“Non-Citizenship”
as a Dividing Element in a Two-Community
Society of Latvia

Submitted by:

Tetiana Chepurko
Student no. (home): 2218860
Student no. (host): 11271345
E-mail: tanuha88@mail.ru
Mob.: +49 176 38652776

Supervised by:

Prof. Dr. Hans van Koningsbrugge
Dr. Rixta Wundrak

Göttingen, 30.06.2013
MA Programme Euroculture

Declaration

I, Tetiana Chepurko, hereby declare that this thesis, entitled “‘Non-Citizenship’ as a Dividing Element in a Two-Community Society of Latvia,” submitted as partial requirement for the MA Programme Euroculture, is my own original work and expressed in my own words. Any use made within it of works of other authors in any form (e.g. ideas, figures, texts, tables, etc.) are properly acknowledged in the text as well as in the List of References.

I hereby also acknowledge that I was informed about the regulations pertaining to the assessment of the MA thesis Euroculture and about the general completion rules for the Master of Arts Programme Euroculture.

Signed

Date 30.06.2013
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................... page 4

“NON-CITIZENSHIP” AS A DIVIDING ELEMENT IN A TWO-COMMUNITY SOCIETY OF LATVIA .......................................................... page 10

1. Internal Factors Impeding Ethnic Accord: Latvia’s Role ................ page 10
   1.1. Latvian Ethnic Mobilization, Nation-Building and Nationalism ..... page 11
   1.2. Ethnic Policies ................................................................................................. page 16
       1.2.1. Phenomenon of “Non-Citizenship” as a Derivative of Citizenship Law ........................................................................................................ page 17
       1.2.2. Linguistic Segregation through Language Law ................................... page 27
       1.2.3. Minority Education Reform: “Russian Schools Are Our Stalingrad!” .. page 31

2. External Factors Impeding Ethnic Accord: Russian Influence ........ page 37
   2.1. Human Rights and “Compatriots” Issue in Russian Foreign Policy toward Latvia ....................................................................................... page 39
       2.1.1. The Russian Military as a Tool for Assisting Compatriots .......... page 41
       2.1.2. International and European Institutions as a Political Instrument ... page 43
           2.1.2.1. United Nations ................................................................................. page 44
           2.1.2.2. Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe ............. page 45
           2.1.2.3. Council of Europe ......................................................................... page 46
           2.1.2.4. Council of the Baltic Sea States .................................................... page 47
           2.1.2.5. European Union ............................................................................ page 47
           2.1.2.6. North Atlantic Treaty Organization ........................................ page 49
       2.2. Russia’s Soft Power Instruments ................................................................ page 51

3. Narrative Interview Analysis ................................................................. page 57
   3.1. Analysis of Biographical Data ................................................................. page 58
   3.2. Thematic Field Analysis ........................................................................... page 60
   3.3. Reconstruction of a Case History .......................................................... page 66
   3.4. Summary of Findings ............................................................................. page 67

CONCLUSION .............................................................................................................. page 70

LIST OF REFERENCES ......................................................................................... page 72

Annex 1: Interview Questions ........................................................................ page 77
Annex 2: Transcript of Interview ................................................................ page 78
INTRODUCTION

Latvia, as an ethnically heterogeneous state whose population is considered by some scholars, including Latvia’s eminent sociologist Aivars Tabuns, 1 the most divided in Eastern Europe, represents a peculiar case for those researching in the field of identity construction, minority rights, and ethnic conflicts. It has the largest share of ethnic Russians and other predominantly Russian-speaking minorities among Baltic states. According to the latest census, by the year 2012 there were 61 per cent of ethnic Latvians, 27 per cent of ethnic Russians and 12 per cent of individuals belonging to other minority groups in the Republic of Latvia. 2 This situation has arisen as a result of Soviet deportations along with mass immigration of Russian-speaking Soviet citizens during the time of Latvia’s existence as a Union Republic between 1940 and 1991, when the proportion of Latvians in the country dramatically declined from 77 per cent as of 1935 to 52 per cent in 1989; 3 in the Latvian capital Riga, which is the most illustrative in terms of heavy migration processes, the number had fallen from 63 to 36 per cent by 1989. 4 Back then Latvia was one of the most prosperous and industrially developed republics that attracted qualified workers from other parts of the Soviet Union. Accordingly, numerous young specialists were assigned to work in Latvian factories and help in the construction work of any kind. The language of interethnic communication within the USSR borders was considered Russian, the knowledge of which was self-sufficient to be able to live also in the Latvian republic. Even until today the Russian language has remained dominant among non-Latvian residents of the country. A total of 58 per cent of people who do not belong to Russians by their descent assert that Russian is their mother tongue, and 82 per cent mostly use it at home. 5

All above mentioned factors have created what many of modern political analysts and scholars researching in post-Soviet identity construction come to define as a “two-

---

4 Tabuns, Changing National, 5.
5 Ibid., 15.
community society” in today’s Republic of Latvia.\(^6\) In fact Riga is the most representative of this phenomenon with native Latvians constituting a minority, that is, barely 42 per cent compared to 42.9 per cent of ethnic Russians and the remaining 15.1 per cent of other ethnicities, including Byelorussians, Ukrainians and Jews, who in light of the Soviet legacy, are most likely to be Russian-speaking too.\(^7\) This is why to better reflect reality the interviews for the present research were conducted in the capital city, whereby the term “Russian-speaking population of Latvia,” or simply “Russian speakers,” is used with reference to David Laitin for the sake of a more accurate definition of the group of people sharing a common linguistic and sometimes social identity, also called “former Soviet identity,” which allowed him to tag them as a single group.\(^8\)

Moreover within the group of the Russian-speaking community – not to say diaspora or minority appearing as legally inapplicable designation in the case of post-Soviet Latvia – there is a significant number of persons who possess a “non-citizen” status, meaning those former Soviet nationals who after the restoration of Latvian independence in 1991 did not qualify for Latvian citizenship and at the same time did not acquire citizenship of any other country.\(^9\) This previously unknown in public international law “specific legal status”\(^10\) de facto targeted the Russian-speaking population that arrived in the country after 1940 during the time when Latvia, as it is seen in the circles of its current political establishment, was illegally annexed to the USSR. As a result, people affected by the state’s strict citizenship policy and subsequently labeled as “non-citizens” do not have the right to vote both in national and local elections, neither can they run for public office or found political parties. Furthermore, they are excluded from practicing certain professions such as a civil

---


\(^7\) Brigita Zepa and others, eds., Ethnopolitical Tension in Latvia: Looking for the Conflict Solution (Riga: Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, 2005), 25.


\(^9\) Gatis Pelnēns, ed., The “Humanitarian Dimension” of Russian Foreign Policy Toward Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, and the Baltic States, 2nd ed. (Riga: Centre for East European Policy Studies, 2010), 162.

servant, a lawyer, a pilot etc.\textsuperscript{11} and are disadvantaged as regards land ownership and calculation of pension rates.\textsuperscript{12}

Due to persistent calls from Latvian politicians, “non-citizens” have not been recognized as stateless persons in accordance with international law and therefore cannot benefit from the United Nation’s Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. Neither do they fall under the category of a national minority on the state level. Due to Latvia’s restrictive definition of a national minority that embraces only full-fledged citizens, individuals who possess a citizenship of another country, and some rare cases of statelessness – provided that in the latter two options some “long-established ties with Latvia” are proven,\textsuperscript{13} “non-citizens” are equated to immigrants in their social and political status, otherwise being officially referred to as “Soviet-era migrants.”\textsuperscript{14} Thus, even though Latvia ratified the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the vast majority of Russian-speakers are recognized as Soviet-era settlers who illegally came to the country as “military or civil occupants”\textsuperscript{15} which does not guarantee them protection of international law.\textsuperscript{16} The subject of Soviet-era settlers versus national minorities who had lived in the country before 1940 has long served as a political battleground for Latvian nationalists and Russian-speaking activists. Members of the Russian-speaking community of Latvia do not see themselves as newcomers since their relocation took place at the time when Latvia was part of a one big country, the USSR. Being also a matter of symbolic inclusion through positive connotations associated with national minorities and particularly through the recognition of the legitimacy of minority rights, this debate is central to the determination of the political status of Russian-speakers in Latvia as well as the construction of their public image.

\textsuperscript{12} Pelnēns, “Humanitarian Dimension,” 163.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
According to the latest statistics of Latvia’s Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs there are currently 312,189 “non-citizens” out of the total of 2,220,000 Latvian residents, whose rights are infringed and whose identity is accordingly marginalized. As Commercio truly asserts, “Latvia’s citizenship policy has created a demos based on ethnicity and in the process generated a second-class society composed primarily of Russians.”\(^{17}\) Along with exclusion from the citizenry the Russian-speaking former Soviet citizens suffered a loss of their social status due to the transition of the country from a Union republic to an independent state virtually overnight, which had significant implications for the identity formation of Russian-speakers, on the one hand, and for the internal ethnic relations, on the other.

The aspects and causes of ethnic divisions in Latvia were approached by different scholars, among whom the most known are Brigita Zepa, David Laitin, Dovile Budryte, Michele Commercio, Svetlana Diatchkova, David J. Galbreath, Ieva Gruzina, Richard C. M. Mole, and Aivars Tabuns. Yet nobody looked at what the decisive factor in the deterioration of interethnic relations in the country is. My personal contribution to the previous study of the issue lies in the focus of how such country-specific factor as citizenship rights of “non-citizens” in Latvia are reflected in interethnic relations. First, I will defend my assumption that limited rights along with political and social inequality of “non-citizens” and all other resulting consequences of their status can be considered one of the major reasons for ethnic divide in Latvia. Even taking into account that “non-citizens” constitute roughly a half of the total Russian-speaking population of Latvia, this proves to be true of the other half that although not being directly affected by the infringement of their human rights, is involved in the interethnic battles around citizenship through the relationships and kinship with “non-citizens” as well as participation in political parties and the civic dialogue. Then, by means of a biographical research method I will explore personal life stories of the selected “non-citizens” to answer the following research question: How does the status of “non-citizen” influence interethnic relations in Latvia?

The manifold nature of the subject determines this work’s place being at the boundary between sociology and political science. Hence, to build up my argument that “non-citizenship” is one of the main impediments to ethnic accord in post-Soviet Latvia

---

I will investigate the country’s patterns of interethnic relations from different perspectives. First, I will look at factors facilitating ethnic divide inside Latvia by addressing issues such as Latvian non-titular groups’ exclusion from the state apparatus related to post-Soviet nationalism, and ethnic policies of the newly emerged state, including the most controversial of them in terms of human rights – Law on Citizenship. Second, the thesis will provide external reasons for the ethnic divide, that is, mainly the role of Russia and the EU in lobbying Latvian nationalists for the reduction of statelessness, which indirectly aggravates the already existing ethnic tensions within the country. To round up the argument, “non-citizenship” will be discussed as a phenomenon, or rather a concept, embedded in Latvian exclusionary national identity politics. Finally, in the last chapter I intend to test the extent of validity of my initial assumption that the classification of people according to their citizenship is one of the most divisive issues in ethnic relations in Latvia through the analysis of a narrative-biographical interview with a Russian-speaking “non-citizen,” followed by a summary of findings and conclusion. As a point of departure for the following biographical research I worked out and am using a tentative hypothesis that by constructing marginal identity through political isolation the “non-citizenship” in Latvia impedes integration of its bearers and thus facilitates the ethnic divide.

By choosing the biographical method of qualitative research I aim at exploring the hidden aspects of the societal split along ethnic lines in Latvia and those of self-determination of Russian-speakers obstructed by poor citizenship rights. Furthermore, I will attempt to trace the point at which citizenship rights became a decisive factor in the deterioration of interethnic relations in the state of Latvia. The interview sample for the analysis consists of three Russian-speaking “non-citizens” of different age groups who did not naturalize for the Latvian citizenship and were eager to tell their life-stories. The fact that no responses of titular group representatives are included in the sample, although it measures interethnic relations, can be regarded as a certain limitation of the research. However, this is intentionally done to investigate how the ethnic divide is experienced by the group primarily affected by disenfranchisement and only then to look how, in turn, this is mirrored in their private relationships with Latvians. Since I focus on the impact of one specific factor, that is, limited citizenship rights, on the interethnic relations, it already by definition cannot equally concern both communities. Therefore as a start, it is important in this study to concentrate on how the political
isolation added to the alienation of “non-citizens” from the state represented by the titular ethnicity and arguably spilled over to the rest of Latvian society.

As the statistics show a rapid drop in the number of “non-citizens” who managed to acquire Latvian citizenship through naturalization since 2008 and due to the fact that over 70 per cent of the remaining people in question are over 41 years old, further naturalization process appears to be unrealistic, which accordingly poses a danger that ethnic tensions will remain. Other sources, such as the 2008 survey, reveal that there is a dramatic decrease in patriotism among “non-citizens” over the last ten years – the factor that has always been considered one of the major incentives to naturalize. Therefore, it is important to address the “non-citizenship” issue today, otherwise being further neglected or put off, without any intervention from scholarship, public figures or the government, the problem is likely to remain unresolved for years to come.

Since the issue of citizenship is closely related to basic human rights in the European Union and elsewhere in the world, this research represents a contribution to the relevant discussion around minority rights, identity construction, and ethnic discrimination. On the other hand, the major findings about the impact of political exclusion on patterns of ethnic accord, being applicable not solely to Latvia, can be used in the political practice of other countries.

1. **Internal Factors Impeding Ethnic Accord: Latvia’s Role**

Although only a few cases of open conflicts between Latvians and Russian-speaking non-Latvians have been registered thus far, several recent studies carried out by the Baltic Institute of Social Sciences (BISS) indicate ethnic tensions in the modern state of Latvia. They can be attributed to the specific historical circumstances as well as the ongoing process of nation-building after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the proclamation of independence of Latvia. As Tabuns suggests, different views as regards just national policies of language, education, and citizenship as well as mutually contradictory interpretations of the shared history might have become the determining factors for the ethnic cleavage.\(^{20}\) In addition, all the above mentioned is being reinforced by both Latvian and Russian political ideologies as well as further provoked and nourished by the current bilingual mass media within the country. The reasons for the existing ethnic gap between Latvians and Russian speaking non-Latvians are in fact manifold and the aim of this chapter is to investigate them.

The study of national, state, and regime identities in Latvia conducted in 1999 has shown that many members of the Russian-speaking population of Latvia express a low level of pride about their respective nationality. However, at the same time only 58 per cent of them feel at home in Latvia. A large number of non-ethnic Latvians feel insecure about their status today and in future.\(^{21}\) Many modern scholars argue that this can be attributed to the feeling of alienation of an individual from the state and its politics that translates into the dislike on an interpersonal level and may in the end affect ethnic relations. To better understand the nature of ethnic tensions a brief theoretical frame will be given in the following.

According to Zepa, the leading researcher of the BISS, ethnic tensions can be triggered by a rapid change in a group’s status in that two or more different ethnicities that happen to populate the same country start to compete for political hegemony like it


\(^{21}\) Tabuns, *Changing National*, 53.
was the case in post-Soviet Latvia. She goes on to argue that such changes in society inevitably create mutual distrust and similarly the sense of being threatened by the opposing ethnic other. This view is also supported by Tabuns, who describes three main factors that may facilitate the alienation of an individual from the nation state in theoretical terms. First, just like Zepa, he identifies social transformations in society which encourage competition for jobs, wages and status levels as a possible account for the growing instability of links between people and, hence, for the weakening solidarity in relationships. Second, he says, an accelerated economic transition can lead to disorientation, create feelings of helplessness and raise suspicions among people who failed to adapt to it quickly. Third, Tabuns suggests that it is unfulfilled expectations of a more active involvement of the government in economic processes and concerns of the “ordinary people” alike that usually alienate citizens from the political core of their country.

All these factors, yet also the failure of the government to adapt impartial state-building policies that would not discriminate against large ethnic minority groups of the country, seem justifiably to apply to the specific case of post-Soviet Latvia which I will elaborate on in the following sections by taking account of the way how the political perceptions of non-Latvians affect relations between the two largest ethno-linguistic communities at issue. Several general reasons as well as the country’s particular circumstances will be discussed to answer the question how divisions along ethnic lines came to exist in Latvia and more specifically, how the growing nationalism and what is known as ethnic policies polarized the society and withal what the role of the Latvian citizenship model is in it.

1.1. Latvian Ethnic Mobilization, Nation-Building and Nationalism

The breakup of the Soviet Union created a situation where a previous majority of Russians with their various privileges as the colonist nation became a minority in a now foreign country with a high proportion of nationalistic-minded people of the domestic population. Tabuns emphasizes in this respect the feeling of insecurity of Latvian

---

23 Tabuns, *Changing National*, 34.
Russians who began to conceive themselves as a minority which in his opinion impedes integration and formation of a common national identity in Latvia.  

Back in the Soviet times Russians and other Russian-speaking immigrants sent to the Latvian SSR by the communist party enjoyed vast informal privileges. It concerns, for example, the allocation of housing and the priority given to the Russian language in public and state affairs first of all. Unlike the local population, the majority of recent immigrants were spared the pain of staying on a waiting list for a public apartment. Statistics show that “among residents of all housing space constructed in the 1980s, only every fourth person was a Latvian.”

With regards to the use of Russian in Latvia throughout the Soviet years, it should be noted that due to the far-reaching policy of Russification practically every Latvian was meant to master it as the unofficial state language. As a result most ethnic Latvians turned bilingual, while Russian-speakers even did not make efforts to learn the local language. This is clearly reflected in the statistics of the year 1989, shortly before the recovery of Latvian independence: 68.3 per cent of Latvians were proficient in Russian and only 22.3 per cent of Russians, 18.0 per cent of Byelorussians, and 9.8 per cent of Ukrainians were able to claim proficiency in Latvian.

It is therefore not surprising that Tabuns sees the above described factors as a fertile ground for the development of a dual society in Latvia “marked not by living ‘together’, but rather ‘side-by-side’” even back in the pre-independence time. Interethnic contradictions were evident; Latvians felt discriminated in their own home country but nobody cared because Russians, being granted political and economic privileges, considered themselves to be the titular nation in the Latvian SSR. Arguments put forward by John Ginkel, an American political scientist, in his analysis of identity construction in Latvia’s Singing Revolution are along the same lines. Subscribing to the view of Tabuns he adds that a mutual distrust between ethnic and non-ethnic

24 Tabuns, Changing National, 7.
25 Ibid., 5.
27 Tabuns, Changing National, 5.
28 The term “Singing Revolution” is commonly used to refer to historic events between 1987 and 1991 that led to the restoration of the independence of the three neighboring Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.
Latvians had already existed before Gorbachev launched the program of perestroika in 1986. He argues that back then:

Latvians blamed the Russians for stealing their statehood and importing communism, and Russians in Latvia had little regard for the republic’s indigenous population, finding greater salience in their Russian identity, the identity that held the reins of power throughout the republic and the greater USSR.

The proclamation of independence of the Latvian state in 1991 generally meant a considerable shift of hierarchies in terms of ethnic structure, but insecurity, a loss of political identity and privileges for most Russian-speakers in particular. Svetlana Diatchkova reviewing the features of ethnic democracy in Latvia affirms that “[t]he official aim of the ethnic policy of the newly restored independent state has been to re-establish Latvia as a nation-state with a core Latvian identity based on the Latvian language and culture.” Such expressions as the “core nation” or the “core people” became visible in all political rhetoric and were set down in legal acts and political documents. The titular ethnicity became a politicized label promoted through official policies and informal networks - the strategy that emphasizes ethnic differences, rather than calls for or at least encourages ethnic integration. Michele E. Commercio argues that ethnic differentiation is what is characteristic of nationalization, unlike nation-building which she defines as “a process that transforms a traditional entity into a modern state by uniting a diverse population into a nation or an integrated community based on a shared national identity.” This in turn allows us to conclude that the process of nation-building in Latvia, if not ought to be called “nationalization” according to Commercio, is without doubt to be characterized by exclusive rhetoric and the politics of ethnic nationalism. And if we subscribe to Mark A. Jubulis’ thesis, then this type of the emerging nationalism is exactly the one that directly influences the nature of ethnic relations in the here analyzed country.

