



**Baltic Institute of Social Sciences**

**INTEGRATION PRACTICE AND  
PERSPECTIVES**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Public integration policies that are declared in political documents speak to the involvement of all of Latvia's residents in pursuit of the overall goals of society. These speak to the guarantee that the Latvian nation will have the right to self-determination, as well as to the right of non-Latvians to preserve their native language and culture.<sup>1</sup> The Public Integration Programme says that public integration in Latvia involves partnership among various social strata, Latvians and non-Latvians, and citizens and non-citizens. All parties involved in integration must be active, according to the document.<sup>2</sup>

Issues related to this research are based on the fact that there has been no harmony among those who are pursuing integration policies. On the one hand, the Public Integration Programme which was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers in 2001 declares the state's official position vis-à-vis issues of public integration. On the basis of this document, the government approved a series of laws which relate to ethnic policy in Latvia, the aim being to ensure that the laws are in line with EU documents which regulate the rights of minorities. The policy is aimed at increasing the number of Latvian citizens, as well as at encouraging political participation by citizens and non-citizens alike.

On the other hand, there are quite a few politicians in Latvia who pursue a different position – one that could be termed a “nationalist political discourse.” These politicians oppose the official integration discourse of Latvia, as well as the positions which the EU takes vis-à-vis minority issues. The For the Fatherland and Freedom/Latvian National Independence Movement party, for instance, has proposed amendments to Latvia's citizenship law which would limit the abilities of non-citizens to undergo naturalisation.<sup>3</sup> Nationalist radicals have written texts which are even more out of line with the official integration discourse. These texts are clearly intolerant and even hostile vis-à-vis Russians in Latvia.<sup>4</sup>

An “opposition discourse” which criticises both the Public Integration Programme and its implementation, meanwhile, can be found in the Russian language mass media of Latvia.<sup>5</sup> In the Latvian language mass media, by contrast, there is usually support for the official integration discourse.<sup>6</sup> Previous studies show that local residents have the widest possible variety of opinions about these issues. Everyday experiences sometimes dictate a discourse of neutrality, while other survey respondents present an intolerant lack of understanding with respect to issues of ethnic policy along with a series of complaints about these issues. The study “Ethno-political Tensions in Latvia: A Search for a Resolution to the Conflict” shows that in discussions about ethnic relations, respondents differentiate between two levels – ethnic relations in society at large and ethnic relations in individual relationships. The dominant discourse among Latvians and non-Latvians involves a unique differentiation – the public at large claims that ethnic relations are poor (people say that relations are bad, conflict-based, harsh, etc.), while descriptions of individual relationships involve a wide range of statements, ranging from neutral to positive ones.

The existence of conflicting discourses among various agents of integration serves to support the goal of this study – to research processes related to public integration, as well as agents which have an effect on these.

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<sup>1</sup> “Public Integration in Latvia”, National Programme (2001), Rīga, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8-10.

<sup>3</sup> Arāja, D. “Pirms vēlēšanām atgrūž nepilsoņus” (Non-Citizens are Pushed Aside in Advance of the Election), *Diena*, 5 May 2006.

<sup>4</sup> “Gardam kriminālvajāšana” (Garda Faces Criminal Prosecution), BNS news agency report, *Diena*, 5 May 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Zepa, B., Šupule, I., Kļave, E., Krastiņa, L., Krišāne, J. and Tomšone, I. (2005). *Etnopolitiskā spriedze Latvijā: konflikta risinājuma meklējumi* (Ethno-political Tensions in Latvia: A Search for a Resolution to the Conflict), Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, Rīga, pp. 1-72.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

## 2. DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH

There are five areas of research which help to study the main integration agents – 1) The mass media; 2) NGOs; 3) Political parties; 4) The political elite; 5) Processes of integration in society.

### 1. The role of the press in constructing collective identities

Press analysis that has been conducted in the past has usually involved a specific period of time. This project involves a review of the way in which Latvian and Russian publications have depicted issues concerning a sense of belonging to the state, along with civic and ethnic identity, over the last 15 years (from 1990 until 2005). Research has usually involved content analysis. This time researchers will use discourse analysis instead, which will make it possible to look at the process through which the mass media construct collective identities:

- Political identity (belonging to a political party or to public movements);
- Civic identity (the sense of belonging to the state);
- Cultural and ethnic identity (language, belonging to an ethnic group).

Three Latvian and three Russian newspapers have been chosen for analysis. The specific issues of these newspapers were chosen from those times when there were public and media debates over ethnic policies and related issues (Table 1).

Everyday experience and research that has been conducted in the past show that the Latvian and Russian press differ in terms of the selection of information and in terms of the way in which information is presented. Discourse analysis makes it possible to “restore” these issues with the help of certain resources, looking at the way in which press publications express their positions vis-à-vis important issues of ethnic policy, thus having an effect on the positions taken by readers.

**Table 1. Periods of time from which press publications were analysed**

Year	Event related to ethnic policy
1990	Approval of Latvia's Declaration of Independence
1991	Restoration of Latvia's independence
1994	Debates over the Citizenship law
1999	Debates over the Language law
2003	Accession to the EU
2004	Education reform
2005	Ratification of the convention to protect minority rights

### 2. A study of the dynamics of political integration

Political parties are an important agent for public integration. Their role becomes particularly visible during pre-election periods. Researchers who focus on conflicts stress that the making use of ethnic sensibilities so as to attract voters is a fairly popular element in political battles. During the study of the dynamics of public integration, the following processes were organised:

A) Analysis of the ethnic aspects of the political party electorate during parliamentary elections in 1993, 1995, 1998 and 2002;

B) A study of the documents of political parties from the perspective of ethnic policies – the promises which each party makes with respect to ethnic policy and the way in which these goals are reflected during the election campaign (press analysis is used for this purpose).

### 3. The NGO sector as an agent for public integration

The study of NGOs reviewed those organisations which work in the fields of ethnic policy and human rights. Particular attention was devoted to those NGOs whose work is discussed in the press and thus creates more extensive resonance in society.

The goals in studying the roles of NGOs were the following:

- A) To study the work of NGOs (activities and products) insofar as these are related to ethnic policy and public integration;
- B) To review the political positions and orientations of NGO activists;
- C) To look at the depiction of NGO activities in the press.

### 4. The positions of the political elite vis-à-vis issues of public integration

Theoretical research papers often emphasise the role of the political elite, along with the abilities of the elite to promote public integration and to deepen various conflicts. This project involved a study of the positions taken by the political elite. Several approaches were taken:

A) A study of the positions of the elite on the basis of existing research about the elite (BISS in co-operation with the University of Oslo), conducting secondary analysis of those studies (1997, 2000, 2003);

B) In-depth interviews with representatives of the political elite with respect to issues of ethnic policies and models for public integration in the future.

### 5. A study of the processes of public integration

In this section, the main focus of the researchers is on the social practices of society – practices which people implement in everyday life in shaping integration strategies. The focus is also on the resources which are available to the various groups. Special groups to be analysed included ethnic Latvians, as well as minority representatives. Researchers dealt with people of differing ages, income levels, educational levels and regions of residence.

The study of public integration processes involved both qualitative and quantitative research methods:

- 1) Focus groups involving various groups of respondents

There were 18 focus group discussions in all of Latvia. Nine were organised in Latvian, and nine were organised in Russian. Separate focus groups involved young people, middle-aged people, and elderly people. Participants were recruited on the basis of random and quota sampling. The discussions were all held in January and February 2006.

**Table 2. The focus groups**

<b>In Rīga</b>	<b>Language of discussion</b>
Young people (18-30)	One in Latvian, one in Russian
Middle-aged people (31-59)	One in Latvian, one in Russian
Older people (60-75)	One in Latvian, one in Russian
<b>In regions</b> (Liepāja and the Liepāja District, Jelgava and the Jelgava District, Daugavpils and the Daugavpils District)	
Young people (18-30)	Three in Latvian, three in Russian
Middle-aged people (31-59)	Three in Latvian, three in Russian
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b> (nine in Latvian, nine in Russian)

## 2) A representative survey of the people of Latvia

In order to learn about the social practices of various social and ethnic groups in contacts with other cultures, as well as to study motivations and choices related to integration strategies, a representative survey was conducted of Latvian residents aged 15-75. A total of 1,005 respondents were queried. The cohort was based on a multi-level and stratified random sampling. Interviews were conducted at the places of residence of respondents and on the basis of the random-walk method. This method allows researchers to apply the research results to all of Latvia's residents who are aged 15-75. The surveys were conducted in March and April 2006.

### 3. THE THEORETICAL PART OF THE RESEARCH

The national programme "Public Integration in Latvia" has this to say about the national context of the integration process – Latvia is a democratic, law-based nation state, one in which "there are no contradictions that cannot be resolved and that would not allow for the establishment of a nationally unified, nationally and socially integrated cohort of citizens."<sup>7</sup> The integration programme also says that the government plans to design mechanisms aimed at guaranteeing the right of self-determination of the Latvian people, as well as at making sure that the rights of ethnic minorities are observed.

It is clear that without saying so specifically, the integration programme includes efforts to develop integration policies in two directions, the harmonisation of which is fairly complicated both in theory and in practice. On the one hand, there is the idea of strengthening the nation state, while on the other hand, the public integration programme stresses the idea that the people of Latvia are brought together by the desire to protect and develop their ethnic and cultural identity. Recognition of the development of identities and culture among various ethnic groups indicates that the programme includes certain elements of multiculturalism. Integrating the ideas of a nation state and of multiculturalism in a single programme – this is a complicated job and one which may prove to be contradictory.

Similar conclusions were drawn by Estonian researchers who studied the Estonian public integration programme which is being implemented during the period between 2000 and 2007. The Estonian integration researcher Raivo Vetik says that "the concept of public integration that is mentioned in the programme contains elements which can be contradictory under certain circumstances. Increasing the homogeneous nature of society and the preservation of ethnic differences is usually a contradictory process."<sup>8</sup> Emphasising that it is important to justify the way in which unification of society is to be implemented and the kinds of differences among those who are integrated should be preserved, Vetik points to three spheres of public integration in Estonia – ones which establish a strict foundation for all groups of society. These include linguistics and communications (the Estonian language as the joint information space), legal and political issues (the community of loyal citizens and the need to reduce the number of non-citizens), and socio-economic issues (all ethnic groups must have equal social mobility opportunities). These elements are accompanied by cultural pluralism, which means that non-Estonians have the guaranteed right to preserve their language and culture.<sup>9</sup>

At the same time, however, Estonian researchers also point out that there are differences in political and academic discourse when it comes to public integration in Estonia.<sup>10</sup> This makes it clear that implementing the principles of multiculturalism is a fairly complicated job.

Before we offer an analysis of Latvian practices in terms of public integration, let us take a quick look at such concepts as "nation state", "national minorities" and "multiculturalism". Interpretation of these has much to do with the way in which contradictory problems can be

<sup>7</sup> "Public Integration in Latvia", *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>8</sup> Vetik, R. (2002). "Multicultural Democracy as a New Model of National Integration in Estonia", in Lauristin, M. and Heidmets, H., eds. *The Challenge of the Russian Minority*. Tartu: Tartu University, p. 59.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>10</sup> Kalmus, V. (2003). "Is Interethnic Integration Possible in Estonia? The Ethno-Political Discourse of Two Ethnic Groups". In *Discourse and Society*, 14(6). London: Sage Publications, pp. 667-697.

resolved – problems which relate to the establishment of a nationally unified and nationally and socially integrated community of citizens in a multi-ethnic country.

### The nation state

The concept of a “nation state” is internally contradictory, because in essence it means that territorial and legal boundaries coincide with the boundaries of a specific ethnic group by which the state is identified. Usually the name of the ethnic group is included in the name of the country.<sup>11</sup> Given, however, that there are very few countries in which one ethnic group makes up nearly the entire community of residents, there are practical or theoretical issues about national minorities, immigrants, citizenship institutions, multiculturalism, etc.

Each of these concepts has been the subject of many volumes of academic texts, and there have been extensive debates among politicians when it comes to these ideas. In Latvia, for instance, discussions about the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities have involved a fairly harsh exchange of ideas about the way in which national minorities should be defined. People have asked, for example, whether Russians should be seen as a national minority.

Admitting that there are few ethnically homogeneous countries in the world, representatives of various theoretical perspectives seek to find a term that would more precisely describe the community of citizens in an ethnically heterogeneous country. Anthony D. Smith, who defends the concept of primordialism, for instance, argues that in the case of poly-ethnic countries, the inclusion of various ethnic groups which preserve their special cultural heritage demands a specific process which usually emerges only over the course of several centuries – one which enables the emergence of a concrete “political culture” and “civic nationalism”. This allows the individual to feel right at home in two areas of loyalty and identity. Examples of this include Catalonians and Spaniards, Bretons and the French, and Scots and the British.<sup>12</sup>

Rogers Brubaker, for his part, compares the emergence of feelings of nationalism in Germany and France, arguing that feelings of nationalism can emerge before or after the establishment of a nation state. In Germany, such emotions existed before the nation state was created, and they served as a stimulus for the establishment of the state. In France, for its part, nationalist feelings emerged after the state was set up, emerging from government institutions, the civic community, and the sense of civic belonging.<sup>13</sup> Brubaker emphasises the idea that differences are based on the principle under which society is unified – in France, society is unified politically, and participation therein depends on citizenship. In that case, we can speak of civic nationalism. In Germany, society is unified on the basis of ethnicity, and this is an example of ethnic nationalism.<sup>14</sup>

If we apply these concepts to Latvia, we find that the concept of ethnic nationalism is a good way of describing the efforts of Latvians to restore their country's independence in the late 1980s. If we look at people from minority groups who obtained citizenship only after the restoration of independence, however, we must speak of the concept of civic nationalism instead. We can say that both of these principles of unification – the political and the ethnic – co-exist in Latvia. This could be described as the dual nature of public integration in Latvia. On the one hand, it speaks to the possibility of integration, but on the other hand it poses the question of whether various groups in society can be integrated on the basis of different foundations – the principle of ethnicity or that of citizenship.

Will Kymlicka, author of the concept of “liberal pluralism”,<sup>15</sup> introduced a dimension of liberal politics when discussing the concept of “civic nationalism.” Kymlicka argues that a liberal

<sup>11</sup> Raanan, U. (1991). “The Varieties of Ethnic Conflict Analysis”, in Montville, J.V. (ed.). *The Nation-State Fallacy: Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies*. Lexington Books, p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> Smith, A.D. (1995). “Ethnic Identity and Territorial Nationalism in Comparative Perspective”, in Motyl, A. (ed.). *Thinking Theoretically About Soviet Nationalities*. Columbia University Press.

<sup>13</sup> Brubaker (1992). *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 23.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> Will Kymlicka, Magda Opalski (Eds.) (2001) *Can Liberal Pluralism be Exported? Western Political Theory and Ethnic Relations in Eastern Europe*. Oxford University Press, p. 16.



“civic nation” is different from an illiberal ethnic nation in that the most important duty for an ethnic nation is to reproduce a specific ethnic and national culture and identity, while a civic nation, unlike an ethnic one, is neutral vis-à-vis the ethno-cultural identity of its citizens. The latter society defines national belonging as the observance of specific principles of democracy and law. Michael Keating, for his part, stresses that language and cultural policies do not determine whether a nation is civic or ethnic. Instead he points to the ways in which language and culture are used either to establish a civic nation or to engage in ethnic alienation.<sup>16</sup>

The ideas of the aforementioned authors suggest that the emergence of a “unified and nationally and socially integrated community of citizens” requires a precise understanding of several things. First of all, is the principle of public unity ethnic or civic in nature? Second, what policies can be implemented so as to enhance public unity on the basis of a single, specific principle, thus achieving a transformation in the orientations of various groups in society?

### National minorities

In the academic literature, authors usually include two categories of minorities in the concept of national minorities. First, there are ethnic groups which have no country in which they represent the majority but which either used to have such a country or have yearned for one.<sup>17</sup> This description applies to the Catalonians and Basques in Spain, the Flemish in Belgium, Scots and the Welsh in Great Britain, the Corsicans in France, and the Livonians in Latvia. Second, there are ethnic groups which lived in a territory before the arrival of an ethnic group which later established a state in the territory and, through violence, forced the original residents to become a part of the new state – indigenous people, in that case, tend to consider the organisers of the state to be aliens.<sup>18</sup> The Indians of the United States are such a group.

In defining various groups which represent a minority in a larger group, one usually uses the word “minority”. This applies to sexual minorities, religious minorities, those who cast fewer votes for one party than others do for another, a minority within a political party, or a minority in some other institution. Ethnic groups can also be called ethnic minorities. In the Latvian language, the concept of “mazākumtautības” or “minorities” is used. The term “minority schools”, for instance, refers to Polish, Ukrainian, Hebrew, Estonian and other schools where classes are taught in the relevant language. In describing the ethnic composition of Latvia during the Soviet period, the term “immigrants” is often used. This definition is usually applied to groups of people who left their native land voluntarily and moved to another country, usually for political or economic reasons. Immigrants who arrive in a new country and observe its laws have the right to obtain citizenship in accordance with the country’s defined procedure for doing so.

The restoration of Latvia’s independence and the collapse of the Soviet Union created a situation in which the arrival of Soviet-era migrants from other Soviet republics was compared to international migration processes. The change in Latvia’s statehood led to a situation in which the fact of immigration was based on a new concept – the need to obtain citizenship in newly independent Latvia, the need to learn the official state language to become integrated into the labour market, and adaptation to the move toward greater use of the state language in education. This situation is one which can create extensive conflicts between the Latvian state and this group of immigrants. If the state’s goal is to strengthen the status of a nation state in which an important role is performed by a community of citizens who are loyal to the state, the state language and the state’s culture, then the immigrant group, like groups of immigrants in any country, wishes to support the preservation of its own ethnic identity and culture. It must also be stressed that the massive migration processes of the Soviet era created radical changes in Latvia’s ethnic composition. The percentage of Russians in Latvia increased from 9% in 1935 to 34% in 1989, while the proportion of ethnic Latvians dropped from 77% in 1935 to 52% in 1989.<sup>19</sup> The mass immigration in Latvia was much different than immigration in Western

<sup>16</sup> Keating, M. (1996). *Nations Against the State: The New Politics of Nationalism in Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland*. London: Macmillan.

<sup>17</sup> Kymlicka, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>19</sup> Latvian State Statistical Committee. *Latvijas Statistikas gadagrāmata (Latvian Statistical Annual)*, Rīga, 1993.

European countries, where immigrant groups tend to be proportionally smaller in comparison to the overall population.

### Integration of immigrants, multiculturalism

According to Will Kymlicka, Western democracies have had more than 200 years of experience in terms of integrating immigrants, and there have been few cases in which immigrants who have arrived legally and have the right to citizenship have created threats against the stability of liberal democracy.<sup>20</sup> At the same time, Kymlicka also admits that there have been cases when requests to learn state language in order to obtain citizenship and requests for children to learn state language in schools have been taken as an offence by immigrant groups. In evaluation of integration experience, Kymlicka acknowledges that until the 1960s, the countries which received the greatest number of immigrants (the United States, Canada, Great Britain) essentially implemented assimilation policies. Immigrants were expected to accept the local cultural norms. Eventually, immigrants began to be similar to local residents in terms of their speech, their clothing, the way in which they spent their free time, the foods that they ate, the size of their families, their identities, etc. In the 1970s, however, it was revealed that this model of assimilation is unrealistic, unnecessary and unjust.<sup>21</sup>

Such policies are unrealistic because many groups can never be fully integrated with locals as a result of visual or emotional differences. Forced assimilation is unnecessary, because in those cases when immigrants have a strong sense of identity, they may never become loyal citizens. Forced assimilation is unfair, because it denies an equal attitude vis-à-vis all immigrants, and for many this can become a very oppressive process.<sup>22</sup>

Since the 1970s, immigrants have increasingly been demanding a “multicultural” model of integration, one that would enable various integration strategies. Canada and Australia are two countries in which multicultural policies are being implemented. The two governments have undertaken to sponsor and to actively support multiculturalism as an official policy. Great Britain is also open to the idea of multiculturalism. France, Germany and Japan are most certainly not.<sup>23</sup>

During the latter decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, academics focused on theoretical research involving multiculturalism. The Canadian political philosopher Charles Taylor describes multiculturalism as “politics of recognition”, which means looking for techniques whereby individual ethnic identities can be preserved while, at the same time, using citizenship as a compensating identity which allows different ethnic groups to become integrated into the state.<sup>24</sup> Taylor emphasises that “recognition” and “non-recognition” on the part of others are the foundation of identities. He also points to “recognition” as a vital human need. Taylor has spoken of two different kinds of “recognition” that are common in present-day politics – the politics of universalism and the politics of differences. In the first case, the equality of all citizens is recognised. In the latter case, the emphasis is on the special cultural and other identities of citizens.

Another theorist in the field of multiculturalism is Bhikhu Parekh, who hails from India and points to a similar paradox in the area of multiculturalism. He argues that unity and differences are equally important, but at the same time they limit each other. The deeper the differences, the stronger the unity must be to keep a heterogeneous society together while, at the same time, maintaining that which is different. Referring to Taylor, Parekh argues that recent debates about multiculturalism have focused on these two alternatives – the state either recognises equal rights for everyone, or it chooses politics which recognise the differences among various cultures.

Steven Vertovec argues that multiculturalism relates to many discourses which are both different and overlapping. The term “multiculturalism” is used to describe various situations and meanings, e.g., as a description of demographic diversity, political ideology, operating policies,

<sup>20</sup> Kymlicka, W., Opalski, M. Can Liberal ..., *op. cit.*, p. 32.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>23</sup> Kivisto, P. (2002) *Multiculturalism in a Global Society*. Blackwell Publishing.

<sup>24</sup> Taylor, C. (1992). *Multiculturalism and “The Politics of Recognition”*. Princeton University Press.

goals related to institutional transformations, opportunities for cultural manifestations, overall moral challenges, new areas of political battles, or a manifestation of the phenomena of post-modernism.<sup>25</sup>

Reviewing the cross-section of various interpretations of multiculturalism, Ralph Grillo proposes a border between “weak” multiculturalism and strict multiculturalism. Weak multiculturalism, according to Grillo, exists when differences in culture are recognised only in the private sector, and when immigrants and members of ethnic minorities are expected to take part in a high degree of assimilation in the public sphere, in relation to issues related to judicial affairs, the government, the market, education and employment. Strict multiculturalism, by contrast means that there is institutional recognition of cultural differences in the public sector, also including political representation.<sup>26</sup>

### Experience with public integration policies and multiculturalism

In analysing policies aimed at implementing multiculturalism, Ralph R. Premdas has pointed to two versions or faces of multiculturalism.<sup>27</sup> The first version exists in those countries in which there are several ethnic groups and in which their co-existence has been institutionalised at the political and administrative level. Premdas points to the model of consensual democracy that has been defined by Arend Lijphart.

The second option is to take a formal approach vis-à-vis minorities, supporting the demand of the minorities to preserve at least some of their cultural traditions whilst simultaneously supporting the values and views of a nation state. Cultural pluralism in such countries has emerged thanks to processes of mass migration. Typically, immigrants in these countries seek to achieve legal equality and to become involved in the national community. Premdas argues that this duality in loyalty contains a certain amount of risk. There can be problems if an ethnic group is not properly assimilated and faces systematic discrimination. This can encourage the group to take a defensive position and to question its identity and its loyalty vis-à-vis the state as a means for demonstrating dissatisfaction. If conditions do not improve, such groups can eventually demand autonomy.

These two models can be seen as the extremes of the scale of multiculturalism policies. Other, more moderate models, of course, are also possible.

Writing about the politics of multiculturalism in Estonia, Raivo Vetik has explained that its essence can be understood if there is a comparison of four different models of democracy (liberal democracy, multicultural democracy, consensual democracy, ethnic democracy) on the basis of four considerations – recognition of the fundamental principles of democracy, recognition of group rights, institutionalisation of the policies of group rights, and the recognition of group privileges.<sup>28</sup>

Liberal democracy recognises the main principles of democracy, promoting individual freedoms as the central value and, thus, denying the rights of groups. Multiculturalism recognises the rights of groups but does not provide for the political institutionalisation of same. In accordance with the principles of consensual democracy, group interests are politically institutionalised. In the case of an ethnic democracy, the privileges of a single group are recognised.

In describing the situation which prevails in Estonia, Raivo Vetik argues that there is a fairly fragile boundary between multiculturalism and ethnic democracy. He points out that the democracy of multiculturalism is similar to ethnic democracy in that both recognise the rights of

<sup>25</sup> Vertovec, S. (2001). “Transnational Challenges to the ‘New’ Multiculturalism”, paper presented to the ASA Conference, University of Sussex.

<sup>26</sup> Grillo, R., Riccio, B. and R. Salih (2000). “Here or There? Contrasting Experiences of Transnationalism: Moroccans and Senegalese in Italy.” Brighton: CDE, working paper, University of Sussex.

<sup>27</sup> Premdas, R.R. “Public Policy and Ethnic Conflict.” In *Management of Social Transformations – MOST*, series of discussion papers, No. 12. See <http://www.unesco.org/most/premdas.htm>.

<sup>28</sup> Vetik, R. (2002). “Multicultural Democracy as a New Model of National Integration in Estonia”. In Lauristin, M. And M. Heidmest (eds.). *The Challenge of the Russian Minority*. Tartu University, p. 61.

groups. They differ, however, in that the democracy of multiculturalism does not recognise the institutionalisation of a certain group's privileges whilst, at the same time, recognising the rights of a substantial and titular national group – something that cannot be seen as discrimination against ethnic minorities and cannot be seen as support for the privileges of the specific national group.<sup>29</sup> It has to be said that this explanation leaves many questions about minorities, about the rights of titular groups, and about the implementation of these groups with the help of specific policies. Presumably, a clearer link to politics could be provided by a view of multiculturalism in the light of liberalism – e.g., the approach of Kymlicka,<sup>30</sup> which emphasises that specific and collective rights aimed at minority cultures are compatible with the principles of democratic principles. We see that there can be many different manifestations of multiculturalism, but at the last time, it is important to make sure that the politics of multiculturalism are not empty declarations. Instead, they must be an organic component in the ideology which the state is pursuing.

The first country to announce the politics of multiculturalism officially was Canada, which did so in 1971. Canada established programmes and services in support of ethno-cultural associations so as to help minority groups to overcome their difficulties and to promote their full participation in public life. Canada granted constitutional recognition to multiculturalism in 1982, approving the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.<sup>31</sup> The government approved special laws in accordance with that charter, stating that “multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage.”<sup>32</sup>

Western countries which preserve their status as nation states are, at the same time, trying to adopt various models for integrating minorities. Latvia's situation is one in which there are efforts on the one hand to strengthen the nation state, while at the same time, and on the other hand, there are demands which minorities make vis-à-vis the state (Table 3).

**Table 3. The politics of a nation state and the interests of minorities**

<b>Resources used to strengthen the nation state</b>	<b>Demands waged against the state by minorities</b>
Citizenship policies	Liberalisation of citizenship policies
State language policies	Liberalisation of the Language law
Education policies	Liberalisation of the Education law
Employment of citizens in government	Reduction in the employment-related limitations which non-citizens face
The national mass media, symbols, holidays	Greater opportunities to strengthen ethnic identity and culture
Migration policies	
Repressive resources (the police)	

Kymlicka argues that the politics of a nation state and the demands of minorities must be reviewed together, because the demands of minorities are often a reaction to a political step that has been taken in a country which seeks to strengthen the nation state.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>30</sup> Kymlicka, W. (1995). *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*. Oxford University Press.

<sup>31</sup> See <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/charter>.

<sup>32</sup> See <http://lois.justice.gc.ca/en/c-18.7/226879.html>.

<sup>33</sup> Will Kymlicka, Magda Opalski (Eds.) (2001) *Can Liberal Pluralism be Exported? Western Political Theory and Ethnic Relations in Eastern Europe*. Oxford University Press.

## Models of integration and acculturation

The concept of “acculturation” applies to processes which are the result of long-lasting and intercultural contacts among individuals, families, communities and societies. When people of various cultures develop contacts amongst themselves, they can transfer cultural behaviours, forms of language, views, values, products, technologies and institutions among themselves.<sup>34</sup>

The word “acculturation” was used for the first time in a report prepared in 1880 by J.V. Powell, who worked for the American Ethnographic Bureau. He analysed local languages in America (Oxford Dictionary, 1989). It was only in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, that researchers began to focus on acculturation issues in a scholarly way. The first serious acculturation theory was elaborated by Thomas and Znaniecki in their study of Polish immigrants in America.

A look at the development of acculturation-related research is provided in a table designed by Floyd W. Rudmin, “The number of acculturation studies.” We see that the greatest number of studies in this area was conducted over the last decade.

**Table 4. The number of acculturation studies**

	PsycINFO (an index of psychology databases, including dissertations)	Dissertations (based on the international index of dissertation abstracts in all disciplines)
1900-1930	0	0
1931-1940	17	5
1941-1950	60	25
1951-1960	97	49
1961-1970	111	69
1971-1980	248	153
1981-1990	572	700
1991-2000	1,571	1,376

Source: Rudmin, F.W. (2003). “Catalogue of Acculturation Constructs: Descriptions of 126 Taxonomies, 1918-2003.” In Lonner, W.J., Dinnel, D.L., Hayes, S.A. and D.N. Sattler (eds.) *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture* (Unit 8, Chapter 8). See <http://www.ac.wvu.edu/~culture/index-cc.htm>. Center for Cross-Cultural Research, Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington, USA, p.2.

Generally speaking, the phenomenon of acculturation is a matter of interest in several areas of academic study, because theories about acculturation have been developed by sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, political scientists and linguists. In his analysis, Rudmin points to a certain problem – scholars have designed various taxonomies of forms of acculturation, and the same terms are sometimes used in slightly different meanings. For this reason, it is very important to provide precise information about the way in which a specific type of acculturation is understood within the framework of a specific theory.

The most widely used theory of acculturation is that of John W. Berry. He designed and updated this theory over the course of many years, and he has countless followers who have used the concept in empirical research. Some have supplemented his approach.

According to Berry, the term “strategies of acculturation” includes actively expressed attitudes and behaviours. This is a strategy for existing in a society in which there are multiple cultures. Berry argues that we can speak of theories of acculturation in those cases when there is a key difference between an individual’s preferences (attitudes) and his or her lifestyle and activities.

<sup>34</sup> Rudmin, F.W. (2003). “Catalogue of Acculturation Constructs: Descriptions of 126 Taxonomies, 1918-2003.” In Lonner, W.J., Dinnel, D.L., Hayes, S.A. and D.N. Sattler (eds.) *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture* (Unit 8, Chapter 8). See <http://www.ac.wvu.edu/~culture/index-cc.htm>. Center for Cross-Cultural Research, Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington, USA.

According to Berry's theory, there are four major types of acculturation strategies – assimilation, integration, separation and marginalisation.<sup>35</sup>

**Assimilation** – individuals do not want to preserve their cultural heritage, trying instead to maintain intensive contacts with another culture;

**Separation** – individuals attach a great deal of importance to the preservation of their own culture and avoid intensive contacts with another culture;

**Integration** – individuals attach a great deal of importance to the preservation of their own culture while trying to maintain intensive contacts with another culture;

**Marginalisation** – individuals do not wish to preserve their cultural heritage or have no opportunity to do so, while at the same time they have no contacts with representatives of another culture (often for reasons of social alienation or discrimination).

In our study, another possible type of strategy is **fusion** in establishing a new identity. This strategy of acculturation is proposed in the taxonomy of other researchers in this area. Some are followers of Berry (LaFromboise, Coleman and Gerton, for instance),<sup>36</sup> along with Bourhis and others.<sup>37</sup> This model involves the fact that the result of integration is the emergence of a new identity. In his work, Bourhis speaks of the emergence of a new identity, as well as a manifestation of the values of individualism (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Selection of acculturation strategies and societal strategies as a whole. The theory of Berry, supplemented with the concepts of other researchers (LaFramboise, Coleman and Gerton, 1993: Bourhis, et al., 1997)**

	Preservation of one's ethnic culture and identity	
	+	-
Frequency of ethnic relations with another culture +	Integration/multiculturalism	Assimilation/merger of cultures (the "melting pot")
-	Separation/segregation	1) Marginalisation/exclusion 2) Emergence of a new identity (fusion) 3) Individualism

Berry argues that acculturation strategies can only be called acculturation strategies if individuals have freedom of choice and the relevant opportunities. The selection of an integration strategy, for instance, is possible only if the other culture is open and inclusive with respect to the diversity of cultures. This means that society is prepared to adapt many important institutions (related to health care, education, the law, labour, etc.) to cultural diversity, accepts the ideology of multiculturalism, has no distinct biases or discrimination, and favours good relations among ethnic groups.

Berry also speaks of a "multicultural assumption" which he has discovered in his research. This assumption says that **only those people who feel secure about their own cultural identity can accept those who are different.**

In this context, the study of acculturation-related attitudes over the last several years has increasingly emphasised the expectations of acculturation – i.e., the kinds of acculturation strategies that are supported by dominant group. Depending on the extent to which the strategies chosen by immigrants coincide with the expectations of the dominant group, relations among those groups emerge (Montreuil and Bourhis, 2001).<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Berry, J.W. (2001). "A Psychology of Immigration", *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 57, No. 3, 2001. pp. 615-631.

<sup>36</sup> LaFromboise, T., Coleman, H.L.K. and J. Gerton (1993). "Psychological Impact of Biculturalism: Evidence and Theory", *Psychological Bulletin*, 114, pp. 395-412.

<sup>37</sup> Bourhis, R.Y., Moise, L.A., Perrault, S. and S. Senecal (1997). "Towards an Interactive Acculturation: A Social Psychological Approach", *Journal of Psychology*, 32, pp. 369-386.

<sup>38</sup> Montreuil, A. and R.Y. Bourhis (2001). "Majority Acculturation Orientations Toward 'Valued' and 'Devalued' Immigrants", *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 32, pp. 698-719.

If both groups prefer integration and assimilation as adaptation strategies, relations are good. Problems in relations occur if the dominant group only accepts the assimilation strategy, while immigrants prefer the integration strategy. Conflicting relations in relation to this typology also occur if the dominant group's attitudes promote segregation, or if immigrants choose to stay apart from the dominant group. In such cases, there is a full lack of positive communications, and the two groups ignore one another. Research shows that forced assimilation creates a counter-reaction and promotes the spread of the strategy of separation (Shamai, Ilatov, 2005).<sup>39</sup>

### **Ethnic and civic identities**

In order to help us to understand acculturation strategies, Berry also offers the concept of **cultural identity**. By this Berry refers to a set of views and attitudes which people accept with respect to belonging to a certain group. Just as Berry's taxonomy of acculturation strategy is based on two dimensions, cultural identity is based on two dimensions – identification with an ethnic group (**ethnic identity**) and the subjective belonging to a country (**civic identity**). These dimensions can be independent of one another, and they are "nesting" in the sense that ethnic identity can be maintained within the confines of a broader civic identity (for instance, an ethnic Italian who lives in Australia).<sup>40</sup>

Strategies of acculturation are related to an individual's identity. In other words, when both identities are accepted, that represents integration. If the two identities are denied, that means marginalisation. If one or the other identity is dominant, then that refers to assimilation or separation respectively.

In accordance with the theory of social identity, it is extremely important for people to uphold a positive social identity, one part of which is belonging to various groups. Such people usually have good thoughts about themselves and the groups to which they belong, and this has much to do with their relationships with other groups. If one's own group does not seem better than other groups and the individual continues to identify with that group, then he or she seeks ways of maintaining the feeling that his or her group is still superior. This can be achieved by demonstrating increased trust in the group and shaping a more negative attitude vis-à-vis other groups or discriminating against them (Tajfel, Turner, 1979).<sup>41</sup>

## **4. CONCLUSIONS**

### **The choice of acculturation strategies and acculturation expectations among the population**

Given how complex it is to integrate a society, this study reviews the existing experience of respondents in terms of contacts with society, looking also at civic and ethnic identity, as well as the behavioural models (and acculturation strategies) which are related to same. Researchers also have looked at social agents who play an important role in shaping and implementing integration policy – politicians, the mass media and public organisations.

Research concerning integration practices is based on an enhanced version John Berry's concept of acculturation strategy, one with the help of which support for and identification with five acculturation models was evaluated.<sup>42</sup>

A quantitative survey of residents and focus group discussions held among local residents show that both Latvians and people of other nationalities most often support the selection of the integration strategy – 80% of Latvians, 83% of Russians, and 81% of people of

<sup>39</sup> Shamai, S. and Z. Ilatov (2005). "Acculturation Models of Immigrant Soviet Adolescents in Israel", *Adolescence*, Fall 2005, Vol. 40, No. 159, pp. 629-645.

<sup>40</sup> Berry, J.W. (2001). "A Psychology of Immigration", *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 57, No. 3, 2001, pp. 615-631.

<sup>41</sup> Tajfel, H. and J.C. Turner (1979). "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict". In Austin, W.G. and S. Worchel (eds.). *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

<sup>42</sup> See Chapter 3, "Theory", pp. 13-15.

other nationalities. In accordance with this strategy, representatives of minorities attach a great deal of importance to the preservation of their culture, but at the same time they feel a sense of belonging to the Latvian state and its society and speak fluent Latvian.

According to Berry's theory, an integration strategy can be seen as the most optimal way of ensuring ethnic harmony in society, and it can be said that good conditions exist in Latvia for integration, because 80% of Latvians support the integration strategy, 65% of Russian speaking residents of Latvia identify themselves with it.<sup>43</sup> At the same time, an equal percentage of Latvians support the idea that non-Latvians might select the assimilation strategy (81%), while among Russians, only 44% support that idea. Differing views vis-à-vis assimilation strategies indicate that there is a difference between the acculturation strategy and expectations, and to a certain extent this creates tensions between the two socio-linguistic groups in Latvia.

Expectations related to acculturation are also demonstrated vis-à-vis people's views with respect to this opinion: *"Latvians must understand and accept the fact that Latvia's society is made up of various ethnic groups, including Russians, Belarusians, Ukrainians, the Roma, Lithuanians and others."* Among Latvians, 85% of respondents agree with the view, and 11% do not. Generally speaking, it can be concluded that most Latvians are open to an integration strategy with respect to Russian speaking residents of Latvia, while approximately one-ninth (11%) refuse to accept the multicultural situation which prevails in the country. They consider an ethnically homogeneous country to be more acceptable.

Analysis of the extent to which ethnic Russians identify themselves with other strategies for acculturation shows that 30% identify with the strategy of fusion, and 29% identify with the strategy of assimilation. In terms of support, these two strategies are in second and third place behind the strategy of integration when it comes to Russian respondents. The strategy of fusion is supported by 47% of Russians, and the strategy of assimilation is supported by 44% (as was noted before, 81% of Latvians support the assimilation strategy, while 44% support the fusion strategy).

Among Latvians and Russians alike, the most negatively rated strategy is that of marginalisation – the situation in which non-Latvians do not wish to preserve their ethnicity and cultural heritage, but also do not feel any sense of belonging or interest in the Latvian state. Only 10% of Latvians and 13% of Russians support this strategy.

Differing attitudes among Latvians and Russians are seen when it comes to the strategy of separation – a situation in which individuals attach a great deal of importance to the preservation of their own culture whilst avoiding contacts with Latvians and failing to develop a sense of belonging to Latvia. Among Latvians, this strategy is supported only by 9% of respondents, while 27% of Russians do the same. One-fifth of Latvia's Russian speaking residents (20%) feel that they can largely or completely identify themselves with this strategy.

Those who support the strategy of separation are people who insist that Russian culture is superior to Latvian culture, people who do not wish to speak or learn the Latvian language. These are people who do not agree with this view: *"Russians must understand that the state language in Latvia is the Latvian language, and so in order to live in Latvia, one must speak the Latvian language"* (11%). They feel that *"the Russian culture is superior to the Latvian culture, and for that reason, Russians in Latvia do not need to learn the Latvian language"* (21%). It is important that fewer people who identify with the strategy of separation are found among those who are 31 to 45 years old. These apparently are people who have done better in merging into Latvian society. They have established families, and in civic terms they feel a sense of belonging to the country. A negative trend, however, is that young people choose the strategy of separation more often than the average among all age groups (26%).

All in all, the study shows that both Latvians and Russian speakers in Latvia are often subject to various stereotypes that are maintained in society and reproduced in the mass media. Among Russians, there are commonly held stereotypes about Latvian nationalism which alienates and offends Russians. Latvians, for their part, often hold stereotypes about Russian chauvinism and about the refusal of Russians to learn the Latvian language. Although the survey results show that the trends of Latvian nationalism and Russian chauvinism are

<sup>43</sup> See Chapter 6.1., "Acculturation Strategies", pp. 26-55.



supported only by a small segment of society, focus group discussions prove that these stereotypes are very strong and that they affect both the choice of acculturation strategies and the expectations of acculturation.

### **The political aspect of integration**

The political aspect of integration is both extremely important and complicated. It is important because politicians control the construction of models related to the future of society, and they also control the implementation of those models. It is complicated because among the authors of policies, there are different views about integration. Also terminology upon which ethno-policy is based is interpreted in different ways, even though such policy is the cornerstone for public integration. Terminology used on an everyday basis requires a theoretical explanation, but Latvia has not had sufficiently broad and explanatory discussions about the concept of "national identity". Debates which began in the early 1990s about the kind of nation that was being shaped in Latvia and the kind of model of nationalism which prevails in the country – an ethnic or a civic model – have diminished.

Various social agents have different levels of influence when it comes to public integration processes. Many experts in the area of the civil society emphasise that the lack of effectiveness in national integration policies can be blamed on political parties and politicians who, in the struggle over political power, make vast use of ethnic and linguistic belonging as an effective form of political capital, thus polarising society.

This is confirmed through analysis of election results. In comparing the dynamics of the electorate of political parties during the last four parliamentary elections, one sees that among the parliamentary parties, the ones which have a heterogeneous electorate – ones which receive support from Latvians and Russian speakers – are disappearing. With each election, the trend of each party's range of voters becoming more and more homogeneous is becoming more distinct, with parties attracting only Latvians or members of ethnic minorities. The most typical example of this is For the Fatherland and Freedom/Latvian National Independence Movement. Since the 1993 parliamentary election, it has always been supported almost exclusively by Latvians, with no more than 2-3% of Russians voting for the party. The electorate of other influential and more recently established parliamentary parties also tends to be homogeneous. Among those who voted for the People's Party in the 2002 election, for instance, 94% were Latvians. The Latvian Alliance of the Green Party and Farmers Union, too, received 95% of its votes from Latvian. 91% of the supporters of the New Era party and the First Party of Latvia were Latvians. These are, with good reason, called Latvian parties as a result of the ethnicity of their supporters. The party alliance For Human Rights in a United Latvia is the greatest representative of minority interests, and 72% of its supporters are members of ethnic minorities.

Despite the ethnic polarisation of the electorate, experts still believe that ethnic conflicts in Latvia are unlikely, because problems which would occur if the conflict were to develop more deeply are not of interest to the public or to politicians. At the same time, however, many social agents, including politicians, are interested in upholding a certain level of tension in society so as to gain specific benefits as a result of that.

If we analyse the position taken by Latvian politicians on ethnic policies, we see that these positions tend to be ambivalent. A survey of members of the political elite show that the views of the Latvian and the Russian speaking elite are most diverse when it comes to issues related to the rights of minorities – 60% of non-Latvians and only 5% of Latvians admit that this is a serious problem. This shows that on the one hand, Latvian politicians do not think that issues of minority rights are of importance among other problems. On the other hand, ethnic policy is the specific issue that is used to manipulate with the votes of viewers and to polarise their choices.

True, statements made in party documents about the policies related to public integration are quite diverse among Latvian parties, and that is also true when the statements of those parties are compared to those which are presented by minority parties. For the Fatherland and Freedom/Latvian National Independence Movement is a conservative and nationalist party, and

typically it argues that when it comes to issues which apply to public integration – learning the state language, minority education reforms, enhanced requirements with respect to naturalisation – are ones which minorities have to deal with. However, the party's programme defines no obligations which Latvians must accept in order to enable integration – tolerance and openness toward those who wish to become integrated. According to Berry, strategies of acculturation can be called strategies of integration only if individuals have freedom of choice and the relevant capacities. The selection of an integration strategy, for instance, is possible only if the other culture is open and has an inclusive orientation with respect to cultural diversity. An integration programme which only states the obligations of minorities and does not have anything to say about tolerance vis-à-vis various nationalities and cultural values is one which can be compared to assimilation policy. The Alliance of the Green Party and Farmers Union has a similar position. The only statement in its programme which has to do with ethnic policy is this: "We will shape Latvia as a nationalist, pretty and powerful country, with Latvian as the only state language and Latvian culture as the dominant culture. We support the idea that only the Latvian nation has the right to determine the future of the Latvian state."<sup>44</sup>

Other Latvian parties recognise the right of minorities and their culture to survive in their programme documents. The First Party of Latvia stresses that it supports a multicultural Latvian society, but with the Latvian language as the only state language. The First Party of Latvia supports integration and naturalisation, and in these processes, the Latvian language is stressed as a key instrument. The party's programme stresses the need to preserve minority cultures: "Minorities are a part of the Latvian people, and their culture belongs to Latvia's culture. For that reason, we support the establishment of conditions which allow *national minorities*<sup>45</sup> to preserve and develop their culture and to protect their identity, religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage."<sup>46</sup>

Similarly, the Latvian Social Democratic Workers Party says in its programme that the Latvian language must be the only state language. The programme also stresses the need for all of Latvia's residents to be loyal toward the country: "Every citizen of Latvia must understand that he or she is first and foremost a citizen of the Latvian state, and only then does he or she represent his or her ethnic group." The party also supports the principle which says that there must be respect for each minority nationality's language and culture: "Not just Latvians, but also non-Latvians wish to preserve their ethnicity. For that reason, we must support the efforts of people of other nationalities to preserve their ethnic identity." Latvia's Way defines Latvia as a "nation state with a multicultural society." New Era and the People's Party also speak of the recognition of minority cultures in their programmes.

Minority parties for their part stress the right of minorities to preserve their identity. The views of the People's Harmony Party with respect to ethnic issues are based on the idea that the rights of Latvians to communicate only in their own language in their country must be unlimited, but the situation of Russian speakers must be made easier. The party argues, for instance, that local government institutions must offer assistance to people in Russian, and schools must be allowed to choose how best to achieve the nationally specified level of Latvian language skills. The People's Harmony Party stresses that the Russian language in Latvia must be given the status of a minority language. The party alliance For Human Rights in a United Latvia argues that Latvia is "democratic and multicultural."

The fact is that the language of party documents is much more "sterile" than the things which politicians say in Parliament and in the media, but these documents display a broad spectrum of positions. The poles of this spectrum are held by conservative nationalist parties on the one hand and by minority parties on the other. The former parties do not speak of recognising minorities in their documents, while the latter parties avoid using terms such as "nation state." Analysis of party documents indicates that centrist parties are more open to the establishment of successful integration policies.

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<sup>44</sup> Central Election Commission, campaign programme of the Latvian Alliance of the Latvian Green Party and Farmers Union, [http://web.cvk.lv/pub/?doc\\_id=28225](http://web.cvk.lv/pub/?doc_id=28225).

<sup>45</sup> Emphasis of the authors.

<sup>46</sup> Programme of the First Party of Latvia.

Typically, the programmes of various parties use different terms and different interpretations of those terms when it comes to political integration. The context of problems related to integration is defined in diverse ways. There is a particular split between minority and Latvian parties, but it can also be seen that there is great diversity in the use of terminology among Latvian parties and in the views of parties when it comes to various problems. For the Fatherland and Freedom/Latvian National Independence Movement the discourse of requirements vis-à-vis those who obtain naturalisation through naturalisation mostly deals with terms such as “a Latvian Latvia” and “repatriation.” The Latvia’s Way party, by contrast, uses the terms “nation state and “multicultural society” – terms without which the emergence of public integration policies cannot be imagined, because they point both to the model of the state and to the role of minorities therein. The programmes of minority parties, by contrast, is dominated by the “discourse of defence,” speaking to the special status of Russian as a language of minority communications as a method for preserving the identity of Russians.

Here we must also speak of another problem which keeps political forces from having a unified understanding of integration policy. That is the fact that the understanding and interpretation of terms is based on the influence of the different languages and cultures. It has to be admitted that the difference in interpretation affects the most important terms which have to do with public integration – “national minorities” and “national identity.” At the same time, however, it must also be stressed that the interpretation of terms differs not only between Latvian and Russian texts, but also in the context of a single language. The interpretation of terms such as “nation” and “nationalism” is very different.

### **Differing understandings about the term “national minorities”**

One of the terms which raises debates from time to time, particularly in the context of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, is the concept of “national minorities.” The Latvian translation of the title of this convention does not really use the term “national minorities” precisely, instead speaking of “minorities” – a broader term and one which does not differentiate between national and ethnic minorities. In this case, that is very important. In English, the convention applies only to national minorities. There have been debates in many European countries about what exactly that term means. The result has usually been that the term “national minorities” is applied to those ethnic groups which have historically lived in the territory of the relevant state. Migration during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is usually not included in this definition. According to Kymlicka, for instance, the concept of national minorities must also include those ethnic groups which do not have a state in which they would represent the minority but used to have such a state, as well as those which yearn for such a state. He adds that the term must also cover those ethnic groups which lived in a territory before the members of the ethnic group which arrived in the territory later, established a state, and forced others to become a part of the new state. The indigenous people consider such people to be “aliens.”<sup>47</sup> The situation in Latvia is made all the more complicated by virtue of the fact that in Russian, the term “нацменьшинства” is used extensively. This word is closest to the concept of “minorities” in Latvian. The terms cover both ethnic and national minorities. The idea of „этническая группа”, by contrast, has entered the Russian language only in the last several decades, and it is used only in the academic literature. The term “нацменьшинства” is used far more often in the public arena.<sup>48</sup>

We can say that language in this case lags behind the development of socio-political processes such as the collapse of the USSR, the establishment of independence in the formerly occupied countries, and the introduction of new norms of democracy which dictate the general processes in terms of relations between the indigenous population and the national minorities. The aforementioned convention has no norms which regulate the relationship between the titular

<sup>47</sup> Will Kymlicka, Magda Opalski (Eds.) (2001) *Can Liberal Pluralism be Exported? Western Political Theory and Ethnic Relations in Eastern Europe*. Oxford University Press, p. 25.

<sup>48</sup> For instance, an exhibition which Latvian minorities staged at the European Parliament was called “Latvian Minorities in History and Today”, but in Russian the title was “Выставка о латвийских нацменьшинствах.” *Час*, 12 June 2006.

nation or majority with various minorities which have arrived in the relevant country in the recent future. Usually it is the case that each country organises its policies individually with respect to immigrant groups. Here, too, we see different approaches. Canada, for example, has established policies of multiculturalism, while the labour market in Germany still involves the definition of “guest workers.”

In the case of Latvia, it is important to establish and implement a specific integration policy, because Latvia’s situation differs from that in other European countries. Latvia has a large minority group which is not a national minority. Only Latvia, its politicians and its people can decide on how to shape relationships between the majority and the minorities in Latvia. For that reason, a legally and institutionally supported public integration policy is justified.

A key requirement for a successful integration policy is the selection of terminology which is perceived and interpreted more or less equally among participants in integration policy, assuming that full unanimity about the terminology is impossible. In the current situation, the term “нацменьшинства”, which is extensively used in the Russian press, is interpreted to mean “national minorities”. At the same time, the Russian language does not contain a term which refers to the entire set of ethnic minorities. In the Latvian press and in Latvian documents, meanwhile, there is no precise difference among the concepts “minorities”, “ethnic minorities” and “national minorities”. The media texts which are quoted in the study “Practices and Prospects for Integration,” too, include expert statements which indicate an inconsistent use of the aforementioned concepts.<sup>49</sup>

The practice of imprecise use of terminology not only explains the reason why discussions among politicians are fruitless, it also allows one to think that problems related to political debates are becoming deeper, and tensions in the public space are becoming increasingly exacerbated. The imprecise use of terminology also makes it possible for politicians to manipulate society to a greater degree.

The fact that politicians and political debates create the desire for separation both among people who are members of minorities and among Latvians, thus promoting the emergence of a society with two parallel communities, is mentioned by experts, representatives of public organisations, and ordinary people from various ethnic groups.

### **Ethnic and civic nationalism**

Other important terms that are cornerstones for integration policy include the concepts of “nation” and “nationalism”. A nation, as a community of citizens, is the most important resource for a state. There are two ways of interpreting the term “nationalism”, however – “ethnic nationalism” and “civic nationalism.” These terms reveal the framework within which the nation is formed. Rogers Brubaker compares the emergence of emotions of nationalism in Germany and France and argues that such emotions can emerge both before and after the establishment of a nation state. In Germany, such emotions existed before the establishment of the nation state, and this served as a stimulus for establishing the state. In France, emotions of nationalism emerged after the state was established, emanating from national institutions, the political community and the sense of civic belonging.<sup>50</sup> French society is unified in political terms, and participation therein is determined by citizenship. Here we can speak of civic nationalism. Society in Germany is unified on the basis of ethnicity, which is an example of ethnic nationalism.<sup>51</sup> If these terms are applied in Latvia, then it is clear that ethnic nationalism describes very well the efforts of Latvians to restore national independence in the late 1980s. If, however, we look at the minorities which gained Latvian citizenship only after the restoration of independence, the concept of civic nationalism must be used. The fact that political and ethnic principles exist in parallel in Latvia poses the question of how public integration policies are to be developed.

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<sup>49</sup> The terms used in party documents, by experts and in the mass media have not been edited, they are presented exactly as they were cited in the original text.

<sup>50</sup> Brubaker, R. (1992). *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 23.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, p. 24.

## **Nationalism and citizenship**

One of the main issues in terms of public integration is the issue of citizenship. Latvia still has lots of non-citizens – some 418,400 in all. This issue is still on the public agenda, and it is the basis for questions about the procedure for awarding citizenship, the expansion of the political rights of non-citizens (e.g., allowing them to vote in local government elections), etc. If the process of people becoming citizens via naturalisation is approved, then politicians must answer the question of what kind of civic community is being established – is it based on ethnic or civic nationalism?

Interviews with politicians reveal a wide spectrum of views about these issues, and researchers have been able to develop a conditional scale to provide a look at the way in which politicians interpret the community of citizens, the expansion of the community, and the political rights of non-citizens.

Radically right wing and nationalist parties tend to focus on ethnic nationalism, which is manifested through their desire to limit the number of non-Latvians who receive citizenship. These parties argue that naturalisation reduces the proportion of ethnic Latvians among citizens. This indicates that politicians in nationalist parties cannot accept civic nationalism, which speaks to the emergence of national emotions via one's belonging to the political community and one's obtaining of citizenship.

Minority parties, by contrast, have completely different views about the process of obtaining citizenship, insisting that naturalisation requirements must be made easier and that anyone who was born on Latvian territory should be recognised as a citizen. In future, according to these politicians, the rights of non-citizens should be expanded, particularly emphasising the right of non-citizens to vote in local government elections.

A series of parties which are centrist in relation to issues of ethnic policy<sup>52</sup> insist that the process of naturalisation must continue and that it should continue at its present pace or even more rapidly so as to promote people's participation in political processes. The positions of national minorities and of centrist party politicians can be compared to the orientation of civic nationalism.

The different thinking of politicians when it comes to the establishment of a community of citizens points out that there are fundamental problems in shaping and implementing integration policies even if a policy programme has been established.

Interviews with representatives of public organisations showed that there are parallels between the orientation of politicians and NGO activists when it comes to citizenship issues. It must be stressed that among NGOs which are actively involved in ethnic policy issues are even more distinctly polarised. There are radically nationalist Latvian movements such as the Latvian National Front and Club 415, as well as radical minority movements such as the Centre for Defence of Russian Schools. The latter group argues that the process of naturalisation is humiliating for those people who have lived in Latvia all their lives, and so the process is unacceptable in terms of creating doubts about the basic principle in establishing a community of citizens in Latvia – the process of naturalisation. True, one finds more public organisations than political parties which express concerns and desires vis-à-vis the strengthening of the sense of civic belonging.

If we look into the future, we see that one trend that might split up society might be collaboration between radical political organisations and political parties, or the development of these organisations into parties. Among minorities, this process is suggested by close co-operation between The party alliance For Human Rights in a United Latvia and the Centre for Defence of Russian Schools. This causes The party alliance For Human Rights in a United Latvia positions to become more radical. Among radically nationalist Latvians, meanwhile, the

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<sup>52</sup> This is not a completely clear classification, and borders cannot be strictly drawn. Among the Latvian political parties which are classified as moderate here, there are party members who are radically nationalist in their thinking, and their views are not really in line with the positions which are taken in party programmes.

same can be said about the fact that the organisation "Everything for Latvia" has become a political party.

### **The state language and public integration**

We can speak of contrasts between ethnic and civic nationalism when it comes to the state language, too. All of the Latvian political parties emphasise the Latvian language as the most important resource for integration in Latvia, which means that the most important cultural value among Latvians is chosen as the resource which could help to unify society. People from minority parties and public organisations, by contrast, admit that everyone needs to learn the Latvian language and that the Latvian language is important in Latvia, but at the same time they argue that it is important for minorities to preserve their native language skills. They add that if harmony in society is to be realistic, the important issues include people, culture, knowledge and contacts. Radicals among Latvians and minorities, for their part, promote more radical ideas. Latvians want to make sure that the linguistic environment is entirely Latvian, while minorities sometimes call for the Russian language to be declared officially as the country's second state language.

It must be stressed that there are many public organisations in Latvia – ones which deal with culture, education, analysis or the civic society – which directly or indirectly affect public integration. Representatives of minority NGOs admit that the Latvian language must be the state language and the language of communications among ethnic groups, but they also stress that the Latvian language, as a value, is perceived differently among various ethnic groups. Whilst recognising the Latvian language as the state language, it is important to maintain tolerance vis-à-vis other languages and cultures, say these people. Otherwise, there could be a negative counter-reaction among those who belong to other cultures. NGO representatives admit that the Latvian language is a resource for promoting understanding and contacts, but they also insist that the Latvian language and culture cannot serve as a cornerstone for integration: *"The role of the Latvian language in the integration process is only a positive role, because given that Latvia's indigenous population is made up of Latvians, it is a positive thing if members of all nationalities begin to understand the Latvian language. That, accordingly, breaks down barriers, reduces distrust and everything else. That is a good thing. At the same time, however, this must not be exaggerated. Integration cannot be based on the Latvian language and culture."* NGO leaders stress the role of the Latvian language in establishing a civic society: *"The Latvian language is absolutely important for the integration which is known as 'participation in shaping policy', and this is not possible without the Latvian language. Without the Latvian language, no minority group can take part in the process of planning or influence, and that means that the group is marginalized. I think that in the process of shaping national or statehood-related identity, the Latvian language is extremely important."*

According to representatives of minority parties, the Latvian language is just one factor in promoting integration. The Latvian language must be learned and spoken, but Latvia's is a multicultural society, and that means that other ethnic groups must have the right to speak their own language – this will strengthen Latvia as a country and will not threaten the Latvian language. Latvian politicians, for their part, stress the state language as a fundamental element in integration: *"The Latvian language is one of the basic elements, and without it, ethnic integration is not possible."*

When it comes to the views of Latvians and minorities with respect to the state language as a resource which promotes contacts and understanding among ethnic groups, both sides stress that Latvian language skills help minority representatives to take part in public life and feel a sense of belonging in Latvia. Latvians, however, emphasise the substantial meaning of the state language which, as an element of Latvian culture, serves as a foundation for integration. Minorities, for their part, recognise Latvian language skills only as a resource whilst, at the same time, stressing the importance of their own cultural and linguistic identity.

## **Minority education reforms and public integration**

Views about the reform of education in Latvia are crassly diverse. Representatives of centrist parties feel that the reforms have been very positive and normal, while representatives of minority parties say that the reforms have brought more that is bad than good, because the effect has opposed integration. There is a third view, too – radical nationalists and conservative nationalists say that the pace of reforms is correct, but even more intensive changes are needed.

As far as Latvian politicians are concerned, the main benefit from reforms at minority schools is that non-Latvian young people will become more competitive in the labour market – something that will also have an effect on social integration. At the same time, however, minority politicians say that not all students are capable of studying materials that are presented in Latvian, which means that their educational level is declining and their inclusion in to the labour market is becoming a problem.

Both minority politicians and NGO representatives argue that these problems could have been avoided if the school reforms had been more gradual and if preparations had been more careful. Several respondents thought that the reforms were too swift and careless, no proper methodology was prepared, and teachers were not trained sufficiently to use a bilingual approach to their teaching. The parents of children also were not sufficiently informed about the planned reforms which might have promoted a positive attitude vis-à-vis the introduction of the reforms.

Members of ethnic minorities stress that the great speed at which the reforms were implemented and the way in which they were put into place have created a lack of trust in the government. It is clear that Latvians and minority representatives have radically different views about educational reforms, their goals, their implementation and their results. In the context of public integration, it will be possible to judge the effectiveness of the reforms only in the long-term future, but given the current situation, minority politicians and NGO representatives feel that the reforms were forced upon them, while Latvian politicians and NGO representatives usually say that the reforms helped to improve the overall situation.

## **Analysis of Russian and Latvian press publications**

Media discourse has an important role to play in reflecting political events and in shaping public opinion. Discourses shape the knowledge of social participants, the prevailing situations and social roles, as well as the identities and mutual relations among various social levels (the political, social and everyday arena). It must be stressed here that there are differences among the discourses that are offered by the media and by politicians. This is also true with respect to everyday discourses about identity, knowledge and social relations.<sup>53</sup>

It is of key importance to point out the complicated relations among civic, political and ethnic identity, as analysed in media discourse. Linguistically constructing the gap between Latvians and Russians, the media usually make use of various signs of ethnic identity (language, mentality, cultural personalities, the cultural heritage), as well as signs of political identity – the political history which the whole group has experienced, figures in politics (including historical ones), political problems from the past, present and future, and political goals which participants and groups have in common.

Analysis of press publications focused on media discourses and their possible influence on the shaping of identities as events which are important in terms of ethno-policy have been discussed between 1990 and 2005. These include the approval of the declaration of independence in May 1990, the restoration of Latvia's independence in August 1991, the approval of the Law on the State language in 1999, the referendum on EU accession in 2003, and ratification of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in 2005, among others.

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<sup>53</sup> Wodak, R. (2001). "The Discourse-Historical Approach". In Wodak, R. and M. Meyer. *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Sage Publications.

Generally speaking, the discourses used in Latvian and Russian language newspapers are radically different, and they shape different collective identities among those who read Russian language newspapers and those who read Latvian newspapers. The gap between these media spaces promotes a separation between the two ethno-linguistic groups, making it difficult to ensure mutual discussions, exchanges of views, and the shaping of unified identities. The gap is closely linked to the polarisation of political identities, because political parties, too, represent the interests of one or the other group. The ethnic interests of parties dominate over ideological differences related to economic, social and other issues. Both the Latvian and the Russian language press those who think differently are marginalized in terms of discourse, depicting them as individuals who do not represent the majority views of the public and discrediting them as being selfish, criminal or radically nationalist.

A review of Latvian newspapers during the aforementioned time period shows a clear orientation toward readers who are Latvians. In the early 1990s, Latvian newspapers were dominated by attempts to actualise and strengthen the ethnic identity of Latvians, comparing that identity to that of the Soviet person and to the internationalism which was propagandised at that time. At the same time, the media sought to establish a civic identity for Latvians, separating them from the Soviet Union and encouraging a sense of belonging to the independent Latvian state. Typical during this era was a confluence of the ethnic, civic and political identities of Latvians, because in Latvian newspapers, Latvians were reflected as a very much unified group – one which powerfully identified with everything that was Latvian, a group which wanted to live in an independent Latvian state. Thus the Latvian newspapers also shaped a very powerful political identity, at the basis of which was support for the Latvian People's Front and other organisations which supported its efforts toward independence.

After the restoration of independence, the discursive attempt to activate ethnic identity diminished a bit in the Latvian press. The attempts were actualised only when important issues related to ethno-policy were considered. Also noticeable has been a split between political identities on the one hand, and ethnic identities on the other, and differentiated political identities among Latvians. Still, there has always been a powerful focus on Latvian readers, and a unified political identity has been shaped with respect to issues that are sensitive in ethno-linguistic terms. Latvian newspapers reproduce a civic identity which excludes non –Latvians from the community of people who belong to the Latvian state. The Latvian press has very little content which refers to issues that are of importance to Russian speaking residents – minority education reforms, for instance.

In the Russian language press in the early 1990s, by comparison, not much attention was devoted to ethnic identity. The content of these newspapers was dominated by the establishment of a political and civic identity. The discourse in Russian language newspapers promoted the confluence of political and civic identity, activating links between people's sense of belonging to the USSR and their support for the Latvian Communist Party and the Interfront (the main anti-independence umbrella organisation in the late 1980s and early 1990s). Later, the newspapers increasingly sought to develop the ethnic identity of Russian speakers, referring to the historical roots of Russians on Latvian territory, the wealth of Russian culture, and the elements of Russian mentality. Ethnic identity was promoted with the goal of strengthening the political identity of non-Latvians. Discourse about civic identity became weaker in Russian language newspapers, and that promoted a greater gap between Russian speakers and the Latvian-governed institutions of government. During the aforementioned time period, the Russian language press increasingly used the rhetoric of open conflict and battle. This was particularly evident when protests against minority education reforms were discussed.

Of decisive importance in the formation of collective identity are the Latvian and Russian languages as the chief criteria for marking out boundaries between ethno-linguistic groups. Competition between the two languages actualises and increases the sense of endangerment which is found in both groups. That is why issues concerning language have created the harshest debates in the media, ensuring much more active ethnic discourse with respect to issues such as approving the law on the state language and pursuing minority education reforms.



The fact that there is a gap in discourse between the two ethno-linguistic groups in the media is also made evident by virtue of the fact that there is still no word in the Latvian language that would offer a positive description of all of the residents of Latvia, including both Latvians and non-Latvians.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING PUBLIC INTEGRATION POLICIES**

- Because people who are involved in the development of public integration policies have very different interpretations of terminology that is the cornerstone of integration policies (e.g., national minority, nation, nationalism, nation state, multicultural society, etc.), the fact is that scholarly and practical conferences must be organised so as to promote the development of terms that are theoretically justified and can be applied in the practice of shaping policy. These terms must be disseminated in the academic environment, in educational institutions, in the institutions of government, and among the public at large.

- The public integration programme that is approved by the Cabinet of Ministers must be accented as the government-defined programme which aims to promote public integration. It should be mandatory for all institutions of government and for all politicians. Ministries must take specific steps in pursuit of the basic positions of the national integration programme.

- Centrist parties must work with minorities and public organisations so as to deal with issues of public integration and ethnic policy, undertaking responsibility for the development and implementation of such policy.

- The mass media must oppose announcements which relate to ethnic hatred or discrimination, as well as activities by public organisations which seek the same. Political movements, politicians and other public figures must clearly mark out the border beyond which intolerance or discrimination of an ethnic or other nature begin – things which are not in line with the norms of a democracy society.

- The public space must be protected against the proclamation of intolerance. The mass media must avoid giving voice to those who seek to foment intolerance, ethnic or other hatred, whether they be individuals, organisations or representatives of various movements.

- Public organisations must work with the mass media to disseminate positive experiences in promoting ethnic tolerance harmony, thus facilitating the spread of the discourse of multiculturalism and tolerance in society.

- In order to reduce the gap between the Russian and Latvian language media, publications in one language should include information from publications in the other language.

- In civic studies courses at educational institutions, there must be discussions and instruction about Latvian society as a multicultural society. Students must learn about and gain a stronger understanding of national minorities in Latvia such as the Livonian people, but also about ethnic minorities such as Russians, Belarusians, Ukrainians, Poles and others who live in the country.

- In the social sciences and the humanities (history, literature, history of culture), examples must be presented which offer a look at the diversity of society in ethnic and in other terms. Students must be encouraged to conduct research into the field of multiculturalism when they prepare their academic papers.

- The younger generations must be raised in the atmosphere of tolerance and understanding with respect to ethnically diverse groups of residents. The causes of ethnic intolerance must be explained, and there must be greater understanding of the importance of the observation of the principles of democracy in everyday life and by every member of society. Role playing can promote intercultural communications skills. In extracurricular activities, there must be support for projects which are aimed at tolerance and understanding among various groups in society. Students must be encouraged to discuss positive experiences in establishing ethnic tolerance and harmony.

## 6. RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

### 6.1. STUDYING THE PROCESSES OF PUBLIC INTEGRATION

#### Strategies of acculturation

Focus group participants and those who completed the questionnaire of the study were offered five stories which reflect five types of acculturation strategies – assimilation, integration, separation, marginalisation and fusion.

All of the stories began in the same way: “Konstantin arrived in Latvia in 1980 after he had completed his training as an engineer at the Leningrad Polytechnic Institute. He was sent to work at a factory in Rīga, Latvia. There, he met a woman called Iveta (a Latvian), and they were married.” Further on, the life positions and the importance of the Latvian and Russian language and culture are different in each story. The stories were written on the basis of a research methodology that was elaborated by Van Oudenhoven and his colleagues.<sup>1</sup> They were specifically adapted, however, to Latvia’s situation, because they had to be believable in the context of this country. Information from previous BISS research<sup>2</sup> was used, and the stories were discussed and improved during a methodological seminar.

Because the stories were used both in the focus groups and in the quantitative survey, the various methodologies supplemented and explained one another, creating a more complete understanding of attitudes vis-à-vis the various strategies of acculturation in Latvia.

**Table 5. Support for five types of acculturation strategy, average results (1 = no support at all, 5= full support)**

*To what extent do you support the way in which \_\_\_\_\_ are shaping their lives in Latvia?*

<b>Acculturation strategy</b>	<b>All residents (N=961/977)</b>	<b>Latvians (N=629-636)</b>	<b>Russians (N=243/252)</b>	<b>Others (N=84/88)</b>
Separation	2.15	1.85	<b>2.84</b>	2.44
Assimilation	4.02	<b>4.36</b>	3.27	3.69
Integration	<b>4.38</b>	4.38	4.36	4.44
Marginalisation	2.06	1.98	2.23	2.07
Fusion	3.42	3.41	3.43	3.50

The survey result shows that both among Latvians and among Russians, the greatest support is given for the policy of integration (Table 5). Latvians and Russians also have fairly similar views when it comes to the strategy of marginalisation and fusion – the strategy of marginalisation does not seem attractive to people, while there are fairly positive views when it comes to the strategy of fusion and the establishment of a new identity. There are key differences in terms of support for the strategies of assimilation and separation – there are far more Latvians who support assimilation and reject separation, while among Russians, in comparison to Latvians, there are quite a few more who support the strategy of separation and do not support assimilation.

In the quantitative survey, those respondents who chose to be interviewed in Russian were asked to answer this question: To what extent do you feel similar to the main character in the story? The results of the survey show that most respondents felt that they were comparable to the main character in the integration story. The next largest group found similarities with the character in the story of fusion and the emergence of a new, European identity. In third place were those who spoke of the assimilation strategy. Least often did respondents feel that they

<sup>1</sup> Van Oudenhoven, J.P., Van der Zee, K.I. and M. van Kooten (2001). “Successful Adaptation Strategies According to Expatriates”, *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 25, pp. 467-482.

<sup>2</sup> Zepa, B., Šūpule, I., Kļave, E., Krastiņa, L., Krišāne, J. and I. Tomšone (2005). “Etnopolitiskā spriedze Latvijā: konflikta risinājuma meklējumi” (Ethno-political Tensions in Latvia: Searching a Solution to the Conflict), *Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, Rīga*, pp. 1-72. See also Zepa, B., Šūpule, I., Krastiņa, L., Penķe, I. and J. Krišāne (2004). “Etniskā tolerance un Latvijas sabiedrības integrācija” (Ethnic Tolerance and Public Integration in Latvia), *Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, Rīga*, pp. 1-84.

were similar to the character in the story which dealt with the strategy of marginalisation (Table 6).

**Table 6. Identification with five types of acculturation, average results (1 = I am not similar at all, 5 = I am completely similar)** Survey respondents who chose to be interviewed in Russian (N = 275-288)

*To what extent do you feel that you are similar to \_\_\_\_\_?*

Acculturation strategy	Average indicator	Those who feel that they are largely or completely similar to the character (responses 4 and 5), %	Those who feel that they are only slightly or not at all similar to the character (responses 1 and 2), %
Separation	2.51	20%	46%
Assimilation	2.77	29%	40%
Integration	<b>3.90</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>10%</b>
Marginalisation	1.92	9%	67%
Fusion	2.81	30%	36%

If we compare the way in which Russian speakers in Latvia identify with various types of acculturation on the one hand and the **acculturation expectations** of Latvians with respect to non-Latvians, we see that these two things more or less coincide. Latvians are most likely to support the strategies of integration, assimilation and fusion. Among Russian speaking residents of Latvia, the largest percentages of local residents identify with the strategies of integration, fusion and assimilation.

