the Czech Republic see Long (1999).

³ See Adam (1995) and Engel (2001) for a discussion how homosexual acts became a characteristic of one’s identity and Gamson (2003) and Adam (2002) for discussions about the deconstruction of homosexuality through Queer Theory.

⁴ Latvia’s underlying model of nation is therefore the model of a culture nation (“Kulturnation”), which defines the nation as an ethnic community (Weiss/Reinprecht 1998:18).

(Schmidt 2004:116 et seq.). Besides, forced migration during Latvia's industrialization and the deportations of 1941 and 1949⁵, when approximately 57,000 Latvians were displaced to Siberia, evoked the feeling in many Latvian citizens of becoming a minority within their (former) own country (Dreifelds 1996, Gänzle 2004, Pabriks 2003:57). Consequently, reproduction (of ethnic Latvians) is seen as very important.

As homosexuality is constructed as a non-reproductive form of sexuality⁶, seeing the visibility of LGBT people as a threat to the nation is an interpretation that seems very plausible to many Latvians. Thus, homosexuality is strongly rejected. Furthermore, the deficiency of civil society causes a lack of routine when it comes to deal with diversity and differing views (Secretariat of the Minister for Special Assignments for Society Integration Affairs 2004, Schmidt 2004:143/150).

Forty years of Soviet occupation also influenced Latvia's gender system, thus having an impact on the current view of homosexuality as well.

2.1. Latvia's gender system after 1991 – “back to normality”

The economic, demographic, societal, political and cultural changes which took place from 1940 on were defined as abnormal, which also applies to the gender system (Stukuls Eglitis 2002). The ‘abnormal’ gender system of Soviet times, where women were ‘over emancipated’, is replaced by the gender order of the first republic. Women⁷ are now defined in terms of the private sphere, being responsible for the (social) reproduction of the nation and therefore ‘naturally’ needed a male breadwinner, who is confined to the public sphere⁸. In this way also, the ‘demographic crisis’, or the negative birth rate in political discourse, is supposed to be solved as well (see Mozaika 2007). “The notion of ‘natural’ or ‘normal’ sex roles, whether associated with the past or with modern Europe, is widely shared in the society and reflected in the narratives of

⁵ There is a differentiation in literature and history between the deportations of Jews during the German occupation and of Latvians during Soviet occupation. Pabriks argues that the deportations of Jews and the migration of the Baltic Germans after WWII also had a remarkable effect on Latvian society as for this reason the political, economic and cultural elite was missing after 1945 (Pabriks 2003:42). Generally, that is not talked about in historical accounts.

⁶ Political discourse does not discuss why many heterosexual couples also do not reproduce. Completely excluded is the discussion that people living in same-sex relations still are able to reproduce in principle.

⁷ It would also be interesting to look at how women's bodies are used as symbols for cultural reproduction.

⁸ Stukuls Eglitis argues that this view overlooks the fact that women during the First Republic were gaining access to higher education and were entering male connoted professions (Stukuls Eglitis 2002: 190). In addition, I would also like to question the term ‘over emancipation’.

post-Communist change in Latvia as well.” (Stukuls Eglitis 2002:202).

Defining a binary, complementary, hierarchical and heteronormative gender order, which mainly has to ensure social reproduction, as ‘normal’ already strongly implies the ‘abnormality’ of homosexuality. The concept of sexual citizenship, which is discussed in the following paragraph, shows how the construction of homosexuality as abnormal is reflected in Latvian politics.

2.2. Latvia and the concept of ‘sexual citizenship’

The concept of sexual citizenship demonstrates that sexuality plays a crucial role for full citizenship, more particularly for full political and social participation.

Political participation refers to legal rights, e.g. marriage and its resulting privileges, and the right for protection, e.g. through the recognition of sexual orientation as a basis for hate crime. Social participation means the possibility of a social group to be part of societal, cultural life. A precondition for social participation is visibility. If a social group is constantly constructed as not being part of the nation or even as a threat to the nation, it then cannot have social participation. (Hetero)sexual orientation is crucial when it comes to citizenship rights and without heterosexuality full political and social participation cannot be taken for granted (Phelan 2001).

