

On the nature of national interests.

During the latest European parliament election progress many slogans have been built upon national interests. “Nacionālā apvienība” and “Jaunā Konservatīvā partija” are at the forefront of this with their advertisement slogans “nacionālo interešu sardzē” [On guard for national interests] and “Latvijas intereses pāri visām” [Latvian interests over all], what is more the party “Latvija Pirmajā Vietā” [Latvia first] is using its name to signal the same message. Such slogans are more than advertisement tools that give up absolutely no criticizable information on the policy of these parties, but rather they have deep implications on the usage of identity politics.

Starting off, I am latvian. And not only because I was born here and I know the latvian language but rather because I am willingly a part of the latvian nation. I have a deep interest in the history of my country, I appreciate the deep culture found all around me and no matter where I choose to study I want to come back to Latvia and live here. However, my politics are distinctly different from the parties mentioned previously and, Importantly, I do not feel that they defend my interests.

In Plato’s “Republic” the division between parts of states are made quite clear, when Plato says:

”You ought to speak of other states in the plural number; not one of them is a city, but many cities[...]. For indeed any city, however small, is in fact divided into two, one of the city of the poor, the other of the rich; these are at war with each other; and in either there are many smaller divisions, and you would be altogether beside the mark if you treated them all as a single state.”

These partitions have not disappeared, no equal and like-minded state has been created. What is more, to claim to represent or defend every single one of these groups is not only impossible but is an active lie. This can best be seen while examining the political campaign of “Latvija pirmajā vietā”. Their caricaturization of latvian interests appears to be as follows: Latvia is a Christian country, it holds conservative interests and it needs to get rid of the oppression perpetrated by the European Union. Such a caricature claims to include most Latvians, a claim which is, at best, dubious. The logical fallacy is clear - to antagonize one large part of the country by outright wanting to prohibit inclusive education and law and in the same breath to claim to represent the whole nation is a notion that escapes logic.

Surely there are real Latvian national interests, which are not grounded in lies and logical phallacies? Well as I see it there are two, but only one is a true universal. There is the wish for an improvement in living conditions/ economic growth. Economic growth must happen with the actions of the general public as its basis. The government can try to speed it up but there are a myriad of means to achieve this growth, thus creating another division, like the ones mentioned previously. The second wish is that of national defence. It is my conviction that this is a basic will people have and as such it is important for some level of national or international governmental body to guarantee it. This is already in effect in all parties, which is a peculiarity here, where Russia is breathing down the necks of the whole of Eastern Europe, the importance of armed deterrence is quite well seen by everybody. Due to this being common knowledge, to make a claim that only one party is standing for this national interest is quite simply a lie.¹

Overall national interests in my mind are quite certainly a buzzword, which can only influence people not well versed in politics and they could even be seen as a populist tactic.

¹ Some might argue that the preservation of culture is another matter of national importance, and it for sure is necessary, but it is not something to defend on the international level, therefore is not included in here.