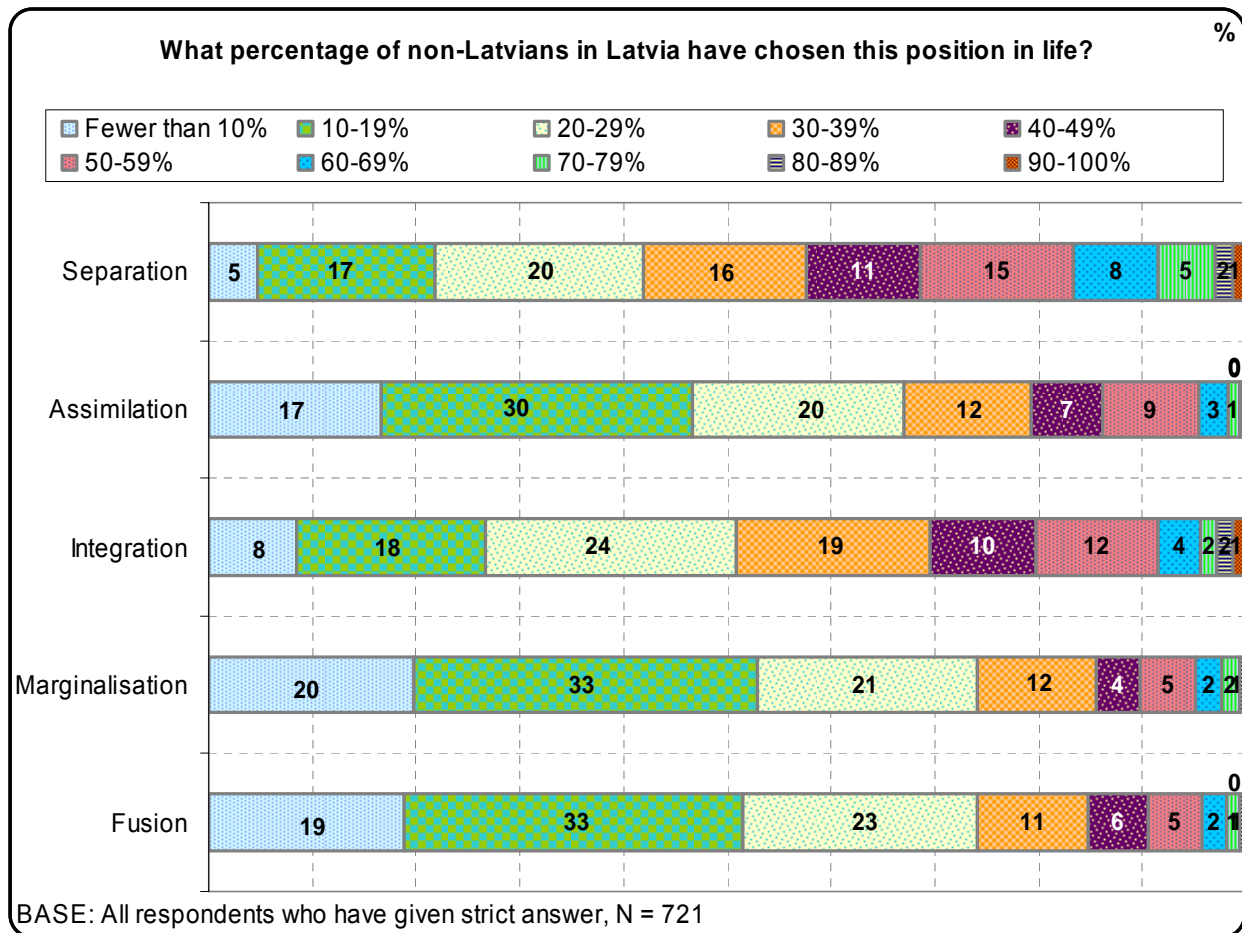
At the same time, however, it must be noted that 20% of non-Latvians identified themselves with the strategy of separation – the one that is least acceptable to Latvians.

In the survey which focused on all of the acculturation strategies, respondents were asked to judge how widespread each strategy is among non-Latvians in Latvia. Respondents most often argued that the strategy of separation and the strategy of integration are most commonplace among non-Latvians (Figure 1), but the overall results of the survey, it must be said, show that there is no single acculturation strategy which dominates in Latvia. Indeed, all five strategies are represented to a more or less equal degree.

Latvians believe that the greatest number of non-Latvians in Latvia choose the strategy of separation (the arithmetic average – 36.3). Russians and representatives of other nationalities, for their part, feel that the largest percentage of non-Latvians opt for the strategy of integration (38.0 and 34.2).

**Figure 1. Assessing the spread of acculturation strategies**

Answers to this question: "What percentage of non-Latvians in Latvia have chosen this position in life?" All answers are divided in 10 groups "Fewer than 10%", "10-19%", etc. Figure 1 shows the frequency with which each answer was given. The question was posed separately with respect to each acculturation strategy. Figure 1 shows that 5% of Latvians feel that the strategy of separation is typical among fewer than 10% of Latvia's non-Latvians, 17% think that the strategy of separation is typical among 10-19% of such residents, etc.



**Table 7. The spread of acculturation strategies, arithmetic average per nationality**

What percentage of non-Latvians in Latvia have chosen this position in life?

Acculturation strategy	All residents	Latvians	Russians	Others
Separation	34.6	36.3	32.9	26.9
Assimilation	22.7	21.6	24.9	24.4
Integration	29.6	25.5	38.0	34.2
Marginalisation	20.2	20.8	19.6	17.8
Fusion	20.4	19.0	24.0	19.3

Attitudes and identification with each of the strategies of acculturation, as well as the issue of acculturation expectations will be analysed in greater detail further along in this report.

### Assessment of the strategy of separation

*Konstantin arrived in Latvia in 1980 after he had completed his training as an engineer at the Leningrad Polytechnic Institute. He was sent to work at a factory in Rīga, Latvia. There, he met a woman called Iveta (a Latvian), and they were married. Konstantin mostly speaks Russian at work and at home. His children attend a school where classes are taught in Russian. Konstantin has very important links to his native Russia. As he puts it: 'I cannot accept Latvian culture and traditions. I have no need for the Latvian language in my everyday life.' Most of Konstantin's friends are Russian speakers. Konstantin would like his children to pursue their higher education in Russia where, he believes, a higher quality of education is ensured. Konstantin subscribes to several magazines from Russia and only watches Russian television channels. Konstantin has not yet received Latvian citizenship, but he is thinking about doing so, as that would make it easier to travel. Until now, however, it has been of greater advantage to be a non-citizen, because that has made it easier for him to visit his relatives in Russia each year.*

According to the acculturation theory of Berry, the strategy of separation is one in which individuals attach a great deal of importance to the preservation of their culture. Such people avoid contacts with the representatives of the other culture.

**Table 8. Support for the way in which the character in the SEPARATION story shapes his life in Latvia**

	Average indicator	Those who fully or mostly support the character (answers 4 and 5), %	Those who fully or mostly do not support the character (answers 1 and 2), %
All respondents	2.15	15%	60%
Latvians	1.85	9%	73%
Russians	<b>2.84</b>	27%	34%
Others	2.44	18%	47%

The results of the survey show that among all Latvians, 15% of respondents support this strategy, while 60% do not. The greatest proportion of supporters is found among Russians, and particularly among those who are 61 to 75 years old (41% support), as well as among those who are 15 to 30 years old (27%). Slightly greater support for the strategy is found among Latvians and Russians who live in the Latvian capital city of Rīga.

Among **Latvians**, the strategy of separation is judged most harshly (an average indicator of 1.85, with 73% of Latvians fully or mostly not supporting the character) (Table 8). In focus groups, respondents expressed disgust at this strategy, arguing that it is not clear why such an individual is still living in Latvia.

*If he cannot accept this, then perhaps he can go somewhere else where it is acceptable. He has free choice, no one is forcing him to live here. Perhaps he has greater links with Russia? – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30 years old, interview in Latvian)*

*He doesn't accept our culture at all. He's not interested in the country in which he lives, in the things that happen here, the culture. Forgive me, please, but what is this man doing here? Let him move to Russia, let him live, work and study, everything will be fine. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Latvian)*

This discourse is based on the rights of the titular nation. In some cases, respondents struck a defensive pose:

*Yes, but we live in Latvia, this is also our country. We dictate terms here, we do not have to yield before the Russian speakers. This is our country. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Latvian)*

Latvian respondents express their distaste at the strategy of separation, angrily pointing out that no one was forced to move to Latvia and arguing that if someone really does not like

living here (i.e., if that person does not enjoy Latvian traditions and the Latvian language), then it is better for any person to seek out a country which is more in line with his or her specific desires. In Latvian focus groups, many respondents said that if someone has come to Latvia and remained here, then for one reason or another it must be better here than elsewhere:

*True Russians live in Russia. These are wanderers, they are wanderers who are seeking their fortune. He knew that these were the Baltic republics, that life was more advantageous here, living conditions were better. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 60-75, interview in Latvian)*

*When I talk to the ones with whom I have greater contacts, I tell them – go ahead and go to your Russia, what keeps you here? The answer – no one is waiting for us there. These people are afraid of losing their flats, their cars, all of the other conveniences. They go to visit their relatives, and then they come back. It is better here, because here there are salaries, houses, flats. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Latvian)*

*Nobody was brought here in chains. If he came here, then for one reason or another he decided that something is better here. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

Some Latvian respondents are offended about the fact that the character in the story refuses to accept Latvian traditions and culture:

*I think that if you move to another country, then it is your obligation to take an interest in that country's culture. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Latvian)*

*I don't agree that one cannot accept Latvian culture and traditions, they are quite beautiful. The people I know are happy to accept them, they celebrate, but this man apparently has some kind of ambition. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Latvian)*

*I also cannot accept the fact that he cannot accept our traditions, which seem to be so lovely and storied. No one is asking him to do anything terrible. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Latvian)*

*I don't believe that he cannot accept Latvian culture after living in Latvia for so long. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Latvian)*

Among Latvians and non-Latvians alike, focus group respondents largely agreed that people who live in Latvia must have a command of the Latvian language, and they had negative things to say about the character's attitude vis-à-vis the Latvian language. Some focus group participants in the Latvian group were quite harsh about the issue of the Latvian language. They were offended specifically by the refusal of the character in the story to learn the Latvian language and by his negative attitude toward that language:

*I cannot understand how this man can live in Latvia, spend time here, work here and still not speak Latvian. How can he live here without speaking the Latvian language? That is the only thing that is not acceptable to me. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Latvian)*

*That is a lack of respect if you cannot speak a single word, you cannot answer questions. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Latvian)*

Also unacceptable to many Latvian respondents was the fact that Konstantin denied the identity of the mother of his children. The kids were attending a school where classes were taught in Russian, the family spoke Russian at home, and the story left some respondents with the impression that the Latvian mother had no influence in the family at all, that her Latvian identity was being denied;

*He does not respect his wife, who is a Latvian. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

*We've all heard them saying, "Нам не нужен ваш собачий язык" (We don't need your language – it's the language of a dog!). This man is a Russian chauvinist. I feel sorry for that woman and her children, because the family is constantly under pressure, under ideological influence, and the children are unhappy. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

Several respondents linked the strategy of separation to an aggressive and negative attitude on the part of Russians. They argue that it is very easy to manipulate such people, also suggesting that they easily yield before the ideology of specific political parties. Several

respondents said that those young people who took part in protests against education reforms were probably the children of people such as Konstantin.

*One can feel a certain aggression in Russian people. Latvian people adapt, but Russians are becoming increasingly aggressive. It is easy to manipulate such people. The political parties make use of those people who don't like it here, they try to get them to oppose our country. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Latvian)*

*I would like to say very critically that he is hostile toward Latvia, because he says that he cannot accept the traditions of Latvian culture. Then I really must ask why he is living in this country. Go and live in the country which has a culture which you can accept, which has a language that you like, which has people whom you like. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

*This is a classical example of a Russian chauvinist. He was sent here, but he has no plans to leave. We see how the ideology affects those people who were sent to live here. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

*Konstantin's children remind me of my childhood. They are enemies of this system. They were certainly take part in progressive marches, they will take part in protests. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

Some respondents argued that these aggressive and negative attitudes are based on Russian language mass media outlets, and if someone only watches Russian TV and reads Russian newspapers, this separation promotes the emergence of a negative attitude, along with even greater separation and isolation from the rest of Latvia's society.

*It is no secret to anyone that events in Latvia are reflected in a negative light on those channels. My experience shows that people who don't like the place where they live are dangerous. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Latvian)*

*In any event this is all cultivated, it is cultivated by the press, and the person ends up being who he is. It is no surprise that this has happened. (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

Among Latvians, some respondents are upset about the fact that many non-Latvians in Latvia have no need to speak the Latvian language. The Russian language in Latvia is adequately self-sufficient. If someone does not need to speak the language on an everyday basis, then he or she will not learn the language. Latvians indirectly point out that this is one of the problems in Latvia – people can do very well without any command of the language.

*It's true – if the person doesn't need the language, then he will never learn it. Please understand – if I don't need to hammer a nail into a piece of wood, then I won't be looking for a hammer. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

*I suspect that even information about what is happening in his environment is information which he can only receive in Russian – all of the information! It comes from the news, from the press. What motivation does someone have to learn the Latvian language if he can absolutely live his life without speaking it? – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 18-35, interview in Latvian)*

Other participants in Latvian focus groups offered views which could be described as empathetic or neutrally positive. These people said that each person has the right to choose his or her own model of life and integration, even if that person lives in a different country. Second, someone who has not lost his roots and his links to his own country (Russia) deserves respect.

*I support all of his interests. He is an individual, a person – let him live his life. I don't care whether he's a Russian, a Turk, a Gypsy or a Jew. He loves his country, and he is loyal to it. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Latvian)*

Other respondents expressed empathy for the character in the story, stressing that he was sent to work here – it was not a matter of his own free will.

*I have spoken to many acquaintances who are Russians – back then they had no choice at all. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Latvian)*

*Non-Latvians were brought here are guest workers, not as occupants. They simply came to work here. (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-30, interview in Latvian)*

Representatives of this discourse stressed that each person can make his or her choice, and no one else has the right to denounce that choice. As long as the individual does not break the law or express an aggressively negative attitude toward Latvia and Latvians, all is well:

*As long as he does not spit on the local culture, as long as he does not feel increasing aggression toward Latvians, let him live here! – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Latvian)*

*Basically he would not disturb me as long as he didn't go out into the city centre to scream that he is a Russian, he was born in Russia, he is excellent. If he is living, if his life is good, then let him live. He doesn't bother me. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Latvian)*

*If he can live that way and not break the law, then let him live here. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 18-35, interview in Latvian)*

*Unlike the rest of you, I support the presence of absolutely all people in Latvia. The greater the diversity among those who live here, the more interesting it will be for us to live our lives. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

Some Latvian focus group respondents have made peace with the fact that the Russian language in Latvia is self-sufficient and that there are manifestations of a society with two separate communities in the country. They stress that this is simply a reality – no one can be accused of anything, and the situation must be accepted:

*Whether you like it or not, Latvia has a society with two communities. Please understand, if he feels good in the other society, the other community, then he has no need to seek out the one in which he does not feel good. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

*That's life – please understand that life goes down different tracks, there are switches, and so he has arrived in the Russian environment. In Latvia, the Russian environment is self-sufficient. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Latvian)*

In the Liepāja focus group, one respondent said that the Latvian environment is not always open to non-Latvians. If a non-Latvian finds that he or she is not accepted, then he or she will create a border, while if the person is accepted, he or she becomes more open and friendly:

*They are becoming more distant, we are pushing them away, we do not want them. If someone is accepted by Latvians, then that person changes. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

In summarising the attitudes expressed in the Latvian focus groups, one must point to several different discourses. First of all, the issue of language is very important, and many respondents stressed it. Second, many respondents have an exacerbated attitude toward Latvian traditions and culture. The refusal to accept the Latvian language and Latvian traditions is perceived as disrespect and Russian chauvinism. Third, respondents attached a great deal of importance to the issue of whether the character in the story arrived in Latvia himself or was sent here. Those who noticed that the man was sent to Latvia tended to be more empathetic toward the position which he has taken in life. Some respondents identified the character with Latvians who are working in Ireland today, and they expressed a greater understanding. The two most distinct positions are illustrated very vividly by a quote from the focus group in Rīga. Here we see a positive and understanding attitude, but also offence about the fact that Konstantin ignores the Latvian language and culture, perceiving this as disrespect.

*I like Konstantin, he lives here, he came from Russia, that is where his roots are. He has roots in the country from which he came, and there is no need for him to become a Latvian.*

*Certainly he does not respect Latvians.*

*And why should we respect those who do not respect us? Let him go back to Russia [everyone laughs] – (Rīga and Rīga District, 60-75, interview in Latvian)*

Among **Russians**, the strategy of separation is supported by a bit more than one-quarter of respondents (27%), while one-third of Russian speaking respondents (34%) do not support the strategy. This was seen in a focus group in which the discussion was held in Russian. Those who do not support the strategy denounced the character in the story over the fact that he doesn't speak Latvian and has isolated himself from Latvian life. These are respondents who believe that if one lives in Latvia, one must not ignore the Latvian language and culture:



Konstantin should learn the Latvian language. If he came to this country, then he must learn. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Russian)

I cannot support him completely either. On the one hand, I understand him, but he cannot just ignore Latvian culture completely. Neither can he fully exclude himself from Latvian life, he has to have some kind of interest. If you live in this country, then you have to try to learn the language. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Russian)

I think that if you live in another country, you have to speak the language – not perfectly, necessarily, but enough to make contacts with others. Why can't the Russian and Latvian culture be merged? You can be more linked to Russian culture, but you must also respect the Latvian culture. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Russian)

Some respondents said that they cannot understand how someone in Latvia could not need to speak the Latvian language:

How can he not need the Latvian language? That's odd. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Russian)

How can anyone live like that? Everything is in Russian, in Russian, he doesn't even recognise that which is in Latvian. I can't understand that. I don't know, it's just not acceptable to me. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 18-35 interview in Russian)

Those focus group participants who had negative views about the strategy of separation feel that the position taken by the character in the story represents disrespect and ignorance about Latvia. That is the main thing which they could not accept – these respondents feel that you cannot disrespect the country in which you live:

In the first story (the one about assimilation), there is disrespect toward Russian culture, it speaks to someone who has forgotten his roots. Whether you like it or not, you were born a Russian. In this story, however, there is **disrespect toward the country in which you live**. It doesn't matter whether you were born here, whether you arrived here 10 years ago, one year ago or six months ago – I think that you must respect the country in which you live. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Russian)

I got the sense that he is against Latvia, the country in which he lives and in which he feels fine. He is against it. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Russian)

How can he do this – live here and not accept anything that is Latvian? Does he become nauseous because of this? – (Rīga and Rīga District, 60-75, interview in Russian)

I don't support him, because he disrespects the other culture. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Russian)

I cannot imagine myself in place. He has isolated himself from everything. He cannot be so closed off, he cannot push everything aside. He isn't looking forward. You must respect the country in which you live. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Russian)

If someone tries to live in a different country without supporting it, that always ends badly. I cannot understand how someone could live like that. (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 18-35, interview in Russian)

I don't support him at all – he needs to respect the place where he lives. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 18-35, interview in Russian).

If he lives here, then he should demonstrate at least a little bit of loyalty, if only for the sake of appearance. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 36-60, interview in Russian)

Other respondents who felt that this strategy is unacceptable felt that the character was very egotistical and was operating only from the position of his own advantage. Some felt that he didn't even want to live in Latvia and was planning to leave.

He is living on the basis of his own advantage, and that is not acceptable. I do not support him. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 60-75, interview in Russian)

I think that he's not planning to live here, he wants to leave. (Rīga and Rīga District, 60-75, interview in Russian)

He hasn't learned the language, and this man looks for his own advantages in any situation. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Russian)

Nothing is important to him other than his personal advantage. If he **spits in the eyes of Latvia's residents**, if he cannot accept the Latvian culture and traditions because he doesn't need them, if he only speaks Russian – well, sorry, there are lots of Russians in Latvia who

speaking Latvian, and I think that he needs to learn the language, too. (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Russian)

Some respondents in the Russian language focus groups repeated a very popular fragment of discourse which was heard in the Latvian focus groups – that someone who takes this position in life needs to go and live somewhere else.

*I would say that Konstantin is a cancer on Latvia's body. He lives in Latvia, but he's interested in Russian culture. Why? He's a space alien of some kind. He doesn't even know what's happening in Latvia, he only knows what's happening in Russia. In that case, let him pack up his things and leave! There he'll know everything. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

*I'm wondering why he doesn't move to Russia. He's suffering in Latvia. He had a chance to go there when the chaos started, he could even have bought himself a flat. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

*If he hates everything here so much, then let him sell his flat and move to Russia. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

Several respondents could not accept the fact that Konstantin made the choice of separation on behalf of his children, too, making them study in schools where classes are taught in Russian and wanting to send them to Russia for their higher education. These respondents feel that he is “robbing” his children in that way, keeping them from learning about the values and wealth of culture of their country and their city:

*I can understand adults if they have no need in this regard, but they cannot make all of the decisions on behalf of their children. No one knows how those children's' lives will develop. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Russian)*

*These children – even though this is their country, they are too pompous to accept anything. That is very aggressive – not accepting anything that is found here in Rīga, where they live. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Russian)*

*A child who is going to school in Latvia must be graduated from school in Latvian. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

Other focus group participants, by contrast, expressed understanding and support for the position taken by Konstantin in the separation story, because they themselves do not feel Latvian culture or have little contact with it. They try to make contacts with Russians in Russian, and they have similar feelings to those of Konstantin:

*I cannot accept Latvian culture, even though sometimes I go to those various holidays. If you compare Latvian culture and traditions to Russian culture and traditions, then there is no comparison. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Russian)*

*I'm the same. I would also look for the most advantageous option, the one that is appropriate specifically for me. That's why I support him. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

*I live the same life – I don't want to, and I won't. I have everything. I have Russian citizenship, I can go there as often as I want, I can calmly cross three borders. There is nothing for me in the West. I've been there, I've seen the West. Better to stay here and receive the 200 or 300 lats. I can't say that I hate or particularly love the Latvians. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

*To what extent can you identify with him? – Completely, I fully support him. I hold on to Russian culture, all of my acquaintances are Russians, I prefer to speak in Russian. I watch Russian programmes and read Russian books, too. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

Understanding is also expressed by those respondents who feel that the story relates not to disrespect toward Latvian culture, but rather to the fact that Russian culture, the native land and cultural roots are so very important to Konstantin:

*His culture is important to him, and he will only hold on to his own culture. He doesn't need an alien one. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Russian)*

*I both support and do not support Konstantin, because he arrived from Russia, that is the land of his birth. He doesn't want to change anything, but if he lives in Latvia, he must learn the Latvian language and some traditions, linking these to the future. He has categorically decided,*

however to send his children to study in Russia. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Russian)

Several respondents made excuses for the Russian speakers in Latvia who do not speak Latvian, focusing both on a lack of the linguistic environment and the self-sufficiency of the Russian language, and on the fact that certain types of people find it hard to learn any language.

*I know someone who simply cannot learn the language. It doesn't work for him. He does well at mathematics, at arithmetic, but not at Latvian. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Russian)*

*If someone who does not speak the language lives here and feels fine, then he has no need, and I would not denounce him for this. If he feels fine, if he has no internal need and does not converse, then why should he force himself? I can understand that. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Russian)*

Summarising the views stated by respondents in the Russian language focus group, it has to be said that there were some who denounced Konstantin's strategy of separation, because they feel that anyone who lives in Latvia must speak the Latvian language and must not be allowed to ignore the country in which he or she lives. At the same time, however, many respondents found similarities between Konstantin's story and their own lives, expressing the view that this strategy represents a position taken by a great many non-Latvians in Latvia.

*This is a very realistic story, I have lots of acquaintances of this type. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Russian)*

*That's how people live, after all, we know that! – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Russian).*

*This story reminds me of an acquaintance of mine. She was born in Latvia, but she basically doesn't speak Latvian at all, and she's not studying the language, she says that she doesn't need to. I asked her how she does her work, because she works with clients. She answered – if someone does not speak to me in Russian, I don't give them any discounts. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Russian)*

*There are more people of this kind than those who resemble the character in the previous story [assimilation]. These people are just drifting down the stream. (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Russian).*

*There are thousands of people like Konstantin! – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

Several respondents indicated that as far as they know, this position is most often taken among older people – those who refuse to recognise the changes that have taken place as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union:

*I think that there are a great many people of that kind. Probably that can be said about most of the Russians who were migrants. Particularly those people who are older – they hold on to these views. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

*Some of the people who correspond to this description, particularly among older people, don't even know where they're living. It's clear that they're not living in Latvia. They're still living in the former USSR. They're all in Russia, in some kind of world of the past. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Russian)*

The results of the quantitative survey confirm that among those who are 61 to 75 years old, there are greater percentages of respondents who feel similarities to Konstantin and have opted for the strategy of separation (17% say that they are completely similar to him). It has to be noted, however, that there is also a comparatively high percentage of young people aged 15 to 30 who feel that they largely are similar to Konstantin (totally – 5%, to a great degree – 20%). The least support for the character in the separation story was offered by Russian speaking residents of Latvia who are 31 to 45 years old (see Table 9). It has to be noted that there are no statistically important differences in the views of citizens and non-citizens in these groups.

Among those people who live in Latvia and who communicate more in Russian than in Latvian, 20%, on average, accept the separation strategy as their own. This largely coincides with judgments that are made about the strategy. When asked about how many non-Latvians in Latvia have chosen Konstantin's strategy of separation the most frequently cited answer was

20%. All in all, however, there are very diverse views as to how many people in Latvia support this strategy. The comparatively highest percentage is found among those who feel that this might be true with respect to 20-29% of Latvia’s residents. Latvians feel that there are more non-Latvians of this type than do Russians.

**Table 9. Identification with the character in the SEPARATION story**

	Average indicator	Those who feel that they are mostly or fully similar to the character in the story (answers 4 and 5). %	Those who feel that they are very little or not at all similar to the character (answers 1 and 2), %
All respondents	2.51	20%	46%
Citizens	2.42	19%	49%
Non-citizens	2.65	22%	41%
15-30	2.59	26%	42%
31-45	2.28	13%	55%
46-60	2.52	20%	43%
61-75	2.77	26%	41%

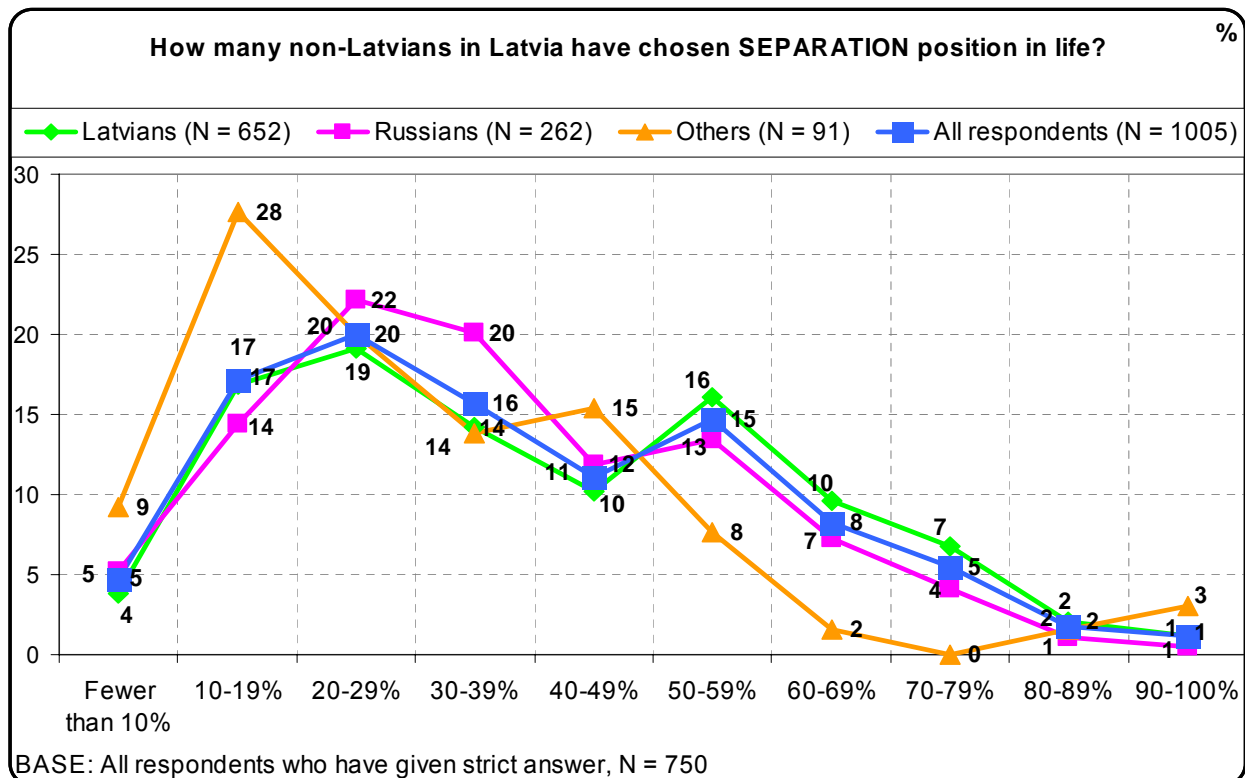
Another view that was expressed in the focus group discussions was that this strategy of acculturation might be very widespread among people in Rīga and Daugavpils. All in all, however, the separation strategy was very well known by Latvians and Russians, and no one questioned its validity:

*I think that this might be a fairly traditional model in Rīga. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

*This is more typical in Eastern Latvia, in Daugavpils. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

**Figure 2. Evaluation of the spread of the SEPARATION strategy**

Answers to the question “How many non-Latvians in Latvia have chosen this position in life?” All answers are divided in 10 groups: “Fewer than 10%”, “10-19%”, etc.



### Assessment of the strategy of assimilation

Andrei arrived in Latvia in 1980 after he had completed his training as an engineer at the Leningrad Polytechnic Institute. He was sent to work at a factory in Rīga, Latvia. There, he met a woman called Iveta (a Latvian), and they were married. Initially Andrei spoke to everyone in Russian, but because he had many Latvian colleagues and work and his wife and friends were Latvians, too, he quickly learned Latvian, and they speak Latvian in the family. His children attend Latvian schools. Andrei has lost his links to Russia. Since the repeal of age limits on naturalisation in 1999, Andrei has obtained Latvian citizenship, because all of his relatives in Latvia are Latvian citizens. Together with his wife, Andrei is a member of a Latvian folk dancing group, and they take part in Latvian Song and Dance Festivals.

As a strategy of acculturation, assimilation refers to a situation in which an individual voluntarily chooses to maintain intensive contacts with another culture without thinking about whether or not he or she wishes to preserve his or her native cultural heritage or identity. The results of the survey show that quite a few people, generally speaking, support the strategy of assimilation in Latvia (69%), but at the same time, there are relatively few non-Latvians who identify with the story to a greater or lesser degree.

**Table 10. Support for the way in which the character in the ASSIMILATION story shapes his life in Latvia**

	Average indicator	Those who fully or mostly support the character (answers 4 and 5), %	Those who fully or mostly do not support the character (answers 1 and 2), %
All respondents	4.02	69%	12%
Latvians	<b>4.36</b>	81%	4%
Russians	3.27	44%	29%
Others	3.69	57%	20%

Considerably more support for the assimilation strategy is given by **Latvians** – it is supported by 81% of Latvian respondents. This indicates that there are many expectations among Latvians when it comes to non-Latvians in Latvia – that they will accept the Latvian language and culture and step away from the Russian cultural heritage:

*This is the right road, he has assimilated. That is commendable, it is an example for others. - (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Latvian)*

*I think that it is a very normal situation. The man came to Latvian, he married a Latvian woman, and he is so deeply ingrained in the local culture that he forgets his Russia. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Latvian)*

*It is good that the kids are attending a Latvian school. That is better than the situation for quite a few people. It is very nice that he takes part in Latvian culture and takes part in the Song Festival. That means a lot. I like that. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Latvian)*

*Of all of these stories, I think that this one is the most acceptable. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

For many Latvians, the choice to accept that which is Latvian is nice. They praise the choice as an example of respect toward the Latvian state and Latvians. They stress that this is a very good strategy for Latvian and Latvians, all the more so because Andrei freely speaks Latvian and has a friendly attitude toward Latvians. On the other hand, focus group participants also spoke of those instances when they have encountered a denial of the Latvian language or culture on the part of non-Latvians.

*I completely support him. I work in a company where most workers are Russian, and I know those Russians. We also have members of other nationalities – Ukrainians and Belarusians. I wish that even one-half of these people were like that, then I would be happy to be with them. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Latvian)*

*I also support him. This person is sympathetic to me, he takes part, he does not reject things. There are lots of people – you tell them about the Latvian Song Festival, but they gaze at you with big, stupid eyes and do not react at all. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Latvian)*

*He is someone who is positively oriented toward the country in which he lives. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

It still has to be said, however, that in Latvian focus groups in general, the assimilation strategy was viewed more critically than the integration strategy, and there were several reasons for this. First of all, the strategy of assimilation in Latvia's context seemed exaggerated and unlikely in Latvia, because the Russian community in the country is very large and self-sufficient:

*I think that this is a terribly positive example – he dances folk dances at the Song Festival. **I think that's ridiculous.** – (Rīga and Rīga District), 18-30, interview in Latvian)*

*I don't really believe this story. How can someone forget all about his roots? – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Latvian)*

*I cannot imagine this, because he is a first-generation resident here. It's not as if his parents and grandparents lived here, he has already lost his identity. Moreover, he seemingly does not want to accept the culture of his own people. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 18-35, interview in Latvian)*

The assimilation model seemed more believable to those who imagined Andrei in a very Latvian environment in Vidzeme or Kurzeme, but not in Rīga or Daugavpils. Others said that the story would be more believable if Andrei had been born in Latvia and had attended a Latvian school.

*The conditions were better, there weren't just Russians all around. If he had had Russians all around him, then who knows – maybe he would just speak Russian. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Latvian)*

*I suspect that Andrei doesn't live in Rīga or Daugavpils, where there is a predominance of Russians. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Latvian)*

*He has become Latvianised. He has been in an environment in which there are basically Latvians. That's how his life has ended up. What's more, he had the desire himself. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

*The main thing here is that he had lots of Latvian colleagues at work. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

Because the participants in the focus groups tried to imagine and understand the situation, several respondents suggested that by nature, Andrei is very calm and adapts to his wife. This, they said, could explain his becoming Latvianised:

*He's in the other ditch now, this is not the best option. The woman here retrained him too much. That's why he dances folk dances, sings in a choir – who knows what else. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

*I think that Andrei has a much weaker and pliant nature. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

*He's interested in the traditions and culture of his wife's nation. I think that this is the most important fact in this story. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

Second, a majority of respondents in all groups could not accept the fact that the individual had fully rejected his roots and the culture of his native land. Some respondents even said that it would be unacceptable for all non-Latvians in Latvia to reject their culture and their roots:

*I think that he is a traitor to his own country, he has completely forgotten the Russians, his culture. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Latvian)*

*I don't think that it's completely right that he has completely forgotten Russian culture. Fine, Latvian culture is important to him, but Russian cultural traditions are also very deep and rich, and that would not be correct. I think that he should also have an interest in Russian culture. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 60-75, interview in Latvian)*

*As Latvians, we can only be pleased at how well he has adapted himself to our country and its cultural environment. On the other hand, it seems that he has become assimilated. I*

wouldn't want all non-Latvians who come here to forget their culture. That is the other extreme. You have to preserve yourself. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Latvian)

Respondents said that they don't like the fact that Andrei offers nothing of the Russian cultural heritage to his children and grandchildren.

*If I had a husband like that, then I would very much regret the fact that he gives his children nothing of the Russian culture. I cannot accept a full loss of one's own culture and a full transfer into another one. You could say that I dislike this.* – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Latvian)

*He must not lose it, he must not! Children have to be raised so that they also know their father's culture, then they'll understand both Russians and Latvians. If the child wants to be intelligent, then he must be familiar with the Russian classics, he must know everything.* – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)

In discussing the strategy of assimilation, several respondents said that it would be better if non-Latvians were to accept Latvian traditions and learn the Latvian language while preserving their Russian identity. Essentially, that would correspond to the strategy of integration:

*If you remember your origins and your history, that doesn't keep you from living in this country.* – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Latvian)

*Why does it say here that he has lost his links with Russia? Why must he lose those links? He doesn't have to reject them.* – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)

Several respondents in the Latvian focus groups argued that it is not possible to arrive in Latvia and accept the Latvian culture fully as one's own. Accordingly, they think that someone who has chosen the assimilation strategy faces a hard life, because he or she has given up his own cultural identity:

*In fact he has moved from one culture entirely to another, and he will never enter the second one completely. Is that the ideal option? It's the best one for us Latvians, but it's not the ideal option because the person has lost any real links to the things that can fulfil him, to his culture. From our perspective that's a good thing, but in essence it's not good at all.* – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Latvian)

*He can't become a Latvian. That's as clear as the fact that a trolley car will never take flight.* – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 18-35, interview in Latvian)

*I feel sorry for him as an individual. We all come from somewhere, we're all going somewhere. If that place is empty for a person, then I don't know how he lives his life.* – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Latvian)

*If someone loses his roots, then he loses a great deal as an individual.* – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)

Some respondents feel that no one can forget about his or her roots and mentality, while others think that Andrei is a Soviet-era individual and so doesn't feel his Russian roots, choosing instead to become Latvianised:

*Every person has memories of his ethnic homeland. Andrei, too, has those memories deep, deep inside himself – about his homeland and everything else.* – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)

*I assume that he is a product of the Soviet Union.* – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)

Generally speaking, members of Latvian focus groups tended to say that assimilation is extremely uncommon in Latvia:

*Yes, there are non-Latvians in Latvia who take part in Latvian culture with their heart and their soul, but they are, of course, the exception.* – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Latvian)

*I think that there are very few people like that in real life.* – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 18-35, interview in Latvian)

Among **Russians**, support for the strategy of assimilation is two times lower than among Latvians – 44%. Comparatively larger numbers of respondents who support the strategy were found among women (50%), older people (59% among those aged 61 to 71), and people who do not live in Rīga (51% in other towns, 59% in the countryside). Among those who do not support

the strategy of assimilation, greater percentages were found among non-citizens and more highly educated people.

Focus group discussions in Russian indicate that non-Latvians in Latvia find it hard to identify with the strategy of assimilation. Some of them praised a few of the activities in which the character in the story, Andrei, engaged – the fact that he had learned the Latvian language and received his citizenship. Complaints about Andrei, however, were largely the same as in the Latvian groups – focus group participants did not like the fact that Andrei had lost his roots and rejected Russian culture:

*Good for him that he underwent naturalisation, learned the language and found his place here, but it is a minus that he is not maintaining links with the culture of his ancestors. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Russian)*

*Forgetting your roots? Give me a break – that would be the same thing as forgetting your mother. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Russian)*

*In any event, he must not forget his fatherland. If he has done so, then he has lost himself, he is nothing. He is a man who can change at the drop of a hat. You must respect yourself, you must respect that which is real. You don't have to offend anyone – if you live somewhere, then you have to respect that country. If you don't, then why do you live here, go away! But by no means can you forget your own country. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 60-75, interview in Russian)*

Many respondents could not accept the idea that Andrei had no more links with his relatives in Russia:

*I don't know how that would be possible at all. I came from Russia, for instance, I maintain links with my relatives. I absolutely cannot identify myself with this man. The only thing is that he has learned the language and become a citizen. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Russian)*

*The fact that he learned the language, that is a good thing. The fact that he is not upholding links by telephone or with letters – that is not good. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Russian)*

Many respondents said that they support Andrei's activities, arguing that it is good that he has found a place for himself in Latvia and accepted local traditions. At the same time, however, the same respondents also often said that they found it hard to identify with the story:

*I fully support Andrei, but this story – I don't know how realistic it is, because I've never met anyone like that. I've never met someone who arrived in Latvia as an adult and accepted Latvian culture, traditions and mentality to such a great degree. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Russian)*

Some respondents did say that such incidents can be encountered, but not very often. Respondents said that of great importance in the process of assimilation is the Latvian environment in which Andrei found himself – the environment which accepted him:

*I fully support the way in which he is shaping his life in Latvia. I've met a few people like that in Latvia – not many, but a few. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Russian)*

*He has found himself in a good environment, and he was successful at all of it – the language, everything else. These kinds of things happen in our country, but seldom. I fully support him. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Russian)*

*He simply had to live in that environment, there were Latvians all around him. He had no other choice. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

As was the case in the Latvian focus groups, here, too, one heard the view that this situation would be possible if Andrei had been born and raised in Latvia, if he had attended a Latvian school:

*This makes me think more of a Russian who was born here and was sent to a Latvian school. If he came from somewhere else, then I doubt it. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

Other respondents made up family factors which might have influenced Andrei – his parents didn't teach him Russian culture, or perhaps he lost his relatives:

*Perhaps his parents did not work hard to make sure that he maintain the Russian culture. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*



*He's lost his roots in Russia because he never had any roots there in the first place. If he had relatives there, then he wouldn't lose those roots. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

Other respondents flatly rejected the story and said that it was all made up and unrealistic. Latvia, they said has a vast Russian community, and back in Soviet times it would have been unimaginable for someone to choose assimilation and a rejection of the Russian language and culture:

*This story is so very unbelievable. The community here is historical, people speak both Latvian and Russian. Moreover, many Russian speakers have very deep roots here. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Russian)*

*Given the ethnic makeup of the population, I think that this is a completely fairy tale. I've never met anyone like that, it's hard to imagine. – Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

*I've never met anyone like that, this can only be a hypothesis. You can't just become a Latvian all of a sudden. You can't forget anything. Goodness me, that never happens! – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

*Back in Soviet times people only ever shifted to the Russian language. This situation is not believable. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

*This situation is purely theoretical. Someone who has come from Russia, who has all of his roots there – he can't just simply go and become a Latvian. That doesn't happen. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

In addition to bemusement and disbelief, some respondents offered a sense of disgust – how on earth can someone reject the Russian language and culture?

How badly do you have to hate your culture? How offended do you have to be to reject your language completely? – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Russian)

*I'm a bit offended about the Russian people. Really – how much do you have to hate your culture to reject it? Russian culture is quite strong, after all. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Russian)*

*Didn't anyone teach him to respect Russian traditions and culture? I can't understand this. Does he really not care? – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

*It can't be that he simply extracted a part of himself and threw it out. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

Some respondents, in discussing this story, also said things which suggested scorn of the Latvian language and culture, in comparison to the Russian language and culture, as well as the Russian state:

*Something like this will never happen. You'd have to be an idiot! Russia is such a big country, it's existed for several thousand years. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

*Russian culture is richer, more ancient. Latvians took their culture over from Germany. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

Some respondents could identify with the story not in terms of Latvia, but instead of their imagined or real experiences somewhere else. People talked about moving to South America, the United States, as well as Belarus. One respondent suggested that the situation in the story might be true in Latvia – 30 years from now:

*I think that he was 30 years ahead of his time, if we look at it from the present day perspective. I think that this story applies more to America. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

*I completely identify myself with Andrei and can do so, because I once found myself in Latin America without speaking a single word of Spanish, I was in exactly the same situation as Andrei, except that I didn't have a wife (laughs). I had to live, and I remember how they treated me at first, but 18 months later the situation was completely different – I spoke the language, I lived together with the people of that country. I can fully identify myself with this story, and I believe that it is normal. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Russian)*

*I can imagine myself in Andrei's place. No matter how important the Russian and the Latvian culture might be to me, I know that I am attracted by Belarus. Perhaps the time will come when I will move to live there, and I will be the same as Andrei, only in Belarus. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

In all of the focus groups, there were respondents who supported Andrei's choice, as well as those who expressed a lack of understanding and a sense of disgust – how could that be? Some felt that Andrei had done a bad and unacceptable thing. In no focus group was a single respondent found to claim that the story could also be applied to a friend or acquaintance.

The results of the quantitative survey confirm that far greater numbers of people support the assimilation strategy than identify with it. 29% of non-Latvians in Latvia, on average, believe that they are similar to one extent or another to Andrei, while 40% say that they are very little or not at all comparable to the character in the story (Table 11). Among citizens, there are slightly more respondents who feel similar to Andrei. Comparatively higher percentages of support are also found among those in the 31-45 and 61-75 age cohort. Interestingly, there are no significant differences between the answers given by immigrants and those given by non-Latvians who were born in Latvia. Greater identification with Andrei was discovered among members of other nationalities whose native language is not Russian.

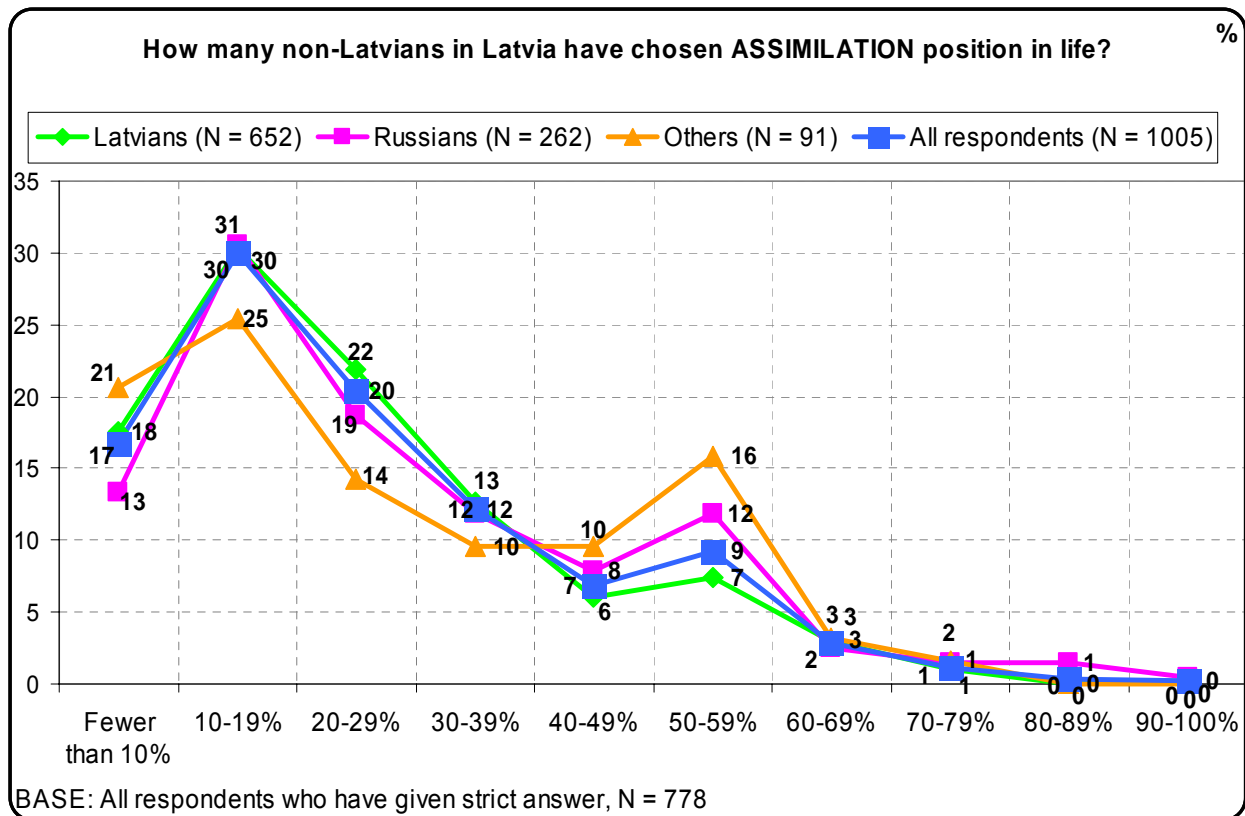
**Table 11. Identification with the character in the ASSIMILATION story**

	<b>Average indicator</b>	<b>Those who feel that they are mostly or fully similar to the character in the story (answers 4 and 5). %</b>	<b>Those who feel that they are very little or not at all similar to the character (answers 1 and 2), %</b>
All respondents	2.77	29%	40%
Citizens	2.86	32%	40%
Non-citizens	2.66	24%	41%
15-30	2.57	26%	49%
31-45	2.79	33%	40%
46-60	2.77	26%	39%
61-75	3.06	31%	30%

When asked the percentage of non-Latvians in Latvia who have chosen the strategy of assimilation, respondents most often mentioned the 10-19% range. Fewer than one-third thought that more than 30% of non-Latvians might have chosen the assimilation strategy, and very few, indeed, felt that more than 60% of non-Latvians did so. There were no statistically important differences in terms of the answers that were given to this question by Latvians, Russians and members of other nationalities.

**Figure 3. Evaluation of the spread of the ASSIMILATION strategy**

Answers to the question “How many non-Latvians in Latvia have chosen this position in life?” All answers are divided in 10 groups: “Fewer than 10%”, “10-19%”, etc.



**Assessment of the strategy of integration**

Vitaliy arrived in Latvia in 1980 after he had completed his training as an engineer at the Leningrad Polytechnic Institute. He was sent to work at a factory in Rīga, Latvia. There, he met a woman called Iveta (a Latvian), and they were married. While living in Latvia, Vitaliy has learned to speak the Latvian language well, particularly in the last few years, when he has needed to speak the language at work. Vitaliy speaks to Latvian friends in Latvian and to Russian friends in Russian. Vitaliy speaks to his daughters in Russian, while his wife, Iveta, speaks to them in Latvian. Vitaliy’s daughters have a free command of the Latvian and Russian language. Vitaliy’s family celebrate both the Latvian Summer Solstice and the Russian Orthodox Christmas and Easter. Vitaliy regularly attends performances by Russian artists in Latvia – particularly comedians. He likes the latest Russian movies, but when he watches an ice hockey game between Russia and Latvia, he is more a Latvian fan in emotional terms, even though he also supports the Russian team. In 2000, Vitaliy received his Latvian citizenship, and he plans to continue to live in Latvia.

In the work of Berry, the integration strategy speaks to a situation in which the individual attaches a great deal of importance to the preservation of his or her own culture while, at the same time, accepting another culture and trying to maintain intensive contacts with its representatives. In the literature, this is usually considered to be the optimal strategy among all of the aforementioned ones in terms of ensuring friendly relationships in society. It has to be said, however, that this is an entirely voluntary strategy – as far as the representatives of the other culture are concerned, it is the most acceptable one.

Survey results show that **more than 80% of Latvia’s residents support the strategy of integration**. Only 2% had a negative view of the strategy, and 13% gave the answer “3” – they

neither supported nor rejected the strategy. There were no significant differences in the answers given by Latvians, Russians and others.

**Table 12. Support for the way in which the character in the INTEGRATION story shapes his life in Latvia**

	Average indicator	Those who fully or mostly support the character (answers 4 and 5), %	Those who fully or mostly do not support the character (answers 1 and 2), %
All respondents	4.38	81%	2%
Latvians	4.38	80%	2%
Russians	4.36	83%	3%
Others	4.44	81%	0%

In the focus group, as in the survey, most **Latvians** had very positive things to say about Vitaliy's story, which relates to the strategy of integration. Many respondents said that this was the best of the five stories that were offered. Respondents were very pleased that Vitaliy was preserving his roots and the heritage that he received from his parents while, at the same time, accepting Latvian culture and integrating into the Latvian environment:

*Vitaliy is a perfect Russian. He has adapted himself to life in Latvia – not just adapted, but accepted this environment, he lives here, everything is fine. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Latvian)*

*He does not deny that which is Russian, he is interested in that which is Latvian, and that means that his children benefit, too. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 18-35, interview in Latvian)*

Many respondents spoke of true life stories in which people demonstrated similar positions and attitudes vis-à-vis the Latvian language and the Latvian environment. Several respondents suggested that this is quite common in Latvia:

*I think that most people in Latvia are people like Vitaliy. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Latvian)*

*This is true! It really is true! – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 18-35, interview in Latvian)*

*My dad is Russian. We have a similar situation. He does not feel bad here, he feels that he belongs here. He was born in Latvia, but he belongs to the Russian culture. He speaks both Latvian and Russian. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 18-35, interview in Latvian)*

In Rīga, several focus group participants said that they would be very pleased if more non-Latvians were like Vitaliy:

*If this were true of all immigrants, not just from Russia, but from other countries, too, then I would have no complaints about them living here, establishing their families and learning the Latvian language while, at the same time, allowing their kids to continue to speak their own language. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Latvian)*

*I'd love to have someone like that as a neighbour or colleague at work. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Latvia)*

There were other Latvian focus group respondents in Rīga, however, who criticised the story and indicated that they support the strategy of assimilation. They posed rhetorical questions – *So what is he – a Russian or Latvian? He has to decide.* One respondent griped that Vitaliy learned the Latvian language only because he had to – *he could have learned the Latvian language because he lives in Latvia, not because he needed to for work.* Yet another respondent thought that Vitaliy's children would not live in Latvia – they would emigrate to other countries, because the local culture is not theirs. One respondent suggested that even though he can accept Vitaliy's attitude toward life in Latvia, he would nevertheless prefer that Vitaliy leaves:

*I would rather have him live there than here, but he is more acceptable to me than some bandit, drug addict, junkie or bum. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Latvian)*

Some respondents felt that Vitaliy should speak Latvian to his daughters at home: *Yes, the father could teach the Russian language to his daughters, but mostly they could all speak one language.* Generally speaking, however, Latvians praised Vitaliy's strategy as a very

positive one, stressing how good it is that his children freely speak both Latvian and Russian, and adding that each person can choose the language in which his or her family speaks – the main thing is to be loyal to the Latvian state:

*I think it's great that the father talks to his daughter in Russian and the mother speaks to her in Latvian. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Latvian)*

*I think that anyone can speak the language of his or her own choice, particularly in the family. The state is the state, the family is the family. Well all live our private lives, and those private lives are inviolable. If the state starts to interfere in private life, then we'll be back in the days of the Stalin and Hitler regime. Yes, he is loyal. I wish that there were more people like him. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Latvian)*

Among **Russians**, 83% support the strategy overall, but support drops to a comparative degree among young people aged 15 to 30 (73%), and among the people of Rīga (74%). Greater support for the strategy is offered by women (86%) and by Russians aged 31 to 45 (89%). In the focus group discussions which were held in **Russian**, too, there was much praise for Vitaliy's position, with respondents indicating that he respects the Latvian culture in which he lies whilst, at the same time, not forgetting about his native land of Russia:

*I support Vitaliy. Good for him that he has adapted to this place, that he has learned the language, that he is not forcing his children to do anything. They can speak both languages, so they have no problems in speaking to people on the street or anywhere else. There's also the thing that he upholds culture here. I do the same – I celebrate both Latvian and Russian holidays. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Russian)*

*There are examples of this, and there will be such examples. It is good that nothing is excluded, everything is only enriched. That is in the interests of the children – they freely speak two languages. They have an idea of the culture, even if they will never live there. They know what it is, and they know their own culture. The result is that it will be easier for them to integrate into any society. They have no biases against any culture. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Russian)*

*Latvia is a very beautiful country. Vitaliy was sent to Latvia and fell in love with it with all his heart, and I understand him. That is why I fully support his position – five points out of five. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

There were a few respondents who perceived the story as being an example of assimilation, and they tended to speak more of those aspects of Vitaliy's life which have to do with adapting to Latvians and learning the Latvian language and culture:

*Vitaliy's story is the optimal one, there are lots of people like that in Latvia. It is a matter of adapting your life to circumstances. Someone who has come to Latvia has not choice but to adapt. He had to learn the language – he needed it to work, first of all. Second, if he is married to a woman who is a part of another nationality, then he has to learn about that nationality's culture. Even more, a smart person with brains in his head who lives in another country just has to learn that country's history, culture, etc. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

*I think that he's closer to the Latvians after all, and if you look at it in terms of traditions, he is becoming Latvianised. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

Many focus group respondents said that they identify with the story – in absolutely every group there were at least a few respondents who essentially said that it was *their* story, too. It was no surprise that they were prepared to say very positive things about Vitaliy:

*I identify myself with him, I would do exactly the same. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 60-75, interview in Russian)*

*I can say that I completely support him. He treats the Latvian and the Russian culture properly, he supports the one and the other, he acts in a good and loyal way. I have exactly the same view, it was exactly the same situation in my family. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 60-75, interview in Russian)*

*I can imagine myself in his place. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

*Vitaliy's story comes from my own life. My situation is very similar, both the Russian and the Latvian culture are very important to me. In this situation, I would consider them both to be*

equal in terms of how important the one and the other is. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Russian)

*I know a Ukrainian, and I asked him – which fatherland is more important to you, Ukraine or Latvia, where you have lived for most of your life? If there were war, on which side would you fight? He told me that he would fight for Latvia, because this is his home, he has to live here. If there are international tournaments, he cheers for the Latvian teams. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

*In truth, this is a very realistic example from life. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

At the same time, however, there were other respondents who said that they could not imagine themselves in Vitaliy's place, because the Russian culture is more important for them:

*Russia will always be first for me – the country from which Vitaliy came, where he was born. The Russian culture will be more important for me. I can't imagine myself in his place, but I fully support him, because I support any decision which someone takes, no matter what decision it is. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

Some Russian speaking respondents demonstrated a distinctly negative attitude vis-à-vis the Latvian language and the idea that it is being forced upon them. For that reason, they could not accept Vitaliy's position:

*I, for example, am someone who does not want to speak the Latvian language.*

*Why?*

*It's not acceptable to me, I don't need that language. In my sector, I have achieved a situation in which I don't need the Latvian language. People count on me in the way that I am. I work in the construction industry, and any Latvian who speaks to me speaks in Russian. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

A great deal of debate in the Russian language focus groups focused on one of the aspects of the story – the aspect of being the fan of a sports team or a national team. The story says that when Vitaliy watches an ice hockey game between Russia and Latvia, he is more emotionally a fan of Latvia, while he also supports the Russian national team. On this issue, participants in the focus group discussions could not reach unanimity. Some said that like Vitaliy, they are fans of both teams:

*Indeed. I feel sorry for Russia and for Latvia equally if someone makes a mistake. When there was a game between Russia and Latvia which ended in a tie, I was happy that it was a tie. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

*When there are Latvian-Russian matches, I am a fan for Latvia, but when Russia lost yesterday, I was upset. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

There were some respondents who said things like this: *If I am with Latvians, then I cheer for the Latvian team, if I am with Russians, then I cheer for the Russian team. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Russian)* Other focus group participants could not accept the fact that as an ethnic Russian, Vitaliy was more the fan of the Latvian team:

*I don't like the fact that he supports the Latvian team, because he is from Russia. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Latvian)*

Other respondents said that when Latvia competes with Russia, they support Russia to a greater degree, but when there are games involving other countries, they stand together with the Latvian team:

*When Latvia plays against another team, I cheer for Latvia. I'm a fan in my soul. When Latvia plays with Russia, though, I cheer for Russia. I don't know, but Russia is closer to my soul. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

*At home, when Latvia is playing against another team, we cheer for Latvia, but if it plays with Russia, then we cheer for Russia. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

Several Russian speaking respondents said that they are bigger fans of Latvia, because it is more important for that country to win in which the fan lives. It can be concluded that this is a question which largely lays bare the status of civic identity and is, indeed, important among respondents:

*I cheer for Latvia. It's important for me to see the country in which I live winning. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

Among all of the groups, a particularly intensive discussion about the integration strategy developed among **residents of Daugavpils and the Daugavpils District in the 36-60 year old group**. When people talked about Vitaliy's integration story in this group, some felt that the issue had to do with assimilation and were categorically opposed:

*I watch the news in Latvian, and that's it. Nothing else affects me. I categorically oppose assimilation. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

Two respondents argued that children should learn English instead and then leave the country. That was the future which they predicted for their children:

*It is better for them to learn English, and then they can leave this "sunny" country. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

*They [the children] will be leaving. Europe is open now, you can wash dishes anywhere. They pay more in England, but the dishes are the same. Thanks a lot! – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

There was one respondent who harshly confronted those who had negative things to say about integration. She said that she supports the strategy entirely, she identifies with it, and she does not believe that anyone is forcing her to adapt to anything:

*Vitaliy's story is my life story, too. I listened to Anna and Sergeiy, and I thought to myself – I've lived in Latvia for 33 years, but is it the Latvia which you spoke of? I am here because I was sent here, my job was here. I guess I'm just a lucky person, because I had no problems at all with language and naturalisation. I live here, and I'm glad to be here. I speak the truth. I didn't have to adapt to anything, as you have said. I'm glad that I can read Latvian magazines, that I can watch and listen to broadcasts in Latvian, that I can speak to my boss, Aina, in Latvian. I can speak to a Russian girl in Russian, I can answer someone on the street in Latvian. When I come to Rīga, I'm pleased that someone asks me something in Latvian, because I understand the language. I haven't adapted to anything, I simply learned the language. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

**Table 13. Identification with the character in the INTEGRATION story**

	Average indicator	Those who feel that they are mostly or fully similar to the character in the story (answers 4 and 5). %	Those who feel that they are very little or not at all similar to the character (answers 1 and 2), %
All respondents	3.90	65%	10%
Citizens	3.98	68%	9%
Non-citizens	3.78	60%	12%
15-30	3.75	59%	15%
31-45	4.11	74%	7%
46-60	3.84	62%	10%
61-75	3.84	61%	11%

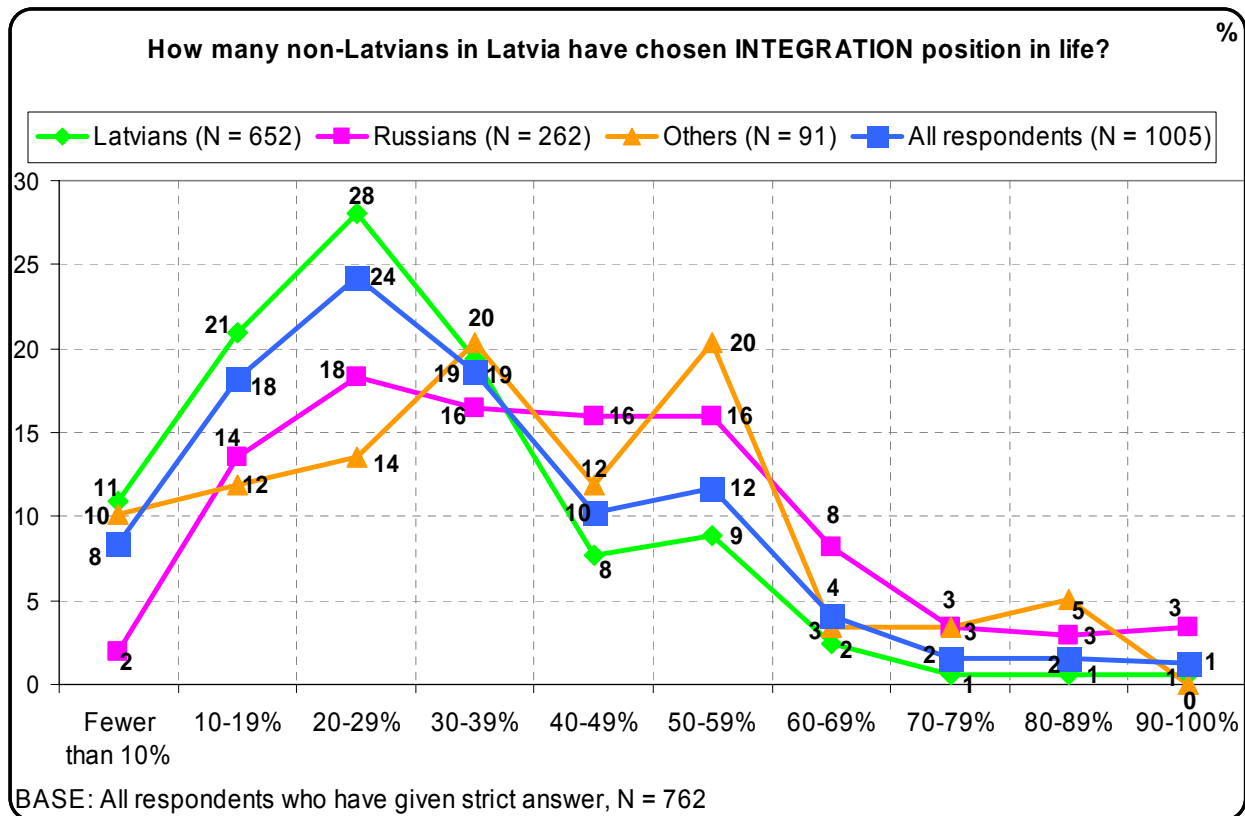
Data from the quantitative survey show that 65% of Russian speakers largely or fully identify with the integration strategy. Only 10% feel that they are not at all like Vitaliy. It has to be noted that people aged 31-45 are more likely to identify with the strategy, while those in the 15-30 age group are less likely to do so. There are slightly greater numbers of citizens who feel similarities with the character in the integration story than there are among non-citizens. Comparatively fewer people who felt that they were similar to Vitaliy were found in Rīga and Kurzeme, while greater numbers were found in Latvia's other regions.

Asked about the percentage of non-Latvians in Latvia who have chosen the integration strategy, the largest percentage of respondents said 20-29%. There were Latvians (46%) than Russians (27%) and other non-Latvians (19%) who have that answer. Among Russians and members of other nationalities, majorities of respondents think that more than one-third of non-

Latvians have chosen the integration strategy. The arithmetic average of Latvians, Russians and others who gave that answer is 25%, 38% and 34%, which shows that Russians are more likely than Latvians to believe that there are greater numbers of such integrated non-Latvians in the country.

**Figure 4. Evaluation of the spread of the INTEGRATION strategy**

Answers to the question “How many non-Latvians in Latvia have chosen this position in life?” All answers are divided in 10 groups: “Fewer than 10%”, “10-19%”, etc.



**Assessment of the strategy of marginalisation**

*Mikhail arrived in Latvia in 1980 after he had completed his training as an engineer at the Leningrad Polytechnic Institute. He was sent to work at a factory in Rīga, Latvia. There, he met a woman called Iveta (a Latvian), and they were married. At home, the family speak Russian, the kids study at a school where classes are taught in Russian. Mikhail feels no sense of belonging to any culture – he has lost links to Russia and that which is Russian, but Latvian traditions, cultural events and jokes are unacceptable to him. Mikhail speaks very poor Latvian. He’s thinking about moving to another country, but has not decided on one. Mikhail likes to watch American movies. Events in Russia and the Russian community in Latvia are of no interest to him. Mikhail has no plans to obtain Latvian citizenship, because he does not need it.*

Marginalisation, in the context of the theories of acculturation, represents a situation in which someone does not want to maintain the cultural heritage of his or her ethnic homeland, while at the same time having no contacts with representatives of the other culture. This is a matter of social alienation to a certain extent, and it can be the result of a voluntary decision or of discrimination.

This study shows that the strategy of marginalisation is the least favoured among respondents in Latvia, with support given only by 11% of the country’s residents. Nearly two-thirds (64%) have a negative view of marginalisation.



**Table 14. Support for the way in which the character in the MARGINALISATION story shapes his life in Latvia**

	Average indicator	Those who fully or mostly support the character (answers 4 and 5), %	Those who fully or mostly do not support the character (answers 1 and 2), %
All respondents	2.06	11%	64%
Latvians	1.98	10%	67%
Russians	2.23	13%	56%
Others	2.07	11%	62%

The percentage of Latvians who mostly or completely do not support the strategy of marginalisation is greater than the percentage among Russians – 67% of Latvians and 56% of Russians say no to the strategy. Comparatively greater percentages among those who support the strategy of marginalisation are found among non-citizens (18%). Among those who do not support it, the greatest percentage is found among Russian women – 61%.

Focus group participants were also most likely to say that they don't think much of Mikhail, who represents the strategy of marginalisation. In **Latvian** focus groups, people said that they wouldn't want Mikhail as a neighbour. People assumed that Mikhail is an alcoholic or drunkard, a degraded person – those kinds of people, according to respondents, typically have little or no interest in cultural processes at all, as is the case with Mikhail. Many respondents said that Mikhail doesn't really know what he wants. In several focus groups, respondents said that the children of people such as Mikhail are the ones who are out on the streets during protests against education reforms. Here, as in the group which discussed the story of separation, some respondents said that non-Latvians such as Mikhail should leave:

*Let them all get out of here, good riddance! If they all go away, then the right ones will remain, the ones that we need. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Latvian)*

*Let him go to America, let him find a job there – if he can learn the language and find his place there. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

*Let them go away, and then they (the European Union) will have to deal with them, the Mikhaills and Konstantins of this world. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

Many respondents said that it is an accident of life that Mikhail is in Latvia in the first place, that he was looking for an advantage to go somewhere else because Latvia is “just another stop along the rail.” Several respondents used phrases such as “citizen of the world”, “American”, “cosmopolitan” and “child of Communism.”

*This is someone who came to Latvia literally for five minutes. He doesn't care about Latvia or Russia, he just wants to go somewhere else. As soon as he has the money, he and his family will be gone. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 60-75, interview in Latvian)*

Participants in the focus group discussions argued that Mikhail is neither a Russian nor a Latvian. Several respondents said that they pity him – it is difficult to live without one's own roots:

*As far as I'm concerned, Mikhail is simply an unhappy man. He was sent from Leningrad to work in Rīga. He didn't find his place here. He lost his place in Russia. Now he's thinking of moving to some other country – maybe he'll find his place there, his culture. He's unlucky that he was sent away from Russia. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 60-75, interview in Latvian)*

*A person without roots is not a person, it's a person who has nothing at all. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

Asked whether they support this strategy, most respondents replied in the negative. Some Latvians predicted that Mikhail would never learn the Latvian language, but also that he would probably never leave the country. In many groups, respondents talked about the disrespect toward Latvians which is manifested in Mikhail's attitude:

*It's a bad thing. I know someone like Mikhail in my own life. He doesn't consider us to be people at all. If you ask him why he doesn't speak Latvian, he'll tell you that it's a crippled*

language, he hates speaking it. This really is bad. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Latvian)

From the national and economic viewpoint, Mikhail is very much an undesirable person. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 18-35, interview in Latvian)

Several other people said that Mikhail is “harmless”, because he watches his American movies and doesn’t disturb anyone:

There’s no point in focusing on him, he’s just a part of the grey mass. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Latvian)

A few other respondents argued that Mikhail is a normal person who is very typical of “this day and age” – particularly among young people. That’s because there are no ideals or values in society today other than money or sex:

He’s a normal guy, completely appropriate for this day and age. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Latvian)

The point is that we have no ideals today. Young people have nothing, no spiritual or moral values – they just think about money and a chance to have sex. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Latvian)

One resident of Rīga who took part in a Latvian focus group felt that his views coincide with Mikhail’s at least to some degree, because he also has no particular interest in cultural processes:

I see a whole lot of similarity between Mikhail and myself, I’m thinking about the kind of person that I’ve turned out to be over the course of time. I pretty much support his lifestyle, I’d be glad to have a few glasses of vodka with someone like that. I sense that we might have some interests in common – he doesn’t much care about culture either. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Latvian)

In the focus group discussions which were held in **Russian**, similarly, participants argued that Mikhail doesn’t feel a sense of belonging to Latvians, Russians, Latvia or Russia. Participants thought that Mikhail has no goals or motivations in life, except perhaps for the desire to live somewhere else.

When I read this story, I got the sense that this is not a serious guy, he just lays around on his sofa and watches movies. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Russian)

This is a man who has lost himself. He is nothing. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 60-75, interview in Russian)

I think that he has lost himself, he doesn’t know who he is any more. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Russian)

Among the participants in the Russian speaking groups, there were also a few respondents who said that Mikhail should leave:

If he wants to move to another country – happy trails! – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 36-60, interview in Russian)

He doesn’t think about Latvians or Russians, just about America. He should leave. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 36-60, interview in Russian)

He has to go abroad, he has nothing to do here in Latvia. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 36-60, interview in Russian)

Many respondents, however, expressed doubts about whether Mikhail would ever leave. They thought that the story made it clear that he is quite passive and doesn’t really know what he wants. Most participants had negative things to say about Mikhail’s approach to life:

People like that usually don’t get very far. He’s satisfied with the empty existence in which he lives. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Russian)

He sits at home, he comes home, he grabs a bottle of beer, he collapses into the sofa, he turns on an American movie and sucks down his beer. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 18-35, interview in Russian)

Most participants in the discussion denied that they could live Mikhail’s life. The main problem in identifying with him was that Mikhail had no Russian roots, while others found it unacceptable that he doesn’t speak Latvian:

*It's hard for me to imagine myself in his place. He does not have any sense of belonging when it comes to the Latvian or the Russian culture. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

*You can't live like that. You have to know about Latvian culture if you live here. Neither are you allowed to forget your roots – you have to be familiar with them. To put it in brief, I don't support him. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 60-75, interview in Russian)*

As was the case among Latvian groups, the Russians in focus group discussions also expressed pity for Mikhail, saying that he has lost himself, he doesn't know what he wants, he has no interests, and there is no point to his life:

*I think that it's hard for people like that to live. They are alienated in a sense. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

Some participants in the focus group discussions which were held in Russian, however, said frankly that they can identify with Mikhail, because on the one hand, they also like American movies, and on the other hand, it's not all that simple to pack up and leave Latvia, even if they don't feel any sense of belonging to the country:

*I can put myself in his place to a certain extent. I watch American movies, too, but I also have no opportunity to leave. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

*I can imagine myself in his shoes. I also have a very poor command of the Latvian language, my skills are weak. I'd like to visit some other country, but I have no plans to live anywhere else, I intend to remain in Latvia. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

Non-Latvian focus group participants said that there are lots of people like Mikhail in Latvia. In the group of Liepāja residents who are between 36 and 60 years old, someone said that all young people behave that way today – many people are leaving Latvia to earn money, and it is possible that they will never return:

*I've met such people, but I don't support them. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Russian)*

*There are lots of people like that, yes – they don't fit in here or there. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Russian)*

*If we're talking about Mikhail, that's a situation which you encounter on every step. The guy is just living. We assume that people have to live better lives, they have to work at a job where they are paid more. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

*I could show you lots of people who want to leave, who care about nothing. Yesterday an acquaintance of mine, a very good person, said that he would get his citizenship and then he would – well, I cannot repeat what he said, it was too vulgar. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

**Table 15. Identification with the character in the MARGINALISATON story**

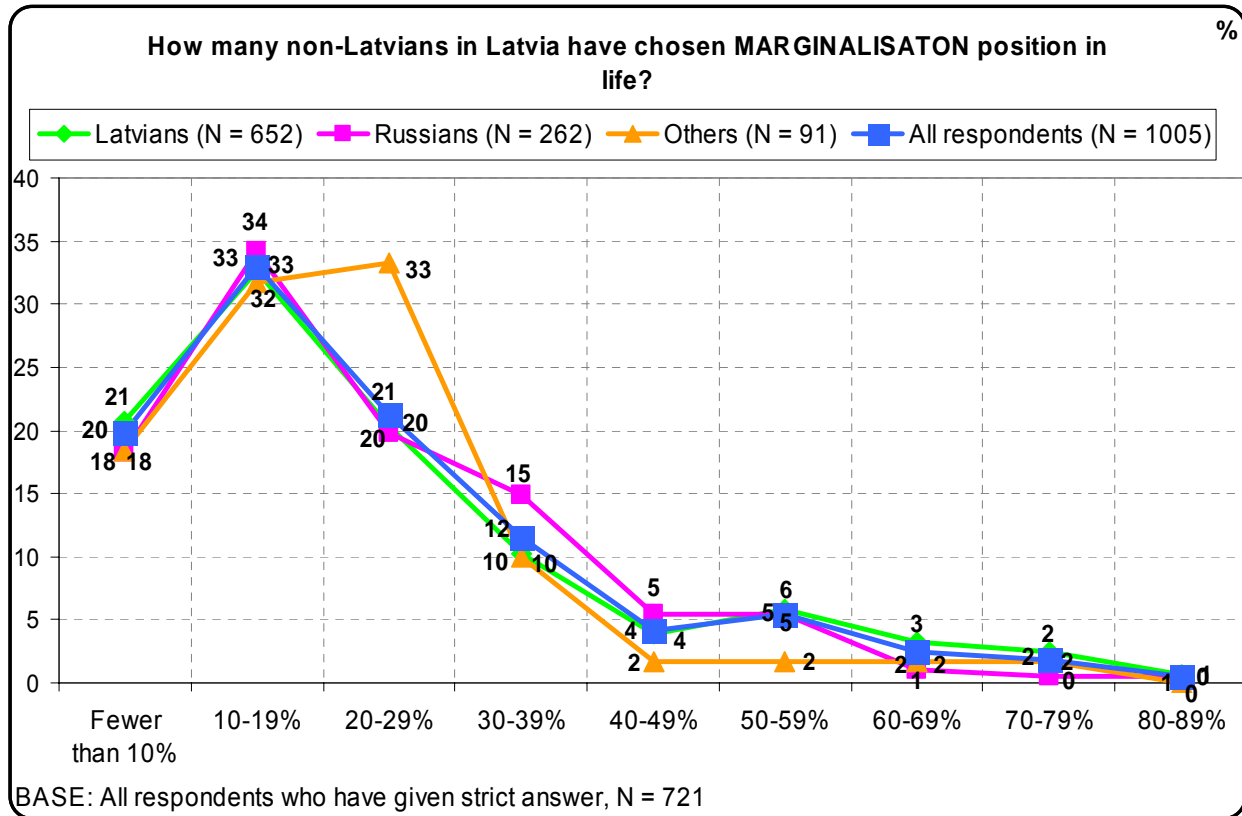
	<b>Average indicator</b>	<b>Those who feel that they are mostly or fully similar to the character in the story (answers 4 and 5). %</b>	<b>Those who feel that they are very little or not at all similar to the character (answers 1 and 2), %</b>
All respondents	1.92	9%	67%
Citizens	1.82	5%	72%
Non-citizens	2.06	14%	60%
15-30	1.95	5%	65%
31-45	1.97	9%	69%
46-60	1.99	12%	61%
61-75	1.68	7%	78%

The quantitative survey shows that among those non-Latvians who choose to speak Russian in conversation, an average of 9% identify with Mikhail. Among non-citizens, the percentage is higher than the average – 14%. There are no statistically meaningful differences

among age groups, although it must be said that among older people (61-75), there are greater numbers who feel that they are not at all like Mikhail – 78%.