2.2.1. Social participation of LGBT persons in Latvia

Before and after Latvia joined the European Union homosexuality and rights of LGBT persons had been the subject of public and political discourse, but still very few LGBT people are ‘out’ according to my interviewees and other research. Homosexuality is seen as not being part of national identity and as a threat to the nation's survival.

“Latvia without homosexuality” was taken literally in 2001 when a publishing house called for essays about this topic. Even members of Parliament, the archbishop of the Lutheran and the cardinal of the Catholic Church contributed to the publication without being criticized by the Latvian Human Rights Commission (AI 2002, Waitt 2005).

A (media) analysis identified four core themes in the statements of politicians and denominational leaders in Latvia: homosexuality and homosexuals are constructed as “degenerate”, “deviant”, “pederasts” and “alien”, all terms which imply that LGBT people do not belong to the nation (Waitt 2005:162). Renkin argues that by focusing on the heterosexual nuclear family as the norm all other forms of family, particularly same-sex couples with children, are systematically excluded. They are neither part of the present nor the

past and thereupon it seems that solely the traditional family can ensure social reproduction, precisely the survival of the nation (Renkin 2005).

“Nationalism” and “demographic crisis” are two common arguments of politicians when it comes to opposition to homosexuality. Nationalism is said to ensure the homogeneity and integrity of the nation (Mozaika 2007). The statement of the chairperson of the Latvian Parliamentary Human Rights Committee, Janis Šmits, exemplifies this: “For this reason, I would recommend that every deputy who votes in favour of the legislation of homosexuality should no longer go and place flowers by the Monument of Freedom, because with his vote he will be the same as those people who once tried to annihilate our people.” (Mozaika 2007:30). Even ‘supporting’ LGBT issues is seen as a threat to the survival of the nation.

Drawing on the concept of sexual citizenship, LGBT does not enjoy social participation in Latvia. The following paragraph will examine if that is the case for political participation as well.

2.2.2. Political participation of LGBT persons in Latvia

In Latvia, although the age of consent is the same for homo- and heterosexual relations and homosexual acts between men are not liable to prosecution anymore, LGBT persons do not have the same political rights as heterosexual citizens.

Latvian Civil Law forbids same-sex marriage (Article 35.2). Similarly, in the constitutional amendment of December 2005, Article 110 now defines marriage as “a union between a man and a woman” (Civil Law of Latvia 2001, Latvijas Republikas Saeima 2002). The attempt of the Latvian National Human Rights Office in cooperation with the Homosexuality Information Center (see 4.) to legalize same-sex marriage in 1999 failed, resulting in a serious violation of human rights and European Union legislation, according to the Magnus Hirschfeld Center for Human Rights (1997).

Latvian antidiscrimination legislation for a long time did not include sexual orientation although due to harmonisation with European Union law, Latvia should have included it at least since 2004. First attempts to include sexual orientation stem from 1999. In 2006, Latvian Labour Law was finally in accordance with European Union Directives 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC (ILGA-Europe 2007, Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies 2005, Locmelis 2002).

Whereas sexual orientation is acknowledged as the basis for discrimination, it is not recognized as a basis for hate crime. Hate speech is not liable to prosecution (Linda Freimane). There are also cases of disc-

rimination that LGBT persons report to the police and more often, many of the cases are not even reported (ILGA-Europe 2001, Locmelis 2002).

In sum, the Latvian state does not grant the same opportunities for social and political participation or the same protection to its homosexual citizens as to its heterosexual residents, as the analysis drawing on the concept of sexual citizenship has shown. Furthermore, a look at the consequences of Soviet occupation, especially for the gender system, has shown how homosexuality is constructed as being incompatible with Latvian national identity. Therefore, the findings support my first assumption that heteronormative Latvian national identity is exacerbating the work of the LGBT movement.