Ethnic mobilization of Latvians towards the restoration of their nation and the rise of nationalism are interdependent processes presumably grounded on the perceived

---

30 Ibid.
31 Tabuns, Changing National, 16.
32 Ethnic democracy should be understood here as a political system that combines a structured ethnic dominance with democratic, political, and civil rights for all.
34 Ibid.
35 Commercio, Russian Minority Politics, 17.
injustice inflicted by the Soviet rule, political marginalization and feeling of being endangered as an ethnic and linguistic minority. The latter in fact manifested itself in the country’s ethnic policies. On the one hand, the nationalistically marked ethnic policies, including the Citizenship Law, which will be discussed in detail later, and the status of Latvian as a single state language, can be seen as a sort of political payback since Latvians view their Soviet period of history as illegitimate occupation and are supported in this regard by the majority of Western democracies who had never recognized the regime. On the other hand, the aim of such restrictive policies might be to guarantee political power for the ethnic Latvian nation, particularly because the Soviet-era immigrants were thought to be disloyal and similarly their integration was perceived as a linguistic threat. Tabuns’ general view is that minorities (also in other states than Latvia) still often have an image of a potential security threat or constitute an unpleasant reminder of the past hegemony of another state.

Finally, political elites in Latvia indeed succeeded in ensuring the dominance of ethnic Latvians in main decision-making and state bodies. As a result, Russian and other minorities appeared to be excluded from full participation in social and political life of their new home country, although many of them participated in Atmoda and believed in justice of the restored independent Latvia.

Taking into consideration all these arguments Ginkel introduces the idea of development of an exclusionary identity among non-ethnic Latvians. Tabuns, however, being more radical in his statements, puts it in a discourse of a psychological shock caused by the changes. He states that this shock, apart from triggering mass re-emigration of non-Latvians, found expression, in a few cases, even in aggressiveness of those who were most affected by the transition outcomes but stayed behind like some Russian politicians. Yet despite ethnic exclusion Diatchkova, for instance, generally believes that under conditions of instability during any transition period a lot of people, regardless of their ethnicity, tend to alienate from the state and its policies because they think the state does not work in their interest (this in turn brings us back to the theoretical premises of Tabuns who speaks of unfulfilled expectations of an active

---

38 Tabuns, Changing National, 55.
39 Atmoda means “Awakening” in Latvian and was a name of a weekly newspaper in the Latvian SSR and Latvia until 1992 which later became a reference to the Latvian National Awakening and struggle for independence from the Soviet Union.
41 Tabuns, Changing National, 5.
governmental engagement in economic troubles of the country on the grassroots level that are likely to cause alienation of individuals. She believes that “[l]ow civic participation, lack of trust in their ability to influence state policy and limited access to information”\(^{42}\) were experiences of many non-Latvians as well as ethnic Latvians.

Interethnic relations and the formation of identities are influenced not only by political factors associated with the period of transition and the process of nation-building, but also by economic ones. Tabuns points out that a great proportion of Russians and other minorities loyal to the economic principles of the former Soviet Union wanted to preserve the socialist economic model, while Latvians were much more in favor of a transition to the market economy.\(^{43}\) When the transition began, those Russians who were directors of state-owned enterprises managed to do the trick of shifting most of the income of these companies to their private businesses to later use this money in order to privatize the state-owned ones which they themselves had \textit{de facto} made bankrupt before. Since many business sectors during Soviet times were controlled by the Russian economic elite, Latvians often think that Russians were the ones who benefited the most from the situation but whose political loyalty they did not trust. The Russian economic elites, for its part, were suspicious of their Latvian counterparts who now had political power and could deprive them of the economic space they had conquered. Based on these facts Tabuns has, therefore, the reason to state that the divergence of economic interests connected with the establishment of a new market system right after the restoration of Latvian independence has taken its toll on the relations between the two major ethnic groups in Latvia. He suggests that the economic circumstances negatively impacted the identity formation of both ethnic groups and deepened a cultural as well as political gap between them.\(^{44}\)

To sum it up, the fact that the Russian-speaking population of Latvia failed to mobilize in response to the national mobilization of ethnic Latvians, the emerging nationalism after throwing off the shackles of the Soviet hegemony, and the speedy process of nation-building disregarding minority rights - under difficult socio-political conditions of a sudden loss of the status, which made Russian-speaking non-Latvians suffer from a kind of shock, - can be considered influential in shaping post-Soviet identity of Latvia’s Russian-speakers and what is more important, in the emergence, or

\(^{42}\) Diatchkova, “Ethnic Democracy,” 89.

\(^{43}\) Tabuns, \textit{Changing National}, 64.

\(^{44}\) Ibid.
rather the deepening of the ethnic cleavage between these two major ethnic groups of Latvia.

1.2. Ethnic Policies

In the context of the rising nationalism associated with the period of transition and nation-building, which was dealt with in the preceding section, the breaking point of Latvia’s interethnic relations has been concentrated mainly around ethno-politics. The matter of ethnic policy regulation became crucial when Latvia’s Russian-speaking minorities realized that power was now linked to Latvians as an ethnic group who constituted 83 per cent of the total number of employees of the national government as of 2005\(^\text{45}\) and drafted all country’s policies, including the most sensitive ones in terms of minority rights such as the citizenship and language laws, the education reform, and the national integration program. The study on the integration of non-Latvian young people proved that among Russian-speakers, “there is considerable dissatisfaction and even aggression both vis-à-vis the country’s ethnic policies and with regard to the Latvians who shape those policies.”\(^\text{46}\) This is no surprise if we agree with Dovile Budryte, who studied public response to nationalism in the post-Soviet Baltic states, that in order to be satisfied, citizens of a democratic country must feel that the authorship of the laws belongs to them and that this is the country’s “demos” who has the power to change those laws that work against their basic rights and interests.\(^\text{47}\)

The national law introduced in the independent Latvia devoted a great deal of attention to the status of Latvians and the Latvian language. The new language policy declared Latvian to be the only state language. According to the country’s citizenship policy most Latvians automatically received citizenship in return for their old Soviet passports, while many Russians and Russian-speakers could become citizens only through a gradual process of naturalization. As Laitin puts it, to win the support of nationalists among titulars the government designed its key policies to meet their increased expectations that clearly implied disadvantages for Russian-speakers.\(^\text{48}\) In February 1993, in response to the letter from the first High Commissioner on National

\(^{45}\) Zepa, Ethnopolitical Tension, 12.
\(^{46}\) Ibid., 5.
\(^{48}\) Laitin, Identity in Formation, 93.
Minorities of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Max van der Stoel, advising on the improvement of minority rights and integration in Latvia, the then Foreign Minister Georgs Andrejevs referred to the pain and suffering of the Latvian nation during the Stalinist repressions and made a statement indicating that only a government elected by the real (pre-war) citizens of the indigenous population would be capable of making legitimate decisions with regard to the state’s future and citizenship in particular. Naturally, such claims could not but serve as a catalyst for opposition from Russian-speaking former Soviet immigrants, whose disagreement with the government officials and decisions taken by them inevitably transferred to the personal level and were finally manifested in a dislike of the Latvian-speaking community as a whole.

Many researchers of ethnic rights in Latvian post-Soviet discourse explain the strategy for holding back Russian-speakers from national governance as a way to facilitate the state decision-making which favors Latvians. As an obstacle to full political participation of the Russian speaking community this, in turn, constitutes a danger of further development of ethnic segregation and contributes to reciprocal alienation among its members. In order to understand on what grounds Latvia’s national policies provoked disagreements between the titular nation and the Russian-speaking community and continue to do so, I will take a closer look at the content of these documents in the following sections.

1.2.1. Phenomenon of “Non-Citizenship” as a Derivative of Citizenship Law

Against the background of the nation-rebuilding task faced by Latvians after 1991, citizenship has been an unusually emotional and sensitive issue for the society ever since. It demanded a conscious choice of in-group and out-group membership rules. The question of who belongs and who does not has not been debated not only in political circles, but also in the wider public sphere. The protests demanding that “the ‘Soviet colonists’ be repatriated” made the task not easier but escalated the situation. This can be explained by security concerns linked to the much larger concerns over the viability of the long-sought independence, that the dimension of loyalty to the state and nation

49 Budryte, Taming Nationalism?, 110.
50 Zepa, Ethnopolitical Tension, 12.
51 Budryte, Taming Nationalism?, 112.
became key to the decision on eligibility for citizenship. Arguably Latvia’s most controversial governmental decision specifically targeted the Russian-speaking population and can be regarded as one of the main reasons for the ethnic split.

There were calls for an autonomous republic-level citizenship which would impose controls on immigration, namely restrain the influx of Soviet migrants, as early as 1988 in Latvia. Yet, except for the provisional resolution of 1991 passed by the Supreme Council, the issue of citizenship was not dealt with until 1994, i.e. the date of approval of the citizenship law.

The law on citizenship reflected controversy of the issue concerning the way in which “‘Soviets’ without the Soviet Union” were to be treated. In pursuit of political community building the decision-makers had to decide for one of the options available in the international legal practice. The first option, the so called “zero option,” entailed automatic granting of citizenship to all permanent residents of the predecessor state because a new political and administrative entity was formed, in simple terms, a new country appeared on the world map. It has been called “zero option” because, other than permanent residency, there are no requirements for those who wish to apply for Latvian citizenship. The second option was derived from the principle of state continuity, denying the lawfulness of Latvia’s annexation to the USSR, and implied the restoration of the nationality of the state that had existed before. The third, and perhaps most democratic, way represented a hybrid version that was based on the latter principle but required necessary adaptations in the present political context to avoid mass statelessness.

However, a nationality policy favoring all of Latvia’s inhabitants, “regardless of their social status, language, party, religious or national affiliation,” how it was communicated by the Latvian Popular Front (LPF) – an opposition political organization that consolidated the society for the struggle for independence, – has never been implemented. Brubaker suggests that both the inter-war statehood legacy and the Soviet legacy permitted national radicals to adopt a restored-state model of citizenship, even though others hold that citizenship must be partly restored according to the

---

continuity thesis and partly designed anew in order to conform to democratic norms and values.\textsuperscript{56} Since, it was argued, Latvia did not cease to exist during the times of the occupation by the USSR and, consequently, was not a successor state to the Latvian SSR, there were no formal prerequisites to favor all residents, including minorities, through the “zero option.” The law states that Latvia as a state had existed before its illegal incorporation into the Soviet Union and its citizenship law then followed the principle of \textit{ius sanguinis}, therefore automatic citizenship in the now restored republic should be granted only to the citizens of the pre-war period and their descendants. Accordingly, it can be inferred that the occupation rhetoric was used to justify discrimination of minorities and their isolation from the process of state-building, although the appropriateness of a historically precise term of occupation in this context still remains contentious and will be discussed in more detail in a later section. If Latvian decision-makers had agreed that the annexation was legal, then, according to international law, they would have had to adopt a policy that grants citizenship to all current permanent residents of Latvia on the grounds of being a successor state to the Latvian SSR.

Hence, basically ignoring any ethnic criteria and using only the restorationist interpretation Latvia managed to “deny automatic citizenship to over 1.2 million mostly Russian Soviet-era immigrants,” reasoning that “these people had entered [the country] during an illegal occupation.”\textsuperscript{57} Latvian politicians further argued that all immigrants, who came to reside in Latvia after 1940 and their young children, even if they were born in Latvia or have lived there for the most time of their lives, stayed illegally in the country\textsuperscript{58} and therefore temporarily received a passport of a hitherto unprecedented legal status of “non-citizens” of Latvia before they could undergo a proper naturalization process. Now especially those ethnic minorities, who had supported Latvian independence by voting for the program of the LPF, were left with the feeling of being deceived because they had had the most expectations for equal rights and opportunities as it had been propagated by the party.\textsuperscript{59} In short: the ruling party deprived of electoral rights among others the people who it had been elected by.

\textsuperscript{56}Brubaker, “Citizenship Struggles,” 279.
\textsuperscript{58}Ibid., 264-65.
\textsuperscript{59}Gruzina, “Relationship between History and a Sense of Belonging,” 411.
Budryte summarized the “Latvian citizenship problem” as follows: “Russian speaking residents, backed by Russia, demanded that their Soviet citizenship automatically translate into Latvian citizenship (zero option), while the Latvian politicians, claiming the right of national survival, were unwilling to grant automatic citizenship.”

In the controversy over citizenship Latvia enlisted the support of its neighbor and post-Soviet counterpart Estonia that, unlike the third Baltic state Lithuania, also resorted to radical measures in its citizenship policies discriminating against minorities. The status of “non-citizens” has since then become characteristic of both countries, Latvia and Estonia.

“Non-citizens” of Latvia are de facto neither citizens, nor foreigners, yet can be defined as possessing “functional Latvian nationality,” according to the country’s leading specialist in international law Kristine Kruma. She suggests that it was a hard political compromise but by means of acknowledging these people’s right to obtain Latvian citizenship through naturalization, the government applied, after all, a carrot and stick approach. By contrast, “non-citizens” themselves, who since then have been represented first by the Equal Rights faction and later party of the same name, refer to people of their own as Negroes, which is a clever hint to the status of African Americans in the United States and, other than that, can be read as the abbreviation of the Russian word for “non-citizen,” i.e. *negr*azhdanin (masculine) and *negr*azhdanka (feminine), wherein the Russian word *negr* stands for Negro.

Such a harsh comparison is made to emphasize a large number of restrictions “non-citizens” experience in their daily life:

1) With regard to political rights “non-citizens” *cannot*…
   - elect and be elected at either level, national or local
   - establish political parties;
2) As far as social and economic rights are concerned “non-citizens” are not allowed to…
   - have certain public and private sector careers like those of: judge, court bailiff, notary, prosecutor, policeman, state security officer, land surveyor, fireman,

---

62 Ibid., 88.
national guard, captain of a crew, private detective, attorney, or employee in
diplomatic and consular service
- own land and buy property in specified areas, especially in cities
- receive pension for employment occurred during the Soviet period outside the
Latvian SSR.  

Some of these rights are also granted to all EU citizens residing in Latvia more than
three months, for example, the right to participate in municipal elections. Moreover,
before 2007 “non-citizens,” unlike long-term resident third-country nationals of the EU,
could not travel to the countries of the Schengen agreement without a visa. All in all, as
of March 2008 there were 75 differences in rights between citizens and “non-citizens,”
mainly with respect to careers in the public sector.  

Although Latvia recognizes its special legal link to “non-citizens,” this status cannot
yet be considered a mode of Latvian nationality. “Non-citizens” are given a different
passport, the type of which is indicated inter alia in English as “alien’s passport” on the
first page. They cannot become nationals of any other state at the same time, are not
subject to deportation, and when abroad, are guaranteed the right to receive diplomatic
protection of the Latvian Republic as well as the right to freely return to Latvia.  

According to the first calculations made after independence there were some 714,980
registered “non-citizens” in 1993 which made up roughly 28 percent of all Latvian
residents. These statistics results made the Western European country leaders and
members of international organizations express their worries about the disproportional
large number of persons lacking nationality in one country and the fact that this may
destabilize the society and cause ethnic conflicts. However, those people could not be
repatriated en masse as aliens or executors of the occupying regime because this would
be contrary to human rights, all the more taking into consideration that nearly 32 per
cent of the share were already born on the territory of Latvia. Nor could they be
categorized as stateless because that would not be complementary with the principle on

---

63 Kruma, “Checks and balances,” 73; Poleshchuk, Chance to Survive, 174.
64 Poleshchuk, Chance to Survive, 174.
65 Kruma, “Checks and balances,” 74.
66 Ibid, 73.
68 Kruma, “Checks and balances,” 72.
69 Ibid.
70 Buzaevs, Negrazhdane Latvii, 12.
the reduction of statelessness safeguarded by the international community. Latvia’s official position in this dispute was that the introduction of the new legal status for persons without actual citizenship came to be a forced but conscious choice.

In order to recover their rights Latvian “non-citizens” had to follow a three-stage procedure of naturalization that included a language test, a history/civics test and the recently introduced “naturalization windows.” The so called “windows” system established a schedule for naturalization according to the age, place of birth, and the legal status of the family members of applicants. This order presupposed that immediate members of a citizen’s family could acquire citizenship first, already in 1995; “non-citizens” who were born in Latvia would be able to do that only one year later, while those born outside Latvia would need to wait at least six years. The consequences of this procedure were the following: although some “non-citizens” were well integrated before independence, they still had to wait for years in order to get tested on language proficiency and knowledge of history; on the other hand, some poorly integrated aliens who were not ready to take the tests in such a short period of time were expected to undergo the naturalization process quite early.

Besides, there was a supplementary provision identifying categories of individuals who were banned from naturalizing and hence acquiring Latvian citizenship by default. Those included, for instance, persons who used anti-constitutional methods to oppose the Republic of Latvia’s independence; who propagated fascist or any other totalitarian ideas after May 4, 1990; who held office in an institution of a foreign state authority; who served in the armed forces, internal forces, security service or the police of a foreign state; who after January 13, 1991, acted against the functioning government in the ranks of the Latvian Communist Party or any other political organization of opposition etc. The rationale behind the additional ruling was that all those involved in actions of the occupying forces are not entitled to citizenship. This affected all former and current members of the Soviet armed forces and the KGB in the first place.

---

71 Kruma, “Checks and balances,” 88.
73 Ibid.
In 1998 “naturalization windows” were abolished but nevertheless it has not significantly speeded up the process. The number of “non-citizens” is still considerable and naturalization rates remain low from year to year. To be precise there are currently 312,189 people left out of the citizenry body of Latvia which is 14 per cent of its total population. Among them, 67 per cent are Russians, while less than 1 per cent is Latvians. For further comparison: while 40 per cent of Russians are “non-citizens,” more than 99 per cent of Latvians are citizens.

The issue remains high on the agenda also in part due to newborn children of “non-citizens,” who, in accordance with the Latvian citizenship law, are not entitled to automatic citizenship and have to either become naturalized together with their parents before the age of 15, or be extra registered, on application by both their parents before reaching the age of 15, or undergo naturalization independently after the age of 15. In 2010, 478 infants in Latvia were registered as “non-citizens.” It is more than twice as much as the number of persons under 17 years old, who managed to obtain Latvian citizenship by passing naturalization in the same year. Overall, as of January 1, 2011, there were 13,550 minor “non-citizens” residing in Latvia.

Despite the fact that the citizenship law undermined the rights of a greater part of Latvia’s Russian-speaking minority, it did not initially meet opposition from the international community – which has also never accepted Baltic states’ involuntary annexation to the Soviet Union – and was declared legitimate. The Estonian sociologist Marju Lauristin emphasizes, however, that for the former Soviet immigrants who virtually yesterday still were full citizens it was painful and humiliating to find themselves all of a sudden in the position of aliens and to have to apply for residence.

---

77 Buzaevs, Negrazhdane Latvii, 6.
78 Ibid.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
permits or start naturalization procedures to legally remain in their country.\textsuperscript{84} She says that “[t]his was not only a change in personal legal status but also a social and psychological drama for thousands of people.”\textsuperscript{85}

Trying to answer the question why Latvians had to resort to such restrictive citizenship policies, researchers on ethnic conflicts and minority integration generally discuss three main arguments.

First, Wiegandt and Diatchkova agree on the idea that the citizenship law was constructed especially to challenge the residence permit of Soviet-era immigrants in anticipation of their return migration.\textsuperscript{86} Wiegandt explains it from the perspective of the re-awakened national consciousness of Latvians, who, after having regained their independence, might have wanted to get rid of the former “colonizers” on their territory too.\textsuperscript{87} The expected outmigration of Russian-speakers can be proved by the statements of Latvia’s leading politicians: the Prime Minister Valdis Birkavs, who saw the solution to the “Russian problem” not only in naturalization, but also in “encouraging voluntary repatriation and emigration to third countries,” and the President Guntis Ulmanis, who promised to engage only in a “peaceful and voluntary” repatriation of Russian-speakers.\textsuperscript{88} As Mole concludes by taking into account the announcement of the Latvian Ministry of Finance to provide financial assistance for repatriation of Soviet-era immigrants to their native republics and the official stance of the Immigration Department on the reduction of residents of non-Latvian origin to prevent lasting ethnic conflicts, the state authorities left little doubt how welcome the Russian-speaking part of the population was in Latvia after independence.\textsuperscript{89} By picking up the idea of Pettai it can be added that through manipulation of political exclusion of non-citizens Latvians intended above all to compensate for their own suffering and experience of unjust treatment in the Soviet era.\textsuperscript{90} With regard to this, in February 1993, the then Foreign Minister of Latvia Georgs Andrejevs literally called for “affirmative action for Latvians

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., 92; Wiegandt, “Russian Minority,” 110.
\textsuperscript{87} Wiegandt, “Russian Minority,” 110.
\textsuperscript{88} Budryte, Taming Nationalism?, 110.
\textsuperscript{89} Mole, The Baltic States, 83.
\textsuperscript{90} Pettai, “Estonia and Latvia,” 265.
to compensate them for the discrimination they have experienced in their own country.”