**Figure 5. Evaluation of the spread of the MARGINALISATON strategy**

Answers to the question “How many non-Latvians in Latvia have chosen this position in life?” All answers are divided in 10 groups: “Fewer than 10%”, “10-19%”, etc.



When asked to think about how many people in Latvia pursue the marginalisation strategy, the largest number of respondents said that 10-19% do – 24% of respondents said so. More than one-half of Latvia’s residents think that the spread of the marginalisation strategy is below a level of 30% (53% in all). 52% of Latvians, 56% of Russians and 55% of people of other nationalities say so. It is clear that there are no major differences in terms of what people of various nationalities have to say about the matter.

**Assessment of the strategy of fusion and a new identity**

Viktor arrived in Latvia in 1980 after he had completed his training as an engineer at the Leningrad Polytechnic Institute. He was sent to work at a factory in Rīga, Latvia. There, he met a woman called Iveta (a Latvian), and they were married. While living in Latvia, Viktor has learned the Latvian language very well, because he needs to speak the language at work, but he has also learned English, because he speaks that language at work, as well. Viktor speaks Latvian with Latvian friends and Russian with Russian friends. His daughters are students in Sweden. Viktor received his Latvian citizenship in 2004, because he also wanted to be a citizen of the European Union. In everyday life, Viktor does not hold on to Latvian or Russian traditions, he tries to follow world events, is interested in the latest technologies, and is a big fan of Formula 1 racing.

Berry does not propose the strategy of fusion in his concept of acculturation strategies, but other researchers (LaBromboise, Coleman and Gerton, 1993; Bourhis, et al., 2001) argue

that Berry's concept is incomplete, as it does not speak to the emergence of an entirely new identity. This new identity is particularly important in the context of mass migration and globalisation, and so other researchers have proposed the strategy of fusion and the emergence of a new identity. The story about Viktor that was offered to focus group participants includes aspects of a European identity and of globalisation.

**Table 16. Support for the way in which the character in the FUSION story shapes his life in Latvia**

	Average indicator	Those who fully or mostly support the character (answers 4 and 5), %	Those who fully or mostly do not support the character (answers 1 and 2), %
All respondents	3.42	46%	17%
Latvians	3.41	44%	17%
Russians	3.43	47%	15%
Others	3.50	54%	20%

The strategy of fusion and a new identity received quite a bit of support in Latvia, with an average indicator of 3.42 out of five. It has to be said, however, that more than one-third of respondents did not have a specific view on the matter and did not really answer the question (33% rated the story at a level of 3, which meant that they neither supported nor rejected it, and 4% said that they could not answer the question). There were few differences in the answers given by Latvians and Russians, but among members of other nationalities, there were fewer who had a neutral view and, therefore, more who gave a positive assessment (54%) and a few more who had a negative opinion (20%). It has to be noted that among Latvian and Russian young people (15-30), there were slightly higher percentages of those who supported the strategy of fusion than was the case among other age groups (51% and 52%).

There were various views expressed during the focus group discussions when it came to this particular life model. Because there were no significant differences between the Latvian and Russian focus groups, the results are presented here together. Respondents in the Latvian and the Russian language focus groups often thought that Viktor was very attractive, because he was moving along with the times and knew how to adapt to his situation. Many people felt positively about the fact that Viktor speaks three languages – Latvian, Russian and English.

*I really like Viktor, I have to say. I think that everybody should be like that. I support him very strongly. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Latvian)*

*Our society only wins when there are happy people like these. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

*I love this story, it is very positive and modern. He has targets in his life, he studies languages – Latvian, English. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Russian)*

At the same time, however, many people didn't like this approach in life. They thought that Viktor was devoting too much attention to new things, that he had forgotten about his roots:

*To tell the truth, he just runs along with others. He tries to monitor world events. He likes the things that are new, but he does not like the things that are old. Everything that is new, after all, is based on that which is old. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Latvian)*

*I don't like the fact that in everyday life, he does not hold on to Latvian or to Russian traditions. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

*I don't know, I don't understand – I don't think that it's possible for someone not to be involved in any traditions at all. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Russian)*

Secondly, many respondents thought that Viktor was just looking out for himself, that he was pursuing money and a good life:

*I don't think that this is the best example. He definitely came here because of the advantages that were on offer. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Latvian)*

*Money, money, and only money. His goal in life is to have a life which is good, rich and well-provided for him and his family. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 36-60, interview in Latvian.)*

Respondents didn't like Viktor's individualism. Some called it egotism. Others said that Viktor "lives only for himself":

*This is typical of young and ambitious people who do not link their lives to Latvia. They're looking forward, into the distance. They only think about themselves. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Russian)*

*I hate this person. If anything happens, this person won't help anyone, he'll just think about himself. He doesn't think about his nation, he doesn't even think about his family. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 60-75, interview in Russian)*

In the Latvian focus groups, several respondents groused about the fact that Viktor received Latvian citizenship not because he feels a sense of belonging in Latvia, but rather for reasons of personal advantage – he wanted to become a citizen of Europe. This, according to these participants, means that Viktor has no plans to remain in Latvia for any longer period of time:

*Viktor received Latvian citizenship because he wants to be a citizen of the EU. This is a matter of calculation. I can understand that he doesn't really feel a sense of belonging in the country, in a month or so he'll move to Sweden and live there. I don't think that this is a good or positive thing. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Latvian)*

In speaking about Viktor, people used various words such as "individualist", "cosmopolitan", "career man", "businessman", "fellow traveller", "man without a backbone", "citizen of Europe", "product of globalisation", "a member of the proletariat" and "no one important." In most cases, these were critical concepts:

*This is reality when we cannot offer any values. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Latvian)*

*He doesn't do any major work, he doesn't discover anything new. He's a typical and average citizen with a nice car and so on. On weekends he's a fan of Formula 1. He's satisfied. He doesn't bother anyone, and no one bothers him. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

Some respondents argued that Latvia needs people of this kind, because they are active, they ensure the country's growth, they pay taxes, and they speak Latvian. On the other hand, there is no hope that they'll remain in Latvia and accept Latvian traditions:

*I have to thank him for earning my pension. He is a very loyal guest worker who will work here for a certain period of time and then leave. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 60-75, interview in Latvian)*

*He is a true citizen of the European Union, he could live in any country. He is financially independent. He's also a man who thinks about his children. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Latvian)*

*He's not really interested in anything, he just needs money, money, money. It's good, though, that he contributes something to the state. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Latvian)*

Several respondents said that there are quite a few people like Viktor in Latvia today, both Latvians and non-Latvians:

*This is one of the most modern lifestyles. Most people live that way, irrespective of their nationality. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 18-35, interview in Latvian)*

*Sadly, that is the trend in our society when money appears on the table. He's no longer interested in mutual human, ethnic or any other kinds of relations. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

*Lots of people here are like that. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

In the focus groups which were conducted in **Russian**, people were asked to say how much they identify with the story. Logically, those who did not care for the fact that Viktor has lost his traditions (*He does not belong to Latvian or to Russian culture*) and who thought that he was mostly selfish and greedy for money did not feel that they could identify with him:

*I distrust him, and so I cannot put myself in his shoes. My views about life are completely different. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 60-75, interview in Russian)*

Many others, however, said that they feel similar to Viktor in that traditions are not important to him, he is more open to the world and that which is new, he has a broader range of vision, and he is modern:

*Of all of the stories, Viktor's is closest to me. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

*I can fully identify myself with him. I believe that nationalism is Nazism and causes problems for people. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

*I support the fact that he considers himself to be a citizen of the European Union. He doesn't observe traditions to any particular degree, because he is a modern person, and that is why I can identify myself with him. I also do not pursue various traditions. I fully identify myself with him – five points. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

People in the Russian language focus groups particularly stressed the idea that Viktor's story represents a model for the future – Europe's influence will be enhanced, and as values change, money and individual welfare will be the major values in life. Some respondents said that this story is the most typical and the most acceptable for young people. Similar views were stated in the Latvian focus groups:

*I believe that this is a story about the future in Latvia. There will be assimilation anyway. All of Europe lives like that. This is a realistic story. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

*He is more modern, he can communicate, he is flexible. A man of the future, he's interested in the latest technologies, in Formula 1. I think that this will be the most acceptable model for young people. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

*The previous story (marginalisation) and this story indicate that there will be no culture, only everyday life will be of interest. We will be consumed by business, money and attempts to have a better life. No culture is important to him. I can identify myself with him to a very little degree. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

*He's a citizen of the world, he has a broad view of many things. I support him. We're not going to be able to put up a big fence and live behind it. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

*He is a hero for our age. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

**Table 17. Identification with the character in the FUSION story**

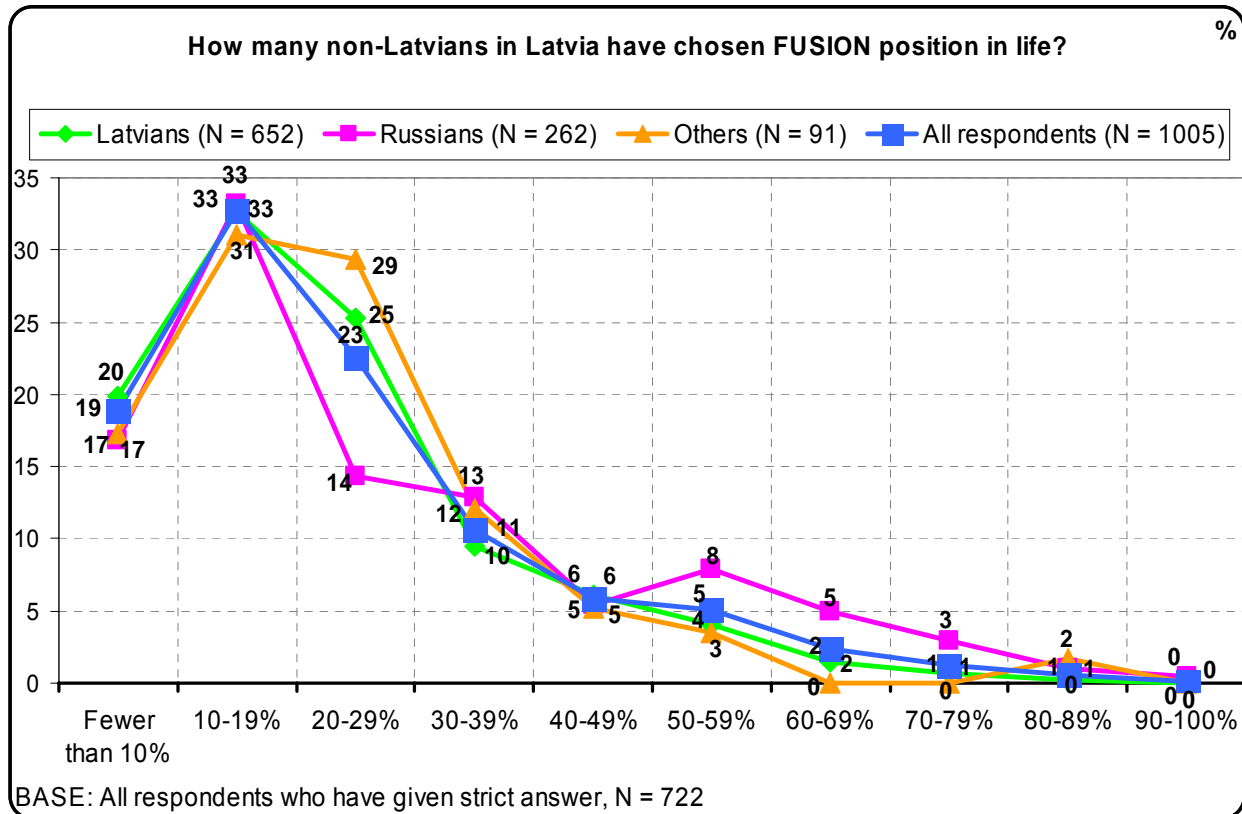
	Average indicator	Those who feel that they are mostly or fully similar to the character in the story (answers 4 and 5). %	Those who feel that they are very little or not at all similar to the character (answers 1 and 2), %
All respondents	2.81	30%	36%
Citizens	2.87	29%	34%
Non-citizens	2.74	30%	39%
15-30	3.07	38%	28%
31-45	2.95	30%	35%
46-60	2.67	28%	39%
61-75	2.40	18%	44%

The quantitative survey shows that slightly fewer people identify with Viktor than support him. 30% of respondents say that their views are similar to those of Viktor, who embodies the strategy of fusion and the emergence of a new identity. Slightly more respondents (36%) do not feel any similarity with Viktor at all. There are no significant differences between citizens and non-citizens on this issue, but there are major differences among the various age groups. There are quite a few more people who feel similar to Viktor among young people who are 15 to 30 years old (38%). The older the respondent, the less likely this is – among those who are between 60 and 75, only 18% feel similarity with Viktor. Those with a higher education were more likely than others to feel similarity.

Judgments about the dissemination of the fusion strategy were quite similar in the various nationality groups. The arithmetic average in answering this question is 20%. The largest number of respondents said that 10 to 19% of Latvia’s residents pursue the strategy. It must be added that 28% had no concrete view on the matter.

**Figure 6. Evaluation of the spread of the FUSION strategy**

Answers to the question “How many non-Latvians in Latvia have chosen this position in life?” All answers are divided in 10 groups: “Fewer than 10%”, “10-19%”, etc.



**The importance of ethnic and civic identity**

The quantitative survey included several questions aimed at measuring various aspects which are related to social identity. One question involved a list of 32 different groups, and respondents were asked to decide on those groups to which they feel a sense of belonging, the ones with respect to which they could use the word “we”.

Answers to this question show that **ethnic identity** is nearly as important to Latvians as family is. Of all Latvians, 77% said that they feel a sense of belonging among Latvians, 84% - among their family, 80% - among their relatives, and 75% - among their friends. This shows that ethnic belonging is in third place among the 32 options, right behind family and relatives.

Only 43% of Latvians said that they feel a sense of belonging among all of Latvia’s residents, and only 24% said that they feel that they belong to the people of Europe. Only 16% said that they feel a sense of belonging when thinking about Latvians who live abroad.

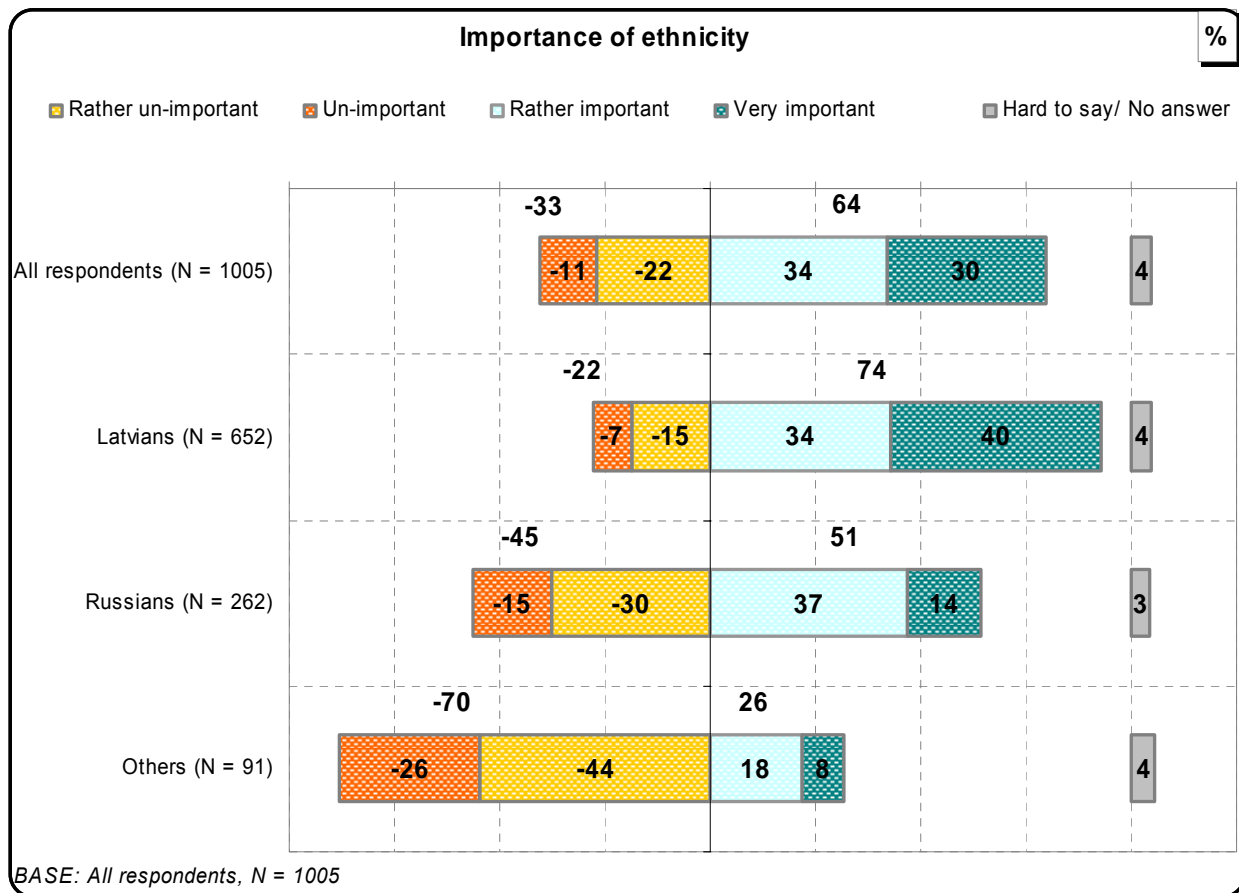
The situation among Russian speaking residents of Latvia is a bit different. 49% said that they belong to the Russian nation, while 56% said that they are a part of Latvia’s Russians. 79% spoke of family, 71% of relatives, 68% of friends. 42% said that they feel a sense of belonging to all of the people of Latvia. The idea of belonging to the Russian nation and of belonging to the Russians of Latvia – these were in fourth and fifth place among the 32 options.

The importance of **ethnic identity** is also assessed through this question: “How important is it in your life that you are a member of (the individual’s nationality)?” Answers to this question make it very clear that ethnicity is far more important to Latvians than to Russians



(Figure 7). Among Latvians, 74% attach very great or great importance to ethnicity, while among Russians the indicator is just 51%.

**Figure 7. The importance of ethnicity in life**  
 How important is it in your life that you are a member of ...



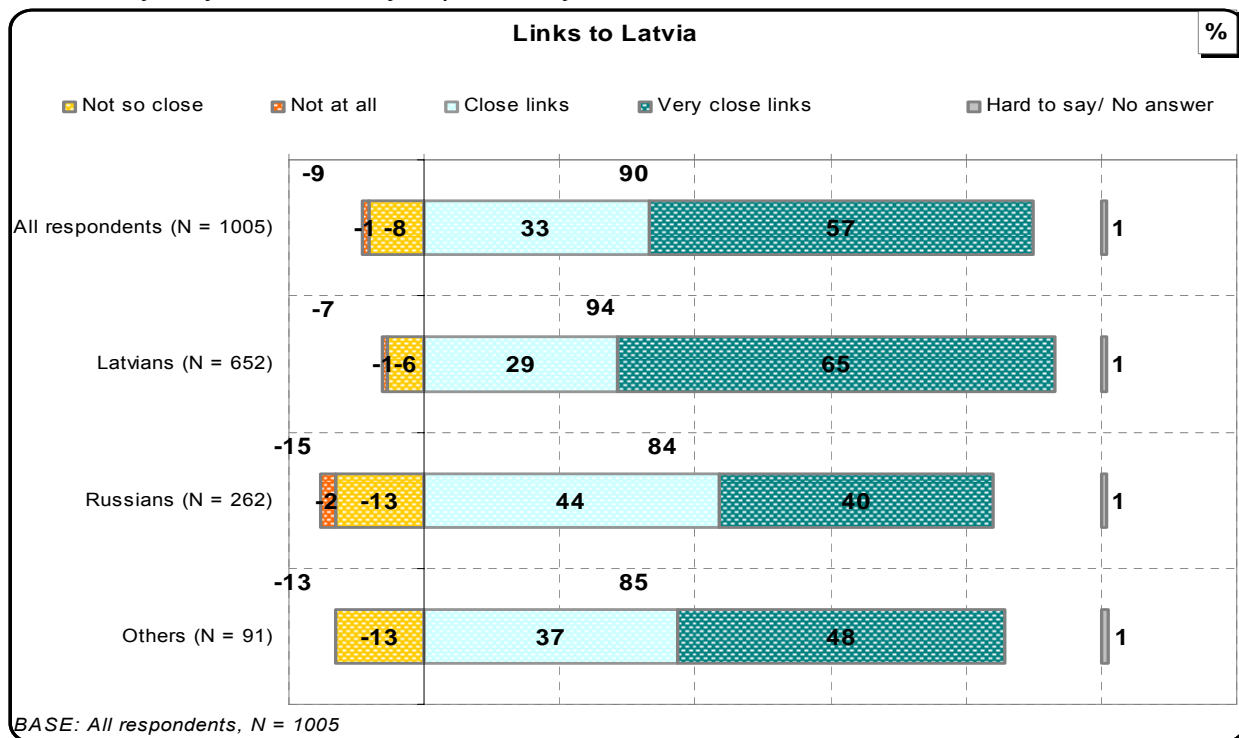
**Civic identity** was addressed in the survey with this question: “How closely do you think that you personally are linked to the Latvian state?” 93% of Latvians and 84% of Russians said that the links are close or very close (Figure 8).

In the 15-30 age group, there were slightly fewer respondents who thought that they are linked to Latvia (81%). Among young Russians, the percentage was lowest of all – only 68% of Russians aged 15 to 30 felt close or very close to Latvia. In older age groups, the numbers were higher – 86% of Russians in the 31-45 cohort, and fully 98% of Russians in the group aged 61 to 75. There were also distinct differences by gender – fewer Russian men feel that they are linked to Latvia (76%), but 90% of Russian women do. Among those Russians with an elementary education, too, there were fewer people who felt links to Latvia – 75% (91% among those with a higher education). The numbers were also lower among urban residents.

Among Latvians, too, there were slightly fewer respondents in the 15-30 age group who felt links to Latvia (86%). In other age groups, the indicators ranged between 95% and 97%.

**Figure 8. Links to Latvia**

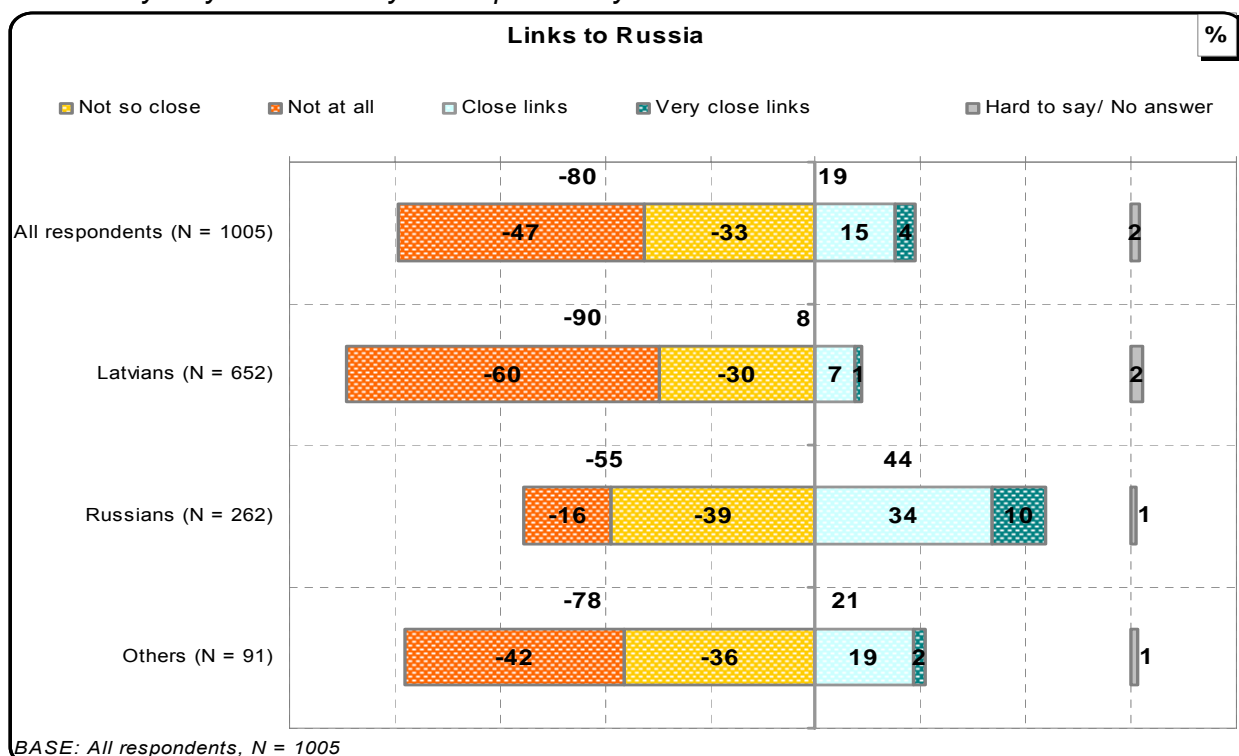
How closely do you think that you personally are linked to the Latvian state?



9% of Latvians and 44% of Russians feel close or very close links to Russia. There are no really major differences among age groups here – closer links to Russia are felt by 38% of people aged 15 to 30, an 52% of people aged 61-75. Those Russians who are non-citizens (58%) and those who live in Latvia’s big cities are more likely than others to feel links to Russia.

**Figure 9. Links to Russia**

How closely do you think that you are personally linked to Russia?



One's sense of belonging to Latvia was also assessed by two other questions: "Do you personally feel that you are a part of Latvia's society?" and "To what extent are you proud of the fact that you are a resident of Latvia?" Answers show that 83% of respondents feel that they belong to Latvia's society, while 11% disagree. As was the case with the previous question, the most significant differences are found from the ethnic perspective – 91% of Latvians feel a sense of belonging, while only 66% and 70% of Russians and members of other nationalities do.

Among Latvians and Russians alike, there are a bit fewer respondents who feel proud that they live in Latvia. 73% of all residents feel that they are proud or probably proud of living in Latvia – 82% of Latvians, 57% of Russians, 60% of members of other nationalities.

All of the trends discovered in the quantitative survey were also reflected in focus group discussions which were held in **Russian**. Most participants felt that Latvia was their homeland, their country. Some felt a stronger sense of belonging to their city, but they also said that Latvia or the city in which they live is their home:

*I was born in Latvia, and I think that my things are here. I couldn't live elsewhere, not even in Russia. Here I have familiar streets, I have my friends. Those things are important for me. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

*When I'm abroad, I feel that I'm being called back to Jelgava. The issue is not whether I love or hate this country, Jelgava is the thing. I don't like any other city. Everything is mine here, everything that is interesting to me here. I know that when I am not in Jelgava, then everything annoys me. I just spit and go home to my mom and dad, my friends. I know everything here. You know what's on your plate, you're like a fish in water. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

*I have never had any links with Russia, that country doesn't even exist for me, even though I am a Russian woman myself. Russia in my view has more to do with politics, with horror about things that are happening there. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Russian)*

*Latvia is the land of my children's birth, they don't like to travel to Russia. When they go there, they take a look at their grandmother and grandfather, and then they come back home. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 31-59, interview in Russian)*

At the same time, focus group participants also expressed bitterness over the fact that Russians and members of other ethnic groups are not completely accepted in Latvia. One respondent compared Latvia to a stepmother:

*Latvia is the land of my birth, but it often treats us like a stepmother would. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

Russian speaking residents of Latvia are offended and embittered by statements such as "Go back to your homeland", which are often made by radically nationalist organisations and, sometimes, by people in everyday life. These people feel that Latvia is their homeland, their home:

*Latvia is the land of my birth, this is where I was born. My ancestors hail from Belarus, my parents are dead. If someone tells me to go back to my homeland, I have nowhere to go. Latvia is my homeland, but I am treated like an immigrant here. I find that very offensive. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

*Those who wanted to leave did so, the others won't be going anywhere. Whether you like it or not, they won't be going anywhere. I can tell you that when I'm in Russia, I don't feel at home there. First of all, the nature of people is different, the mentalities are different, even though we all speak of the language. There's something of the Soviet Union there, and no matter what, but you are a stranger there. I am a stranger to those people. If I go there, they won't see me as a Russian. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

Some respondents feel that Latvia is their second homeland, their first one being Russia or another country. This was seen more often among those respondents who were of middle age or were older than that:

*I was born in Russia, I am a Russian woman, but Latvia has become my second mother, my second homeland. I completed my higher education here, I found my husband here, I had my children here. My roots are here. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

Only a few respondents said that they consider Russia or Belarus as their homeland, that they would like to live there, but so far they have not managed to do so. Others claimed that they have close and important links to Russia:

*I think that my homeland is Russia, I go to visit them, and I believe that those are my roots, I respect those roots. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

At the same time, several respondents talked about the trend of people moving to the wealthy countries of the European Union, as well as to the United States. Some people said that they were just waiting for the right moment to leave:

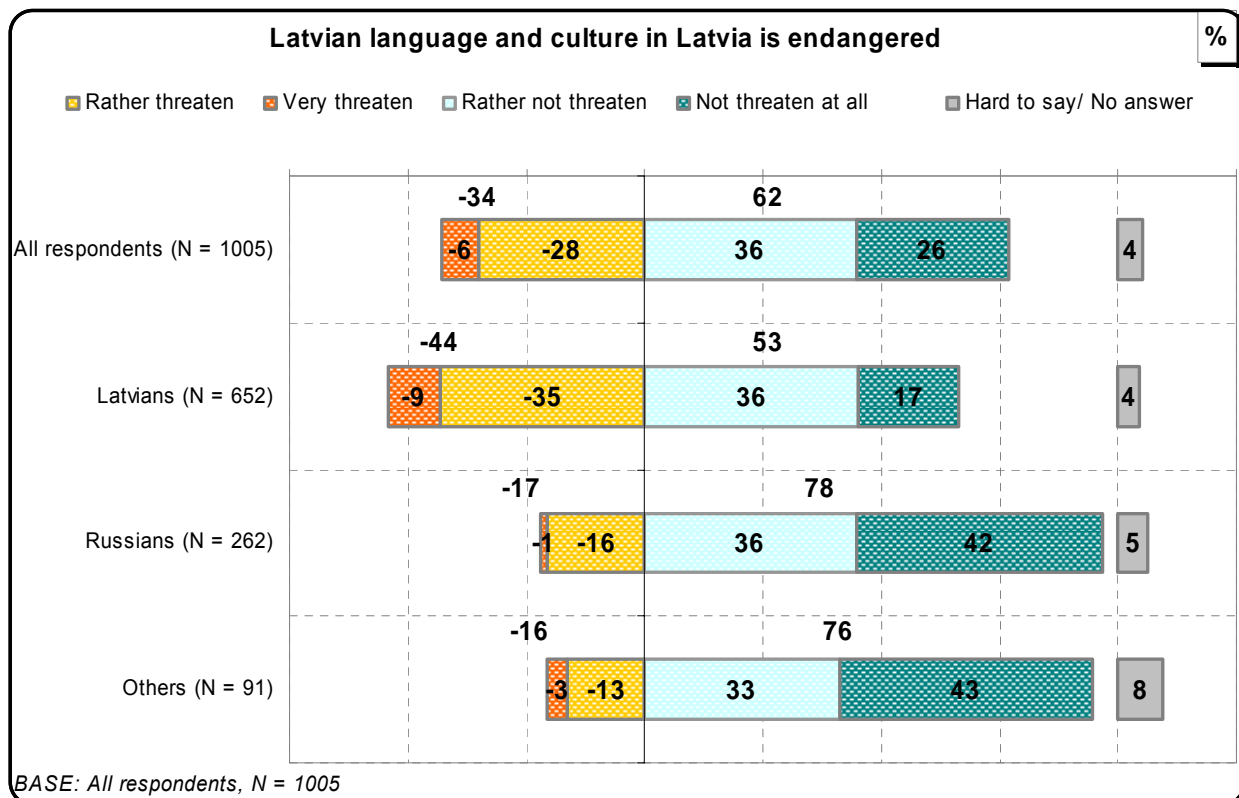
*I would leave at the first opportunity if I were sure that I would have a job and a home abroad, if people would accept me and my family. I would leave at the drop of a hat. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

**The sense of endangerment, cultural chauvinism**

One of the conclusions drawn in the last research study released by the BISS<sup>3</sup> was that a sense of endangerment is one of the main sources for tensions in ethnic relations and for intolerance. The study “Ethnic Tolerance and Public Integration in Latvia” was based on information that was extracted from focus group discussions, and the hypothesis was that both Latvians and Russians feel endangered in Latvia. Quantitative data from the survey show that 44% of Latvians feel that the survival of the Latvian language and the Latvian culture in Latvia is under threat. Among Russians, a similar share (45%) felt that the survival of the Russian language and culture in Latvia was endangered.

**Figure 10. Views about threats against the survival of the Latvian language and culture in Latvia**

*Do you think that the survival of the Latvian language and culture in Latvia is endangered?*



Among Russians, there were far fewer respondents who felt that the Latvian language and culture were under threat (17%), and among Latvians, there were far fewer who thought that

<sup>3</sup> Zepa, B., Šūpule, I., Krastiņa, L., Penķe, I. And J. Krišāne (2004). “Etniskā tolerance un Latvijas sabiedrības integrācija” (Ethnic Tolerance and Public Integration in Latvia”, Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, Rīga, pp. 1-84.

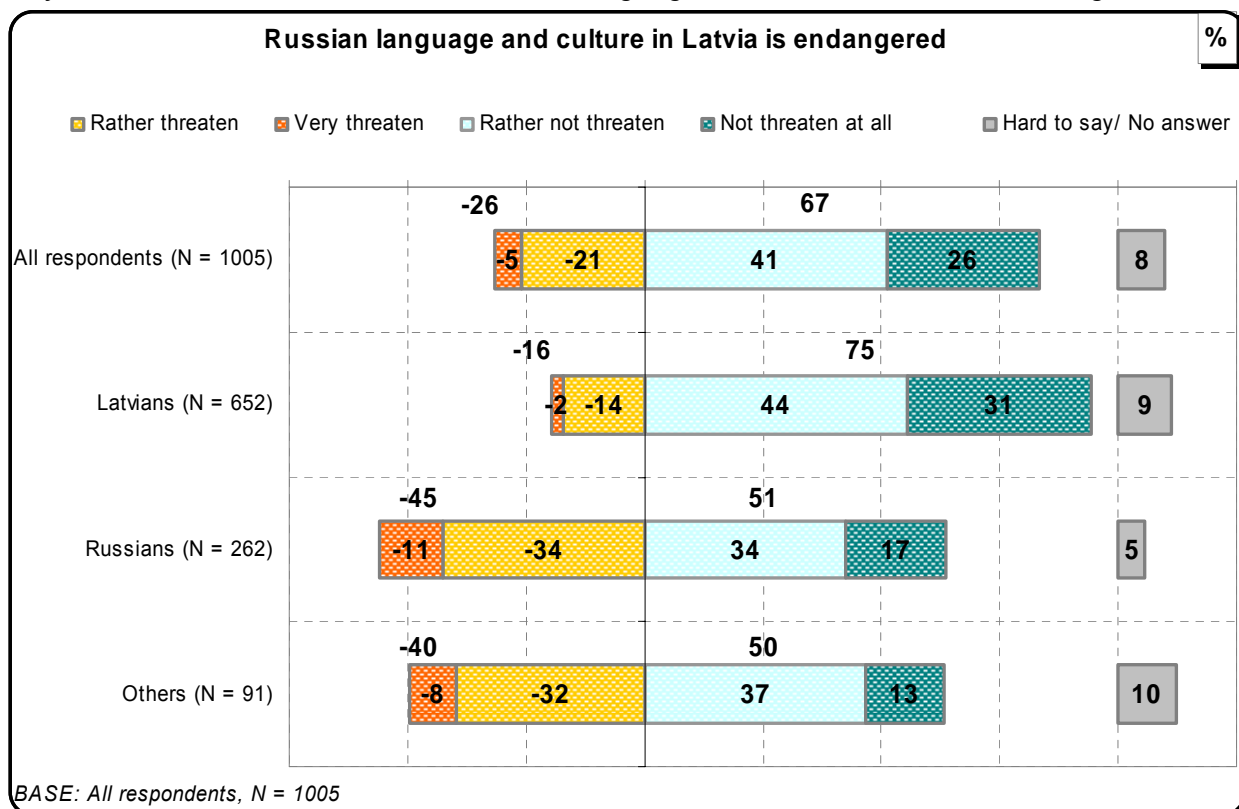
the same could be said about the Russian language and culture (16%). The quantitative survey, in other words, confirms the hypothesis which says that the two major socio-linguistic groups in Latvia feel endangered to a certain extent.

If we analyse this question from the perspective of various socio-demographic groups, we see that among Latvians, a higher sense of endangerment is felt by those with a higher education (51%) and by people in Rīga (58%). There were no statistically important differences among the various age groups.

Among socio-demographic groups in the Russian cohort, there were no significant differences among the various groups when people were asked whether the survival of the Russian language and culture in Latvia is under threat. Only people with an elementary or incomplete secondary education thought a bit more frequently that this is so – 53%. Among Latvians, young people aged 15-30 were slightly more likely than others to think that there are threats against the survival of the Russian language and culture.

**Figure 11. Views about threats against the survival of the Russian language and culture in Latvia**

*Do you think that the survival of the Russian language and culture in Latvia is endangered?*



A subject which was brought up quite frequently in focus group discussions was the idea that the Russian culture is superior to the Latvian culture. Several Russian speakers argued that this is true. Among young people in Jelgava, for instance, focus group participants who were discussing the integration strategy said that the Russian culture is wealthier and that Latvians have a narrower range of vision than Russians do – Latvians, said these respondents, are more likely to adapt to life:

*[Latvians] don't know a great many things, and that means that they are inappropriate for life. I think that Latvian culture is fine, but Russian culture is far richer. It provides much more for human development. When I have contacts with Latvians, I cannot say that I dislike them, but I believe that they are stupider than Russians are. That was not the right thing to say – it's not that they are stupider, they just have a narrower range of vision.*

*They adapt to life more poorly. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

*Latvian history began in 1918, and that is not a sufficiently long period to talk about culture. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

The focus group in Jelgava was also the place where people said that eventually, Latvia will be populated entirely by Russians or Russian speakers. In the Latvian focus group, this view among Russians was mentioned with harsh disgust, with respondents saying that the idea is being used as an excuse not to learn the Latvian language:

*I think that sooner or later Russians will take over Latvia. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

*I once asked a Russian why he doesn't speak Latvian, and he said that it was because we are living in the Soviet Union. He said that this has always been Russian land, and Latvia as a state is a temporary phenomenon. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

Latvian focus group participants expressed anger over Russian chauvinism, which is very offensive to Latvians. When speaking about Russians, some Latvians said that they behave as if they were conquerors:

*He has been vaccinated with the politics of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin – the idea that the Russian nation is superior to all others, and so he doesn't have to accept this tiny nation of two million people. On the other hand, he can't leave, because there is nothing for him there, he would have to start life all over again. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 60-75, interview in Latvian)*

*Here's another guy [Konstantin – the separation strategy] who doesn't try to accept our everyday culture. Right down to his genes he believes that he does not have to do that, he is here as a conqueror, a victor. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 60-75, interview in Latvian)*

In all of the Latvian focus groups, people talked about the desire to see greater respect on the part of non-Latvians vis-à-vis the Latvian language and culture:

*I want to feel more respect! – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

*I liked the fact that she [a Russian woman] poses the question politely, she has respect toward our language, and she explains that it just so happened that she did not learn the language. She treats me with respect. – (Rīga and Rīga District, 18-30, interview in Latvian)*

These questions were particularly emphasised in the Latvian focus groups in Rīga and Daugavpils. Latvians in Daugavpils talked about their experience and their assimilation into the Russian community:

*The situation is very different here. Latvians here have assimilated completely, they have become Russian. That's true even of our children, you must understand. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

*I was told that if I didn't learn the Russian language, I would not be living here. There's no point in speaking Latvian – you won't get an answer. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Latvian)*

Several participants in the Latvian focus groups admitted that Latvians, all in all, lack self-confidence and pride in their country. Many respondents were upset by the large numbers of Latvians who have decamped for Ireland. Others worry about the fact that the importance of traditions is on the decline:

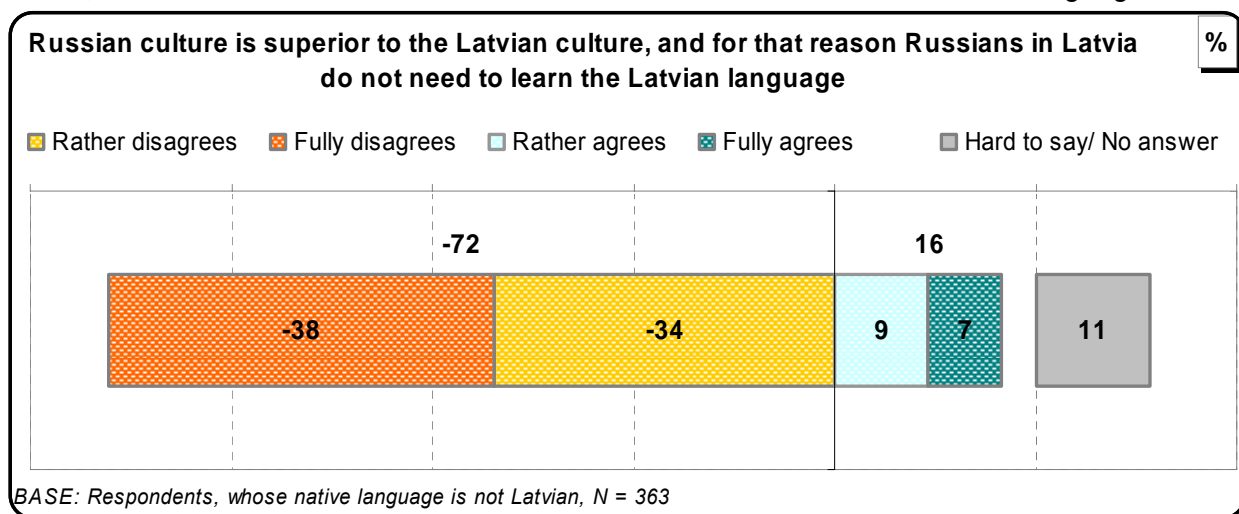
*Another generation will have to pass before we see the time when the Latvian state is big and strong, and we have something of which we can be proud. Latvians deny their own country. When I travel to America, people ask me why Latvians who arrive from Latvia always speak so badly of their own country. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 36-60, interview in Latvian)*

**These statements in the Latvian and Russian focus groups show that an understanding of the situation in Latvia requires theories which are focused on the analysis of post-colonialism and on the hierarchy of groups in formerly colonised countries. The issue has to do with the situation of colonists and attitudes toward them, because Latvians perceive Russians as conquerors, while Russians perceive Latvians as a less “important” nation, one that “does not even have its own culture.”**

In the quantitative survey, Russian speaking respondents were asked to answer this question: “To what degree do you agree with the view that the Russian culture is superior to the Latvian culture, and for that reason Russians in Latvia do not need to learn the Latvian language?” The results show that 16% of Latvia’s Russian speakers agree with that view. Among Russians, the number is a bit higher – 21%. It is important that this view is more prevalent among Russian speaking young people (21%), older people (22%), and people in Rīga (21%). It is also higher among those respondents who do not have a higher or a specialised secondary education.

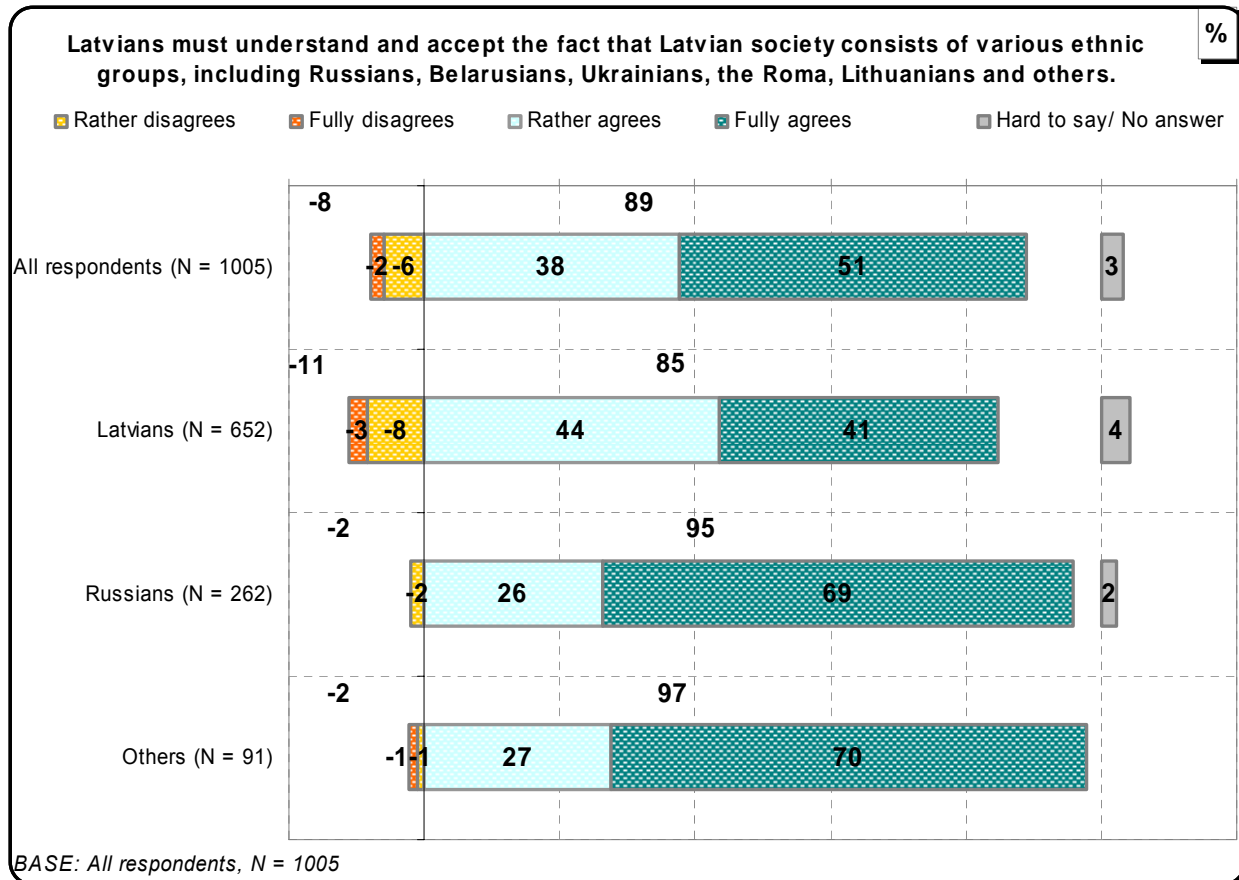
**Figure 12. Views about the superiority of the Russian culture as a reason not to learn the Latvian language**

*To what degree do you agree with the view that the Russian culture is superior to the Latvian culture, and for that reason Russians in Latvia do not need to learn the Latvian language?*



Another statement which was offered in the survey was focused on learning about the extent to which Latvians and Russians are prepared to accept another culture. The statement focused on the readiness of Latvians to accept the concept of multiculturalism: “Latvians must understand and accept the fact that Latvian society consists of various ethnic groups, including Russians, Belarusians, Ukrainians, the Roma, Lithuanians and others.” Answers show that most people in Latvia agree (85%). Only 11% disagree. There were no statistically important differences on this question when it came to socio-demographic groups.

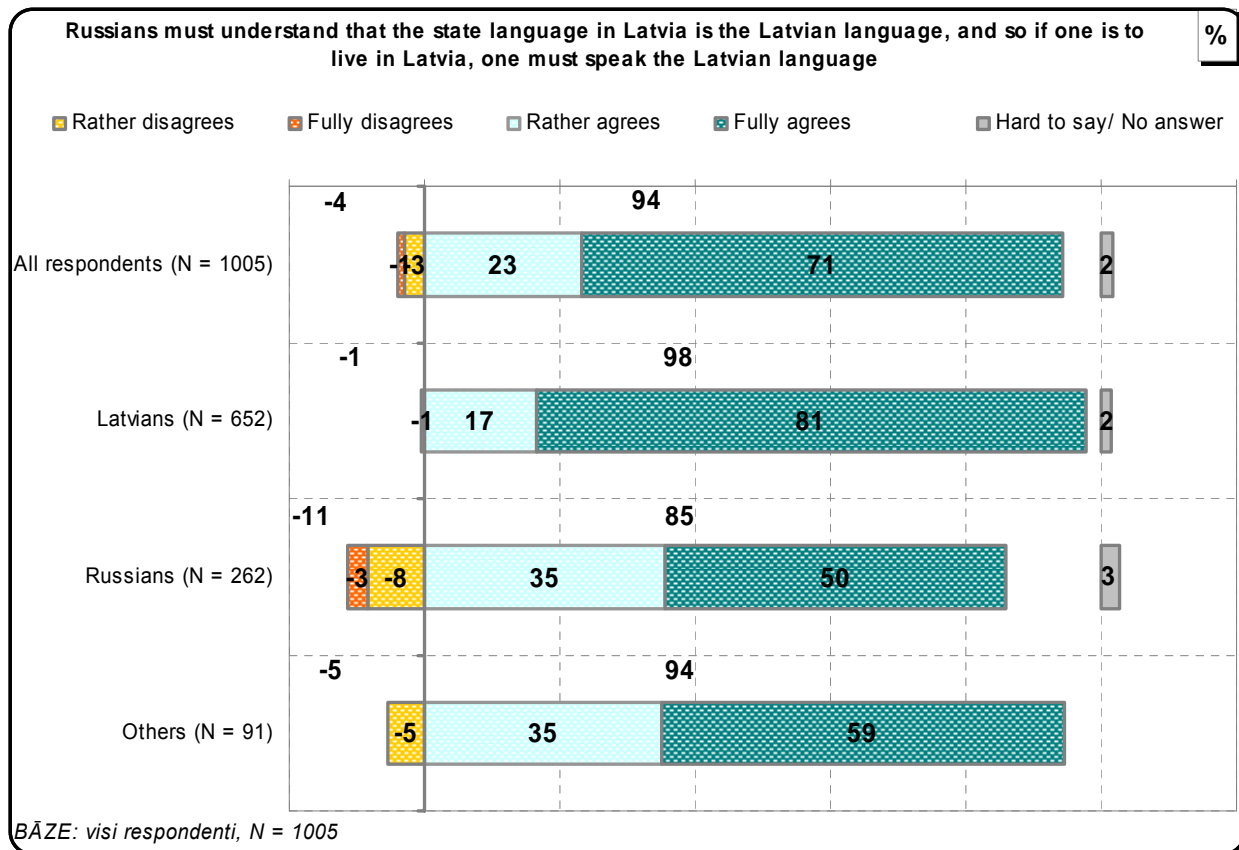
**Figure 13. Responses to the statement “Latvians must understand and accept the fact that Latvian society consists of various ethnic groups, including Russians, Belarusians, Ukrainians, the Roma, Lithuanians and others”**



Another question focused on the attitudes of Russians vis-à-vis the Latvian language: “Russians must understand that the state language in Latvia is the Latvian language, and so if one is to live in Latvia, one must speak the Latvian language.” This statement was supported by 94% of all residents and 86% of Russians. 11% of Russians and 5% of representatives of other nationalities rejected the statement. There were slight differences in terms of citizenship issues – Russians who are not citizens were more likely than others to disagree with the statement (17%). Among Russians, a slightly higher percentage of those who disagree with the statement was found among those aged 46 to 60 (17%) and among those with an elementary or incomplete secondary education (28%).



**Figure 14. Responses to the statement “Russians must understand that the state language in Latvia is the Latvian language, and so if one is to live in Latvia, one must speak the Latvian language”**



**Attitudes toward integration agents: political parties, politicians, NGOs and the media**

**Support for political parties in relation to ethnic issues**

Both in the focus groups and in the survey, respondents were asked about the extent to which they support the positions taken by various political parties on ethnic issues. The focus groups made it clear that people still blame politicians for a lack of ethnic harmony in Latvia:

*We live together here, and no matter what, if we are together, then we are integrating, whether we want to or not. My view is that there are horrible people up there who want to divide us up into two camps, that's what they're trying to do. – (Liepāja and Liepāja District, 18-35, interview in Russian)*

*As long as there were no political parties, there were no problems. When the political parties appeared, problems came along with them. Instead of consolidating the country, they want to split it up. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

People also talked about the parliamentary election which is upcoming in October 2006. They said that right before the election, ethnic issues will be exacerbated so that Russians vote for PCTVL and Latvians vote for the right wing “Latvian” parties:

*Now the election is approaching, and everything will begin. As soon as the elections are over, things will settle down. In other words, ethnic issues will be brought up again and again until the election. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

*The Russian, for instance, will go to vote for PCTVL, but no Latvian will ever vote for that party. People don't look at the programmes of parties, they don't look at what parties are offering – it's just a matter of principle. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 36-60, interview in Russian)*

The results of the quantitative survey show that right wing parties such as For the Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK, New Era and the People's Party are supported by nearly one-third of Latvians (27%-32%) when it comes to ethnic issues, while among Russians, 4 to 13% support those parties. Only 8% of Latvians support the alliance For Human Rights in a United Latvia, while nearly one-half of surveyed Russians (45%) do the same. The results of the survey, in general, confirm that many people in Latvia don't support political parties at all. Party supporters can largely be divided up into ethnic camps.

Here is a look at the attitudes which people hold with respect to each of the parties.

#### *For the Fatherland and Freedom/Latvian National Independence Movement*

When it comes to the ethnic positions of For the Fatherland and Freedom/Latvian National Independence Movement, support is indicated by 32% of Latvians, 4% of Russians and 10% of people of other nationalities. Opposition is stated by 29% of Latvians, 54% of Russians and 51% of people of other nationalities.

The party enjoys greater support with respect to ethnic issues among older Latvians (44% of those aged 61-75, only 24% of those in the 15-30 age group) and among people with a higher education (37%). Among Russians, the situation is the opposite – a higher proportion of those with a higher education do not support the party (74%). In other groups, there are larger numbers of people who do not offer a specific answer.

#### *New Era*

The position of the New Era party is supported with respect to ethnic issues by 32% of Latvians and 11% of Russians and representatives of other nationalities. No support is given by 28% of Latvians, 43% of Russians, and 41% of people of other nationalities. Among Latvians, the party's ethnic policies are supported more by people with a higher education (39%) and people in Rīga (38%). Among Russians, people in Rīga and people with a higher education are those who are most likely to reject New Era's position on ethnic issues (61% and 47% respectively)

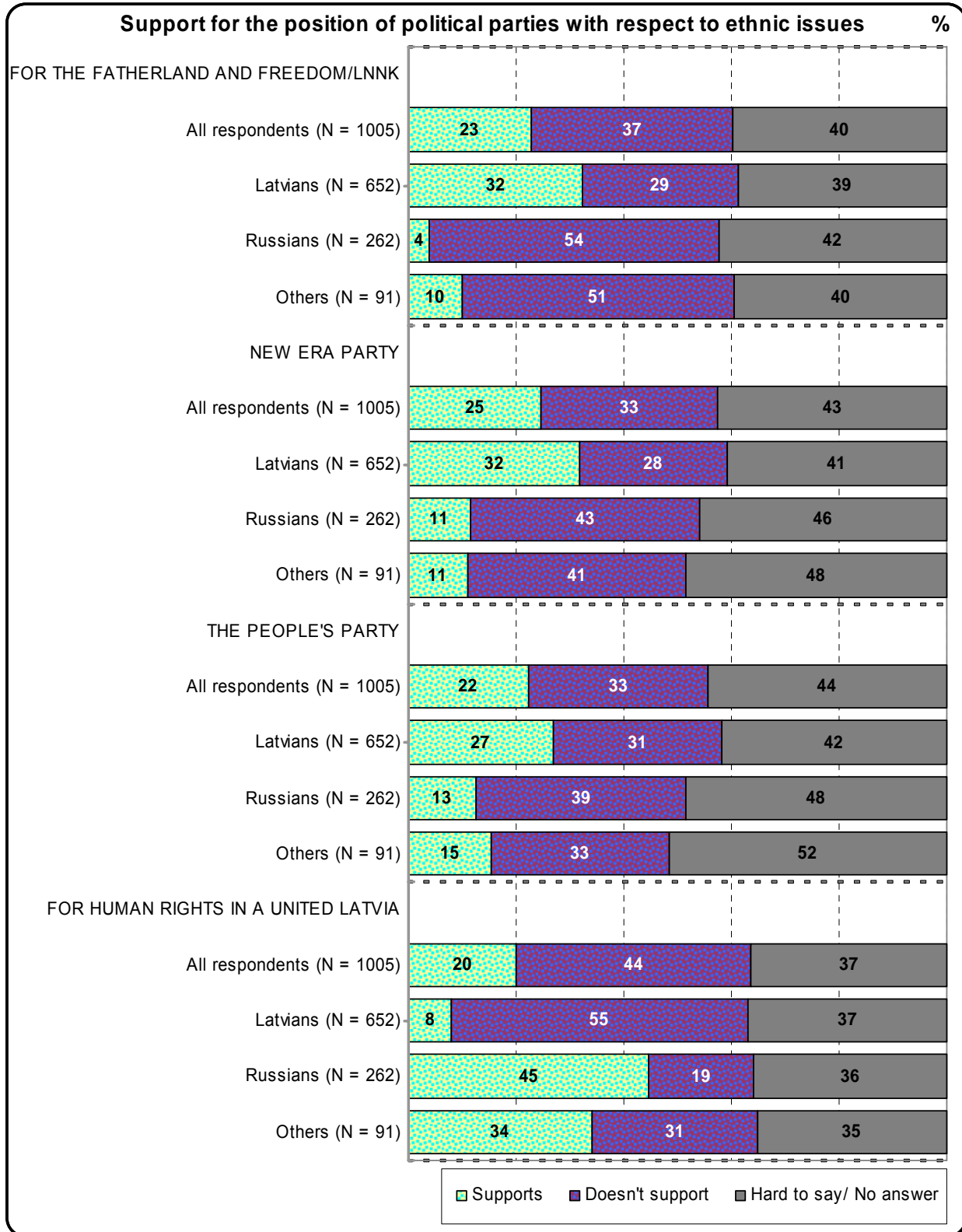
#### *The People's Party*

Among Latvians, the position of the People's Party is supported by 27%, while among Russians and members of other nationalities, the percentages are 13% and 15% respectively. No support is given by similar percentages of people in all of the ethnic groups – 31% of Latvians, 39% of Russians, and 33% of people of other nationalities. There are no statistically meaningful differences among various socio-demographic groups when it comes to the People's Party's positions on ethnic issues.

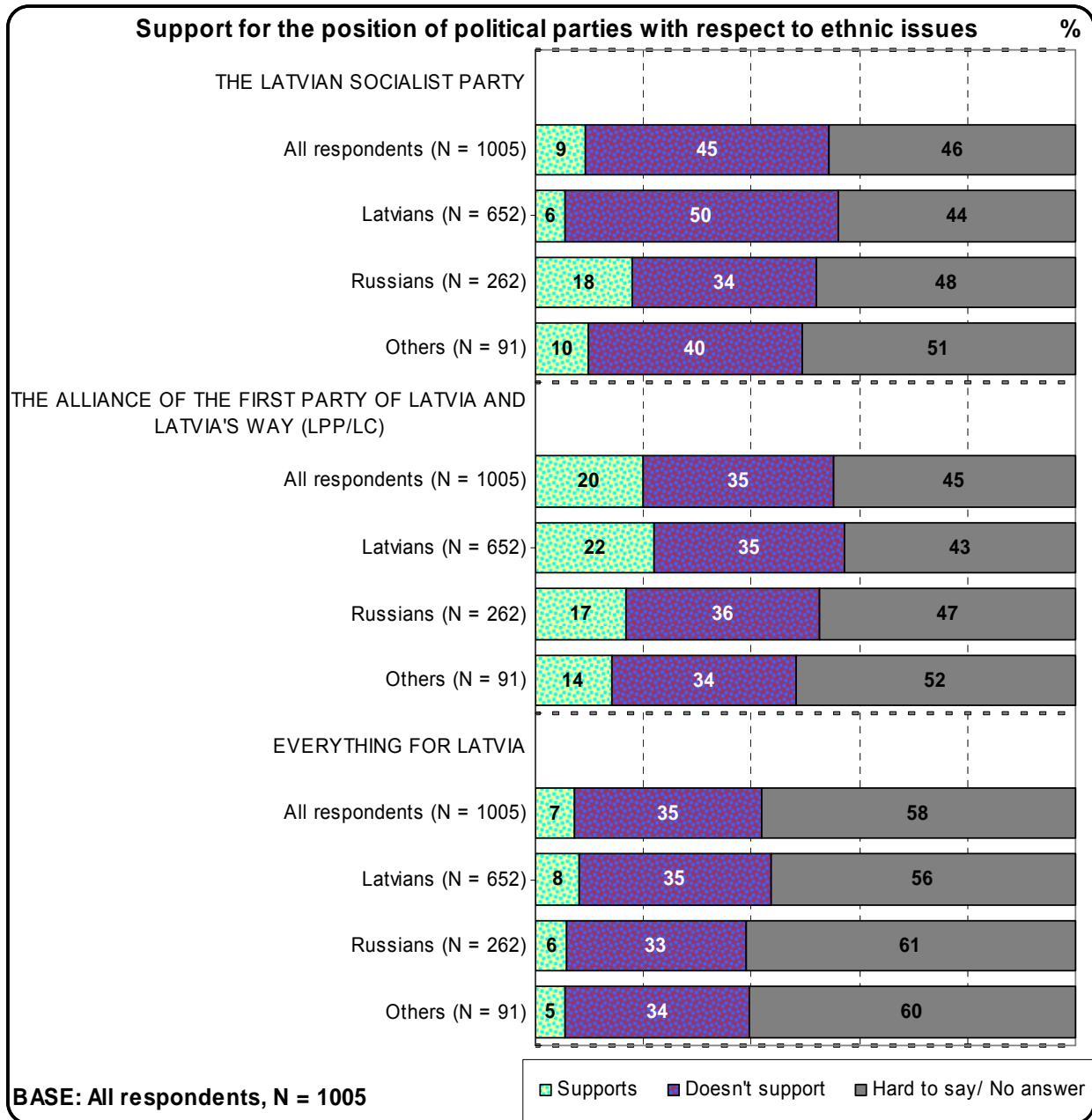
#### *For Human Rights in a United Latvia*

The three aforementioned parties are right wing in orientation, and in comparison, there is a big difference in support that is given by Latvians and representatives of other nationalities to the left wing For Human Rights in a United Latvia (PCTVL). It is supported by 8% of Latvians, 45% of Russians, and 34% of people of other nationalities. The party's positions are opposed by 55% of Latvians, 19% of Russians, and 31% of others. Among Russians, the highest percentage of support is given by non-citizens (53%), people in Rīga (53%) and people with a higher education (57%). By comparison, only 38% of young Russians aged 15 to 30 support the party.

**Figure 15a. Support for the position of political parties with respect to ethnic issues**  
*To what extent do you support the policies of various political parties when it comes to ethnic issues?*



**Figure 15b. Support for the position of political parties with respect to ethnic issues**  
 To what extent do you support the policies of various political parties when it comes to ethnic issues?



*The Latvian Socialist Party*

The positions of the Latvian Socialist Party receive less support than those of PCTVL – 5% among Latvians, 18% among Russians, and 10% of others. Opposed to the party’s positions are 51% of Latvians, 34% of Russians, and 40% of people other ethnic groups. Among Russians who do not support the position of the Latvian Socialist Party on ethnic issues, there is a greater percentage of respondents with a higher education – 52%.

*The alliance of the First Party of Latvia and Latvia’s Way (LPP/LC)*

The position on ethnic issues of the political alliance of the First Party of Latvia and Latvia’s way is supported by 22% of Latvians, 17% of Russians, and 14% of people of other nationalities. In all groups, at least one-third of respondents (34-36%) do not support that position.

*Everything for Latvia*

Of all of the surveyed parties, Everything for Latvia receives the least support – its position is supported by 8% of Latvians, 6% of Russians and 5% of people of other nationalities. This is the party with respect to which the largest number of people had no specific views – 58%. In the case of other parties, it must be said, that was also true among many respondents – approximately 40 to 45% of respondents could not give a clear answer.

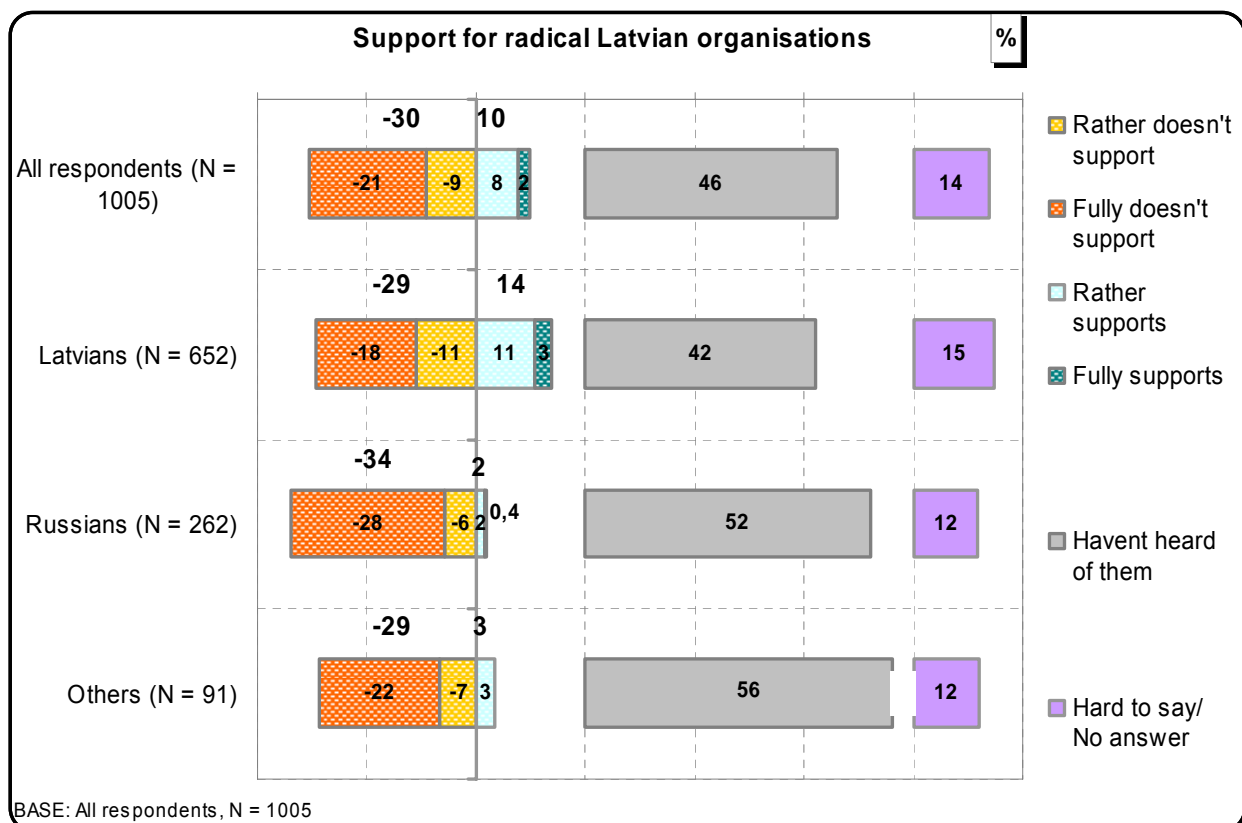
**Views about the position of radical public organisations on ethnic issues**

Questions similar to those that were posed about political parties were also posed with respect to radical public organisations: “To what extent do you support the ethnic positions of movements such as the ‘Centre for Defence of Russian Schools’ and the ‘Unified Congress of the Latvian Russian Community (OKROL)’?”, and “To what extent do you support the ethnic positions of movements such as ‘Everything for Latvia’ and ‘Club 415’?”

Radical Latvian movements receive comparatively less support among Latvians than radical Russian movements receive from Russians – the position of “Everything for Latvia” and “Club 415” is supported by 14% of Latvians (21% of Latvians who live in Rīga). Far greater numbers of people knew nothing of the organisations – 42% of Latvians, and 52% of Russians.

**Figure 16. Support for radical Latvian organisations**

*To what extent do you support the ethnic positions of movements such as “Everything for Latvia” and “Club 415”?*



The positions on ethnic issues held by the “Centre for Defence of Russian Schools” and the “Unified Congress of the Latvian Russian Community”, by contrast are supported by 4% of Latvians, 50% of Russians, and 14% of people of other nationalities. Only 17% of respondents have heard nothing about these organisations. Among Russians, the position of these organisations is supported more often by non-citizens (63%) and residents of Rīga (62%).