My second assumption was that the European Union on the other hand is facilitating the work of the movement. As Latvia only recently joined the EU, I undertook my own research consisting of two guideline based interviews with experts and an analysis of organizational documents. I use the resource mobilization theory, a paradigm of social movement theory, to find out if Latvia’s joining of the EU provides the organization Mozaika with more resources and how it affects the organization’s strategy.

3. Resource mobilization theory and definition of resources and strategy

The main question of the resource mobilization theory, tracing back to McCarthy and Zald, is how organizations mobilize resources. Organizations have the power to mobilize individual actors, keep the movement alive and therefore are also responsible for its success (Hellmann 1998, Raschke 1985). The potential mobilising power of a social movement organization heavily depends on its potential resources.

According to Garner/Tenuto (1997:23) and McCarthy/Zald (1987:36), resources are members and supporters, money, a well disposed public opinion, support through elites and media and the degree of professionalization (abilities in lobbying, administrative tasks and fund-raising).

Resource mobilization theory also takes into account that social movements can be facilitated or restrained by denominations, private institutions, other SMOs which work towards the same/opposite goals, and the state (with its possibilities of suppressing or encouraging social movements through agents of social control such as the police) (McCarthy/Zald 1987:24, Garner/Tenuto 1997:23f).

Taking the resource mobilization theory as a reference, I define resources as follows: members and supporters of the organization, financial resources, media support, knowledge about fundraising and lobbying, supportive (but also opposing) denominational,

governmental and private institutions as well as the public. I add staff as a resource as I do not think it is covered by members and supporters.

Other than looking at resources, I am interested in how the European Union influences the strategy of the organization. A strategy is a means of reaching one's goals. The actions, such as seminars, various events, Pride parade etc., which Mozaika undertakes, are defined as its strategy. In reference to the concept of sexual citizenship, I look at the strategies to reach the goal of political and social inclusion. Political inclusion consists of legal regulations to ensure equal rights and protection. Social inclusion means the ability to participate on equal standards in the social life of a society and the visibility of non-heteronormative family models and ways of life.

3.1. The interviews

Semi-structured interviews have proven to be of good use in research into social movements, particularly when it comes to poorly documented and little-studied movements. Through experts who possess insider knowledge it is possible to get a lot of information in a relatively short period of time. Their vast knowledge, privileged access to information, especially about decision-making processes, as well as their willingness to talk to the researcher are important criteria in the process of selection of potential interviewees (Blee/Taylor 2002, Meuser/Nagel 1991).

My first interviewee, Linda Freimane, a founding and board member of Mozaika and also a board member of ILGA-Europe⁹, is a lawyer and journalist. She was born and raised in Sweden as a child of Latvian refugees and has been living in Latvia since 1997. She is currently working as a counsellor for an American firm.

My second interviewee, Juris Lavrikovs, works as a communications officer for ILGA-Europe in Brussels. Until he left Latvia in 1996, Juris Lavrikovs had been involved in LGBT issues in his home country. He is a founding and active member of Mozaika and has a degree in law.

The following description of the organization Mozaika relies mainly on information given during the interviews and the full names of the interviewees will be given as bibliographical reference. Also, organizational documents and information gathered from the organization's employee (referred to as "conversation with A.") have been used. Having described the organization and its resources, I will analyze the impact of the European Union on resources and strategy.

⁹ ILGA-Europe is a regional group of ILGA (International Lesbian and Gay Association) that works towards equality of LGBT persons on a European level.

4. The organization mozaika

Already in the 1990s, preceding the founding of Mozaika, there had been LGBT organizations in Latvia. The officially registered organization LASV (Latvian Association for Sexual Equality) existed from 1990 until 1997. Since 1994, it sought to end discrimination on a legal basis and fought for same-sex marriage legislation. Its successor was the HIC (Homosexuality Information Center), which had been lobbying for same-sex marriage in 1999 in cooperation with the Latvian National Human Rights Office (Lavrikovs 2000, Lavrikovs 2000b, Juris Lavrikovs). Since 1992, there has also been an informal organization consisting of 12 to 14 women. There is no information available about the length of its existence (Linda Freimane).