Second, Edwin Poppe, just like Marju Lauristin, puts forward an argument of a perceived threat to the national community integrity. He argues that it is either a threat of Russian political intervention or a fear that in case of equal opportunities of political engagement for Latvians and Russian-speaking non-Latvians, the latter would rather serve interests of their external national homeland Russia, than the country they reside in, that made Latvians restrict political rights of all other ethnic groups in the independent Latvia. This is also the argument brought up by Diatchkova who suggests that “the related threat of losing the ethnic and political majority, and the perceived threat posed by the disloyalty of non-core groups acting as a potential ‘fifth column’ for Russia have been important leading motives for key ethnopolitical decisions.”

Last but not least, Latvian political elites did not want to lose trust of their voters. As Galbreath puts it “[in] the struggle for political legitimacy in the eyes of Latvian voters, moderate groups had to show their credentials as protectors of the Latvian nation.”

For all the above mentioned reasons it can be concluded that “non-citizens” are not welcomed in their country of residence, nor are they offered any exceptional conditions to be able to return to their historic homeland. Moreover, they cannot count on a substantial protection from the side of the EU either. At the time of accession negotiations, EU conditionality served as a political leverage for the improvement of ethnic diversity accommodation in Latvia, as minority protection was one of the major criteria for membership in the European family. But since Latvia joined the EU hardly any change has been made towards easing restrictions of the citizenship policy because though the protection of minority rights is an accession criterion, there is no explicit mention in the Treaty of Maastricht that it is also EU’s membership obligation. Apart from that, the accession to the EU had brought about further legal inequality, in that a citizen of another EU Member State resident in Latvia could participate in the state’s

91 Budryte, Taming Nationalism?, 109-110.
municipal elections, for instance a Finn, whereas a Latvian “non-citizen” did not enjoy the right to vote on his own soil, even at this level. This is why the suggestion that EU citizenship should be extended to all permanent residents of the Member States, regardless of their nationality, could have backed up the stateless population affected by the existing democratic deficit in Latvia, by granting them right to vote for the European Parliament as well as at the municipal level in all EU member countries and by ensuring diplomatic protection of Latvian “non-citizens” from any Union authority in third countries where Latvia is not represented.97 However, the proposal for this amendment has ended in talk and the initial parameters of EU citizenship laid down in Article 8 of the Draft EU Constitution have been retained.98

It follows that the lack of support from the European community and the historic homeland along with insufficient in-group mobilization have resulted in a marginalized self-identification of the Russian-speaking non-Latvians affected by the policy, which Zepa called a “special non-citizen identity.”99 According to her, this identity can be characterized by resignation and civic indifference that are manifested in the attitude à la “the Latvian state doesn’t like me and I don’t like the Latvian state” or “if I will get citizenship without any major hassles, that’s good, but if I don’t, that’s no big deal.”100 Indeed, it has been estimated by experts on the basis of surveys that about 300,000 of Latvian “non-citizens” will never become citizens because they have already put up with the fact of having no political status, which implies that the will or the means to meet the naturalization requirements are not there.101

As a conclusion it must be noted that, all in all, the adoption of the citizenship law was an important stage in the formation of Latvian statehood, but it served to discourage a large community of people united by the common Soviet legacy that were born or had resided for years – often for the most time of their life – on the territory of Latvia. Through the introduction of a special status of “non-citizens” a considerable amount of people was left out of the citizenry body because they presented a danger of disloyalty to the nation. As most scholars concur, “by applying collective rules to the citizenship issue Latvian authorities alienated many potential loyal citizens and discredited the

97 Elsuwege, Russian-speaking minorities, 42.
98 Ibid.
100 Ibid.
Latvian legal system in the eyes of many residents.”\textsuperscript{102} The denial of political rights to one part of the society in the form of “non-citizenship” ended up in mutual distrust among people of different ethnicities and, as a result, increased the degree of segregation in Latvia.

1.2.2. Linguistic Segregation through Language Law

Along with the rapid political change associated with the revival of the independent republic of Latvia there was a drastic change in the status of the national language. While Latvian citizenship legislation deprived a good half of the Russian-speaking population of the right to work in public service and occupations reserved only for citizens, the language law presented yet another barrier to the labor market access for the non-titular ethnicities by making proficiency in Latvian an important prerequisite for employment in the private sector too.

By 1999 the system of the state language testing had been expanded from three to six categories of proficiency that determined an individual’s chances on the labour market, regardless of his qualifications profile and previous professional experience. Since 1999 employers, as a rule, have required a language certificate meeting the new standards. According to them, both beginner’s levels reduce the chances of a person’s recruitment to unskilled manual labour; the intermediate levels of language proficiency allow access to jobs in the service sector as well as to those in the fields of engineering and accounting; the lower level of the advanced category permits an individual to run a company or be recruited as a specialist, manager, medical worker, social worker, and teacher, while only the higher level of the same category associated with native fluency enables an individual to work in state agencies and its subdivisions or in administration that entails high responsibility in terms of record keeping.\textsuperscript{103}

Such linguistic approach to labour market access was aimed at privileging the titular nation and consequently discouraged ethnic minorities. Russians interviewed for Commercio’s research on minority politics in post-Soviet Latvia repeatedly report about disadvantages in recruitment procedures.\textsuperscript{104} Among non-native Latvians there is a

\textsuperscript{103} Commercio, Russian Minority Politics, 64-65.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 68.
widespread view that it is a question of nationality – and by no means of a person’s qualifications – that is decisive for getting a good position or a well-paid job. The saying “Latvian is a profession” that has become popular among non-titulars, who experienced discrimination of this kind, is illustrative of the phenomenon which the researcher himself calls “the transformative power of informal networks” – those practices and unwritten rules that exist beyond the formal law.

Since 1995 there have also been changes in the Latvian labour law code permitting employers “to lay off employees who cannot fulfil their professional duties due to a lack of Latvian language knowledge.” In addition, a State Language Inspection Board and a State Language Centre were created to help monitor the implementation of the law on languages in accordance with the Administrative Violations Code. The regular inspections are carried out by the State Language Centre as a supervising body, whose staff visits public and private enterprises to check the following aspects of their operation:

1) the language of record keeping, public information, and product labeling;
2) the state language proficiency of employees;
3) the daily medium of communication among employees as well as between employees and their customers.

Those, who do not fulfill obligations imposed by the state language law, become subject to an administrative penalty. For example, a person can be issued a fine if he or she employs a person, whose knowledge of Latvian does not meet the prescribed standards, or fails to determine the necessary level of language proficiency for the vacancy in question, or does not provide interpretation into the state language when needed etc. All in all, there are fourteen kinds of language violations included in the Code. The statistics show that the vast majority of the people who have been fined since 1992 belong to the Russian-speaking community.

Turning back to the text of the first language law adopted in 1992, it is important to note that Latvian was given the status of the sole state language in the Republic of

105 Commercio, Russian Minority Politics, 68.
106 Ibid., 8-12.
107 Tabuns, Changing National, 8.
108 Ibid.
109 Commercio, Russian Minority Politics, 64.
110 Poleshchuk, Chance to Survive, 165.
111 Ibid.
112 Commercio, Russian Minority Politics, 64.
Latvia from the outset of independence. Brubaker describes experiences of local people, who passed through the time of transition, when Russian-language street signs were suddenly removed and clerks or officials would start to pretend in public not to understand Russian anymore.\textsuperscript{113}

Later, the use of Russian was significantly limited in the official as well as the public domains according to the new 1999 state language law which remains to be in force today. It stipulated that language legislation does not guarantee the protection, promotion and respect for any languages, other than Latvian and Liv. Among all languages used on the territory of Latvia this concerned primarily Russian that had been expected to be framed as at least minority language, yet fell under the group of foreign languages. By contrast, the Liv language, being recognized as an autochthonous language, enjoyed some privileges in the form of state support.

In official written or oral contact with public administration there is no provision to allow the use of minority languages, although it may be tolerated in practice. Article 18 of the state language law stipulates that Members of Parliament (MPs) are asked to promise “to be loyal towards Latvia, to strengthen its independence and to recognize Latvian as the only official state language” when undertaking their duties.\textsuperscript{114} Article 21 and Article 101 stipulate that Latvian is the only working language in the Parliament and in local governments respectively.\textsuperscript{115} Furthermore, in case of written applications to the government in a foreign language, including Russian, one has to include a notarized translation into Latvian to be able to reach the officials.

The Russian-speakers were similarly affected by the provision that only the state language is allowed to be used in public organizations and private businesses, which automatically means that any transaction conducted in Russian within such a company is technically illegal.\textsuperscript{116} For the purpose of state documentation all personal names and surnames of residents of Latvia in the proceedings, record keeping and official correspondence have to comply with Latvian grammar.\textsuperscript{117} Employees of public and private organizations must also use the state language in verbal interactions that reflect

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{113} Brubaker, “Citizenship Struggles,” 273.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 3.
\item \textsuperscript{116} Commercio, Russian Minority Politics, 64.
\item \textsuperscript{117} Diatchkova, “Ethnic Democracy,” 95.
\end{itemize}
public interest.\textsuperscript{118} Although an individual is entitled to choose any language as a means of communication in the private sphere, the law still permits interference to a certain extent under legitimate circumstances such as public security, health etc.\textsuperscript{119}

With respect to mass media the law imposes further restrictions, in that no more than 25 per cent of programming broadcast on television and radio may be in foreign languages.\textsuperscript{120} Given the fact that most people in Latvia can watch satellite and cable channels from Russia, which are highly competitive and above all do not face the same restrictions, these regulations, as suggested by Helen M. Morris, reduce the access of Latvia’s Russian-speakers to local news, presenting another obstacle to rapprochement between two ethno-linguistic communities, constructive political dialogue, and integration.\textsuperscript{121}

The conclusion that follows from these findings about the state language law should be that disproportionate rights promoted by its controversial provisions facilitated the formation of two different information spaces and further alienated ethnic Latvians and Russian-speaking non-Latvians from each other. Being aware of the implications nationalist-marked political decisions might have for the ethnic accord in a given society, this raises the question of a rationale behind the risk of the introduction of such a divisive linguistic policy.

Here Latvia’s unique historical background can shed some light on the complexity of the issue. The need to introduce such strict state language use regulations in the country can be explained by endangered linguistic identity of titulars that is deeply rooted in the Soviet policy of Russification. Commercio refers to this phenomenon by saying that “Russification eventually generated anti-Russian sentiment that elites channeled into support for nationalization projects in the aftermath of the Soviet Union’s demise.”\textsuperscript{122} He classifies the language policy as antagonistic because by conceptualizing Russian as a foreign, not even minority, language it attempts at deliberately eliminating the legal use of this medium in the public domain.\textsuperscript{123}

Vineta Porina, a current Member of the Saeima\textsuperscript{124} engaged in state language politics and a member of National Alliance “All for Latvia!” – “For Fatherland and

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{118} Commercio, Russian Minority Politics, 64.
\bibitem{120} Morris, “The non-citizens of the EU,” 261.
\bibitem{121} Ibid.
\bibitem{122} Commercio, Russian Minority Politics, 30.
\bibitem{123} Ibid, 20.
\bibitem{124} The Parliament of the Republic of Latvia.
\end{thebibliography}
parliamentary group, declared that the official task and aim of the Latvian government is to ensure that Latvian remains in the group of 5 per cent of the world’s languages spoken by more than 1 million people. Her statement about the complicated way from bilingual society to monolingual in the state language that Latvia is presently undergoing, confirms that this is obviously being achieved at the expense of the spread of the Russian language. In fact, many Latvian politicians have long been convinced that a demanding state language law is a guarantee of the survival of a titular language in a bilingual environment, in the context of what van der Stoel repeatedly commented that the status of the state language can be strengthened by language teaching, rather than through the imposition of restrictive legislative measures.

Despite pressure from European institutions and international human rights organizations, the governing elites did not want to make concessions referring to the fear of the extinction of the Latvian language. As Budryte puts it, “minority rights discourse became the source of the majority’s insecurity.” The official justification of the present shape of the country’s citizenship and language policies lies in the historical memory of the Soviet nationalities policies, mass deportations, and Russification which became part of the discourse on victimization of the nation. Thus, it seems that minorities together with the international community members have due expectations, while titulars have due fears, taking into consideration the painful events of the Soviet past.

1.2.3. Minority Education Reform: “Russian Schools Are Our Stalingrad!”

The issue of language of instruction in education system is another point which illuminates the nature of minority-majority struggles in Latvia. Although the law on languages adopted in the pre-independence period in 1989 guaranteed the right to choose the language (between Latvian and Russian), in which a child wants to receive secondary education, the subsequent policies were clearly aimed at excluding Russian

---

125 A right-wing political party in Latvia with fourteen seats in the Saeima, whose coalition consists of conservatives, Latvian ethno-nationalists, and economic liberals.


127 Ibid.

128 Budryte, Taming Nationalism?, 121.

129 Ibid., 129.

130 Budryte, Taming Nationalism?, 129-130.
from the academic settings and ensuring the widespread use of Latvian as the only state language.

As argued by several authors, the lack of state language skills as a key impediment to naturalization and equal competition on the labour market as well as the segregated type of education system inherited from the Soviet Union, within which virtually all Latvians used to go to Latvian language schools, while Russians and other minorities used to attend Russian language educational institutions, became the main preconditions for the introduction of the Ministry of Education and Science's “Programme for gradual transition to secondary education in the state language, and increase in the proportion of subjects taught in the state language in the primary school curriculum” approved in 1998 by the Cabinet of Ministers. By 2004 Russian-language public secondary schools should have been transferred to the Latvian language of instruction, whereby the initial intention remained to transform all state-funded schools into Latvian language schools, allowing only special institutions and privately funded schools to teach in Russian or other foreign language. In addition, all primary schools funded by the state had to switch to bilingual instruction starting from the study year 2004.

The current version of the law provides that not less than 60% of curricula shall be in Latvian and starting from 2007 all state examinations shall be passed in Latvian – two major amendments that went down in history of the Republic of Latvia as the minority education reform of 2004. Bearing in mind the effect of the state language law on the public mood, the education reform inevitably came to be understood as another attempt to forcefully assimilate the Russian-speaking community. A number of minority political groupings voiced their concerns about the perceived threat to the preservation of their native language and culture. It is not surprising if we look at the results of a poll on identity of Russian-speaking young people in Latvia which reveal that 77 per cent of respondents regard language as the core of their national identity. Hence the reduced use of their mother tongue in such a vital sphere of life as education means not

---

131 Tabuns, Changing National, 8.
133 Elsuwege, Russian-speaking minorities, 12.
135 Elsuwege, Russian-speaking minorities, 12.
136 Poleschchuk, Chance to Survive, 215.
just a threat to the viability of their culture, but much more a threat to their identity itself.

Already shortly before the formal adoption of the reform, in May 2003, a large scale protest campaign for full state-funded education in minority languages started. The strong disagreement with the amended education policy on the part of the Russian-speaking community resulted in further lasting protest activities during spring and summer of 2004 under the slogan “Russian schools are our Stalingrad,” in the mass critique of the Latvian political establishment in general and their pseudo-democracy as well as gave rise to the first significant mobilization of Latvian minorities that found an outlet in the formation of two organizations: “Headquarters for the Protection of Russian Schools” (Shtab) and the Human Rights Committee, which subsequently advocated for the rights of non-citizens.\footnote{Ivars Ljabs characterized the events of 2003-2004 as ruining the civic ideals of cooperation and dialogue by creating resentment and isolation instead.\footnote{Nils Muižnieks, ed., \textit{Latvian-Russian Relations: Domestic and International Dimensions} (Rīga: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds, 2006), 80-81.}}\footnote{Ibid, 80.} Ivars Ljabs characterized the events of 2003-2004 as ruining the civic ideals of cooperation and dialogue by creating resentment and isolation instead.\footnote{Ibid.}

One more factor causing the wave of protest against the education reform was that Russian-speakers were generally not prepared to rapidly switch to the Latvian medium of education. The survey showed that the students’ knowledge of the state language was very poor since only 10% of headmasters, 6% of teachers, and 25% of parents said that their students/children were definitely ready to study in a secondary school in Latvian, while hardly 15% of the students themselves evaluated their Latvian language skills as sufficient to be able to follow in class.\footnote{Poleshchuk, \textit{Chance to Survive}, 215.} Moreover, Chapter VI on Educators and Educatees of the Education Law provides that teachers in all public schools, including schools for minorities, are obliged to be highly proficient in the official language.\footnote{Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia, “Education Law.”} This also concerns those teachers who teach their subjects in minority languages.\footnote{Ibid.} Yet de facto only 50% of the surveyed educators turned out to be fluent enough to teach their subjects in Latvian.\footnote{Poleshchuk, \textit{Chance to Survive}, 215.} The situation proved to be true of the reality when after the
implementation of the reform in Russian schools some of the “non-citizen” students complained that they had to devote more time to translation than the actual learning.143 By Latvian politicians educational reforms were seen as “the most important driving force of the integration process,” whereas Russian-speaking minority NGOs rebelled against the radical changes in the education system, describing them as a “disguised form of assimilation.”144 In support of the protests the Association for the Support of Russian Language Schools in Latvia (LASHOR) urged that education in the mother tongue is necessary for the intellectual development of children.145 There was even the view heard from the lips of Gennady Kotov, one of the organizers of the activities against the reform of minority schools, that the reform was a crime towards the Russian nation in general because the Latvian political elites consciously wanted to make Russians less educated by providing them with low-grade education.146 Altogether there is still a great disagreement between ethnic Latvians and Russian-speaking non-Latvians over education reforms in minority schools, not to mention the introduction of Russian as a second state language in Latvia. The general assumption on the part of the titular community drafting the language and the minority education laws was that those who want to remain in Latvia would have to linguistically integrate.147 However, as the theory of language conflict suggests, an ethnic conflict can develop out of mere politico-linguistic tensions if a core ethnic group uses language as the basis for integration of the other ethnic groups in a society.148 In the case of Latvia these were strict language requirements and state interventions in educational program of minority schools that fired up the existing tensions between two major ethno-linguistic groups.

***

As interethnic relations, just like integration, is a two-way process, to summarize internal factors impeding ethnic accord in the Republic of Latvia both perspectives should be taken into account: the one of the titular nation of ethnic Latvians constituting a majority and the other one characteristic of the country’s Russian-speaking minorities.

144 Elsuwege, Russian-speaking minorities, 12-13.
145 Ibid., 13.
146 Pelnēns, “Humanitarian Dimension,” 159.
147 Galbreath, “From Nationalism to Nation-Building,” 388.
148 Zepa, Ethnopolitical Tension, 11.
The chapter served the purpose of providing the reader with some background information and a country-specific analysis on when the ethnic gap came to be seen and what the major factor still causing divisions along ethnic lines might be.

Having been subjugated to the Soviet Union for over fifty years, Latvians felt that their nation was culturally, economically, and demographically weakened. Perceived injustice inflicted by the Soviet regime and fears of potential minoritization through the policy of Russification and heavy immigration from other union republics spurred the new nationalism and ethnic mobilization of Latvians.

Russian-speaking residents of Latvia enjoyed numerous advantages over the local population during the Soviet time, from the privileged status of the Russian language which had displaced Latvian as the medium of impersonal public communication and favorable distribution of state housing to the security of belonging to the Soviet Union’s dominant nationality. After the proclamation of Latvian independence there was a considerable shift in hierarchies, as a result of which large majority of post-war Russian-speaking immigrants lost their social privileges and were granted a shameful status of “non-citizens” that excluded them from full political participation and left with a feeling of inferiority.

The widespread sense of perceived ethnic discrimination among Russian-speaking minorities is rooted in the state policies that were designed to promote the core nation. Due to the fear of ethnic Latvians that through the growth of Russian-speaking voters more pressure would be exercised on political life, especially in areas where the clash of interests is highly possible such as language policy and education, the citizenship law introduced an unprecedented legal status of “non-citizens” that made possible to deprive Soviet-era immigrants of voting rights at the national and municipal levels as well as of big part of social rights. Despite lobbying from the side of European and international human rights organizations to allow Latvian “non-citizens” to participate in local elections, the respective amendment proposals have been rejected under the pretext that this would decrease the motivation for naturalization. The reason is that the enlargement of citizenry through Latvian Russian-speakers is commonly seen as a threat to national integrity.

Furthermore, the fear that Russian as a “killer language” would reduce the need of use of Latvian made the governing political elite implement a restrictive state language policy and a controversial minority education reform, which de facto represented an
attempt to impose monolingualism along with monocultural values on a historically multiethnic society that exhibits a clear tendency to balanced bilingualism.