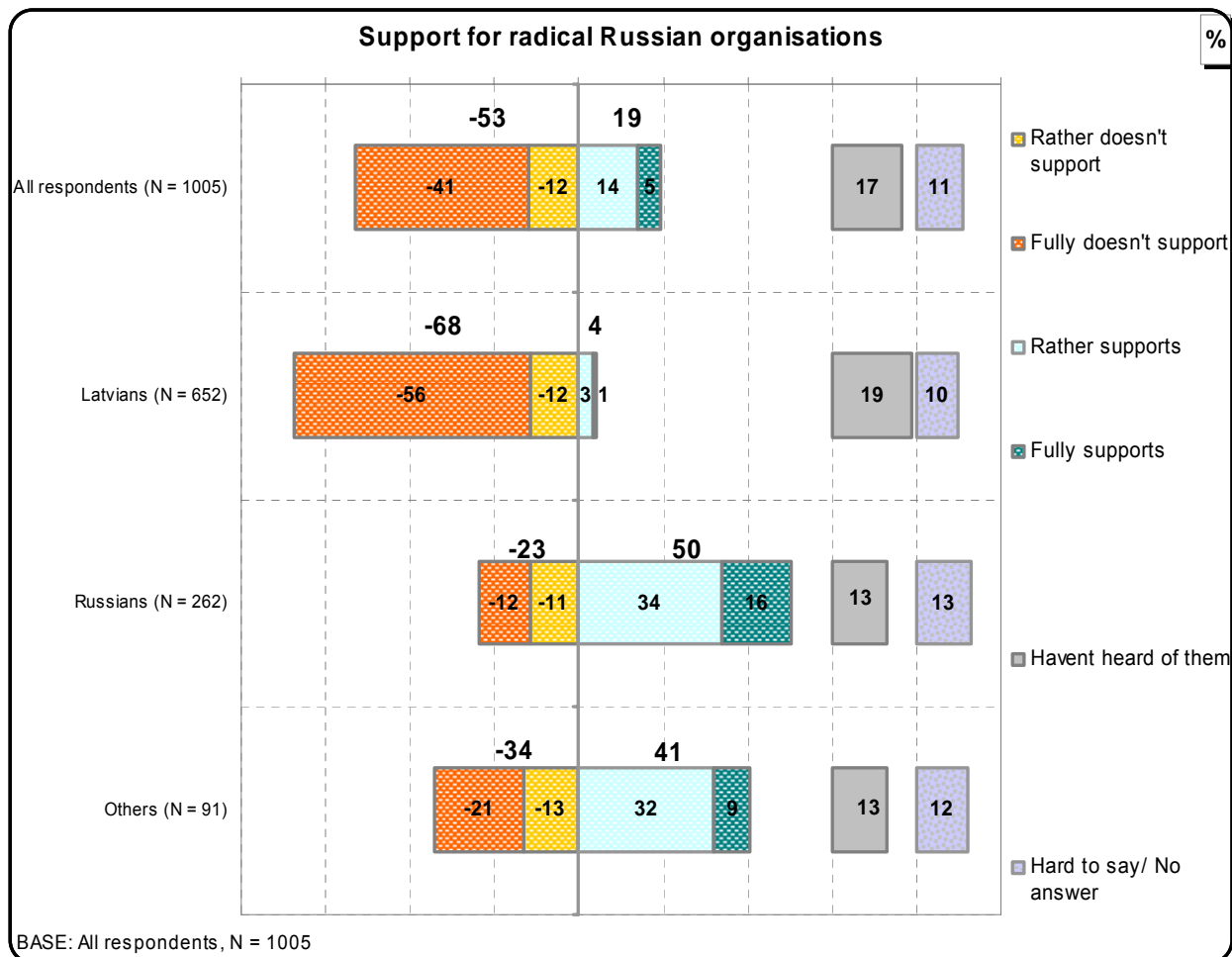
In focus groups, people were asked about their attitude vis-à-vis organisations such as “Everything for Latvia” and “Club 415”. Latvian respondents expressed a negative attitude on the one hand, but on the other hand they also said that radically nationalist Latvian organisations serve as a counter-measure against radically nationalist Russian organisations:

*I think that they're too nationalist. I haven't ready their programme, but I've seen the organisation's people making loud statements out in the streets, and I think that this is too crazy. It's very good to be a patriot, but this seems to be an extreme approach, those people seem to be obsessed with their issues. I don't support that. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 18-35, interview in Latvian)*

*Radicalism is always bad. On television, I have seen Mr Pliners [the leftist politician Jakovs Pliners] on TV during the day, and in the evening I have read 'DDD' [the newsletter of the radically nationalist Latvian National Front]. There is a balance, at least, and I can sleep peacefully at night. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 18-35, interview in Latvian)*

**Figure 17. Support for radical Russian organisations**

To what extent do you support the ethnic positions of movements such as the “Centre for Defence of Russian Schools” and the “Unified Congress of the Latvian Russian Community (OKROL)”

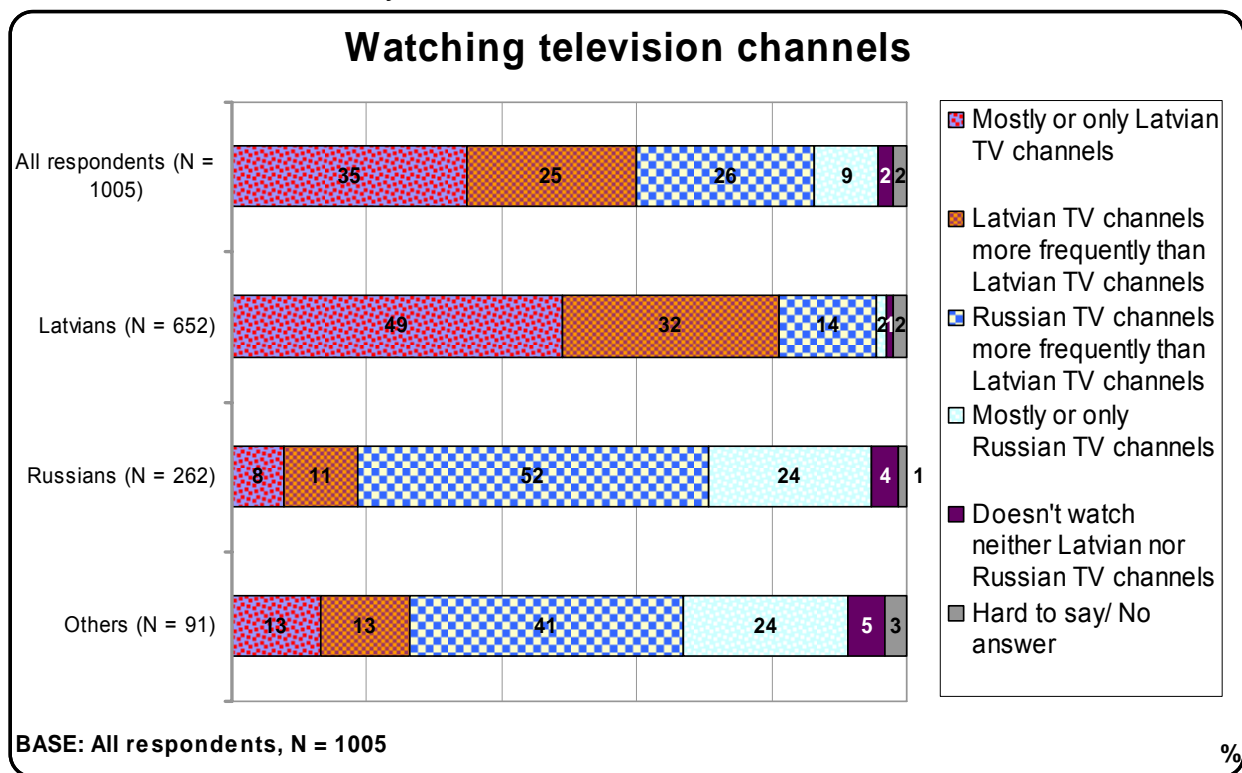


**The popularity of Latvian and Russian television channels**

Survey data show very clearly that Latvians mostly watch Latvian TV channels, while Russians in Latvia mostly watch TV channels from Russia. Among Latvians 81% mostly or more often watch Latvian television channels, while 19% of Russians do the same. The situation is quite the opposite when it comes to Russian TV channels – 16% of Latvians and 76% of Russians mostly or more often watch those programmes.

Among young Latvians, interestingly, fewer people only or more often watch Latvian television channels (79%, as opposed to 90% among those who are 61 to 75 years old). Again, the situation is quite the opposite among young Russians – a greater percentage (86%) of those aged 15 to 30 watch Russian TV channels, while the figure among those aged 61 to 75 is just 61%.

**Figure 18. Watching television channels**  
Which television channels do you watch more often?



Focus group respondents say that the result of a split in Latvia’s media reality shapes differing interpretations of reality, and they encounter this on an everyday basis:

*People are tired and don't want to react to this. There is no conflict at the everyday level. You open the newspaper, there it is, close the newspaper, there it isn't. Turn on the TV, there it is. Go to work, there it isn't. I work with Latvians, nothing of the sort happens. It doesn't happen at the everyday level. It's all been created artificially, and it will continue to remain artificially as long as they need it. – (Jelgava and Jelgava District, 36-60 interview in Russian)*

*This problem of nationalism, as far as I am concerned, is completely exaggerated. The things that we are told are nothing but propaganda. To be sure, any mass media outlet engages in propaganda. Yes, one channel propagandises one thing, another propagandises another. Then you can conclude that two channels are not enough. – (Daugavpils and Daugavpils District, 18-35, interview in Latvian)*

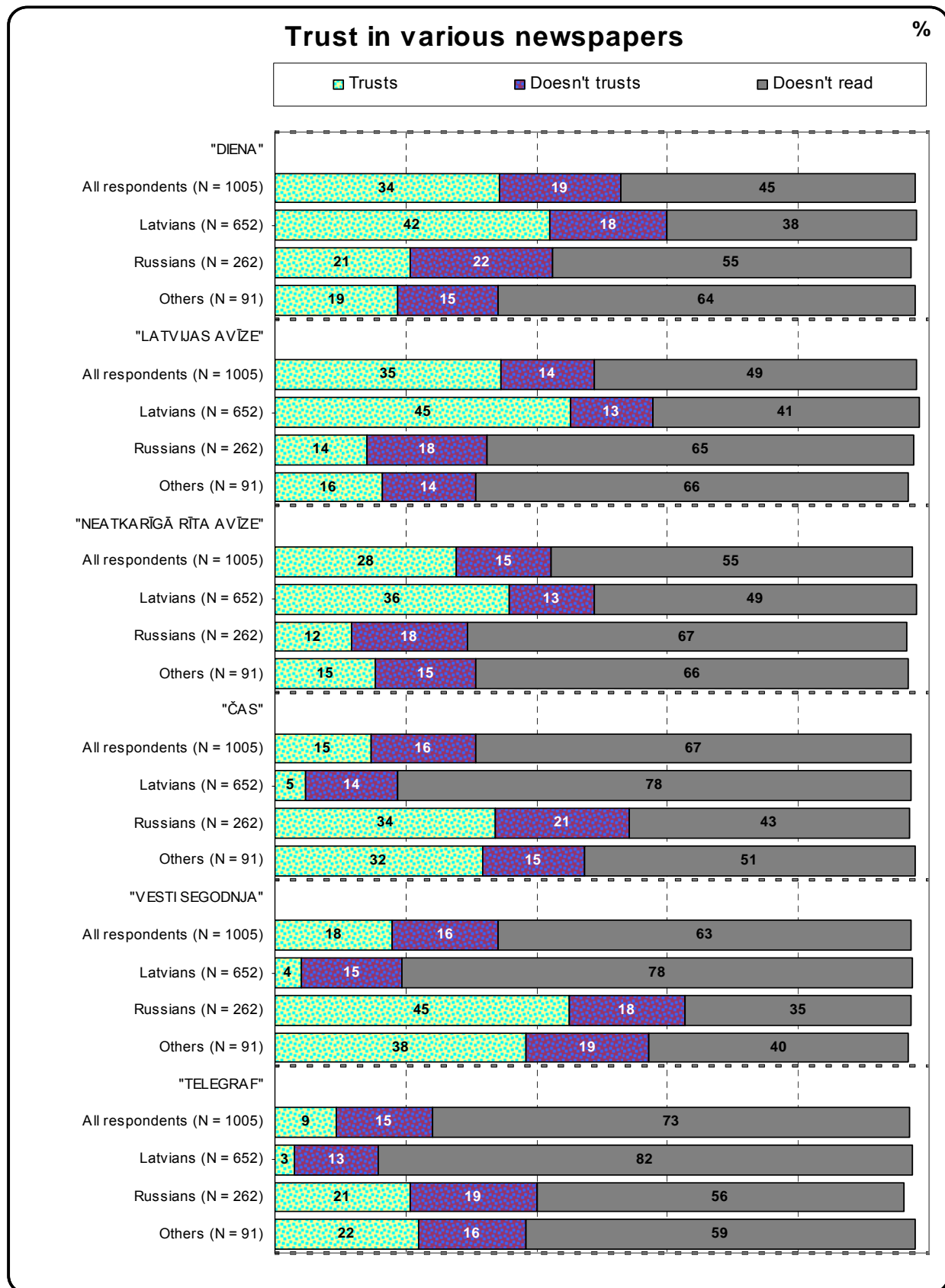
***Trust in various newspapers***

In order to determine the level of trust among Latvia's residents in various newspapers and to review this issue from the perspective of media analysis, researchers asked respondents to say how much they trust the information that is provided in the various newspapers. There were six newspapers with respect to which this issue applied – *Diena*, *Latvijas Avīze*, *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, *Час*, *Вести-Сегодня* and *Телеграф*. The results of the survey show that Latvians read and trust Latvian language newspapers much more, while Russians and others mostly read and trust newspapers in Russian – particularly *Час* and *Вести-Сегодня*.



**Figure 19. Trust in various newspapers**

To what degree do you trust the information that is provided in various newspapers? Do you trust ... ?



## 6.2. THE ROLE OF THE PRESS IN CONSTRUCTING COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES

### Critical discourse analysis: a historical approach

At the centre of critical discourse analysis (CDA), there are various roles performed by discursive actions in terms of shaping and maintaining unequal power relations among various social groups, between men and women, and among national, ethnic, religious, sexual, political and sub-cultural groups. CDA reviews battles which are manifested when one discourse is given privileges and others are marginalized, thus also affecting the positions of individuals and groups that are involved in discourse.

Discourse can be defined as a set of simultaneous and sequential interrelated linguistic activities that are revealed through social activities as semiotic signs that are thematically interrelated.<sup>1</sup> Wodak's approach has most often been used in analysing historical and political discourses, and its main goal is to integrate texts from as many genres as possible, as well as the historical dimensions of the subject that is under study. This approach considers the historical dimension in two ways – 1) by integrating the historical background and the factors which determine discursive instances; 2) by researching the ways in which specific discourse types and genres constantly change.

CDA takes into account the situation, the status of participants, time and place, as well as other social factors – participation in groups, age, socialisation, as well as psychological factors which are of great importance in creating texts. When conducting this analysis, one must take into account the psychological, cognitive and linguistic factors that were the foundation for the creation of the text. These factors shape structures or 'frames' and 'schemata' which help to structure and perceive reality. Wodak defines the concept of frames as general models which bring together our overall knowledge about that or another situation. Schemata are concrete models for realization of a specific situation or text. The concept of strategies is closely linked to these concepts. Strategies are used in pursuit of goals, but that does not mean that participants in discourse are always aware of those goals.<sup>2</sup>

Research concerning discourse can involve three interrelated analytical dimensions:<sup>3</sup>

1. Content
  2. Argumentation strategies (whether conscious or not)
  3. Linguistic means and forms of realization (at the level of texts, sentences and words)
- Let us review each of these dimensions separately:

#### 1. Content

When conducting media analysis, one can differentiate among various ranges of subject matter in terms of content:

- The idea that Latvians are a specific type of human being ("*homo latviensis*"), contrasting Latvians to representatives of other nationalities and declaring that they are completely different;
- Collective political history (the myth of origin, mythic figures, political triumphs, a period of welfare and achievement, defeat);
- Common culture (language, religion, art, science, food, apparel and other characteristic indicators);
- The collective political present and future (citizenship, political achievements, political problems, threats, political values and goals);
- The "national body" (the territory of the state, natural resources, landscapes, important locations, buildings).

<sup>1</sup> Wodak, R. "The Discourse-Critical Approach". In Wodak, R. and M. Meyer (eds.) *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Sage Publications, 2001, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Titscher, S., Meyer, M., Wodak, R., and E. Vetter. "Methods of Text and Discourse Analysis". London: Sage Publications, 2000, pp. 155-156.

<sup>3</sup> De Cillia, R., Reisigl, M. and R. Wodak. "The Discursive Construction of National Identities", *Discourse & Society*, 1999, 10(2), p. 157.

**2. Strategies**

Participants in social processes use discourses to shape knowledge, situations, roles, as well as identities and mutual relationships. There are four major types of discursive strategy:

- The **constructive** strategy (it constructs and creates an identity, e.g., by distancing one’s own ethnic group from others in linguistic terms);
- The **perpetuation/justification** strategy (it reproduces and preserves identity, e.g., by presenting immigrants as a threat against national identity);
- The **transformational** strategy (it transforms an identity, e.g., transforming one aspect of national identity into an aspect of another identity);
- The **destructive** strategy (it destroys identity, e.g., by removing the mythological aspects of national identity).

**3. Linguistic means and forms of realization**

Linguistic means and forms of realization are used to express content and to implement discursive strategies. Elements of linguistic discourse can be analysed at the level of entire texts (e.g., the structure of the text), of sentences (e.g., the grammatical structure of sentences), or of words (e.g., the selection of words).

In this research, both of the aforementioned dimensions are analysed – content and discursive strategies. The analysis also, however, points to certain and vivid resources of linguistic expression which reveal contents and strategical characteristics of discourses.

**The we-you discourse**

When analysing identities and the way in which they emerge, one of the central questions is the discursive development of the concepts of “we” and “you”. Specific indicators are used to develop groups – similarities are emphasised in the “we”group, and there are great attempts to accent differences between “we” and “you” groups. That is why the establishment of a group’s identity is very closely linked to the creation of boundaries against “other” groups. It has to be stressed that indicators on the basis of which people are divided into groups are selected on a strategic basis, in accordance with the specific situation or goals. These indicators can change over the course of time. In analysing the discursive establishment of identities, one must focus attention on where the specific boundary between groups is drawn – the way in which this boundary is created and what the related strategic goal might be. One’s own group is reflected as positively as possible, while other groups are depicted in a negative light.

**Table 18. The scheme for analysing the we-you discourse**

<b>The “us and you” discourse</b>	
<i>Discourse of difference</i> 1. Categorization and evaluation 2. We-discourse: - Constitution of ‘we’ - Positive self-portrayal	<i>Linguistic realization</i> 1. Content definition of groups 2.1. Grammatical cohesive elements 2.2. Disclaimers, self-assessment, norm-respect
<b>Argumentation strategies/ techniques (justification)</b>	
<i>Attribution of responsibility or guilt</i> Black-white painting Rejection of guilt Scapegoat strategy	<i>Denial of responsibility or guilt</i> Publication of lies and/or unchecked or false information
Victim-agent reversal	a) Exaggeration: for example theories of conspiracy
The above strategies and denials are also realized by certain ‘techniques’ of	b) Playing down:balancing/ rationalization c) Rejection, denial

argumentation about distortions		
Goal: devaluation and defamation of the 'opponents' viewpoint		
<b>Forms of linguistic realization</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unreal scenarios</li> <li>• Comparisons</li> <li>• Analogies</li> <li>• Evocations</li> <li>• Equation/generalisation</li> <li>• Discourse representation</li> <li>• Quotations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rhetorical questions</li> <li>• Introductory formulae</li> <li>• Allusions, evocations (also at text and word level)</li> <li>• Metaphors</li> <li>• Assertions</li> </ul>	Vagueness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generalising reference</li> <li>• Speaker's perspectives</li> <li>• Stylistics/situationality</li> <li>• Euphemisms</li> <li>• Text coherence</li> <li>• Metaphoric lexems</li> </ul>

Source: Matouschek, B., Wodak, R. and J. Janussek. Notwendige Maßnahmen gegen Fremde? Genese und Formen von rassistischen Diskursen der Differenz. Wien: Passagen (1995), p. 60. Quoted in Titscher, S., Meyer, M., Wodak, R., and E. Vetter. "Methods of Text and Discourse Analysis". London: Sage Publications, 2000, p. 159.

In discursive research related to ethnic relations, Wodak<sup>4</sup> proposes a review of the following questions:

- 1) How are persons named and referred to linguistically?
- 2) What traits, characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to these persons?
- 3) By means of what arguments and argumentation schemes do specific persons or social groups try to justify or legitimise the exclusion, discrimination, suppression and exploitation of others?
- 4) From what perspective or point of view are these labels, attributions and arguments expressed?
- 5) Are the respective utterances articulated overtly? Are they intensified or mitigated?

**Table 19. A scheme for analysing discursive strategies**

Strategy	Objectives	Devices
Referential /nomination	Construction of an in-groups and out-groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership categorization</li> <li>• Biological, naturalizing and depersonalizing metaphors and metonymies</li> <li>• Synecdoches</li> </ul>
Predication	Labelling social actors more or less positively or negatively, deprecatorily or appreciatively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stereotypical, evaluative attributions of negative or positive traits</li> <li>• Implicit and explicit predicates</li> </ul>
Argumentation	Justification of positive or negative attributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Justification of political inclusion, exclusion, discrimination or offering or privileges</li> </ul>
Perspectivation, framing or discourse representation	Expressing involvement Positioning speaker's point of view	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting, description, narration or quotation of (discriminatory) events and utterances</li> </ul>
Intensification, mitigation	Modifying the epistemic status of a proposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intensifying or mitigating the illocutionary force of (discriminatory) utterances</li> </ul>

Source: Wodak, R. "The Discourse-Critical Approach". In Wodak, R. and M. Meyer (eds.) Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis. London: Sage Publications, 2001, p. 73.

<sup>4</sup> Wodak, R. "The Discourse-Critical Approach". In Wodak, R. and M. Meyer (eds.) Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis. London: Sage Publications, 2001, pp. 72-73.

### The goals and the empirical materials of press analysis

In this research project, the approach of critical discourse analysis is used to analyse the press. The aim is to study the way in which collective identities are constructed:

- Political identity (belonging to a political party or public movement);
- Civic identity (national belonging);
- Cultural and ethnic identity (language, belonging to an ethnic group)

In order to achieve this goal, researchers:

- Defined periods of time which were of importance in ethno-political terms, as well as the most important Latvian and Russian language newspapers in each of the periods;
- Selected articles which were printed during the relevant time period with respect to the important events;
- Studied the reflection of these events in the Latvian and Russian language press;
- Made use of the approach of critical discourse analysis to analyse the mechanisms used to construct collective identities in the Latvian and Russian language newspapers.

Press analysis was conducted with respect to periods of time when there were public and media debates about issues of ethno-policy. Three Latvian language and three Russian language newspapers were chosen for analysis during each period of time (Table 20).

**Table 20. Periods of time and surveyed publications**

Month, year	Newspaper		Issue
	Latvian	Russian	
May 1990	<i>Cīņa</i> <i>Latvijas Jaunatne</i> <i>Atmoda</i>	<i>Советская молодежь</i> <i>Советская Латвия</i> <i>Единство</i>	Approval of the Declaration of Independence
August 1991	<i>Diena</i> <i>Neatkarīgā Cīņa</i> <i>Latvijas Jaunatne</i>	<i>Советская Латвия</i> <i>СМ-Сегодня</i> <i>Единство</i>	Restoration of Latvia's independence
June 1994	<i>Diena</i> <i>Neatkarīgā Cīņa</i> <i>Labrīt</i>	<i>СМ-Сегодня</i> <i>Панорама Латвии</i> <i>Бизнес &amp; Балтия</i>	Approval of a law on citizenship
July 1999	<i>Diena</i> <i>Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze</i> <i>Lauku Avīze</i>	<i>Панорама Латвии</i> <i>Час</i> <i>Суббота</i>	Debates over a language law
Sept. 2003	<i>Diena</i> <i>Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze</i> <i>Lauku Avīze</i>	<i>Час</i> <i>Вести Сегодня</i> <i>Телеграф</i>	Referendum on accession to the EU
February 2004	<i>Diena</i> <i>Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze</i> <i>Lauku Avīze</i>	<i>Час</i> <i>Телеграф</i> <i>Вести Сегодня</i>	Protests against minority education reforms
May 2005	<i>Diena</i> <i>Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze</i> <i>Lauku Avīze</i>	<i>Час</i> <i>Телеграф</i> <i>Вести Сегодня</i>	Ratification of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

For each period of time, researchers selected articles which had to do with the important ethno-political events. In analysing these articles, researchers focused on the way in which ethno-political processes were reflected, as well as on the way in which the newspapers described important participants therein – political parties, non-governmental organisations and international institutions. The main dimensions of analysis to be considered were the content of the discourses and the discursive strategies that were applied.

## Results of the press analysis

### ***Approval of the Declaration of Independence (1990)***

#### **Description of events**

A language law was approved in 1989 to declare that the Latvian language was the state language of Latvia. Latvian language courses were organised at places of employment and elsewhere. A law on Latvia's economic sovereignty was also approved.

In January 1990, the symbols of the Republic of Latvia were confirmed – the red-white-red flag, the hymn and the national seal.

On March 18, elections to the Supreme Council of the Latvian SSR were held, and the Latvian People's Front (LTF) won 138 seats of 201.

Certain articles of the constitution of the Latvian SSR were amended, with one amendment creating a multi-party system in Latvia. The influence of the Latvian Communist Party (LKP) at institutions and companies receded.

The State Security Committee (KGB) began to rehabilitate individuals who were repressed during the Soviet era.

There were shortages of food and industrial products, because the existing delivery system had collapsed. Companies lacked raw materials, and barter transactions were arranged with suppliers of raw materials in other Soviet republics. Kolkhozes provided land for individual farmers.

On May 1, the Congress of Citizens of the Republic of Latvia was held, and a Latvian Committee was elected.

On May 4, the Supreme Council approved a declaration on the restoration of the Republic of Latvia.

On May 14, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev issued a decree in which he declared the May 4 declaration to be unlawful.

On May 15, a so-called political strike was held – 200 representatives of the army and the local military school gathered at the entrance of the Supreme Council. The special services unit known as the OMON (*Отряд милиции Особого Назначения*) intervened and forced the protesters to retreat.

#### **The influence of newspapers on the process of shaping identities**

During this period, the Latvian and Russian language press mostly published various official pronouncements, along with appeals and declarations, from the Supreme Council, as well as political parties (mostly the LKP and the LTF) and public organisations.

In Latvian language newspapers, everything that was characteristic of the Soviet system was described in very critical or sarcastic terms. This vividly marked out a discursive strategy that was aimed at constructing a new civic identity. One way to construct an identity was to activate links to the pre-war Republic of Latvia.

Newspapers printed a great deal of information about the pages of Latvian history which had been hushed up during Soviet times – the period of independence between 1918 and 1940, as well as the repressions of the Soviet regime. Historical events are of great importance in the discourse of independence, because defenders and opponents of independence use them to justify their positions and activities, albeit with differing interpretations.

The interwar period was particularly important in the creation of a new identity, because it made it possible for people to establish positive identification with the independent country of that time.<sup>5</sup> It was stressed that this was the only period of time in which Latvians had their own independent state, thus justifying and enhancing the efforts of the so-called Latvian Renaissance to achieve independence. The first republic was largely presented in idealistic terms – as a

<sup>5</sup> The theory of social identity says that it is important for people to belong to groups which are positively judged by other groups and, especially, by members of the group in question. See Taifel, H. and J.C. Turner (1979). "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict". In Austin, W.G. and S. Worchel (eds.). *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*. Monterey, Calif.: Brooks/Cole.

period of general growth, one in which Latvians gained accomplishments in the economy and in other areas.

The focus on the interwar period republic was very specific in Latvian language newspapers, helping to create the impression that as soon as the USSR was gone, Latvia would once again become this first independent Latvian state, one populated primarily by Latvians, with relatively few representatives of other nationalities. Wealthy farmers would work their small farms, they would export butter and pork to Western Europe. There would be no major industries to pollute the environment.

In contrast to the interwar period of independence, the years of Soviet authority were depicted in a very negative light, thus destroying the identity of the Soviet individual and establishing a new civic identity in its place. The crass rejection of the Soviet era and all that was characteristic of it – this was a typical foundation and the most vivid manifestation of the new identity.

Along with the rejection of all that was Soviet, the Latvian language newspapers also started to shape the image of Latvians as a nation which belongs to the developed Western world. Newspapers presented a powerful orientation toward Western Europe, the United States and other countries with democratic systems, market economies with private companies, competition, and a wide diversity of products. There was an emphasis on the contrast between these countries and the Soviet Union:

*“... The reality of Soviet life among Latvians exacerbated efforts, at least in the world of ideas, to emphasise their belonging to the community of European nations without any hesitation. Of course, the Baltic Republics were far more Western than the rest of the empire.”* (Atmoda, 29 May 1990)

Latvians often perceive processes of change as a return to “normality” – a “normal” state, “normal” everyday lives, and “normal” economic development.<sup>6</sup> The ethnic, civic and political identity of Latvians was strengthened through reports about leaving the USSR as an independent country, as well as the return of the Latvian nation into the Western political, cultural and economic arena. This stressed the historical rights of the Latvians, also legitimising the processes aimed at establishing an independent state.

Of similar meaning was the frequent discussion of Soviet repressions. The feeling among Latvians that they had been hurt was strengthened as a component of ethnic identity. Newspapers wrote about the right to compensation – compensation at the expense of other nationalities, in some cases.

The Latvian language newspapers largely spoke to Latvians alone, referring to Latvians as “us” and “the people”, and thus creating the impression that Latvians, as an ethnic group, represented the numerical majority in society and that all Latvians have the same views and attitudes. An ethnic identity was constructed for Latvians, stressing that all people of Latvian origin have certain positive properties – they are hard-working, polite, well educated, able to deal with difficulties, patriotic and musical.

It was also stressed that Latvians are a nation of farmers – all Latvians were farmers in the recent past, and they want to live in single family farms and work the land, as was the case during the rule of pre-war President Kārlis Ulmanis.

When writing about all of the residents of Latvia – both Latvians and members of other nationalities, the phrase that was usually used was “the entire Latvian nation.” People from other ethnic groups, however, were often depicted in negative terms, publishing many scornful epithets. Often all non-Latvians were called migrants, thus depicting the very diverse community of Latvia’s residents as a single mass. Properties attributed to this mass were the dominance of material interests over spiritual interests, the search for one’s own good, as well as disrespect against Latvians and the Latvian language and culture.

A review of the Russian language newspapers that were published at that time shows that there were radical differences between the LKP newspaper *Советская Латвия* and the Interfront newspaper *Единство* on the one hand and the newspaper *Советская Молодежь* on

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<sup>6</sup> Stukuls Eglitis, D. (2002). *Imagining the Nation: History, Modernity and Revolution in Latvia*. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press.

the other. The first two newspapers stood firmly for Latvia's remaining in the Soviet Union, while *Советская Молодежь* was more likely to support the restoration of Latvia's independence. This newspaper did not stress threats against Russian speakers, although it did print critical reviews of important events of the day.

In the Russian language newspapers the Russian speaking population is depicted internationalist contrasting to the growing nationalism of Latvians. It is stressed, that Russian-speakers do not sort people according to their ethnic background. Russian newspapers mostly show their readers as simple and hard-working persons. Comparatively often veterans of war and work are mentioned, their feelings about actual processes are portrayed.

In the Russian language newspapers, authors predicted an inevitable exacerbation of interethnic tensions, writing far more often about the concept of "national harmony" and emphasising its importance in preserving the public peace. Readers were called upon to promote equality among Latvian residents of various ethnic groups. This challenge was particularly addressed to the LTF and those who supported its views. These political forces were often described as "fomenting interethnic hatred", with the newspaper stressing the friendly and favourable relationships which existed among various elements in society before the processes of independence began.

*"Не понимаю, что происходит в нашей стране? В прибалтийских республиках? Раньше люди всех национальностей жили дружно. Никто не запрещал говорить на родном языке. А теперь русских обвиняют в том, что загубили национальную культуру и национальные языки."* (*I cannot understand what's happening in this country, in the Baltic Republics? People of all nationalities used to live in friendship. No one kept anyone else from speaking his or her native language. Now, however, Russians are being accused of destroying national culture and national languages.*) (*Единство*, 21-28 May 1990).

It must be stressed here that the Russian language newspapers hardly ever used the word "renaissance", which was common in the Latvian press. This can be explained by virtue of the fact that the concept of the "Latvian national renaissance" was used to describe processes at the centre of which there were ethnic Latvians. People of other nationalities could not identify themselves with these processes. The concept of "renaissance" also includes a very positive evaluation of ongoing processes. Russian newspapers, by contrast, were dominated by a very critical view of events.

The Russian language newspapers, unlike their Latvian language counterparts, devoted far greater attention to economic issues, analysing the situation and making predictions about the future economic development of the republic. Russian language newspapers were full of negative statements about the Latvian economy if the country were to split off from the Soviet Union – in most cases, a severe economic crisis was forecast. Newspapers stressed the fact that the Latvian economy was very closely linked to those of the other Soviet republics, both in terms of receiving raw materials and in terms of selling ready-made products. Russian newspapers printed much more information about the shortage of various products, particularly groceries, in the country's shops, arguing that this was an absolutely unacceptable situation, one that would only worsen if the country were to continue to move along the path of leaving the USSR:

*"...Верховный Совет республики фактически взял курс на реставрацию буржуазной Латвии. (...) это политический авантюризм, который принесет народу немало бед – безработицу, социальную незащищенность малоимущих классов. Не имея своих сырьевых ресурсов, республика может оказаться в тяжелом положении: останятся заводы и фабрики, возникнут проблемы с топливом, электроэнергией"* (*The Supreme Council of the republic has in fact, set off on the course of restoring the bourgeois Republic of Latvia. (...) This is a political adventure which will cause great harm to the nation – unemployment and a lack of social protections for the poor. Without its own resources of raw materials, the republic may find itself in a difficult situation – industry and factories will close down, there will be problems with fuel and electricity.*) (*Советская Латвия*, 15 May 1990)



## Presentation of events in Latvian language newspapers

The position taken by Latvian language newspapers was usually quite similar, because at the centre of events were processes aimed at restoring the independence of Latvia. The position of ethnic Latvians was unified, and so the community of residents during this period was homogeneous – positions related to ethnic belonging, civic identity and politics all coincided.

The Latvian press often used the word “freedom”, describing this as the highest possible value and the main goal of all Latvians at the given period of time. Unlike the Russian language newspapers, Latvian papers devoted very little attention to economic issues, often arguing that Latvians would be prepared to tolerate shortcomings in pursuit of the goal of freedom:

*“... We are so close! If not to immediate independence, then at least, initially, the recognition of free (albeit perhaps barefooted) people.” (Latvijas Jaunatne, 4 May 1990)*

The Latvian newspapers also had lots more to say about the activities of the Soviet army and militia and their possible role in subsequent events. The enormous military superiority of the opposition and the helplessness of Latvians in the case of conflict were accentuated:

*“The army can do what it wants, because it has all the ‘toys’.” (Atmoda, 22 May 1990)*

At the same time, however, the papers also encouraged the belief that unity and political wisdom would help Latvians to oppose the Soviet superiority, particularly if they avoided provocations. The Soviet army was depicted very negatively and sometimes sarcastically, with papers arguing that soldiers in the army were not very intelligent. It was also noted that many of those who had immigrated from other Soviet republics during the Soviet period arrived as a result of their service in the armed forces:

*“... There were citizens dressed in moss-green uniforms who denounced the hope of small and naughty Latvia to liberate itself from the supervision of her elder brother at a time when he was facing such difficulties. It has to be said that there were not very many protesters with posters which confirmed true concerns about their stomachs.” (Latvijas Jaunatne, 4 May 1990)*

The Latvian language newspapers presented a great deal of information about the approval of the Declaration of Independence, stressing its historical importance and irreversibly placing Latvia on the path toward restored independence.

Thus, for instance, *Latvijas Jaunatne* described the meeting of the Supreme Council at which the declaration was approved: *“They want to drag out the work and to keep the document from being approved TODAY, because the entire nation was waiting for it.” (Latvijas Jaunatne, 5 May 1990)*

The newspaper contrasted the actions of MPs representing the LTF and the opposition - Equality faction. The paper was clearly on the side of the former, printing very sarcastic texts about opposition MPs:

*“The most eager heirs to the working principles of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR tried to introduce these in the work of the Latvian parliament, engaging in excessively energetic manipulations in the middle of the hall and occasionally interrupting the chairman of the meeting with loud shouts from the soul.” (Latvijas Jaunatne, 5 May 1990)*

*“... Comrade Alksnis went so far in his “legal” equilibristic approach that one accidentally had to conclude that the over-the-top work of this knight of the federation robbed him of the ability to have at least a partially critical attitude toward the sense of his contradictory statements.” (Latvijas Jaunatne, 5 May 1990)*

On May 15, pro-Soviet protesters tried to storm the parliamentary building, and the Latvian language newspapers argued that the two sides in the conflict were very different. Defenders of Latvian independence were presented as peaceful and singing representatives of the Latvian nation, with mothers carrying the portraits of sons who had perished in the Soviet military among them. Representatives of the opposition were characterised as a mob of hooligans, mostly made up of military trainees dressed in civilian clothing who were acting on the basis of a prepared scenario and were thus not representing the views of the people:

*“... Peaceful people gathered here. Journalists were doing their work, there were patriotic songs. As has been the case on other days, there were many mothers who held the portraits of their sons, who perished in the ranks of the Soviet army, in their hands. But then (..)*

people began to gather whose activities were not peaceful. First there was a mob of young men, dressed in civilian clothes and speaking in Russian. (...) It was clear that they had coordinated their operations in a dress rehearsal, reaching joint agreement on what must be done. (...) They screamed vulgarities, offensive words and open threats against the government of the Republic of Latvia, the members of our Parliament, and the entire Latvian nation. Even more, this angered mob, with fists raised to hit someone, heard a command and threw themselves against the chain of militiamen and defenders of the public order.” (Latvijas Jaunatne, 16 May 1990)

The Latvian press stressed that the events of May 15 were an undemocratic demonstration of the power of the armed forces, a process which discredited the opposition – the Interfront and the Unified Council of Labour Collectives, which had called on working people to strike on that day. The Latvian newspapers also cited a far smaller group of demonstrators than did the Russian language newspapers.

## **Presentation of participants in the events in Latvian language newspapers**

### **Parties and non-governmental organisations**

During this period of time, the political identity of Latvians was unified and very clearly presented – people supported the LTF and its goals, among which the most important was the restoration of the independent state. That is why the Latvian press, in most cases, expressed clear support for the LTF and its activities:

“The majority of MPs elected Anatolijs Gorbunovs, who has the support of the people of Latvia, to this post [chairman of the Supreme Council]. Congratulations!” (Latvijas Jaunatne, 4 May 1990)

There were several other organisations, including the Latvian National Independence Movement (LNNK) which also set the goal of restoring independence, and they formed a more or less unified bloc with the LTF. The Latvian press offered them almost undivided support.

On the other side of the polarised political spectrum, however, was the Latvian Communist Party (LKP). Its members and representatives were depicted most negatively – usually in a sarcastic, scornful and mocking style. This position was even taken by the newspaper of the LKP Central Committee, *Cīņa*.<sup>7</sup> Still, early in May 1990, the newspaper published not only very critical articles about the LKP, but also various materials from the party – appeals, speeches by party leaders, reports from LKP meetings, and decisions taken by the Central Committee.

The LKP declared its support for the “right of the Latvian nation to self-determination,” but it also insisted that there must be a new union treaty for the USSR, one that would ensure true sovereignty within the union. The LKP promised that if the treaty did not uphold the interests of the Latvian people, then it would support Latvia’s withdrawal from the USSR. Many LKP members resigned.

The newspaper of the Latvian People’s Front, *Atmoda*, was, of course, the one which had the most reportage about the LTF and its activities. Sometimes the reports were quite critical. Quite a bit of attention, however, was also devoted to other political organisations – those whose positions were similar to those of the LTF.

The activities of the LNNK were described in great detail, especially in relation to the registration of Latvia’s citizens, the positions taken by the Congress of Citizens, and the work of the Latvian Committee which the Congress had elected. Twenty Supreme Council members represented the LNNK, and at the movement’s third congress, it was decided that the LNNK would become a political party. The LNNK had more radical positions than the LTF on issues such as granting citizenship to all of Latvia’s permanent residents.

<sup>7</sup> Initially *Cīņa* published not just LKP materials, but also articles by journalists in which support for the restoration of independence was expressed. After the editor of the newspaper was replaced, it published lots of information about the operations of the split-off Latvian National Communist Party, but very little and very critical information about the LKP.

The Latvian Independent Communist Party (LNKP, established in 1990 with Ivars Ķezbers as its leader) also stated the goal of achieving Latvian independence. It wanted to work with the LTF. The LNKP tried to attract members of the LKP who were no longer satisfied with that party's thinking.

Comparatively little information was published in the newspapers about the Latvian Social Democratic Party (leader Jānis Dinēvičs) and the Latvian Democratic Social Workers Party (Valdis Šteins). Most of the coverage concerned the relationship between the two parties, with information also printed about the work of Social Democratic organisations during the period of the first republic.

A very active organisation was the Latvian League of Women, which sought to protect young men who were being drafted into the Soviet army, arguing that they should do their service in Latvia or be able to engage in alternative service.

The Latvian branch of the organisation "Daugavas Vanagi" (Hawks of Daugava, an émigré organisation of World War II veterans) was established. Its goal was to pursue an independent and Latvian Latvia and to take care of old soldiers.

The Latvian Association of National Cultural Societies and its member organisations supported the LTF and worked very closely to it.

The Unified Council of Labour Collectives (ADKP) called on people to engage in a general strike on May 15 and to gather at the Supreme Council. The Latvian press presented this organisation as an artificial structure which twisted the truth and was aimed at fomenting interethnic hatred and greater violence.

### **Presentation of events in Russian language newspapers**

Unlike Latvian newspapers, which published a great deal of ceremonial information about the approval of the Latvian Declaration of Independence and stressed its historical importance, Russian newspapers devoted far less space on their pages to this event. There were brief reports of the fact as such, but there was no reportage about the procedure whereby the declaration was approved.

Most Russian language newspapers argued that the declaration was unlawful and unconstitutional, that it was an attempted coup, and that a referendum must be organised before any such decision could be taken:

*"Не политиканы, а сам народ должен решить это, решить в точном соответствии с общепризнанными правовыми нормами"* ("It is not the self-interested politicians but the people who must take this decision, take a precise decision in accordance with universally recognised legal norms.") (*Советская Латвия*, 22 May 1990).

The newspaper *Советская Молодежь* took a different position from that which was presented in the other Russian language newspapers. Generally speaking, it offered its support to the restoration of independence, but its coverage was far less euphoric than that which was presented in the Latvian newspapers. There were also criticisms of what was happening:

*"Независимость, о необходимости которой так долго говорили, - провозглашена. Надеюсь, читатели внимательно прочтут каждое слово принятой Декларации, и это в некоторой степени снимет напряжение и опасения, связанные с незнанием впервые публикуемого сегодня документа"* (*Independence, the need for which has been discussed for such a long time, has been declared. I hope that readers will carefully peruse every word in the approved declaration and that this will, to a certain extent, reduce tensions and fears which have to do with a lack of knowledge about the document which has been published for the first time today.*) (*Советская Молодежь*, 8 May 1990).

The Russian and Latvian newspapers also presented differing coverage of the events of May 15 outside the Supreme Council building. Latvian newspapers saw this as an attempt to overrun the building and to stop the Council's work, thus threatening the efforts toward independence. Russian newspapers, for their part, mostly reported that participants in the demonstration were simply trying to deliver a petition of demands to MPs.

The newspaper *Советская Молодежь*, by contrast, presented the events of May 15 similarly to the way in which they were reported in the Latvian newspapers, and it did not support the strike:

*“Честно говоря, я с трудом пытаюсь понять логику авторов подобных призывов. Призывать не работать, а бастовать логично, мне кажется, в том случае, когда ни жить, ни работать так больше невозможно. Бастовать сейчас, когда твоя работа особенно дорога и нужна той земле, на которой ты живешь?”* (“To be honest, I find it difficult to understand the logic of the authors of this appeal. I think that it is logical to ask people to stop working and to go on strike only if it is no longer possible to live and work in that way. What is the meaning of striking now, when your work is particularly important and necessary for the land in which you live?”) (*Советская Молодежь*, 12 May 1990)

## Presentation of participants in the events in the Russian language newspapers

### Parties and public organisations

Russian language newspapers presented far more information about the activities of the LKP than the Latvian newspapers did, and this indicated that the newspapers had a specific political orientation. There was, however, no unanimity among the Russian newspapers - *Советская Молодежь* was far more critical about the LKP than *Советская Латвия* and *Единство* were. *Советская Молодежь* far more frequently pointed to mistakes in the activities of the LKP, arguing that the party had not been sufficiently active in terms of leading and managing the processes of restructuring which had begun:

*“Отношение многих коммунистов к заботам перестройки осталось чисто декларативным”* (“The attitude of many Communists vis-à-vis the processes of restructuring has remained at the level of declarations and nothing else.”) (*Советская Латвия*, 12 May 1990)

The newspaper also argued that the LKP was finding it very hard to accept activities in a multi-party system. At the same time, however, it also said that the LKP based its thinking on rational considerations, as opposed to the LTF, which based its work on (nationalist) emotions. The LKP, wrote the paper, had very experienced politicians and public activists. It was also not forgotten that the LKP defended the interests of working people:

*“...сепаратисты ставят личное конъюнктурное стремление блеснуть «независимостью» мышления выше ТРЕЗВОЙ и НАУЧНОЙ оценки данных событий”* (“... The separatists are presenting their personal and conjunctive desire to shine on the basis of thoughts about ‘independence’, placing these intentions above a SENSIBLE and SCHOLARLY evaluation of ongoing events.”) (*Единство*, 14-21 May 1990)

Reports on the meetings of LKP committees in Latvia’s cities and districts also noted that many people were resigning from the party and that the top leadership of the party was being replaced. There was little emphasis on or analysis of the fact, however, that in many places it was the previous leaders of the LKP who were resigning from the party and, in many cases, joining the LNKP. Reports of that type would have discredited the LKP as an organisation.

The LKP supported an independent Latvia in the framework of a restored Soviet federation. The party said that such a federation would allow Latvia to be truly independent while at the same time enjoying the advantages of an equal partnership with Russia and the other republics of the Soviet Union.

The activities of the LTF were discussed quite critically in Russian language newspapers (as opposed to the Latvian papers, which accented only the positive aspects of LTF operations and idealised the organisation). Here, too, however, the Russian newspapers did not strike a unified pose. *Советская Молодежь* far more than other Russian language newspapers, reported on the positive aspects of LTF activities. Critical remarks were explained largely on the basis of specific considerations and judgments. By contrast, *Советская Латвия* and *Единство* hardly ever published any analysis of LTF activities. Instead, they published emotional statements in which LTF members were depicted as dishonest, egotistical and selfish – people who were trying to take over power and, by ignoring the interests of the people, were

harming the people to a very great degree. The newspapers argued that LTF leaders were incompetent in the areas of economics and public policy.

Many newspapers argued that many of those who supported the LTF and the independence of Latvia were nothing more than opportunists who were prepared to change their political beliefs in accordance with the political “fashion” of the day, just so as to extract maximum personal benefits:

*“Вчерашние карьеристы, выросшие, как на дрожжах, благодаря членству в компартии теперь резко меняют свои убеждения. Еще недавно они называли себя верными ленинцами, сейчас многие из них ведут злобные нападки на В. И. Ленина” (“Yesterday’s careerists, who experienced a rapid rise thanks to their membership in the Communist Party are not crassly changing their beliefs. Only recently they said that they were faithful Leninists, but now many of them are fiercely attacking Lenin.”) (Единство, 28 May to 4 June 1990)*

*“Кучка жалких карьеристов рвется к власти, обещает нам всякие блага: свободу, богатство и претворение в жизнь самых заветных наших желаний. Эти господа отрицают все существующее и хотят создавать все «новое» - реставрировать старую буржуазную республику” (“A handful of pitiful careerists are seeking power and promising all kinds of benefits to us – freedom, wealth and the fulfilment of our hidden desires. These gentlemen deny all that exists now and want to establish “new” things in every area of life – they are seeking to restore the old bourgeois republic.”) (Единство, 21-27 May 1990)*

Russian language newspapers, for their part, were far more likely to argue that the LTF and its allies were trying to “destabilise the situation.” This was aimed at ensuring that readers would blame the movements for the insecure political and economic lives of local residents, and particularly Russian speakers. It was also an indirect argument to say that if the organisations were to succeed in “destabilising the situation” far more radical processes and tragic events with unpredictable consequences could be expected.

The newspapers *Советская Латвия* and *Единство* wrote very harsh articles about those LKP members who had joined the LNKP. They were dubbed traitors, thus emphasising the allegedly harmful nature of these people’s activities. The papers argued that the Communist party was being abandoned by those who were out for themselves, insisting that a true value would be the retention of faith in the party even when times were hard:

*“...настоящее мужество состоит в том, чтобы в трудный момент остаться в ленинской партии и отдать все силы укреплению ее авторитета, ведущей роли в обществе” (“True manliness means maintaining one’s membership in the Leninist party when times are hard, devoting all of one’s efforts to strengthening its authority and its leading role in society.”) (Советская Латвия, 12 May 1990)*

The LNKP was mostly described in the Russian language press as a party which was only seemingly independent, because it was supported by the LTF. The newspapers mostly criticised the nationalist position taken by the LNKP, as opposed to the internationalist position supported by the LKP.

The Committee of Latvian Citizens was mostly presented in Russian language newspapers as an extremist and nationalist organisation, one which was unfairly dividing the people of Latvia into classes – citizens and non-citizens. By comparison, the newspaper *Советская Латвия* presented fairly neutral information about the Congress and the Committee of Latvian Citizens insofar as their legal standing was concerned.

### ***The full restoration of Latvia’s independence (1991)***

#### **Description of events**

July 31 – the Soviet army or the OMON forces kill six employees of a Lithuanian customs facility at Medininki.

August 17 – Opposition MPs from all three Baltic Republics gather in Rīga to establish a council called *Sodružestvo*, the aim being to co-ordinate activities focused on preserving the union.

August 18 – A putsch takes place in Moscow, and power is taken by a National Emergency Committee, headed by the deputy president of the USSR, Yanayev. Mikhail Gorbachev is barred from leaving his summer home in the Crimea. A national emergency is declared.

August 19 – The Supreme Council and the Council of Ministers announce that as far as they're concerned, the coup has been illegal, and so there is no need for an emergency situation. Russian President Boris Yeltsin announces the same and calls on the people of Russia to strike. The OMON or the army shoot and kill two residents of Latvia. The OMON and the army overrun the Latvian Interior Ministry, the Rīga Militia, television and radio buildings, the main Rīga telephone central, and the telegraph central.

August 21 – The Supreme Council approves the constitutional law "On the Statehood of the Republic of Latvia" to declare that the transition period had ended and that Latvia was proclaimed as an independent and democratic republic.

August 22 – The putsch is over. Military units leave the occupied buildings and return to base.

August 23 – A demonstration called "The Flaming Baltic Way" is organised. The Supreme Council suspends the activities of the LKP.

August 27 – A court suspends the publication of the newspaper *Советская Латвия*.

### **The influence of newspapers on the process of shaping identities**

During this period, various Latvian language newspapers presented a very similar position on ongoing events, thus confirming unity in the political identity of Latvians. Latvian newspapers promoted the emergence and strengthening of a powerful ethnic, civic and political identity among their readers. It has to be stressed that ethnic identity during this period largely dictated the individual's political identity, because the Latvian newspapers generally presented a unified political line in favour of Latvia's independence. Newspapers also supported the development of a market economy, the processes of privatisation, and the return of land and buildings to their former owners.

Also during this period Latvian newspapers began to write more about the work of the government and the position of various political parties, because that position largely coincided with the position of the newspapers themselves. Russian language newspapers, by contrast, focused more on the thinking of ordinary people, as opposed to the "lords" – the Latvian politicians who had taken power. Russian newspapers printed more information about the everyday cares and lack of legal protection of the "little man."

The LKP newspaper *Советская Латвия* and the newsletter of the International Front of Working People of the Latvian SSR, *Единство*, insistently expressed their political position, thus helping to shape the political identity of their readers, too. At the foundation of this process were fears of change and of existing and possible discrimination against Russian speakers. Newspapers also stressed the economic problems which might occur if Latvia were to split off from the USSR and establish a market economy. Both newspapers insisted that they supported true democracy, as opposed to the authoritarian governance of the LTF. This meant that Russian speakers in Latvia would have less trust in the legitimacy of parliamentary and government operations. This, in turn, made it difficult for them to identify themselves with the structures of the state, thus fomenting alienation.

One Russian language newspaper, *Советская Молодежь*, took a generally positive look at the processes of change, but it, too, often published criticisms of various things that were going on, trying also to analyse the possible future of these processes. Discrimination against Russian speakers was also an important subject for this newspaper. It argued, too, that the parliamentary opposition – the Equality faction – had no way of influencing the decisions of the Supreme Council.

The discourse of Latvian identity, too, was based on threats – the large proportion of Russian speakers in Latvia, which supposedly threatened the survival of the Latvian people and their language, as well as the military superiority of the USSR, which could put an end to Latvian independence:

*"Knowing about the number of citizens of the USSR who are present in Latvia at this time, and knowing about their activities in pursuit of their political and, mainly, socio-economic*

interests, it is not so hard to predict who will rule Latvia tomorrow.” (*Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, 2 August 1991)

Both Latvian and Russian language newspapers mostly represented a specific political position. Opposing views were published seldom, and when they were published, it was often in an emotional and tendentious manner. This meant that there were no debates in newspapers that would be based on proper arguments, and there was no mutual understanding of the needs and desires of various groups in the population.

### **Presentation of events in Latvian language newspapers**

The August putsch was a period of extreme intensity and of various very important events. Newspapers quickly tried to report the latest information on what was happening. The situation in Latvia was changing so quickly that newspapers did not have time to prepare more extensive and analytical commentary. During the days of the putsch, most newspapers printed short articles about the many events. Often the “facts” in these reports were not checked.

In writing about the putsch, Latvian language newspapers tended to stress the dramatic nature of the situation. In its August 19 issue, the newspaper *Diena* published a huge headline on its front page: “Zero Hour!” *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, for its part, posed a question: “An Emergency Situation: Beginning of the End?” The ethnic and political identity of Latvian readers was strengthened by the description of various threats. Newspapers carried detailed information about the activities of the army and the OMON, stressing the military units as the primary source of danger. Many articles discussed the ability of Latvians to defend themselves, and thoughts about future developments in the situation were presented. On more than one occasion, however, the newspapers also called on local residents to remain peaceful and to engage in nothing other than forms of non-violent protest:

*“All of us must, without any question, remain peaceful at this time and refrain from any activities that might mess up the unstable status of peace. Time is working in our favour at this time – the coup is struck, and our parliament, government and People’s Front are organising opposition structures.”* (*Diena*, 20 August 1991)

*“Freedom cannot be won in offices and meeting rooms, but it also cannot be won just on the basis of barricades and battlefields. We will protect the idea of our future, our strength and our unity, if we consolidate ourselves around those structures of power and governance which we ourselves have shaped, which are led by our elected representatives.”* (*Diena*, 19 August 1991)

The sense of belonging to the Baltic States as a component of a Latvian’s political identity was enhanced through articles about what was happening in Estonia and Lithuania. The fact was, however, that the most important events were taking place in Moscow, and so Latvian newspapers devoted most of their attention to those events. They wrote in great detail about what the organisers of the coup were doing, as well as what Russian President Yeltsin was doing in response. Latvian newspapers expressed support for Yeltsin and argued that the future of Latvia would largely depend on the results of the coup in Russia:

*“Who knows – if the great Russian nation proves ready to go out into the streets today and sacrifice its lives, then we, too, will be able to form ranks under the red-white-red flag with weapons in hand. Until the awakening in Russia, however, such step would be an adventurous gesture of suicide, one that would only lead to great harm and the destruction of the living force of the nation.”* (*Diena*, 19 August 1991)

The operations of the army and the OMON were described in great detail in Latvian language newspapers. Militarists were presented as stupid men who were brutally attacking unprotected and peaceful residents. This, wrote the newspapers, was an example of arbitrary violence:

*“Armoured transport moved down Zirgu Street toward Dome Square, and shooting began near the square. Soldiers dressed in military uniforms ordered civilians to lay down on the ground or to get down on their knees. Three men were ordered to put out a campfire which they had lit. During these processes, vulgar language was used. Some people were dragged by the hair, and some were hit on the head with weapons. One soldier announced: ‘Пачемпел бьдѐм*

ympom.<sup>8</sup> After a few moments, there was more shooting, mostly in the direction of the Dome Cathedral. Judging from what the attackers had to say, the process was not planned in advance, and no orders had been given. Perhaps this was the self-initiative of just a few of the participants.” (Diena, 21 August 1991)

After the putsch, the Latvian press began to publish articles calling for revenge – those who had supported the coup, said the papers, had to be put on trial. When the Supreme Council banned the LKP, the Interfront and several other organisations, there was much coverage of this fact. The same was true when the last leader of the LKP, Alfrēds Rubiks, was arrested.

“The main thing now is to determine all of the organisations which were guilty of supporting the putsch. We have good reason to demand liability on their part.” (Neatkarīgā Cīņa, 23 August 1991)

The newspapers wrote sarcastically about those people, mostly Russian speakers, who declared their loyalty to the Latvian state after the coup attempt, now saying that they wanted nothing to do with the Communist Party and the Interfront.

## **Presentation of participants in the events in Latvian language newspapers**

### **Parties and non-governmental organisations**

The institutions which received the most coverage in newspapers during this period in time were the Supreme Council (AP) and the Council of Ministers (MP), because these were the institutions which had the power to take decisions. Newspapers also, however, devoted quite a bit of attention to the programmes and activities of various parties and public organisations. Latvian newspapers supported the position of the Latvian People’s Front (LTF) and its faction in the AP. Readers received lots of information about the LTF’s views on various issues. Various announcements from the organisation were published, and there were reports about the meetings of the LTF faction. This served to shape the political identity of readers, among other things. All in all, the LTF was the most important authority at this time, and its attitude had a great deal to do with overall attitudes among Latvians. The attitude also had an influence on the development of events. Latvian newspapers printed hardly any criticisms of LTF members, positions and activities.

Along with the LTF, the Latvian press also devoted quite a bit of attention to the LNNK. During the Soviet putsch, it was this party which called on the AP to declare the independence of the Republic of Latvia. Newspapers printed the views of the LNNK board with respect to the situation at hand and what should be done next:

“The LNNK board also calls upon its members, as well as others who support independence, to engage in a programme of non-violent resistance in case of the establishment of a military regime, acting in accordance with the activities of the occupants and the capacities of the protesters. The LNNK board reminds us that collaboration with the occupants must be seen as participation in a criminal act.” (Diena, 24 August 1991)

The newspaper *Latvijas Jaunatne*, for its part, published a long interview with the leader of the LNNK, Visvaldis Lācis (*Latvijas Jaunatne*, 7 August 1991).

When it came to the Latvian Communist Party (LKP) and its leader Alfrēds Rubiks, however, most coverage in Latvian newspapers was very critical or sarcastic. This allowed newspapers to demonstrate their political positions and to encourage their readers to distance themselves from the party. The LKP was depicted as a very conservative organisation, one that was based on Soviet ideology and principles and could not change. It was emphasised that the LKP was serving the interests of the powerful Soviet Union, not the Latvian people. During the August putsch, the party was very euphoric when the LKP triumphantly announced that any media outlet or organisation which had violated the Soviet constitution would be shut down:

“Rubiks announced that the new structures of governance would oppress any opposition – with military might, if necessary. (...) Rubiks also predicted the introduction of martial law. He

<sup>8</sup> Tomorrow you will be shot (Russian)



added that those political organisations and press publications which violate the Soviet constitution would be shut down.” (*Diena*, 19 August 1991)

Once the putsch was over in Moscow, however, the influence and authority of the party plummeted. The LKP was proclaimed to be illegal because of its opposition to the independent state, and party leader Rubiks was arrested. The collapse of the LKP was presented in Latvian newspapers with great triumph and joy.

Another important political participant in the events of the putsch was the “Equality” faction in the AP. It was mentioned with increasing frequency in the Latvian press during this period of time. Most of the Latvian newspapers were very frank about their dislike vis-à-vis the faction’s positions and activities, arguing that members of the faction were Communists and that the activities of the faction in the AP was destructive. The chairman of the faction, Sergejs Dīmanis, expressed support for the government of Ivars Godmanis, offering his own support and that of his faction. He also met with representatives of the Soviet Armed Forces to discuss the situation at hand. Nevertheless, Latvian newspapers continued to present sarcastic and negative statements:

“An open issue is what to do with the members of the AP who remain loyal to the empire.” (*Diena*, 23 August 1991)

“... At this time, the sensible members of the “Equality” faction have their last chance to demonstrate political courage and to become involved in the work of the Supreme Council not as a destructive opposition and as puppets of the LKP, but rather as partners in shaping the future of Latvia.” (*Diena*, 23 August 1991)

After the putsch was over, some members of the “Equality” faction established a separate group, the Democratic Initiative Centre. Many withdrew from the “Equality” faction altogether. The newspaper *Latvijas Jaunatne*, however, continued to present the idea that there were two monolithic and homogeneous forces which were battling against each other in Parliament. The paper also sought to strengthen the political identity of its readers by supporting the LTF – “The two factions have different opinions about what is happening.” (*Latvijas Jaunatne*, 23 August 1991). Also – “The opposition has simply split up.” (*Latvijas Jaunatne*, 29 August 1991).

The newspaper *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* had scornful things to say about the leader of the Interfront, Anatoliy Alekseyev: “... With a fairly humble baggage of knowledge which he has collected over the course of a few years, he is still trying to be an influential politician.” (*Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, 9 August 1991)

The Latvian press had much less to say than the Russian language press about certain opposition-based non-governmental organisations such as the Unified Council of Labour Collectives. Latvian reports about these organisations were largely full of mockery, arguing that the representatives of the groups were incompetent. The political positions of the organisations remained largely unacceptable to the Latvian press.

*Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, more than any other newspaper, reported on the activities of the Latvian Democratic Labour Party (LDDP, leader Juris Bojārs), but often the coverage was quite critical:

“The demands of the LDDP are completely out of line with the survival demands of the Latvian people.” (*Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, 2 August 1991)

### **Presentation of events in Russian language newspapers**

First of all it has to be said that the Russian language press presented a larger diversity of views than did the Latvian press, which largely expressed a unified position vis-à-vis the independence of Latvia. Among the Russian language publications surveyed for the purposes of this study, there were two which expressed very similar positions – the newspaper of the LKP, *Советская Латвия*, and the informational bulletin of the International Front of Workers of the Latvian SSR, *Единство*. In accordance with the position taken by their parent organisations, these publications supported Latvia’s remaining within the USSR, citizenship for all residents of Latvia, and rejection of privatisation. Another newspaper, *Советская Молодежь*, by

comparison, had relatively positive things to say about the process of change, but it also was often critical about ongoing events, offering its analysis of what might happen next.

The LKP newspaper *Советская Латвия* published quite a few official pronouncements from those who were organising the coup. There was a great deal of coverage of the views of the LKP leadership, particularly Alfreds Rubiks, about the situation at hand:

*“Коммунисты сегодня видят свою задачу в усилении политической работы в массах, разъяснении смысла происходящих событий, направленных на восстановление конституционного порядка, вывод страны из затяжного кризиса” (The Communists at this time feel that their main job is to expand their political activities among the masses, so as to explain ongoing events which are aimed at restoring constitutional order and helping the state to end the long-lasting crisis.) (Советская Латвия, 20 August 1991)*

Paradoxically, Rubiks simultaneously gave full support to the organisers of the putsch and claimed that he is *“the leader of a political party which defends democracy” (Советская Латвия, 20 August 1991)*. He called on local residents to remain calm and to keep working at companies and institutions. The LKP sought revenge – Communists approved an announcement from one of the organisers of the coup, Gennadiy Yanayev, to say that laws approved by the Supreme Council of Latvia were null and void. The LKP also called for the prosecution of those who had made *“neo-Fascist pronouncements” (Советская Латвия, 20 August 1991)*.

The Russian language newspapers presented very brief and laconic reports of the reaction of the AP to the coup, as well as the constitutional law “On the National Status of the Republic of Latvia”, which was approved on August 21.

The newspaper *Советская Латвия* had sarcastic things to say about the situation, arguing that the constitutional law was approved so as to remove obstacles against arbitrary political decisions:

*“Не успели, как говорится, высохнуть чернила на Декларации о независимости, чуть больше года назад казавшейся вершиной в борьбе за «свободную» Латвию, как ее рамки стали тесны нашим парламентским радикалам, и они, воспользовавшись обострением ситуации в стране, от них освободились. Выполнив тем самым в очередной раз волю руководства ДННЛ, буквально накануне высказавшегося в специальном постановлении о целесообразности такого акта” (“They didn’t even wait for the ink to dry, so to speak, on the declaration of independence which, a bit more than a year ago, seemed to be the apex in the battle for a ‘free’ Latvia, when the boundaries of the declaration became too narrow for our parliamentary radicals. Taking advantage of the exacerbated situation in the country, they got rid of those boundaries, thus once again fulfilling the desires of the leadership of the LNNK, which, literally on the day before, were expressed in a special decision on the need for such a document.” (Советская Латвия, 22 August 1991)*

The position taken by the newspaper *Советская Молодежь* (renamed *СМ-Сегодня* on August 27, 1991<sup>9</sup>) was more similar to the positions taken by Latvian language newspapers than was the case among other Russian language newspapers. *Советская Молодежь* harshly criticised participants in the coup. Once Russia and the West announced their recognition of Latvia as an independent state, the newspaper expressed its support with the headline *“Нас признали” (“We Were Recognised”)* (*СМ-Сегодня, 27 August 1991*).

After the putsch was over, *Советская Молодежь* reported on its front page that *“Россия опять спасла мир!” (“Russia Once Again Saved the World!”)* (*Советская Молодежь, 23 August 1991*). This demonstrated a certain orientation toward Russia, also expressing views with respect to the events of World War II – events which are often interpreted in different ways by Latvians and Russian speakers.

Typical of Russian language newspapers was the discourse of Fascism. This word was published quite often. In Latvian language newspapers, it was almost never used. The word

<sup>9</sup> On August 21, the publishing house of the Soviet Communist Party in Latvia ordered that printing of the newspaper *Советская Молодежь* be halted. One day later, after the collapse of the putsch, it announced that this had been a mistake.

"Fascism" was most often used to describe discrimination against Russian speakers in Latvia. After the putsch, the word was also used to refer to the activities of the OMON special forces:

*"Если человека расстреливают из автоматов или пулеметов только за то, что он не остановил свою машину, - это фашизм. Если безоружного, лежащего на земле старика избивают резиновой дубинкой - это фашизм. Если мирных жителей разгоняют прикладами автоматов и дубинками - это фашизм. Нам все равно, какого он цвета – коричневого, красного или пятнистого. Здесь он не пройдет"* ("If someone is shot with a gun or a machine gun just because he did not stop his car, that is Fascism. If peaceful residents are attacked with the butt of a gun or a club – that is Fascism, too. We don't care about the colour – brown, red or spotted. This will not be accepted here.") (Советская Молодежь, 23 August 1991)

By comparison, the newspaper *Единство* had a very different view of OMON activities, arguing that the special forces were protecting local residents from the violence of criminals. The paper said that it could not understand the complaints that were made against the OMON forces by the Soviet interior minister, Boris Pugo:

*"..за то, что они добросовестно выполняют свой долг по защите Конституции СССР и прав человека, за то, что омоновцы стоят на защите Советской власти в республиках Прибалтики, за то, что ликвидировали незаконные таможни, за то, что они обезоруживают незаконные бандитские формирования, выполняя указ Президента. За то, что они, попав в ловушку перед зданием МВД Латвии, обстрелянные с двух сторон, были вынуждены штурмом взять это МВД..."* ("... with respect to the fact that they, in line with their conscience, fulfilled their duty to protect the Soviet constitution and human rights, to the fact that the OMON defended Soviet authority in the Baltic Republics, to the fact that they liquidated illegal customs facilities, to the fact that they disarmed unlawful groups of bandits, thus implementing the President's orders. With respect to the fact that they, when trapped near the Latvian Interior Ministry and faced fire from two sides, were forced to counterattack and occupy this Interior Ministry...") (*Единство*, 20-26 August 1991)

The Russian language newspapers *Советская Латвия* and *Единство* argued quite often that a civil war was possible. The Latvian press, by contrast, sometimes suggested that this would be desirable and necessary so as to halt the development of ongoing events and changes in Latvia.

*"Но есть и третий путь, все чаще упоминаемый с трибунами и в печати – гражданская война! Чтобы выжить!"* ("And yet there is a third way which is increasingly mentioned from the podiums and in the press – a civil war! Simply to survive!") (*Советская Латвия*, 2 August 1991)

*"..если потребуется отстоять свою честь, достоинство и собственность, мы все вместе готовы защищать себя от внутренних врагов и предателей, обманым путем пробравшихся к власти и терроризирующих страну."* ("If it becomes necessary to defend our honour, respect and property, we are prepared to join together so as to protect ourselves against internal enemies and traitors, who have engaged in fraud so as to take power and to terrorise the nation.") (*Единство*, 13-19 August 1991)

After the coup was over, the Russian language newspapers began to call for an avoidance of a "witch hunt" which might threaten peace and social harmony in Latvia, particularly among residents of various nationalities:

*"И вот – неолевизм. Поиск настоящих виновников (читай - преступников), организаторов попытки переворота, грозит перейти в охоту за «нелояльными». Я слышал, что собираются уволить работников столовой Дома печати за «пособничество» бывшим хозяевам бывшего Издательства ЦК КПЛ..."* ("This, you see, is neo-Bolshevism. The search for those who were truly guilty of attempting to organise the coup (in other words, of criminals) threatens to become a process of hunting those who are 'disloyal.' I hear that there are plans to sack employees of the Press House cafeteria because they 'helped' the former owners of the publishing house of the LKP Central Committee...") (*СМ-Сегодня*, 27 August 1991)

## Presentation of participants in the events in Russian language newspapers

### *Parties and non-governmental organisations*

Russian language newspapers, as opposed to Latvian language newspapers, often presented a critical attitude vis-à-vis the LTF and its activities. They denounced the movement's monopoly on power and its seemingly unquestioned authority in Latvia. The Russian language press often compared the status of the LTF to the great influence which the Communist Party had once had in absolutely all areas of life. Particular criticisms were levelled against the unequal ability of various political forces to express their views in the media, pointing to LTF control over television and radio – something which ensured the movement's influence among local residents. The papers also argued that by contrast, members of the "Equality" faction in the Supreme Council had no opportunity to influence decisions that were taken.

The newspaper of the International Front of Workers described the LTF as a criminal organisation which was serving its own interests, not those of the people. The paper argued that one of the main goals of the organisation was to discriminate against Russian speaking residents of Latvia. *Единство* also claimed that the LTF was actually being run by émigré Latvians, and so it did not represent the Latvians of Latvia:

*"..господа эмигранты разработали и предложили, а вновь избранное правительство беспрекословно исполнило. Если вы помните предвыборные программы депутатов, избранных в парламент республики, то там и речи не было о восстановлении буржуазного строя в Латвии. Хороши избранники народа!" (".. The émigré gentlemen drafted and proposed instructions, and the newly elected government obeyed without any objection. If you remember the campaign programmes of deputies elected to Parliament, then you know that there was not a single word about the restoration of the bourgeois order in Latvia. Well done, representatives of the people!")* (*Единство*, 13-19 August 1991)

The newspaper *СМ-Сегодня*, by contrast, had critical things to say about the attitude of the "Equality" faction vis-à-vis Latvia's independence, and about the faction's activities during the putsch:

*"Сообщение о том, что Ельцин подписал указ о признании, все депутаты встретили стоя. Разве что «Равноправие» не аплодировало. И один из депутатов фракции все же остался сидеть"* ("Deputies rose to their feet to listen to the announcement that Yeltsin signed orders on recognising Latvia's independence. Only the 'Equality' members did not applaud. One of the faction's members even remained in his seat.") (*СМ-Сегодня*, 27 August 1991)

Like the Latvian press, *СМ-Сегодня* was very sceptical about those MPs who broke off from the "Equality" faction to form the Democratic Initiative Centre:

*"Такое сотрудничество выглядит более чем сомнительным. Трудно так скоро забыть о том, что в первые два критических дня фракция заняла позицию «трезвого политического реализма», в соответствии с которой ею и не был открыто осужден путч.."* (*Such co-operation seems far more than questionable. It is hard to forget very quickly that during the first two critical days, the faction struck the pose of 'sensible political realism', in accordance with which it did not openly denounce the putsch.*) (*СМ-Сегодня*, 27 August 1991)

The Russian language press often reported "radical nationalists", thus creating the impression that most Latvians could be described in that way. On the other hand, the newspapers also praised the moderate position taken with respect to national issues by the chairman of the Supreme Council, Anatolijs Gorbunovs, and the chairman of the Council of Ministers, Ivars Godmanis.

## **Debates over the Citizenship law (1994)**

### **Description of events**

On June 9, 1994, the Saeima (Parliament) approved a new law on citizenship on second reading. The law said that automatic naturalisation would be available to ethnic Latvians and Livonians, persons who had been repatriated, persons who were forced to arrive in Latvia during the German occupation regime, persons who had been graduated from a school at which classes are taught in Latvian, ethnic Lithuanians and Estonians, and the spouses of citizens of the Republic of Latvia, provided that they had been married for at least 10 years and had lived in Latvia for at least five years. Naturalisation of others would begin in 1996, when applications would be accepted from persons aged 16 to 20. In subsequent years, applications would be accepted from people born in Latvia during the next year in question. Others would be allowed to apply for naturalisation after 2000, and during the period until that time, there would be a limitation of naturalising no more than 0.1% of the number of Latvian citizens in the previous year. One of the most important requirements for naturalisation was the demonstration of Latvian language skills.

On June 14, in Strasbourg, a Latvian delegation engaged in consultations with the Council of Europe on the draft citizenship law. The Council expressed opposition to the principle of quotas, arguing that non-citizens who were born elsewhere and who were not given the chance to receive automatic naturalisation were not told clearly when they might receive Latvian citizenship.

On June 21, the Saeima approved the citizenship law on third reading, preserving the quota principle to which the Council of Europe had objected.

On June 28, President Guntis Ulmanis returned the law to Parliament for repeat consideration.

### **The influence of newspapers on the process of shaping identities**

During this period of time, the issue of identity was not the focus of attention. Newspapers were mostly writing about the views of various parties and about the possibility of reaching a compromise on the citizenship issue. At the same time, however, the issue of citizenship also involved ideas about civic identity and one's sense of belonging to the state.