Mozaika was founded as a reaction to the first Pride in 2005 and also as a reaction to the constitutional amendment in December 2005, which banned same-sex marriage. Before it was officially registered as a NGO in Latvia on the 10 March 2006, it started as a network of friends and was part of another LGBT organization (ILGA Latvia), which had organized the first Pride in 2005. Due to internal difficulties, they separated in February 2006 and Mozaika was founded. Three of Mozaika's 16 founding members had been active in LGBT related issues since the 1990s. Mozaika became a member of ILGA-Europe in summer 2006 (Mozaika 2006b, Linda Freimane, Juris Lavrikovs).

1.1. Organizational resources

Initially I describe the positive resources (members and supporters, employees, finances, knowledge about fund-raising, backing through media and supportive institutions) and compare them to the resources the preceding organizations had. I then go on to describe the negative resources (the public and opposing institutions).

1.1.1. Members and supporters

In March 2007, Mozaika had 86 members, of whom 18 were "supporting members". This makes Mozaika the largest ever LGBT organization in Latvia. Women and men are equally involved (Document 1, Linda Freimane).

The average age is 35 years, but the range in age is quite large, from 17 to 72 years. Compared to its preceding organizations, members tend to be older, which is seen as an advantage because members then can share their (international) work experience in general but particularly in the human rights sector and in lobbying. Usually they also have more life experience, which is also beneficial for the organization (Document 1, Linda Freimane, Juris Lavrikovs). A fourth of

the founding members grew up outside of Latvia (Denmark, Sweden, Canada, and the United States); ten of its members were born in another country (Document 1 and 2, conversation with A., Linda Freimane).

Members tend to be highly educated (there are lawyers, doctors, journalists, artists, psychotherapists, students and IT specialists active in the group) and the founding committee was considerably lawyer based (Document 2, Linda Freimane). In contrast, activists of the 1990s were young professionals or young students, lacking experience of how to build and run a NGO. In addition, they were a very small group, so many got overloaded very quickly (Linda Freimane, Juris Lavrikovs).

1.1.2. Employees

Though there is one paid full-time administrative assistant taking care of administration, organization and coordination during certain office hours, Mozaika needs and has highly committed volunteers. Currently 10 to 15 people are helping yearlong, up to 40 hours a week (Conversation with A.).

3.3.3 Financial resources

Mozaika is quite well off in regards to financing projects but has difficulties paying for administrative staff and the office. The Latvian state, European Union, NGOs and philanthropic organizations support only projects (Linda Freimane). The Soros Foundation Latvia is exceptional as it gave money in 2006 to set up the organization and pay the rent for the office¹⁰ (Document 3).

The financing for 2006 consisted largely of philanthropic resources. 68% of the annual budget (of 25.000 Euros) was provided by non-governmental institutions: the Soros Foundation Latvia and the Swedish non-profit organization RFSL (Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual Rights). Governmental money was given by the European Commission in cooperation with the Latvian Ministry for Social Integration (Document 3, RFSL 2006).

Not only did the budget (about 120.000 Euros in March 2007) rise considerably in 2007 but also the percentage of funding provided by state sources has increased significantly. 88% of Mozaika's resources are covered though money from the Latvian Ministry for Social Integration and the Society Integration Foundation¹¹. The rest is covered by the US American foundation Astraea¹² and by the Soros Foundation

¹⁰ The foundation aims at the promotion of a tolerant, democratic and open society (Open Society Institute 2007).

¹¹ A public institution whose goal it is to assist societal integration processes.

¹² Astraea aids lesbian led LGBTI organizations. "I" stands for "intersexual".

(Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice 2007, document 3, Secretariat of the Special Assignments Minister for Social Integration 2003).

As external funds have to be applied for project by project, it is difficult for the organization to make plans for future activities. Nevertheless, Linda Freimane states that the financial situation of Mozaika is good. Especially positive in her view is that the Society Integration Foundation, a state-based institution, is supporting Mozaika, despite the political climate. Juris Lavrikovs stresses the new funding opportunities since Latvia joined the European Union – openings Mozaika has made use of already and will continue to do so.