All in all, different views of common history, rising nationalism of Latvians that manifested in the citizenship and education policies, language segregation and unequal opportunities on the labor market made Russian-speaking non-Latvians feel alienated from their new country, although they did not feel attached to Russia either. Hence, the transition period and the process of nation-building with all its side-effects made an ethnic gap visible and affected the formation of a marginalized identity of “non-citizens” and the rest of members belonging to the Russian-speaking community of Latvia.

The situation where the citizenry of the independent state consisted of almost exclusively of titular ethnic group, who continued to shape ethnically divisive policies, has further polarized political debate in Latvia. According to public opinion polls, it proves to be very likely that it was exactly alienation from the state and its decisions on the part of Latvian Russian-speakers that has transformed into dislike of the Latvian-speaking community as a whole. Therefore, there is evidence that the status of “non-citizen,” being a powerful instrument of exclusion, remains one of the main obstacles to consolidation of society. By hampering social integration, it has a direct impact on the development of a common national identity which is currently lacking in Latvia.
2. **External Factors Impeding Ethnic Accord: Russian Influence**

Since Latvian independence Russian foreign policy toward its compatriots in post-Soviet Latvia has revolved mainly around human rights of “non-citizens,” which has subsequently grown into one of the major common discourses in bilateral Russian-Latvian relations, blocking constructive interstate political dialogue and impacting on the domestic ethnic situation in Latvia. By illustrating developments within Russian foreign policy, I will therefore investigate the impact of the Russian Federation as the “external national homeland” on the nature of interethnic relations in Latvia together with the role of European institutions and international organizations as agents of “conditionality” by looking at their treatment of “non-citizenship” issue. The aim of this chapter is to provide a different perspective and thereby a wider framework for the argument pertaining to the disagreement over citizenship rights, which should be regarded as one of the main catalysts of deepening the interethnic cleavage in Latvia.

The official attitude of the Russian government toward Russians who found themselves living outside the Russian Federation after the disintegration of the Soviet Union has often had a neo-imperialist tone. Shortly after 1991 there was an attempt made by the Russian Federation to introduce a dual citizenship to Russians living in the “near abroad” which de jure had the potential to be converted into a very strong instrument of Russia’s leadership across the region. However, this project failed with the exception of about 200,000 individuals in Abkhazia, 50,000 in South Ossetia, and 100,000 in Transnistria who made use of the opportunity to obtain Russian passports through the Russian Law on Citizenship in the versions of the 1990s. Instead, a program of support to compatriots (Basic Directions of the Russian Federation’s State Policy toward Compatriots Living Abroad) was adopted. By considering the Russians living in the “near abroad” not only as members of ethnic minorities residing in other countries, but also as compatriots, this program enabled Moscow to secure the grounds for raising the problem in relation to its neighbors at its own discretion. In other words, conceptualizing the issue in terms of “compatriots abroad” has allowed the Kremlin to

---


address the problems of Russian diasporas in post-Soviet countries as Russia’s internal matter.

The term of compatriots abroad is defined under the Article 1 of the Law on Compatriots Abroad adopted in 1999 and amended in 2006 as a group of people who are either citizens of the Russian Federation living abroad, or individuals that used to have Soviet citizenship, or those who emigrated from the Soviet Union or the Russian Federation or, finally, who are descendants of compatriots “with the exception of descendants of individuals representing titular nations of foreign countries.”151 In addition, Article 3 explains that self-identification of former citizens of the Soviet Union as “compatriots” is a matter of personal free choice. It is clear that the notion of “compatriots” applies first and foremost to ethnic Russians, but the Russian authorities refrain from mentioning this directly and include into this category all of the non-titular groups living in the CIS and titular groups retaining their Soviet traits. Therefore, many scholars refer to Russia’s compatriots in post-Soviet countries as the Russian-speaking population or Russian-speaking minorities in order not to exclude all those former immigrants coming from other Soviet republics than Russia.

In Latvia, unlike other former Soviet satellite states, the Russian Federation did not try to protect its compatriots by granting easy access to Russian citizenship, although the situation around minority rights in this country, as far as it could be shown in the previous chapter, has been more than simply contentious. This suggests that it was not in the interests of Russian foreign policy to provide its compatriots in the independent Republic of Latvia with Russian passports. Rather, it gave impetus to make the country’s human rights matter an instrument of foreign policy and use it as a means to blackmail Latvia in European affairs, this way indirectly impeding its domestic ethnic accord.

Apparently, if “non-citizens” in Latvia had been automatically given passports of the Russian Federation, the need to grant them Latvian citizenship would have disappeared and the human rights argument so readily used by Russian politicians would have weakened. Therefore, the central argument of this chapter is that Russians have used the “non-citizen” status of the majority of their compatriots in Latvia as a leverage of influence on Latvian internal policy on the one hand and on European politics as well as EU-Latvia relations on the other hand, which, in turn, had a dramatic impact on the

151 Zevelev, “Russia’s Policy Toward Compatriots.”
development of domestic ethnic relations in Latvia. The overall dissatisfactory situation of the infringed rights of Russian compatriots in Latvia itself arguably has not been of a major concern to the Russian Federation.

As long as Latvia’s treatment of its ethnic minorities was interpreted by Russia as illegitimate, the foreign policy movements to consolidate the Russian community abroad have never been solely based on the desire to ensure the preservation of the cultural capital of ethnic Russians. Andis Kudors, Executive Director at the Latvian NGO Centre for East European Policy Studies, stated in his speech that “several aspects of compatriots policy create tensions here [in Latvia].”\(^{152}\) The use of soft power as well as at times aggressively provocative statements and calls in mass media, which stimulate the Russian-speaking community in Latvia to change legislation, undermine the internal social cohesion and societal security.\(^ {153}\) In support of this argument the following two sections will illuminate the means by which Russian foreign policy instruments affect Latvia’s internal relations between the titular and the minority communities in terms of intensifying ethnic tensions.

2.1. Human Rights and “Compatriots” Issue in Russian Foreign Policy toward Latvia

The Russian Federation has made the status of Russians in Latvia one of the central issues in bilateral relations since the restoration of Latvian independence, the evidence being that this matter repeatedly appears in both Russian foreign policy documents and statements of various Russian political leaders. Russia’s human rights practice toward Latvia is guided by the political principle framed as the right to interfere due to the status of the external national homeland. Roger Brubaker defines this status in the following:

A state becomes an external national “homeland” when cultural or political elites construe certain residents and citizens of other states as co-nationals, as fellow members of a single transborder nation and when they assert that this shared nationhood makes the state responsible, in some sense, not only for its own citizens but also for ethnic co-nationals who live in other states.\(^ {154}\)


\(^{153}\) Ibid.

As Kudors suggests, if Russia says that it is its duty—moral duty—to protect compatriots in Latvia, then it becomes a legitimate instrument of foreign policy.\textsuperscript{155}

The reasons why the human rights of “non-citizens” have remained an unresolved issue in Russia-Latvia bilateral relations are grounded in their fundamentally different attitudes toward the common Soviet past. Whereas Latvia condemns the incorporation of the Baltic states into the Soviet Union by interpreting it as “occupation,” Russia takes the view that the events took place under the international law in force at that time and that gaining independence as a new state, Latvia had legal obligation to grant all its residents nationality, including Russian-speaking post-war immigrants and their children, most of whom had been born already on the territory of Latvia.\textsuperscript{156} The failure to do so is seen by Russia as the principal challenge to further development of constructive political dialogue.

Since the early 1990s the elites of Latvia have pressed Russia to acknowledge that it had occupied Latvia, but to no avail. The lack of consensus in bilateral relations between Russia and Latvia has constantly stood in the way of societal integration, for, as Mole emphasized, “the different discourses within which each of [the] two communities [of Latvia] operated automatically rendered the position of the other side illegitimate.”\textsuperscript{157}

Against this background the policy of the Russian Federation towards its compatriots in Latvia has been implemented along three closely related dimensions. First, according to the Latvian human rights activist and political scientist Nils Muižnieks, Russia sought to use its military as a tool to affect the status of Russians in Latvia, attempting to link the issue of troop withdrawal to changes in Latvian policy and even threatening military action. Second, he points out, Russia has raised the issue of Latvia’s Russians in various international organizations, seeking to exert pressure on Latvia to change its policies and to isolate it diplomatically. Third, Russia has implemented a package of policy measures aimed at assisting certain categories of Russians in Latvia and maintaining their link to Russia.\textsuperscript{158} The latter has been described by other researchers as instruments of soft power\textsuperscript{159} or the “humanitarian dimension” of Russian foreign policy.\textsuperscript{160}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{Kudors} Kudors, “Soft Power in Russian Foreign Policy toward Latvia.”
\bibitem{Pelnēns} Pelnēns, “Humanitarian Dimension,” 138.
\bibitem{Mole} Mole, The Baltic States, 167.
\bibitem{Muižnieks} Muižnieks, Latvian-Russian Relations, 119.
\bibitem{Pelnēns2} Pelnēns, “Humanitarian Dimension,” 149.
\end{thebibliography}
Through all these actions the Russian government has continuously expressed its concern with the Russian-speaking population of Latvia who is deprived of the right to receive citizenship within this country. However, many examples of Russia’s real political actions show that Moscow has treated the protection of rights and interests of Russians and Russian-speaking minorities in Latvia much more as an instrument of securing leadership of the former Soviet republic as well as consolidating its sphere of influence in Europe rather than as a goal in itself. As the Russian political scientist Igor Zevelev critically puts it in his article, “[t]he problem was often buried in oblivion for the sake of other foreign policy issues.”

In general terms there are two main aims associated with the compatriots policy of any country according to Kudors, (1) the first of them being the acquisition of loyalty of displaced compatriots with the help of soft power and (2) the second of using the potential of these consolidated diaspora groups to achieve broader goals, all of which will be illustrated by the example of Russia in the subsequent sections. Finally, he argues that championship on behalf of human rights, as in the case of Russia’s official treatment of its compatriots in Latvia, might serve the goal of enhancing the country’s own legitimacy in the public eye.

2.1.1. The Russian Military as a Tool for Assisting Compatriots

Right after the collapse of the Soviet Union, when the loss of empire and the “transformation from a super-power to a political ‘giant on clay feet’” brought Russia an unprecedented identity crisis, whereas Latvia having just thrown off the shackles of the Soviet regime strove to integrate into the political and economic system of Europe, the presence of the Russian military forces in Latvia’s territory became a stumbling block to the Russian-Latvian interstate relations. Until 1994 Russia skillfully used the compatriots issue as a cause to blackmail Latvia and to maintain military control over the country.

According to the data provided by Sergei Zotov, head of Russia’s delegation in negotiations with Latvia, as of August 1991 Latvia had between 50,000 and 80,000 Soviet military personnel stationed on its territory, along with more than 22,000 retired military personnel.

---

161 Zevelev, “Russia’s Policy Toward Compatriots.”
162 Indāns, Latvia and the United States, 104.
163 Ibid.
Several reasons came into play why Russia postponed the decision to withdraw the troops. Housing shortages in Russia, the fear of possible boycotts of the withdrawal by servicemen as well as the necessity to protect compatriots whose right of citizenship was violated were among those officially claimed. Yet the Kremlin’s aim was, arguably, not to affect minority policy in Latvia per se but rather, as Muižnieks puts it, “to be seen as attempting to influence it.”

One of the possible underlying reasons for Russia’s resistance to negotiate the troop withdrawal issue with Latvia might have been another endeavor to preserve the fading power in the post-Soviet space, perhaps comparable to the no less controversial case of Ukraine where the naval base of the former Soviet and now Russian Black Sea Fleet has persisted until present time.

From May 1992 through April 1993 Russian officials took various steps to make the military a tool to achieve policy goals in Latvia. In these years Yeltsin signed a decision to withdraw Russian troops only after all Russians were granted Latvian citizenship and numerous infringements of the rights of Russian-speakers were halted. About the same time, Sergei Zotov, Russia’s chief negotiator with Latvia, as mentioned above, issued a threat of military action to protect compatriots in the following public statement: “One should not forget that [Russia’s] military personnel in Latvia have access to weapons. If apartheid against inhabitants of Russian nationality continues, conflict is unavoidable.” Further, Vladimir Zhirinovsky, leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, taking the problem of rights of compatriots upon himself, tried to challenge the new Baltic governments by his infamous comment: “Soon there will be no Lithuanians, Estonians, and Latvians in the Baltics. I’ll act as Hitler did in 1932.”

In addition to all, the “Main Provisions of the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation” accepted in early November 1993 stated that “the oppression of the rights, freedoms and lawful interests of Russian citizens in other countries would permit the use of military force to defend the interests of such citizens.” The withdrawal of the Russian troops was concluded in August 1994 and by closing the radar station in Skrunda (Latvia) on 31 August 1998, could be regarded as fully

---

165 Muižnieks, Latvian-Russian Relations, 120.
166 Ibid.
167 Ibid.
169 Muižnieks, Latvian-Russian Relations, 121.
completed. There is high likelihood that the disagreement over the troop withdrawal took the form of support for compatriots in Latvia in order to build up Russia’s influence on geopolitically one of the most strategic territories of the former Soviet Union. Compatriots’ potential was thus utilized as an instrument of international relations.

Whatever the actual intention, the military threats considerably affected the already poor Latvian-Russian relations as well as Latvia’s attitude towards its Russian and overall Russian-speaking population that was now simply equated with the Russian ethnic community. Laitin in his book on identity in formation raises the issue of how the whole diverse set of post-war immigrants and military servants was called “Russians” by the titular community that was not eager to see outsiders in “their” republic.170 Along with “Russians,” the references such as “colonists” and “occupiers” had become commonplace by the time of the troop withdrawal. To quote the author, “[t]hey were all Soviet agents and the Soviet Union was – in their mind – just another euphemism for the Russian empire.”171

2.1.2. International and European Institutions as a Political Instrument

With the withdrawal of Russian military forces from Latvia, Moscow ultimately surrendered its political and military domination over the region and had to develop different tactics in bilateral relations with Latvia. The Kremlin found a solution in internationalizing the sensitive issue of minority rights, seeking to preserve a status of a global player, on the one hand, and to regain much of its influence and leverage as well as limit Western penetration in the region, on the other hand. The issue of the treatment of Russian-speakers in Latvia was put on the agenda of all major regional and international organizations, including the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe (CoE), the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), in hope that Latvia would implement their recommendations.

Apparently, Russia did not act directly out of the fear that Latvians would distort the real course of events in the public eye and accuse them of violence and aggressive

171 Ibid., 265.
blackmail. Instead, the country’s political leaders found it reasonable to make European institutions and international human rights organizations witness the conflict and use them as a leverage of influence on the domestic policy of Latvia as long as the latter is first a member of the European Union and second part of the international community. Acting through various multilateral international institutions and using their political power as an instrument, Russia has managed to remain at the main table of international talks. However, its overall rhetoric and statements in public speeches were at times over-dramatized and exaggerated, and contained notorious metaphors with regard to Latvia’s political regime and ethnic policies such as “rebirth of fascism,” “apartheid,” and “ethnic cleansing,” with the extreme example being the 1998 speech of Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov where he accused the Latvian authorities of “genocide” and compared Latvia to Cambodia under Pol Pot.172

A lot of talk about the problem, yet the lack of decisive actions towards supporting compatriots or combatting violations against “non-citizens” gives enough evidence to assume that Russia did not really care about its diaspora but rather has sought to discredit Latvia in international affairs and in the eye of the Russian-speaking community. Consequently, producing the image of an enemy represented by the Latvian government with its potential electorate, all this heated and emotional political debate has taken its toll on the ethnic divisions in the country by setting two communities against each other.

2.1.2.1. United Nations

The United Nations was the first international organization appealed to by the Russian Federation to make the minority issue in Latvia a matter for public debate.

In the fall of 1992, following the announcement of a halt to the troop withdrawal that was linked to alleged discriminatory practices against compatriots, Russia pressured the UN Secretary-General to send a fact-finding mission to Latvia to investigate the pressing problem. Yet the mission did not register “any gross violation of human rights,” but rather “anxiety” among minorities “about their future status.”173

Later, Russia tried to use every possible chance to raise the issue of the treatment of Russians in various UN bodies through letters, draft resolutions, and radical statements.

---

172 Quoted in Muižnieks, Latvian-Russian Relations, 121.
173 Ibid.
Among them were two initiatives, one on arbitrary withdrawal of citizenship and the other on unacceptability of certain modern manifestations of racism, addressed to the Human Rights Council and the Third Committee of the General Assembly of the UN. In addition, the Russian delegation to the UN began to provide voluntary payments of 2 million USD to the budget of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) with a request to channel this funding into the issue of “non-citizens” in Latvia and Estonia. The Latvian delegation in its turn expressed a hope that the UNHCR would preserve its integrity and be capable of independently deciding how to budget.

In public speeches at UN meetings Russian politicians made accusations of “blatant” and “systematic discrimination” against Russians and referred to “expelling the non-indigenous population,” “destroying [their] cultural life,” “organizing political trials against anti-fascist veterans,” “forbidding people to speak in their native language” etc.174

2.1.2.2. Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Russia has also used the platform of the CSCE/OSCE to draw attention towards its compatriots in Latvia. One of the first attempts was made in December 1992, when Russia distributed a memorandum “On the Situation of the Russian-speaking Population in Latvia and Estonia” to CSCE foreign ministers in Stockholm. Subsequently, priority was given to cooperation with the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) Max van der Stoel and members of the CSCE/OSCE Mission to Latvia as the key interlocutors with the Latvian government on minority issues.

At first, Russia actively supported the work of the Mission and the HCNM and made an effort to influence their decisions. But as soon as it realized that Max van der Stoel did not dance to Russia’s tune, it became highly critical and turned to other OSCE structures such as the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, various conferences, and even the OSCE Economic Forum.

Throughout 2001, despite Latvia actively lobbying its partners to close the OSCE Mission to Latvia, fearing that activities of the Mission would spoil the country’s image and thus present an obstacle to Latvia’s joining the EU and NATO, Russia fought a tough diplomatic battle to make the Mission remain and observe the situation. Even

---

174 Muižnieks, Latvian-Russian Relations, 121.
when the Mission was finally closed at the end of December 2001, Russia continued to take measures to destroy the prestige of Latvia as a potential candidate member state of NATO and the EU.

As early as in 1997, in awareness that Latvia and its Baltic neighbors continue to strive for an increasingly close cooperation with NATO and the EU, Russia offered the Baltic States security guarantees. After they had not been accepted, Russia applied increased pressure on the Latvian government, threatening with economic sanctions and removal of Latvia’s products from shop shelves in the major cities of Russia as a response to Latvia’s unwillingness to change the citizenship and language policy.175

As Artis Pabriks and Aldis Purs noted, the Baltic States were very important for Russia from the strategic point of view, and therefore, Russia attempted to hinder their integration into the EU and NATO by all means.176 For example, the European Parliamentary Assembly Russia used almost every opportunity to point out that “Latvia does not deserve to become a Member State of the European Union.”177 However, the arguments which Russian political leaders used as a weapon to discredit Latvia on the international arena were limited to the infringement of the rights of Russian-speaking minorities.

2.1.2.3. Council of Europe

Another forum, which Russia has made use of to attack the issue of minority rights in Latvia, is the Council of Europe. As Muižnieks emphasizes, “much of the work of Latvian diplomats in this organization revolves around refuting Russian charges.”178 Already at the very first session in May 1992, when Russia’s application for membership in the Council of Europe was considered, Russia managed to distribute a “Memorandum on the Violation of Human Rights in the Baltic States” to the Committee of Ministers.

After having become a full-fledged member of the Council of Europe, Russia’s aim was to prolong human rights monitoring of Latvia by the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) and then, to control the post-monitoring dialogue. This was one more way how Russia discredited Latvia in the eye of European community on the basis of the

175 Ozoliņa, Latvia-Russia-X, 22-23.
176 Ibid., 106.
177 Ibid., 24.
178 Muižnieks, Latvian-Russian Relations, 123.
minority issue and harmed its bid to join the EU, insofar as meeting CoE human rights standards is considered a necessary prerequisite for EU membership.

Russia’s intention to keep Latvia from the EU accession was finally reflected in the claim of 2004 by Dmitry Rogozin, head of the Russian delegation at the PACE, that Latvia was “not worthy of being invited to the EU.”

2.1.2.4. Council of the Baltic Sea States

The Council of the Baltic Sea States is a regional organization, which Russia, along with Germany, the Nordic and Baltic countries, is part of. Russia has ensured that the compatriot issue is included in the agenda of this body too.