The essence of the citizenship law was to draw a line between "us" and "aliens" – between those who belong to the Latvian state and those who do not. Only those people could be accepted in the "us" group who possessed characteristics which could be sensed and considered as an important share of "our" civic identity. That is why the issue of citizenship was highly sensitive on both sides.

Neither the Latvian nor the Russian language press, however, published much debate about where this line should be drawn. This can be explained to a certain extent by virtue of the fact that the readers of both kinds of newspapers had unified views within their ethno-linguistic media spaces with respect to the criteria for awarding citizenship. On the one hand, newspapers mostly reflected a specific view, thus shaping public intention and creating the impression of a unified position among Latvian and Russian speakers. On the other hand, both Russian and Latvian language newspapers typically presented other views and those who disagreed with their own position in a negative light.

During the debate over the citizenship law, the media activated the discourse of threats – Latvians were called upon to fight for the survival of the Latvian nation, while the Russian language press argued that Russian speakers had no rights in Latvia and that governing Latvian politicians were hostile toward non-Latvians.

### **Presentation of events in the Latvian language newspapers**

Latvian language newspapers largely presented the process of approving the law on citizenship as an attempt to reach harmony among the interests of various political parties. The

diversity of views among parties reflected a dilemma – the need to approve a law that would be acceptable to international European institutions whilst at the same time seeking to protect the national interests of the Latvian people.

Newspapers provided detailed information about the procedure for approving the draft law on citizenship, and they discussed the search for a compromise among various parties. There was little discussion of the specific articles of the draft law, but the Latvian language press unanimously argued that the law must not hinder the ability of Latvia to join the Council of Europe and to move toward other international institutions, as well.

The main argument related in Latvian newspapers to the citizenship law focused on the interests of the Latvian people. In other words, the needs of other residents of Latvia were purposefully ignored in the name of ethnic self-preservation. The large number of Russian speakers in Latvia was presented as the main threat against the survival of the Latvian nation, and so rules related to naturalisation, according to the newspapers, must be structured so that this group of people would not be given a chance to undergo naturalisation in the near future.

The various versions of the citizenship law and the considerations which underpinned these provided a great deal of information about public views, and about the civic identity of various groups. Considerations related to the citizenship law clearly defined the groups which Latvians considered to be close to themselves and which, therefore, could be identified as ones which belong to the Latvian state. It must be stressed that these views were presented as natural, objective and indisputable:

*“... A lack of understanding and a process of bitterness are still faced by those who deserve our country’s citizenship in a natural way. First of all, this refers to many people of Latvian and Livonian origin who lived among fellow members of their nationalities, those who legally arrived in Latvia prior to 17 June 1940 and their successors, those who were forced to come to Latvia during the Nazi occupation regime, those who have been graduated from schools where classes are taught in Latvian, the Estonians and Lithuanians who have shared in our destiny, those who have been married to a citizen of the Republic of Latvia for a long time – 10 years, and those who have made particular achievements on behalf of Latvia.” (Neatkarīgā Cīņa, 20 June 1994)*

The point is that in the discourse of civic identity, the issue of boundaries can be based on a wide variety of criteria in terms of determining one’s belonging to the state – ethnic origins (people of one nationality seem closer than others), education, the time and conditions of arriving in Latvia, as well as other factors. This means that debates over articles in the citizenship law largely depicted people’s understanding of civic identity.

## **Presentation of participants in the events in Latvian language newspapers**

### ***Parties and non-governmental organisations***

In reporting on the approval of the citizenship law, most newspapers spoke to negotiations, agreements, consultations and bargaining among the various parties – linking the citizenship law to import tariffs, for instance. That is why the text of the law was amended many times so as to introduce proposals from various parties therein.

The Latvian newspapers mostly reflected the views of Latvia’s Way, then the governing party. Prime Minister Valdis Birkavs actively promoted the approval of the law, and when it was approved with the quota principle, he called on the president of Latvia to reject the law and to send it back to the Saeima for secondary consideration.

A great deal of reporting covered the attitudes of the LNNK<sup>10</sup> with respect to the draft citizenship law. The party’s main goal was to limit naturalisation. Many LNNK proposals were included in the law. Its views were presented most particularly on the pages of the newspaper *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, which, during this period of time, also presented several other articles which dealt with the issues of the citizenship law. For instance, one article concerned people in the

<sup>10</sup> The LNNK, or Latvian National Independence Movement, became a political party at its congress on June 18, 1994.

Latvian region of Latgale who had registered themselves as citizens unlawfully, and the headline for the piece was *“Taking What is not Given”* (*Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, 7 June 1994). A republished article, *“Why the Russians are Leaving”*, talked about ethnic Russians who were leaving Uzbekistan (*Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, 20 June 1994)

Typically, the Latvian language press had little to say about the arguments of those parties which represented Latvia’s Russian speakers. These views were largely presented as being directly opposite to the views of the LNNK and the For the Fatherland and Freedom party. More extensive explanations were published very seldom, and when they were published, they were often presented in a negative way. Various techniques of discourse were used to discredit opposing views – for instance, newspapers emphasised behaviour in line with one’s party belonging, as opposed to one’s well-argued beliefs. The narrative approach was used for this purpose:

*“Larisa Laviņa of the ‘Equality’ faction has already taken the far-left position, and she, of course, thinks that the draft law is not in line with the present-day situation, expressing concerns about its practical applications, if only in relation to the requirement for Latvian language skills and knowledge about Latvia’s history.”* (*Labrīt*, 11 June 1994)

The Latvian newspapers discredited the thinking of Russian speakers, arguing that their motivation for obtaining citizenship was mercantile in nature. The newspapers did not speak to such considerations as the desire to take part in Latvia’s political and public life, any sense of belonging to the country, etc.:

*“.. Active non-citizens and leftist citizens (..) demand the immediate granting of citizenship to all of Latvia’s permanent residents, and they also demand a change in the status of the Russian language. It must be added that many non-citizens are not politically active, and their link their demands (desires) the guarantees of an economic nature – work, housing guarantees and utility services. These demands take on a political tone by virtue of the fact that there are political forces which take advantage of the indistinct status of non-citizens and their complicated economic situation in the country so as to link these two things, spreading the view that citizenship, in truth, is the only guarantee of welfare.”* (*Diena*, 6 June 1994)

In some articles, newspapers allowed all of the political parties which were represented in the Saeima to express their views to an equal extent.

### **International organisations, institutions**

In discussing the approval of the law on citizenship, Latvian language newspapers devoted a lot of attention to various European institutions. Of particular importance was the thinking of the Council of Europe vis-à-vis the draft law, because Latvia had declared membership in the Council to be one of its primary foreign political goals. Newspapers pointed out that Estonia and Lithuania had already joined the Council of Europe, adding that this would not be possible for Latvia until approval of the citizenship law. Russia’s influence was also of great importance – it was known at that time that Russia, too, was preparing to join the Council of Europe. Should Russia manage to achieve this before Latvia, argued the newspapers, then it could be expected that Russia would veto Latvia’s accession:

*“.. The Council of Europe will be forced to agree with Russia that yes, this really is a bad law. When Russia, thanks to its ‘weight’, joins the Council of Europe in the spring, then it will start to dictate terms to us in the name of Europe. In the final analysis, we will end up with the true ‘zero option – a puppet parliament and a government that has been approved in Moscow.”* (*Diena*, 22 June 1994)

During the drafting and approval of the citizenship law, there were repeated consultations with the Council of Europe. No specific instructions were given, but the Council made it clear that it could not accept the principle of quotas that was included in the law.

Latvian language newspapers, in reporting on the recommendations of the Council of Europe, sometimes argued that these must be taken into account, because Latvia’s movement toward international institutions was particularly important. This view was particularly defended by the newspaper *Diena*, which described the process as an historical choice for the Latvian state – joining Europe or remaining in the sphere of influence of Russia.

“.. If Latvia is not admitted to the Council of Europe in the near future and its political integration into the community of Europeans is postponed for a non-specific period of time, then our country’s future destiny may become very complicated. Russia cannot wait for this to happen, and it will do everything that it can to leave Latvia behind so that it can gradually be broken down in economic and, eventually, in political terms. (*Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, 20 June 1994)

In quoting the Council of Europe recommendations, other newspapers argued that the interests of the Latvian people were more important than the views of the Council of Europe and other international organisations, because these organisations did not understand the special situation which prevailed in Latvia – one that was not found in other European countries.

### **Presentation of events in Russian language newspapers**

If we compare the way in which the approval of the citizenship law was described in the Latvian language and Russian language press, then we see that the Latvian press saw these processes more as political procedures. The views of various parties were reported on more than one occasion with respect to various version of the citizenship law, and there were detailed descriptions of the approval of the draft law from the perspective of legal norms.

Russian language newspapers, by contrast, had far harsher things to say about the draft citizenship law, because this was an issue which had a direct influence on their readership. Articles about the citizenship law were meant specifically for local residents, with the main attention being devoted to the content and possible consequences of the draft law, as opposed to the relevant legal process.

Coverage in Russian language newspapers was largely sarcastic in tone. Newspapers reported on the draft citizenship law mostly because the position of governing parties on the matter was already known. The Russian press scorned the eternal fears of Latvians with respect to the Russian speaking residents of Latvia. Newspapers often used the same terms which Latvian nationalists use – “migrants” and “occupants”, for instance. Journalists writing for the Russian language newspapers also often scorned the desire of Latvians to see a “Latvian Latvia”, arguing that this meant that ethnic cleansing could be expected. Articles focused on citizenship also indicated that their authors were offended at the situation which had arisen – one in which Latvian politicians take decisions on the status of the Russian speaking community. Moreover, according to these papers, there were constant reminders to say that non-Latvians are not desirable in Latvia:

*“..тогда широкая общественность удостоится чести лицезреть этот документ, рожденный в муках политических уступок, длительных согласований, проработок и крупных изменений” (“.. Then the public at large will have the honour of seeing this document, which was born through torturous political yielding, long-term harmonisation and revisions with great changes.”) (*Панорама Латвии*, 8 June 1994)*

The Russian language press was full of the view that most Russian speakers who are permanent residents in Latvia deserve automatic citizenship – in compliance with “zero option” carried out in Lithuania. The citizenship law that was approved in the end was described in the Russian language newspapers as discriminatory. Newspapers also argued that some groups would have to wait far too long before their right to naturalisation can be pursued.

### **Presentation of participants in events in Russian language newspapers**

#### **Parties**

Russian language newspapers expressed unambiguous support for those parties and public organisations which defended the interests of Russian speaking residents of Latvia (the People’s Harmony Party, Equality, etc.). The views of such organisations were usually presented first. Support was also indicated through the publication of party announcements. Thus, for instance, the newspaper *Панорама Латвии* published an announcement from the Equality party with respect to the citizenship law (22 June 1994), while *СМ-Сегодня* did the same with an announcement from the People’s Harmony Party (17 June 1994):



*“Я. Юрканс (ПНС) считает, что во имя общественного согласия, благополучного развития страны и реальной интеграции в Европу необходимо строить такую политику государства, которая расширяла бы круг сторонников независимой Латвии. Это и моральный долг перед теми негражданами, которые помогли в восстановлении независимости” (“Jānis Jurkāns (People’s Harmony Party) believes that in pursuit of public harmony, the favourable development of the state, and true integration into Europe, government policies must be ones which expand the range of supporters for the independent Latvian state. This is a moral obligation, too, toward those non-citizens who helped to restore Latvia’s independence.”) (СМ-Сегодня, 10 June 1994)*

The Russian language press also offered considerable coverage of the views of nationalist Latvian parties (LNNK and For the Fatherland and Freedom), because these helped the newspapers to express and strengthen their views. Supporters of the parties were usually called radical nationalists, thus attaching a negative meaning to a patriotic or nationalist position:

*“А. Кирштейн (ДННЛ) напомнил, что в референдуме 25 проц. голосовали против независимости. На этом основании он всех, видимо, и считает «пятой колонной». А как иначе расценить его слова о том, что 500 тыс. человек из нынешних 740 тыс. неграждан не хотят и не будут учить латышский язык, а хотят они – оружие, служить в армии и полиции в надежде на возвращение Латвии в империю. (...) М. Гринблатс («ТБ») неграждан считает нелегальными иммигрантами, и этим все сказано” (“Aleksandrs Kiršteins (LNNK) recalled that 25% of people voted against independence in the referendum. Apparently this is why he considers everyone to be a ‘fifth column.’ How else can one judge his statement about the idea that 500,000 of the current 700,000 non-citizens do not want to learn the Latvian language and will not do so? They want weapons, they want to serve in the army and the police in the hope that Latvia will return to the empire. (...) Māris Grīnblats (For the Fatherland and Freedom) considers all non-citizens to be illegal immigrants, and that says it all.”) (СМ-Сегодня, 10 June 1994)*

As was the case in the Latvian language newspapers, the Russian language newspapers, too, had little to say about the consultations in which political parties engaged so as to reach agreement on the issue. Because the parties which defended the interests of Russian speakers had little influence, and the major agreements were reached among the other parties, however, the “bargaining” among political forces was presented largely in a negative light.

### **International organisations**

Because international organisations, particularly the Council of Europe, criticised the draft citizenship law for having too many limitations and for being a law which would not clearly tell potential applicants for citizenship when they might receive the right to undergo naturalisation, Russian language newspapers vocally supported the positions taken by the European institutions on this issue. The authority of the institutions was confirmed, and it was often used as justification for the positions which were taken by the newspapers. This is indicated, for instance, by the fact that newspapers published a letter from the OSCE commissioner on minority issues, Max van der Stoep. There were also interviews with other European human rights specialists.

The Russian press mocked the thinking of Latvian politicians about how they could get the Council of Europe to agree to the criticised principle of quotas in the citizenship law:

*“..плевать на Евросовет, авось проглотит квоты рано или поздно: мы строим этнически чистое государство и никто не заставит нас свернуть с пути” (“They spit on the Council of Europe, maybe it will swallow the quotas sooner or later – we’re putting together an ethnically pure country, and no one will push us off this road.”) (Панорама Латвии, 28 June 1994)*

After the Saeima approved the citizenship law on third reading, disappointment could be noticed in the Russian language press, with some newspapers complaining that the Council of Europe did not take a sufficiently strict position on the matter:

*“..почему же представители европейских организаций смущаются и робеют всякий раз, когда совершенно настоятельной становится необходимость занять*

ясную позицию по самой сути, сердцевине проблемы, почему прибегают к обходным маневрам, формальным претензиям?" (".. Why on Earth were the representatives of European organisations confused and scared each time that there was a completely urgent need to take a clear position in response to the essence and nucleus of this problem. Why do they prefer to engage in indirect manoeuvres, why do they offer only formal complaints?") (Панорама Латвии, 29 June 1994)

## Consideration of the Language law (1999)

### Description of events

On July 8, 1999, Parliament, for the first time, gave third reading approval to a law on the state language.

Debates over this law involved international institutions such as the OSCE, the Russian Foreign Ministry, Latvia's political parties, public organisations and NGOs. Voting in favour of the new language law were For the Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK (TB/LNNK), Latvia's Way, the Latvian Social Democratic Workers Party, the Social Democratic Party and the People's Party. The New Party abstained, and the political alliance "For Human Rights in a United Latvia" (PCTVL) voted no.

Before the law was approved, the "Equality" movement<sup>11</sup> organised a picket line outside the Saeima on the day during which the state language law was approved on third reading. On July 12, at the Esplanade park in Rīga, PCTVL organised a meeting with local residents to announce that a picket line would be organised outside of the Latvian president's office on July 13 and 14 in hope that she would return the law to Parliament for repeat consideration. The protest was organised by the Committee on Human Rights in Latvia. On July 14, the president sent the law back to Parliament, asking it to think again. The final version of the law was approved in December 1999.

### The influence of newspapers on the process of shaping identities

The goal of the state language law was to strengthen the Latvian language as the state language in institutional terms. Language is a very important element in characterising cultures and nations, and the institutional strengthening of a language is a powerful factor in constructing a nation. In writing about debates over the language law, newspapers actively took part in constructing group identities – something which usually has to do with uplifting one's own group and reducing the importance of others. Generally speaking, newspapers used the strategy of constructing discourse,<sup>12</sup> and this was true both among the Latvian and the Russian language media. This was indicated by a linguistic strengthening of "our" group and by marginalisation of other groups. Newspapers used various strategies to strengthen the sense of belonging among their readers to one or the other ethnic group. Latvian newspapers typically engaged in an indirect process of ignoring the status and views of Russians in Latvia. In some cases, more nationalist Latvian language newspapers (*Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze* (NRA) and *Lauku Avīze*) constructed a negative image of Russia and Russians (often through a negative depiction of Russia's image). Recent Soviet history was used as an excuse for this. The Russian language newspapers, by contrast, used the strategy of intensifying the problem and of using the arguments of victims and those who were offended, arguing that Russians were being oppressed in Latvia and that existing integration policies were unsuccessful.

In writing about debates over the language law, Latvian newspapers devoted a great deal of attention to the requirements of EU institutions and the OSCE, thus presenting the great influence of international institutions on these issues. Russian language newspapers, by contrast, referred to Russian culture (ancient Russian language traditions, the wealth of Russian literary heritage, etc.) to strengthen the sense of belonging among their readers to the Russian community in Latvia. The discourses in the Russian language media in terms of describing

<sup>11</sup> A political party which was a part of PCTVL and was established in 1996.

<sup>12</sup> Wodak, R. And M. Meyer (2001). *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Sage Publications.

events show indirectly that the Russian community in Latvia has a powerful history and set of cultural traditions. Moreover, the size of the community in Latvia is large enough (the media often exaggerated the size of the community) to provide a powerful justification for the Russian ethnic group in Latvia to insist that the Russian language must be strengthened in institutional terms.

There are two ways of constructing the identity of an ethnic group – the instrumental and the symbolic method. The first is used to preserve material rights and to gain these fully from the state. The second is used to preserve a community's cultural identity.<sup>13</sup> In the existing situation, the Russian language media construct an instrumental identity, making use of symbolic characteristics of identity – the ethnic group's historical experience with cultural identity. This is indicated by ongoing complaints about taxes which Russian residents pay in Latvia, by reminders of the share of Russians in the population, and the resulting indications that the Russian language deserves institutional strengthening in Latvia, too.

Another key factor is the construction of political belonging, and this was presented with equal power in the media of both languages. This indicates that there was a separation between "Latvian" and "Russian" parties. At the political level, the media construct a split society, one in which Latvians and Russian speakers are represented in government institutions. The media construct two political flanks in which each side fights for the interests of the group which it represents. This does not promote the development of an integrated society. A similar situation exists among public organisations. Particularly active are two Russian organisations – the "Committee on Human Rights in Latvia" and the "Russian Community in Latvia". With the help of the media, they try to exacerbate the situation and to argue that Russian residents of Latvia are oppressed and must fight for their rights.

### **Presentation of events in Latvian language newspapers**

In the context of the state language law, the various Latvian language newspapers expressed differing attitudes. *Diena* wrote more about the fact that the state language law was in line with the requirements of EU institutions, thus confirming Latvia's movement toward the EU, which was important to the newspaper, as well as the need to make sure that Latvian laws are in line with EU laws. The newspapers *NRA* and *Lauku Avīze* emphasised national values to a greater degree. Both newspapers had negative things to say both about the requirements of EU institutions and the demands of Russia.

There were no debates about the way in which the law would affect minorities in Latvia, the goals of the law or the reasons why non-Latvians in Latvia had objections to the proposal. The only resource for full public debates can be said to have been the newspaper *Lauku Avīze*, which, on July 8, printed the full text of the proposed state language law. There were, however, no debate about amendments to the law before its approval on third reading on July 8. Negligible explanations which all but disappeared against the background of events appeared only after the law was approved.

Until the law on the state language was approved on July 8, *Diena* reviewed it only in the context of OSCE and European Union demands, arguing that these demands must be observed if Latvia is to join the EU. Before the approval of the law, it was mostly seen as an "obstacle against Latvia's invitation to join the European Union" (*Diena*, 3 June 1999).

The newspaper *NRA*, too, mostly focused on OSCE requirements in advance of July 8. Unlike *Diena*, *NRA* criticised the requirements of EU institutions, indirectly indicating that the paper supported a stricter and more nationalist state language law:

*"By the way, are the main objections of Europe with respect to the state language law linked this time to the rights of other languages, cultures and individuals? No, the requirements demand the liberation of the technological and business space from the Latvian language – a space in which, according to them, the Latvian language is far too pushy and a local and provincial issue for transnational interests."* (*NRA*, 9 June 1999)

<sup>13</sup> Oommen T.K. (1997) *Citizenship, Nationality and Ethnicity*. London: Polity Press, p. 39.

In advance of the adoption of the law, neither *Diena* nor *Lauku Avīze* devoted particular attention to the objections which Russian speakers had. Both newspapers excluded this segment of the Latvian population from the debate. *NRA*, for its part, wrote about the position of Russian speakers in a very distanced way”

*“The Rīga City Council has permitted the Equality movement to organise a protest on July 8 against the idea that the state language law is not in line with European norms and could significantly worsen the condition of so-called Russian speakers.”* (*NRA*, 7 June 1999).

After the law on the state language was approved and until the president decided to send it back to Parliament on July 14, all newspapers took a negative position vis-à-vis the government institutions of Russia and the organisations of Russian speakers in Latvia. Some of these organisations picketed outside the president’s office on July 13 and 14. *NRA* printed several articles in which it criticised EU institutions, too. *NRA* tends to present a very specific gap between Latvians and others, one that is absolute and makes no room for compromise:

*“If she [the president] takes one decision, non-Latvians will cheer, if she takes the other, Latvians will cheer.”* (*NRA*, 15 July 1999)

*NRA* also differentiated between “Latvian parties” and “Russian parties”, which indirectly suggested that the newspaper did not want to accept a politically integrated position vis-à-vis Latvia’s society. Approval of the law “was supported by all of the Latvian factions in the *Saeima*. Only *PCTVL* found arguments against virtually every article in the law while it was being considered.” (*NRA*, 9 July 1999). Moreover, this article was published on the first page of the newspaper.

The newspaper *Lauku Avīze*, for its part, typically presented Russia as an oppressor of Latvia. Latvia’s self-image was strengthened through discussions of the work which its government was doing. The paper indirectly presented an “us against them” discourse when discussing Latvia and Russia:

*“There is no point in talking about protests from Russian institutions, these have nothing to do with language. The goal is to ‘keep the gunpowder dry’ among those forces which are focused against Latvia. While the Latvian government makes an effort to naturalize and integrate non-Latvians, sometimes crawling out of its skin to achieve this, spending money on language lessons and other things, opponents of a harmonic nation are working with full effort.”* (*Lauku Avīze*, 13 July 1999).

When writing about the Russian speakers’ protest, all newspapers modified the status of the situation and the problem, making an effort to reduce the importance of what were described as insignificant protests. In writing about the picket line, both *Diena* and *NRA* ensured that participants were linguistically anonymous, which means that the papers were distancing themselves from non-Latvians, and particularly Russians. Distance was also indicated by sarcasm and the use of the passive tense in describing the protest:

*“On Monday evening, opposite the president’s office, several tens of protesters had gathered. They sat on benches and blankets which they had brought and promised that they would continue the protest. (...) Protesters said that the law ignores the rights of national minorities and will promote assimilation.”* (*Diena*, 13 July 1999)

*“At the park outside the president’s office, for the second day, people brought together by the Community of Latvia’s Russians (LKK) gathered to protest against the state language law. (...) The scene outside the president’s office yesterday was quite peculiar – several women were laying around in the grass on blankets which they had spread. Young people with black bands around their heads were sitting on the steps. One could notice a tent, etc.”* (*NRA*, 14 July 1999)

When the president sent the law back to Parliament, Latvian newspapers presented this merely as a fact.

## **Presentation of participants in the events by Latvian language newspapers**

### **Parties**

The party which most strongly insisted that the state language law be adopted on July 8 on third reading was TB/LNNK, along with the TP and the LSDSP. Different views were

presented by Latvia's Way (LC), the New Party and PCTVL. The LSDSP and TB/LNNK had more nationalist views. The TP and TB/LNNK were prepared to support "more radical norms (...) making it mandatory to speak Latvian at all public events, not just those that are organised by state and local government institutions and companies." (Lauku Avīze, 7 July 1999).

The OSCE commissioner had recommended that consideration of the law be postponed, and TB/LNNK reacted quite crassly. NRA quoted MP Juris Dobelis:

*"This is impolite interference in the work of Latvia's parliament. Knowing how long it took to get to this point, it is completely shameless for van der Stoel to send this request at a time when just one day remains before the law is adopted."* (NRA, 3 July 1999)

TB/LNNK argued that the OSCE requirements be organised, stating that "it is entirely up to Parliament to decide whether to take them into account or not to do so." (Diena, 3 July 1999) LC took a different position:

*"LC wants the language law to be harmonised with EU requirements so that it is not an obstacle against beginning membership negotiations."* (Diena, 3 July 1999)

*"Latvia's Way insists that there must be a strict law on the state language, but one that will not hinder Latvia's integration into the European Union."* (NRA, 7 July 1999)

PCTVL opposed the third-reading approval of the law. NRA presented the views of PCTVL, suggesting that an ethno-political conflict might be possible: *"This is entirely a political issue. This is an issue which concerns not the Latvian language, but the Latvian and Russian language. It determines the level at which the Russian language will be spoken in Latvia."* (NRA, 15 July 1999)

### **Non-governmental organisations**

Before the law was approved, *Diena* published a comment by Nils Muižnieks, director of the Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies, an NGO: *"The law has created too much of a fuss among local politicians and foreign institutions."* (Diena, 7 July 1999). After the law approved the next day, *Diena* once again printed Muižnieks' view – *"this law is not in line with international obligations."* (Diena, 9 July 1999)

NRA presented the views of NGOs after the president returned the law to Parliament on July 14:

*"Another opponent to the current version of the law is Nils Muižnieks, director of the Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies. He told Neatkarīgā that any good law must satisfy several criteria – it must be properly structured, it must be possible to implement the law, and the law must be in line with international requirements."* (NRA, 15 July 1999)

The views of the NGOs of Russian speakers were presented in *Diena* after the protests which were organised against the law outside the president's office on July 12:

*"One of the harshest speeches was delivered by Vjačeslavs Altuhovs, chairman of the Community of Latvia's Russians. He called for a boycott of stores in which clerks speak Latvian and information about products is not provided in Russian. He also called for a fight on behalf of the official recognition of the Russian language in the Saeima."* (Diena, 13 July 1999)

The commentary page of *Diena*, typically described those organisations which defend Russian speakers in a sarcastic way, thus reducing the seriousness of the situation:

*"The fuss raised around the language law has another aspect – the unusual activity of so-called Russian speaking organisations. The large number of such organisations is a mirage. That is the tradition in our country – if there are two Latvians, there are two parties, and if there are three Russians, there are four associations of Latvia's Russians."* (Diena, 14 July 1999)

### **Presentation of events in Russian language newspapers**

Russian newspapers which wrote about the state language law in July 1999 typically presented a more emotional view of events. It is important that during the entire month the state language law was the central issue for *Час* and *Панорама Латвии* alike. Events related to the law were presented on the first pages of the newspapers, and usually in a central position. *Час* devoted one-quarter of its front page to the subject of the state language law, usually printing the

news with white letters on a black background. The coverage was full of slogans in relation to the state language law. Latvian newspapers did not present the law as the central event of the day. It was only a few days before and after the law was approved on third reading on July 8 that newspapers presented the issue as a central event.

Unlike Latvian language newspapers, which avoided any discussion of the protests organised by institutions which represented Russian speaking institutions, *Час* wrote on July 2 that the “Equality” movement was planning a protest outside Parliament on July 8, the day when there were plans to approve the law on third reading. *Час* quoted Leonīds Raihmans, chairman of the Latvian Human Rights Committee, who said that the protest would be very peaceful:

*“..лозунги будут позитивными, и самому мероприятию мы хотим придать цивилизованный характер” (“The slogans will be positive, and we want to make sure that the event itself is of a positive nature.”) (*Час*, 2 July 1999)*

The newspaper *Панорама Латвии*, for its part, published an appeal from the “Equality” movement and an invitation to attend the protests both on July 1 and July 6. The announcement on July 6 was printed under a headline which very much dramatised the situation. There was also a cartoon to show that the Russian language is under threat. The Russian language was presented as a victim:

*“Скажем нет языковому насилию” (“Let us say ‘no’ to the violence of language!”) (*Панорама Латвии*, 6 July 1999)*

Until the state language law was approved on third reading on July 8, most reports and articles about the law in *Панорама Латвии* were in a column headlined “SOS”. This indicated that the newspaper took an emotional stance in exacerbating problems. Russian language newspapers, generally speaking, used various powerful words to describe the state language law – “repressive” and “draconic”, for instance. These were found most often in *Панорама Латвии*:

*“Вос-мого июля должна решиться суд-ба одного из самых ‘болевых’ законов” (“On June 8, the destiny of one of the ‘most painful’ laws will be determined.”) (*Панорама Латвии*, 7 July 1999)*

*“Принятый закон репрессивен в отношении к национальным меньшинствам Латвии, составляющим 43% всех ее жителей” (“The decision that has been taken is repressive vis-à-vis Latvia’s national minorities, which make up 43% of the population.”) (*Панорама Латвии*, 12 July 1999)*

Both *Час* and *Панорама Латвии* took a sarcastic approach to the legislative process in Latvia until the law was approved. In order to construct a positive self-image for Russian speakers, newspapers presented facts from Russia’s political history. By contrast, the work of Latvia’s government institution was discussed negatively. The situation was intensified by the use of a sarcastic set of arguments that are used by victims. This indirectly indicated the desire for the Russian language to be given stronger institutional and official status in Latvia:

*“Словом, главное изгнать русский язык из всех сфер общения, впредь говорить и думать исключительно по-латышски. Ну а тяжелая экономическая и финансовая ситуация, нужды крестьян, безработных, пенсионеров, малообеспеченных подождут” (“In other words, the main thing is to eliminate the Russian language from all spheres of communications. In the future, we will only be allowed to speak and think in Latvian. Issues such as the difficult economic and financial situation, the needs of farmers, the unemployed, pensioners and the poor will have to wait.”) (*Панорама Латвии*, 7 July 1999)*

Russian newspapers made heavy use of a negatively oriented discourse of “us against them”. The construction of the “us” discourse made use of the strategy of the arguments of victims, as well as the construction of words which denigrate oneself. Again and again there were indirect indications that minority interests are not sufficiently represented in the institutions of government:

*“Их позиция в вопросе закона о языке открыто демонстрирует: они не приемлют, что Латвия — мультикультурная страна, а не страна хозяев (латышей) и временных гостей (нелатышей). (...) Потому что ныне правящим нужны не нелатыши, а такие же, как ОНИ, ИХ копии — живущие и думающие, как ОНИ” (“Their position on the state language law makes it clear that they cannot accept the fact that Latvia is a multicultural*

country, not one of owners (Latvians) and short-term guests (non-Latvians). (...) That is because the leaders at this time need people who are the same as THEM, who are copies of THEM, who live and think like THEY do. They do not need non-Latvians.” (Час, 8 July 1999)

After the law was approved on third reading, use of the “us against them” discourse increased, and there were also attempts to create a bright and positive self-image. A powerful indicator of culture – language – was used for this purpose:

“За последнюю тысячу лет мы, русские, не плохо поработали над тем, чтобы наш язык не нуждался ни в защите, ни в каком-то специальном заповедном статусе.” (“Over the last millennium, we Russians have done good work to ensure that our language does not need protection or any special status.”) (Час, 8 10 July 1999)

In some cases, the “us” group was constructed by offering ironic accusations of guilt to the group of “others” and “them”:

“Сначала нас всех окрестили ‘русскоязычными’, потом «оккупантами» и «мигрантами», потом «негражданами». Нам так это нравится...” (“Initially we were all Christened as ‘Russian speakers’, then ‘occupants’ and ‘migrants’, and then ‘non-citizens’. We just love all of this...”) (Панорама Латвии, 13 July 1999)

When it came to the protests outside the president’s office on July 13 and 14, Час offered calm and slightly sarcastic coverage. This may have represented a desire to shape a positive self-image by showing that the paper wanted to present its position vis-à-vis the language law in a peaceful way. In visual terms, however, Час reflected the protest and its participants, who were carrying posters with noisy slogans, on its front page, thus suggesting that the events were of a revolutionary nature. The situation was exacerbated by a comparison between the protests against the law on the one hand and the riots in Kosovo on the other – an issue which was an important issue on foreign affairs pages during this period of time. Headlines included such ideas as “Linguistic dictatorship leads us to Kosovo” and “Yes to integration, no to assimilation!”

“Сбылась мечта Вайры Вике-Фрейберги: окрестности президентского дворца уже сейчас стали средоточием русской культуры, и новый президент может изучать язык Пушкина круглые сутки, не выходя из своих апартаментов” (“The dream of President Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga has come true: The Russian culture is concentrated around her office, and the new president will be able to learn the language of Pushkin without leaving his apartments.”) (Час, 15 July 1999)

“Кроме этого, сегодня и завтра в Риге в знак протеста пройдут два мероприятия. Их цель: заявить о недопустимости языковых репрессий” (“What is more, two events will be held in Rīga today and tomorrow in the form of protests. The goal is to insist that language-related repressions are unacceptable.”) (Час, 12 July 1999)

After the president sent the law back to Parliament, Панорама Латвии presented this as an achievement for the protesters. Unlike Latvian language newspapers, Панорама Латвии continued to debate the state language law even after it was sent back to Parliament on July 14. To justify these debates, Час made use of powerful elements of cultural identity, while Панорама Латвии argued that the Russian language has the right to enjoy institutional status in Latvia. False “facts” from history were presented in support of this idea:

“За русский, великий и могучий, за один из языков ООН, а также Пушкина, Гоголя и почти полумиллиона жителей Латвии” (“We stand for the powerful and mighty Russian language, one of the languages of the UN, the language of Pushkin, Gogol and nearly half a million residents of Latvia.”) (Час, 23 July 1999)

“Никакой советской оккупации Латвии с точки зрения международного права не было. Русские, приехавшие на восстановление народного хозяйства Латвии после 1945 года, не являлись и не могут считаться эмигрантами или оккупантами” (“From the perspective of international law, there was no occupation in Latvia. Russians who came to Latvia to renew Latvia’s economy after 1945 are not and cannot be seen as emigrants and occupants.”) (Панорама Латвии, 23 July 1999)

Панорама Латвии also presented its views as to what might be the next steps in drafting the state language law. The newspaper assumed that the law would be prepared in a way which would continue to repress minorities. Russian newspapers made use of a powerful

generalisation, arguing that the Russian language was the language of all minority nationalities in Latvia. This once again supported the argument that the Russian language must have institutional status in Latvia:

*“Поэтому уже сейчас можно говорить о том, что Латвии будет действовать жесткий закон, направленный на революционное, принудительное внедрение латышского языка при полном игнорировании языка нацменьшинств – русского языка” (“That’s why we can already speak of the idea that a hard-hearted law will be in effect in Latvia, one that is aimed at revolutionary emphasis on the Latvian language and complete ignorance about the language of the national minority – the Russian language”) (Панорама Латвии, 29 July 1999)*

## **Presentation of participants in the events in Russian language newspapers**

### **Parties**

On July 1 and July 6, on its front page, the newspaper *Панорама Латвии* published announcements from the “Equality” movement to invite people to attend a protest at the Saeima. The text was very powerful: *“Скажем НЕТ языковому насилию” (“Let us say NO to language violence!”)* (*Панорама Латвии*, 1, 6 July 1999)

The Russian newspapers presented a sarcastic and negative view of TB/LNNK, the TP and the LSDSP, all of which insisted that the state language law must be approved on third reading on July 8:

*“Те три партии — «Тевземей ун Бривибай», Народная партия и социал-демократы наверняка захотят еще раз попробовать свои силы и подвести под свое большинство идеологическую основу. Лучшего случая не придумаешь” (“The three parties – TB, the People’s Party and the Social Democrats – will probably once again want to test their strength and to make ideological justifications the cornerstone for their majority. A better situation cannot be imagined.”)* (*Час*, 3 July 1999)

The newspaper *Панорама Латвии* published an interview with PCTVL representatives Sergejs Dolgopolovs and Aleksandrs Bartaševičs, who said that their party’s views about the state language law were based on a position which justifies the situation of Russian representatives in Latvia. The two men argued that “others” are guilty of the fact that many Russians in Latvia do not speak Latvian:

*“Мы согласны с тем что госязык должен быть, но мы против тех методов, которыми его пытаются внедрить. Хочу напомнить, что начале Атмоды была попытка в доброжелательной атмосфере дать возможность иноязычниками изучать латышский” (“We agree that people need to learn the Latvian language, but we oppose the methods by which others are trying to achieve this. I would like to remind you that at the beginning of the Renaissance, there were policies which allowed non-Latvians to learn the Latvian language on a voluntary basis.”)* (*Панорама Латвии*, 7 July 1999)

Like the Latvian language newspapers, *Час* reported on a meeting that was held on July 7 by four parties – the New Party, the TP, TB/LNNK and the LSDSP – to reach agreement on a unified vote on the state language law on July 8. *Час* argued that this agreement was the foundation for the kind of government would be established in the future:

*“Принятие закона о госязыке было основным условием формирования нового правительства. То есть те фракции, которые поддерживают ужесточение языковой политики в Латвии, автоматически входят в правительственную коалицию” (“Approval of the state language law was the main requirement for a new government. Those factions which support the plan to enhance the strength of Latvia’s language policy will automatically become a part of the governing coalition.”)* (*Час*, 8 July 1999)

After the law was approved, *Час* spoke favourably of the New Party which, along with PCTVL, voted against third-reading approval of the language law:

*“Впрочем, Новая партия поступила тоже почти честно и, главное, почти благородно. Почти — потому что накануне голосования по закону «новые» долго мялись-жались, выбирая правильное решение” (“The New Party, too, acted nearly honestly and, most*



importantly, in an almost noble way. Almost because at the end of the vote on the language law, the party spent a long time in thinking before it took the right decision.” (Час, 9 July 1999)

### **Non-governmental organisations**

The NGOs which were most active in debates over the state language law were the Committee for Human Rights in Latvia<sup>14</sup> and the Russian Community in Latvia.<sup>15</sup> Both worked hand in hand with the “Equality” political movement. The work of the latter organisation was discussed in the context of the protest outside Parliament on July 8:

*“Глава Русской общины Латвии Гарольд Астахов держал за веревочку воздушный шарик синего цвета диаметром около метра с надписью ‘Valsts valodas likums’. Судя по черным ушкам на макушке, он был стилизован под бомбу или морскую мину”* (“The leader of the Russian Community in Latvia, Haralds Astahovs, held a large inflatable balloon which was blue, approximately one metre in diameter, and with the text ‘State Language Law’. Judging from the drawing, it was a stylised bomb or mine.”) (Час, 9 July 1999)

Representatives of the Russian Community in Latvia and the Committee for Human Rights in Latvia were presented in an informal way, as positive people who were defending the rights of Russians in Latvia:

*“Их старший товарищ, один из трех глав Латвийского комитета по правам человека Владимир Бузаев, привел в пикет активистку Русской общины Латвии (РОЛ) Ирину Извекову, чтобы огласить окрестности президентского дворца белогвардейскими романсами. Гармонист из Латвийского комитета по правам человека Владислав Данилов музицирует на здешней скамеечке. (...) Ночуют человек сорок молодежи и около десятка взрослых. Политическая и общественная принадлежность — в основном движение ‘Равноправие’, РОЛ, Латвийский комитет по правам человека”* (“Their oldest member, Vladimirs Buzajevs, is one of the three leaders of the Latvian Human Rights Committee, and he invited an activist from the Russian Community in Latvia, Irina Izvekova, to attend the protest so that the area around the president’s office would be full of romance. On the local stage, Vladislavs Daniļovs, a representative of the Latvian Human Rights Committee and an accordion player, performed. (...) Approximately 40 young people and 10 adults are spending the night here. As far as political and social belonging is concerned, most of them come from “Equality”, the Russian Community in Latvia and the Latvian Human Rights Committee.”) (Час, 15 July 1999)

*Панорама Латвии* offered the views of Genādijs Kotovs, a representative of the Latvian Human Rights Committee, with respect to a meeting which PCTVL organised on June 12 at the Esplanade and about the picket line outside the president’s office on July 13 and 14. Kotovs usually presents an emotional view of events: *“Пусть госпожа В.Вике – Фрейберга посмотрит в глаза тем, кого лишают даже права говорить на своем родном языке”* (“Let Mrs Vīķe-Freiberga look into the eyes of those who are being forbidden to enjoy the right of conversing in their native language.”) (Панорама Латвии, 13 July 1999).

*Панорама Латвии* also interviewed representatives of several organisations which were taking part in the protest. In writing about the picket line, it compared it to the beginnings of the pro-independence movement in Latvia:

*“Вступает в разговор Илья Вершинин, заместитель председателя Молодежного Клуба Латвии (МКЛ). – Мне кажется, что сейчас наступает новая, русская Атмода – наконец-то русскоговорящие ощутили себя единой”* (“Involved in the conversation was Ilja Veršīņins, deputy chairman of the Latvian Youth Club: ‘It seems to me that right now a new Russian Renaissance is beginning – Russian speakers finally feel a sense of unity’.”) (Панорама Латвии, 15 July 1999)

<sup>14</sup> ЛКППЧ: Латвиский комитет по правам человека

<sup>15</sup> Русская община Латвии

### **International organisations and institutions in other countries**

When discussing the state language law, Russian language newspapers often referred to comments made by the OSCE and the European Commission, pointing out that these organisations had objections to the law. This focused attention on the fact that the newspapers were not the only ones with objections.

A particular role in the newspapers was performed by the Russian Foreign Ministry and the foreign minister, Igor Ivanov. Russian language newspapers published an announcement from the Foreign Ministry which was released on July 8 and which dealt with the language law that had been adopted on third reading. Russian language newspapers typically refer to the views of Russian political institutions vis-à-vis the situation in Latvia, because this indicates that Russia cares for its diaspora in Latvia, that the Russian community in Latvia has a protector:

*“Буквально через час после утверждения закона МИД РФ выступил с официальным заявлением по поводу того, что «Сейм, проигнорировав призывы авторитетных международных организаций, принял Закон о госязыке, который носит откровенно дискриминационный в отношении национальных меньшинств характер». При этом Россия рассчитывала на то, что «принципиальную оценку случившегося» выскажут ОБСЕ, Совет Европы, Европейский Союз...”* (“Literally one hour after the law was approved, the Russian Foreign Ministry issued an official announcement to say that the Saeima, in approving a law on the state language which included clear discrimination against national minorities, ignored international organisations which have lots of authority. Russia relied on the Council of Europe, the EU and the OSCE in terms of their issuing a formal statement about what happened.”) (Час, 10 July 1999)

The Russian language newspapers also repeatedly published the views of the Russian prime minister with respect to the law, offering exaggerated statements about the historically special status of Russians in Latvia and the right of Russians to strengthen the official status of their language in the country:

*“Премьер напомнил, что около половины населения Риги – русские. Они строили этот город, защищали его от фашистов, спасали экономику”* (“The prime minister reminded us that approximately one-half of the residents of Rīga are Russians. They have built this city, defended it against Fascism and rescued its economy.”) (Панорама Латвии, 10 July 1999)

### **Debates before Latvia’s accession to the European Union (2003)**

#### **Description of events**

A referendum or national vote on Latvia’s accession to the European Union on May 1, 2004, was held on September 20, 2003. Only the citizens of Latvia were allowed to vote in the referendum. On September 9, 2003, Latvian university students organised a referendum on accession to the EU, one in which non-citizens could also vote.

On September 3 and 4, the European Union’s commissioner on enlargement, Günter Verheugen, visited Latvia. On September 3, he met with local residents in Tukums, and on September 4 he travelled to Daugavpils.

On September 3, there was an unauthorised protest against upcoming education reforms in minority schools. On September 14, Russian speakers held another protest against the reforms. On September 25, Russian schoolchildren from Latvia organised a picket line at the building of the Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly to protest the reforms.

#### **The influence of newspapers on the process of shaping identities**

Latvian language newspapers typically chose different argumentation strategies with respect to the referendum on joining the EU. *NRA*, *Diena* and *Lauku Avīze* mostly wrote about economic and social benefits which Latvia would obtain after accession. *Lauku Avīze* offered less in the way of its own comments, choosing instead to publish interviews with politicians and representatives of various organisations, thus trying to create an all-encompassing debate about

Latvia's need to join the EU. Some interviews indicated that journalists wished to polarise the situation by arguing that Latvia had just two options – the EU or Russia. In advance of the referendum, all of the newspapers made use of the history of the Soviet era. When presented in emotional terms, these facts served as an important argument for the idea that the EU was Latvia's best choice.

In September 2003, Russian newspapers, unlike Latvian ones, focused more on the education reforms that were to be introduced in minority schools in 2004. This issue was just as important as the September 20 referendum on joining the EU. The Russian language newspapers had less to say about the positive and negative socio-economic factors relating to Latvia's accession to the European Union, but they provided lots of coverage of the Centre for Defence of Russian Schools (LAŠOR). Over the course of four months, after the first protest against the expected reforms on May 23, 2003, LAŠOR collected petition signatures from people who opposed the reforms. For Russian newspapers, the reforms and the protests against them were the key event each day, and very often these issues were discussed in front-page articles.

Generally speaking, newspapers used the strategies of constructive discourse,<sup>16</sup> and that was true among Latvian and Russian language newspapers alike. This involved a linguistic attempt to strengthen the "us" group and to marginalize other groups. Latvian language newspapers tended to ignore issues which affected Russian residents, while the Russian language media offered sarcastic comments about the governing Latvian politicians.

The Latvian language newspapers produced a powerful construct of cultural identity, exaggerating differences between Latvians and Russians and articulating unusual and exaggerated comparisons – Latvia and Russia as belonging to two different civilisations. This is typical of minority discourse, which proposes the construction of a social subject by exaggerating differences among communities and groups, offering unusual comparisons such as belonging to different civilisations, and accenting differences.<sup>17</sup> This indirectly constructs a contrast between Latvians and the Russian diaspora in Latvia. Russian civilisation is linked to all that is negative, and it is compared to the West, to which Latvians feel a sense of belonging. Negative attitudes toward Russia were strengthened by references to recent history and the sufferings of the Latvian people.

In the Latvian language newspapers, this construction of cultural differences was one of the main arguments, along with economic and social arguments, in encouraging readers to vote in favour of joining the EU. Little attention in these newspapers was devoted to the issue of European citizenship.

The Latvian language media continued to construct political identity by pointing to the gap between "Latvian" and "Russian" parties. There was also insistent marginalisation of Russian views and the situation of Russia. Newspapers did not publish news or debates about the existing education reforms in minority schools, nor did they cover the situation of non-citizens upon Latvia's accession to the EU.

It is clear that these media discourses did not promote the integration of Latvia's society. Instead, they simply strengthened the contrast between Latvians and Russians.

As far as the Russian language media were concerned, the referendum related to a very strong attempt to strengthen the ethnic group's identity. Russian language newspapers often tried to construct the close link between the Russian community in Latvia and Russia and the cares of its government institutions for the diaspora in Latvia when talking about the EU referendum and the issue of education reforms in minority schools. Unlike the way in which debates over the state language law were presented in the media, this time Russian language newspapers did not use factors of cultural identity to strengthen the self-esteem of the Russian ethnic community, instead emphasising political and civic arguments.

The media offered a great deal of coverage to the views of those public organisations which sought to defend the interests of Russians in Latvia. The media mostly wrote about the activities of these organisations in the context of expected reforms in minority schools. Both the organisations and the media basically used the rhetorical strategy of the victim's argumentation,

<sup>16</sup> Wodak, R. And M. Meyer (2001). *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Sage Publications.

<sup>17</sup> Bhabha, H.K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, p. 54.

as well as sarcasm to indicate that the status of Russians in Latvia was marginal and oppressed. Readers were told about groups which defended their interests, and they were given a chance to identify themselves with these groups. In parallel, but to a lesser extent than was the case in Latvian language newspapers, there was a division between political parties which, in media discourse, are different for Latvians and Russians. Interestingly, some parties which defended the rights of Russians favoured a “yes” vote in the EU referendum (the People’s Harmony Party, “Equality”). They felt that accession to the EU would provide solutions for the defence and strengthening of Russian interests in Latvia.

In the context of the upcoming EU referendum, the media widely reflected the views of parties and public organisations when it came to the rights of Latvia’s citizens and non-citizens in the EU. It must be stressed that citizenship is an instrument for encouraging equality in a democratic society, while ethnic and national divisions often promote inequality.<sup>18</sup> EU citizenship offered a new chance to receive equal rights. It is of key importance that in speaking of these rights, Russian language newspapers mostly referred to institutional security.

### Presentation of events in Latvian language newspapers

Before the referendum, there were two different discourses in newspapers, and that indicates indirectly that the media were still trying to engage in linguistic marginalisation of the large Russian minority in Latvia, making use of exaggerations, unjustified generalisations (“the largest share of the people”), and unjustified concerns. The issue of citizenship was often used as an argument, particularly in *Diena*:

*“When it comes to Euro-integration, a large share of the people have been annoyed by the need to do things that we would otherwise not do – liberalise the citizenship law, for instance.” (Diena, 2 September 2003)*

*“Is there reason for concern that after accession to the EU, Latvia will face new demands related to language and citizenship, for instance making it easier for non-citizens to obtain citizenship or granting the status of a state language to the Russian language?” (Diena, 5 September 2003)*

Here we see the “us against them” discourse, which is constructed by making use of categorical comparisons and exaggerated ideas:

*“We’ll have to decide on which side of the border Latvia lies – finally and truly in Europe or back in the periphery of Russia. We must state clearly the civilisation to which we belong and wish to belong.” (Diena, 8 September 2003)*

The Latvian language newspapers often wrote about the Soviet era, using it as an argument to enhance the belief of readers that they must vote “yes” in the EU referendum. This once again offered an indirect and repeated reminder of the common experiences of the Latvian people, thus strengthening Latvian identity:

*“Just remember how painfully Latvia was torn apart from Europe, keeping from becoming a country like Denmark or the Netherlands. Remember how people living under the totalitarian regime dreamed about ending up in London or Paris, about the lifestyle of people there, about the desire not to trample their own dreams and to realise that accession to the EU is a continuation of the processes of the Renaissance and independence.” (Diena, 5 September 2003)*

Shortly before the referendum, newspapers increased their efforts to construct a negative image of Russia and Latvia’s Russians, making use of Latvia’s national symbols, such as the language, as well as the issue of economic and political security. The media seemingly tried to present Russia as a treat against Latvia and Latvia as a potential victim of Russia, which could destroy Latvian politics and culture. There were very mocking terms which were used to describe certain representatives of Russian institutions and Russians who lived in Latvia: *“All kinds of Russian and local bees”* [The Russian language acronym for PCTVL resembles the word “bees”, hence the designation]:

<sup>18</sup> Oommen, T.K. (1997). *Citizenship, Nationality and Ethnicity*. London: Polity Press, p. 38.

*“A negative vote on September 20 might create serious threats against the status of the Latvian language, because Latvia would remain politically alone between the EU and the CIS. Russia and all of the local bees would double their demands for education in Russian and the status of a second state language for Russian.” (Diena, 13 September 2003)*

A distinctly negative characterisation of Russia appeared on the front page of *Diena* on September 19, the day before the referendum. Russia and the Western world were compared, and Russia came off much the worse in the comparison. The media used the “us against them” categories for constructing groups – “East and West”, arguing that Latvia belonged to the Western world. In order to strengthen the negative emotions of readers vis-à-vis Russia, moreover, the paper used the strategy of the victim’s argumentation:

*“A ‘no’ vote would mean declaring that we would become a part of the lawless, undemocratic and latently authoritarian bazaar of the East. (...) Politicians in Russia are openly speaking of Latvia as the ‘last bastion’, they speak of the referendum as a chance to preserve that which is left over of the USSR. We call on you not to fulfil these hopes. Let us not become suicidal defenders of their bastion.” (Diena, 19 September 2003)*

On September 20, the date of the referendum, *Diena* presented typically emotional strategies, making use of Latvia’s collective memories and its recent history. Once again the arguments were based on the image of Latvia as a sufferer, and the newspaper posed rhetorical questions to its readers:

*“This will be an historical choice which will finally decide whether the centuries-long battle of our people for survival on the border of two civilisations will be crowned with our ‘yes’ to Western civilisation, civilisation to which the Latvian people have always belonged. (...) The time has come for Latvia to bring the last century to an end – the century which was the bloodiest century in European history, a century which was particularly merciless toward our nation.” (Diena, 20 September 2003)*

Latvian newspapers also presented short but sarcastically vivid coverage of a protest held by Russian speakers on September 14. In linguistic terms, the Russian speakers were indirectly distanced from any chance to express their views about Latvia’s accession to the EU. What is more, the participants in the protest were described with discrediting and exaggerated concepts such as “Russian chauvinists” and “sloppy Russian imperialists and a company of their followers”:

*“Russian chauvinists played the native language of Livonians at their meeting and called on people to vote against the EU if students in schools would be forced to study in Latvia. Radio PIK, which is directed by Žuravļovs, the battler against NATO and the EU and the representative of the “Welfare” party, defrauded Ieva Akurātere [a popular Latvian singer] by playing a recording of her performance of “For My Nation (Help us, God!)”, written by Brigita and Andris Ritmanis, and covering the song with a voice yelling the words “German lord.” The sloppy Russian imperialists and their company of followers suddenly are very concerned about Latvian independence, which we will supposedly lose in the EU – an organisation which supposedly is like the USSR which they lost.” (Diena, 15 September 2003)*

*Diena* quoted many representatives of the intelligentsia, who said that Latvia has historically been a part of Europe and that Latvian culture is an inviolable component of European culture:

Jānis Stradiņš [a medic and professor]: *“And we must remain Europeans. That is one of the foundations for our nation’s identity.” (Diena, 17 September 2003)*

Māra Zālīte [a playwright]: *“Let us remember how we were hurt by the historical injustice of seeing Latvia violently torn apart from the rest of Europe. If that had not happened in 1940, Latvia would be equal to Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland or Sweden. That was Latvia’s status before the occupation, and it must be its status once again.” (NRA, 5 September 2003)*

After the referendum, Latvian language newspapers presented convincing arguments to say that non-Latvians and Russians were the ones who basically voted against accession to the EU, this before any serious analysis of the results:

*“The most negative attitude toward the EU was found in those parishes which are mostly populated by Russian speaking residents.” (Diena, 22 September 2003)*

*"In Liepāja, 77% of voters voted in favour of EU membership, in Ventspils – 73.2%, in Jelgava – 64.4%, in Jūrmala – 62.7%, in Rīga – 59.1%, in Rēzekne – 43%, and in Daugavpils – 31% of voters. These numbers clearly show that the most sceptical vote was cast in those places where greater numbers of Russian speakers live."* (NRA, 22 September 2003)

## **Presentation of participants in the events in Latvian language newspapers**

### **Non-governmental organisations**

*Lauku Avīze* wrote that the "Russian Community in Latvia" was opposing accession to the EU because Latvia's accession to the EU would promote the splitting off of the Russian diaspora in Latvia from Russia:

*"It was no accident that at a recent discussion, the chairman of 'Russians in Latvia-Russians in Europe', Russian community leader Vjačeslavs Altuhovs was almost in a panic in concluding that 'When Latvia becomes the EU border, that will split us even further apart from Russia...'"* (*Lauku Avīze*, 4 September 2003)

Writing about a meeting that was held on September, 4, *Lauku Avīze* reported on an appeal from a Russian organisation called "For the Rights of Latvia's Citizens", in which it called for institutionalisation of the Russian language in Latvia by granting it, along with the Latvian language, the status of an official state language. The refusal to recognise Russian as an official state language was compared to assimilation:

*"We call on people to understand a simple truth – until such time as the Russian language is recognised as a state language in the Republic of Latvia and all of the residents of the country receive the rights of citizens so that they can influence important decisions in our lives, we will never rid ourselves of attempts to assimilate Latvia's Russians."* (*Lauku Avīze*, 6 September 2003)

Also present at the aforementioned meeting was the "Russian Community in Latvia", whose representative, Eduards Gončarovs, expressed his views about upcoming education reforms. He made use of the situation of Russian children in the context of the expected education reforms and made a series of rhetorical statements. These indirectly indicated that it is necessary to institutionalise a powerful identifier of the Russian culture – the Russian language:

*"For 12 years they tried to get rid of us here, but now we are being struck in the weakest place – our children. With these reforms, our government wants to turn us into people who will vote for it. We will not yield, because we have no reason to trust this government. The law must record our right to study in our native language."* (*Lauku Avīze*, 6 September 2003)

### **International organisations and institutions in other countries**

On September 3, in Tukums, there was a meeting with the European Union commissioner Günter Verheugen, whose views about Latvia's accession to the EU were presented in all of the Latvian language newspapers:

*"Verheugen made it perfectly clear that if Latvia chooses to remain outside of the EU, then it will have to count on a partnership with Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, adding that 'I doubt whether investors from those countries will flow into Latvia and whether you will find a market for your products there.'"* (*Diena*, 4 September 2003)

Journalists from *Diena* asked Verheugen about easier naturalisation terms for non-citizens, thus indicating that this was still an important issue for the media:

Journalist: *"Is there reason for concerns that after joining the EU, Latvia will face new demands related to issues of language and citizenship – for instance, making it easier for non-citizens to gain citizenship or awarding the status of a state language to the Russian language?"*

Verheugen: *"No. That is not within the competence of the EU. Issues related to minority rights are a part of the so-called political criteria, and we apply the standards of the Council of Europe here. These issues are not, however, part of the direct competence of the EU."* (*Diena*, 5 September 2003)

Verheugen's views were presented a bit differently in *NRA*, which quoted his views on the naturalisation of non-citizens:

*"... You must encourage non-citizens, particularly younger people, to learn the Latvian language, to take the naturalisation and examination, and thus to become fully vested citizens of Latvia and, by extension, of the EU."* (*NRA*, 4 September 2003)

After the referendum, some Latvian newspapers covered the views of the Russian Foreign Ministry, thus indicating that Russia's government institutions were devoting increased attention to the Russian diaspora abroad. One newspaper wrote that representatives of Russian institutions did not want to permit the narrowing of Russian language use in those countries where there is a major Russian diaspora:

*"Questions related to Russia's economic co-operation must be linked more closely to the way in which the rights of fellow Russians are observed abroad, the first deputy Russian foreign minister, Eleonora Mitrofanova, announced this week. (...) Among other things, she expressed concern that the use of the Russian language in several countries is being narrowed. She particularly pointed to the areas of secondary and higher education."* (*NRA*, 25 September 2003)

### **Parties**

Latvian language newspapers typically presented mocking and sarcastic responses to certain parties in the PCTVL alliance. This indirectly reminded readers of a conflict between those political parties which defend the interests of Russian speakers in Latvia and those that are right wing in their politics. In the media, the former group of parties was usually presented in sarcastic and mocking terms, because they opposed Latvia's accession to the EU:

*"At 'meetings with voters', Golubovs [an MP in Latvia] did not forget to warn his audience that when it joins the EU, Latvia will lose a part of its sovereignty, arguing that this is a gross violation of the Constitution."* (*Lauku Avīze*, 4 September 2003)

The views of New Era were represented by its leader, Einars Repše, who was prime minister at that time. His views indirectly constructed a mighty distance between Russia and Latvia. The prime minister made use of rhetorical exaggerations and impersonal metaphors:

*"Latvia outside the EU divides Europe into two parts – this scenario is so unnatural, so unacceptable in terms of the country's development, that (...) all battles for Latvia's independence will have proven to be in vain. We will be in a grey zone with countries with which nothing links us – neither cultural, or historical links, just geographic proximity."* (*Diena*, 17 September 2003)

*Lauku Avīze* presented the views of Olga Veidiņa from the Latvian Socialist Party:

*"For 12 years we were told that we would live better. No one told us who would have a better life, though – the people or those who are in power. During this time, factories have been destroyed, farmers somehow make ends meet, culture is not developing, the Latvian language is not developing, and the nation has been split into two – Latvians and Russians. (...) I will vote against the EU."* (*Lauku Avīze*, 20 September 2003)

The same issue of the newspaper also presented the views of Astrīda Mūrniece of the LSDSP. In arguing in favour of a "yes" vote on the referendum, she turned to Latvia's recent past:

*"Our party is in favour of joining the EU. 15 years ago, could you have imagined representatives of five political parties in this room? There was just one Communist Party, the right party, and all of the others would be locked up in a 'secure place'."* (*Lauku Avīze*, 20 September 2003)

### **Presentation of events in Russian language newspapers**

Russian language newspapers argued that upcoming reforms in schools would be a powerful factor in splitting up Latvia's society. In order to strengthen the seriousness of the situation, newspapers made use of the context of the referendum on Latvia's accession to the European Union. It was often argued in the papers that the EU does not permit the existence of a split society in a single country, which encouraged readers to conclude that Latvia was not prepared for EU membership:

*“За несколько месяцев до вступления в ЕС и так не особенно единое латвийское общество оказалось окончательно расколотым” (“A few months before accession to the EU, the already not particularly unified Latvian society proved to be completely split up.” (Телеграф, 1 September 2003)*

Some Russian newspapers smirked about the conflict between Latvians and Russians in Latvia, arguing that this was an eternal conflict and that both sides saw the EU as a solution to it: *“Русские верят, что Брюссель вернет их общине все потерянные за последние 12 лет позиции. А представители титульной нации надеются, что ЕС поможет сделать из местных русских латышей. Или, на худой конец, с открытием границ русские плавно переберутся куда-нибудь подальше, если не в Россию, то хотя бы в Германию или в Швецию” (“Russians believe that Brussels will return their community to all of the positions which it has lost over the last 12 years. Representatives of the titular nation, for their part, hope that the EU will help them to turn local Russian residents into Latvians. Alternatively, they hope that eventually, as borders open, Russians will calmly move to other countries – if not Russia, then at least Germany or Switzerland.” (Телеграф, 1 September 2003)*

Coverage of a protest on September 4 which was aimed at defending the right of Russians to pursue their high school language in their native language was very dramatic. The newspapers described the process with powerful indicators such as *“массовая акция”* and *“многотысячный митинг-манifestация”*, or “mass action, meeting of several thousand people – a manifestation”. This only served to intensify the nature of the situation. Coverage was very emotional, and front page headlines were very emotional, too: *“Все равно нам сны по-русски будут сниться” (“No matter what, we will dream in Russian.” (Час, 5 September 2003)*

The newspapers also published photographs to indicate the size of the protest, as well as to show young people holding posters and wearing T-shirts with special slogans. This visually indicated that the protest was of a radical nature:

*“В гуще людского моря виднелись лозунги «Покажи язык реформе!», «Латвия - позор Европы», «Да - школам, да - Европе, нет школам - нет Европе», «Двинск - русский город», «Русские школы - наш Сталинград», выполненный на английском языке” (“Amidst the ocean of people, there were visible slogans in English: “No to language reforms!”, “Latvia – Europe’s dishonour”, “Yes to schools, yes to Europe, no to schools, no to Europe!”, “Russian schools – our Stalingrad”, “Dvinsk [the Russian name for Daugavpils] – our city!” (Час, 5 September 2003)*

As was the case in Latvian language newspapers, Russian language papers, too, viewed the EU as a positive socio-economic guarantee, because it offers major programmes of co-financing. Russian language newspapers simultaneously presented two views – support for Latvia’s accession to the EU, because it would allow Russians to improve their status in Latvia via the help of EU institutions and funds, as well as opposition to the EU, arguing that society in Latvia is split up and is not integrated, and so Latvia is not prepared to join the EU:

*“Ведь евросоюз действительно может вытянуть Латвию из нищеты. Жизнь в достатке – это лучшая гарантия безопасности” (“The point is that the EU really can drag Latvia out of poverty. A wealthy life – that is the best guarantee of security.” (Телеграф, 1 September 2003)*

Some of the Russian language newspapers indicated that the fact that non-citizens could not take part in the referendum was offensive. The situation was presented in very emotional terms, making use of exaggerated comparisons with the policies of apartheid in South Africa. In order to enhance the idea that non-citizens are oppressed in Latvia, some newspapers used a word to describe Russian residents of Latvia which diminished their self-evaluation – “Negroes”:

*“Латвия просто переняла опыт расистской Южно-Африканской Республики: когда расисты ЮАР почувствовали, что придется уступать, то ради сохранения монополии власти они негров (принадлежавших к племенам банту) объявили... иностранцами.(..) Разделение народа Латвии по цвету паспортов, по сути, мало отличается от программы бантустанизации и имеет те же цели - отстранить часть «этнически чуждых» от политических решений” (“Latvia has simply taken over the experience of the racist Republic of South Africa. When racists in South Africa felt that they*



would have to yield, then in order to maintain a monopoly on power, they declared that Negroes (who were members of the Bantu tribe) were ... aliens. (...) Dividing up the people of this country on the basis of the colour of their passports is not much different from the things that happened to the Bantus, and the goals are the same – ensuring that those who are ethnically different cannot take political decisions. These people in South Africa did not have any political rights, even though they were permanent residents of the country.” (Час, 9 March 2003)

In advance of the referendum, Час published an article by Nils Muižnieks, minister for integration, in which he tried to convince Russian residents to vote “yes” in the upcoming referendum. He argued that the EU would improve the situation of non-citizens, as well as the process of naturalisation. In order to convince readers, he turned to an issue that was an important part of the agenda of Russian language newspapers – citizenship:

“Вступление в ЕС будет способствовать процессам натурализации неграждан и будет гарантировать базовый минимум прав человека для неграждан Латвии в других государствах Европейского союза. .. темпы натурализации немного повысятся после вступления в ЕС, потому что часть неграждан захочет иметь те многие права и свободы, которые будут иметь граждане в объединенной Европе, к примеру, права свободно перемещаться, работать и учиться в странах ЕС” (“Joining the EU will promote the naturalisation process for non-citizens and guarantee basic human rights for Latvia’s non-citizens in other EU member states. The pace of naturalisation will increase a bit after accession to the EU, because many non-citizens will want to acquire all of the advantages and freedoms which unified Europe offers to its citizens – the right freely to travel, work and study in EU member states.” (Час, 19 September 2003)

After Latvia joined the EU, newspapers began to pose rhetorical questions about whether this meant that European traditions would be implemented vis-à-vis ethnic minorities. This indirectly indicated that newspapers considered EU policies on minority issues to be better:

“Значит ли это, что власть тут же усвоит европейские традиции отношения к национальным меньшинствам? Конечно, нет. Референдум — всего лишь ворота, за которыми открывается долгая дорога” (“Does this mean that the government will immediately inherit European traditions vis-à-vis national minorities? Of course not. The referendum was just a gate beyond which there is a long road.” (Телеграф, 22 September 2003)

After the positive vote on EU accession, some newspapers commented the speech which the Latvian president delivered to the nation, arguing that it was not meant for Russians in the country. This was an emotional reflection of the idea that Latvia’s society is segregated:

“И г-жа Вике-Фрейберга неоднократно упирала на исторический выбор именно латышского народа. Наивно, конечно, было ожидать обращений ко всему латвийскому народу, хотя граждане - это не только латыши, да и внушительная часть русских Латвии - 42 процента - граждане по рождению. Думаю, большая часть уклонившихся от референдума - русскоязычные: их не звали. Да все годы правящая элита только и делала, что дистанцировалась от них, а то и игнорировала” (“And Mrs Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga mentioned the historical origins of the Latvian people on more than one occasion. It was naïve, of course, to think that she would speak to the entire Latvian nation, even though not all citizens are Latvians, and an impressive share of Latvia’s Russians – 42% -- were born citizens. I think that many of those who rejected the referendum were Russians. No one invited them to take part. For all of these years, the governing elite have distanced themselves from the Russians, even ignored them.” (Час, 22 September 2003)

In commenting on the results of the referendum, Russian language newspapers argued that the results were affected by the social status of local residents, not by ethnicity:

“В субботу проявилась и еще одна особенность, ломающая привычные стереотипы: отношение избирателей к Евросоюзу определяла не столько их национальность, сколько материальное благосостояние” (“On Saturday we saw another factor which broke down accepted stereotypes – the attitudes of voters with respect to the EU were dictated not so much by their nationality as by their material circumstances.” (Телеграф, 22 September 2003)

The newspaper *Вести Сегодня* wrote sarcastically that the results of the referendum were based on a campaign which ignored Latvia's Russian residents. Information about the EU, Latvia's accession to the EU, and the advantages that would be provided by this accession was often available from public organisations, but the newspaper argued that there was no national information campaign to be focused on Russian residents of Latvia, thus indirectly segregating them (see *Вести Сегодня*, 22 September 2003).

At the end of the month, the main piece of news in Russian language newspapers was the fact that Russian schoolchildren were visiting the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on September 25 to discuss the status of Russians in Latvia. This campaign was organised by the "Russian Schools Defence Headquarters". The delegation was accompanied by Dmitriy Rogozin, a representative of the Russian Parliament who specialises on international issues:

*"Ребята вернулись немного другими - они увидели, что такое единая Европа, получили большой стимул для самоуважения и самодостаточности. Здесь, на родине, никто не хочет их слушать, а там, на олимпе Европы, - слушают с большим интересом"* (*"The children were different when they came home. They had seen unified Europe and thus received a great stimulus in terms of self-respect and self-sufficiency. No one listens to them here at home, but there, at the European Olympus, people listened to them with great interest."*) (*Час*, 30 September 2003)

## **Presentation of participants in Russian language newspapers**

### **Parties**

The views of political parties were presented in Russian language newspapers in two contexts – in relation to the upcoming education reforms in minority schools, and in relation to the expected referendum.

Often published in the newspapers were the views of Jānis Jurkāns, chairman of the People's Harmony Party, with respect to the school reforms. The party supported the reforms in general and argued that Russian children must learn the Latvian language, but the party did not support the 60:40 proportion which meant that 60% of all classes would have to be taught in Latvian:

*"Все должны понять: латышский — это государственный язык. А государство, если оно считает, что госязык — главный инструмент интеграции общества, должно обеспечить обучение латышскому языку на очень хорошем уровне, то есть подготовить преподавателей и достойно оплачивать их труд. Кроме того, школы сами должны выбирать, какие предметы дети будут изучать на латышском. Но в то же время школа должна гарантировать, что ее выпускники будут знать латышский язык на таком уровне, чтобы без проблем поступить в любой вуз Латвии"* (*"Everyone must understand that the Latvian language is the state language, but if the government feels that the state language is the main instrument for integration, then it must make sure that Latvian language training is at a very high level – instructors must be trained, and they must receive appropriate salaries. Moreover, schools themselves must be given the right to decide which subjects will be taught in Latvian. Schools, however, must also guarantee that graduates speak Latvia at a level which allows them to study at institutions of higher education without any problems."*) (*Телеграф*, 8 September 2003)

The views of MP Jakovs Pliners appeared in the newspapers in the context of anti-school reform protests which took place on September 4. His position involved extreme exaggerations, with the MP claiming that the education reforms would promote drug addiction and poverty:

*"Не допустим сделать из наших детей бомжей и наркоманов! Это не нужно ни нам, ни латышам, ни Латвии в целом!"* (*"Let's not allow them to turn our children into bums and drug addicts. We don't need this, nor do Latvians or Latvia as a whole!"*) (*Телеграф*, 5 September 2003)

Another MP for PCTVL, Vladimirs Buzājevs, argued that teachers and schoolchildren must work together to determine the proportion of languages in schools. He also argued that in

private schools, language discrimination must be forbidden. (*Вести Сегодня*, 17 September 2003)

The position of political parties vis-à-vis the upcoming referendum was not presented very much in the newspapers.

On September 3, there was an informational campaign about the EU at the Hotel de Rome, and in presenting this, newspapers used the “us against them” discourse. This was hidden under identification with certain political parties, with newspapers arguing that there was a split between Latvian and “other” political parties:

*“Евроагитация в форме народного гулянья прошла вчера напротив отеля De Rome, которое организовал центр информации ЕС. Все латвийские партии, поддерживающие идею вступления в Евросоюз, разбили на площади агитационные палатки и развили бурную деятельность по переубеждению евроскептиков”* (“The Euro-agitation which was manifested as a movement of people, took place at the Hotel de Rome, and it was organised by the EU Information Centre. All of the Latvian parties which support the idea of joining the EU set up tents and engaged in stormy campaigning to convince Eurosceptics.” (*Час*, 4 September 2003)

Parties which favoured Latvia’s accession to the EU included both the People’s Harmony Party and the “Equality” movement which was led by Tatjana Ždanoka. “Equality” saw the EU as a means for improving the situation of Russian residents in Latvia who could use their right to vote in the EU’s institutions.

### **Non-governmental organisations**

The Russian press had a lot to say about the Centre for Defence of Russian Schools (LAŠOR). It was the main organiser of the anti-school reform protests on September 4. Since its first demonstration against education reforms on May 23, LAŠOR collected petition signatures from Russian residents against the education reforms. This information was often presented on the first page of the Russian language newspapers, which pointed out that 106,157 people had signed the petitions (see *Час*, 1, 25 September 2003)

The protest on September 4 involved both LAŠOR and the “Community of Russian Speakers in Latvia”. The emotional arguments of these organisations were widely reported in the media:

*“Русскоязычная община Латвии откликнулась на призыв прийти на митинг, или, если угодно, на встречу с депутатами, потому что люди, в чьих семьях растут дети, не могут быть безразличными к их будущему”* (“The Russian speaking community of Latvia responded to the challenge to attend the demonstration or meeting with MPs, because people with children cannot be apathetic about their future.”) (*Час*, 20 September 2003)

The chairman of LAŠOR, along with 20 representatives of the non-Latvian community, signed a letter which was published in *Вести Сегодня* on September 17, calling on people to vote in favour of Latvia’s accession to the EU. Of key importance is the fact that the basic LAŠOR argument was that the views of Russian residents would be considered only if Latvia joined the EU. Then there would be a possibility to fight for the right of children to study in their native language. The EU was perceived as a set of institutions which would fully ensure the rights of Russians in Latvia.