4.4.4. Knowledge about lobbying and fund-raising

Juris Lavrikovs is Mozaika's expert for lobbying and fund-raising on a European level. His job as the information and communications officer of ILGA-Europe is to provide information about funding for all LGBT organizations within the European Union.

Right from the beginning, the founding members of Mozaika considered becoming a member of ILGA-Europe later on. Thus, the organization's subtitle LGBT was chosen, although there is not much 'T-activity'. This was mainly due to Juris Lavrikovs (Linda Freimane).

4.1.5. Media support

There is one (Latvian speaking) newspaper ("Diena") which is supportive of LGBT issues and is an influential newspaper as well. There are also two radio and television stations, which are objective in their coverage of LGBT related issues (LTV and Latvijas Radio). The media sector is divided into Latvian and Russian speaking media and, generally speaking, each section of the population tends to seek information in their mother tongue. The Russian language press in general but also the Latvian language newspapers (Ritdiena and Latvijas Avize) have a tendency to oppose visibility of LGBT people (Linda Freimane).

4.1.6. Governmental Partners

It is the duty of the Ministry for Special Assignments for Society Integration Affairs to hold a dialogue with Mozaika and the Ministry is also financially supporting the organization (see 4.1.3). However, since the current Minister, Oskars Karstens, is a member of the conservative First Party, the cooperation is not unproblematic.

The only LGBT-friendly party is the oppositional party New Era but support of LGBT issues is nothing that the whole party has agreed upon, nor has it been put on its agenda. Officially apart from that,

there are individual supportive politicians such as the Foreign Minister, Artis Pabriks, and the Minister of Culture, Helena Demakova. The Prime Minister, Aigars Kalvitis, changed his attitude towards LGBT issues from opposition to neutrality (Linda Freimane).

Embassies of members of the European Union and also of Norway, the United States and Canada support Mozaika by attending activities and promoting their support. One example is a reception held at the British Embassy for representatives of Mozaika and its co-operation partner Pride London (Linda Freimane).

4.1.7. Non-governmental partners

The Soros Foundation and the Open Society Institute (both founded and financed by George Soros) are supporting Latvian NGOs that work towards a democratic, tolerant and open civil society. Thus, they also aid Mozaika financially.

Other NGOs which get funding through these players are also partners of Mozaika, e.g. the Civic Alliance – Latvia, Transparency International, dialogi.lv, the Centre for Public Policy – Providus, the internet portal policy.lv and the Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies (Open Society Institute, 2007a, Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies, undated). It was not clarified by Linda Freimane what the co-operation consists of. The homepage of the organization gives one example – the presentation of the Hate Speech Monitoring reports, where representatives of policy.lv Providus and of the Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies took part (Linda Freimane, Mozaika 2007a).

Linda Freimane also mentioned the following (inter)national partner organizations. They shall be mentioned here to show the broad spectrum of partners although the form of co-operation is unclear: the Resource Centre for Women MARTA, the Association for Family Planning and Sexual Health Papardes Zieds, the Latvian Psychotherapy Association Union, the Latvian Institute, the Danish Culture Institute and Norden (Nordic Council of Ministers' Office in Latvia) (Linda Freimane).

The quantity of partners illustrates a big change since the 1990s when NGOs did not want to cooperate with organizations dealing with LGBT issues and were trying to dissociate themselves from them. Whereas LGBT issues had been extremely marginalized during that time, they are now part of the mainstream human rights discourse (Juris Lavrikovs).

So far, I have described the supportive resources. The following paragraphs will deal with rather controversial resources.

4.1.8. The public

There are few studies dealing with public opinion about homosexuality and some of them tend to

be barely representative. According to findings of a recent, representative study, which asked about people's attitude towards homosexuality, the majority of respondents had a negative attitude regardless of ethnic origin. One out of four had an extremely negative attitude, one out of three said he/she held a neutral position (Makarov 2006).