While the CBSS deals primarily with environmental and economic cooperation around the Baltic Sea, Russia supported the establishment of a CBSS Democracy Commissioner in 1994 in order to have another lever to pressure Latvia together with Estonia on the minority issue. Russian authorities regularly met with the High Commissioner to influence his treatment of the rights of the Russian-speaking population of both Baltic countries and make it first on the list of priorities. But this body never attained the prominence of the OSCE or the Council of Europe and the Democratic Commissioner’s post had ceased to exist by the end of 2003.

2.1.2.5. European Union

While Russia continuously used communication platforms of the OSCE and the CoE to harm Latvia’s EU bid, it has also directly addressed EU bodies on issues related to the rights of its compatriots in Latvia. When Latvia adopted a language law in December 1999, the Russian Foreign Ministry appealed to the Council of the EU to reconsider Latvia’s invitation to negotiate EU membership. In late May of 2003, Russia tried to put the compatriot issue on the agenda of the EU-Russia summit and made it clear that if the EU raised the Transdniestra issue, Russia would raise the issue of Russians in the Baltic states.

---

179 Muižnieks, Latvian-Russian Relations, 123.
180 Ibid.
181 Ibid.
Despite Latvia’s hopes that after joining the EU (May 1, 2004) and NATO (April 2, 2004) the issue of the defense of the rights of the Russian-speaking population would be removed from the agenda, Russia did not give away its main diplomatic strategy towards Latvia because the aforementioned steps were taken not only to hinder its integration in the Euro-Atlantic organizations. From October 2003 through April 2004, Russia resisted applying the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between Russia and the EU to Latvia and Estonia, reasoning that these states violated the rights of Russian-speakers. Only after the EU had compromised, offering to engage in human rights consultations with Russia, it agreed to apply the PCA to all new member states. Yet even though these consultations provided Russia the opportunity to raise the compatriot issue, they also paved the way for discussion of the human rights situation in Chechnya, so unpleasant to Russia.

Nevertheless, taking into consideration the time lag when, due to the UN reforms of 2005, the Human Rights Commission was dissolved, while the newly established Human Rights Council was in the process of formation, the European Union – Russia consultation mechanism on human rights was a suitable forum for Russia to realize its politics and to safeguard its interests in the Baltic region. For this reason, as soon as the EU and Russia’s consultation mechanism on the issues of human rights and basic freedoms was formed, Russia announced that within this framework it “would like to actualize the issue of the Russian-speaking minorities in Latvia and Estonia.”

Apart from that, Gunda Reire discusses the resolution against contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance initiated by Russia in 2004 at one of the UN meetings as an instrument undermining Europe and its unity. There was no mention of a country, including Latvia, in the resolution but the permanent representative of the Russian Federation in the UN in New York, Vitaly Churkin, admitted in a communication with media that this resolution was “directly related to processes in Latvia and Estonia” for the Russian delegation is “concerned about the unwillingness of the European Union to unmask the attempts to rehabilitate fascism.”

She goes on to argue that the strategy of introducing a resolution on such sensitive issues without naming a specific country which it is targeted at was supposed to cause

---

182 Ozoliņa, Latvia-Russia-X, 71.
183 Ibid., 70.
184 Ibid., 74.
controversy within the European Union and thus to affect its integrity.\textsuperscript{185} It may well be true considering the fact that the Baltic States are a vital buffer for Russia against the intrusion of the West in the former Soviet territories, and measures like this benefit security policy and work in favor of the restoration of Russia’s global status.

2.1.2.6. North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Finally, to internationalize the compatriot issue and influence amendments to citizenship policy in Latvia the Russian Federation before 2004 took advantage of Latvia’s intention to join NATO. This mindset was confirmed in a claim made by Russia’s Council on Foreign and Defence Policy, a think-tank close to the Kremlin that “NATO cannot accept into its ranks countries with unresolved problems with minorities and borders.”\textsuperscript{186}

Further, on 27 December 2002, not long before Latvia’s accession to NATO, Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov addressed a letter to NATO Secretary General George Robertson on the “situation with the one and a half million Russian-speaking residents” in the three Baltic states, listing the various areas of concern and asking “whether it is envisaged within NATO to keep this problem unresolved or will its prompt solution be sought”\textsuperscript{187} His major message was that these sensitive points of Russia’s relations with Latvia and Estonia should not be carried over into the framework of NATO-Russia cooperation.

Afterwards in 2003, Russian deputies at the NATO Parliamentary Assembly headed by Lyubov Sliska prepared a highly critical report on minorities in Estonia and Latvia that again enabled to place the issue of the rights of Russian-speakers on the agenda of an international organization and stimulated discussion followed up with on-site visits.

To sum up, all these examples support the argument that Russia applied various methods to use capacities of the existing international organizational framework to safeguard its political interests in Latvia. However, by its international actions Russia discredited Latvia and inspired tensions both in Latvian-Russian and Latvian-European relations, which was mirrored in internal affairs and public attitudes surrounding “non-citizens.” The main sources of resistance against international critique on the part of the

\textsuperscript{185} Ozoliņa, Latvia-Russia-X, 70.
\textsuperscript{186} Muižnieks, Latvian-Russian Relations, 125.
\textsuperscript{187} Ibid.
titular community came to be historical memory and “perceptions about the need to ‘strengthen’ nationhood.”\(^{188}\)

Budryte argues that minority rights discourse used by Russia through lobbying at international organizations prompted references of Latvian governors to the nation’s sufferings in the Soviet times and increased their fears about Russia’s intentions to assert influence in Latvia by enlisting help of the Russian-speaking compatriots.\(^{189}\) Latvian authorities persistently did not want to give in and simplify the citizenship requirements. Thus, by using “victimization” as an excuse, they aimed at minimizing Russian interference in the state’s internal affairs and preventing their national identities of being absorbed by Russian culture from the outside like it had been the case between 1940 and 1991. Yet, as pertinently emphasized by Budryte, collective victimhood has the negative potential to segregate society roughly into the group of former victims on the one hand and that of former perpetrators on the other.\(^{190}\)

Finally, the political controversy that involved various European and international actors strengthened Latvian nationalists in the position that “non-citizenship” issue associated with the Russian-speaking minorities is a sore point in their country – something they had to be ashamed of and constantly justify in the eye of the international community. The push for minority rights has obviously raised ethnic fears and only reinforced what has come to be known as Latvia’s “small nation complex.”\(^{191}\) As the opposite side of the coin it directly influenced the official attitude of the government toward minority issues, casting doubt on the loyalty of Russian-speakers backed up by their external national homeland. It follows that on an interpersonal level (in the light of the growing distrust between the governing elite and the Russian-speaking civil society groupings in Latvia) both communities had also to drift apart even more.

As Galbreath argues, Russian foreign policy towards the Baltic states in fact did little to help both “non-citizens” and Russian-speakers in general, or to significantly impact on the role of European organizations in the treatment of these issues.\(^{192}\) Rather than being targeted at providing substantial help to its compatriots, Russia has been busy criticizing the human rights situation in Latvia, leading attention away from the human

---

\(^{188}\) Budryte, *Taming Nationalism?*, 200.

\(^{189}\) Ibid., 129.

\(^{190}\) Ibid., 179.

\(^{191}\) Quoted in ibid., 111.

\(^{192}\) Galbreath, “From Nationalism to Nation-Building,” 399.
rights situation, deficit of democracy and the corruption in Russia itself. As a result of not being able to influence domestic development of Latvia, the Kremlin has attempted to isolate it internationally. The compatriots issue has been made a cause to blackmail Latvia together with the international community basically every time it has come to other interstate or Russia’s global interests. However, even though the Russian Federation did not manage to prevent Latvia’s integration into the EU and NATO, it has “succeeded” in furthering the conflict between the Latvian governing elites and “non-citizens” together with the whole Russian-speaking community of Latvia.

2.2. Russia’s Soft Power Instruments

The concept of soft power developed by Joseph Nye describes state measures and activities that indirectly influence other countries’ decisions by attracting in different ways and convincing of the possible benefits, in contrast to applying force or using financial incentives.\(^{193}\) It is about the means that are rather long-term in nature and have the power to stimulate the desired outcome but not entirely control it.\(^{194}\) Although soft power as a notion began first to be officially used in the last Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation adopted in February 2013, its core meaning had been known and implemented before but termed in different ways, among which “public diplomacy” is perhaps the most common.\(^{195}\)

Russia’s efforts to exercise soft power in the form of direct assistance to Russians in Latvia through cultural and educational programmes began in earnest only in 1999. Unfortunately, there is no information in monetary terms how much assistance is provided by the Russian Federation to various organizations and individuals in Latvia because Russian authorities prefer to keep it secret. There is strong reason to believe, for instance, that certain political parties and some influential Russian-language periodicals are funded by the Russian government, even though it could not be officially confirmed.\(^{196}\) However, here, the focus will be solely on those measures that were publicly acknowledged.

Firstly, veterans of World War II have been an important target group for Russian diaspora policy from the early days. Every year Russian diplomats have provided moral


\(^{194}\) Indāns, *Latvia and the United States*, 96.

\(^{195}\) Kudors, “Soft Power in Russian Foreign Policy toward Latvia.”

support to veterans in Latvia in the form of various commemorations and meetings with veterans in the embassy to celebrate Victory Day. The Russian Embassy has provided subscriptions of Russia’s newspapers to veterans and in 2001 it gave vouchers to veterans for visiting health resorts in Russia. Russia has also taken part as an interested third party in a number of cases involving former KGB personnel, military officers or their families challenging Latvia in the European Court of Human Rights.¹⁹⁷

Secondly, Russia has made investments in education of Russian-speaking students and school teachers of Latvia. It provides scholarships to study in Russia each year and organizes teacher-training seminars. Training seminars for 40 teachers of Russian language and literature were organized and funded by the Russian central government in 2000, 65 of such in 2001, and more than 90 in 2002.¹⁹⁸ In 1999 the Moscow City Council established what has come to be known today as “Luzhkov scholarships.” That year 45 students from Latvia were awarded fellowships to study in Russian universities; the figure grew to 48 in 2001 and 54 in 2002.¹⁹⁹ Over the last several years, the Russian Embassy in Riga has also supported study visits to Russia – in 2006, for example, 120 schoolchildren from all over Latvia spent 9 days in St. Petersburg.²⁰⁰ Apart from that, since 1998 the Russian authorities have yearly sent large amounts of textbooks to schools in Latvia. While the first shipment consisted of 7341 books, five years later the number had already grown up to 55,000 books.²⁰¹ Although these were and continue to be valuable material contributions to Russian libraries and schools in Latvia, some of the books, for example, in history and social sciences, in opinion of Latvian scholarship contain ideologized versions of past events and current political affairs which is seen as one of the instruments of soft power.

Thirdly, the Russian political elites have provided financial support for various groups and organizations promoting the prestige of Russian culture and the Russian language abroad, one of them being the House of Moscow.²⁰² In the recent years this major center of Russian cultural activities in Latvia located in the very heart of Riga has been funded by the Moscow City Council.

¹⁹⁷ Mužnieks, Latvian-Russian Relations, 126.
¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 127.
¹⁹⁹ Ibid.
²⁰⁰ Ibid.
²⁰¹ Ibid.
Lastly, while all above mentioned measures related to the assistance in culture and education might have served merely as a tool of flirting politics to secure sympathies and loyalties of Latvian Russians, another direction of policy which is clearly political is likely to have been aimed at getting the Russian-speaking community of Latvia to act as Russia’s “fifth column.” For example, the Latvian Security Police has revealed the information that sources in Russia provided financial support to the unregistered Headquarters for the Defence of Russian-Language Schools, which organized a series of protests against the education reform in 2003 and 2004. Moreover, in the run-up to Latvia’s 1998 and 2002 parliamentary elections there were efforts on the part of Moscow to support the electoral aspirations of the coalition “For Human Rights in a United Latvia,” whose leader Jānis Jurkāns had previously signed “an agreement on cooperation calling for regular meetings, mutual activities and joint positions in international organizations” with the head of the Russian party “Our House Russia” Viktor Chernomyrdin.

Russian NGOs and compatriots organizations abroad, including those in Latvia, have also played a significant role in reaching foreign policy goals of the Russian Federation. According to the Foreign Policy Review of 2007 it is marked by extensive information support and cooperation in structuring the “Russian World.” Apart from that, the new Russian Federation’s national security strategy indicates that a common “humanitarian, information, and telecommunications space” must be developed in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the neighboring territories.

For example, in Latvia the Russian-language media is consistent in evoking Soviet nostalgia and promoting unifying ideological labels such as Orthodoxy as a pillar of Russian civilization or the great victory in World War II on the one hand and in popularizing the defense of minority language and culture on the other, thus intensifying minorities’ enemy perceptions of the titular community and hindering social integration in Latvia. The treatment of Russia-speakers, violation of rights of “non-citizens,” Latvia’s approach to the Soviet history and Latvia’s accession to NATO are among the topics that find the most negative portrayal in Russian-language media available in

---

204 Muižnieks, Latvian-Russian Relations, 128.
206 Ibid., 189.
207 Porina, “Language Policy of Latvia.”
Latvia. Moreover the research carried out by the Centre for East European Policy Studies (CEEPS) shows that most “non-citizens” already live in an information space influenced by Russia where the latter is depicted as a prosperous and mighty state, which takes care of its citizens and gives them social security. The fact of informational segregation of the majority of “non-citizens” can be attributed to the lack of the state language knowledge or opportunities for participation in the political life of the country of their residence. Anyway, subscribing to the comment of Morris, this reality is successfully utilized by media and political parties of Latvia that are still as a rule defined by their attitude to the citizenship policy and tend to view any manifestation of the domestic ethnic divide as a positive vote winner.

In addition to all, the CEEPS research mentioned above identifies some consular issues of Russian foreign policy in Latvia that get in the way of integration of “non-citizens.” One of them is the arrangement of a visa-free entry to Russia in 2008 for “non-citizens” that immediately led to the slowdown of naturalization. Given these findings and other recent studies by Latvian scholars, Kruma concludes that all aspects of the compatriots policy of the Russian Federation are directed at minimizing the interest of “non-citizens” to naturalize and accordingly to integrate into Latvian society.

To summarize, as a survey on evaluation of diaspora policy in the Baltic states carried out in 2004 on behalf of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has shown, there is a widespread impression among bearers of Russian culture in Latvia “that the policy of Russia to support compatriots is to a certain degree declarative and exists only in words.” At the same time it is not in the interest of the Russian Federation to let the compatriots in Latvia fully escape its influence, therefore soft power can be seen as another instrument of impeding integration. Through various cultural activities and financial contributions Russia develops a sense of belonging to the external national homeland among Latvia’s Russian-speaking minorities, which raises concerns in the minds of titulars that a considerable part of their society serves political interests of Russia and is disloyal to Latvia. This deepens mutual distrust and increases ethnic fears.

Indāns, Latvia and the United States, 106.
Kruma, “Checks and balances,” 80.
Muižnieks, Latvian-Russian Relations, 129.
between the autochthonous residents of the state on the one hand and Russian-speakers on the other.

***

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union Russian foreign policy toward Latvia can be characterized by a “neo-imperialistic” course. By defining Russian population in the post-Soviet Latvia as an integral part of the Russian nation, Russia sought to turn its concerns about compatriots, especially those denied citizenship, into an instrument of soft power.

Identifying itself as the external national homeland to all those former Soviet immigrants, who found themselves residing in the now independent state of Latvia, Russia got involved in the domestic minority-majority relations of the country. However, the policies towards compatriots came to be closely tied up with Russia’s geopolitical interests and therefore became a source of Latvia’s perceived national insecurity. “Minority rights” and the “human rights of ‘non-citizens’” rhetoric was skillfully used at various European and international platforms by the Russian Federation to reassert its influence in Latvia. The fear of the Latvian governing elite that in case voting rights are given to “non-citizens,” the political community of the country will be unstable made the Russian-speaking community subject to security concerns of the titular nation, which, in turn, triggered further interethnic confrontations in the domestic affairs of Latvia.

There is little evidence that Russian military troops stationed in Latvia until 1994 had a direct impact on treatment of Russians at the time, except for some positive effects of international involvement in the minority problem. Clearly, the internationalization of the controversial issue of the rights of Russian-speakers in Latvia initiated and subsequently maintained by the Russian Federation made Latvia vulnerable to international criticism. Without Russian efforts in this regard regional and international organizations would obviously have paid less attention to the situation of Russians in Latvia. However, the extent to which the European minority rights conditionality actually changed policy in Latvia is still debatable. Rather, as a result of Russia’s active lobbying and in response to the European and international pressure, Latvia began to feel that it is not master of its own political destiny, which finally manifested itself in the alienation from the potentially disloyal minorities because the latter were perceived
as subjects to authority of another state. In turn, the initial resistance from the Latvian
government to liberalize the laws on language and citizenship, added to the feeling of
marginalization among Russian-speakers, who started to criticize the community of
ethnic Latvians for “russophobia.” Moreover despite Russia’s numerous attempts to
discredit Latvia in the eye of European democratic countries on the basis of minority
issues, Latvia did join the EU and NATO, the OSCE Mission to Latvia was closed, and
PACE monitoring and the post-monitoring dialogue have ceased.

For all these reasons and due to the fact that the Russian government avoided
granting citizenship to compatriots with a “non-citizen” status in Latvia it can be
concluded that the improvement of the human rights and citizenship situation of the
Russian diaspora in Latvia has not been the goal itself, but rather an instrument for
achieving any greater goal. Instead, the shortcomings of Russian foreign policy toward
compatriots have resulted in the situation that Russian-speakers living in Latvia turned
out to be torn between two countries neither of which really welcomes them – in fact,
abandoned by both states. This has proved to be disastrous to the integrity of their
identity and has constantly caused suspicions from the titular community of ethnic
Latvians.

Overall, the Russian Federation’s policy toward compatriots in Latvia has had a
significant impact on the domestic ethnic accord in Latvia, in that it added to the
consolidation of differences along ethnic lines within the state. On the one hand,
Russia’s driving force for keeping “minority rights issue” at the table of international
negotiations discredited Latvia in the eyes of the international community, making the
Latvian establishment feel that their Russian-speaking population is the root of all the
country’s troubles. On the other hand, soft power as part of Russian foreign policy, by
increasing the role of Russia-friendly individuals, has created anxiety among ethnic
Latvians that a significant part of Latvian society would remain under control of the
Russian Federation which is meant to undermine the country’s national integrity.
Through Russian media, Russian-language education, NGOs, literature, and textbooks
Russian-speakers, and “non-citizens” in particular, are stimulated to take steps towards
combating social discrimination and condemning Latvian national politics. Finally,
Russian soft power mechanisms in the form of informational and financial assistance of
the spheres, including cultural, that build on a distinct identity of Latvian Russian-
speakers have also proved, even though indirectly, to be instrumental in further dividing
the society and complicating the interethnic situation.
3. Narrative Interview Analysis

Having argued in the first two chapters that the division of Latvian residents into citizens and “non-citizens” served as a decisive factor in the deterioration of interethnic relations in Latvia, the aim of this chapter is to test the extent of validity of the initial thesis. To answer the research question of how this unique in legal terms phenomenon impedes ethnic accord in post-Soviet Latvia three narrative-biographical interviews with Russian-speaking “non-citizens” were carried out in Latvia’s capital city Riga.

To investigate interethnic relations the target group for interviews was reduced to former Soviet citizens who live permanently in Latvia and have not taken advantage of the right to obtain Latvian citizenship – in other words “non-citizens” who did not naturalize. The sample was narrowed down for the reason that the interethnic discourse is more pronounced among “non-citizens,” rather than former “non-citizens” who, in contrast, demonstrated the necessary motivation and potential to restore their political and a good deal of social rights and to become accordingly integrated. At the same time none of the representatives of the titular nation were included in the sample since the citizenship policy affected rights primarily of Russian-speakers transforming the problem of a legal nature basically into the one of an ethnic nature in the majority-minority context. Thus the interethnic dimension will be dealt with first and foremost from the perspective of the Russian-speaking community, that is, how they experience the political isolation with respect to everyday relations with the Latvian-speaking counterparts – the ones who in fact had constructed this isolation on an ethnic basis.

Riga was chosen for the biographical research on “non-citizenship” as a place, whose ethnic composition is representative of the whole society because nearly half of the city’s inhabitants are ethnic Latvians and the remaining approximately fifty per cent are Russian-speaking minorities. Thus the situation in the whole country should be best judged by the example of the capital. Besides, it has the largest proportion of people still holding the “non-citizen” status which simplifies the collection of data.