The view of the Russian Schools Defence Headquarters was presented in the newspapers in advance of the referendum. On September 17 and 19, the “headquarters” published an announcement in Russian language newspapers, calling on local Russians to vote against EU membership, because the EU, according to this organisation, would not resolve the issue of education reforms at minority schools. The vote on EU accession was compared to a vote on these reforms:

*“(..) если Европа не определит свою позицию в отношении русских школ Латвии, то мы вынуждены будем призывать своих сторонников голосовать на референдуме против.(..)”* (“If Europe does not define its position vis-à-vis Russian schools in Latvia, then we will be forced to call upon our allies to vote ‘no’ in the referendum.” (*Вести Сегодня*, 19 September 2003)

On September 19, *Вести Сегодня* also published an announcement from several public organisations – the “Russian Community in Latvia”, the “Russian Youth Association”, the “Jūrmala Russians’ National Cultural Autonomy”, the “Latvian Youth Club”, the “Community of War Pensioners”, etc. The announcement seriously questioned information about the EU that had been provided by the Latvian government. The claim was that the government was hiding true information about the EU – that after accession, prices would increase, the number of small and medium enterprises would diminish, the number of farms would decline, the number of jobs would be lower, and crime would expand. The statement particularly argued that accession to the EU would not improve the situation of Russian speakers in Latvia. There was an indirect appeal to postpone the referendum by one year, using that time to improve the situation related to education reforms and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

### **International organisations**

Russian language newspapers often published the views of the Russian Foreign Ministry, which denounced Latvian policy with respect to Russian residents of the country. The presentation of the views of Russian government institutions showed how important Russia’s care for the diaspora in Latvia was for the Russian language newspapers:

*“Замглавы МИД РФ выразил обеспокоенность в связи с тем, что агитация в пользу вступления в ЕС, ведущаяся внутри стран Балтии, зачастую стала приобретать антироссийский оттенок. «Такой подход пока не встречает должной, на наш взгляд, реакции со стороны Евросоюза. И это не может не вызывать сожаления и, не скрою, определенной настороженности», - заявил замглавы МИД РФ”* (“The ministry points out that campaigning in favour of EU membership in the Baltic States is becoming more and more anti-Russian. We feel that this has not yet led to an appropriate reaction on the part of the EU, and that cannot help but summon up regret and certain concerns.” (Час, 13 September 2003)

On September 14, on its front page, *Вести Сегодня* printed a big headline – “Русская диаспора под угрозой!” (“The Russian Diaspora is Threatened!”) The article which followed featured an interview with two experts – a lawyer and a professor from St Petersburg. Also interviewed were four representatives of the Russian government who were asked to analyse the expected school reforms. They all criticised the reforms, basing their arguments on cultural and economic factors and arguing that the community’s cultural traditions were being destroyed. The interviewees claimed that 40% of Latvia’s residents are Russians (an exaggeration – statistics show that the proportion of Russians in Latvia is just 29.6%), that they pay taxes, and so they have the right to be educated in the language of their choice.

### **Protests against minority education reforms (2004)<sup>19</sup>**

#### **Description of events**

On January 22, a picket line was organised outside the building of Parliament. The slogan was “Hands off from Russian Schools!” Parliament was planning to approve amendments to the law on education which the government had prepared in May 2003 to declare that 60% of classes in minority high schools would have to be taught in Latvian. On second reading, the text of the law was changed to say that all classes in minority schools would be taught in Latvian.

MPs from the governing coalition rejected limitations in the educational process, and by third reading, the 60:40 proportion was back in place.

On February 5, during the third-reading consideration of the bill, a major protest was held outside the building of Parliament and the offices of the president.

<sup>19</sup> For more information about the way in which the relevant protests were depicted in the Latvian and Russian press, see Zepa, B., Šūpule, I., Kļave, E., Krastiņa, L., Krišāne, J. and I. Tomsone (2005). *Etnopolitiskā spriedze Latvijā: konflikta risinājuma meklējumi* (Ethno-political Tensions in Latvia: A Search for a Resolution to the Conflict), Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, Rīga.

On February 11, a strike and demonstration was held at the president's offices. She could have returned the education law to Parliament by February 12, but on February 13, she proclaimed the amendments to the law. These took effect on February 27. On the Bastejkalns hill in Rīga, a protest called "Wall" was organised to defend the authors and participants of a video clip called "Black Kārlis" in "honour" of the then education minister, Kārlis Šadurskis. The clip, without authorisation, made use of the Pink Floyd song "Another Brick in the Wall" and was aimed against education reforms in Latvia.

### **The influence of newspapers on the process of shaping identities**

Latvian newspapers, in general, presented much less information about minority education reforms than Russian language ones did. Only the most important events related to the process found their way onto the pages of Latvian language newspapers. This meant that they were focused very distinctly on Latvian readers, the assumption being that they were not much interested in minority education reforms. This is also made clear by the fact that when newspapers wrote about new events related to the reforms, they often first provided an overall review of the situation in this area and of changes in minority education since the restoration of the country's independence.

Because newspapers largely defended a specific position vis-à-vis education reforms, other views were presented rarely or from a specific perspective. Views opposing those which dominated in Russian language newspapers appeared only if government officials who were responsible for education policy and supported it made them. It has to be said, that Russian language newspapers, as opposed to Latvian ones, also sometimes printed opposing views from "their own people" – Russian speakers who supported the education reforms. During the surveyed time period, however, minority views appeared in Latvian language newspapers less often than Latvian views appeared in Russian language newspapers.

When reviewing education reforms in the context of ethnic relations, one sees several general discourses in the newspapers:

The "WE do not want hate" discourse was used by Latvian and Russian newspapers alike, true – from opposite positions. Latvian language newspapers suggested that protesters were aggressive, while Russian language newspapers argued that they were peaceful, writing about a hunger strike, for instance, as a form of non-violent opposition. This legitimated each paper's position while discrediting the other side. The contrast between the ethno-linguistic groups (us against them) became stronger:

*"Когда колонна с криками «Руки прочь от русских школ!» проходила мимо латышской школы, на шум открывались окна классов. И наши дети дружелюбно махали своим сверстникам руками. Так что пусть политики не говорят о разжигании межнациональной розни. Русские дети вообще не связывают свои акции в защиту русской школы с национальными разборками!"* ("When the column of protesters shouting "Hands off of Russian schools!" went past a Latvian school, the windows of classrooms opened, and the children waved at their peers in a friendly way. Why aren't politicians talking about the fomenting of ethnic hatred? Russian children do not link their defence of Russian schools with any nationalist quarrels!") (Вестни Сегодня, 6 February 2004)

The Russian newspapers quite often resorted to the discourse of Fascism, comparing Latvians to Fascists in various contexts, and comparing government policy to genocide. This has to do with the opposing views presented in Latvian and Russian newspapers with respect to the end of World War II, with the former presenting this as the beginning of the occupation, and the former presenting it as liberation from Fascism. The discourse of Fascism also relates to debates about Latvian participation in war crimes. This discourse certainly allowed those who engaged in it to feel morally superior, and that helped to legitimate their views with respect to education reforms.

Another discourse can be called "The state has done so much good on your behalf." Latvian newspapers often used this as an argument against the idea that schools were not prepared to implement education reforms, arguing that government institutions had made major investments in preparing for the reforms – financing, as well as bilingual education courses for

teachers. Readers were encouraged to think that after such major investments, all schools should be ready to transfer toward a system in which most classes are taught in Latvian.

Articles about education reform in the Russian language press more often offered individualised descriptions of social participants, thus encouraging readers to identify themselves with the views that were presented.

### Presentation of events in Latvian language newspapers

Latvian language newspapers had much less to write about protests against minority education reforms than Russian language ones did. The most important propositions<sup>20</sup> or, in other words, most important subjects in relation to education reforms are the following:

- The Latvian language must be learned very well in minority schools so as to ensure that all young people have an equal opportunity to enter university and to enjoy competitiveness in the labour market. Education reforms represent one of the ways of ensuring that students at minority schools have good Latvian language skills.

- The law says that in pursuit of this goal, classes must be taught in Latvian. The reason why Russian speakers protest cannot be understood, because the government has drawn back from its earlier demand that all classes be taught in Latvian, instituting a 60:40 proportion instead. The protests can be ignored, moreover, because only a small share of the Russian speaking community is taking part in them. The only cause for worry is the openly declared and militant dissatisfaction displayed by some Russian speakers, as well as the opposition of these people to the establishment of a Latvian Latvia.

In writing about the protests in which students engaged, Latvian newspapers sought to diminish the size and importance of the demonstrations, using various discursive strategies for this purpose:

- Creating the impression that few people took part in or supported the protests;
- Discrediting the participants by offering detailed descriptions of their negative characteristics – they were said to be uncultured, lazy, disloyal, hostile toward Latvians, unorganised, etc.

- Emphasising those cases when the protests were unauthorised, linking them to violations of the law and to the police (*“The government seeks to move the activities of the schoolchildren from the expression of socio-political views about the specific issue to a semi-criminal zone”* (NRA, 17 February 2004));

- Emphasising that the protests created a threat against security (*“It went to the point where additional police forces were called in to attempt to prevent any possible provocations on the part of the young people”* (NRA, 6 February 2004)).

The aim of these strategies was to encourage Latvian readers to think that all was well, that the protests could be ignored, and that there was no need to react to the essence of the protests or to seek out the causes and solutions of the relevant problems. This maintained a positive civic identity or a sense of belonging to the Latvian state among these readers. Of similar discursive importance was the emphasis of various negative characteristics among the organisers, participants and supporters of the protest, thus encouraging Latvian readers to reject the described groups. Latvian language newspapers extensively reported on the uncultured behaviour and hooliganism of some participants in the events:

*“... sullyng the president’s residence; trampling on flowers; a shameless person who peed on the walls of the presidential palace; “the police found a swastika and vulgar texts addressed to President Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga on the walls of the palace; vandals”* (Latvijas Avīze, 6 February 2004). *“... the protesters purposefully threw things at the windows of the palace”* (NRA, 6 February 2004)

The Latvian press also expressed dismay over the possibility that violence might be exacerbated in Latvia as a result of conflicts between young Latvians and Russians:

<sup>20</sup> The term “propositions” here is used in the terms of critical discourse analysis. In discourses, the representation of themes or the selection and emphasising of the most important information within the discourse is of key importance. Van Dijk uses the term “proposition” to describe these themes.

*“Violence is being escalated in society; the violence can only increase.” (Latvijas Avīze, 14 February 2004)*

*“Supported by the press in Russia, the demonstrations fomented by Russia and its servants promise to become even more extensive. Parents may soon accompany the students, soon 20,000 or 50,000 people may take to the streets in place of the 5,000 who have been doing so. That is not all that unbelievable if one takes into account the demagogic and emotional propaganda that is being spewed.” (Latvijas Avīze, 14 February 2004)*

Newspapers wrote that the main reason for this was the demonstrations that were being waged against education reforms. The conflicts were presented in very dramatic terms, leading readers to feel that the situation was very serious and that an active counter-attack was urgently needed, lest Russians cause serious harm to Latvian schoolchildren. The sense of endangerment on the part of another group encourages alienation and strengthens identity. The sense of endangerment among the Latvians was increased by the mentioning of the slightly mystical “forces” which opposed the education reforms. This suggested unknown dangers that were hard to predict.

## **Presentation of events in Latvian language newspapers**

### **Parties**

In presenting the parties, we must differentiate between PCTVL and other parties, which were presented differently in the Latvian and the Russian press. The Russian press published much more information about the activities and views of MPs from PCTVL, while the same views appeared in the Latvian language press far less often.

PCTVL representatives were usually described in the Latvian press as being dependent on Russian politicians, selfish, and people who fomented protests among Russian speakers as a means for serving their own political interests. Latvian language newspapers often used scornful and sarcastic terms to describe them.

In the Latvian language newspapers, opponents of education reforms were, generally, discredited with various techniques. Usually the newspapers emphasised the selfish interests of politicians and the idea that they were manipulating Russian speaker residents whilst also trying to create disorder and threats against the public order.

In Latvian and Russian language newspapers alike, students were usually called children, but with different discursive goals. In the Latvian press, this indicated that the students could not take independent decisions about education reforms and the protests that were being organised. The suggestion was that the students were taking part in the protests only as victims of malicious manipulation on the part of politicians, particularly from PCTVL. The young people, papers suggested, did not even really know the subject of the protests:

*“Children who were younger than 10 years old were dragged into the protest.” (Latvijas Avīze, 6 February 2004)*

*“The students were fired up by Tatjana Ždanoka, Jakovs Pliners, Genādijs Kotovs and their comrades, who were equipped with megaphones. They repeated the things which they screamed again and again, not allowing the mob to relax or to lose its militant spirit.” (Latvijas Avīze, 6 February 2004)*

### **Non-governmental organisations**

The Russian Schools Defence Headquarters were mentioned quite seldom in Latvian language newspapers which wrote about the protests, with reporters focusing more on the participation of PCTVL therein. The organisation was presented in the Latvian language press as a marginal and radical organisation, one which had a tendency to engage in criminal activities. Participants in the organisation were scornfully depicted as agitators, provocateurs and people who cause public disorder:

*“Who other than the headquarters is creating this fuss and encouraging children to violate the limits to protests that are defined in the law?” (Latvijas Avīze, 12 February 2004)*

### **International organisations and institutions**

Representatives of Russia’s Parliament actively supported the protests and demanded that various European institutions investigate the situation of minorities in Latvia, particularly insofar as minority education reforms were concerned. These activities received quite a bit of coverage in the Latvian press, and they encouraged the emergence of a civic identity in which a key element was a negative attitude and a rejection of Russia.

The OSCE high commissioner on minority issues, Rolf Ekeus, visited Latvia to say that he supported the idea that no fewer than 60% of classes be taught in Latvian at minority schools (*Diena*, 26 February 2004). The author of a monitoring report commissioned by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament also did not criticise the 60:40 proportions (*Diena*, 20 February 2004).

### **Presentation of events in Russian language newspapers**

Russian language newspapers provided much more reportage about events related to education reforms than Latvian language newspapers did. The importance of this issue for the Russian newspapers was indicated that during the phase that is studied here, almost every interview, no matter what the basic subject, involved questions which sought to learn the respondent’s views on education reforms.

Russian language newspapers argued in support of the right of individuals to study in their native language, arguing that rights and opportunities must be equal – if Latvians have the right, then Russian children must also have it.

In producing these arguments, Russian language newspapers often referred to the Soviet era, indicating that education reforms were a form of Latvian revenge for their suffering during Soviet years. The newspapers also pointed out that Latvians were not kept from studying in their native language in the Soviet Union, thus arguing that existing government policies were more merciless and less tolerant than Soviet policies had been.

In discussing education reforms, the Russian language newspapers usually stressed that Russian speakers believe that people must study and speak the Latvian language, but when it came to the way in which the language is to be taught at school, most newspapers suggested Latvian language lessons (of the kind which Latvians had used to learn the Russian language), not the teaching of whole classes in Latvian. The teaching of classes in Latvian would cause the knowledge of students to suffer. (This argument was usually ignored by the Latvian language press).

Violations among protesters were usually reported in brief in the Russian language press, as opposed to the Latvian language press, and there was a focus on:

- The mass nature of demonstrations (Latvian and Russian newspapers reported radically different numbers of participants);
- The idea that the entire Russian speaking society was involved:

*“Среди защитников русского образования были все: и дети рабочих, и дети крупных бизнесменов, которые пришли на митинг с персональными шоферами и охраной” (“Among those who defended Russian education were all kinds of people – the children of workers and major businessmen, who arrived at the demonstration with their personal chauffeurs and bodyguards”) (Вести Сегодня, 6 February 2004)*

The Russian language newspapers offered longer reports about the demonstrations, complete with large photographs. Later these photographs would also be used to illustrate other articles in relation to education reform. The demonstrations were presented as a revolution, a decisive event of historical importance for all of Latvia’s Russian speakers. The articles included a great deal of drama and pathos, which was made clear in headlines such as *“Школьная революция”* (“School Revolution”, *Вести Сегодня*, 6 February 2004), *“Страсти вокруг реформы–2004: весна на дворцовой площади”* (“Passions Surrounding Reforms-2004:



*Springtime in the Castle Yard*, Час, 6 February 2004), “Сегодня решается будущее всего русского нацменьшинства” (“*The Future of the Entire Russian National Minority is Decided Today*, Вести Сегодня, 6 February 2004)

On more than one occasion, newspapers tried to draw parallels with the battle for Latvia's independence during the National Renaissance, thus suggesting ideas about the suffering of the people in their right to be free of a repressive system of governance:

*“Наверное, этот по-весеннему теплый февральский день войдет в историю русских Латвии. Потому что это начало русской весны. Бархатная революция. Аммода”* (“*This warm, spring-like February day will probably be recorded in the history of Latvia's Russians. It is the beginning of the Russian spring, a velvet revolution. Renaissance?*” (Час, 6 February 2004)

Russian language newspapers presented great disappointment and bitterness when the president decided to proclaim the amendments to the education law:

*“Очень жаль, э-жа президент, что вы такая непонятливая. Мы до последнего верили в вашу государственную мудрость, но, видимо, ошиблись. Печально, однако...”* (“*It is too bad, Madam President, that you are so slow-witted. Until the last moment we believed in your national wisdom, but apparently we made a mistake. That is a sad thing...*” (Вести Сегодня, 11 February 2004)

## **Presentation of participant in the events in Russian language newspapers**

### **Parties**

Russian language newspapers represented MPs from PCTVL as the main defenders of Russian speaking residents and as authorities of ideology, thus making excuses for them. MPs from the People's Harmony Party were also depicted in a much more favourable light than Latvian politicians were. The newspapers argued that because leftist deputies were in opposition to the government, that kept them from doing their work fully:

*“Никто из депутатов, кроме «пчел», к детям не вышел.»* (“*No MP except some from PCTVL came to see the children*” (Вести Сегодня, 6 February 2004)

Politicians from other parties were often described in the Russian language newspapers as nationalists who do not care about the problems of minority groups. Russian language newspapers were particularly harsh in their description of TB/LNNK and its position vis-à-vis education reforms.

### **Non-governmental organisations**

The way in which the Russian Schools Defence Headquarters were described in the Latvian and Russian language press was extremely diverse. The Latvian newspapers presented the organisation as the embodiment of evil, while Russian newspapers idealised and glorified participants in the organisation as selfless fighters for the future of the entire Russian speaking society.

Russian language newspapers offered extensive and detailed information about the organisation's work, and readers were introduced to its activists. The “imagined reader” carefully monitored everything that happened in relation to education reforms and was well informed about headquarters operations.

The Latvian Centre for Defence of Russian Schools (LAŠOR)<sup>21</sup> opposed amendments to the education law and expressed views similar to those of the Russian Schools Defence Headquarters. For that reason, the organisation received neutral or positive coverage in the Russian language press. Mentioned most frequently in the newspapers was the organisation's leader, Igors Pimenovs. He was often called upon to represent minority organisations at debates and discussions organised by various government institutions.

<sup>21</sup> Латвийская ассоциация в поддержку школ с обучением на русском языке (ЛАШОР).

### **International organisations**

Russian language newspapers presented various international organisations, and particularly the institutions of the European Union, as unquestioned authorities which could be mentioned by opponents of the reforms to convince others that their views were the correct ones. Newspapers suggested that there might be various sanctions against the Latvian state if the education law amendments were approved.

The Russian language press also offered a great deal of information about things said by people in Russia – members of Parliament and local embassy officials – when it came to minority education reforms in Latvia. These statements were most often based on international reforms related to minority and human rights. In reporting on the active work of representatives of Russia at the Latvian and international level – activities which were aimed at ending the education reforms, the Russian language newspapers encouraged readers to identify themselves with Russia as a country which defends their rights. In terms of discourse, this meant that Russian language newspapers were encouraged to form a civic identity that is oriented toward Russia.

### **Debates about the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities<sup>22</sup> (2005)**

#### **Description of events**

The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe was signed by Latvia in 1995, but Parliament only ratified it on May 26, 2005.

On May 9, 2005, members of the governing coalition agreed that the convention would be ratified by June 2005. The partners also agreed to attach a declaration in which they would state that Latvia was ratifying the convention with two opt-outs – those relating to Articles 11 and 12 of the convention (use of minority languages in street names and in local governments). The Latvian position would be based on the Constitution and the law on the state language, and the government would define those minorities to which the convention applies.

The Cabinet of Ministers approved the convention on May 17 and sent it on to Parliament. MP Jakovs Pliņers (PCTVL) organised a protest outside the Cabinet of Ministers building on May 17, demanding that the document be ratified without any opt-outs or limitations. Parliament ratified the convention on May 26, with TB/LNNK, PCTVL and the TSP voting against it.

It is of key importance here to mention other events in May 2005 which were a part of the agenda of newspapers:

- US President George Bush visited Latvia on May 4;
- On May 9, the Latvian president attended a ceremony in Moscow to commemorate the Soviet Union's victory in World War II;
- A planned border treaty between Russia and Latvia was not signed on May 10;
- On May 12, Parliament approved a declaration to denounce the totalitarian Communist regime of the USSR.

<sup>22</sup> The Latvian translation of the convention's title is not precise, because "national minorities" is translated as "minority ethnic groups". This is a broader concept which does not differentiate between national and ethnic minorities – something which, in this case, is extremely important. The convention applies only to national minorities, including ethnic groups which have no country in which they would represent the majority – a country which they used to have or toward which they are working. This also applies to ethnic groups which lived in a territory before the arrival of representatives of those ethnic groups who later established a state on the territory or violently forced others to join the new country. Local residents consider such people to be aliens. (See Kymlicka, W. (2001). *Can Liberal Pluralism be Exported? Western Political Theory and Ethnic Relations in Eastern Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 25.) The term that is used in Russian, "нацменьшинства", is also a very broad term which does not differentiate between ethnic and national minorities.

## The influence of newspapers on the process of shaping identities

The Latvian language newspapers did not use vivid discursive strategies aimed at shaping the identity of a concrete group. Newspapers had sarcastic things to say about the convention and the debates among parties, thus reducing the importance of the convention as a resource for public integration. Public integration in Latvia was presented as a more or less successful event, which indicates that a positive image for Latvia was being shaped in relation to integration policies.

Russian language newspapers, by contrast, devoted a great deal of attention to Latvian government policy over the previous 15 years in discussing the convention – the country's independence declaration in particular. Newspapers argued that all of the people of Latvia had to have equal rights. Newspapers also reviewed the process of approving the Latvian citizenship law and state language law, along with the debates which swirled around these. It was stressed that these political processes were always aimed against the interests of Russians in Latvia. This could be described as a strategy of reproducing identity,<sup>23</sup> which continues to construct a separation between Latvians and Russians. This mostly made use of the strategy of the argumentation of victims, which indirectly offered a negative evaluation of what "other" groups were doing. This relates to Brass (1985),<sup>24</sup> who argues that when it comes to ethnic relations, the role of politicians is very important in the manifestation and mobilisation of ethnic belonging. Brass also argues that ethnic groups are artefacts of the political process.

In the context of protecting the rights of national minorities, ethnic identity is essentially strengthened on the basis of political belonging (identity). The reader is offered linguistic exaggerations about threats against their situation on the one hand, and political agents which defend them on the other hand – PCTVL, the People's Harmony Party, the Russian Foreign Ministry and the International Affairs Commission of the upper house of the Russian Parliament. In some cases, the Russian newspapers had sarcastic interpretations of history, scorning those politicians whose activities are based on an emotional perception of Latvian history.

In the context of the minorities convention, newspapers did not use elements of culture to strengthen ethnic identity.

## Presentation of events in Latvian language newspapers

Both *NRA* and *Diena* offered very descriptive reporting on the minorities declaration, presenting the main bones of contention – opt-outs from Articles 10 and 11 of the convention, as well as the definition of what a minority is. *Lauku Avīze* devoted more attention to the convention than the two aforementioned newspapers did. *LA* interviewed experts and politicians about this issue.

The media often quoted or paraphrased statements made by US President George Bush about the situation of minorities in Latvia – ones which were in support of a positive Latvian image. The image of Latvia as a victim was also presented, however, with newspapers using facts from history and quoting those Russian media outlets which had a different interpretation, of Bush's speech in Rīga:

*"I can perceive the things that Bush said about minorities as commendation of what Latvia has done so far. We know very well how difficult our historical heritage is, and in Bush's speech I heard a clear and positive evaluation and support for the course that we have taken..."* (*Lauku Avīze*, 9 June 2005)

*"The Kremlin and the people who implement its interests locally probably will not be able to use the things which Bush said about minority rights as an indicator of the maturity of democracy and a civic society that is based on common principles of responsibilities so as to accuse Latvia with any justification of 'discrimination against Russian speakers'."* (*Diena*, 9 May 2005)

<sup>23</sup> Wodak, R. and M. Meyer (2001). *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Sage Publications.

<sup>24</sup> See Brass, P.R. (1985) (ed.). *Ethnic Groups and the State*. Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble Books.

*"It must be added that the Russian media devoted a lot of attention to Bush's speech in Rīga, where he said that minority rights must be observed in a democracy. In the neighbouring country's press, this was perceived as a direct accusation against Latvia."* (Diena, 10 May 2005)

The newspaper *Lauku Avīze* offered lots of detailed coverage to debates among politicians and experts when it came to coming up with a definition of minorities which could be included in the declaration and appended to the convention (see *Lauku Avīze*, 12 May 2005)

The media often indicated that the minority convention was just a resource for routine political games. It was argued on several occasions that the reason why the minority convention was on the agenda was unsuccessful experience in relation to the border treaty which Latvia and Russia still had not signed:

*"The only practical result of the May celebrations which Latvia might have expected was the signing of the long-awaited border treaty, which Russia had proposed to do on May 10. Russia proposed, but Russia rejected the idea. Who knows why anyone in Latvia feels guilty for what did not happen? How else can one interpret the government's strict decision to ensure that the minorities convention be ratified by the Saeima before the Summer Solstice festival?"* (*Lauku Avīze*, 11 May 2005)

*Lauku Avīze* took a nationalist position vis-à-vis the convention, sarcastically writing about Latvia's "enemies", "Russifiers" and "imperialists." By this the newspaper referred to institutions in Latvia and Russia which represented Russians. This indicated an "us against them" construct:

*"(..) political parties must provide explanations (..) They must explain why Latvia's enemies abroad and domestic opponents of the country are so very tempted about this seemingly democratic document – what do they hope to achieve? They must explain how to make sure that the convention is not used as an instrument to create unrest in Latvia. It would be good if the governing parties were to convince us that nothing will be given to serve the interests of Russifiers and imperialists."* (*Lauku Avīze*, 14 May 2005)

*Diena* and *NRA* typically presented a view of the adoption of the minorities convention which dealt with issues and exacerbated the situation. This is indicated by the way in which the document was described – it was indirectly suggested that the convention would create conflicts in society:

*"Still, we can expect more than one quarrel about the convention in the Saeima, because it is perceived as an issue that is of great political sensitivity and is a matter of principle. Mostly, however, these are biases that are caused by a lack of knowledge, because Latvian already guarantees all of the minority rights that are mentioned in the convention."* (*Diena*, 11 May 2005)

*"The political effect of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Latvia's society has been exaggerated. (..) Now it seems, however, that this effect is being exaggerated to an even greater degree – the point where one cannot understand whether ratification of the convention which was signed 10 years ago should support or exclude disputes in society."* (*NRA*, 16 May 2005)

*Lauku Avīze* was the only one of the three Latvian language newspapers which wrote about a PCTVL protest at the Cabinet of Ministers building on May 17, when the government was approving the convention. Information about the protest was very general, thus reducing its importance:

*"The protest brought together some 100 participants. The number of police officers and journalists was approximately the same. Even though the protest took place during school hours, there were also many young people who were present. (..) A place of honour was assigned to the National Bolsheviks – their leader, Beness Aijo, was given a chance to make a speech along with the 'main orators' of PCTVL."* (*Lauku Avīze*, 18 May 2005)

The newspaper *Diena*, in explaining why the convention was being ratified only now suggested in an impersonal way that "pro-Moscow" parties were to blame. This indirectly indicated an attempt to preserve a positive image for right wing parties while destroying the image of left wing and centrist parties, arguing that they were supporting the implementation of Russia's political impulses in Latvia:

*"Latvia signed the agreement on acceding to the convention in 1995, but the Saeima has delayed ratification both because of the fact that pro-Moscow politicians were hoping without*

reason that the convention could be used to introduce a second state language and to strengthen a state with two communities, and because Latvian radicals agreed with them, saying that this would certainly happen.” (Diena, 19 May 2005)

## Presentation of events in Latvian language newspapers

### Parties

*Lauku Avīze* presented a sarcastic statement about the fact that Jakovs Pliners, a representative of PCTVL, refused to meet US President George Bush because the president was not focusing attention on the “sorry” condition of Russians in Latvia:

*“Pliners says that he has lots of reasons for this – Bush has done nothing to resolve the problem of Latvia’s non-citizens, to ensure that Russians can speak Russian at Latvian government institutions, to allow veterans of the Red Army to enjoy various discounts, and so forth. ‘I cannot and do not want to do this,’ Pliners said at the end of his announcement. (...) The truth is that this phrase illustrates all of PCTVL and its policies very well – it does not want to and cannot refrain from the need to scream about violations of minority rights.”* (*Lauku Avīze*, 10 May 2005)

Latvian newspapers presented impersonal and scornful descriptions of left wing parties (PCTVL, the People’s Harmony Party), and complaints about these parties were generalised: *“The so-called leftist MPs have tried to use the convention as a political weapon in support of ‘arguments’ related to their various demands – repealing education reforms, for instance.”* (*Lauku Avīze*, 13 May 2005)

The paper also had sarcastic things to say about PCTVL representatives who took part in a protest aimed against the planned opt-outs in relation to the minorities convention:

*“Among the protesters were nearly all of the most active politicians of PCTVL – Jakovs Pliners, Tatjana Ždanoka, Vladimirs Buzajevs, Juris Petropavlovskis, Boriss Cilevičs, Genādijs Kotovs and others. (...) Buzajevs inspired those who were present with these words: ‘We are not guests, we are the true owners of this land. If you don’t believe me, just look at the Barclay de Tolli monument and the Orthodox cathedral!’”* (*Lauku Avīze*, 18 May 2005)

The media used exaggerated concepts to reflect PCTVL’s negative position toward the opt-outs:

*“... PCTVL is hysterically protesting on behalf of ratifying it without any opt-outs.”* (*Diena*, 19 May 2005)

*Lauku Avīze* argued that the People’s Party, the First Party of Latvia, the Latvian Alliance of the Green Party and Farmers Union and the New Era party did not object to two opt-outs or to the definition of national minorities, while TB/LNNK did not support ratification of the convention at all:

*“TB/LNNK feels that the convention should apply only to those minority nationalities which do not have their own country – the Livonians and the Roma, for instance.”* (*Lauku Avīze*, 24 May 2005)

PCTVL, the People’s Harmony Party and the Latvian Socialist Party supported ratification of the convention without any opt-outs. PCTVL argued that the convention should be applied to all non-Latvians (*Lauku Avīze*, 24 May 2005)

### Non-governmental organisations

The newspaper *Lauku Avīze* wrote about several organisations – OKROL (the Unified Congress of the Russian Community in Latvia) and the Russian Schools Defence Headquarters – which took part in the PCTVL-organised protest at the Cabinet of Ministers on May 17:

*“Also there were the main activists of OKROL and the headquarters.”* (*Lauku Avīze*, 18 May 2005)

After the convention was ratified, on May 26, *Diena* published the views of Igors Pimenovs from LAŠOR with respect to the minorities convention:

*“Opt-outs were approved so as to calm down nationalist Latvian voters who think that the convention would mean the end of independence. (...) These opt-outs will only make Russian nationalists in Russia more active.” (Diena, 26 May 2005)*

Diena also reported on the views of Ilze Brands-Kehre, director of the Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies, who said that the opt-outs were not necessary:

*“On the one hand, the convention applies only to citizens who have lived in Latvia for generations. On the other hand, non-citizens are given equal rights, but newly naturalised citizens who have undergone naturalisation during the period of independence simply fall through the cracks. I don’t think the opt-outs are necessary at all.” (Diena, 26 May 2005)*

### **International organisations and institutions**

After ratification of the convention, on May 26, NRA quoted experts who said that the Council of Europe would criticise the way in which the convention was adopted – it would have problems with opt-outs related to Articles 10 and 11 of the convention, which speak to topographic signs in Latvian and the language used to communicate with local government institutions. (NRA, 27 May 2005)

Diena wrote about complaints on the part of the Russian Foreign Ministry which were focused on the ratified convention:

*“The only member state of the Council of Europe which commented on the minorities convention which Latvia ratified on Friday was Russia – it harshly complained about the fact that the convention does not apply to non-citizens and that it was ratified with opt-outs. ‘The problem of non-citizens is the main human rights violation in Latvia,’ said Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.” (Diena, 28 May 2005)*

### **Presentation of events in Russian language newspapers**

As was the case in Latvian language newspapers, increased attention was devoted in Russian language newspapers to the visit to Rīga of US President George Bush and to his official speech, in which he mentioned the status of minorities in the Baltic States.

The newspaper *Час* quoted Latvian President Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga’s comments about Bush’s speech, and it made reference to the president’s statement about the fact that the Republic of Latvia treats all residents equally and that its goal is a civil society that is based on the classical model of France, not any ethnic conditions. *Час* had sarcastic things to say about this, arguing that ethnic groups in Latvia are ignored altogether. (*Час*, 9 May 2005)

*“Заметим, что по Конституции Французской Республики в государстве никаких национальных меньшинств просто нет...” (“Let us note that the constitution of the Republic of France indicates that there are no national minorities in that country at all.”) (*Час*, 9 May 2005)*

In writing about the Bush visit, *Телеграф* offered a particularly emotional position, one that described the roles of victims in talking about the status of minorities in Latvia:

*“Ему не расскажут, что нацменьшинства так и не дождалось обещанного диалога по реформе образования, столь накалившей атмосферу. Первого человека Америки не посвятят в такие «мелочи», как переписывание Конвенции о защите нацменьшинств, принятое местным интеграторами” (“No one told him that minority nationalities did not get the promised dialogue about education reforms, that this really exacerbated the atmosphere. The senior official of the United States will not be enlightened with ‘petty’ issues such as the rewriting of the national minorities defence convention, which local integrators have accepted.”) (*Телеграф*, 6 May 2005)*

The issue of citizenship was very important when Russian language newspapers wrote about the minorities convention. *Телеграф* argued that a big problem was the understanding of the concept of citizenship in the context of defining minority nationalities, insisting that the convention would apply to “groups of citizens that are integrated into Latvia’s society.” The newspaper recalled the process of approving the citizenship law, which created much debate in

society, thus pointing to the idea that the rights of Russians in Latvia were being oppressed. (Телеграф, 10 May 2005)

Телеграф also was very critical about the opt-outs and the definition of national minorities, which would be attached to the convention. This was indicated in several headlines such as “Конвенция без нацменьшинств” (“A Convention Without Minority Nationalities”) (Телеграф, 12 May 2005). This was presented as a position that would diminish self-evaluation and would create negative aspects of the situation:

“Обе сноски, как пояснил Пабрикс, никак не отразятся на теперешней жизни нацменьшинств, точнее, тех, кого в скором времени так не будут называть, поменяв, видимо, их статус на оккупантов, репатриантов и т.д. Зато оговорки поднимут рейтинг правительства в глазах титульной нации” (“Both changes, as Pabriks explained, would have no effect on the existing lives of minority nationalities or, more precisely, the life of people who will soon not be called members of national minorities any more – they will be given the status of occupants, repatriants, etc. The objections, however, will improve the rating of the government in the eyes of the titular nation.”) (Телеграф, 12 May 2005)

It is very important that the Russian language was used in newspapers as a powerful discourse which constructs belonging. The newspaper Час wrote indirectly that language was the key factor in defining minorities:

“И тут возникает важнейший вопрос - есть русские староверы, жившие в Латвии в течение долгих столетий. И они уж точно должны считаться национальным меньшинством. А есть русские, которые приехали в Латвию лишь после Второй мировой войны и в глазах государства меньшинствами явно не считаются. Но и у тех, и у других - один язык. Русский” (“And here we see the most important issue – Russian Old Believers have lived in Latvia for many centuries. They must certainly be seen as a national minority. There are Russians who arrived in Latvia only after World War II, and they are not seen as a national minority in the eyes of the government. Still, they both speak the same language – the Russian language.”) (Час, 11 May 2005)

The discourse also involved rhetoric about whether it is possible to separate between Russians who were born in Latvia (“потомственных латвийских русских”) from those who were not (see Час, 11 May 2005). The Russian language was given the main role as the decisive factor related to the situation of minorities in Latvia. This discourse involved the strategy of a victim's arguments, which suggested that Russians in Latvia were being oppressed:

“Иными словами, делается все, чтобы русские статус нацменьшинства не получили и после формальной ратификации конвенции” (“In other words, everything is being done to make sure that after the formal ratification of the convention, Russians will not receive the status of a national minority.”) (Вести Сегодня, 14 May 2005)

The discourse of nationalism was used widely in writing about the minorities convention, suggesting that Latvian politics were distinctly nationalist and that nationalism feeds the Latvian society: “метастазы национализма пропитали латвийское общество” (“The metastasis of nationalism has saturated Latvia's society”) (Час, 17 May 2005). Newspapers also argued that the convention had created agony in society – a conflict among the nationalities which live in the country:

“...парламентской статистике не отражено, сколько оплаченных налогоплательщиками часов затратили депутаты на зализывание исторических травм, проводя дискриминирующие законопроекты и обсуждая откровенно антирусские, точнее, антирусские декларации и обращения” (“... Parliamentary statistics do not tell us how much taxpayer money MPs spent in ‘licking’ historical traumas, reviewing discriminatory legislation and openly discussions declarations and attitudes which are anti-Russia or, more precisely, anti-Russian”) (Час, 17 May 2005)

One politician who was interviewed often by the newspapers was Boriss Cilēvičs, the then chairman of the committee of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly in Strasbourg which dealt with minority rights. In Телеграф and Вести Сегодня alike, he offered detailed explanations of the opt-outs in the convention and of the reason why it contains a different definition of minority nationalities than the one which has been specified by the Council

of Europe. He said that this was first and foremost so as to avoid any contradictions with the Latvian Constitution. The second reason, however, was distinctly emotional:

*“У нас государство недоверяет нацменьшинствам. Дескать все, что идет на пользу меньшинствам, делается во вред коренной нации”* (“In our country, the government doesn’t trust minority nationalities. The idea is that anything which helps minority nationalities hurts the indigenous nationality.”) (*Телеграф*, 11 May 2005)

In *Час*, he had sarcastic things to say about the opt-outs, linking those to the occupation and indirectly indicating that as far as he was concerned, the opt-outs represented Latvia’s desire to take revenge against Russia:

*“Понимаете, это единственный вопрос, к которому можно пристегнуть оккупацию, потому что остальные нормы конвенции с оккупацией связать довольно трудно. А здесь такой красивый наглядный образ: «Названия на русском напоминают о советском времени!”* (“Please understand that this is the only issue to which the occupation can be linked, because it is quite difficult to link other norms in the convention to the occupation. Here, however, we have a lovely and readily visible excuse: ‘Place names in Russian remind us of the Soviet era!’”) (*Час*, 17 May 2005)

When the Cabinet of Ministers approved the minorities convention on May 17 and sent it on to Parliament, the newspapers increasingly used the strategy of a victim’s arguments, complete with emotional exaggerations:

*“Политика Латвии последних лет пропитана ложью. Официальные лица говорят одно, а подразумевают прямо противоположное. Говорят о сотрудничестве - и вступают в ЕС, ни словом не обмолвившись о территориальных претензиях к России. Говорят об интеграции - и берутся за ратификацию конвенции о правах нацменьшинств через 10 лет после подписания. Да и то с оговорками. Говорят о натурализации - и тормозят ее. Говорят о советской оккупации - и едут в Москву на праздник Победы”* (“Politics in Latvia have been full of lies over the last several years. Officials say one thing but think very much the other. They talk about co-operation and join the EU without saying a single thing about territorial claims against Russia. They talk about ratification and ratify a convention on the rights of national minorities 10 years after it is signed – and with opt-outs, too. They talk about naturalisation and hinder it. They talk about the Soviet occupation and travel to Moscow for Victory Day celebrations”) (*Час*, 18 May 2005)

After the convention was ratified on May 26, newspapers wrote sarcastically that the opt-outs and the definition of minorities were based on Latvia’s offence over the occupation. Newspapers indirectly indicated that Latvia’s politics are emotional, not rational:

*“Это уже становится традицией нашей страны - принимать важные международные документы с декларациями, заявлениями и оговорками, меняющими их смысл. А потом долго говорить о тяжелом историческом наследии и особой, сложившейся только у нас, ситуации... И конвенция, к сожалению, не стала исключением”* (“That is becoming a tradition in this country – ratifying important international documents with various declarations, announcements and opt-outs which change their meaning. Then they spend a long time talking about the difficult historical heritage and the situation which is special, typical only of us... The convention, sadly, is no exception”) (*Час*, 27 May 2005)

The newspapers argued that the two opt-outs to the convention indirectly indicated that Latvia wanted to avoid responsibility: *“...это профанация официальной Ригой якобы взятых на себя обязательств”* (“... that is a profanation of the responsibility which official Rīga supposedly takes upon itself”) (*Вести Сегодня*, 27 May 2005).

Both *Вести Сегодня* and *Телеграф* printed front-page headlines which had negative things to say about the convention: *“Хромая конвенция”* (“Crippled convention”) and *“Дискриминация – навсегда”* (“Discrimination for life”) (*Телеграф*, 27 May 2005, *Вести Сегодня*, 27 May 2005). The newspapers sarcastically reported on the position of various political parties during ratification of the convention.



## Presentation of participants in the events in Russian language newspapers

### Parties

On the front page of its May 2 edition, *Телеграф* published an interview with Andrejs Kļementjevs, a representative of the People's Harmony Party. The interview was focused on the minorities convention, and the MP displayed a very sceptical idea about Latvian policy in the area of minority nationalities:

*“Латвия только создает видимость того, что тут пытаются, наладить отношения с национальными меньшинствами.(..) кто-то и может поставить латвийскую сторону на место, то это только евроструктуры, надзирающие за соблюдением прав нацменьшинств” (“Latvia is only creating the impression that it is trying to settle relationships with national minorities. (..) If anyone can put Latvia in its place, then it is the European structures which are responsible for the implementation of national minority rights.” (Телеграф, 2 May 2005)*

Attitudes toward TB/LNNK in the newspapers were sarcastic and scornful:

*“Разумеется, национал-патриотические парламентарии всячески просили министра не спешить с ратификацией. Так, по Петерису Табунсу, «угроза Латвии огромна» - со стороны русских, разумеется” (“To be sure, the nationalist and patriotic parliamentarians tried very hard to ask the minister not to be in any hurry in ratification. As Pēteris Tabūns put it, ‘there are great threats against Latvia’ – threats on the part of Russians, of course.” (Вести Сегодня, 14 May 2005)*

The newspapers devoted a lot of attention to PCTVL activities, quoting an announcement which the party submitted to Parliament with respect to the minorities convention. They also published information about PCTVL's planned protest at the Cabinet of Ministers on May 17:

*“Мы считаем, что права, гарантированные конвенцией, следует предоставить всем постоянным жителям государства, которые жили в Латвии на момент ее подписания. Мы считаем, что предлагаемые оговорки сделают процесс ратификации бессмысленным, что только ратификация конвенции без оговорок и ограничивающих деклараций могла бы способствовать единству общества Латвии” (“We believe that the rights which are guaranteed in the convention must be applied to all permanent residents of the country who lived in Latvia at the moment when the convention was signed. We think that the proposed opt-outs will make the process of ratification entirely senseless – only the ratification of the convention without any opt-outs and declarative announcements could promote unity in Latvia's society” (Час, 12 May 2005)*

In other reports in the Russian language press, PCTVL used exaggerations about the status of Russian residents of Latvia, pointing to three political events which supposedly were aimed at worsening their situation – planned ratification of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities with opt-outs, a declaration aimed at denouncing totalitarianism, and the ruling by the Constitutional Court that education reforms did not violate the rights of Russians (Час, 16 May 2005)

Russian language newspapers offered extensive coverage of the PCTVL protest at the Cabinet of Ministers which was aimed at urging ratification of the convention without opt-outs and without the planned definition of national minorities. In *Вести Сегодня*, the protest was presented as a revolution, and there were photographs and powerful slogans on the paper's front page on May 18. *Час*, by contrast, wrote sarcastically about the protest, using diminutives to describe the protesters:

*“Пикетчики, среди которых были депутаты - «пчелы» Яков Плинер, Владимир Бузаев и Юрий Соколовский, - держали в руках плакаты с надписями на русском, латышском и английском языках. Надписи на плакатах гласили: ‘1/4 жителей Латвии - неграждане - политически репрессированы» и «Вопрос образования - вопрос свободы человека (Ж. Руссо)’ (“Among the protesters were ‘bees’ such as Jakovs Pliners, Vladimirs Buzajevs and Juris Sokolovskis. They were holding up posters with text in Russian, Latvian and English. The texts announced that ‘1/4 of Latvia's residents – non-citizens – politically repressed*

people' and that 'the issue of education is an issue of human freedoms (Rousseau)' (Час, 18 May 2005)

On May 20, *Вести Сегодня* published an interview with Ivars Godmanis from the Latvia's Way party, who expressed the view that Russians make up the majority of the population in most of Latvia's cities, and that means that the convention cannot apply to them (*Вести Сегодня*, 20 May 2005)

Russian newspapers made reference to a TB/LNNK announcement in Parliament to denounce the ratified minorities convention:

*“Как подчеркнул глава фракции «тевземцев» в Сейме Марис Гринблатс, поспешно принятая конвенция дает слишком широкое определение нацменьшинства, оставляя возможности для протестов враждебных Латвии сил, в том числе защитники русских школ могут поддерживать требование об отмене реформы образования в школах нацменьшинств” (“As the chairman of the TB/LNNK faction in Parliament, Māris Grīnblats, stressed, the hurriedly approved convention creates excessive opportunities for forces that are hostile to Latvia to protest. Russian school defenders, among others, can continue to demand the repeal of minority education reforms” (Час, 30 May 2005)*

### **Non-governmental organizations**

Час also conducted a provocative interview with representatives of the “Everything for Latvia!” movement, the aim being to determine “how to establish a Latvian Latvia.” After the interview, the most interesting comments were put on the newspaper's front page. Час constructed the oppressed situation of Russians in Latvia in a provocative way:

*“Негры’ должны уехать или стать латышами” (“The ‘Negroes’ have to leave or become Latvians”) (Час, 16 May 2005)*

Also participating in the PCTVL protest on May 17 was the Association of Latvia's Residents (Объединение жителей Латвии), and its representative, Vladislavs Nauduševičs said that Russian speakers must not be passive observers with respect to the convention, because with opt-outs, the convention would serve as a foundation for their destruction. He also said that in Latvia, “democracy exists only on paper.” (*Вести Сегодня*, 18 May 2005)

### **International organisations**

As noted above, the Russian newspapers often interviewed Boriss Cilēvičs, who said again and again that the Council of Europe might not accept the Latvian-ratified convention with the planned opt-outs. (Час, 17 May 2005)

On May 16, the Council of Europe held a summit meeting in Warsaw, with representatives of the Russian Foreign Ministry in attendance. *Вести Сегодня* reported that at Russia's initiative, the summit would discuss the status of minority nationalities in Latvia, along with “политика двойных стандартов в отношении прав человека” (“bilateral standards in policies related to human rights”). Macedonia, the paper argued, has one set of standards about minorities, while Latvia has a different one. (*Вести Сегодня*, 17 May 2005)

After the convention was ratified, newspapers commented on the views of the Russian Foreign Ministry and the International Affairs Committee of the upper house of the Russian parliament about Latvia as an undemocratic country:

*“Комментируя намерения латвийского правительства «поправить» Рамочную конвенцию, заявил, что таким образом наши власти пытаются навсегда узаконить недемократические нормы” (“Commenting on the Latvian government's intention of ‘fixing’ the convention, the ministry announced that by doing this, our government is trying to ensure that undemocratic norms become lawful for time eternal”) (Телеграф, 27 May 2005)*

*“...принятое решение свидетельствует о том, что эта страна не является европейской, и лишь подчеркивает «недоразвитость латвийских демократических институтов, продвигающихся исключительно в направлении псевдопатриотизма, псевдоисторизма, ксенофобии и нацизма” (“... the approved decision indicates that this cannot be seen as a European country, and it only emphasises the lack of development among*

*Latvia's democratic institutions, which are moving in the direction of pseudo-patriotism, pseudo-history, xenophobia and Nazism") (Вести Сегодня, 28 May 2005)*

In its May 30 issue, *Вести Сегодня* reported that a commission would be established in Moscow to defend minority nationalities in Latvia.

### 6.3. RESEARCH CONCERNING THE DYNAMICS OF POLITICAL INTEGRATION

#### SUPPORT FOR POLITICAL PARTIES DURING SAEIMA ELECTIONS ON THE BASIS OF ETHNIC BELONGING – 1993, 1995, 1998, 2002

The aim in this section of the report is to discuss tendencies which have to do with changes among the supporters of political parties, reviewing this question on the basis of ethnic belonging. The analysis is based on research that was conducted approximately one month after parliamentary elections in 1993, 1995, 1998 and 2002. The research cohort was selected on the basis of a multi-level and random selection of respondents who would be representative of the totality of citizens of the Republic of Latvia. Direct interviews were conducted at the place of residence of respondents (Table 21).

**Table 21. Methodology used to conduct post-election surveys**

Session of Parliament	Survey time	Survey method	Description of sample	No. of respondents
5 <sup>th</sup> session	July 1993	Direct interviews, place of residence	Multi-level, random selection, representative of all citizens	607 citizens who voted
6 <sup>th</sup> session	Oct.-Nov. 1995	Direct interviews, place of residence	Multi-level, random selection, representative of all citizens	550 citizens who voted
7 <sup>th</sup> session	Oct.-Nov. 1998	Direct interviews, place of residence	Multi-level, random selection, representative of all citizens	860 citizens who voted
8 <sup>th</sup> session	Nov. 2002	Direct interviews, place of residence	Multi-level, random selection, representative of all citizens	1,012 citizens

As readers will know, the process of naturalisation, which was introduced in Latvia in 1995, allowed people who arrived in Latvia during and after the Soviet period to obtain citizenship. Post-election surveys allow one to monitor trends in terms of the way in which the proportion of citizens who are ethnic Latvians, ethnic Russians, and representatives of other nationalities has changed. Table 22 shows that if 91% of voters in 1993 were ethnic Latvians, then their percentage declined to 77% in 2002. There are essentially two reasons for this. First of all, non-Latvian voters have become more active. Second, the number of non-Latvian citizens has increased as a result of naturalisation. It must be stressed, however, that greater activity among minority voters is the more important of these two factors.

**Table 22. Voting on the basis of ethnic belonging, of all voters**

Election	Latvians (%)	Russians (%)	Others (%)
5 <sup>th</sup> Saeima, 1993	91	9 (Russians + others)	--
6 <sup>th</sup> Saeima, 1995	82	14	4
7 <sup>th</sup> Saeima, 1998	82	13	5
8 <sup>th</sup> Saeima, 2002	77	17	6

Source: Survey of citizens of the Republic of Latvia, 1993, LSPC. Survey of citizens of the Republic of Latvia, 1995, BDN. Survey of citizens of the Republic of Latvia, 1998, BDN. Survey of citizens of the Republic of Latvia, 2002, BISS.

**Table 23. Citizenship obtained through the process of naturalisation**

Year	No. of naturalised citizens		Total no. of citizens	% of naturalised citizens among all citizens
1995	984	984		
1996	3,016	4,000		
1997	2,993	6,993		
1998	4,439	11,432	1,767,460 (as of 1 July 1999)	0.65
2000	14,900	38,759		
2001	10,637	49,396		
2002	9,844	59,239	1,791,318 (as of 1 July 2002)	3.3
2003	10,049	69,288		
2004	16,064	85,352		
2005	19,169	104,521	1,834,282 (as of 1 January 2006)	5.7
<b>Total</b>		<b>104,521</b>		

Source: Naturalisation Board of the Republic of Latvia. Data from the Population Register of the Citizenship and Migration Board, valid as of 1 January 2006.

Table 22 shows that 18% of those who cast votes in the 7<sup>th</sup> Saeima election in 1998 were non-Latvians, while the proportion of such people during the 8<sup>th</sup> Saeima election in 2002 had risen to 23% -- an increase of 5%. If we compare this to the dynamics of the proportion of naturalised citizens among all citizens, we see that the percentage has increased from 0.65% in 1998 to 3.3% in 2002. This means that between the two elections, the proportion of naturalised citizens in the total body of citizens increased by less than 3%. These numbers suggest that the percentage of minority voters is increasing largely thanks to the activities of minority voters, and not so much as a result of an increase in the number of voters as a result of naturalisation.

If we review the number of parliamentary seats which have been won by political parties during the last four Saeima elections, we see that 21 parties have won seats at least once (Table 24). Only one of them, TB/LNNK, has managed to retain its status as a parliamentary party during the entire period since the first Saeima election in 1993. Latvia's Way won seats three times, LNNK running separately succeeded twice (the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Saeima), as did the People's Harmony Party (6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Saeima) and the People's Party (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Saeima). The other 16 parties or alliances of parties won seats only once. True, the PCTVL alliance brings together several parties, and it can be seen as the successor to the People's Harmony Party and the Equality party. This means that minority parties are stable political forces, too, and they have systematically been represented in Parliament. Analysis of the number of seats shows that the most stable parliamentary parties are the nationalist and conservative TB/LNNK on the one hand, and the parties which have joined together under the PCTVL banner and defend the rights of minority nationalities on the other.

**Table 24. Seats won by political parties in the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Saeima election**

No.	Party	5 <sup>th</sup> elect.	6 <sup>th</sup> elect.	7 <sup>th</sup> elect.	8 <sup>th</sup> elect.
1.	Latvia's Way	36	17	21	
2.	Latvian National Independence Movement (LNNK)	15	8 (with Green Party)		
3.	Harmony for Latvia – Rebirth of Economy	13			
4.	Latvian Farmers Union	12			
5.	Equality	7			
6.	For the Fatherland and Freedom	6	14	17 (TB/LNNK)	7
7.	Latvian Christian Democratic Union	6			
8.	Democratic Centre Party	5			
9.	Democratic Party "Saimnieks"		18		
10.	People's Movement for Latvia ("Zīģerists Party")		16		
11.	Unified list of Latvian Farmers Union, Christian Democratic Union and Latgale Democratic Party		8		
12.	Latvian Union Party		8		
13.	People's Harmony Party		6	16	
14.	Latvian Socialist Party		5		
15.	People's Party			24	20
16.	Latvian Social Democratic Union			14	
17.	New Party			8	
18.	New Era				26
19.	For Human Rights in a United Latvia				25
20.	Latvian Alliance of the Green Party and Farmers Union				12
21.	First Party of Latvia				10

Source: Central Elections Commission, [www.cvk.lv](http://www.cvk.lv).

**Table 25. Voters in the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Saeima election by nationality (L=Latvian; R=Russian; O=Other)**

No.	Party	L	O	L	R	O	L	R	O	L	R	O
1.	Latvia's Way	88	12	88	6	6	84	8	8			
2.	Latvian National Independence Movement (LNNK)	94	6	100	0	0						
3.	Harmony for Latvia – Rebirth of Economy	47	53									
4.	Latvian Farmers Union	84	16	100	0	0						
5.	Equality	21	79									
6.	For the Fatherland and Freedom	93	7	100	0	0	99	0	1	98	2	0
7.	Latvian Christian Democratic Union	87	13									
8.	Democratic Centre Party	87	13									
9.	Democratic Party "Saimnieks"			84	12	4						
10.	People's Movement for Latvia ("Zigerists Party")			82	10	8						
11.	Unified list of Latvian Farmers Union, Christian Democratic Union and Latgale Democratic Party			94	6							
12.	Latvian Union Party			76	12	12						
13.	People's Harmony Party			25	66	9	19	67	14			
14.	Latvian Socialist Party			23	77							
15.	People's Party						93	5	2	94	4	2
16.	Latvian Social Democratic Union						88	7	5			
17.	New Party						85	9	6			
18.	New Era									91	4	5
19.	For Human Rights in a United Latvia									16	71	13
20.	Latvian Alliance of the Green Party and Farmers Union									95	3	2
21.	First Party of Latvia									91	3	6

Source: Survey of citizens of the Republic of Latvia, 1993, LSPC. Survey of citizens of the Republic of Latvia, 1995, BDN. Survey of citizens of the Republic of Latvia, 1998, BDN. Survey of citizens of the Republic of Latvia, 2002, BISS.

If we look at the ethnicity of those who voted for various parties, we can first define those which have an ethnically homogeneous or heterogeneous electorate. TB/LNNK is the most typical example of this. From the very beginning, almost all of its supporters have been Latvians, with no more than 2-3% of Russians plumping for the party. It must be noted, too, that TB/LNNK is the party with the longest history in Parliament. Other and more recent parliamentary parties also tend to have an ethnically homogeneous electorate – in the 8<sup>th</sup> Saeima election, for instance, 94% of those who voted for the People's Party were Latvians. For the Latvian Alliance of the Green Party and Farmers Union, the same was true of 95% of Latvians. 91% of those who supported New Era and the First Party of Latvia were Latvians. These can, with reason, be called Latvian parties.

It is important that among parliamentary parties, there are none that are supported only by Russian speakers. Those parties which are mostly focused on the defence of minority rights also receive votes from Latvians – for instance, 16% of those who voted for PCTVL in the 8<sup>th</sup> Saeima election were Latvians. Still, 84% of the alliance's supporters were minority citizens, and so with good reason it can be called a party for minorities or Russian speakers.

If we look at the ethnicity of people who voted for parties in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Saeima election, we see that there were several with an electorate that could be described as heterogeneous, but many of them won seats in Parliament only once. Among these were the following parties which won seats in the 5<sup>th</sup> Saeima: Harmony for Latvia – Restoration of the Economy (47% of its voters were Latvians, 53% were Russians), the Latvian Christian Democratic Union (87% and 13%), the Democratic Centre Party (87% and 13%), and the Latvian Union Party (76% and 14%). In the 6<sup>th</sup> Saeima election, there were the People's Movement for Latvia (the Zīgerists Party) (82% and 12%), and the Democratic Party "Saimnieks" (84% and 16%).

Latvia's Way can be distinguished from amongst other parties as a party with an ethnically heterogeneous electorate and also as a party which served in Parliament for a long period of time (the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Saeima). The party received votes from 12-14% of voters. We can assume that ethno-political polarisation among political forces dictated the polarisation of voter choices on the basis of the ethnic principle, and this kept non-Latvians from voting for Latvia's Way, choosing instead to plump for minority parties. The battlefield of Latvia's political parties has a strictly defined ethnic boundary to separate those parties that are supported by ethnic Latvians and those that are supported by others. This is not a trend which appeared instantly – it has been developing over the last 14 years in the context of ethno-political issues (the citizenship law, the naturalisation procedure, the law on the state language, minority education reforms). This has created a situation which ensures that few parties have an ethnically heterogeneous electorate, and changing this situation will certainly be quite complicated.



## ANALYSIS OF PARTY DOCUMENTS

### ***Everything for Latvia!***

The “Everything for Latvia!” (VL) party was established in 2006 on the basis of a public organisation. It is a radically nationalist party, and its stated goal is a “Latvian Latvia – an independent country governed by Latvian values (the Latvian language, culture and political will), one in which residents are brought together by selfless work on behalf of the nation and the fatherland.”<sup>1</sup> At this writing, the party had only drafted its short campaign programme, which emphasises the view that the right of the Latvian people to enjoy full lives in their fatherland, to speak their own language and to specify their future is under threat. Latvians may lose political power in their country, because it might be “taken over by pro-Russian forces which are hostile to Latvia.”<sup>2</sup>

The following goals are defined in the short programme: 1) Ensuring political power for Latvians; 2) Use of the Latvian language as the language of instruction in all state-financed schools; 3) Definition of the Latvian language as the only language in the public and the private sector; 4) Awarding of citizenship only to persons who are loyal to Latvia; 5) Encouraging the emigration of people who are hostile to Latvia.<sup>3</sup>

With respect to the latter two of these goals, the editor of the VL newsletter, Jānis Derums, has written the following: “The new Saeima must immediately halt mass naturalisation and establish an effective repatriation programme to help all of those who cannot accept our language, our laws and our morals to return to their homeland or to emigrate to another country.”<sup>4</sup>

In an interview, a representative of VL said that the main importance of his party in terms of integration relates to the party’s regular and widely advertised activities:

*– “I can cite no other organisation which is not in power in the country but has regularly – once a month, on average – organised large events that are debated in the mass media, any other organisation which has attracted so much publicity and has regularly involved so many active participants, particularly young people”.* (Raivis Dzintars)

### ***For the Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK***

The TB/LNNK alliance was established in 1997, when it defined itself as a nationalist and conservative party. Among its primary positions is the idea that the Latvian language is the cornerstone for national identity. The alliance consistently calls for strict citizenship and immigration policies. The introduction of a position paper approved by the party in 2004 says that “the stability of the Latvian society is guaranteed by the equality of all of Latvia’s citizens, the rights of national minorities, and a continuation of the pre-war traditions of Latvia.”<sup>5</sup>

The party’s position paper for the period between 2004 and 2007 also says this: “The Latvian language is our national value and the foundation for our identity, while also serving as the foundation for education and development in the future. Stable government support must be ensured for the preservation and development of this potential.”<sup>6</sup> In support of this goal, TB/LNNK insists that the Latvian language must be the only state language, and all classes at the high school level must be taught exclusively in Latvian, etc. The party calls for strict controls over the naturalisation process, as well as for increased repatriation of Latvians and non-Latvians alike. Repatriation was also emphasised in the party’s campaign programme in the 2002 election, along with the need to develop a Latvian Latvia.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Information from the party’s Internet homepage: <http://www.visulatvijai.lv/index.php?kat=1&lid=2>.

<sup>2</sup> The short programme of Everything for Latvia: [http://www.visulatvijai.lv/faili/VL/dokumenti/VL\\_isa\\_Programma.doc](http://www.visulatvijai.lv/faili/VL/dokumenti/VL_isa_Programma.doc).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> The Visu Latvijai newsletter, No. 1, June 1 to July 15, 2006, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> For the Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK programme, introduction. <http://www.tb.lv/index.php?id=18>.

<sup>6</sup> For the Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK programme. <http://www.tb.lv/index.php?id=239>.

<sup>7</sup> Central Elections Commission. TB/LNNK campaign programme. <http://web.cvk.lv>.

In accordance with these positions, TB/LNNK has drafted two laws. The first would amend the citizenship law to end naturalisation for a period of time (the 3<sup>rd</sup> transitional rule). The range of people who could apply for citizenship would be narrowed (Articles 13 and 15). Parliament would consider each individual application for citizenship, and the amount of time granted for a review of relevant documents would be extended (Article 17). The process of obtaining citizenship would be made more complicated. It would be supplemented with an interview in Latvian, as well as an added statement in the citizenship oath – a promise to be loyal to Latvia, to strengthen the Latvian language as the only state language, and to do nothing in opposition to Latvia as an independent and democratic country (Articles 21 and 19). It would also be easier to withdraw someone's citizenship (Article 24).

The second proposal has to do with the law on repatriation and emigration. The aim here is to encourage Latvians who live in other countries to return to their ethnic homeland, while at the same time encouraging those non-Latvians who are living in Latvia to leave, thus promoting the "deoccupation" and "decolonisation" of Latvia (Article 1). Each émigré would be given financing to move house or to leave (Article 12). The party wants the law to take effect on January 1, 2007.

In interviews, TB/LNNK representatives have said that ethnic integration is not a priority for them insofar as their party programme is concerned. Of far greater importance is social integration, in which ethnic integration plays only a small role. The party also feels that it is wrong to call it nationalistically radical, but it has declared its principles on national issues very clearly:

- "Our party does not promote this issue as a priority, because we believe that the issue has been misperceived to a certain extent. We would prefer to talk about social integration in the sense that all regions of Latvia must be included in society. We must also work to make sure that the poor, the differently abled, and the families with many children can become a part of society. This ethnic integration is just a part of the mix, and perhaps not the main part." (Māris Grīnblats)

- "We are often told that we are nationalist radicals. No, we support humane and normal integration, because there are good people who want to live here. There are a few Russians who come to this country and learn the language in a few months' time, while others are unable to do so over the course of 50 years. In other words, it all depends on individual will. That is why we want to change the repatriation law and the citizenship law." (Pēteris Tabūns)

- "We have clearly declared these principles, and we believe that we have respect toward those non-Latvians who accept the Latvian rules of the game and become integrated into society. We do not judge people on the basis of ethnicity, but we have no respect for people who spitefully refuse to understand this." (Māris Grīnblats)

### **The Latvian Alliance of the Green Party and Farmers Union**

This alliance is made up of the Latvian Farmers Union (LZS) and the Latvian Green Party (LZP), which merged in 2002. Their joint campaign programme for the 2002 parliamentary election had this to say: "We will shape Latvia as a national, lovely and powerful country, with the Latvian language as the only state language and Latvian culture as the dominant culture. We insist that only the Latvian people have the right to determine the future of the Latvian state."<sup>8</sup> This was the only statement in the programme which had to do with issues of ethnic policy.

The programme of the Latvian Green Party says nothing about public integration, while the programme of the Latvian Farmers Union, which was in force until a new programme was approved on March 11, 2006, stated that the party is a centrist force which stands for "preservation of the national identity of the Latvian people."<sup>9</sup> The party said that it wanted to

<sup>8</sup> Central Elections Commission. Green and Farmers Alliance campaign programme. [http://web.cvk.lv/pub/?doc\\_id=28225](http://web.cvk.lv/pub/?doc_id=28225).

<sup>9</sup> Campaign programme of the Latvian Farmers Union. <http://www.lzs.lv/?sad=programma> (last reviewed on 21 June 2006).

protect the national identity of Latvia, along with Latvian mentality and culture. The programme also said that the LZS considers it to be necessary to stabilise Latvian society, establishing a unified country, which can be achieved “by accepting as citizens and integrating into our country those non-citizens who are loyal to the country.” There was a second statement about this issue: “The Latvian language must be the only state language, but minority nationalities must be given the right to preserve and nurture their language and culture. The result of the naturalisation and integration of loyal non-citizens should lead to the creation of a multi-national society in Latvia.” The new LZS programme, by comparison, has nothing to say about issues which relate to ethnic integration.<sup>10</sup>

Education reforms are important in the area of public integration, too. Education and Science Minister Baiba Rivža, who is a member of the ZZS, wrote in a publication that “no changes will occur in Latvia’s education laws. Education reforms will be continued as planned, and the Latvian language is and will continue to be the only state language in our country.”<sup>11</sup>

In interviews, ZZS representatives have stressed that theirs is a centrist party, one which works in pursuit of a consolidation of society. They defend the Latvian language, but do not feel that naturalisation should be halted. Instead, they are focused on finding compromise among various views and on promoting integration:

- *“We are against radical political forces. We are a centrist political party which is doing everything possible to consolidate society. We are doing everything to shape the welfare state here, so that there is harmony, integration and balance here.” (Jānis Straziņš)*
- *“We unquestionably defend the Latvian language. We defend it, and we want it to develop. We have no desire to behave radically in stopping naturalisation. [...] Ours is a centrist party, and we have to find a compromise between various options so that there are no exaggerations on either side. [...] We also think highly of the fact that people want to become integrated [...], to participate in political, social and other aspects of life. [...] We support their ability to do so.” (Andris Bērziņš)*

### **New Era**

The New Era (JL) party was established in 2001. It defines itself as a rightist political force. The party’s declaration on values says that the state must care for the preservation of the Latvian language and culture, but it also says this: “New Era is convinced that differences in ethnic origin, culture or religion are no obstacle against national unity. The foundation for unity is loyalty toward the Latvian state and the Latvian language as the language which the entire society has in common.”<sup>12</sup> Elsewhere in the same declaration, JL says that it wants to establish a society in which non-Latvians speak the Latvian language and do not feel alienated from Latvian cultural values while, at the same time, preserving their ethnic identity.

The JL party programme has a separate section on ethnic policy, which emphasises the promotion of integration and the shaping of a common identity and sense of belonging in Latvia irrespective of each individual’s ethnicity. The programme says that the Latvian language is the foundation for identity while, at the same time, preserving each ethnic group’s language. This is the goal: “The Latvian state supports the efforts of each ethnic group in Latvia to preserve its national heritage, its language and its culture, while at the same time promoting the inclusion of minority nationalities in the common Latvian cultural space.”<sup>13</sup>

Another goal: “The Republic of Latvia shapes an open, democratic and tolerant society. The state promotes the self-organising of minority nationalities and their work in preserving their ethnic identity whilst, at the same time, strengthening patriotism and a sense of belonging to the Latvian state. The learning and speaking of the Latvian language does not threaten the

<sup>10</sup> Campaign programme of the centrist Latvian Farmers Union. <http://www.lzs.lv/?sad=programma> (last reviewed on 29 June 2006).

<sup>11</sup> “Cerot uz dialogu” (Hoping for Dialogue), published on 25 May 2006. <http://www.lzs.lv/?sad=aktualitates&action=read&id=258>.

<sup>12</sup> The New Era programme and values declaration. <http://www.jaunaislaiks.lv/page.php?id=2617>.

<sup>13</sup> The campaign programme of New Era. Ethnic Policy. <http://www.jaunaislaiks.lv/page.php?id=2782>.

preservation of minority languages. The Latvian language must not be ignored in local governments or in the public or service sector.”<sup>14</sup>

In the context of the election, the party has slightly updated its ethnic policy programme. Among the goals is the statement that there must be sufficient demands vis-à-vis applicants for citizenship so that they might be more successful in becoming a part of the community of citizens. The party also argues that the importance of national holidays must be enhanced so as to promote the emergence of a national identity, one which includes both the titular nation and the various ethnic communities which live in the country.

### **People's Party**

The People's Party, which was established in 1998, wrote in its campaign programme for the 2002 election that it is a rightist and conservative party.<sup>15</sup> In its declaration of basic values, the party says that it supports a Latvian Latvia, that it is necessary to nurture and increase patriotism, but that it is also necessary to demonstrate tolerance vis-à-vis other ethnic groups in Latvia and their cultural traditions.<sup>16</sup>

The party's programme for the Saeima session which began in 2002 includes a section on an integrated society, including the issue of ethnic integration. The programme says that “the people of Latvia are made up of Latvians and minority representatives who live in Latvia. [...] One of our biggest jobs is to ensure internal unity among the people of Latvia.”<sup>17</sup> The TP argues that integration must be based on European and Latvian values. There must be unity with respect to these values, as well as with respect to the fact that the Latvian language is the main language of communications in Latvia. The programme has a subsection on language, and the TP argues that “someone who lives in Latvia and does not speak the Latvian language is subject to the risk of isolation, unemployment and social apathy.”

A subsection on minority nationalities argues that representatives of minority nationalities who are citizens have the right to “preserve and develop their identity, culture and language,” because the culture of minority nationalities is a component in Latvia's culture. The TP supports “the mutual enrichment of Latvian culture and that of other nations – heterogeneous contacts among cultures.”

In terms of recent TP activities in relation to public integration, the party has objected to amendments to the law on citizenship,<sup>18</sup> but it also says that the citizenship law must be strict so as to achieve the goal of a “civically unified, socially protected, educated and Latvian speaking Latvian society.” The main stress is opposition to provocations, and support for loyalty and unity.<sup>19</sup>

One member of the party, Dzintars Ābiķis, had this to say about the party's position on issues of integration – other ethnic groups must become integrated into society on the basis of Latvian values:

*- “Integration is the inclusion of non-Latvians in Latvian society, accepting the Latvian cultural values which prevail here, learning the Latvian language, becoming involved in all national processes and, by extension, leading to consolidation in society. At the same time, however, it must also be stressed, of course, that Latvian values – the cultural values which have emerged here over the course of the centuries – must be the cornerstone for our lives.”*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> The 8th Saeima programme of the People's Party. [http://www.tautaspartija.lv/jpg/TP\\_8.Saeima.doc](http://www.tautaspartija.lv/jpg/TP_8.Saeima.doc).

<sup>16</sup> “Mēs mīlam šo valsti” (We Love This Country), People's Party Internet homepage.

[http://www.tautaspartija.lv/lat/par\\_ko\\_mes\\_esam](http://www.tautaspartija.lv/lat/par_ko_mes_esam).

<sup>17</sup> The 8th Saeima programme of the People's Party. [http://www.tautaspartija.lv/jpg/TP\\_8.Saeima.doc](http://www.tautaspartija.lv/jpg/TP_8.Saeima.doc).

<sup>18</sup> Esta, J. “Tautas partija neatbalsta grozījumus Pilsonības likumā” (People's Party Does Not Support Amendments to Citizenship Law), published 14 December 2005. <http://www.tautaspartija.lv/lat/temas/temas/91>.

<sup>19</sup> Rugāte, A. “Latvijā jābūt stingram Pilsonības likumam” (Latvia Must Have Strict Citizenship Law), 19 October 2005. <http://www.tautaspartija.lv/lat/temas/temas/31>.