Three years earlier, a survey of the Marketing and Public Opinion Research Center SKDS found out that only 14.9% of interviewees thought of homosexuality as a normal phenomenon in society, whereas 78% did not or rather didn't agree. Longitudinal research of SKDS implies that the number of people with a negative opinion has risen. (SKDS 2004, cited in Timofejevs 2004).

The report on "Cultural Diversity and Tolerance in Latvia" cites the European Values Survey where homosexual people took the fourth place of the potentially less liked neighbours and where it is said that 76.9% see homosexuality as a never justifiable social behaviour (European Values Study Foundation 1999, Secretariat of the Special Tasks Minister for Social Integration 2003a).

Research about sexual orientation discrimination suggests that 17% of the 194 respondents who identified themselves as homo- or bisexual had been attacked at least once. 40.2% say they were targets of (mostly verbal) harassment and 17% claim that harassment happened at the work place (Locmelis 2002).

In Linda Freimane's view, the majority of the Latvian population is neither exceptionally homophobic nor particularly gay-friendly. She is convinced that Latvians do not like extremists as they assume that that would give Latvia a bad reputation in foreign countries. She sees the potential to win them over through rational argumentation and action that stays within the legal framework. According to her, a radicalization of the population is not very likely (Linda Freimane).

4.1.9. Religious groups

The three biggest Churches in Latvia (Lutheran, Catholic, and Russian-Orthodox) as well as the sects Joyful Message and New Generation are strong opponents to the LGBT movement. So far, each year they have built a coalition against the Pride and have organized a "Family Festival" on the same day as the Pride Parade. Most of the demonstrators opposing the Pride Parade 2006 belonged to the sect New Generation (Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia 2005, Linda Freimane, Seattle Times 2007).

4.1.10. Non-governmental opponents

The organizations NSS (National Union of Forces), No Pride, Visu Latvijai (All For Latvia) all oppo-

se LGBT issues but for different reasons. NSS and No Pride cooperate during Pride not only with the above-mentioned religious denominations and with other organizations in Poland but also other foreign countries. NSS is a rather small neo-Nazi organization (about 50 members). All For Latvia is a nationalistic Youth organization whose main enemy is the Russian speaking population of Latvia but it also opposes LGBT rights (Linda Freimane).

The main aim of the NGO No Pride, founded by Igars Maslakovs, is to prevent any Pride Parade ever in Latvia in order to protect the traditional family and the Latvian nation. In March 2007, Maslakovs wrote an open letter to the Mayor of London, who had written a letter of support to Mozaika, accusing him of interfering in internal affairs, violating human rights and trying to impose another totalitarian regime upon Latvia (Document 4, Linda Freimane, Maslakovs 2007, Noprude undated).

Also in March 2007, a new anti-LGBT organization Other Europe was officially registered although it had existed since summer 2005 as an informal organization called Movement for Traditional Values. As their name implies, their aim is to defend traditional values in Latvia and Europe, e.g. traditional family values as well as traditional religious values (Lavrikovs 2007).

4.1.11. Governmental opponents

The party and the politicians who were mentioned the most in Mozaika's Hate Speech Monitoring were the governing First Party and its chairperson of the Latvian Parliamentary Human Rights Committee, Janis Šmits (see 2.2.1), as well as Transport Minister Ainars Šlesers. As many of the leading politicians of the First Party are clergymen, they call themselves the Priest Party, opposing LGBT rights on Christian principles. It was an initiative of the First Party that led to the constitutional amendment of 2005. According to Linda Freimane, Janis Šmits joined the protest of No Pride in front of the City Council in 2006 holding a No Pride T-shirt in his hands (ILGA 2005, Mozaika 2007:11, Linda Freimane).

The argument all opponents have in common is that they have to defend traditional families. Some argue on a Christian basis, some stoke fears of the nation's dying out. These organizations, parties and politicians are treating LGBT persons as not being part of the nation and as a threat to the nation and therefore work against social participation of LGBT people. They are connecting to the idea of national identity. The description of the negative resources of Mozaika once again implies that national identity is exacerbating the work of the LGBT movement.