The choice of interview participants was made exclusively through personal contacts and can be thus described as a random respondent selection. These are people who had neither been citizens of the Latvian Republic in the pre-war period, nor are their direct descendants. Both female interviewees were born in Russia and migrated to Latvia short after the war. On the grounds of having entered the country during the Soviet regime they were granted the “non-citizen” status. The only male respondent, Maksim, was
born in Latvia but is a child of parents who are recognized as Soviet-era immigrants and this is why was registered as a “non-citizen” too.

The basic age and gender characteristics of the interviewees are as follows:

1) Nina, female, 67 years old
2) Maksim, male, 41 years old
3) Yekaterina, female, 74 years old

For the biographical case reconstruction the life story of the third interviewee Yekaterina was given preference due to a more favorable format and setting of the interview which took place in the familiar surroundings of her own home in a relaxed atmosphere. For the sake of comparison, the main drawback of Nina’s narration was that she constantly deviated from the topic and included a lot of information irrelevant to her biography. Maksim, in turn, agreed to be interviewed only together with his wife which resulted in a chaotic conversation, at times evolving around her interpretation of his life as a “non-citizen,” rather than his own reflections.

In the following I will first build up a hypothesis based on the qualitative data collected from the interview with Yekaterina according to Rosenthal’s model of analysis of narrative-biographical interviews,\(^{215}\) then look for similarities as well as incorporate examples from the other two interviews to support and illustrate the assumptions, and finally, draw conclusions by relating the findings to the working hypothesis which was stated in the introduction and is reminded here again: through political isolation, the “non-citizen” status in Latvia constructs marginal identity of the Russian-speaking minorities, which impedes their social integration and thus facilitates the ethnic divide.

3.1. Analysis of Biographical Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Life Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During the war</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1939</td>
<td>born in Staraya Russa, Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939 – 1941</td>
<td>her father died in the war, her grandmother on the mother’s side was killed by Germans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Life Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1941</td>
<td>Staraya Russa was burnt down, her mother and she were evacuated to Lithuania by Germans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941 – 1945</td>
<td>lived in Lithuania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945 – 1950</td>
<td>her mother and she returned to the native town Staraya Russa; all relatives were sent to Siberia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After the war / Soviet period

| Year 1950   | some of her relatives who were living in Latvia suggested that they move; at the age of 10 moved to Latvia, town Cēsis, with her mother (at that time they did not have passports, so her uncle who was a Chairman of the Village Council issued something like a leaving certificate for them to move; finally due to this certificate they received passports already in Latvian SSR) |
| 1950 – 1957 | lived in Cēsis with her mother, her mother worked at the brickyard and she went to a Russian-language school; finished school there; did not master the Latvian language at school because it was taught as a minor subject/foreign language class |
| Year 1957   | got married and moved to her husband’s flat to Riga |
| 1957 – 1991 | finished a specialized school as a cutter; subsequently worked as a cutter in a shoe factory for 33 years; at the age of 20 (in 1959) gave birth to her first daughter who later went to school in St. Petersburg; 6.5 years later (in 1965) her second daughter was born, soon her mother-in-law retired and babysat, the girl later graduated from a Latvian Russian-language high school majoring in economic science |
| Year 1991   | she and all of her family members voted for the Popular Front (in favor of independence) |

After independence

| 1991 – 2004 | shoe factory was closed, she retired, her pension as a “non-citizen” (in 1994) was calculated at a lower rate than that of an ordinary citizen; took a language test to start a new job as a cleaner in a bank which she found through her niece and worked there to add to her pensionable pay |
Time Period | Life Experience
---|---
*Year 2004* | Latvia’s accession to the EU
*Year 2007* | she could travel visa-free to the countries of the EU
*Present time* | she is the only “non-citizen” in the family, her both children naturalized for Latvian citizenship; her elder daughter speaks Latvian fluently and teaches it at school; her younger daughter has two degrees and speaks good Latvian but has been unemployed for three years – her husband is well-paid, her daughter (Yekaterina’s granddaughter) works, her son (Yekaterina’s grandson) both studies and works; Yekaterina’s granddaughter with her boyfriend have lived for 4.5 years in her flat, both have paid rent since they started to work after school

### 3.2. Thematic Field Analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lines</th>
<th>Thematic Sequence of the Story as Told</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Start of Opening Narration</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td><em>Explanation</em> of how she ended up in Riga:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- in 1950 came to Latvia,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- finished school in Cēsis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- in 1957 got married and moved to Riga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-13</td>
<td><em>Self-justification</em> why she does not speak Latvian fluently:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- during Soviet times nobody demanded knowledge of Latvian, although went to school in Latvia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- but still she has a basic level of Lavian and uses it in daily situations, e.g. in shops, cafés etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- her elder daughter, although studied in St. Petersburg, had a good teacher of Latvian back at secondary school and now is fluent in the state language and even teaches it at school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- her younger daughter received education in Latvia during the Soviet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* For the interview transcript in the original language see Annex 2.
Lines  Thematic Sequence of the Story as Told

period but also speaks better Latvian than her

14-19  Explanation why her younger daughter is unemployed:
  - does not have a 3rd category language certificate (native-speaker’s level)
  - generally it is hard to find job today in Latvia
  - her husband is well-paid and both children already work

20-21  Assertion that she worked her WHOLE life in Latvia, not a year in Russia

23-26  Report about transition period:
  - justifies her loyalty in that she says that she voted for independence
  - criticizes the Popular Front for their promises of equal treatment and
citizenship rights
  - expresses disappointment that Russians as a result were treated as
  “second-class people,” and were expected to leave the country after
  independence “à la go away!”

27-32  Slight digression to explain that they were not welcomed in Russia either
because short after the war, 1950s
  - all relatives were sent to Siberia
  - her mother’s mother was killed by Germans

32-33  Start of report about the difference in treatment of “non-citizens”
  - calculation of pensions at a lower rate than for “Latvians”

33-36  Assumption that now equal rates for all because Europe disapproves of the
fact that “some have more, other less, although all of us pay the same taxes”

36-39  Continuation of report about the difference in treatment of “non-citizens”
  - names professions that are reserved only for citizens
  - expresses her misunderstanding why “non-citizens” cannot become
  “even firemen”

39-40  Inference that those are professions where the state language knowledge is a
prerequisite this is why only for citizens

40-42  Specification that her children are all citizens, she is the only “non-citizen”

42-46  Statement of her attitude to the “non-citizen” issue
  - feels that it is insulting
  - repeats that they were all in favor of independence
Lines | Thematic Sequence of the Story as Told
--- | ---
- | reports that she has always made good friends with Latvians and there used to be no ethnic lines in relationships, nobody used to make accusations against each other
- | contradicts herself by saying that “in fact Latvians are, well, not BAD”
47-50 | Her interpretation of the problem
- | when Moscow ruled, everyone used to please the Soviets – now all efforts are directed at Brussels
50-59 | Her opinion on the shift of power manifested in Euroscepticism
- | complains about the “rule of Brussels”: fields are not sown, quota for fishing
- | “this is also humiliation in a way,” they “dictate” what to do, you are not man of your fate
59-74 | Evaluation of living standards in Latvia today
- | impossible to live on pensions
- | low wages
- | declaration of Dombrowskis that Latvian economy has grown to the 1st place in Europe is “RIDICULOUS”
- | high outmigration, but mostly citizens migrate
- | reference to “non-citizens” for whom there are more obstacles to get employed in Europe and so they stay in the country
74-81 | Explanation of why she does not naturalize
- | underscores her age
- | the need to pass exams for naturalization, to prove your language proficiency, e.g. once when she was offered a job as a cleaner in a bank, she took a language exam, but now does not have the motivation to do it again
- | the only reason why she would do it is for voting rights at local level
82-84 | Follow-up on report about the difference in treatment of “non-citizens”
- | lack of voting rights, neither at national, nor at local level
- | restates limited access to the labour market
86-91 | Recognition of the fact that she does not know all restrictions in rights for
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lines</th>
<th>Thematic Sequence of the Story as Told</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“non-citizens” since, due to her age, she does not encounter it in her everyday life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>End of Opening Narration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94-95</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Narrative Question: Could you tell more about your childhood?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96-112</td>
<td>Report about events starting from birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- was born in 1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- in 1941 the war began, evacuation to Lithuania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- could stay in Lithuania also after the war but her mother wanted to return to the native town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- returned to Staraya Russa but the town had been burnt down, almost no place to live in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114-122</td>
<td>Description of living conditions in Staraya Russa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- oppression through police because her parents were wealthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- threats that they would follow their relatives to Siberia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- her mother continuously bought the police off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122-129</td>
<td>Reasoning: why they first left Lithuania, then their native town and finally ended up in Cēsis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>131-139</td>
<td>Continuation of report starting from move to Cēsis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- relatives living in Cēsis offered them to come</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- got married and moved to Riga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- worked in a shoe factory for 33 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- short after breakup of the Soviet Union retired and received a “miserable pension rate, although [they] had very good salaries”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141-149</td>
<td>Evaluation of the currency transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- people lost their savings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- those who came to power misused the currency shift and made a fortune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Narrative Question: Please tell me more about your life in Cēsis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151-156</td>
<td>Report about parts of biography starting from Cēsis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- went and finished school in Cēsis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- moved to Riga and graduated from a specialized school as a cutter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- childhood was short because at the age of 18 she already got married</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and at the age of 20 got her first child

Explanation of her decision to move to Riga
- hard times and no work in winter
- her future husband made her a proposal and invited to Riga

3rd Narrative Question: And what happened next in Riga?

Report about parts of biography in Riga
- lived on salary
- got her first daughter
- improved their financial situation and almost 7 years later she gave birth to her second daughter
- her mother-in-law retired and took care of the baby

Evaluation of the present time success of her daughters
- both received higher education
- younger daughter has even two degrees but is unemployed
- she is wondering what is wrong about the country if a person with two degrees sits at home

Evaluation of the study career of her grandchildren and their partners

Evaluation of living standards back in the Soviet times
- she personally “was very well off”
- had a good salary
- travelled a lot to other Soviet republics

Impressions of her trips around the Soviet Union
- “I got to see a completely different world”

4th Narrative Question: Can you recall how your life went on after the breakup of the Soviet Union?

Evaluation of economic situation of people after independence
- hard time for her, small pension (even brought her pension card to show me her monthly rates: 25 Ls / month in 1994)

Evaluation of ethnic relations after independence (for the first time she addressed me with the familiar you-form in Russian)
- morally difficult, they despised, did not want to talk to us in Russian, if they heard Russian on the street, first thing they said was “Off to
Lines  Thematic Sequence of the Story as Told
railway station and train!”
- housing was scarce, they expected us to leave and vacate apartments
- the ethnic attitudes “were unrecognizable”
- Latvians felt power

239-252 Expression of confusion about why the ethnic divide became visible and how/where it all began
- argues that there was no linguistic oppression or ethnic discrimination on the labour market during the Soviet times (provides examples from her own experience)
- assumes that maybe it is rooted back in Stalinist deportations
- justifies by saying that other nations equally suffered from Stalinist repressions and many of her relatives were sent to Siberia, everybody suffered, not only Latvians
- “it is not all because of Russians”

253-254 5th Narrative Question: Can you recall your contacts with your Latvian friends, which you have mentioned before, that deteriorated after independence?

255-264 Evaluation of her contacts with Latvian neighbours after independence
- corrects my wording by saying that they began to communicate less, i.e. only greet each other but do not know about and help each other
- compares it to life in villages
- admits that she is missing it

264-270 Recognition that ethnic relations have become better now
- asserts that everybody suffered enough
- implies that mutual sufferings during transition brought people together
- repeated reference to the past when shortly after independence Latvians verbally sent Russians home
- “but we are not welcomed there either”
3.3. Reconstruction of a Case History

After the in-depth analysis of raw data of Yekaterina’s life-story as lived and her life-story as told, the aim of this section is to demarcate the objective truth of her biography from the way she reconstructs her past in the narration.

From the beginning of the interview Yekaterina implicitly provides a link between “non-citizenship” and ethnic relations in Latvia, one of the examples being that in several segments of the interview she uses a contraposition of “non-citizens” and Latvians, instead of “non-citizens” and citizens. Throughout her story she repeats several times that the attitude of Latvians to Latvian Russians has severely changed since independence. This new attitude was described as “completely different” and even “unrecognizable” which was obviously manifested in the recognition of the majority of the Russian-speaking post-war immigrants as “non-citizens.” Therefore the status of a “non-citizen” is perceived by the interviewee not as a legal construction but rather as part of the concept of ethnic discrimination: in her own interpretation of the events “non-citizens” are equated with Russians, or the Russian-speaking community, versus Latvians who had enshrined the division along ethnic lines in the law.

One of the main foci of Yekaterina’s narration is the comparison of her life before and after Latvian independence, or, adhering to our terms, the comparison of life as Soviet citizen and as Latvian “non-citizen.” If we look at the biographical data, it is evident that shortly after the war those were hard times for her, her family, and in general for the whole Latvia under the Soviet rule, but she attaches increasingly positive connotations to that period, in some statements even contradicting herself. For instance, she emphasized that everybody, including her personally, lived very well at that time. She recalls her travels to other Union republics with a good portion of nostalgia, putting it as a clear advantage of her former life, although, objectively, Latvian “non-citizens” at present time are not constrained as regards mobility both to the countries of the EU and Russia. Moreover according to Yekaterina, she is now in a financially secure position and can afford trips to other countries, no less than back before 1991. However, what she reports to feel about the present time, by contrast to the described happy memories of her Soviet past, is predominantly “humiliation” and “discomfort.” She admits to being ashamed not to be able to speak the Latvian language fluently since she has lived here for the most time of her life. Finally, she does not feel welcomed in Latvian society anymore and the meaning that she attributes to “non-citizens” like
herself is in their treatment as “nobodies”. Hence, it can be inferred that the status of a “non-citizen” overshadowed her perceptions of the whole current political system and state structure of Latvia.

Yet political or social rights affected through the status are not directly the aspects of the “non-citizenship” phenomenon that make the interviewee feel small and unwanted, in one word, excluded in her country. These are not extensively referred to in the story as told, except for perhaps low pension rates that Yekaterina still managed to timely accommodate to. It follows that her “tragedy” is primarily based on the spoilt relationships between ethnic communities and people in general, and only indirectly on the limited rights resulting from “non-citizenship.” Thus, it brings us to the hypothesis that it is not citizenship rights as such that impede ethnic accord, but far more citizenship rights as one of the most vivid manifestations of a larger societal concept, that is, the exclusionary national identity politics.

As Yekaterina puts it, due to the effect of humiliation through the “non-citizen” status she lost her sense of pride of the country she is living in; she feels as having been deceived and therefore detached from the state. During her opening narration she repeatedly explains, as if offering excuses or declaring her loyalty to the nationhood, that she has always had a good opinion of Latvians and back in the 90s voted for independence together with her whole family. By offering excuses in this form the interviewee reveals that the feeling of social exclusion associated with her legal status is personally seen as blame put on her, or sort of a punishment in which she has been living for years. She suggests that there are so many Russians and other Russian-speaking ethnicities in Latvia because Latvians, unlike Estonians for example, used to be welcoming and have a good attitude towards them during the Soviet times.

3.4. Summary of Findings

The findings and the hypothesis inferred from the narrative-biographical interview analysis significantly broaden the framework given by our initial hypothesis that the phenomenon of “non-citizenship” constructs marginal identity of Latvia’s Russian-speakers through political isolation, which, in turn, impedes social integration and facilitates the ethnic divide. As the research showed, the division of Latvian residents into citizens and “non-citizens” is the final and most vivid manifestation of the victory of one ethnic group over the other in the long course of interethnic struggles. This
corresponds to Zepa’s theoretical premise mentioned at the beginning of the first chapter that one of the triggers for ethnic tensions can be a rapid change in a group’s status in that two or more different ethnicities populating the same country start to compete for political hegemony. However in the case of post-Soviet Latvia the marginalized identity of the Russian-speaking minorities has crystallized not through the lack of political rights as such, but through the feeling of exclusion and alienation from the state, which the new status brought about.

The idea of Latvian national identification is based on the “occupation” rhetoric which publicly condemns Russian-speaking Soviet-era immigrants as “invaders” and by default excludes them from the societal core. This results in the marginalization of a great part of the Latvian population constructing two mutually distrusting and opposing communities.

Examples of the other two interviewees indicate these identity-oriented features of ethnic relations and further reveal that the ethnic divide became visible already before independence, in the 80s. Maksim recalls several situations on the playground from his childhood when the slightest disagreement with Latvian children could turn into a showdown over the status of who is who and what one is doing on the Latvian soil. He is convinced that the hostile attitude was put in the heads of a younger generation by the parents who had gone through the war. Similarly, Nina tells how her family friendship with a Latvian couple, her former neighbours that she long kept in touch with after moving house, was destroyed on the ethnic grounds. She reports that once she hosted her friends on the occasion of housewarming, one of them blurted out after having got drunk that there was no need to make repairs in the new flat because Nina was expected to soon go away from the country anyway.

Both episodes of the interviewees’ life stories show how Russians were made to strangers in the country they regarded as their homeland, worked for its future and voted for its independence together with Latvians. Although both of them paid the same taxes, “non-citizens” in the face of Russian-speakers received lower pension rates and were isolated from the best career posts. Maksim reports that you hardly meet any ethnic Latvian working at a construction site because all of them are either state authorities or chief administrators. As if to prove the ethnic nature of the “non-citizenship” concept, in response to the question what would have been different if citizenship rights had been given automatically to the Soviet newcomers, Yekaterina did not say that she would
have actively participated in the Latvian politics exercising her right to vote or would have wished to become a judge, but that the society would have been more untied.

Finally, to answer the question how the status of “non-citizen” influenced interethnic relations in Latvia the initial hypothesis that has served as a reference point should be elaborated in the way that could be confirmed through the narrative-biographical research findings. It follows that the status of “non-citizen,” being embedded in a wider encompassing concept of exclusionary national identity politics, marginalizes Latvian Russian-speaking minorities, which is contrary to the principles of integration and thus works towards impeding the ethnic accord.
CONCLUSION

The thesis explored the domestic features of interethnic relations in Latvia obstructed by divisive minority politics, the post-Soviet process of nation-building and transition as well as the political involvement of the external national homeland, international, and European organizations. According to the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia there are still about 40 per cent of ethnic Russians and other Russian-speaking minorities residing in Latvia, who do not hold national citizenship, being categorized as people of a “non-citizen” status – the status which is unique to Latvia and Estonia (that is to say, people who are lawfully present in the host country, but cannot be recognized as stateless persons).

I argued that “non-citizenship” can be considered one of the major factors that polarized the Latvian society. “Non-citizenship” as a derivative of the Latvian citizenship law is a legally unprecedented phenomenon and at the same time, a multifaceted social concept that is closely associated with a number of political and societal developments within and outside Latvia. First, after the proclamation of Latvian independence there was a considerable shift in hierarchies that allowed nationally minded political elites to adopt ethnic policies, which excluded Latvia’s Russian-speaking minorities from full political participation, infringed upon their social privileges, and as a result, left them with a feeling of inferiority. Among other things the enlargement of citizenry through Russian-speakers was seen by the governors as a threat to national integrity.

Second, since the law targeted primarily post-war immigrants, among whom Russians and Russian-speakers from other Union republics constituted the majority, the legal issue of “non-citizens” has grown into a highly sensitive ethnic controversy. Members of Latvia’s Russian-speaking community still report to feeling marginalized and alienated from the state.

Last of all, in the eyes of the international community the policies had to be officially justified by the historical memory of the Soviet illegitimate “occupation” which at one time brought about national suffering and undermined Latvian nationhood and today, has become part of national identity construction.

On the other hand the domestic ethnic accord in Latvia has been impeded by numerous external factors. First and foremost, the Russian Federation, identifying itself as the external national homeland to the Soviet-era immigrants residing in Latvia, got
involved in “minority rights” and the “human rights of ‘non-citizens’” discourse through various European and international platforms to reassert its influence in the country. As a result, the whole Russian-speaking community in the face of “non-citizens” has become a sticking point in the Russian-Latvian interstate dialogue which has considerably added to security concerns of the titular nation and triggered further interethnic confrontations in the domestic affairs of Latvia.