## Latvia's Way

Latvia's Way (LC) was established in 1993 and has defined itself as a party which defends the ideas of liberalism and conservatism. One of the basic elements in its operations has been "defence of the interests of the Latvian nation in Latvia as a nation state."<sup>20</sup> The 2002 party programme does not have a separate section on integration, but it does list the main principles that must be observed in the area of integration. The programme states that successful development in Latvia requires the existence of a "nation state with a multicultural society, one in which the Latvian language is the only state language." The programme also states that government policy and society must be open to and support public integration and naturalisation of non-citizens.<sup>21</sup>

Eiženija Aldermane, who is an LC member, is the director of the Latvian Naturalisation Board. The current minister with special portfolio for public integration, Karīna Pētersone, is also a party member. Speaking at an LC/LPP forum on May 20, 2006, the minister stressed that LC has always focused on issues of public integration. Pētersone expressed the view that the positions of the Latvian language must be strengthened, and that the state must help applicants for citizenship to learn the language. She believes that integration is often misunderstood. The aim of integration is not to merge non-Latvians into a Latvian environment or an "entire" society. Instead, "we must orient ourselves and those who speak other languages toward those values which unify us and do not separate us, which require no proof or re-education, which all people are prepared to accept as their own, as values which we all have in common. Only then can a sense of belonging to the state emerge, only then can patriotism emerge."<sup>22</sup>

At this writing, LC had not yet prepared its campaign programme for the 2006 parliamentary election, but in an interview, Eiženija Aldermane listed the main issues which will be a part of the party's short programme:

- *"To establish a harmonious civil society which is not split up, to fight against homophobia [...], to promote the process of naturalisation, to nurture the Latvian language as the state language whilst at the same time demonstrating respect vis-à-vis minority languages and allowing them to develop, and to improve the work of those institutions which work on public integration issues."*

## First Party of Latvia

The First Party of Latvia (LPP) was established in 2002 as a centrist and conservative party. The party has prepared its new programme for 2006, and it contains a section on integration. The programme says that the party supports a multicultural Latvian society with Latvian as the only state language. The LPP supports integration and naturalisation, and the Latvian language is seen as an important instrument in these processes. The programme stresses that particular attention must be paid to new citizens. Integration policies must be based on this group of people.

The party also considers the preservation of minority cultures to be important: "Minority nationalities are a part of the Latvian people, and their cultures belong to Latvia's culture. Therefore, we support the emergence of conditions which allow national minorities to preserve and develop their culture, to protect their identity, religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage."<sup>23</sup> The programme also calls for more dialogue among minority representatives and Latvians. A certain role is also awarded to efforts to promote tolerance, as well as to the need to improve educational programmes – particularly bilingual education.

The LPP is running for election to the 9<sup>th</sup> Saeima in alliance with LC, and both parties are co-operating in particular on running the secretariat of the minister with special portfolio for public integration. In interviews, respondents stressed that the LPP had the initiative in

<sup>20</sup> Latvia's Way programme. <http://www.lc.lv/programme/>.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Speech delivered by Karīna Pētersone, minister with special portfolio for public integration at an LC/LPP forum, 20 May 2006. Published on 5 June 2006. <http://www.lc.lv/topicality/opinion/article.php?id=6895>.

<sup>23</sup> Programme of the First Party of Latvia. [http://www.lpp.lv/new/data/file/LPP\\_programma\\_2006.doc](http://www.lpp.lv/new/data/file/LPP_programma_2006.doc).

establishing the secretariat and its operations. Party representatives have very clearly defined views as to what integration really is:

- *“We have taken over this ministry, because we wish to implement rightist and centrist policies in the integration process so that non-Latvians and minorities are really integrated, so that we do not move toward a split in society, the fomenting of hatred or radicalism which would only create unrest, protests and demonstrations. “Almers Ludviks)*
- *“Integration means participation and co-operation – those are two basic elements in integration. This is certainly not assimilation, and we cannot integrate just Russian people, we must also integrate Latvians. [...] That does not mean that Latvians need to learn poems in Russian or that Russians need to know Latvian folk songs. That is slightly different. We need to understand and respect each other, and our cultures and languages.” (Aleksandrs Brandavs)*

### **New Democrats**

The New Democrats (JD) party was established in 2005, and in its statutes, the party says that it is a democratic and rightist political party.<sup>24</sup> The party has so far drafted only its short programme, which defines the party's political values. Integration-related subjects are not mentioned.

In an interview, Ināra Ostrovska, who was at that time a member of JD, said that the main aspect of the party programme is social issues which apply in equal measure to all of the residents of Latvia. Ethnic conflicts, she said, will become less important when the state's economic problems are resolved:

- *“The main issues for us are health care – these are social issues which relate to elderly people, they are issues which have to do with the economy and welfare in tax policy. [...] The social issue will reduce tensions, which is why we are emphasising health care. A healthy individual is less aggressive. Social issues and a focus on young people, telling them that they need to live where they grew up – that is the foundation for reducing the importance of ethnic issues. Ethnic issues and integration will exist no matter what, but social issues will be the ones which reduce tensions.”*

### **Latvian Social Democratic Workers Party**

The Latvian Social Democratic Workers Party (LSDSP) expresses the ideas of the Social Democratic Party which was established in Latvia in 1904 and re-established in 1989. The LSDSP has basic positions on national policy and integration. The party's programme says that Latvian policy must “first of all be focused on the lawful interests of the Latvian and Livonian peoples.” The Latvian language must be the only state language. The party also stresses loyalty vis-à-vis the state, arguing that “each citizen of Latvia must understand that he is first and foremost a citizen of the Latvian state, and only then does he represent his ethnic group.” The party also expresses the principle that there must be respect toward each minority group's language and culture: “Not only Latvians, but also non-Latvians wish to preserve their ethnicity. Therefore, we must support the efforts of people of other nationalities to preserve their ethnic identity.”<sup>25</sup>

The LSDSP programme: “We support Latvia as a nation state. It is a state in which the Latvian language is the only state language, in which all residents understand and speak the Latvian language.”

LSDSP considers integration to mean policies which emphasise civic values in Latvia. The party believes that integration must first of all occur in the framework of social policy, and only then must it be applied to ethnic groups. The party programme contains the view that naturalisation must be enhanced, and the state must support it. So, too, the state must improve

<sup>24</sup> Statutes of the New Democrats party. <http://www.jauniedemokrati.lv/?a=31>.

<sup>25</sup> Programmatic model of the LSDSP and its scientific and fact-based justification. <http://www.lsdsp.lv/programma/03.htm>.

laws which protect the rights of national minorities.<sup>26</sup> Party member Jānis Dinevičs had this to say in an article: “The LSDSP supports public integration so that all residents of Latvia, regardless of their ethnic or religious belonging, pursue the same ideals and work together to build a flourishing and socially ensured country.”<sup>27</sup>

The programme also speaks to minority schools: “The state must ensure an elementary education in the languages of the larger minorities without creating any special conditions for any specific minority. These schools must move their students toward two cultures at once – their own national culture, and the Latvian culture.”<sup>28</sup>

At the 37<sup>th</sup> congress of the LSDSP on March 12, 2006, party members talked about policy in preparation for the Saeima election. A resolution had this to say: “Latvia needs all of its loyal people, irrespective of nationality.”<sup>29</sup> Party members at the congress and in various articles<sup>30</sup> denounced the use of ethnic issues in pursuit of political power. This, according to the LSDSP, makes it more difficult to resolve far more important social problems.

In an interview, LSDSP representative Ansis Dobelis particularly stressed that ethnic relations have become exacerbated specifically because of politicians. He argued for a search for a compromise so as to shape an integrated society:

*“The LSDSP believes that this hatred or this ethnic gap has emerged in large part thanks to politicians, there are very minimal examples of this at the level of society. We must bring people together, we must talk to them and ensure that they understand that social issues are the most important thing. [...] Perhaps we need to look for a way of allowing each nation to move toward the other. Local governments, for instance, might hire Russian language translators. Russian organisations might admit that the Latvian language is the only language.”*

### **Motherland**

The “politically patriotic alliance” Motherland has not published a programme, but articles that have been published by its members suggest that the alliance is mostly focused on economic goals. In order to enhance the competitiveness of Latvians in the labour market, Motherland feels that Russian language teaching must become compulsory in all high schools. In an interview, party representative Juris Žuravļovs said that the main issue is the country’s economic development, because everyone in Latvia, irrespective of ethnicity, wishes to live a good and wealthy life:

*“We do not divide people up. We do not ask from where they have come, with whom they live, what position they hold. We do not look at people’s hair, at the language which they speak, or the colour of their skin. We understand that the Social Democratic position is one which fights for everyone. We must care for all people. That is our party’s position.”*

### **People’s Harmony Party**

The People’s Harmony Party (TSP) was established in 1994. The party programme was not available at this writing, but party member Boriss Cilēvičs stated the TSP’s views on ethnic integration in an interview. He stressed unity and diversity, the preservation of other languages and cultures alongside the Latvian language and culture:

*“The main European slogan is unity in diversity, and this is very appropriate for Latvia. We feel that destroying the Russian language or forcing it underground – that is not in the interests of Latvians in Latvia. We think that the average Latvian who lives in Latvia is not*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Dinevičs, J. “Rūgtā patiesība par etnisko eļli” (The Bitter Truth About Ethnic Hell), published 23 January 2005. [http://www.lsdsp.lv/index.php?l=1&s=13&news\\_id=64](http://www.lsdsp.lv/index.php?l=1&s=13&news_id=64)

<sup>28</sup> LSDSP programme. Education and Science. <http://www.lsdsp.lv/programma/10.htm>.

<sup>29</sup> Resolution 110 of the 37<sup>th</sup> party congress: “On LSDSP policy in preparing for the Saeima election”, published on 12 March 2006. [http://www.lsdsp.lv/index.php?l=1&s=14&news\\_id=184](http://www.lsdsp.lv/index.php?l=1&s=14&news_id=184)

<sup>30</sup> Dobelis, A. “Vai tiešām nacionālais jautājums?” (Is it Really the National Issue?), published 25 January 2006. [http://www.lsdsp.lv/index.php?l=1&s=13&news\\_id=169](http://www.lsdsp.lv/index.php?l=1&s=13&news_id=169).

*a distinct nationalist, that is a person who essentially belongs to various cultures. That is our strength, it increases our competitiveness. [...] We do not dispute the status of the Latvian language as the only official or state language, but at the same time we feel that it is not just the Latvian language and Latvian culture that must be observed, supported and preserved. The same applies to the wealth of Latvian cultures, the wealth of languages, which includes components of the Russian, Lettigalian, Polish, and other languages and cultures."*

The TSP has established the Harmony Centre (SC) alliance with the New Centre party and the Latvian Socialist Party. The alliance publishes its own newspaper, and in its 3<sup>rd</sup> issue, Jānis Urbanovičs, a member of the party and the alliance, wrote about the need to grant the status of an official minority language to the Russian language in Latvia. He argued that "a normal situation for the Russian speaking minority is necessary not just to Russian speakers alone. The truth is that it is also necessary to Latvians, who need order and harmony in Latvia."<sup>31</sup> The alliance's views on ethnic issues are based on the argument that there should be no limitations on the right of Latvians to communicate in their own language in their own country. The alliance also, however, calls for an easier situation for Russian speakers – local governments could offer assistance in Russian, for instance, or schools might be allowed to choose the best way in which they achieve the government-required level of Latvian language skills among their students.

### **New Centre**

New Centre (JC) was established in 2004, and it is a part of the Harmony Centre alliance. The JC party programme has a specific section on "Liquidating Ethnic Tensions in Latvia". This part of the programme speaks to government-financed Latvian language lessons, facilitation of naturalisation and an easing of the relevant requirements, ensuring a secondary education in the languages of national minorities, and a guaranteeing of national minority rights.<sup>32</sup>

In an interview, Igors Pimenovs of JC stressed that Latvia needs a "third community" – one which brings together Latvian and Russian speakers, one in which each group maintains its own specifics whilst maintaining good relations with other groups and feeling a sense of belonging to Latvia:

*"There are many people here who insist that there must be a stronger third community in Latvia – not just the Latvian and the Russian community, but one which brings together people who speak both Latvian and Russian. It does not mean that they would reject their own language, it refers to a sense of symmetry. These people would maintain their own ethnicity, but they would have good and even friendly relations with colleagues who are members of other nationalities, they would see and feel no obstacle between the languages, they would understand that Latvia is their motherland."*

### **Latvian Socialist Party**

Established in 1994, the Latvian Socialist Party (LSP) is a part of the Harmony Centre alliance. At its second conference, the LSP approved a resolution in which it denounced government policy as it has been implemented until now: "[Since the restoration of independence], governing political parties have replaced the slogan of friendship among the peoples with nationalist policies. Newspapers do not write about friendship among the peoples, radio and television do not discuss these issues. Methods such as taking away the citizenship of one-third of the country's residents, introducing the Latvian language as the state language, and implementing various public integration programmes which, in fact, are more reminiscent of

<sup>31</sup> *Tava Avīze*, newspaper of the Harmony Centre political alliance, No. 3, p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> Programme of the political organisation (party) New Centre.  
<http://jc.skice.gids.lv/pub/index.php?id=6&PHPSESSID=45a375058beea3e5d24c7de04685ce85>.



assimilating the non-Latvian segment of the population – these have been the processes which have strengthened the policies of nationalism in Latvia.”<sup>33</sup>

The LSP does not believe that there is a society of two communities in Latvia, but it does denounce various manifestations of nationalism. The party supports “friendship among Latvia’s peoples, public integration, and repeal of any inequality on the basis of linguistic, national or other elements.” The LSP feels that ensuring harmony involves a fight against poverty, arguing that various political parties must work together in pursuit of this aim.

In an interview, LSP representative Aleksandrs Golubovs said that his party supports naturalization and integration that are achieved via economic processes, i.e., by improving life in Latvia:

*“We call on everyone to be naturalized, our programme says that we will promote that process. [...] Integration is necessary – all kinds of integration. People must speak to one another irrespective of their nationality. Integration will be promoted if there are new jobs, if our people don’t have to travel abroad to find jobs.”*

### **For Human Rights in a United Latvia**

For Human Rights in a United Latvia (PCTVL) was established in 1998. It approved a programme on June 3, 2006, which differs from the 2002 programme in that there is no specific section on integration. Issues related to ethnic integration are addressed in nearly all sections of the programme, particularly in terms of basic positions, education, science and culture, as well as human rights.

The programme states that the PCTVL goal is to ensure a “democratic and multicultural Republic of Latvia.” Also stated is this: “The time has come to recognize the fact that there are two communities in Latvia – the Latvian majority and the Russian speaking minority.”<sup>34</sup> PCTVL wants to integrate the Latvian political nation so as to include both communities and all other ethnic minorities, allowing them to preserve their cultural heritage. PCTVL wants schools to choose their own language of teaching, with at least six hours per week spent on Latvian language and literature. It also wishes to improve the system of bilingual teaching.

PCTVL particularly opposes discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, as well as the lack of political rights for non-citizens. A statement from the programme: “The only morally justifiable way of returning political rights to non-citizens is to pass a law which recognizes them as citizens of Latvia.”<sup>35</sup> Generally speaking, the party defines equality between the two communities as its main goal. PCTVL particularly stresses the need to implement the European Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities, which Latvia has ratified, in everyday life. PCTVL says that the existing state system is an “ethnocracy”, arguing that minority representatives have limited opportunities to take part in national governance.

Of key importance in PCTVL’s integration positions is language learning, and this applies both to the Russian and the Latvian language. The party argues that the state must increase financing for the relevant study programmes. “State financing must be ensured for Russian language education at all levels, up to higher education.” The party insists that in local government territories where a minority makes up at least 20% of the population, that minority’s language must be given official status. This is particularly applied to the Russian and Lettalian language.

PCTVL wants to speed up naturalization, and it actively objects to any attempt to make the process more complex. The Justice Ministry, for instance, has asked the Cabinet of Ministers to consider amendments to its own regulations which say that graduates of minority schools require a higher level of knowledge in the centralised national Latvian language exam.

<sup>33</sup> Resolution of the second conference of the Latvian Socialist Party.  
<http://www.latsocpartija.lv/officialdoc.php?msiarticleid=26&l=2>.

<sup>34</sup> PCTVL programme. [http://www.pctvl.lv/?lang=lv&mode=party&submode=program&page\\_id=749](http://www.pctvl.lv/?lang=lv&mode=party&submode=program&page_id=749).

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

PCTVL argues that there are lots of people who cannot pass that exam even now, when the requirements have not been made more complex.<sup>36</sup>

In an interview, PCTVL representative Nikolajs Kabanovs said that a key contribution toward integration is the political strengthening of the Russian community – something which allows it to establish a dialogue with the Latvian community that is based on equality, thus normalising the relationship between the two communities:

*“By establishing a strong political representation of the Russian community in this country, we have replaced the chaotic protests which have been typical of Russians in the past. We have overcome the problem of 2004 – the protests against education reform, and now we can speak to the Latvian community without any bias. [...] No normal person, I think, believes any more that it is possible to turn Russians into Latvians – something that was of concern two or three years ago. Members of the Latvian community are no longer afraid that the situation might become uncontrolled or that a civil war might begin.”*

**Table 26. A comparison of the positions which political parties take on ethnic integration**

Views	VL	TB/LNNK	ZZS	JL	TP	LC	LPP	JD	LSDSP	Motherland	TSP	JC	LSP	PCTVL
Programme includes section on ethnic policy/integration	-			X	X		X	-	X	-	-	X	-	
Existence of a multicultural society in Latvia						X	X							X
Latvian as the only state language	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X					
Preservation of minority cultures			X	X	X	X	X		X		X			X
Education in minority languages									X			X		X
Speeding up naturalisation									X			X	X	X
Limiting naturalisation, promoting repatriation	X	X												
Granting minority language status to Russian language											X			X
Social integration to promote ethnic integration		X						X	X	X				

- Full party programme not available

<sup>36</sup> “PCTVL pret naturalizācijas procesu sarežģīšanu” (PCTVL Opposes Complication of Naturalisation Processes”. [http://www.pctvl.lv/?lang=lv&mode=archive&submode=year2006&page\\_id=645](http://www.pctvl.lv/?lang=lv&mode=archive&submode=year2006&page_id=645).

#### 6.4. THE NGO SECTOR AS AN AGENT FOR PUBLIC INTEGRATION

During the course of the research, interviews were conducted with representatives of 20 different non-governmental organisations. These were chosen on the basis of their goals, on the way in which they pursue these goals, and on the ethnic group which each organisation represents. A more detailed look at differences among the organisations can be seen in the next table.

**Table 27. Public organisations covered in the research**

Type of organisation:		Cultural	Civic	Analytical	Radical Latvian	Radical Russian
No.	Name					
1.	Latvian Youth Council		X	X		
2.	Latvian National Front				X	
3.	Lithuanian Cultural and Educational Centre	X				
4.	Association of Russian Organisations in Latvia	X		X		
5.	Union of Citizens and Non-Citizens	X	X	X		
6.	Golden Ball of Yarn	X	X			
7.	Association to Support Russian Language Schools in Latvia		X	X		
8.	Alef	X				
9.	Club 415	X			X	
10.	Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies		X	X		
11.	Providus		X	X		
12.	Nēvo Drom	X				
13.	Ukrainian Association of Latvia	X	X	X		
14.	Patrida	X				
15.	Georgika	X				
16.	Ider	X				
17.	Russian Schools Defence Headquarters					X
18.	Union of Latvia's Belarusian Public Organisations	X	X			
19.	Doina	X				
20.	Čoron	X				

Cultural associations in this chart are organisations which work on consolidating their own ethnic groups and on popularising their culture. Civic organisations work on establishing the civic society. Analytical organisations engage in political analysis and are actively involved in political processes. Radical organisations pursue their goals via methods which oppose the system which exists in the states. Radical organisations have been divided between Latvian and Russian ones.

## 1. The Latvian Youth Council<sup>1</sup> - Interview respondent Andris Grafs

The Latvian Youth Council (LJP) was established in 1992 and is an umbrella organisation for other youth structures. The stated goals of the LJP include “improving the quality of life of young people and representing their interests by promoting the importance of youth organisations and facilitating their development, co-operation and involvement of public and political processes so as to ensure the emergence of a democratic society in Latvia.”<sup>2</sup>

At this time, the LJP brings together 42 organisations of various nationalities in Latvia, and it is a member of the European Youth Forum and the Latvian Civic Alliance. Most of the groups in the LJP are Latvian groups. The organisation perceives non-governmental organisations as “the merger of society into various interest groups which bring people together and seek to influence legislation.” Grafs says that because NGOs are closest to local residents, they bring together the most active and knowledgeable representatives of society.

Grafs says that the LJP does not consider involvement in ethnic policy to be a priority. Much more important than ethnic segregation in Latvia is segregation which is based on various other social phenomena (place of residence, level of income, etc.).

The LJP works with the secretariat of the minister with special portfolio for public integration (ĪUMSILS), and together they have published a booklet for minority youth. The aim is to encourage readers to be politically active and to promote the emergence of the civic society. The LJP regularly organises seminars and conferences.

Generally speaking, the LJP defends its interests at the political level and provides information and training to its member organisations. The work of the organisation is done mostly in Latvian.

*“Representing the interests which the organisations have in common – that has to do with youth policy, relevant laws, and financing for youth initiatives. Informal education is another thing – we have quite a few seminars. We organise seminars, and we delegate people to attend EU events.” (Latvian Youth Organisation)*

*“We had materials in Russian on public integration, and these were meant for young Russians. This facet had more to do with the civic society – our aim was to activate young people in Latvia’s regions, to work with local governments on various projects, to demonstrate various opportunities. Once again, however, this is not something which speaks to ethnic affairs – it has more to do with the civil society as such, and so the area of ethnic policy is not present in our organisation’s work. We are all in the same pot, we do not divide people on the basis of ethnicity.” (Latvian Youth Organisation)*

## 2. Latvian National Front<sup>3</sup> - Interview respondent Līga Krieviņa

The Latvian National Front (LNF) was established in 1997. It is a group of Latvian nationalists and patriots and their supporters, and it stands apart from other political groupings.

The goal of the LNF is to restore the Latvian state which was proclaimed on November 18, 1918, and liquidated as a result of the Soviet occupation in 1940. The LNF expresses the view that the main job is to achieve “decolonisation” and “deoccupation”. It argues that the status of Latvians in Latvia today makes these processes necessary. The LNF believes that Latvians in Latvia face discrimination and cannot fully pursue their own aims.

The work of the LNF is based on the assumption that the ethnic majority in the country must make up at least 75% of the population. Only this proportion would enable successful integration. This can be achieved by deporting non-Latvians and allowing those who are hostile to Latvia or do not want to live in the country to leave.

The LNF publishes a newsletter that is called *DDD* (“Deoccupation, Decolonisation, Debolshevisation”), and it is published on a fortnightly basis. Authors in the newsletter write about cases when the rights of Latvians are allegedly violated, or greater rights are awarded to

<sup>1</sup> Homepage: [www.ljp.lv](http://www.ljp.lv).

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.ljp.lv/index.php?id=about\\_us&l=LV&open=1](http://www.ljp.lv/index.php?id=about_us&l=LV&open=1).

<sup>3</sup> [www.latvians.lv](http://www.latvians.lv)

non-Latvians. They also write about the importance of politicians and political parties in strengthening (or, more often – destroying) the Latvian nation, as well as the desire of minorities to strengthen their influence in Latvia. The ideology of the newspaper is typified by the fact that it usually refers to non-Latvians as “occupants” or “colonists.”

The LNF is a radical organisation, and it has been tried in court on several occasions for fomenting national hatred. The LNF has been active in expressing its views, thus trying to influence those who shape policy.

*“The nation must represent at least 75% of the population in the country – only then can it integrate others. While that is not true, there are various problems among these groups. That is our basic position.” (Latvian National Front)*

*“The main thing for which we fight is the facilitation of the departure from Latvia of those people who are here illegally and against the will of the citizens of Latvia – in other words, those who were sent here during the occupation and their successors.” (Latvian National Front)*

### 3. Lithuanian Cultural and Education Centre – Interview respondent Biruta Falndere

The Lithuanian Cultural and Education Centre was established in 1989. The organisation seeks to preserve and promote the spread of the Lithuanian culture among the Lithuanian diaspora. The centre also seeks to popularise Lithuanian culture.

The organisation offers various social events and educational programmes. In describing the former, Falndere says that the centre organises performances by various cultural collectives in Latvia, and Lithuanian ensembles have been formed in Latvia, too. In discussing the educational opportunities which the Lithuanian Cultural and Educational Centre offers, Falndere points to Lithuanian language learning groups that have been set up at schools and kindergartens.

The aim of the LKIC is to preserve Lithuanian culture and to shape social contacts among various active ethnic groups and Latvians.

The LKIC seeks to consolidate Lithuanians in Latvia into a diaspora, thus promoting the sustainability of their culture, integrating into Latvian society, and learning the Latvian language. The organisation does not seek to influence political processes.

*“The Lithuanian Cultural Association is important to preserve our Lithuanian identity. We work with other organisations to see what we can do.” (Lithuanian Cultural and Education Centre)*

*“We looked for facilities and finally found some in the Purvciems neighbourhood of Rīga. Our high school has graduated its second class, this year we will graduate the third. First we had just the first grade, but then we brought in teachers from Lithuania, because they speak more correct Lithuanian. Lithuanians in Rīga no longer speak proper Lithuania, the words appear on their own.” (Lithuanian Cultural and Education Centre)*

### 4. The Association of Russian Organisations in Latvia – Interview respondent Mihails Gavrilovs

The association which Gavrilovs represents is an umbrella organisation for some 20 other groups. The aim is to co-ordinate their activities so that each can pursue its own goals and their common goals more successfully and interact. The overall aim is to preserve and to promote the Russian national identity, but Gavrilovs also says that the association always remembers that all of the organisations are located in Latvia. The organisation thus seeks to promote integration among Latvians and Russians whilst at the same time working to strengthen Russian identity.

The Association of Russian Organisations in Latvia (KBLA) basically deals with social issues and organises social events. Among its member organisations are ones which deal with education and health care, as well as ones which actively seek to popularise Russian culture.

The organisation publishes a wide variety of print materials, including a monthly newsletter called *Русское Слово*. The newsletter is informational in nature, and it usually

avoids any analysis of ethnically sensitive issues. When it deals with such issues, then it is not in the ethnic context, but rather under the framework of overall social problems in Latvia.

When *Русское Слово* expresses criticisms, it focuses on arguments within the Russian community in Latvia – those which occur as the result of other organisations or political parties. Ethnic issues in the newsletter are discussed as being excessively politicised, with authors arguing that the problems should be resolved on their own, which means that politicians and parties should not try to earn political capital on their basis. Most of the materials are printed exclusively in Russian.

The KBLA feels that non-governmental organisations are the main mechanism of control which can put the reins on politicians and successfully emphasise those problems which politicians should resolve.

The KBLA can be classified as an association which popularises Russian national culture, defends the social rights of local residents, and analyses political processes.

*“Our work is aimed at ensuring the process of integration and the preservation of ethnic values and knowledge.” (Association of Russian Organisations in Latvia)*

*“We represent Russian organisations, and so we work on the national identity of Russians, keeping in mind the specifics of Latvia, as well as the fact that we are all a part of this integration process.” (Association of Russian Organisations in Latvia)*

## 5. Union of Citizens and Non-Citizens – Interview respondent Vladimirs Sokolovs

The Union of Citizens and Non-Citizens (PNS) was established in 1998, and its main stated goal is to promote the emergence of the civil society. Sokolovs says that the organisation also has a wide variety of secondary goals. It works in the field of culture (organising discussions and television broadcasts, etc.), and on social issues (education, ethnic relations, etc.). It seeks to promote public initiative in terms of becoming more active in the resolution of these problems. Sokolovs particularly points to ethnic minority rights and involvement in decision-making processes when discussing his organisation’s activities.

The Union of Citizens and Non-Citizens usually does not design its own activities – it helps others to pursue theirs, thus trying to encourage public attempts to resolve people’s own problems. Sokolovs says that helping people to become citizens is one way in which his group helps others.

Sokolovs says that a non-governmental organisation is a community of the most active members of the public – people whose aim is to popularise views which they consider to be important and acceptable. Non-governmental organisations enable the emergence and discussion of various views.

*“There is this concept of the ‘civil society’ – that is exactly the area in which we have worked. Our work includes many different ideas, flows, various ethnic and national directions, etc.” (Union of Citizens and Non-Citizens)*

*“I asked myself why there are organisations for citizens, but none for non-citizens. That was the year in which we established an organisation in which the word “non-citizens” is in the name. I do not want to claim that we defend the interests of non-citizens, we certainly do not make that claim, but it is possible that we try to emphasise certain elements of those interests.” (Union of Citizens and Non-Citizens)*

## 6. Golden Ball of Yarn – Interview respondent Irina Viņņika

The Golden Ball of Yarn organisation was established for minority children and adolescents in 2000 on the basis of a previous organisation with the same aims. This is an organisation with a wide range of aims. It is active in shaping the civil society, as well as in maintaining and popularising the ethnic heritage.

Golden Ball of Yarn organises cultural festivals for minorities, bringing together performers of various ethnic groups. It also helps other organisations to learn how to find financing, and it seeks to popularise minority culture.

Golden Ball of Yarn has published several brochures about minority holidays and festivals. These are informational publications which describe the ethnic culture and traditions of minorities and confirm the identity of the representatives of these cultures. The materials advertise minority festivals and events, and they also offer information about all of the processes which the organisation offers to minority representatives.

The organisation has a meaningful publication: "Come and Take Part!" The secondary slogan is "Effective NGO participation in various political processes." The book contains instructions for NGO representatives as to how they can receive necessary information and take part in policy development. Golden Ball of Yarn has organised training seminars on these subjects. Most of its publications are available in Russian and Latvian.

Viņņika says that an NGO is the only way in which the state can work with a specific group in society, and that is why public integration must occur specifically at the level of NGOs.

Golden Ball of Yarn is an organisation which popularises minority culture, brings together minority representatives, facilitates the emergence of the civil society, and teaches NGOs how to do their work.

*"Our organisation began as one which focused on culture, but now it provides services and defends people's interests. Each year we create new projects and receive grants which are aimed at increasing the capacity of minority NGOs and encouraging them to participate in processes. We can say that Golden Ball of Yarn is a unique organisations which provides support to minority organisations."* (Golden Ball of Yarn)

*"The capacity of this target audience is quite low because of a lack of Latvian language skills. There are more than 200 minority organisations, which is a smaller number than is the case with other kinds of organisations. They are alienated from participation processes and the market for projects. Our organisation has tried to fill the gap."* (Golden Ball of Yarn)

*"We are a public organisation with the aim of preserving and developing the ethnic identity and cultural heritage of minority groups which live in Latvia. We also seek to promote the defence of their rights and to encourage inter-ethnic dialogue. This means that all of our work in seeking to preserve the culture of ethnic minorities and to protect their rights involves participation."* (Golden Ball of Yarn)

## **7. Association to Support Russian Language Schools in Latvia<sup>4</sup>** -- Interview respondent Igors Pimenovs

The Association to Support Russian Language Schools in Latvia (LAŠOR) seeks to preserve the ability of people in Latvia to receive an education in Russian. The organisation's main goals include mobilising supporters of its views, providing constructive criticism of the country's education policies, and to draft policy alternatives. In the organisation's operations memorandum,<sup>5</sup> LAŠOR also lists other activities, stating that one of the organisation's goals is to promote integration whilst helping to shape the civil society.

Pimenovs says that the goal of LAŠOR is not to reject the Latvian language. It has the clear right to be the primary resource for communications, but in a democratic society, everyone must have the right to be educated in a way that is as easily perceived as possible. LAŠOR argues that children cannot learn the knowledge that they need if they are not allowed to study in their native language.

Another indirect goal for LAŠOR is to preserve the ethnic culture and language of Russians. The memorandum says that education in one's native language is a major mechanism for sustaining the language. Language, for its part, is a mechanism for the transfer of culture.

Pimenovs says that NGOs are the only way in which various problems in Latvian society can be resolved. This means that NGOs must become stronger and more inclusive.

<sup>4</sup> [www.lashor.lv/lat](http://www.lashor.lv/lat).

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.lashor.lv/lat/position.php>.

*“Our organisation criticises the government’s education policies in the Republic of Latvia. We draft alternative proposals vis-à-vis the education of national minorities and seek to do things which preserve and increase our authority.” (LAŠOR)*

*“When people lose faith in political parties, they reject them and create their own organisations. This allows NGOs to replace political parties to a certain extent. We know that there are organisations of great authority and influence throughout the world. (LAŠOR)*

#### 8. **Alef** – Interview respondent Viktorija Gubatova

The Jewish community centre Alef was established in 2001. It seeks to renew and consolidate the Jewish diaspora whilst also helping to integrate the community into Latvian society. Alef has several important areas of operations. Gubatova says that the centre seeks to engage in innovative operations, and it abstracts itself from those things which other Jewish organisations do.

Gubatova says that the centre seeks to ensure ongoing communications among its visitors, helping the Jewish diaspora to feel at home in Latvia. Alef seeks to promote social and cultural life by organising interest clubs and promoting various social activities. The centre also organises training and regular discussions among its visitors.

The Jewish community centre publishes various print materials. Some of these contain information about Alef operations, others offer information about Jewish traditions, while still others are devoted to minority groups in Latvia.

The first of these materials offers information about the operations of the Alef centre and the entertainment and other activities which are on offer. There is a monthly publication, *Alef*, which offers information about activities and maintains a neutral position vis-à-vis issues of integration. The organisation also publishes other materials about specific events and how they can be attended. Alef activities are meant for all possible age groups.

One of the group’s publications was a calendar called “We Live in Latvia, 2005”. The calendar lists official Latvian holidays, as well as the holidays of minorities in Latvia.

*“We have a far wider range of work at this time – 26 programmes in all. We work with all age groups, although our basic target audience is made up of children and adolescents, as well as people up to the age of 60. We don’t try to copy the work of organisations which were established before ours.” (Alef)*

*“There are communications in any programme, because urban residents these days can find anything they want. In order to get people to visit us, we have to offer them something that they cannot find anywhere else. Communications are probably the only thing that go lacking, except, of course, for money and health. That’s why people come here – it’s very important for them to be amidst others.” (Alef)*

#### 9. **Club 415**<sup>6</sup> -- Interview respondent Jānis Sils

Club 415 was established in 1995 and describes itself as an “organisation for patriotic and thoughtful young people.” The club’s activities are aimed at a Latvia. Sils says that this means “*establishing a country which is in line with the interests of the Latvian people, one that is economically and culturally powerful.*”

The club seeks to popularise and defend Latvian culture. Compared to the LNF, it does less to attack minorities in Latvia, choosing instead to concentrate on popularising that which is Latvian and consolidating the Latvian ethnos.

The homepage of Club 415 offers a look at articles which focus not on one specific subject, but rather on lots of socially important issues. The published articles are increasingly abstracted from the popularisation of a specific viewpoint (although popularisation of ideas is quite clear in those articles that have been written by Club 415 members, as opposed to those which are republished from other portals).

<sup>6</sup> [www.klubs415.lv](http://www.klubs415.lv).



The organisation publishes a monthly newsletter which contains information about the organisation's work, important social issues, and Latvian culture. Apart from analysing the ethnic culture of Latvians, the newsletter has little to say about ethnic issues.

Club 415 can be classified as a radical and nationalist Latvian organisation, one which often expresses an aggressive attitude toward other ethnic groups in Latvia. It also is known for organising aggressive and provocative events.

*"Within our organisation there are several areas of activity – folklore and culture, sports, tourism and, of course, tourism. Most of our participants are young people – high school students and university students, mostly the latter."* (Club 415)

*"Political activities are a part of all of our work, including our cultural activities. Some of the better known activities are the memorial events which we organise on March 16 and November 11. We have had quite a bit of effect at art schools and among artists, because we organise visual arts competitions for young people and children."* (Club 415)

#### 10. **The Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies**<sup>7</sup> -- Interview respondent Ilze Brands-Kehre

The Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies (LCESC) was established in 1993. This is an independent non-governmental organisation which works on human rights education, as well as research about issues of human rights and ethnic relations. The aim of the organisation is to do things which encourage dialogue in society.

The LCESC works in several areas simultaneously. These include human rights in closed institutions, discrimination and the rights of minorities. The rights of ethnic minorities are most often reviewed by the centre in the context of citizenship and language.

In pursuit of its goals, the centre regularly monitors processes (focusing on changes which have an effect on human rights issues), and offers public information. This involves not just the publication of monitoring results and new studies, but also consultation for individuals who seek to protect their human rights.

The organisation's main print publication, which issued once a year, is an annual review of human rights.<sup>8</sup> The publication offers analysis of changes in the area of human rights during the preceding year, and also contains information about LCESC activities. The brochure is divided up into chapters, and one section is called "Minority Rights and Public Integration." The organisation presents a fact-based description of events during the course of the year, but does not engage in additional interpretation.

All LCESC materials are free of charge and can be received electronically from the organisation's homepage.

The LCESC is an organisation which basically engages in process analysis, helping to form the civil society.

*"Ours is a human rights centre, and our main focus is on human rights in closed institutions – this is a fairly high-volume area of work. We have various projects, and we increasingly are working on basic rights, on a view of human rights which has to do with minority views, but not only with those views."* (Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies)

#### 11. **Providus**<sup>9</sup> -- Interview respondent Marija Golubeva

The Providus public policy centre is an independent policy institute which focuses on education policy, criminal law, the rule of law, and the fight against corruption. Providus was established in 2002.

Providus engages in policy analysis, considering the policies of government institutions, as well as the issue of the inclusion of individuals in society. The public policy centre has

<sup>7</sup> [www.humanrights.org.lv](http://www.humanrights.org.lv).

<sup>8</sup> "Cilvēktiesības Latvijā 2004. gads" (Human Rights in Latvia, 2004). Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies, May 2005.

<sup>9</sup> [www.politika.lv](http://www.politika.lv).

particularly focused on minority school reforms, and the relevant analytical report can be found on the Providus homepage on the Internet.

In addition to its analytical work, Providus has established a public policy database, *politika.lv*, which is available on the Internet. This site features the results of research, commentaries by experts, and discussions among readers. The content of the page is available in Latvian and English.

Golubeva says that an NGO must be a group of professionals which can professionally defend its interests. Providus can be positioned in this context as a group of professionals who seek to defend public interests.

*"We try to be fairly analytical. In other words, we are not purely an organisation of activists. We sometimes defend our views quite strongly, but we are an analytical organisation which spends more time on analysing political processes. Our focus is on the roles and opportunities of the individuals. This has to do with the values of an open society – values which we proclaim." (Providus)*

*"Organisations which work in the area of people's rights – it is quite normal in any country or society to have groups which have greater privileges, along with groups which face more discrimination. This is true in Western Europe, too, and the protection of people's rights is very important." (Providus)*

*"There are lots of organisations which work on traditional culture at a very provincial level, but there are few organisations which represent the interests of a group at a modern and professional level, not just at the level of politics or of singing and dancing." (Providus)*

## 12. **Nēvo Drom** – Interview respondent Anatolijs Berezovskis

Nēvo Drom is an organisation for the Roma people which was established in 2003. The organisation's goal is to promote social integration. There are two areas in which the organisation feels that it can have an effect – promoting education within the Roma minority (the organisation has established Roma classes in Tukums), and increasing Roma employment (Nēvo Drom regularly organises seminars about labour law and the ability of poorly educated individuals to find work).

In addition to these activities, Nēvo Drom also seeks to popularise Roma traditions. Berezovskis says that this is an attempt to consolidate the Roma minority and to allow Roma people to find their identity.

The organisation publishes a monthly newsletter, *Nēvo Drom*. Information in this newsletter can be classified in two directions. It writes about Roma history, traditions, and the popularisation of these traditions today. It also writes about the work and activities of Nēvo Drom, as well as the activities of the organisation's friends and assistants. The newsletter is published in Latvian.

*"Our main focus is on education and employment, because we know that the concept of integration into society is unnecessary for us. 97% of us are citizens, we have no language problems, we face a different kind of integration. We need social integration, because it affects human lives from childhood to old age." (Nēvo Drom)*

## 13. **Ukrainian Association of Latvia**<sup>10</sup> -- Interview respondent Viktors Stefanovičs

The Ukrainian Association of Latvia (LUB) was established in 1996 for Ukrainians and people who have lived in Ukrainian. The aim of the organisation has been to offer legal assistance to Ukrainians who live in Latvia. This is one of three major activities for the group – the others are integration of Ukrainians into Latvian society, and social assistance for such people.

In order to promote the integration of Ukrainians into Latvian society, the association organises state language lessons and helps to deal with the legal issues which have to do with the ability of non-citizens to undergo naturalisation.

<sup>10</sup> [www.ukr.lv](http://www.ukr.lv).

The social assistance which the LUB offers to Ukrainians in Latvia relates to the handling of various social issues, consolidation of the diaspora, upholding of traditions, and promotion of communications.

Stefanovičs says that the Ukrainian Association of Latvia takes active part in the drafting of Latvia's integration programme. This represents an attempt to influence and to improve the government's integration policy, as well as to explain the policy to the Ukrainian diaspora.

The organisation has an Internet homepage and a newsletter, *BICHUK*. This newsletter is available on the Internet at no charge. Materials published by the LUB reflect the work of the organisation, as well as issues which may be of interest to the Ukrainian diaspora in Latvia. The newsletter does not analyse political processes in Latvia. Instead, it publishes information about Ukrainian traditions, events in Ukraine, and events in the lives of Ukrainians in Latvia. The association publishes its print and electronic materials in Ukrainian.

*"These are issues which have to do with the provision of social assistance to Ukrainians who live in Latvia. We focus on protecting their rights, we work on issues which have to do with preservation of Ukrainian culture, traditions and language in those areas where Ukrainians live."* (Ukrainian Association of Latvia)

*"The main issues have to do with the integration of Ukrainians in Latvian society and, now, into the European Union. We do not wish to feel alienation here, we want to have a sense of belonging, and so we were very actively involved in the drafting of the national integration programme four years ago."* (Ukrainian Association of Latvia)

#### 14. **Patrīda** – Interview respondent Odisejs Kostanda

Patrīda is an organisation for Greeks in Latvia, and it consolidates more than 90% of the people of Greek ancestry who live in Latvia. Patrīda was established in 1999 and has two main goals – popularisation and preservation of Greek traditions, and dissemination of information about the Greek culture.

Patrīda organises national Greek festivals, it has established a Greek folk dance group and groups where the Greek language can be studied. The group has the largest library and collection of audio and video materials about Greece in the Baltic States.

In addition to these goals, the group also helps to consolidate the Greek community. There are efforts to ensure the sustainability of the community and to form links to other Greek communities in the world.

*"When it comes to our activities, one is learning about the history of the Greek language and cultural heritage, and the other is preservation of our traditions."* (Patrīda)

*"The events which we organise have often been open. We have invited others to take part. We distribute information about what the holidays mean to Greeks, there have been publications in the newspapers, as well as publicity on the radio and TV. Many interested people have taken part."* (Patrīda)

#### 15. **Georgika** – Interview respondent Ēriks Grigolija

Georgika is an organisation for the Georgian community in Latvia. The organisation seeks to preserve Georgian culture and to enhance its level of recognition. The association organises cultural events for this purpose.

Grigolija says that the organisation seeks to avoid being involved in politics or in analysis of political processes, but it does offer information to the Georgian community about naturalisation and integration.

#### 16. **Ider** – Interview respondent Midhats Satdanovs

Ider is an organisation for Tatars in Latvia, and it has been in existence since 1998. In 2001, the Tatar Cultural Centre was established by the organisation. The main aim for the group from the very beginning has been to allow Tatars who live in Latvia to learn about and to preserve their own identity.

As Ider developed, another goal was established – to provide information to people in Latvia about Tatar culture and religion. A particularly important job is to offer information about links between Tatars and Islam.

Satdanovs says that this information is aimed at increasing understanding so as to promote integration. At the same time, he adds, no minority group should lose its specific identity. The preservation of identity is also an aspect of integration.

*“It was a major event. We invited not only people from our diaspora, but also others who could see our culture, who could hear our songs. We organised a competition to see who know the most Tatar songs, we offered our foods to those who were present, and we wanted to be visible in the eyes of others.” (Ider)*

*“We invited television stations to attend our events. We have granted interviews about our lives, our values and our views about events. We are not shutting ourselves off in our diaspora, we are also telling other nationalities about ourselves.” (Ider)*

#### 17. **The Russian Schools Defence Headquarters**<sup>11</sup> -- Interview respondent Genādijs Kotovs

The Russian Schools Defence Headquarters (KSAŠ) is an unregistered organisation which began its operations in 2003. The organisation's stated aim is to preserve education in the Russian language in Latvia. Kotovs says that this goal cannot be achieved unless Latvia's integration policies are changed. On the basis of this thinking, the group has also sought to preserve the status of the Russian language in Latvia and to help minority representatives to undergo naturalisation.

The organisation is directly linked to the PCTVL political party. It brings together several Russian minority organisations which operate in Latvia. Kotovs has said with respect to the group's legal status that it was established so that PCTVL and its supporters could have an influence on various political decisions.

The Russian Schools Defence Headquarters have an Internet homepage, where the organisation's goals and activities are described. There is also a chance for supporters of the organisation's views to exchange ideas. Analysis of the homepage shows that the information on the page is fairly proper, and discussions on the page allow one to understand the views of those who support the group – they oppose any political decisions which Latvians force upon others.

In pursuit of its goals, the KSAŠ organises various mass events, thus trying to influence the views of political forces. This can be classified as a radical organisation, one which often turns to provocations in order to pursue its goals. It has often called on students to boycott school so that they can attend the organisation's mass events. Information on the page is available only in Russian.

The organisation has issued various videos in which Latvians are compared to fascists and supporters of a fascist regime. Yielding before Latvian “whims” is presented in these videos as humiliating. Latvian policy is depicted as targeted destruction of the Russian minority.

*“In legal terms, ours is not an organisation, because we are not officially registered. Our work involves meetings between voters and PCTVL. We deal with people who are not apathetic about that which is happening in Russian schools. That is why the organisation does not have official status.” (Russian Schools Defence Headquarters)*

#### 19. **Union of Latvia's Belarusian Public Organisations** – Interview respondent Valentīna Piskunova

The Union of Latvia's Belarusian Public Organisations (LBSAS) is a structure with member organisations throughout Latvia. The group says that its main goal is to preserve and popularise Belarusian identity among Belarusians and others who live in Latvia. Piskunova says that mutual understanding of cultures is the main element of integration, that it makes further dialogue possible. The organisation also helps to popularise Belarus as such.

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<sup>11</sup> [www.shtab.lv/main.php](http://www.shtab.lv/main.php).

The LBSAS organises various festivals which are devoted to Belarusian culture. It also organises seminars on similarities and co-operation between Latvia and Belarus, and it invites representatives of Belarus to visit Latvia.

The organisation also helps smaller Belarusian organisations in Latvia to find money and assistance.

The LBSAS publishes various materials, particularly the newsletter *Прамeнь*, which is published in Belarusian. The newsletter is interesting in that it deals not only with events in Latvia that are important to the Belarusian diaspora (the focus is particularly on the operations of various Belarusian organisations), but also with events in Belarus which are a part of the work of the political elite in Belarus. The newsletter offers support for those events.

Other print materials from the organisation deal with Belarusian culture and the relevant organisations.

Piskunova says that an important area of work for her organisation is to promote the emergence of the civil society and to facilitate naturalisation. The organisation sees these activities as additional goals. Basically, however, the LBSAS can be classified as an organisation which consolidates the ethnic community and popularises Belarusian culture.

*"We are active. I think that the Belarusian organisation is if not the most active, then at least one of the most active organisations among those which you are surveying." (Union of Latvia's Belarusian Public Organisations)*

*"We do a lot of cultural work, because we feel that culture is one of the techniques for integration – bringing cultures closer together, fomenting understanding. Latvian culture, Belarusian culture, the culture of others – Russian culture, Uzbek culture, despite the fact that it is Islamic. Understanding all cultures is important for the culture of Latvia." (Union of Latvia's Belarusian Public Organisations)*

#### 19. **Doina** – Interview respondent Raisa Gerasimoviča-Durajčika

Doina is an organisation for Romanians and Moldavians, and it has two basic goals. One is to preserve and develop culture. According to Gerasimoviča-Durajčika, the organisation does not try to demonstrate or popularise the Romanian and Moldavian culture, choosing instead to preserve it and to consolidate representatives of the two communities.

The second goal for Doina is to help representatives of the organisation to become integrated into Latvia. Latvian language courses are regularly organised, and this helps people to pursue naturalisation. Gerasimoviča-Durajčika says that these two areas of activity allow Moldavians and Romanians who live in Latvia to feel more comfortable in Latvia.

Doina, generally speaking, is an organisation which seeks to preserve ethnic culture, but also to help its members to deal with legal issues. Doina does not try to influence policy, and it accepts legitimate political processes in Latvia.

*"Our goals, as is the case for all organisations, is to preserve our language and culture, to communicate in our language when we come together, and to preserve our traditions, which is important for any individual who is living abroad." (Doina)*

#### 20. **Čoron** – Interview respondent Jevgēnijs Bardakovs

Čoron is an organisation for Yakutians in Latvia, and it was established in 1995. The organisation seeks to preserve the Yakutian diaspora in Latvia and to promote the traditions of that community. The organisation offers cultural events and defends the diaspora's rights.

*"Our basic goal is to consolidate everyone who has direct links to Yakutia so as to defend our common interests." (Čoron)*

### **Changes in ethnic relations**

Representatives of various organisations say that there has been a deterioration in ethnic relations over the last decade. That is particularly true among representatives of radical

organisations, who speak to education reforms which led to public protests and greater activities among NGOs. Radical Latvian organisations also point to Russia's hand in these processes.

*"Until that time, the situation among ethnic minorities was not as tense. The education law which was introduced in 2003 or 2004 and spoke to the 60:40 ratio – it created a certain situation."* (Nēva Drom)

*"Relations have certainly worsened in recent times, and there are several reasons for this. The Russian factor is certainly of importance here. During the last few years, Russian speakers in Latvia have protested quite noisily against education reforms and other things. For most Latvians, these activities are unacceptable."* (Club 415)

*"Ethnic relations in the last few years have quickly moved toward tensions, if we compare the situation to that which prevailed 10 years ago. It probably is the case, yes, that various Russian organisations have become more active in recent times, and that is particularly true when it comes to these political issues."* (Club 415)

*"The relations were smoother many years ago, when different conditions prevailed. Once the Headquarters appeared in defence of Russian schools, we moved 10 years back in time, and now there is something like unification."* (Association of Russian Organisations in Latvia)

*"I think that the relationship was quiet all the time, there were no differences. Maybe the loudest issue in recent times has been this education reform issue because of the activities of the Headquarters. There has been a real gap, and young people from minority schools have objected. They claimed that the Latvian language is being forced upon them, that they have to study more. At the same time, however, I have never seen any problems in practical contacts."* (Latvian Youth Council)

When it comes to public integration, representatives of analytical NGOs point to two different processes. On the one hand, one can see a process of self-integration in society. Representatives of various ethnic groups work together successfully. On the other hand, the ineffective nature of integration policies at the national level can be blamed on political parties and politicians. At the same time, some respondents say that unsuccessful public integration might lead to total alienation from the state amongst some individuals.

*"I can see how the practical integration – the integration of people into an environment which at one time was relatively closed in ethnic terms – is occurring. People are doing more things together, they are studying at Latvian schools, but there is still quite a lot of opposition to the system. I refer to the institutional system."* (Providus)

*"The process of self-integration is taking place at the local level, and from this perspective, we perhaps are exaggerating the role which the statements of national politicians plays. To be sure, the processes are the same as the ones which take place in everyday life. They're important processes, they take place at a completely different level, but they do happen."* (Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies)

*"I don't think that ours is a unified society yet, but there is a very serious threat that people might give up on this country at the end, each person shaping his or her life as if the state didn't exist at all."* (LAŠOR)

Respondents stress that ethnic disharmony is the consequence mostly of political activities – politicians are the ones who promote the conflict among ethnic groups by maintaining ethnic issues on the daily agenda.

*"Back then and now, there is no threat of an ethnic conflict in Latvia, but there is opposition, and there are disputes, yes. Politicians are not promoting inter-ethnic dialogue, they are still trying to split up society so as to satisfy the emotions of their voters."* (Golden Ball of Yarn)

*"When we talk about ethnic issues, then perhaps people admit that there are certain problems. Perhaps they are more at the level of the political agenda, not on the agenda of the organisations or of local residents."* (Latvian Youth Council)

Respondents also say that ethnic problems often have much less of an effect on local residents than social problems such as income gaps and differences between cities and rural areas do.

*“There is a bloc of issues which affect all residents, and the ethnic issues have been pushed aside. On the political agenda, the issue of education reforms proved that there are issues.” (Latvian Youth Council)*

*“You know, all of the research that has been conducted in Latvia and its regions shows that social problems are more important than ethnic problems. Social disintegration is greater than ethnic disintegration.” (Golden Ball of Yarn)*

*“The gap between the rich and the poor is more visible than the gap between Latvians and Russians.” (Golden Ball of Yarn)*

When discussing the possibility of an ethnic conflict, NGO representatives, including people from radical organisations, say that one reason which hinders the emergence of such a conflict is that a conflict would create problems for all ethnic groups in Latvia. That is why they are interested in preserving inter-ethnic conflict – so that a deeper conflict does not emerge. Respondents also say that a conflict would be undesirable for the state – there is no real reason to fear one, because politicians would not allow it to emerge.

*“I would say that at this time we are half a step away from conflict. Both sides seemingly understand that if a conflict were to start and become more passionate – that would be very disadvantageous for both sides, and that is why the entire issue is handled through words, not deeds.” (Club 415)*

*“I think that it’s not so much an ethnic conflict as it is fear of the possibility of such a conflict. Everyone understands that any conflict would be absolutely undesirable for the country, because communities have been very successful so far in dealing with all of their problems. For that reason, I do not think that we have serious problems in ethnic relations.” (LAŠOR)*

When the ethnic situation is decided, radical Latvian organisations express dissatisfaction about the idea that the consequences of the Soviet era are still ensuring an unfair attitude toward Latvians. Latvians are seen as the main losers in the situation.

*“I would say that ethnic situations are very tense, and the attitude toward Latvians is very unfair. They’re attacked. If there is no crime, criminal cases are fabricated against Latvians. This is all a result of the situation in which the consequences of the Soviet period have not been reversed. Sadly, politics are entirely aimed against the Latvian people.” (Latvian National Front)*

Minority cultural organisations have a more positive view of the situation. They argue that ethnic tensions have diminished over the last few years, because those who are involved in the situation have become more sensible and tolerant. The possibility of an ethnic conflict, according to these respondents, diminishes as a result of people learning the Latvian language – a situation which has recently improved.

Also of great importance are changes in the development of the conflict. Respondents point to discussions that have begun in recent times. Relations have become more civilised, and problems are resolved through negotiations.

*“It seems to me that the relationship has improved. I think that 10 years ago the issue was harsher – well, no – one side has become more sensible, it has calmed down, while the other has become more active but, in some cases, less sensible, I suppose.” (Alef)*

*“On the other hand, it is possible that the fight for the rights of Russian speakers is increasing, but there are people who do sensible things, as is accepted in Europe – they’re politically correct. That’s why I think that relations among people have become better, even though they have never been really bad.” (Alef)*

*“Our Latvian language skills have significantly improved. I’m not just talking about myself, that’s generally true. The lack of trust is disappearing at the everyday level. People are calm, they see that everything is normal.” (Union of Citizens and Non-Citizens)*

*“There are improvements year by year, despite all of the fusses, all of the seemingly negative events. There are definitely improvements in ethnic relations, because these things are occurring in parallel with improved Latvian language skills. It goes without saying that people cannot understand another culture or accept others at an everyday level if they don’t understand what those who are alongside them are saying.” (Union of Citizens and Non-Citizens)*

### **The naturalisation process**

People who choose to undergo naturalisation do so first and foremost because they wish to live in Latvia, but the issue of the linguistic environment is also of important. If the Russian language is self-sufficient, that does not encourage people to learn Latvian. An absence of Latvian language skills, in turn, hinders naturalisation.

Analytical organisations say that another obstacle against the decision to undergo naturalisation is that people receive different information about this issue from the various political forces in Latvia.

*“There may be some who want to go home, they don’t need to be naturalised. Those who are Russian speakers sometimes say that they don’t have the money. I don’t think that’s the main thing, however. The main thing is that they speak Russian and simply fail to learn the Latvian language. That depends on the environment in which they live.” (Lithuanian Cultural and Education Centre)*

*“Negative phenomena include the fact that there have been attacks against this process at the political level. There are some fairly radical politicians who still have an influence on the overall situation.” (Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies)*

*“You cannot force anyone to undergo naturalisation if he or she is not prepared to do so, and especially if the message that is received from left-wing and right-wing politicians tells the person that he or she should not undergo naturalisation.” (Providus)*

Respondents from minority organisations quite often mentioned three major factors which hinder naturalisation. Cultural organisations say most often that the process is too complicated, arguing that if it were simpler, then greater numbers of people would undergo naturalisation. Here respondents speak not only of the citizenship exam, but also of the fee for naturalisation and the documents which have to be prepared.

Second, respondents say in some cases that the terms for naturalisation should be made easier for elderly residents of Latvia.

The radical Russian organisation which is the Russian Schools Defence Headquarters says that the process of naturalisation is humiliating for people who have lived in Latvia all their lives – it is simply unacceptable.

The process of naturalisation is also hindered in part by the fuss that has been raised around this process. People become afraid of being unable to pass the naturalisation exam.

*“The level of knowledge that is necessary to pass the exam could be lowered a bit. For the Fatherland and Freedom insists on a level of knowledge which is all but the same as the exam which a doctoral candidate must take.” (Ukrainian Association of Latvia)*

*“Many people think that they are already a part of society in Latvia, so they don’t need naturalisation. They deserve naturalisation because they’ve lived here for a long time – 10 or 20 years. They feel that they do not need to take any test.” (LAŠOR)*

*“I underwent naturalisation four years ago, and I can’t say that it was particularly pleasant, but I had to do it for work reasons. I don’t think that it was proper, though, because I was born in Latvia and have lived here all my life. My daughter was born in Latvia, and I had to prove that I am a patriot. I didn’t receive citizenship automatically.” (Alef)*

*“As far as I know some 30% of non-citizens consider the naturalisation process to be offensive and unfair. Before the elections of the 1990s, the People’s Front promised that if Latvia were to become independent, Latvian citizenship would be granted to everyone who wanted it.” (Russian Schools Defence Headquarters)*

*“I feel that the process could be a bit quicker, because there are lots of non-citizens. People are afraid of ‘not knowing’ things, they speak and understand Latvian, but they’re afraid of the commission, that they will be ‘unable to pass.’ People think that the whole situation is so very complex. I tell them that this is not the case, all is well.” (Doina)*

Some respondents argue that bureaucracy must be overcome when undergoing naturalisation – bureaucracy which has been established specifically so as to slow the process down.

*“The process which has been started by the government is being implemented normally, as should be the case. A different issue is the procedure itself – many people will not become*



citizens in the near future, because the relevant institutions are unable to accept all of the requests, to satisfy everyone. The procedure was instituted specifically with purpose, and it cannot ensure a rapid pace of naturalisation.” (LAŠOR)

There are diverse views about the pace of naturalisation and the requirements of the naturalisation exam. NGOs which are focused on the civil society say that the requirements for the exam are normal, and the pace is adequate.

“People are given a chance, and then it is up to them to decide whether they will use it or not. If someone does not speak Latvian and has failed the naturalisation exam again and again, then that is the individual’s responsibility – it is an individual issue, not an issue of naturalisation as such. I think that the naturalisation process is successful, and I do not think that it should be faster.” (Latvian Youth Council)

Latvian radicals, for their part, say that the naturalisation requirements are too easy and that too many non-citizens are being naturalised. Representatives of radical organisations have suspicions about those who have become citizens via naturalisation.

“I personally cannot accept the principles on the basis of which naturalisation is occurring in Latvia. When I read the rules on obtaining citizenship, I see that adults are asked about the colour of Latvia’s flag, and I don’t think that this is entirely right.” (Club 415)

“This whole idea of naturalisation must be reviewed again. Of course, there has to be a mechanism of some kind whereby someone can become a citizen, but I think that we could use processes which have been tested in other countries – naturalisation windows, perhaps even quotas, as was the case in the early 1990s in Latvia.” (Club 415)

“Gaining citizenship through the naturalisation process which exists at this time is a crime. It can be implemented only after the decolonisation of a colonised country.” (Latvian National Front)

“I think that a great many people have become citizens, and particularly in the last few years, who, I’d say, are quite hostile toward the statehood of Latvia.” (Club 415)

### **Education reform in minority schools**

When talking about education reform in minority schools, respondents have radically different views. These depend on the NGO which the respondent represents, as well as the links between that NGO and a certain ethnic group. Minority NGOs say that reforms should involve a higher percentage of classes which are taught in the native language of the student, while Latvian NGOs feel that all subjects must be taught in Latvian.

Minority NGO representatives usually claim dissatisfaction with the school reforms. A major objection relates to the idea that the reforms were not prepared sufficiently before they were implemented. Respondents from analytical organisations say that if the government had first designed teaching methods and trained bilingual teachers, then the reforms would be successful. Instead, according to the respondents, the government ignored the need for preparations.

“Initially there were doubts as to whether students would be able to learn properly if classes were taught in Latvian. Schools showed, however, that perhaps because they have very good teachers or because the principal is a very strict woman, students demonstrate sufficient knowledge in subject areas which are taught in Latvian.” (Ukrainian Association of Latvia)

“I’m not saying that this is unnecessary, I’m not saying that classes shouldn’t be taught in Latvian at the high school level. Generally speaking, though, I think that high schools and elementary schools are not ready for this. Many teachers who teach in Latvian have poorer Latvian language skills than their students do.” (LAŠOR)

Most minority representatives say that students can’t learn if they have to study materials in Latvian. Respondents say that some subjects must be taught in the native language – the exact sciences, for instance, which are sufficiently complicated as is. If the sciences have to be

studied in a language which students find hard to comprehend, the quality of learning is threatened. Such views are expressed by both radical and by analytical and cultural minority NGOs.

*"I have to say that it is very hard to study chemistry, physics or maths in Latvian if the child is a Russian speaker. I don't think that this situation should have been made more complicated."* (Nēvo Drom)

*"Schools can teach Latvian literature and history, that was the case when we were students. Those subjects are OK, but there are also subjects in which language is not important, they have to be taught so that students really understand what is being said. The point is not that physics or mathematical terms should be explained in Latvian – the point is that students have to understand mathematics."* (Alef)

*"Those who study will speak the language, but they will not have a good command of physics, chemistry, biology and other sciences. It will simply be a Latvian language lesson which is focused on biology."* (LAŠOR)

*"The education process at schools as such involves great difficulties. The schedule is very saturated, and if it is hard to learn a subject in one's native language, but one is forced to learn it in another language, then it is clear that the quality of education is radically deteriorating, and if we look at everything, then we see that this one of the goals of the reforms."* (Russian Schools Defence Headquarters)

Respondents from Latvian NGOs, for their part, fully support the reforms. They think that problems which have occurred in relation to the reforms are entirely of a political nature. A respondent from a radical Latvian organisation argues that schools should teach all classes in Latvian.

*"In all state schools, classes should be taught only in Latvian in Latvia. Everything must be taught in Latvian. The state language is Latvian. Who can possibly accept the fact that the state is paying for schools where other languages are spoken?"* (Latvian National Front)

*"These reforms have happened, and that was just an exaggerated political fuss, it was a lot of political advertising. The only motivation for young people who attended those protests was that they didn't have to go to school that day."* (Latvian Youth Council)

### **The role of the Latvian language**

Views about the importance of the Latvian language are very diverse among respondents. Most respondents say that the language is very important, and its status must be affirmed by law. Others say that language policies might be more liberal.

*"People need to speak the Latvian language, there's no dispute about that. They need to speak the language, period."* (Association of Russian Organisations in Latvia)

*"It is an important role, and that is demonstrated by the recently approved political document on the state language. It is a separate bloc of ideas, and in existing integration documents, too, the state language is a separate bloc."* (Latvian Youth Council)

*"I very much oppose the fact that people have to speak Latvian and Latvian alone at local government institutions. What if someone cannot write the document in Latvian? I've had people who have asked me to write a document about broken pipes and the like in Latvian. They write the document in Russian, and then they are told that according to the law, a document in Russian cannot be reviewed – they have to write it in Latvian."* (Ukrainian Association of Latvian)

Something said by a representative of a radical Latvian organisation, by contrast, indicates the desire to ensure that the Latvian language be the only language of communications in Latvia.

*“When I see someone who has lived in Latvia for 10, 15, 20 or more years, and that person complains that it is too hard, that he has to speak too much Latvian – well, that seems peculiar to me. I don’t know how many guest workers are moving to Ireland, England and Germany, but it is only logical that when they go there to work, they resolve the language issue in the first few months.” (Club 415)*

*“The Constitution says that the state language is the Latvian language. That’s how it has to be, and that cannot change. The result of various historical processes has created the sad situation in which ethnic homogeneity has been entirely messed up. The fact that the Russian language is entirely functional – particularly in Rīga and other cities – that doesn’t mean that it is a normal, natural or completely acceptable phenomenon. As far as I’m concerned, this is Latvia, and the Latvian language is spoken here.” (Club 415)*

Representatives of minority NGOs say that the Latvian language must be state language and the language of communications among ethnic groups, but they also emphasise that the value of the language is perceived differently among the various ethnic groups. Even if the Latvian language is accepted as the state language, there must still be tolerance vis-à-vis other languages and cultures in Latvia so as to avoid any negative counter-reaction on the part of those who belong to other cultures.

*“Latvian is the language of conversation among ethnic groups, but I think that it will inevitably be just one of the languages in inter-ethnic relations. The Russian language won’t disappear, and that is good. The Latvian language, for its part, is and will remain the only state language.” (LAWSOR)*

*“The Latvian language is of value. No one disputes that, but it cannot be sufficiently valuable for a non-Latvian to force him to reject his own language. If we position the language as the highest value and say that there are no other values, then it is certain that others will be pushed aside. It is of value in the sense that it is the language of dialogue, but it does not have to happen on the basis of culture and language.” (Union of Citizens and Non-Citizens)*

*“If this involves emotions which argue not only that the Latvian language is the state language, but also that this is the country of the Latvians, that only Latvian culture is the culture of this country, etc., then that cannot help but harm the integrity of the state.” (Providus)*

Representatives of minority NGOs stress that the motivation for learning the Latvian language is very important. If people are forced to learn the language, that may create a counter-reaction – people may simply refuse to learn the language.

*“It is very important that the language not be forced on us artificially or violently so that there is no counter-reaction among people who should treat the language as their own.” (LAŠOR)*

*“If someone needs to learn the language, he will learn it, and then he will or will not undergo naturalisation, but he will learn the language. It will turn out, however, that he will not need the language, he’ll simply ignore it.” (Nēvo Drom)*

*“If I’m told that I have to do something, that I have to learn Latvian folk songs, then I don’t like that. I have not liked Latvian folk songs ever since I was a child, and the same is true with Russian folk songs. I’m told to like them, even though I don’t. I don’t want to. I learned the folk songs, I took the test, and the next day I forgot them. That’s happening everywhere.” (Alef)*

Representatives of cultural organisations say that the importance of the Latvian language cannot be questioned, and they stress its significance as the only state language.

*“The state language has its role and status in all structures, and I don’t want to talk about this any more – this is not a matter for debate.” (Georgika)*

*“The Latvian language has to be spoken everywhere, there’s no question. Signs and everything else – they’re all in Latvian. Latvia is not big enough to permit two official languages.” (Lithuanian Cultural and Education Centre)*

*“I am not a professional pedagogue, but I agree that there must be just one state language. The so-called Russian language – people can speak it, but there has to be a single state language.” (Nēvo Drom)*

A representative of the Union of Latvia’s Belarusian Public Organisations has a different view. She says that elements of integration can be found among Latvia’s residents and cultures, but certainly not in language.

*“Is language the main resource for integration in Latvia? I don’t think so. The main thing in integration is people and their culture – their knowledge, their contacts.” (Union of Latvia’s Belarusian Public Organisations)*

Respondents think that new generations will facilitate the speaking of Latvian in Latvia, because young people have better language skills than people from other generations do. Respondents predict that the Russian language will be a resource for communications in parallel to the Latvian language.

*“Our generation still thinks in Russian, but recently I’ve noticed that young people freely communicate in Latvian – that’s a natural process. Young people will probably speak the state language even more freely, and that strikes a balance of some kind between the state language and the language of communications. I think that Russian will keep on being a language of communications between Latvians, Russians and other ethnic groups, and that will be true for a long time to come.” (Georgika)*

Representatives of minority NGOs also admit that people must learn the Latvian language, but they also point out that this has much to do with the individual’s work environment and age. Respondents argue that it is particularly important for young people to learn the Latvian language.

*“I think that if you live here, you absolutely must speak the Latvian language to a greater or lesser extent. It all depends on where you live and work. We have people who have no links to these things. They work in a Russian speaking team or don’t work at all – they sit around at home. There are older people who do not encounter the language at all.” (Alef)*

*“First of all, we want our children to speak Latvian as the biggest language in this country. 63% of Latvia’s residents consider Latvian to be their native language. What is more, Latvian is our state language, it is the language of the ethnos for which Latvia is its ethnic territory. That’s why we think that children from ethnic minority families must have a good command of the Latvian language.” (LAŠOR)*

Respondents also try to understand the link between Latvian language skills and public integration. Many say that learning the Latvian language is a good resource for public integration, although representatives of minority NGOs argue that integration is not possible on the basis of the Latvian language and culture.

*“That is an issue of national identity. Latvia is a symbol and this integration process can happen when people take a few steps toward one another. That means that people from minority groups must have at least an elementary command of the Latvian language.” (Latvian Youth Council)*

*“The Latvian language has only a positive role to play in the process of integration, because the indigenous people of Latvia are Latvians. It is a positive thing if all nationalities begin to understand the Latvian language. That tears down barriers, it reduces mistrust, etc. That is very positive, but it must not be exaggerated. It is not possible to base integration on the Latvian language and culture.” (Union of Citizens and Non-Citizens)*

A representative from one cultural organisation stresses the role of Latvian language skills in political participation and the emergence of the civil society and civic identity.

*“The Latvian language is absolutely essential in the type of integration which is known as ‘participation in policy development’. It is not possible if one does not speak Latvian. No minority group can take part in processes of planning and influence without the Latvian language, and that means that the group is marginalized. I think that the Latvian language is enormously important in the emergence of a national or civic identity.” (Golden Ball of Yarn)*

Representatives of analytical NGOs argue that integration is hindered by identity problems among Russian speakers, because they are not an ethnic group. The group emerged in the context of the Soviet regime, with various ethnic groups assimilating among themselves. The element which unifies them is the Russian language, and that keeps people from developing a new identity in Latvian society and the Latvian state.

*“Sadly, the situation is one in which the Russian speaking community is not an ethnic community. The Russian speaking community is made up of people of Slavic organisations, and secondly of various ethnic groups which have been Russified. We cannot talk about an ethnic group here, because too much of this has to do with the Soviet heritage. The Soviet identity keeps people from developing normal attitudes vis-à-vis Latvia, too. What is Latvia in comparison to the mighty Soviet Union?” (Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies)*

Representatives of cultural NGOs stress that both the Latvian and the Russian language are important in Latvia, because language skills help people to develop career opportunities. Respondents say that minorities should be allowed to speak their own language at public events, too.

*“Thank God, people are becoming smarter, they understand that if they also speak Russian, they will have better prospects in business, in their careers. You can’t live with the Latvian language alone, you absolutely must speak another language. English, of course, is important for someone’s career, but it is easier to learn the Russian language here.” (Alef)*

*“We think that the Russian language does not belong to Russians alone, just like the Latvian language does not belong only to Latvians. It is a language which carries culture, created so that other people can use this treasure and respect its value.” (LAŠOR)*

*“The Latvian language is very important to the Latvian people – I have no doubt about that, but the Russian language will never die here. That goes without saying. We’re close to Russia, ours is a vast information space.” (Golden Ball of Yarn)*

*“I think that it would be OK for the Polish National Association to organise a conference, and why should delegates be kept from speaking Polish. If there are officials who speak Polish there, then I don’t see any problem.” (Latvian Youth Council)*

### **The role of politicians and political parties**

When respondents speak of politicians and political parties in the context of public integration, they usually say that the selfish interests of politicians are the reason for worsening ethnic relations. Harmony in society can be ensured by stable lifestyles, habits and cultures.

*“If something is shaped, if something is good with respect to integration, then someone throws rocks at the process, and then integration immediately becomes involved in politics. Integration absolutely must not be mixed up with politics, that is something completely different – it speaks to a nation which lives in a country with a lifestyle that is based on their habits and culture.” (Nēvo Drom)*

*“I think that ethnic relations at this time have worsened because of politicians, because they are constantly debating this issue, they are always looking for enemies, for people to blame*

*for the fact that you live a bad life. We should forget about this, that is totalitarian thinking – the one who has the most power starts to look for enemies among those who are weaker.” (Ider)*

Respondents say that those who are in power can have a positive effect on integration by establishing government institutions which reduce the possibility of ethnic conflicts and promote harmony in society. These are the secretariat of the minister with special portfolio for integration, as well as the Public Integration Fund.

*“I can only mention a few positive things – to be sure, the establishment of the integration secretariat and the Public Integration Fund, but European institutions were of much influence there, it was not just Latvia’s initiative. There is also the National Agency for Latvian Language Learning, which is an outstanding institution in the area of integration.” (Providus)*

*“The Integration Ministry has done many positive things in this area. It supports many different events, because each ethnos has its own festivals and habits throughout the year, and the Integration Ministry is the one which facilitates this process.” (Nēvo Drom)*

*“If we compare the current situation with the situation 10 years ago, then it has certainly improved. The establishment of this Integration Ministry offers direct proof of this. Before the ministry was established, only two people at the Naturalisation Board dealt with ethnic issues.” (Ukrainian Association of Latvia)*

*“Nils Muižnieks laid the foundations for this, and we respect him, because he was the first true democrat to announce that we must respect everyone who lives here, not just Latvians. Latvians must learn that there are other nationalities here, that they must make friends with those nationalities, they must count on them and live together with them.” (Union of Latvia’s Belarusian Public Organisations)*

When talking about the effect of politicians on ethnic disharmony in society, respondents say that politicians often try to attract attention with provocative proposals as to ethnic policy – e.g., the naturalisation procedure or various limitations. The aim of such pronouncements is to create hostility in the electorate and to split up society. This allows politicians to present themselves as protectors, thus gaining voter support. This judgment about politicians is expressed by radical organisations, as well as those which engage in policy analysis and civil society development.