After the description of Mozaika's resources, I analyze the impact of the European Union on them.

5. Influence of the european union on mozaika's resources

To see how resources of the organization Mozaika changed I compare them with the LGBT organizations of the 1990s and then discuss the influence of the EU on the changes.

During accession negotiations, the European Union already provided financial support to Latvia, e.g. to improve civil society (Linda Freimane). This money was used to support Latvian NGOs fighting for an open and tolerant civil society¹³ resulting in a changed environment. Currently Mozaika has a broad variety of civil society actors co-operating with them, which was not at all the case in the 1990s. Mozaika is also trying to bring about discourse changes through press contacts. Slowly, national public discourse might change over time as well. Mozaika receives EU funding as well. Despite the fact that this money is bound to the financing of particular projects and long-term plans are therefore hard to make, Juris Lavrikovs sees EU funding as a very important resource.

Apart from the changes within national civil society, the joining of the European Union also allows for internationalisation, which is beneficial for the organization. Three of the five board members of Mozaika went to study abroad in Western European countries, as did Juris Lavrikovs, who also worked for an organization in Britain. Although even before Latvia joined the EU it had been possible to study abroad, this international exchange is now facilitated, resulting in a broad variety of knowledge and experiences of Mozaika's members. People like Juris Lavrikovs can provide the organization with their insider knowledge about lobbying and fund-raising.

On the other hand, the emigration of Latvians was facilitated since 2004. One fourth of Mozaika's founding members was born or raised in a foreign country and therefore possesses specific experiences, connections, perspectives which are beneficial for the organization. Generally, there are good connections to LGBT organizations or governmental institutions of the countries the members come from. Mozaika uses these formal and informal networks to learn from other's mistakes and to gain moral (and financial) support.

This internationalisation is emphasizing Mozaika's stand as a serious civil society actor within Latvia. One example is the financial and moral aid of international actors when national support is lacking. If the donors are then discussing Latvia's lack of support, they can harm Latvia's international reputation. At the same time, Mozaika can use these networks to spread information and thus can reach a broader

¹³ A good portion of Mozaika's partner organizations receives EU funding, e.g. the Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies, policy.lv, Transparency International and MARTA.

public, which Mozaika can then use to pressure the Latvian state.

To sum up, the European Union financially supports Latvian civil society actors and therefore Mozaika, too. This opens up the possibility to discuss LGBT issues in national discourse. Through exchange of individuals (travel, study, work) the organization's members are highly educated, experienced, skilled, professional and able to make international connections and build up a network. This network functions as a broadened public, which pressures the Latvian national state. This internationalisation acts as a counterbalance to the national political discourse, which is dominated by actors opposed to LGBT rights¹⁴.

6. Influence of the European Union on Mozaika's strategy

My interviewees talked about two strategies to improve the situation of LGBT people. One is more visibility, the other the improvement of Latvian legislation – more particularly, social and political inclusion (see 2.2.1 and 2.2.2).

6.1. Social participation and EU influences

One of Mozaika's aims, according to the homepage, is to build a consciousness within society that LGBT people are part of the nation¹⁵. They are working towards this aim through cultural activities, informal meetings, where members are encouraged to be open about their sexual orientation, the Pride Parades and accompanying events and through involvement in public discourse through press conferences, interviews, seminars for journalists, etc. (Linda Freimane, Mozaika 2006c). Both interviewees stressed the fact that Pride is not one of Mozaika's priorities as it will develop into a policy and lobby organization in the long run (Linda Freimane, Juris Lavrikovs).

As the European Union supports a tolerant and open civil society, the environment in which Mozaika acts has changed a good deal. LGBT issues can be discussed publicly and there are other organizations providing support for this difficult task. The European Union finances projects which can then be presented publicly (e.g. Hate Speech Monitoring) or which are aimed at informing the public from the beginning.

One could then argue that (financial) EU support created the preconditions to give LGBT people voice and visibility, which could lead to social inclusion in the long run. The above-described internationalisation is further helping that process.