To discover how such country-specific factor as citizenship rights of “non-citizens” in Latvia are reflected in interethnic relations on a personal level for this study I proceeded with the help of the narrativist methodology of biographical case reconstruction which broadened the perspective of my initial assumption that through political isolation, the “non-citizen” status in Latvia constructs marginal identity of the Russian-speaking minorities, which impedes their social integration and thus facilitates the ethnic divide. The research findings have shown that it is not through political isolation, as it was assumed in the working hypothesis, that Latvian “non-citizens” are in fact marginalized, – for all of the contributors to the research have never been active participants of the country’s political community – but rather due to the fundamental principle of exclusion inherent in national identity politics that has been manifested through the “non-citizenship” concept. While ethnic exclusion of the group of Russian-speakers is characteristic of other nationalizing post-Soviet states and is visible primarily on the level of informal networks, Latvia represents a rare case where this element is already enshrined in the law.

Overall, granting of citizenship can serve as a powerful instrument in the fight against statelessness and other forms of political and social exclusion, therefore the findings of the present study, which exhibit the nature of impact of citizenship rights on patterns of ethnic accord in a country by the example of a two-community society of Latvia, should be helpful for further research in this field.
LIST OF REFERENCES


ANNEX 1

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The initial open question (narrative generating question):
I am interested in life stories of people with an alien’s/non-citizen’s passport in Latvia. Please tell me about your whole life, anything that occurs to you. You have as much time as you like. I won’t ask you any questions for now. I will just make some notes on the things that I would like to ask you more about later; if we haven’t got enough time today, perhaps in a second interview.

Specific questions:
- Did you attempt to start naturalization process to obtain Latvian citizenship?
- If so, what did you do to achieve your aim?
- If not, why didn’t you do that? Do you plan to naturalize and why?
- How does political exclusion affect your daily life / your relationship with the host society?
- Does the status of a non-citizen influence your general perceptions of Latvians as an ethnic group?
- Does the status of a non-citizen influence your private relationships with ethnic Latvians? If so, how / in which way?
- Does the status of a non-citizen influence your self-identification/patriotism/your sense of national belonging/attachment to the Latvian nation?
- Does politics in Latvia affect interethnic relations? By which means? Can you give any examples?
- Will anything / your attitude to Latvians… / interethnic relations change if you get a Latvian passport tomorrow?
- Do you think that society would be more united if citizenship rights were equal for all permanent residents of Latvia?
- What is the role of the Russian Federation in this conflict?
- Do you feel a sense of belonging to Russia?
- What is Russia for you?
- Do you have a sense of belonging to Latvia / to Latvians?
У: Я приехала в Латвию в пятидесятом году, и: жила в Цесисе, там мы с мамой
мама работала я училась ходила в школу, вот а: теперь, вышла замуж в пятьдесят
седьмом и переехала в Ригу, и: вот с тех пор я живу здесь, конечно была советская
власть никто с нас особо языка не требовал несмотря на то что с—школу я
закончила в Цесисе здесь и: я: не владею языком так чтобы вот разговорная речь
была хорошая я-, так я немножко говорю конечно и: понимаю всё что там говорят
там вот если замысловатые какие-то речи там где вдруг а так я разбираюсь во всём
и: приду в магазин я могу спросить по-латышски и в кафе и всё что это у меня
dочь старшая она вообще училась в Питере а: латышский вот была очень хорошая
учительница по латышскому ну и она прекрасно владеет латышским и даже в
школе преподаёт латышский, вот а вторая дочь она закончила институт (3) где
экономический и русский факультет ещё в советское время и конечно работала в
русских в этом же институте она была и ну конечно лучше чем я владею я зыком
но вот трудно щас работу найти потому что надо требуют третью категорию (3) и:
она сейчас уже три года не работает (5) ну вот потому как сейчас вообще найти
работу трудно а когда ты латышский в совершенстве не знаешь ну: может быть
она бы и пошла на какую-нибудь работу не с образованием на которой не требуют
образования, но она не хочет муж у неё неплохо зарабатывает так она дочь уже
тоже работает сын учится и работает (4) чтобы идти на грязную работу, ну вот а: я
отработала всю жизнь здесь, всю жизнь ни одного года как говорится в России ни
была ну если я приехала мне было десять лет
Т: угу
У: вот и: что я скажу поначалу как отделились мы все были моя вся семья
gолосовала за отделение от России и думали маленькая страна, будет больше
порядка, и: обещали блага, Мноюнародный фронт и: мы все были за а когда вот
это случилось, мы остались как бы вторым сортом и так что: все уезжайте а: ведь
приехали мы сюда с мамой после войны нас тоже там не жаловали потому что
мы: все родственники были депортированы и осталась мама у нас каким-то
способом что её не увезли в Сибирь потому что её маму убили немцы что у неё
там ну, партизаны ночевали, вот только это маму спасло как-то да и: уходили
ночью сюда уезжали (2) ну это же всё после войны пятидесятий год
посёл=только=пять=лет так что всего было, вот ну: не знаю вот поначалу пенсии
dавали негражданам меньше коэффициентом чем ээ латышам мм вот, НО сейчас
вроде бы я слышала как=то=выступал=народный=контроль как будто бы сейчас
одинаково дают, ну: возможно что и Европа против того что одни меньше другие
больше а платим нароги=налоги одинаково, ээ много профессий которые
не=неграждане не могут, ээ ну, получить такие как полиция и пожарники
смешно=даже=пожарники и: это самое и и аптеки и врачи должны быть все
граждане и естественно что раз=граждане=нет=значит знания языка там должны
уже быть у меня дети все граждане я только негражданка
T: ммм
Y: дети и внуки это естественно, вот ну: ну не знаю что сказать конечно очень
обидно что так поступили потому что мы были все за да и я скажу что я вообще о
Латвии и о латышах нии=всегда у меня были хорошие друзья, мы все дружили,
никакого национального признака нигде не было в дружбе никто никогда, ээ ну
не делали какие-то упрёки друг другу потому что вообще латыши ну неплохие ну
я скажу так что ((усмехается)) они сначала когда была Москва все пёрлись в
Москву и надо было нашему руководству туда угоддать теперь все в Брюссель
T: угу
Y: теперь все в Брюссель и: я скажу что: вот то что стремится Украина ТУДА
((посмеивается)) хорошего ничего нет управляет нами теперь Брюссель
T: да:
Y: наши ПОЛЯ пустые, они не могут даже засеивать их им надо их скосить гладко
чтобы они более менее не зарастали вот это единственноное а сеять ты не можешь
тебе денег не дадут за это что ты не сеешь это разве правильно?
T: да
Y: это неправильно это тоже вот такое унижение ты столько-то рыбы должен
выловить ты столько-то это на всё КВОТА вот так что: хорошего мало тобой
командуют ты не можешь ничего, ну а так, не знаю вроде бы, ээ на одну пенсию
если бы я вот жила одна
T: угу
Y: то: то на одну пенсию прожить просто невозможно поэтому у людей долги ну
слава Богу у меня дети более менее обеспеченные и: они мне даже
щас=внучка=конечно уже четыре с половиной года живёт у меня они платят,
поначалу-то я платила сама а они учились оба вот а щас они платят и мне уже
легче поэтому я их ((усмехается)) и не особо-то им=комната=дана и: я рада что
они живут у меня а так так прожить конечно невозможно и то что наш президент
не президент а: этот Домбровский говорит о том что мы подняли экономику на
первом месте в Европе это просто СМЕШНО это просто ‘смешно’ сколько наши
получают, копейки и: а там совсем другие зарплаты потому и уехalo много
отсюда но самое главное что едут-то граждане

Т: ммм

Y: а остаются-то неграждане, потому что там тоже на работу неграждане они не
могут так стабильно устроиться (3) ну и многие не берут гражданство да и я
dумаю что оно мне в общем-то и не надо, уже мой возраст семьдесят четыре года
и=думаю куда я пойду сдавать там какие-то экзамены хотя когда я устраивалась
уборщицей я пошла я сдала на то что хотя бы уборщицей работать в банке там
мне=племянница=помогла я работала хоть немножко зато пенсия немножко
прибавилась за каждый отработанный год если зарплата более менее то там
прибавляется к пенсии, ну вот так что тас ещё раз идти сдавать как-то не=совсем
‘не хочется’ хотя подумывала может быть сходить сдать хоть голосовать буду так
dаже в местные нам не разрешают (3) не можем ну вот так вот ну=ну а больше
я=не=я=не знаю что можно было бы сказать а то что специальности которые
негражданам это я назвала это мизер

Т: угу

Y: потому что я конечно как уже человек в возрасте не=не мне не приходится ну
не сталкивалось я с этим поэтому особо-то я не знаю (1) я знаю что очень много,
где неграждане не имеют права, а потом, всё это, хотя бы с этой же пенсий всё
так скрыто

Т: угу

Y: что мы: в общем-то полностью всего и не знаем (4)

Т: #да:#

Y: #ну вот# задавайте вопросы

Т: ну а вот хотелось бы узнать побольше о: Вашем детстве вот где оно прошло
откуда Вы приехали можете вот с того момента как-то поподробнее #рассказать?#

Y: #ой да# да детство знаете какое детство вот я родилась в тридцать девятом

Т: угу

Y: и тут же в сорок первом началась война, нас эвакуировали в Литву #немцы
вывезли#

Т: #мммм#

Y: и мы там во время войны жили в Литве это н=недалеко в общем-то до Саты
(под Устелью) помню мамин разговор, вот и мы там прожили всю войну и нас там
оставляли но: мама сказала не на свою заваленку как говорится это Новгородская область Старая Руса

Y: вот такой городок который были очень сильные войны война сильная была там, всех вывозили в Германию и: у нас деревнями вывозили вот мы попали в Литву

T: ага

Y: ну=ну: вот потом мы потом вернулись я ещё была совсем ещё маленькая мы вернулись домой, всё сожжено жить особо негде и: мама говорила вся комната из чего там построен дом ну (из балок) деревянная

T: да=да

Y: вот жили и настолько было притеснение оттого что в общем-то родители были зажиточными так у нас там в деревне был милиционер он просто ходил и всё время требовал иначе поедешь за своими родственниками ‘в Сибирь’ а расплачиваться-то особо нечем было были зарыто в ямах кое-что вот ((усмехается)) мама рассказывала что у отца была каракулевая шуба

T: ага

Y: длинная, так она на воротники резала и ему давала вот этим расплачивалась потому что овощами там картошкой это не хватало и: что там было такое было детство а потом вот когда мне уже было десять лет мы приехали в Цесис и: несмотря на то что жили тоже ээ в бараках

T: угу

Y: ну: здесь уже мама работала и: жили спокойно и никто нас как говорится не притеснял а вот уехали только из-за этого потому что во время (после) могли ж уже остаться в Литве и мама уже ну была молодая и говорила по-литовски но не осталась хотела домой на родину уехать, а вот так приехали и не особо-то, не=невозможно было жить, и вот уехали сюда

T: угу

Y: поехали в Цесис там просто были родственники и они нас туда пригласили и мы там вот жили ‘пока я замуж не вышла сюда в Ригу и с тех пор’ живу в Риге работала всё время закройщицей была на обувной фабрике всю жизнь тридцать три года отработала я (3) вот ну: как раз вот всё это рухнуло и мне было через два месяца пятьдесят пять и дали пенсию там вообще МИЗЕР такой мизер хотя у нас зарплаты были очень хорошие там всех под одну гребёнку всё рухнуло
Т: это уже=это в девяносто первом или чуть позже?

У: ээ нет это было наверное девяносто первый девяносто второй когда вот это репшики там переводили по-моему нет это уже девяносто четвёртый был#

Т: #мммм#

У: потому что поначалу-то эти деньги сдали да были репшики а потом на латы когда там вообще один к двумстам представляете один к двумстам там все накопления которые у людей были все (сгорели) хотя вагоны денеж шли в Россию, так что те кто были у власти нагрелись как следует, деньги-то сдавали и всё а вагоны говарят Репши наш министр финансов или экономики я не помню Репши я знаю у нас и были репшики

Т: #да=да=да я помню#

У: #((смеётся))# а сейчас Римшевич тоже похожая управляет банками, банком государственным ‘латвийским’ ну вот ну что ещё ну:

Т: ну а вот про жизнь в Цесисе подробнее расскажите

У: ну что как ходила в школу закончила школу и: потом уехала сюда и я не заканчивала я заканчивала училище вот это на закройщицу, это такое ну как были раньше ПТУ шо-то там такое я не помню уже ну в общем училище рабочее для рабочих так как специальность эта рабочая, закройщица, но по обуви вот и детство такое было что я в восемнадцать вышла замуж ((смеётся)) в двадцать родила да а Вы знаете жила в Цесисе: сюда когда приехала поступала сначала в техникум хотела и познакомилась с мужем, там жизнь такая была тоже очень довольно мама работала на кирпичном заводе и: в зимнее время завод закрывался и: работы не было и: муж стал звать замуж и я думаю ну в Ригу поеду, так что оттуда вот я уехала в восемнадцать лет и отжила я там восемь лет фактически в Цесисе (2) ну вот в общем вот так вот

Т: А потом в Риге?

У: Ну в Риге ну: знаете ну как, ну нормально всё было вышла замуж в двадцать лет родила девочку, старшая дочь, вот и: тоже было не сладко, всё-таки пока маленькая некуда было деть работали на одной зарплате вон с мужем, и у меня вторая родилась только через шесть с половиной лет=шесть с половиной лет разница у нас почти ‘семь’ вот потому что ну: не хотели иметь чтоб подняться на ноги, ну а потом моя свекровь пошла на пенсию и она согласилась с смотреть младшую тоже девочку была-, была и есть ((посмеивается)) вот две дочери у меня ну: всё нормально оба получили высшее образование и младшая даже два мм вот
она ещё училась в университете на физмате потом экономический закончила вот
сидит дома ((смеётся)) несмотря ни на что ((посмеивается)) казалось бы да?
Т: да:
Y: ну слава Богу у них дети тоже закончили все вот Андрей учится, на:
программиста и работает уже в банке когда-то он ходил на курсы, прогмейстер
программатика как там? да, ну: в общем компьютерные курсы, прогмейстер
называлось наверно ‘это просто фирма’ и: вот он там проявил себя хорошо и его
это оттуда порекомендовали в банк на первом курсе он сразу пошёл работать,
tуда на полставки хоть на дневном ну первый курс у него был бесплатный, ну не
только первый вообще он на бесплатный поступил потому что хорошо учился
‘так как-то прошёл’ хотя внушка, тоже училась хорошо она университет
заканчивала и она: плати деньги платный так довольно дорого всё это
‘приходится учёба’ ну наверно заграницей тоже (3)
T: жизнь скорее я бы сказала, в Германии допустим если университет то ты
вообще не платишь
Y: да да ну вот в Дании учится моего внука девочка на китайском ((смеётся))
фокусница! китайский изучает вот так она не платит там, но она платит за
квартиру там Дания вылетает у неё там я думаю не меньше хотя она была
единственная отличница в школе, за этот ‘выпуск’
T: ммм
Y: и мы говорим что и здесь бы ты получила бесплатное, у нас же в университете
тоже есть китайский, у неё там какие-то предки, что-то связано с японцами, а чё
на китайский пошла я ж не знаю
T: #((посмеивается)) интересно#
Y: #ну вот она два курса# вот заканчивает уже в воскресение приезжает и третий
курс они в Китае, будут учиться, весь год (2)
T: классно классно
Y: да ну вот так вот ну: о себе не знаю ничего такого жили мы в советское время
очень хорошо пример я хорошо жила, потом уже тогда начала работать ну не
знаю мы объездили весь Советский Союз и я побывала и в Чехословакии, и в
Германии, и в Финляндии, и даже во Вьетнаме
T: О: ‘интересно’
Y: да вот так что: #смотрела#
T: с семьёй?
Я: нет одна ездили по туристической вот по работе если надо меня с работы (2) 
ну: почти одна с предприятия ехала, не почти а одна вот ну там по городу были 'в 
разных' были почти две недели бывали посмотрели мир совершенно другой, 
nепохожий на наш, совершенно это было щас скажу двадцать шесть—девятнадцать 
семь лет назад так что это было (2) давно сейчас наверное и там всё изменилось, 
вот ну что (2) 
Т: А как вот Вы пережили этот перелом что Вы заметили как Ваша жизнь 
изменилась после того как Латвия отделилась от Союза 
Я: тяжело, очень тяжело 
Т: Ну вот как можете какие-то яркие воспоминания вот такие вспомнить, вам 
приходят? 
Я: Ну таких воспоминаний особо нету я не могу сказать чтобы что-то там какие-то там были я была на пенсии и когда получала копейки и когда приходила на 
пенсию к дочери она здесь рядом живёт у меня даже где-то хотелось бы 
посмотреть ((выходит из кухни за сумкой)) я сейчас Вам покажу профсоюзные в 
пensionном сказано сколько я там получала ((возвращается с сумкой)) я хожу в 
бассейн так он у меня в сумке надо пенсионный показывать чтобы ну: там три 
лата тогда, ((показывает пенсионный)) вот двадцать пять лат в девяносто 
четвёртом году, двадцать пять латов (2) и естественно что: это были копейки это 
ещё был (Гофманис) председателем так он пенсионерам какие-то скидки давал на 
отопление, не какие-то а пятьдесят процентов хоть его и ругают что он много там 
ну они ж закрыли все предприятия и поэтому безработица щас же у нас только 
одни магазины, и одни продавцы, и банки которые нет-нет да и закрываются и 
люди теряют деньги, вот двадцать пять лат ну что это за деньги? и вот потом всё 
это вот потом пятьдесят четыре это какой же год был ((смотрит в пенсионный)) 
(4) ‘даже тут не написано какой год’ да ну в общем знаешь да тяжело жилось 
прервали во-первых никто не хотел разговаривать если слышали русскую речь то 
это: вагон как=они=говарили вокзал и вагон, и: типа уезжайте отсюда, 
освобождайте квартиры потому что не хватало это сейчас много стали строить 
тогда тоже строили вот районы но много было, вот я хочу сказать что у меня 
всегда было хорошее мнение о латышах ((посмеивается)) хотя я там сказала что: 
вот там из что сначала в Москву потом в Брюссель, но: изменилось настолько вот 
отношение, что: не узнать даже тех друзей было которые ээ были очень добрыми, 
они просто вот почувствовали власть видимо вот у себя ну я не знаю и уже никто
хоть и говорят что их там притесняли НЕ было такого я помню как на работе тебя там выбирают чтобы было два латыша и русский один, чтобы не было притеснений вот в суд там выбирали этими народными заседателями из рабочей среды обязательно должен был быть, выбирала только латышей, я помню один год меня выбрали и как-то через год поставили на моё место латышку так что не было притеснений так и учись вот моя дочь поступала допустим в университет было три потока латышских и один русский так те сдавали лишь бы сдать экзамен а у наших было на одно место пять человек вру=у=русских так что ээ я не знаю ну: когда может быть вот сразу после войны я=я=я сочувствую тем которых вывозили да дак разве это были одни латыши? (2) это же были и русские и украинцы и белорусы все вот я говорю у нас там вот хотя бы мою всю родню, мой дядька родной двадцать пять лет было дан приехал оттуда и он пожил год и умер так что были все-всакое было, и не только здесь в Латвии что как бы из-за русских всё это ну вот они в ответе мы сами страдали всё это

Т: угу а можете рассказать вот о своих контактах с этими семьями друзьями-латышами с которыми немного подпортились отношения после #развала#

Y: #ну а ну как# подпортились просто меньше стали общаться да как-то знаете вот у меня так сложилось что я закончила ээ ну: предприятие закрылось и мне через два месяца на пенсию ну все остались как бы все не стали работать предприятие закрылось и мы уже здесь вот допустим у нас на лестничной клетке мы же да не только с латышами здороваемся мы и с русскими так сейчас вот поздоровались и пошли в деревнях там как-то все знают и общаются а как-то помогают а: здесь вот ну знаем здравствуйте здравствуйте как дела была бабушка говорю что это Вашей бабушки не видно так давно уже нет всё, а мы: вот и не знаем так вот как-то живём все, как-то не=ну нет такого общения которое бы надо было не хватает этого всего все заняты как-то знаете, да сейчас ПО-ДРУГУМУ немножко менее стало щас лучше ээ потому что хватило всем горя все были квартиры теряли продавали и сейчас вот эти вот банки где брали деньги а потом отдавать нечем люди стали разъезжаться и они поняли что: не от нас это зависит от простого народа особенно так что сейчас отношение уже по-другому но поначалу да было не хотели даже говорить уезжайте и едьте в свою Россию и всё такое ну так а мы там не нужны тоже

Т: ‘конечно’, а какой-то пример можете привести #вот чтоб с вами#?

