

Constructing Cultural Identity and Belonging: Defining Latvia's Diaspora in the Diaspora Law

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Abstract : There are many ways to define what 'diaspora' is in a global world as the term has become more and more fluid in the way it is understood and implemented. The main focus of the research has been on the definition of diaspora - arguments against and for the wider and inclusive definition versus the narrower and excluding one. Who can belong and who are supposed to be left out, who is 'ours' and who is 'other' - those struggles have been observed and researched in the content analysis of Latvia's mass media, audio recordings from the Foreign Affairs Commission of the parliament of Latvia and official letters from the Ministries, deputies and NGO's. Latvia's case is interesting from the point of view of cultural studies as it has been a real struggle to define the term 'diaspora' and it's content in Latvia's Diaspora law. Those in favour of a narrow definition warned of political risks for Latvia (such as voting demographics). The side arguing for a wide definition argued that anyone with a felt 'connection' should be eligible. This identity-based debate is still on-going in spite of the inclusive definition of diaspora being integrated into the law.

Keywords : belonging, cultural studies, diaspora, Latvia

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