¹⁴ At the same time, opponents can use resentment of the European Union to gain a broad basis of supporters. These dynamics are open to further research.

¹⁵ One of the members of Mozaika put on his folk costume for Pride 2006 because he wanted to show that homosexuality and Latvian national identity are in fact compatible, although the majority of Latvians wouldn't see it that way (Linda Freimane).

Talking about political participation, though, will clarify that the EU created much more possibilities in this area.

6.2. Political participation and EU influences

Most national actors see LGBT rights as being part of the human rights discourse. Nevertheless, supportive political actors are arguing more on a legal basis, tightened through Latvia's obligations to the European Union to protect LGBT people (Juris Lavrikovs). Both interviewees see legal changes as crucial. Mozaika aims to take on test cases within Latvian legislation. Furthermore, Mozaika fights for same-sex marriage and for the inclusion of sexual orientation as an acknowledged reason for hate crime and hate speech (Linda Freimane, Juris Lavrikovs, Mozaika 2006c).

Latvia's joining the EU caused new legal obligations and the fulfilment of these is not only watched by national, but also by international, governmental and non-governmental actors, which is another visible consequence of the described internationalisation.

On a micro level, Latvian politicians learn from and are controlled by their European colleagues. On a macro level, there is obligation to harmonize Latvian law with European Union legislation. That Latvia has an anti-discrimination legislation, which includes sexual orientation, is, according to Juris Lavrikovs, exclusively due to the European Union. Linda Freimane sees this as an example of how the European Union can push national legislation (Linda Freimane, Juris Lavrikovs).

Particularly when it comes to test cases, the European Union holds several possibilities. In cases of sexual orientation, discrimination organizations can fight the case on behalf of a person. In Latvia, where few people are open about their sexual identity, this is especially important, because there not necessarily has to be an outing (Juris Lavrikovs). Besides, there is a possibility to make an appeal to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg or to the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg if it is a case of discrimination at the work place¹⁶ (Juris Lavrikovs).

Finally, it seems realistic to push same-sex marriage legislation. Although the constitutional amendment was made to prevent exactly this, ironically this might be the basis for Mozaika's argument as they say that the amendment contradicts EU directives, the European Human Rights Convention, the founding treaty and the European Union's Charter of Human Rights (Mozaika 2006b).

My second question was how the European Union influences the strategy of the organization. I

¹⁶ One member of Mozaika is currently appealing on a European level because of sexual orientation discrimination at the workplace (see also Baltic Times 2006).

showed how the internationalisation of resources improves possibilities for social and political inclusion. Mozaika's priorities are changes within the legal system and it will probably become a political lobby organization. Unfortunately, the interview data do not tell the reason for this development. I assume that it is because the European Union provides better opportunities for political inclusion. Another reason might be the legal background of the interviewees. It is also possible that this is merely wishful thinking of my interview partners rather than something the whole organization has yet agreed upon.

7. Conclusion

In a case study of the LGBT movement organization Mozaika, I looked at the new possibilities that opened up after joining the European Union regarding its resources and its strategy.

I showed that the organization could open up new resources such as financial resources and the integration into national civil society. The internationalisation resulting in a better flow of information and network building takes place on different levels, all of them being beneficial to the organization.

By establishing itself as an internationally recognized actor, Mozaika strengthens its position nationally and can therefore work towards social and political inclusion. The organization does both but concentrates on political inclusion. I shall add here that legal changes do not necessarily reflect or lead to changes in the thinking of individuals. It is an open question whether political inclusion of LGBT people will result in social inclusion.

How LGBT persons are seen as alien and as a threat to the nation, which then serves as a basis to deny social and political participation, were clarified through the concept of sexual citizenship.

When looking at another LGBT movement in Eastern Europe within the same time frame, it might now be possible to see how other organizations are making use of the possibilities offered through the European Union. Other open research questions are the dynamics between the LGBT movement and its countermovements. Moreover, more paradigms of social movement theory like collective identity or framing could be applied to the Latvian case to see why the movement has not been able to become a movement with a broad basis.

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