Y: #не=нет такого# у меня не было такого примера
Т: Просто вот вы ощущали да что #по-другому относиться?#
Y: #да ощущали# да да
Т: А вот так вот в магазине или я не знаю как Вы говорите на ну: на вокзале
хотя=на=вокзале=там (2)
Y: ну да ну нет такого не могу сказать чтобы там было что-то какие-то стычки
нет=нет не было ничего такого, ну отношения было да изменилось совсем по-
другому было отношение а так я не могу сказать ничего, это у меня не было
‘ничего такого’ (2) ((тяжело вздыхает))
Т: Понятно, та:к а что сейчас я ещё более такие специальные вопросы которые
dома готовила посмотрю, секундочку, мм а вот хотела насчёт натурализации
спросить, а Вы говорите мм, подумывали да натурализоваться?
Y: Да
Т: А почему всё-таки не завершили этот процесс до конца?
Y: Да просто возраст, уже и знаете как-то идти вот, ну не знаю мне кажется что
как-то уже себя чувствуешь неудобно в таком возрасте прошло двадцать лет и
вдруг я решила натурализоваться (2) ну=не=знаю в семьдесят четыре года иди
получать гражданство надо ли оно мне?, конечно может быть это и необходимо в
будущем даже ну сколько там я ещё проживу может и десять лет проживу ‘кто
его знает’
Т: Дай Бог гораздо больше
Y: ((смеётся)) Дай Бог, не знаю вот да подумывала подумывала что может быть
надо подтянуться немного с дочерью поговорить ((смеётся)) ну вот (2)
Т: Ну вот желание оно откуда появилось?
Y: Желание? Да может быть даже из-за того что ты не можешь вот даже
проголосовать
Т: Да мм понимаю
Y: потому что вот, когда вот это голосование, вот эти вот кандидаты все и что они
там, обещают это же только обещают потом этого ничего нет а мы считаем что
вот эта партия которая сидит щас управляет Ригой всё-таки очень много сделала
для народа, и да они сказали ну пенсионеры все будут голосовать за Ушакова
потому что пятьдесят сантимов им не надо платить, в транспорте бесплатно но
это не пятьдесят сантимов это за месяц выйдет двадцать двадцать пять латов, всё-
так я бы не надо бы мне хочу я поехала на базар и купила себе что-то подешевле
потому что здесь у нас всё дороже на центральном можно найти что-то по-б это

87
подешевле купить и там же не только там овощи ‘и мясо’ ну и продукты и всё остальное и: мы видим как детские сады вот отремонтировали тут столько они настроили тут же всё видно и садики и школы и=и дали и бесплатный проезд и школьникам теперь всем дали проезд и: сам Ушаков говорил что они набираются опыта узнают как в Таллинне бесплатно всем, всем, ну: они о том что есть ли смысл содержать такую армию контролёров, этих автоматов разных которые билет прикладывают ну конечно много туристов всё равно им это надо будет вот там билеты большое количество оплачивают деньги за эти же карточки а карточка какая там не тоненькая бумажка идёт а: чё они выбрали такую фирму дорогую? это же всё тоже покупается, что им там мало и доплачивать надо, ну пока ещё только разговоры но много=много очень много где и вот видим и дворы и дороги всё делают и стараются так что все голосовали конечно не=только=русские латыши голосовали за эту партию ‘ну кто его знает’

Т: то есть Вы хотели Вас это #подтолкнуло пойти натурализоваться?#

Y: #Меня подтолкнуло вот это вот# а так пока что как нам=мы: едем и в Европу и едем и в Россию но я никуда не еду пока что правда внучка-то меня возила я даже нас возила я смотрела её девочку правнуочка моя, она меня и её вот дважды в Париж свозила и в Стокгольм и путёвку брала в Хорватии мы отдыхали, и: где я ещё была (2) где-то она меня ещё а в Таллин, дважды мы ездили, всё так что она меня повозила везде старалась

Т: Хорошо что хоть преград нет

Y: Да ну было вот поначалу когда мы ездили да вот это самое стоял весь автобус и нас было пять человек неграждан и там проверка шла этих наших паспортов, мы говорим Господи граждане они выходят как=какая забота о нас проверяют чтоб мы вернулись нас там отмечают сколько человек вернулось сколько приедет сколько вернётся зачем такая забота? ((смеётся)) зачем мы им там? хорошо если мы там останемся для вас лучше ((посмеивается)) ‘хотя мы и там не нужны и тут не нужны’ ну так

Т: И что вас проверяли прям больше #чем остальных?#

Y: #Да: да# а остальным ничего не надо было ничего, граждане едут так а наши паспорта так стоял по полчаса ой где там час #наверно#

Т: #Он не знал# наверно да что это за #статус?#

Y: #Да они даже# не знают что такое за статус да

Т: И как это всё, как они начали выяснять
Y: Ну как в компьютере там это всё, по радио связывались да ‘да’

T: В итоге задержали автобус да?

Y: Да вот стояли очень долго так это сколько мы границ переезжали это мы ездили в Венгрию то есть там по туристической вот с Ниной как раз тогда мы ездили с ней так стоял автобус вот из-за нас пять человек нас в автобусе было а там полный автобус большой и: ((посмеивается)) а там же границы-то много там Польша Германия потом Венгрия когда уже в Венгрию въезжали да по-моему три границы или сколько мы там проезжали так что по-моему даже по Чехии какой-то кусок дороги был да нас там очень охраняли ((громко смеётся)) да=да, ну: националисти везде есть и у нас=упас Вы вот видите голосуют всё-таки партия националистов ээ заняла в этом голосовании двадцать процентов сколько или девятнадцать двадцать процентов голосов по Риге, отдали им хотя они кроме национальной почвы в общем-то обещать ничего не обещают там чтобы что мы вам там сделаем а вот ээ и эта партия «Единство» они пошли тоже таким путём немножко начали на национальных чувствах и: этим они конечно проиграли

T: То есть сейчас уже более вдумчивые люди, латыши?

Y: Да, да понимают что этим жизнь не становится лучше, более так отношение уже изменилось всё-таки немножко но многие всё равно вот девятнадцать процентов остались на том же, взгляды не изменились ‘ну:’

T: А расскажите вот как Ваши молодые-, молодое поколение Ваши дочери правнуки,- ой внучки ээ общаются с латышами есть? ‘контакты вот как-то’

Y: Есть, у меня внук он тоже на латышском учится внучки все закончили ээ ну: на латышском Ирина ей всё равно на каком говорить и: она сейчас правила работает в (Уралфи) русская фирма но там есть латыши и она говорит я чтоб не забыть я с ними только по-латышски вот=ну она и английск им владеет и ну: английским владеют большинство сейчас и: внук тоже и я рада что так всё ходи и потому что по школьной программе нет ходила на курсы добавочно, сами старались ‘все’

T: Ну а каких-то таких внутренних барьеров нет чтобы обшаться с представителями как бы другой этничности да? вот с латышами для молодых людей то что Вы говорите всё-таки было такое развитие двух параллельных миров да? вот русские с русскими общаются точнее русскоязычные общаются с русскоязычными а латыши с латышами, а сейчас уже молодые, как-то ощущается?
У: Ощущается хотя и разговаривают, и общаются на латышском но: всё равно в компании друзья редко когда чтоб кто-то там в компании был другой национальности русские с русскими и даже,- хотя у моего внука в институте друг латыш он говорят—я говорю что ты русского там не нашёл он говорит да есть но говорит у меня с ним больше общего так что: находят ‘находят, да’
Т: Потихоньку может быть стираются #границы#
У: #может быть# дай Бог, да чтобы потихоньку и стёрлись мы вот говорю уйдёт наше поколение может здесь будет совсем по-другому, ‘в будущем, да=уж’ да язык надо знать это я не отрицаю потому что ээ те кто его знали и раньше молодцы потому что действительно живёшь на этой земле и: ты обязан знать язык, я вот смотрю иногда программу Соловьёва ээ ведущий, ‘Вы знаете наверно’ и он тоже там мол в России приехали русский знайте типа тоже ну конечно если приезжают допустим из Узбекистана и если они не будут знать русский как они там будут общаться просто: то что сейчас всё это уже стирается как бы как раньше были эти свобода где хотел там и жил ‘в любой республике’ щас уже так, ну вот так отношение латышей было настолько хорошим что самые,- много они виноваты сами нас принимали в Эстонии, ну русских мало потому что там приезжали и: если попросят были такие что вот куда пройти они наоборот покажут дорогу, вот и там и русских мало потому что вот такое отношение было поэтому я говорю что я латышем уважаю, вот, не было такого было хорошее отношение и поэтому нас тут та много ((смеётся))
Т: ((смеётся)) ‘интересно’
У: ((смеётся)) да, да потому что они хорошо относились ‘все’ а сейчас вдруг вот так вот мы говорим что вот пляшут по дудку, кто у власти тем и подмазываем, ну а так нельзя! ((посмеивается))
Т: Ну дай Бог скоро поймут
У: Да, да ((посмеивается))
Т: Та:к подождите щас ещё вопросиков у меня несколько есть (4) ну, вот всё к той же теме да, а вот, влияет ли как-то этот статус негражданина вот на Ваш взгляд на отношения между латышами и русскими?
У: Ну: это мне кажется что если ты говоришь по-латышски то ((усмехается)) они тебе в паспорт не заглядывают, ты гражданин или негражданин это не влияет, но просто: да как они говорят (mange lauke) на каком языке говорить потому что они говорят и на русском и на латышском, ну: в деревнях уже не говорят по-русски
там больше русский не изучают, и: это последнее время когда стали торговые
отношения развиваться с Россией так стали требовать русский язык, а одно время
там не требовали и он не нужен был никто не учил, и: если ты говоришь по-
латьышски там никто не смотрит ты гражданин или нет (2)
T: Угу ну да, то есть больше даже язык является таким фактором
Y: Да язык
T: как к тебя будут относиться да?
Y: Да
T: Потому что если на русском заговоришь и скажешь я ничего не понимаю по-
латьышки наверняка уже латыши как-то #по-другому будут#
Y: #да ‘да’# конечно это=это всё я не могу отрицать
T: А вот из Вашего опыта если Вы допустим обращаетесь к латышам на русском
вот как отличается #отношение#?
Y: #Отличается# смотря кто
T: Отличается если Вы хоть и с акцентом но на латышском говорите #или на
русском#
Y: #А: они переходят# на русский
T: Да? Да вы что
Y: Да, да, да начинаешь там по-латышски а: чувствует акцент и что тебе трудно и
начинают по-русски говорить даже вот в кафе там я начинаю спрашивать там
(man bluzinu ludzu) а: она чувствует акцент и: что вам ещё пожалуйста (kur)
((усмехается)) (ku wel) что ещё
T: Ну дружелюбно #переходят на русский#
Y: #Ну: да щас=щас# Вы знаете вот так в кафе это их работа, и им выгодно чтобы
у них были посетители и покупатели так что: разговаривают да и ‘отвечают по-
русски’ щас уже это меньше стало
T: А вот, ещё хотела бы узнать, повлияли ли эти изменения политические как
Латвия объявила независимость и тот факт что вы голосовали за Многонациональный
фронт как Вы сказали и Вас так взвали и лишили политических прав, права
gолосования, повлияло ли это на Ваше чувство патриотизма к государству?
Y: ((вздыхает)) Конечно повлияло, конечно повлияло, потому что: говорили одно
и: и: а сделали совсем по-другому и: мы та допустим я там была уже в
пensionном возрасте а ведь и молодёжь и мои дети все мы все я=говорю моя
семья вся голосовала я знаю многих так был же очень большой процент, это ясно
было что русские голосовали а потом были у нас же это на Домской площади
когда, ну как бы Народный фронт организовывал там жгли костры, там
собирались как бы как охрана типа ( ) там вот где банки государственные там не
подпускали вот этих омоновцев ну: стояли грудью так там же были бок о бок с
русскими и мы у меня соседка латышка она была сослана, была общая кухня у
меня в центре когда я жила и она была сослана в Сибирь, и потом прошло сколько
лет её реабилитировали и вот они вернулись и мы получили квартиру как раз
вместе с ней и мы с ней вместе носили горячий суп туда, чай в термос наливали,
вот те которые там сидели, была же зима и мы с ней носили вместе, она латышка
а мы все ну конечно они вернулись с Сибири все по-русски говорили, уже
ПОТОМ стали говорить по-латышески корда вот ещё потом мы обмен долали
квартиры, и: они вдруг заговорили а у неё была мама русская отец немец, а муж
латиш ну она как бы вроде её из-за этого и в Сибирь отправили что у неё фамилия
была (Гест), немецкая, так нам говорили но Лёня был сосланный тоже за то что
был зажиточный, да, и мы смотрим ((улыбается и эмоционально повышает тон))
СТАЛИ ГОВОРИТЬ ПО-ЛАТЫШСКИ НАШИ СОСЕДИ хотя всё время говорили
по-русски ‘ну: видите’ ну: и дети, и дети говорили же по-русски но и поступать
им было очень сложно в университете, у них два сына было у меня две дочери у
них два сына ‘так по возрасту почти одинаковые’ и им было сложно на
латышский факультет поступить, и: потом обучение началось ((смеётся)) как
говорится так что да: обида была конечно что: так, отношение такое (2) ну это
всё, хотя ‘хотела сказать что: устроили всё это верхушка’ хотя: видишь, пошли и
простой народ тоже
Т: угу

Y: стал как бы за это (2) ‘так’

Т: А конкретно с этой соседкой латышкой изменились как-то отношения?

Y: Да=да мы были очень хорошими друзьями, мы отжили двадцать четыре или
dвадцать пять лет вместе, мы никогда не ругались ‘на общей кухне’ ни-ког-да ээ я
скажу что: мы никогда во-первых семья такая не из пьющих и одна и другая ведь
ссоры происходят когда вместе пьянки а у нас такого никогда не было поэтому,
как-то у нас всегда мирно мы разъехались мы просто плакали ((смеётся)) я гово=я
уехала я эту квартиру кооперативную взяла и дочь оставалась старшая там,
Катя=Катя заходите только не теряйтесь а потом они вот разменились вместе и:
мы встречались ‘вместе’ очень как-то вспоминали все дни, прожитые годы и:
смеялись говорили вспомни что покупали по пятьдесят сантимов эти знаете там на базаре там были шейка там с головкой там потрошки эти ((смеётся)) что это говорим где теперь курицу берём и ещё всё плачем ((смеётся)) говорим что плохо, да всегда привыкаешь к хорошему и стараешься думаешь что,- ‘посматриваем как в других странах когда голодные сидят так думаешь у нас ещё более мение’ ну просто я не могу Вам сказать если бы вот те которые в бедноте живут, наверно те были больше рассказали (2) потому что у меня вёс- всё ‘дети внуки все живут хорошо’
T: Так вот с этой соседкой Вы сейчас общаетесь? Y: Да T: то есть хорошие сохранились отношения, да? Y: Да, да T: Ну то что она перешла на латышский язык это никак не нарушило #Вашей гармонии#?
Y: Нет=нет они стали между собой разговаривать а с нами-то они говорят ‘всё равно по-русски говорили да’ я ей говорила ну вот давайте=давайте надо было раньше и нас бы научили а так говорили по-русски а так бы и мы бы,- а ведь было так что: везде говорили по-русски и: ну не было необходимости, если бы вот ну не разговаривали с тобой может быть и научился бы Ведь прожить всю жизнь мне семьдесят четыре это десять,- шестьдесят четыре года я живу здесь, и=и сказать что я плохо говорю мне даже СТЫДНО сейчас я себя чувствую действительно как-то, некомфортно, ‘так прям скажу, что вот не разговариваю’
T: ‘Обидно’ да тоже: вина как бы государства что не устраивают курсы #не привлекают#
Y: #Да не привлекали# тогда было вот предприятие моё было полностью я говорю что я тридцать три года на одном было большинство но латышей было у нас тоже много, очень много работали, евреев очень много потом стали уезжать кто в Америку кто в Израиль ээ а так вообще было закройщик считалось очень такая престижная работа и: были евреи, и: я поступила как бы случайно потому что,- это самое, было очень многих посадили, десять человек, и десять человек нас приняли так что ((усмехается)) вот так вот, была такая работа, так у нас мы говорили все по-русски и никто никогда ни в чём друг друга не упрекал поэтому так всё это и получилось что не было необходимости, и жили и не думали ни о чём ‘поэтому’
Т: А сейчас как курсы предлагают для пенсионеров?

У: Да я думаю не то что предлагают я помню что говорили для работающих как бы курсы там бесплатно ну не буду же я платить деньги и:

Т: А для пенсионеров прям платно, да?

У: Не знаю, не могу это правильно сказать потому что, где-то что-то, я не ходила на курсы, я вижу когда сдавала чтобы получить эту карту (applisibu) мне дочка ((посмеивается)) так немножко сказала что и как ну и там Господи другой раз мне подруга звонит,- она русская но: заканчивала латышскую школу на хуторе и там она и как начинает и по-латышски говорит я говорю слушай может ты б на русский перейдёшь ((смеётся)) хотя сама она знаешь тоже отец украинец у неё а мама полька, она говорит а я в паспорте латышка,- это русская ((поправляет оговорку)) а=а это самое у неё сестра родная, та латышка ((смеётся))

Т: А: ((смеётся))

У: Да из одной семьи видите как ((усмехается)) да, вот так вот да

Т: А как она национальность там определяют?

У: Да сам говоришь и: какую хочешь

Т: А: Она тогда сказала что русская…

У: Да: тогда в Советское время

Т: А как Ваша подружка,- соседка латышка отреагировала на:

У: На власть?

Т: Щас нет=нет=нет на: то что Вы не получили,- она как бы всё нормально стала гражданкой нового независимого государства, а вы не получили гражданство, хотя близкие как бы люди, да, соседи? Она сочувственно отреагировала, вообще как отнеслась к этой проблеме Вашей?

У: Я уже в это время здесь жила, мы как-то эту тему не поднимали (6) #не знаю#
Y: #Да да# была обида да, ну: я как-то на эту тему ну: не начинали разговора, у нас всегда разговоры о детях как что где работает как, и: вот об учёбе там, ну: такие, бытовые а так чтобы в политику мы никогда, ‘не залезали’ я знаю что: когда вот эти дни отмечаются, вот в марте там, помню что Лё,- Лёня мы=его=Лёней=звали а он Леон вообще и он выступал у памятника свободы как-то, ‘рассказывал как их вывозили’, тоже ну это всё=всё это жизнь никто=ничего
T: Ну так а общая масса латышей Вы не знаете как отнеслись к этой несправедливости?
Y: Несправедливость конечно (2) а=а вот кто их выдавал, русские? да сами же латыши кто знал из русских пришедших вновь эээ в Латвию которые были богатые и которые нет ведь выдавали-то сами латыши
T: Угу
Y: И вывозили их, и предавали, где кто находится, так что тут винить нельзя ээ что вот всё=во всём русские виноваты (2) да, конечно было всё это,- я говорю когда мы уезжали из России в пятидесятом, так ведь паспортов не было у рабочего класса, там не было паспортов ты не имел права вообще никуда уехать, и у мамы брат работал в сельском совете председателем, ему дала,- он дал ей справку как бы он её отпускает, вот по этой справке мы и получали здесь паспорт, а так паспортов не давали чтобы никуда чтобы были ээ работали и никуда никто не уезжал, так что не то что там как сейчас куда хочешь туда и едешь, поэтому: город пустой, разъехались хоть они и говорят что сколько-то там тысяч называли,- больше вот в моём доме на моей лестничной клетке двое уехали, внизу две девочки работают в Греции ‘тоже, ровесницы моей внучки’ а: наверху латышская семья две дочери в Америку уехали сначала одна потом вторая, тоже уехали, вот так что шесть человек у меня только в доме, я знаю ‘может ещё и больше’
T: Просто интересно как всё-таки обычные люди относятся к негражданам, ну что они по этому поводу думают,- просто понятно что политики решили не простые люди но интересно как всё-таки простые латыши отреагировали, не знаете вот как?
Y: Ну не могу так сказать но я знаю что мне кажется э=э (2) положительно
((улыбается)) ‘мне так кажется’ ((смеётся))
T: Даже положительно?
У: Типа того что многие же потерпели от советской власти и поэтому мы как
остались как бы, - ну виноваты тоже в этом 'хотя я говорю что:' мы сами терпели
и: когда в Литве жили могли остатся и жить а: мы поехали домой, просто нельзя
было невозможно было жить там что мама бросила всё и уехала ну я была у неё
одна и: поэтому ей было легче, папа погиб сразу во время войны ((вздыхает))
Т: Да: тяжёлые времена были конечно
У: Да было ужасно
Т: Спасибо Вам большое за Вашу историю и за то что нашли время мне её
рассказать