*“I’m talking about relations between Russians and Latvians, that is what creates this tension. Political parties just keep pouring oil on the fire so that it burns hotter. My view is that we don’t need to complicate the pace of naturalisation. Political parties don’t want people to forget them, and so they come up with slogans to say that we need to this and that. As soon as an election approaches, that’s what they need to do.” (Nēvo Drom)*

*“The thing in Latvia today ... I have to say honestly that there are political parties which are putting the brakes on naturalisation.” (Nēvo Drom)*

*“Parties still need these ethnic issues to attract votes. That is done consciously, because that is a more secure strategy for attracting voters. It’s easiest to scream that ‘the Russians are coming!’ or ‘the Latvians are coming!’ We need to defend our values, our identity or something like that – that’s what politicians do. Political parties have a very negative role to play in the process of integration.” (Providus)*

*“It is probably no surprise that many of us think that the greatest problems have been created by politicians, because they have often exacerbated the relationships.” (Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies)*

*“We have tried to develop a structure in which ethnic groups can preserve their identity. There are politicians who try to split everyone up, take advantage of this situation to get as many votes as possible in the election.” (Association of Russian Organisations in Latvia)”*

*“Of course, any change involves inconvenience and certain difficulties. There were those who made use of this mood in the Russian speaking community, they tried to earn political capital on the basis of that mood.” (Club 415)*

Respondents say that there are members of the political elite who foment ethnic hatred so as to make themselves more popular. Some of these people have been a part of the public elite or public space for a long time, and that suggests, to a certain extent, that politicians have tolerance toward those who seek to split up society. One representative of a radical organisation says that this is the essence of political party activities – all they want is to keep power, and they are prepared to do absolutely anything in pursuit of the aim.

*“There is Kiršteins, everything that he does is negative. This man cannot bring fame or a good reputation for Latvia, he cannot create positive attitudes among those people who live here. The same is true with Garda – how can I respect him if he calls for all of us to be killed. I absolutely cannot love him, but despite this, Kiršteins has been in Parliament. For how many years are we going to tolerate Garda? If the state were to find this to be a bad thing, then I’m sure that it would find certain methods.” (Alef)*

*“A political party is essentially focused on a lack of truth and principles. The main thing is to take over power, everything else is secondary.” (Club 415)*

A representative of a cultural NGO said that the radical Russian Schools Defence Headquarters essentially help to shape the image of a single party (PCTVL). This respondent feels that a public organisation must instead base its work on mutual respect and co-operation.

*“The Headquarters have been doing various things for the last two years without much thought, it was basically PR and advertising for a single party, and nothing more. If you want to accomplish something, then you need a very different approach – look for mutual respect, talk to others, deal with issues, try to achieve something. Don’t come with this negative energy, this matter of hatred.” (Association of Russian Organisations in Latvia)*

Many respondents said that integration policies in Latvia have not been particularly successful. They point out that only the integration secretariat works on these issues, while other government institutions are basically ignoring the Public Integration Programme which has been approved by the government. Respondents say that if the work of the secretariat were co-ordinated with that of other ministries, the situation might improve.

*“Perhaps there are certain signs to suggest that the situation has worsened a bit over the last few years, but I think that the blame rests with politicians and members of Parliament.” (Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies)*

*“We see polarised groups which are for or against the rights of another group in one or another way, but they don’t defend a programme which understands that we are all residents of a single country, we all live the same lives, we all have the same rights. That does not help to develop this joint life. I think that we are lacking political leaders who understand this.” (Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies)*

*“I think that the problem is that integration policies have not been carefully considered. To put it more precisely, these are the policies just of the one secretariat, while other ministries do what they will. I think that this is a mistake. If the Integration Ministry had audited the Education Ministry, for instance, then perhaps we would have avoided all of these mistakes.” (LAŠOR)*

*“Politicians need to influence these processes, but obviously they don’t want to deal with this situation, and the situation will become greater, it will resolve itself. I just can’t tell you how that will happen.” (Latvian National Front)*

NGO representatives say that NGOs should not collaborate with political parties, no matter what offer is made. Non-governmental organisations can influence policy specifically if they are independent of parties and can defend themselves against them.

*“Political parties, you see, are trying to interfere in the work of national minority organisations, and some of the organisations have established links with parties, but I don’t think that this makes sense. We are an NGO, there is no point in our forming links with political parties.” (Ukrainian Association of Latvia)*

*“Politics are not a duty for NGOs, even politics very much affect them.” (Ukrainian Association of Latvia)*

A representative of the radical Russian Schools Defence Headquarters doesn’t agree. In an interview, he said that the organisation was established specifically to work together with one specific party and to encourage an exchange of information between the two.

*“In legal terms, ours is not an organisation, because it has not been officially registered. We organise meetings between voters and the PCTVL political organisation – with people who are not apathetic about what is happening with Russian schools. That’s why this organisation does not have official status.” (Russian Schools Defence Headquarters)*

### **The role of the mass media**

Most respondents have negative views about the mass media when it comes to integration issues. Representatives of cultural and analytical organisations stress that there are two separate information spaces in Latvia, and within these spaces, the same events are presented in radically different ways. Thus the media promote a polarisation of views among Latvians and Russian speakers when it comes to important issues. This is particularly true about ethnic policy, and about the presentation of education reforms in minority schools.

*“As a journalist I can tell you that 80 to 90% of Russian speakers listen to and read only the Russian language media. 90% or maybe 80% of Latvians read and listen only to Latvian publications. These two groups receive completely different information about the same events.” (Ukrainian Association of Latvia)*

*“When it comes to citizenship issues and, often, about minority nationalities, we frequently see a very negative role that has been performed by the mass media. That is particularly true when it comes to minority education. The views are so very much polarised that it’s hard to understand that we all live in a single country.” (Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies)*

*“The Latvian press has less to say about the integration process, but if you look at the Russian press, then I think that Russians who read these Russian newspapers and magazines, those for whom these are the only sources of information – well, the information in those publications is not sufficiently objective.” (Latvian Youth Council)*

Representatives of analytical organisations also say that the negative role of the media in integration processes is manifested through the need of media outlets to publish information about negative events. Respondents suggest that the presentation of positive or non-shocking events is not of advantage to the media, because that does not facilitate greater readership numbers. Instead, the media use integration to sell their product.

*“The minus is that the mass media do not want to see the positive in this issue, they just look for the negative.” (Ukrainian Association of Latvia)*

*“If the mass media were to focus more attention on good aspects of interethnic relations and to close their eyes to the bad things that were happening ... Just turn on the TV. What do you see? People were beat up, people were shot up, there were robberies, there is nothing good. It is as if there were nothing good in life, but that is not the case.” (Ukrainian Association of Latvia)*



*"I'm talking about the Russian media, they use this issue improperly – they don't see the integration process, they see a conflict. We have even thought about publishing our own newspaper so as to express our views." (Association of Russian Organisations in Latvia)*

*"It is logical, because the media are focused on the mood of people, they try to be popular, because their business and income depend on this. They follow the mood, but the Russian mass media, albeit not ideal, are still open to the Latvians, while the Latvian media are closed to the Russians." (Russian Schools Defence Headquarters)*

The civic organisations of minority groups say that the negative content of the media has to do not only with the desire of media outlets to use the issue of integration to split up the market and keep the two ethnic groups from joining together, but also with the fact that many media outlets are the prostitutes of political organisations. There are direct links between political parties and the media. A review of political influence on the media leads radical Latvian organisations to claim that Russia has an interest in promoting ethnic conflicts in Latvia.

*"The aforementioned newspapers facilitate national hatred. They cannot be blamed, however – it's not so much that they foment national hatred, it's more that they engage in ethnic mobilisation. That is much more dangerous, that is very ethereal work." (LAŠOR)*

*"Our media policies have to do with market share, with consumer groups. It is more advantageous for the media if the groups are split." (Golden Ball of Yarn)*

*"I think that this is a sub-programme for the Russian Foreign Ministry here in Latvia. The Russian language newspapers always write in the style of negations. That has been true for decades, it applies to everything that happens in Latvia. Anything that starts with the root "lat" is linked to negative words." (Club 415)*

Even though people talk about links between the two information spaces and the need of the media to present negative information about integration processes, respondents also add that minority media outlets are necessary in Latvia. Analytical organisations say that the problem with minority media outlets is that they have become politicised. The media should speak more to contacts among groups and to cultural events, they should have fewer attempts to criticise the process of integration. Cultural organisations, however, argue that the media are not interested in presenting minority cultures.

*"People watch the Russian television news each night, and you cannot keep them from doing so. Maybe if the range of media outlets in Latvia were a bit broader, if there were a bit more diversity. Of course, there is diversity, but it is political diversity, not cultural diversity." (Providus)*

*"I think that integration is not facilitated if the processes in this country are presented in such different ways. On the other hand, from the perspective of a minority group, it is very important to make sure that minority nationalities have their own media, in their own language, and I think that this is a contradiction. We have to seek out the middle ground. I believe that this is an issue of content. There has been too much emphasis on language." (Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies)*

*"I only know that on the radio, there is one hour per week for various minority groups, but there is nothing of the sort on TV or in the press. Only the radio has a positive effect on integration processes. I have not seen a single programme on TV that has been devoted to minority nationalities." (Georgika)*

Some respondents focus particularly on those newspapers which they feel are most responsible for the non-objective presentation of events. It is interesting that analysts and radical Latvians have the most diverse views about the newspaper *Latvijas Avīze*. A representative of an analytical organisation says that the newspaper is tendentious about naturalisation issues, while the representative of a radical organisation argues, on the contrary, that *Latvijas Avīze* helps Latvians to gain national self-esteem. Latvian radicals are very sarcastic about the way in which integration issues are presented in the Latvian press, while

Russian radicals say that the Russian press tries to present the views of Latvian politicians, thus emphasising their positive view of Russian language publications.

It is evident that representatives of radical organisations are most likely to be satisfied with the existing situation in the media. That is true both among Latvians and among Russians. When it comes to analytical and cultural organisations, however, people are very critical vis-à-vis the way in which the media present integration issues.

*“Latvijas Avīze very distinctly positions itself as an opponent to naturalisation, it does not consider citizens whose native language is not Latvian to be of equal status. The same is true of the Russian media -- Вести Сегодня and Час in particular.” (Providus)*

*“Only Latvijas Avīze tries to publish nationalist articles – ones which perhaps are really aimed at increasing the national self-esteem of Latvians, which focus on these issues.” (Club 415)*

*“Neatkarīgā, Rīgas Balss and Vakara Ziņas are more likely to support official views. They argue how important it is to integrate, they want everyone to welcome the Russian speakers with open arms – let them go ahead and become integrated, etc.” (Club 415)*

*“The Russian mass media demonstrate their openness toward Latvian politicians or intellectuals, they often publish interviews with them. That’s interesting – they allow the other side to have its say. The Latvian media don’t do the same.” (Russian Schools Defence Headquarters)*

### **The role of NGOs in integration**

In talking about their own organisations, respondents often say that they want to promote harmony in society. When talking about the accomplishments of other NGOs, however, there is often the view that such organisations promote greater activity among radical forces, as well as a split in society.

*“These activities of the Headquarters – they have not allowed the organisation to present itself in a positive way. Rightist radicals became stronger. Why does this happen. Rightists become stronger, and then leftists say ‘oh, so that’s the case.’ Perhaps more precisely, they say ‘the Russians are coming.’ Then the Latvians say, ‘oh, the Russians are coming? Latvian, don’t give up!’” (Ukrainian Association of Latvia)*

*“The problem of integration as such is handled in the sphere of public organisations at least to the extent of 70%. That’s where people preserve their ethnicity, that’s where there is interaction. There are various problems such as education, and each organisation tries to resolve them.” (Association of Russian Organisations in Latvia)*

Respondents say that when NGOs try to promote integration, they work in several different directions. Cultural organisations stress that they help each specific ethnic group to preserve its cultural heritage. Respondents think that NGOs are intermediaries which ensure the integration of people from the relevant ethnic group into Latvian society (this includes the process of naturalisation), and also ensure that the group is distinguished among others and maintains its culture and traditions.

*“We had several seminars that were called ‘Integration Without Assimilation’. We talked about how to live in Latvia as our motherland, even though it has been easier for Jews to emigrate than any other group, particularly at first. Those people who live in Latvia are those who have consciously decided to do so.” (Alef)*

*“We probably promote integration, we distribute information among our members. We distribute information from the secretariat amongst our members, we help people to become*

naturalised, because many issues are unclear or inactive. Sometimes we also offer legal consultations.” (Georgika)

“I think that it is the job of the non-governmental sector to promote this co-operation among various organisations, among organisations which tend to work just with one or another ethnic group. I think that this is something that certainly needs to be done.” (Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies)

“Our main focus is on the integration of Ukrainians into Latvian society, and now also the European society. We do not want to feel alienated, we want to feel a sense of belonging to this country.” (Ukrainian Association of Latvia)

“We also had an integration project specifically so that we can help people to feel at home, because somehow there are attitudes to say that we are second-class people. We are the main people, you go stand in the corner.” (Alef)

“As is the case for all of the organisations, our goal is to preserve our language and our culture, to communicate in our language. We come together to preserve our traditions, and that is important for all of us – then it’s easier to live in a foreign land.” (Doina)

Analytical NGOs in particular, but also other organisations also work on promoting links between society and political forces. The main job for an NGO is to supervise the work of government institutions, to co-ordinate criticism of that work, and to develop alternative solutions.

“The NGO is doing work that the state has not done, even though we have not been delegated this task. We are at the beginning of the process, we are working on it.” (Golden Ball of Yarn)

“NGOs are a life preserver for Latvian society. Politicians and the entire political system have been compromised. Politicians are elected once every four years, and then it turns out that there are no controls at all in the hands of society. First of all, people choose party lists, not politicians. You can accidentally be on a list whose members are elected to Parliament.” (LAŠOR)

“We are the ones who do the dirty work. That’s good, because we’re the first one to see human problems. We see what has to be preserved – traditions, history, culture. We know that if these values are not preserved, then the language will disappear first, and the nation will disappear afterward. NGOs and organisations encourage people, remind them of various things.” (Nēvo Drom)

“Our organisation criticises the government with respect to education policy in Latvia. Second, we design policy alternatives with respect to minority education. Third, we take part in processes so as to maintain and increase our authority.” (LAŠOR)

Minority NGOs offer various cultural programmes which are of interest to people of various age groups and interests. When people attend such events, they communicate within their own ethnic group, which is very important given the alienation of modern urban life.

“We have a social centre, it is a community and a different organisation. It has existed for the last 15 years. We have programmes for people of all ages – musical and cinematic clubs. We bring in lecturers, there’s live music. We bring in only knowledgeable professionals so as to ensure quality. These events are not just for Jews, different kinds of people attend – there are no limitations.” (Alef)

“There are communications in any programme, because urban residents these days can find anything they want. In order to get people to visit us, we have to offer them something that they cannot find anywhere else. Communications are probably the only thing that go lacking, except, of course, for money and health. That’s why people come here – it’s very important for them to be amidst others.” (Alef)

Representatives of analytical organisations say that the role of NGOs is becoming stronger in society, but right now it is weak and insufficient. The same is said about the readiness of people to become involved in NGO work. Respondents think that these problems will be resolved over the course of time, and in the near future, NGO work might improve, and the role of the organisations may become more important.

*“NGOs, particularly minority NGOs, are perhaps not working to full effect, but that has to do with our shortcomings. We don’t have money. Members of our organisations are not rich, and millionaires don’t visit us, because they don’t have any issues with integration and ethnic relations.” (Ukrainian Association of Latvia)*

*“I think that it is large, but insufficient – it should be larger, and the non-governmental sector should be mobilised to a far greater extent. To be sure, the civil society remains weak in Latvia.” (Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies)*

### **Ways of improving ethnic relations in Latvia**

When asked about the future, respondents say that they see various possibilities in terms of public integration. The diversity in views usually has to do with the area in which each NGO works. Representatives of radical Latvian organisations say that there is no need for any special integration policy, it is better to allow these processes to develop naturally. Other Latvian radicals argue that the departure of non-Latvians must be promoted.

*“When the state starts to implement a purposeful integration policy – and that does not apply to Latvia alone – that basically indicates just one thing, that there is no real integration. Something has to be done about this. Artificial integration is doomed to failure, because integration can occur only in a natural way.” (Club 415)*

*“We don’t need to keep those who want to leave – let’s help them leave, let’s tell them all about what a good life they can have in Russia. Instead, these people are told to integrate here. There are tens of thousands of people who want to leave.” (Latvian National Front)*

Cultural organisations say that integration must be a natural and voluntary process, without anyone being forced to do anything, and without any special debates.

*“We have no complaints, we’re merging into society. If we live in Latvia, then we have to accept the state and its laws and habits. We have to accept these, we must be loyal. Integration has to be natural and unforced. You can’t force anyone to become integrated.” (Lithuanian Cultural and Education Centre)*

*“My mother had this to say – ‘Don’t help me, don’t bother me.’ If others didn’t bother people, then people might leave more happily. I can say again that you won’t chase anyone out of here with a stick. You don’t want to enter a house where there are fierce dogs in the yard. You take one look, and you don’t go again. That’s why integration has to be a voluntary thing. People have to want to accept other things without losing that which is their own.” (Alef)*

*“The less these issues are discussed, the more natural this process will be. Time will put everything in its place, and if we exacerbate attention that is devoted to these issues, we just make people crazy.” (Georgika)*

Representatives of cultural organisations also say that it is important to learn about the country in which you are living, because you can only love that with which you are familiar. The sense of belonging in one group emerges in comparison to other groups. Respondents also say that they have positive ideas about Latvia when they compare it to other countries.

Respondents say that a big mistake for the Latvian state is to emphasise language as the most important element of integration. Respondents argue that there are other common values which can serve to facilitate public integration – history, the land, stability and welfare.

*“In this sense it is good that people are departing from Russian families, from their Russianness. If you don’t know about something, then you don’t care for it.” (Lithuanian Cultural and Education Centre)*

*"It is very interesting that after people visit other countries, they are so proud of the beautiful locations here in Latvia. Isn't that integration? They feel this to be their country. They say, "... like we have it in Latvia.' Of course – what else are they going to say? In other words, they really are integrated. I can say that most of us who live here feel ourselves to be Latvians, that is only logical." (Alef)*

*"The only value that we supposedly all have in common is the Latvian language. That's all wrong, because values which we have in common are different – a unified and strong country, a motherland. Latvia as a place where the Latvian language is spoken, but where there are history and land, where there are stability, welfare and common values. This is a broader issue than just language." (Golden Ball of Yarn)*

Respondents say that another issue is the need to develop programmes in accordance with the actual proportions of ethnic and socio-linguistic groups in society. It is important to define Russians as the largest minority and to deal with its problems separately. Representatives of analytical organisations stress there have been incomplete views of Latvian society if it is only viewed from the perspective of socio-linguistic groups (Latvian and Russian speakers). Representatives of cultural organisations, similarly, say that it is important to bring minority representatives and Latvians together at cultural events so as to encourage the various cultures to learn about one another and to be tolerant toward each other.

*"The thing is that this must be stressed to a greater extent. The Integration Ministry should have a special department which deals specifically with Russian issues, not with all minorities. That is the largest ethnic minority. Right now we have Poles, Ukrainians, other groups ... and the Russians. Russians make up 80% of the group. If there are issues or problems, they are not controlled, they are taken over by various extremists." (Association of Russian Organisations in Latvia)*

*"One of the biggest problem is that we look in the categories of Latvians and non-Latvians. We think that these are large, homogeneous groups, and then we look to see what's happening. That does not conform to reality, of course – we should be looking at the various sub-groups." (Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies)*

*"The job for the ministry is not only to improve ethnic relations among various minorities, but also between the indigenous nation of the Latvians and us, the minorities. From this perspective, there should be festivals with participation by Russians and Belarusians, as well as Latvians. That is very important, because that allows people to contact with one another, to transfer culture." (Ukrainian Association of Latvia)*

Respondents think that it is important to preserve the specifics of each ethnos, arguing that assimilation should not be encouraged. In helping younger generations to feel a sense of belonging in Latvia, it is very important for young people to preserve their minority identity.

*"It is very important to make sure that the Jewish diaspora does not disappear. We must not assimilate and turn into nothing. A non-Latvian, similarly, cannot turn into a Latvian, each person has his or her own nationality. It was no accident that God divided us up, there is probably something to that. Each nation must preserve its own roots and traditions, that is very important." (Alef)*

*"Everyone lives here, and the country is called Latvia. We need to understand that, and our children will then understand that they are a part of the ethnic minorities which live in Latvia. Their parents came from Belarus, Ukraine or Russia, but this is their country, it is Latvia, and Latvian is spoken here." (LAŠOR)*

NGO representatives also say that it is important to understand that integration is a two-way street. Non-Latvians must learn the Latvian language, while Latvians must demonstrate tolerance and understanding toward minority cultures.

*"When we talk about integration, then for some reason people think that only non-Latvians need to integrate. I think that Latvians also need to integrate. This integration programme, these conferences, these mass media outlets – they don't look at the issue of Latvians integrating, and that's not right." (Ukrainian Association of Latvia)*

*"Integration is a two-way process, we are proclaiming that here and in Europe. Everyone talks about that, but we very seldom see this as a two-way process, we are forever integrating someone unilaterally." (Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies)*

*“If integration is to be promoted, there must be respect toward the language of those people who are the object of integration. The Latvian government demonstrates absolute respect for the Latvian language. The Russian language? Respect should go without saying, but politicians avoid this situation. Moreover, 80% of our politicians are Latvians.” (LAŠOR)*

NGO representatives say that it is important to allow minority representatives to join in the work of legislative commissions as consultants so that decisions can be taken on the basis of an adequate understanding of context. This would make it possible to take minority rights into account when new laws are drafted.

*“NGO leaders should work in a parliamentary commission which deals with integration – not in the taking of decisions, but at least as consultants. We see things which statesmen do not see.” (Nēvo Drom)*

*“There is a lack of understanding about participatory democracy. Particularly if we look at this from the perspective of minority rights, we see that the biggest problem does not appear to be the content of reforms, of language or percentages. The big problem is this lack of participation – minority representatives at least need to feel that they have been a part of the process.” (Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies)*

## 6.5. THE POSITIONS OF THE POLITICAL ELITE VIS-À-VIS PUBLIC INTEGRATION ISSUES

### SECONDARY ANALYSIS OF SURVEYS OF THE ELITE

According to Burton and Higley,<sup>1</sup> there are three types of national elites:

1) An elite that is split up, competitive and not unified, one that has no roots and experiences internal conflicts – sometimes violent ones. These are elite groups which cannot co-operate. There is mistrust among them, and they can be split by political, economic, ethnic, racial, religious or cultural specifics;

2) A totalitarian and ideological unified elite that is based on a single ideology – an example of this was seen in Germany and the USSR in the 1930s;

3) A pluralistic and competitive elite, or a consensually unified elite. Members may have different views about political issues, but they do not tend to hold extremist views which could create a conflict. Such elites are typical of modern democracies.

Researchers of the elite such as Steen<sup>2</sup> insist that an elite can operate successfully only if there is trust amongst its members, if members with different ideological views can debate their ideas and compete among with one another, and if, at the same time, everyone accepts the “rules of the game” of democracy. This is an elite which is integrated into political positions. Among conflicting elites, there is mistrust. There are doubts about the elite groups and their competence. If there are ideological differences, this mistrust is also focused on those who take decisions.

The results of a study of the elite that was conducted in Latvia<sup>3</sup> allow us to review the level of trust among the elite. We can also compare the political positions of Latvians and non-Latvians – attitudes vis-à-vis democracy, the national economy and public integration. This allows us to determine the importance of the ethnic gap and to know which issues are the ones in which this gap is manifested most clearly. Third, by comparing the results of studies conducted in 1997, 2000 and 2003, we can focus on changes in political attitudes, also looking at how the ethnic gap has developed.

#### Trust among the elite

Studies of the elite make it clear that there is distinct mistrust in Latvia when it comes to the political elite. In 2003 it was found that more than one-half of members of the elite (including members of Parliament) agreed with the view that “*most politicians cannot be trusted to do what they think would be best for the state*” and that “*people in important government jobs usually think about their own benefits more than they think about the public good.*” This view was supported less often among government ministers and civil servants – only one-quarter of respondents or so signalled agreement. 80% of respondents accused leaders of short-sightedness – “*there are very few people who clearly know about their interests over a longer period of time.*” It must be stressed here that these views did not change between 1997 and 2003. It turns out that politicians only trust other members of their parties, while accusing others of incompetence and selfishness. This suggests that when Latvian politicians come together in parties, that is usually the result of the interests of the relevant group, while other parties are seen as competitors in pursuit of those interests. This is not competition among different models of political ideology – ones which offer different models as to the development of society. Instead, there is competition among group interests.

<sup>1</sup> Higley, J. and M. Burton (1997). “Types of National Elites in Post-Communist Central and Eastern Europe”, *International Politics*, Vol. 34:2, June 1997, pp. 153-168.

<sup>2</sup> Steen, A. *Between Past and Future: Elites, Democracy and the State in Post-Communist Countries. A Comparison of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania*. Ashgate: Gower (1997).

<sup>3</sup> Here we refer to studies of the elite that were conducted in 1997, 2000 and 2003. The methodology was developed under the leadership of Anton Steen, a professor at Oslo University. 300 people were interviewed in 1997, 285 were surveyed in 2000, and 280 were interviewed in 2003. Respondents were high-rank politicians, as well as representatives of the creative professions, science, business and government.

If we compare the views of Latvians and non-Latvians with respect to trust in the elite, then we see that non-Latvians are more critical than Latvians are. The biggest differences in opinion are found in response to the statement that “*most politicians cannot be trusted to do what they think would be best for the state*”. 65% of non-Latvian members of the elite agree with that statement, as opposed to 54% of Latvians. When it comes to the selfishness of politicians, views are not as diverse – the statement that “*people in important government jobs usually think about their own benefits more than they think about the public good*” was supported by 47% of the Latvian elite and 52% of the minority elite.

**Table 28. Trust among the elite**

% of all respondents

	1997	2000	2003
Most politicians cannot be trusted to do what they think would be best for the state	49	53	54
People in important government jobs usually think about their own benefits more than they think about the public good	45	55	48

**Source:** *Study of the elite, BDN, 1997; BISS, 2000; BISS 2003.*

A comparison of the results of the three studies (1997, 2000, 2003) shows that there have been no positive changes in terms of mistrust in the elite. This is particularly true when it comes to understanding the interests of the state. Between 1997 and 2003, the percentage of respondents who agree with the statement that “*most politicians cannot be trusted to do what they think would be best for the state*” actually increased.

### ***The political positions of Latvians and non-Latvians***

When it comes to priorities in economic and social policy, members of the Latvian elite are more likely to support liberal policies – the individual must care for his or her own welfare. Members of the non-Latvian elite are more likely to support nurturing social policy.

We see a fairly vivid example of this diversity in views when people are asked the following question: “*When it comes to an individual’s welfare, should more responsibility be taken by the individual or the state?*” On a ten-point scale (1 represents the belief that the individual must be fully responsible, while 10 means that the state must take full responsibility), Latvians offered an average indicator of 4.2, thus emphasising individual responsibility to a greater degree. Non-Latvians offered an average indicator of 5.7, thus emphasising the role of the state.

Interestingly, there were fewer differences among age groups in response to this question than there were between Latvians and non-Latvians. The average indicator in the 20-39 cohort was 4.2, while in the 51-60 age group, it was 4.7. Views on this issue were also found to be similar amongst members of the elite with different levels of education.

Similar facts can be said when people were asked about the proportion of state and private properties in business. Among the Latvian elite, 66% of respondents supported the view that “*the proportion of private property should be increased in business and industry*”, while the same was true of only 30% or so of non-Latvian respondents. Here, again, differences among age groups are insignificant.

We see that ethnicity is the main causative factor in terms of differences of opinion when it comes to socio-economic policy. The views of Latvian and non-Latvian members of the elite



are based on fairly diverse ideologies – Latvian views tend to be more liberal, while minorities are more likely to support what is essentially a Social Democratic position.

Interestingly, there is a different gap in the political positions of the elite, as opposed to those of the rest of society. A comparison of studies which focused on the elite<sup>4</sup> and on local residents<sup>5</sup> shows that members of the elite are more likely to support liberal policies, while others expect greater support from the state.

This gap is seen most vividly when people are asked the question “*When it comes to an individual’s welfare, should more responsibility be taken by the individual or the state?*” The elite emphasise the responsibility of the individual to a greater extent (the average indicator is 4.3), while others are more likely to focus on the role of the state (6.4).

Most members of the elite (84%) speak highly of competition, agreeing that it “*encourages people to work hard and to seek out new ideas and opportunities*”. Among others, only one-half or so hold the same view.

A majority of the elite (around 60%) also agree that “*the proportion of private property should be increased in business and industry*”, while among local residents, only 15% strictly argue that private property should dominate. Harmonisation of the views of the elite and of society at large is very important when it comes to priorities in economic and social policy. The studies show that members of the public are more likely to agree with the views of non-Latvian members of the elite. This can be seen as one factor in deepening the gap which exists between minority voters and Latvian politicians.

There are similar results in comparing the views of the Latvian and the Russian speaking elite with respect to the importance of various issues. The most important ones include economic development (around 90%) and the prevention of corruption (around 70% of respondents). Non-Latvians talk about social problems more often than Latvians do – pensions (82% of non-Latvians, 57% of Latvians), health care (82% and 70%), and employment (65% and 51%).

Differences of opinion between the Latvian and the Russian speaking elite, however, are most pronounced when it comes to minority rights. 60% of non-Latvians, but only 5% of Latvians feel that these issues are important.

A comparison of the three studies (1997, 2000, 2003) shows that there have been no major changes in the opinions of members of the elite when it comes to socio-economic policy.

At the same time, however, it has to be stressed that between non-Latvians on the one hand and the power elite, which is mostly made up of Latvians, on the other hand, there is a double gap – one which has to do with ethno-political interests, and another which relates to positions taken on socio-economic issues.

### **Views of the elite vis-à-vis ethnic relations in Latvia**

Representatives of the elite admit that there are ethnic problems in Latvia, but there are differences in opinion as to how serious these problems are. Of all respondents, 41% agree that “*there are just a few small problems which can be resolved*”. One-half of respondents (50%) agree that there are “*a few problems which are difficult to resolve*”. Very few respondents (6%) said that there are “*problems which are so serious that they cannot be resolved in the foreseeable future*”, while only 4% said that “*there are no problems at all*”. Here it is important to understand that there are no statistically significant differences between the opinions of Latvians and those of non-Latvians.

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<sup>4</sup> 2003 data.

<sup>5</sup> Data from a survey of local residents.

There are, however, differences of opinion between Latvians and Russians when it comes to the possibility of an ethnic confrontation – 17% of non-Latvians feel that a confrontation among ethnic groups in Latvia is possible, while only 8% of Latvians agree. Among the elite, there were no respondents who said that there could be an “*open and violent mass confrontation*”, but 20% of Latvians and 7% of non-Latvians think that there could be a “*partly violent confrontation, albeit mostly in words*”. Majorities of Latvian and Russian speaking members of the elite supported the view that a confrontation is possible only in verbal form.

Between 1997 and 2003, the percentage of members of the elite who think that a confrontation is possible declined. Greater numbers of respondents in the most recent survey supported the view that “*Russians who live in Latvia are completely loyal to our country*”. The way in which trends related to ethnic harmony will develop further will become visible after the results of the next study of the elite are presented.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 29. Views of the elite with respect to ethnic relations and the loyalty of minorities**

% of all respondents

	1997	2000	2003
A confrontation between ethnic groups is possible	16	19	9
Russians who live in Latvia are completely loyal to our country	-	21	27

Source: *Study of the elite, BDN, 1997; BISS, 2000; BISS 2003.*

### **Democratic values and their effectiveness in Latvia – views among the Latvian and the non-Latvian elite**

Equality in political rights is a widely supported value of democracy among the elite. Russian speaking members of the elite unanimously supported the view that “*all citizens must have equal opportunities to influence government policy*”, while 90% of Latvians said the same.

There are radical differences in the views of non-Latvians and Latvians when it comes to the loyalty of minorities vis-à-vis the Latvian state – only 20% of Latvians believe that Russians who live in Latvia are loyal to our country, while 90% of non-Latvians say the same. It is very obvious that members of the powerful elite do not trust minorities.

At the same time, however, more than 90% of members of the elite support the idea that Russians who speak Latvian could hold high-ranking posts in politics, national governance, private business, local governments and interest-based organisations. All of the minority respondents supported this view, and only 10% of the Latvian elite rejected the idea.

One-half of those who belong to the Latvian elite believe that “*democracy in Latvia is in good shape, and only a few small changes are needed*”, while the other half indicate support for the idea that “*democracy is in poor shape, and lots of major changes are needed*”. Among members of the non-Latvian elite, only 26% speak positively of democracy in Latvia at this time. Some 60% agree that “*democracy is in poor shape, and lots of major changes are needed*”, while 13% think that “*democracy is in poor shape and must be changed completely*”.

Despite these fairly critical positions vis-à-vis democracy in Latvia, most members of the elite do not cross the boundary of authoritarianism in their beliefs – 73% of Latvian and 61% of non-Latvian respondents reject the view that “*a few powerful leaders will do more on behalf of our country than all laws and conversations might do*”.

<sup>6</sup> The next study of the elite is to be conducted in 2007.

Interestingly, members of the minority elite are more likely to lean toward authoritarianism than members of the Latvian elite are – 39% of non-Latvians and 26% of Latvians support the idea of strong leaders.

A comparison of the views of the elite and of other people allows one to conclude that there is a double gap between the minorities and the power elite. These are based both on ethno-political interests and on socio-economic issues.

**Table 30. Views of the elite about the values of democracy**

% of all respondents

	1997	2000	2003
Democracy in Latvia is in good shape, and only a few small changes are needed	-	44	49
A few powerful leaders will do more on behalf of our country than all laws and conversations might do	49	23	28

Source: Study of the elite, BDN, 1997; BISS, 2000; BISS 2003.

A comparison of the results of the three studies (1997, 2000, 2003) shows that there are a few phenomena which suggest that the thinking of the elite about the values of democracy is becoming stronger. This is seen most vividly when it comes to the idea of a powerful leader. The belief among the elite that “a few powerful leaders will do more on behalf of our country than all laws and conversations might do” has receded considerably among the elite. This is very important in terms of the fact that members of the public at large often continue to look for the strong hand in government. According to research results since 1993, approximately 60% of Latvia’s residents prefer a strong leader to a democratic resolution of issues.<sup>7</sup>

The research results suggest that there are two significant obstacles against the emergence of a unified elite in Latvia, one that has supports the principles of democracy. Mistrust among groups within the elite is one problem, and an ethnic gap is the other, particularly in terms of radically different views about the importance of ethno-policy among other areas of policy. Minority members of the elite stress the importance of issues of ethno-policy, while only a few members of the Latvian elite do the same. It is no accident, therefore, that the views of non-Latvian members of the elite with respect to the development of democracy in Latvia are far more critical than those of Latvians – minority representatives expect more attention to be devoted to minority issues.

We see that different positions on issues of ethno-policy and the atmosphere of mistrust keep groups of the elite from reaching agreement on the development and implementation of public integration policies. On the contrary – ethno-policy is used to manipulate with voters and to polarise their choice.

If we look at the relationship between the elite and local residents, we must stress that there are two gaps between the power elite (which, as we know, is made up mostly of Latvians) and residents who represent ethnic minorities. The first has to do with different positions vis-à-vis issues of ethno-policy, while other relates to differing views about the country’s socio-economic policy. Members of the elite tend to be more liberal, while members of minorities expect social policies to be more gentle than Latvians do. This explains why minorities have less trust in the political elite than Latvians do. Clearly, this reduces the trust of members of the minority in the public integration policies which are being implemented by the power elite. The

<sup>7</sup> Rose, R. and W. Maley (1994). Nationalities in the Baltic States: A Survey Study. University of Strathclyde. See also Rose, R. (2000). New Baltic Barometer IV: A Survey Study. University of Strathclyde. Also Rozenvalds, J. (ed.). Cik demokrātiska ir Latvija? Demokrātijas audits (How Democratic is Latvia? An Audit of Democracy). University of Latvia Academic Publishing House (2005).

power elite, for its part, has greater opportunities to implement integration policies only if there is support from the civil society and if there is co-operation with public organisations.

## ANALYSIS OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH POLITICIANS

### 1. Characteristic of respondents

Interviews were conducted with 20 people from Latvia's political parties who help to shape policy. Respondents represented 14 parties (two people were interviewed from the largest political parties).

**Table 31. Characteristic of respondents**

Respondent	Party	Position
Aleksandrs Brandavs	First Party of Latvia (LPP)	Advisor to the minister with special portfolio for public integration
Ilmārs Mežs	New Era (JL)	Chairman of the party's working group on ethno-policy
Ainārs Latkovskis	New Era (JL)	MP, former minister with special portfolio for public integration
Dzintars Ābiķis	People's Party (TP)	MP
Anta Rugāte	People's Party (TP)	MP
Raivis Dzintars	Everything for Latvia (VL)	Party chairman
Pēteris Tabūns	For the Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK (TB/LNNK)	MP
Ansis Dobelis	Latvian Social Democratic Workers Party (LSDSP)	Secretary general of the party
Ināra Ostrovska	New Democrats (JD) at the time of the interview, now a representative of the Latvian Alliance of the Green Party and Farmers Union (ZZS)	MP
Almers Ludviks	First Party of Latvia (LPP)	Deputy chairman, Rīga City Council
Māris Grīnblats	For the Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK (TB/LNNK)	Chairman of the party's faction in Parliament
Aleksandrs Golubovs	Latvian Socialist Party (LSP)	Chairman of the party's faction in Parliament
Juris Žuravļovs	Motherland alliance	Co-chairman of the alliance
Nikolajs Kabanovs	For Human Rights in a United Latvia (PCTVL)	MP
Boriss Cilēvičs	People's Harmony Party (TSP)	MP

Andris Bērziņš	Latvian Alliance of the Green Party and Farmers Union (ZZS)	MP
Natālija Jolkina	For Human Rights in a United Latvia (PCTVL)	Deputy chairwoman of the party's faction in the Rīga City Council
Igors Pimenovs	New Centre (JC)	Member of the Rīga City Council
Eiženija Aldermane	Latvia's Way (LC)	Director of the Latvian Naturalisation Board
Jānis Strazdiņš	Latvian Alliance of the Green Party and Farmers Union (ZZS)	MP

Among the MPs who responded to the survey, several are members of the Sub-Commission on Public Integration of the Commission on Human Rights and Public Affairs. Andris Bērziņš chairs the sub-commission, and members include Dzintars Ābiķis, Anta Rugāte, Pēteris Tabūns, Ināra Ostrovska, Nikolajs Kabanovs, and Boriss Cilēvičs.

Anta Rugāte chairs the Commission on the Citizenship Law, while Aleksandrs Golubovs is its secretary, and Ināra Ostrovska is a member. Jānis Strazdiņš chairs the Commission on Education, Culture and Science, Dzintars Ābiķis is its secretary, and Pēteris Tabūns is a member.

The political parties of the respondents can be divided up into four groups in terms of their views on ethnic and integration issues:

- Everything for Latvia is a radical and nationalist party;
- For the Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK is a conservative and nationalist party;
- New Era, Latvia's Way, the First Party of Latvia, the People's Party, the Latvian Alliance of the Green Party and Farmers Union, and the Latvian Social Democratic Workers Party are all centrist parties;
- The People's Harmony Party, New Centre, the Motherland alliance, the Latvian Socialist Party, and For Human Rights in a United Latvia are parties whose supporters are mostly members of ethnic minorities.

The radically nationalist party insists upon the Latvian language as the only language with the status of the state language. It also calls for limits on naturalisation, as well as support for the repatriation of non-Latvians. The conservatively nationalist party supports the same ideas, but it also says that social integration will promote ethnic integration.

The centrist parties are focused more on protecting and strengthening the Latvian language and culture, ensuring the preservation and development of minority cultures, as well. The minority parties, however, base their thinking on public integration mostly on issues such as preserving minority cultures, allowing people to be educated in their native language, speeding up the process of naturalisation, and granting the status of a state language to the Russian language, too.

## **2. Ethnic relations and moods, changes therein**

Representatives of Latvia's political parties have different views about existing ethnic relations and moods, but most say that these are acceptable and stable. Most respondents distinctly differentiate between relations which exist on an everyday basis in terms of people's lives and relationships and those which exist at the level of politics. In the first case,

respondents usually say that the situation is good and peaceful, but at the political level ethnic relations are a source of tension – just as they are reflected in the mass media.

Representatives of minority parties argue that ethnic interaction is very limited, and they say that Latvia is a country with two separate communities. They also think, however, that everyday relations among the communities are acceptable.

*"I think that ethnic moods and relationships are, generally speaking, normal – if we are talking about these relations in terms of actual practices among people, among the residents of Latvia. At the same time, however, this is a highly politicised issue. [...] These are problems among politicians and political problems, less so in terms of the relationship among individuals."* (Eiženija Aldermane, LC)

*"There is very little or no sense of ethnic aspects in everyday relations, this is mostly seen in politics. [...] Our society is very much split up if we think that the concept of ethnic relations includes the attitudes of various ethnic and linguistic groups vis-à-vis government policy and various important issues."* (Boriss Cilēvičs, TSP)

*"If researchers wanted to understand the situation and only monitored the Russian language or Latvian language print and broadcast media, then they would get the sense that relations are tense, but if you are an ordinary person who does not monitor the media or political life, then relations are very good."* (Ainārs Latkovskis, JL)

*"Sadly, ours is a society with two communities. Each community lives in its own space, each one has its own mass information resources, its own way of communicating with others. I don't think that there are conflicts among the communities – that has more to do with our political situation."* (Natālija Jolkina, PCTVL)

Respondents think that good relations among various ethnic groups are facilitated by the fact that there is active interaction among them on an everyday basis. People all live in the same environment, and they have similar basic values. At the same time, however, there are also certain suspicions and biases in society with respect to representatives of other ethnic groups, and there are distinct differences of opinion when it comes to certain issues – usually ones that are related to ethno-policy and history. These issues can be used to develop a conflict between Latvians and Russian speakers.

*"The split is very unique. There are no ghetto regions, nearly all Latvians have neighbours who are Russians, and vice versa. On an everyday basis, their shopping and their lives are very interactive, many workplaces also have different kinds of employees."* (Ilmārs Mežs, JL)

*"Latvians and Russians have very similar or identical views about fundamental values. There are a few issues which have to do with ethnic factors and in which views are diametrically opposed. These include World War II, attitudes toward the Latvian Legion, the problem of citizenship, and Latvia's language policy, particularly with respect to the education system."* (Boriss Cilēvičs, TSP)

When asked to talk about the main users and developers of existing tensions, members of the elite refer to political parties and the mass media. Respondents say that the splitting up of society on the basis of the ethnic principle is a factor which can be used successfully to gain political power and to increase mass media profits. These are two centres of power which hinder public integration and make it more difficult to maintain stability and good interethnic relations.

*"Political parties make use of the biases and suspicions which exist in society so as to strengthen their political position in Latvian politics. They try to play games with the mood of protest which always exists in society. To a certain extent, they strengthen this mood of protest, which exists among Latvians and non-Latvians alike."* (Igoris Pimenovs, JC)

*"The fact that there are tense relations can largely be attributed to political parties and politicians. I think that it would be hard to deny that the ethnic issue is primary in collecting*

votes. National and ethnic groups are positioned against one another with various slogans and activities." (Ansis Dobelis, LSDSP)

"All of these active processes are the result of provocations which are organised by political organisations. Slogans on both sides actively lead to more exacerbated tensions. The press goes to work, and relations become worse." (Ināra Ostrovskā, JD/ZZS)

Ethnic relations are influenced by the things which politicians, political parties and government officials say and do, as well as by existing laws. Several respondents said that favourable ethnic relations require appropriate laws, adding that the government must create the impression that integration is desirable and necessary. The attitude of government officials can facilitate or hinder the process of integration. Mistakes in legislation can also have a negative influence.

On the other hand, conservative and nationalist politicians think that a favourable and compliant attitude by the government can only hinder the integration process, creating an effect other than the one that has been intended.

"Integration is a wear word, not a popular word. Before the 2002 parliamentary election, no party sought to shape ethno-policy. To this very moment, sadly, we do not have laws with which minority representatives should work." (Aleksandrs Brandavs, LPP)

"I think that there have been mistakes on the part of Latvians and the governments of that time, because many Russians and members of other nationalities who are loyal to Latvia have perhaps become less friendly." (Ināra Ostrovskā, JD/ZZS)

"Immediately after the restoration of independence, non-Latvians studied the Latvian language, that was obvious everywhere and always. Since then, however, they have developed the opposite mood, and that has been the result of the fact that our government institutions, the Saeima and the government have taken steps toward these people. Instead of wanting to become integrated into this society, they oppose integration in our country." (Pēteris Tabūns, TB/LNNK)

Representatives of the elite also mention other circumstances which have an effect on ethnic relations in Latvia. The influence of history is of key importance, because it has dictated the present situation and created the conditions for existing relations. Respondents say that a positive historical influence has to do with the legislative traditions that were established during the first period of Latvian independence, as well as with the centuries of ethnic diversity that has existed. Negative influence has to do with the large influx of migrants during the Soviet period – a process which created the ethnic composition of the country which prevails at this time.

"Latvia has always been a multi-national country, with various nationalities, not just Latvians living together." (Jānis Strazdiņš, ZZSP)

"When it comes to ethnic issues, the government has always behaved very properly, offering an ethnic balance which essentially ensures the sufficiently numerical representation of various ethnic groups in addition to the indigenous nation. Groups of people co-exist in a sufficiently normal and peaceful way. That was the case during the first period of Latvian independence, [...] and the same traditions have been established in the newly independent Latvia. The foundations are the same." (Anta Rugāte, TP)

"A certain amount of influence has been had by the fact that this ethnic proportion appeared not when Latvia was an independent country, but largely during the period of the occupation. People who arrived here thought that they were arriving in the peripheries of Russia or the Soviet Union, and they do not think of Latvia as an independent country." (Māris Grīnblats, TB/LNNK)

There is also significant international influence, particularly from the European Union and Russia. Respondents have different views about each of these. Russia engages more in the way of indirect influence, e.g., via the mass media. The influence of the European Union is based on legislation – various laws, regulations and recommendations to Latvia.

Representatives of centrist parties stressed the European Union and NATO as a security guarantee for Latvians, one which makes it possible to resolve ethnic issues more successfully.

*"The mood is largely influenced by the press and television – foreign television stations, and particularly on cable television. Many political forces outside of Latvia have an interest in increasing their influence in this country, which is of great geopolitical importance." (Jānis Strazdiņš, ZZS)*

*"The dispute is fomented by political circles which operate on the basis of their own beliefs, but to a large extent it is also fomented by Russian-related mass media, parties and people who have links to the structures of power in Russia." (Māris Grīnblats, TB/LNNK)*

*"Most of the people of Latvia, if we are talking about Latvians, feel more secure as a result of NATO and the European Union, because one of the aspects which influences these relations was, of course, the relationship with Russia and the fear which Latvians have had with respect to Russia." (Ilmārs Mežs, JL)*

*"Today we feel more secure, we are in the European Union, so we are protected, and we can spend more time in thinking about how to improve our lives, about welfare. Of course, we do the things that we must do when we have to note our national issues." (Almers Ludviks, LPP)*

Respondents have had many diverse views as to changes in ethnic relations and moods over the last decade. Many say that these are not very clear issues, because there are both signs which indicate an improvement, and signs which indicate the opposite. Some respondents, when asked to talk about differences, differentiate between that which is happening in everyday life and that which is happening in politics, arguing that there are differences between the two areas.

Representatives of centrist and minority-oriented parties, generally speaking, feel that the issue of ethnic relations has stabilised or become better. A representative of the radically nationalist party, for his part, argues that the issue of relations has become more important over the last few years.

*"The relations have not really changed in any fundamental way, because each community demonstrates its own strengths and develops various ways of influencing the situation. [...] It seems to me that the situation is developing, but it is not changing because of a specific status quo which has been achieved." (Nikolajs Kabanovs, PCTVL)*

*"In comparison to the situation which prevailed 10 years ago, I think that today the situation is improving. Politicians heat up the problem sometimes, and then it is a bad situation. If ethnic groups are allowed to deal with the issues peacefully and on their own, then it is a normal issue. Still, it is very difficult to assess the matter." (Andris Bērziņš, ZZS)*

*"I think that over the last 10 years, relations have become more stable, but they have not improved – each community has withdrawn into itself." (Natalija Jolkina, PCTVL)*

*"At the everyday level, relations have certainly improved, and that has to do with many different factors. [...] Sadly, I see no progress at the political level at this time. Perhaps the issues are perceived with less emotion, but on the other hand, the separation of people by ethnic factors in politics has become deeper and stronger, and it is harder and harder to resolve this issue as the years pass by." (Boriss Cilēvičs, TSP)*

*"The national issue has once again become far more important. If there were a referendum on a distinctly national issue such as the citizenship law, then I think that views about the kind of ethno-policy or ethnic future we should have in Latvia would be even more diverse than was the case in 1998." (Raivis Dzintars, VL)*

When asked to define the main reasons for improved relations, respondents mention the aforementioned accession to the European Union, which has provided Latvians with a sense of security as to threats on the part of Russia. This, say respondents, can affect the ethnic situation. Representatives of political parties say that another favourable factor is that laws have



been approved in accordance with the existing situation. They also speak of the good work done by civil servants, as well as the fact that the level of Latvian language skills has improved among non-Latvians. The change in generations has been noted, too, although the views of young people are also affected by the views of their parents, so the role of the change in generations can be quite limited.

*“Several problems have been resolved in a more or less successful way – the citizenship law and the status of non-citizens. Another factor is that the Civil Service is working at a far higher level of quality, civil servants are much more professional, and one more often finds that they are forthcoming. At the end of the day, there is another factor, too – Latvian language skills are greatly improving among Russians.” (Boriss Cilēvičs, TSP)*

*“Those who have biases and suspicions are representatives of the older generations in Latvia. The younger generation is far more free, it has fewer biases or no biases, it feels no biases toward people of other nationalities who live in Latvia. Sadly, however, I also see young people who are simply regurgitating the suspicions and biases of their parents.” (Igorš Pimenovs, JC)*

Respondents say that a critically important indicator of the idea that ethnic relations have deteriorated in recent years is that there have been more frequent radical statements and activities by parties and organisations which express the views of the various parties to the matter. Each side is becoming harsher, and that has a deleterious effect on the situation which exists in society. Representatives of the elite also say that there have been events and dates which have appeared as a cause for disharmony over the last few years.

*“Over the last 10 years, politicians and their representatives who supposedly battle for the rights of all Russian speakers have engaged in far fiercer rhetoric. If we look at the situation, we can say the same about the rhetoric of For the Fatherland and Freedom – during the last local government election they put up posters which had the text, ‘The Russians are coming!’” (Ainārs Latkovskis, JL)*

*“Relations are segregated. [.. There have been some people or groups of people which do not separate themselves from the whole, but they do encourage separatism. Here I am speaking about extremist right wing and left wing views.” (Anta Rugāte, TP)*

*“Radicals are making increasing use of these holidays, these various dates. The two radical wings are becoming more active, and that is dangerous. The mood is upheld at both ends of the radical spectrum. It is always the case that one group of radicals needs the other group. If radicals on one side are alone, then they cannot maintain their radicalism too long.” (Almers Ludviks, LPP)*

*“We can look at the fact that the Russian Schools Defence Headquarters did not exist 10 years ago, there were fewer Russian media outlets than there are now, particularly in terms of the electronic media. On the other hand, TB/LNNK won the European Parliament election, and there are unfriendly statements from the top. The president, for instance, sometimes speaks negatively about Russia, which would not have been possible in the mid-1990s.” (Nikolajs Kabanovs, PCTVL)*

Respondents say that most political parties are ethnically homogeneous in terms of their membership, and so they attract voters from a single ethnic group, too. This trend is opposite to that which is seen in the other Baltic States. An ethnic vote is a sign to say that ethnic relations in Latvia have not improved over the last several years – perhaps they have even deteriorated. This means that national issues dominate over others when political choices are made.

*“There are areas in which relations have worsened, and we see this because greater numbers of nationalist parties are emerging. Nationalist parties have no future. Their programmes are focused on splitting up society. If one nation’s interests are defended, that means that the interests of other nations are more or less ignored.” (Eiženija Aldermane, LC)*

*"In Saeima elections, it is absolutely clear that Latvians and Russian speakers vote for different parties. This trend is not disappearing. This trend is increasing in Latvia, as opposed to Lithuania, where it changed in the early 1990s, and in Estonia, where it changed at the turn of the century."* (Boriss Cīlēvičs, TSP)

*"Harmony Centre tries to gather Latvian and Russian-speaking voters, and the LSDSP does, too, but these parties do not receive much support from the electorate at this time. Among other parties, it is hard to name any one which can bring together both electorates. This shows that people are thinking in national, not economic or social categories."* (Ansis Dobelis, LSDSP)

*"People choose the parties for which they will vote on the basis of ethnic belonging. Russians and Russian speakers are more likely to vote for PCTVL, and that is easily demonstrated if you look at voting districts on the basis of their ethnic makeup. I represent a nationalist organisation and agree with nationalist views, and I do not like the fact that such people have increasing opportunities to influence political life in Latvia."* (Raivis Dzintars, VL)

### 3. The process of naturalisation

Representatives of the elite have diverse views about the process of naturalisation in Latvia, but most say that even though there are certain problems, the system is optimal for the existing situation. Some representatives of minority parties want to speed up the process of naturalisation, arguing that the pace is too slow, while conservative and nationalist politicians want to limit naturalisation. They argue that there are negative consequences to an excessively rapid process of naturalisation – e.g., disloyal people might become citizens.

*"I think that the pace is quite normal, it is not too slow or fast to cause concerns. The number of new citizens is too small to mean that we cannot accumulate them, particularly given that they live alongside us."* (Ainārs Latkovskis, JL)

*"Naturalisation is limited by objective numbers at this time. Our wing, of course, wishes to speed the process up, but that is the opposite position. As it is happening now, naturalisation is the middle road, and I think that it is available to people. There is sufficient capacity to allow people to become naturalised, there are no particular queues."* (Nikolajs Kabanovs, PCTVL)

*"We calculated the pace of naturalisation given the personnel and resources that are available now, and we see that the naturalisation process will only end in 2040. Accordingly, I think, of course, that the process must be made considerably easier."* (Natālija Jolkina, PCTVL)

*"The pace of naturalisation indicates that there are quite a few people who are not loyal toward the Latvian state, who do not respect the state and its laws, and who do not accept the Latvian language as the only state language. People of that kind, too, have become citizens."* (Māris Grinblats, TB/LNNK)

Representatives of minority and centrist parties speak particularly highly about the work that has been done by the Naturalisation Board and its director, Eiženija Aldermane. Objections, however, are raised against the government's position and the things which some government officials have said about naturalisation. Respondents think that the process of naturalisation is very much affected by political processes and the governing mood which prevails in the country.

*"Eiženija Aldermane is doing very positive and good work, she is professional in her work, but, of course, she cannot fight against all of the political consequences that are created by governing politicians who claim that all of the naturalised people are a fifth column, then inviting them to undergo naturalisation."* (Aleksandrs Brandavs, LPP)

*"The Naturalisation Board employs civil servants with a favourable attitude, they treat people well and care about them, but the fact is that the examination and the attitudes of society and governing institutions create an atmosphere which is a bit unhealthy."* (Natālija Jolkina, PCTVL)

*“The Naturalisation Board does its work to the best of its ability so as to ensure the best possible naturalisation process. I don’t think that anything else can be achieved with the resources and political positions which are the cornerstone for the naturalisation process.” (Igor Pimenovs, JC)*

*“Naturalisation is proceeding very slowly, and there has particularly been no motivation on the part of the government as to why naturalisation is needed. The government doesn’t do much to encourage people to undergo naturalisation and integration.” (Aleksandrs Golubovs, LSP)*

*“Naturalisation is identical to the development process in society and the political background in Latvia. As soon as a high-ranking official says that each person is important and that it is very important for that person to become a citizen of Latvia, we immediately see a new influx of would-be citizens. The president has said things like that, and people receive this as a positive signal.” (Eiženija Aldermane, LC)*

Most respondents think that it would be unacceptable to halt the process of naturalisation entirely, because that would cause tensions and conflicts in society. The pace of naturalisation has been influenced by Latvia’s accession to the European Union, because there are greater opportunities for movement of labour, and those who don’t like the situation here can leave. Some respondents say that these émigrés will be replaced by people who are far more alien to our culture than are the non-citizens who live here, so it would be better to create better conditions for the naturalisation of those who are already residents of Latvia.

*“It would be completely irresponsible to stop naturalisation, as the far right is demanding. It is also complete nonsense to give everyone citizenship as a gift just because they were born here, because their parents arrived here during the period of colonisation.” (Anita Rugāte, TP)*

*“We cannot announce rules of the game and then suddenly change those rules. I think that this would create a great deal of social tension on both sides.” (Andris Bērziņš, ZZS)*

*“I think that no Latvian who really cares for his country thinks that the process of naturalisation should be stopped and then expects people from Turkey or other places to come to Latvia, because we already don’t have workers, people who work to benefit our economy.” (Aleksandrs Brandavs, LPP)*

*“The question is this: If those people leave, who will replace them? That’s the problem – we are losing specialists, we’re losing our best people. We’ll see Muslims arriving, which is happening in France. There’ll be people from Africa. They won’t work, and we’ll need to support them.” (Juris Žuravļovs, Motherland)*

Accession to the European Union has created several other effects on the process of naturalisation. Representatives of the elite say that accession has given non-citizens an additional motivation to undergo naturalisation, and the reason is most often the desire to work elsewhere in the EU. Political parties which once opposed naturalisation have begun to support it.

Another factor has been the recommendations of various foreign experts as to ways in which the naturalisation process in Latvia can be improved. Respondents say that our special historical situation has to be explained in response to these recommendations, because solutions which are successful in other countries would not improve the situation here.

*“Since Latvia’s accession to NATO and the European Union we have seen a rapid leap in the pace of naturalisation. In 2005, two times more people underwent naturalisation than was the case in 2003, and we were working beyond our capacities – we had to hire more people.” (Eiženija Aldermane, LC)*

*“Before we joined the European Union, some non-citizens hoped that they would not have to undergo naturalisation, that some other political solution would be defined. Once we joined the EU, however, they understood that nothing would change. [...] Some leftist political*

groups used to call on people not to undergo naturalisation, but now they are calling on people to do so." (Andris Bērziņš, ZZS)

"Non-citizens are certainly interested in the naturalisation process and in making sure that it happens more quickly, because we are now in the European Union, and many people find this important so that they can emigrate, travel freely and work elsewhere." (Almers Ludviks, LPP)

"Experts often have failed to understand the main thing – the difference between our country, which underwent an occupation and received this heritage as a result of colonisation, and life in the democratic countries which have allowed people to immigrate, but under controlled conditions." (Anta Rugāte, TP)

Respondents describe naturalisation as a process which can have an effect on political power. When people of various nationalities undergo naturalisation, they gain voting rights, and so naturalisation can be seen as something of a threat against "Latvian" parties, which might, therefore, lose their political influence. Some respondents use this idea to explain failures in naturalisation and integration.

"For several of the governing parties, mass naturalisation will mean political suicide. It is clear that they do not want this, and they are trying to hinder naturalisation in some indirect way. [...] If the political elite really wanted to promote naturalisation, then it would be absolutely clear as to what needs to be done. The fact that these things are not being done indicates that a significant speeding up of the naturalisation process is not all that commendable in the eyes of the political elite." (Boriss Cīlēvičs, TSP)

"The number of citizens in Latvia would increase more rapidly, and the ability of parties such as For the Fatherland and Freedom to influence events and to win seats in the Saeima would deteriorate. I'm generalising, but that party would no longer have representatives in the Saeima. I think that this is exactly why they are concerned and are demanding that naturalisation be stopped." (Igoris Pimenovs, JC)

"Those political forces which wish to take over power in Latvia found it very advantageous for naturalisation to be very rapid, so that as many people as possible become citizens and, thus, obtain political power, too." (Jānis Strazdiņš, ZZS)

When it comes to age groups, younger people have far greater opportunities to gain citizenship, and citizenship offers them more opportunities. Older people will probably never undergo naturalisation, because the status of being non-citizens does not have much of an effect on their everyday lives.

Those who live in cities with large numbers of non-Latvians have far less of a need for everyday use of the Latvian language, and that does not encourage people to learn it. Poor Latvian language skills are an obstacle against naturalisation.

"Of the 400,000 non-citizens, 130, 140 or perhaps 150,000 will never undergo naturalisation. These are older people who are no longer in the labour market, who do not travel, and who have the status of non-citizens. That status enables a fairly comfortable life in Latvia, because non-citizens have the same social guarantees as citizens do." (Eiženija Aldermane, LC)

"There are particular problems in the older generation. The younger generation understands clearly that people have to live in this country. Whether people like it or not, they live in this country, they want a career and an education, and there are great opportunities to be educated not only here, but anywhere in the European Union." (Andris Bērziņš, ZZS)

"The naturalisation process is limited by various prerequisites because most non-citizens speak poor Latvian, and because they live compactly in cities where there is an insufficiently broad Latvian environment." (Nikolajs Kabanovs, PCTVL)

*“Particularly in Daugavpils or Rīga, Russians have not become accustomed to speaking Latvian. They have passive knowledge, they can tolerate a situation in which others speak Latvian to them. They can react, they can say that they understand, but they are not accustomed to speaking the language actively.” (Ilmārs Mežs, JL)*

Some respondents point to differences in the attitudes of those people who arrived in Latvia after the restoration of independence and those who arrived during the Soviet times. Respondents think that people in the first group have greater motivation to undergo naturalisation and to learn the Latvian language. People in the latter group, by contrast, often express negative attitudes vis-à-vis the Latvian state, and they feel no need to be naturalised.

There are also people who live in Latvia but are banned by law from undergoing naturalisation, because they worked for certain organisations or institutions during Soviet times.

*“The titular nation in the Soviet Union were the Russians, and they had enormous advantageous. This must create the understanding that those Russians who lived in the Soviet Union – some of them still feel that their nation is superior to others.” (Dzintars Ābiķis, TP)*

*“People who arrived in Latvia on the basis of the immigration law do quite well in integrating into society. Most of these people speak good Latvian, they respect the traditions and culture of this land. Many or even most of those who arrived during the occupation, as well as their children – they have a different view of development here, they want Russian to be the state language, and they make other demands which indicate that they do not perceive Latvia as an independent country.” (Māris Grīnblats, TB/LNNK)*

*“There are people who will never undergo naturalisation for objective reasons – retired military officers who live here, people who worked with the KGB, people who were members of banned organisations such as the Communist Party or the International Front. No one knows how many people of that kind there are, but some calculations suggest that there might be tens of thousands or even 100,000 of them. The law bans them from becoming naturalised.” (Boriss Cilēvičs, TSP)*

Representatives of the elite have various recommendations as to how the situation with naturalisation could be improved. Some parties offer alternatives which would largely limit, but not stop naturalisation. The draft laws on citizenship and repatriation which have been prepared by TB/LNNK are an example of this. VL, too, has its own ideas about how to limit the pace of naturalisation.

*“We make very serious proposals – giving these people money from the national budget so as to help them to return to their ethnic homeland. That is very humane and normal. It is also a component of integration, this cleansing, as we might say.” (Pēteris Tabūns, TB/LNNK)*

*“We have to set quotas because the ethnic proportion of Latvians in their own country has declined dangerously. There are many different options to be discussed, and it is clear that citizenship has to be granted, but in the near future this should happen on an individual basis, reviewing each application, as opposed to engaging in mass naturalisation, as has been the case until now.” (Raivis Dzintars, VL)*

Other respondents have different recommendations as to how the pace of naturalisation can be improved. One representative of a minority party would make the naturalisation process and the relevant examination simpler, while a respondent from a centrist party argues that the exam is already too easy and does not ensure the necessary level of knowledge. Some respondents say that there should be easier terms for certain groups of residents – older people or businesspeople, for instance. Enhanced motivation is also of key importance in improving the naturalisation process.

*“We should soften all of the rules as to how people can become integrated and gain citizenship. The process needs to be made easier, much easier.” (Aleksandrs Golubovs, TSP)*

*“We have to review the law in that there must be a more serious approach to the examination. I think that new citizens should take an oath, because an oath always makes*

people think. It is not just a process. I understand that there will be differences, but there has to be a more serious approach on the part of the state.” (Ināra Ostrovska, JD/ZZS)

“The naturalisation rules need to be made easier at least for people of a certain age and above. They simply need to be given citizenship, because in old age, examinations are deeply traumatic, not everyone, and that is putting it mildly, can do this.” (Natālija Jolkina, PCTVL)

“If someone benefits the Latvian state, then he or she must automatically be a citizen. If someone provides income for the state and creates jobs, if someone helps the Latvian economy to develop, then that person must automatically be given citizenship.” (Juris Žuravļovs, Motherland)

“I think that there are far too few motivational elements – the language is needed in the labour market, for instance. There are campaigns about drunk driving and walking around with reflectors on your clothing, and a similar campaign could be organised to encourage Latvia’s non-citizens to integrate.” (Ansis Dobelis, LSDSP)

#### 4. Implementation of education reform in minority schools

Respondents have very different views about the process of education reform. Representatives of centrist parties think that the reforms have been very positive and normal, while representatives of minority parties argue that the reforms have created more bad things than good ones, because the effect has had nothing to do with integration. There’s a third view, too – radically nationalist and conservatively nationalist politicians say that the reforms are good, but even more radical changes are needed.

“Everything is absolutely fine, to put it in a single sentence – if only because there is this opportunity, minority education is possible in Latvia, it is accredited, and it receives government financing.” (Anta Rugāte, TP)

“My view is negative, of course. I think that these reforms were absolutely inappropriate, and a completely different methodology is needed if we want people to learn the Latvian language.” (Nikolajs Kabanovs, PCTVL)

“These education reforms are just an attempt to assimilate young people in political and ideological terms. The result has been the opposite effect – there are some schoolchildren who do assimilate in linguistic or ideological terms, but a far larger segment of that population becomes even more alienated.” (Boriss Cilēvičs, TSP)

“We think that the proportion could have been higher than 60:40, we feel that we must really talk about the full transfer to basic education in Latvian. The government must move toward classes being taught entirely in Latvian while, of course, guaranteeing the minimum which applies to language and literature in the native language of the students.” (Māris Grīnblats, TB/LNNK)

“If the government finances a school, then classes have to be taught in Latvian. It is clear that the debate can focus only on the period of time during which we transfer to a system in which all classes are taught in the state language.” (Raivis Dzintars, VL)

When asked to talk about the benefits of minority education reforms, respondents first talk about the increased competitiveness of non-Latvian young people in the labour market. They have much better language skills than Latvians do. Success in the labour market will also promote social integration. Minority politicians, however, argue that not all students can study in Latvian, so their education level is deteriorating, and that makes it harder for them to join the labour market.

*"Students are doing better at learning the state language, and so after graduation they will become better involved in local society and become more competitive in the labour market and the higher education market." (Dzintars Ābiķis, TP)*

*"Any businessman who is a Russian faces the requirement of speaking the state language. We're ensuring that the young person who enters the job market is competitive. If we did not do this, we would basically only cause harm to these young people." (Ainārs Latkovskis, JL)*

*"Basically, Russian speaking children are the winners in this reform process. Yes, it was hard for many children to accept the new situation immediately, and the level of knowledge deteriorated for many of them, but if we are talking about languages, then Russian children are quite stronger than Latvian children, they are more competitive." (Juris Žuravļovs, Motherland)*

*"If potentially capable students find new obstacles which make them even more able, then that is only a good thing, but the question is about the weaker ones. Those who have problems in their own native language when they study mathematics or physics simply fail when they have to study those subjects in Latvian. At the more capable end, far more Russian speaking young people are being nominated as leaders, and they compete very successfully against their Latvian peers. At the other end, though, this leads to marginalisation." (Boriss Cilēvičs, TSP)*

In addition to benefits that can be attributed to school reforms, respondents also talk about several losses. The quality of work among teachers has deteriorated, and that leads to lower levels of knowledge. A big problem is that many teachers themselves have poor Latvian language skills. Lessons are taught in Latvian, but students don't learn the language properly.

Several minority party representatives claim that the level of knowledge is deteriorating overall, but politicians from centrist parties are more likely to say that the situation is normal.

*"I think that education reforms are a completely ill-considered experiment with students, with the younger generation, and this has not led to particularly good results, I'm afraid. The first consequence is a deterioration in the level of knowledge, and that has a particular effect on the marginalisation of society. The overall level of knowledge among high school graduates is declining." (Natālija Jolkina, PCTVL)*

*"I get upset when I sometimes see these teachers on television. Many teachers do not speak proper Latvian. Any non-Latvian can be allowed to speak more or less incorrect Latvian, but that is completely unacceptable for a teacher." (Eiženija Aldermane, LC)*

*"The reforms have found their place, they are in effect, and the quality of education is not declining. There was much fear that the quality of knowledge in schools would worsen, but that is not at all true." (Andris Bērziņš, ZZS)*

Some representatives of the elite suggest that the problems could have been avoided if the reforms had been more gradual, and preparations for the reforms had been more careful. Several respondents argue that the reforms were too quick and ill-considered. An appropriate methodology was not prepared, teachers had not yet learned enough about bilingual teaching skills. Parents did not have enough information about the planned reforms.

Representatives of minority parties insist that the hurry in which the reforms were implemented and the way in which they are being pursued has led young people to distrust those who are in political power.

*"The training of teachers and the preparation of methodological teaching resources – that had to be a more careful and considered process, it should have been controlled more carefully. [...] Schools were not sufficiently prepared in many ways – in terms of methodology, teaching resources and psychological considerations." (Eiženija Aldermane, LC)*

*"There was a need to train teachers on bilingual education. The reforms required preparations and a transition period. There should have been methodological materials and*

textbooks, programmes should have been harmonised – lots of work had to be invested in the reforms. Instead, they were quite spontaneous, and both students and teachers suffered. I think that as a result of this, society at large also suffered.” (Natālija Jolkina, PCTV)

“The transfer to classes being taught in the state language was begun by the government without any consultation with the parents of non-Latvian children, and I think that this is the greatest weakness in this policy. Parents needed to be convinced that this goal of learning the Latvian language is very important for the Latvian state and for the future of their children here in Latvia.” (Igors Pimenovs, JC)

“Latvian language skills have improved, non-Latvians teenagers speak better Latvian, but I think that the authority of the Latvian state has deteriorated among non-Latvians and adolescent non-Latvians, because the government forced this transfer toward classes being taught in the state language.” (Igors Pimenovs, JC)

Representatives of centrist and minority parties also have proposals as to how the reforms should have been implemented. Centrist respondents point to education reforms in Estonia as a positive example, saying that perhaps the same options should have been chosen in Latvia. Representatives of minority parties, for their part, have clearly formulated alternatives to the current version of the reforms.

“It was only very shortly before the education reforms were implemented that the government amended the process and installed this 60:40 proportion. That caused disgust and a reason for protests. If only we had accepted Estonia's experience as to the percentage of classes which are taught in Estonian and in the language of the relevant minority -- something which Estonia decided from the very start.” (Eiženija Aldermane, LC)

“Our compromise proposal was to teach Latvian language and literature, history, geography and military training in Latvian. I think that would have been enough to satisfy the yearning of students to learn the Latvian language.” (Nikolajs Kabanovs, PCTVL)

“We proposed a greater number of Latvian language lessons in minority schools each week. Each day there would be a Latvian language lesson, and that would resolve the whole problem. Then we wouldn't need these reforms, which use force in introducing the Latvian language lessons at schools.” (Aleksandrs Golubovs, LSP)

As is the case with other areas of ethno-policy, school reforms are affected by the interests of local politicians, as well as by those of other countries – Russia first and foremost. Respondents say that several political parties are making active use of education reforms so as to gain power, but they are also harming the process of public integration.

One representative from a centrist party stresses that the politicisation of education reforms must be opposed if the goal is to ensure positive ethnic relations in society.

“Because an election is once again approaching, I think that the education reforms will once again become an issue, of course. That is always the case. Russia, for instance, brings up the issue at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and it is a hobby horse for Russia just like naturalisation, education reforms and local government elections.” (Andris Bērziņš, ZZS)

“The reforms were needed, and the problem is developing. The question has to do with attitudes and how they are shaped. The reforms were necessary for the state, but political parties have made quite successful use of the issue – both Latvian and Russian parties.” (Ansis Dobelis, LSDSP)

“Those who encourage these protests are really harming these children, because they are telling kids not to learn the state language, that they will ensure that the Russian language becomes the second state language, etc. The result of this political battle is that integration is deteriorating, nothing more is happening in this area.” (Pēteris Tabūns, TB/LNNK)



*"We must not bow before external pressure or politicisation of this issue. We have to make it clear that we want people who live here to be able to live and work here in the future."* (Almers Ludviks, LPP)

Most representatives of political parties also say that there is a need for better control over the education reforms, arguing that this is not the case at this time. Some respondents say that the reforms have occurred only "on paper", because at some Russian schools, most classes are still taught in Russian, not Latvian. Issues related to the quality of the process are also not monitored with sufficient care. The transfer to teaching in the Latvian language is possible not just with the help of punitive sanctions -- various awards could also be organised.

There are some representatives of the elite who feel that the important thing is pursuit of the actual, not formal goals of the process, so in some cases it would be permissible for schools to avoid some aspects of the law.

*"There are a few schools at which, sadly, there is a theatrical performance about the reforms – classes are taught in Russian, and only when an inspector is present are they taught in Latvian."* (Eiženija Aldermane, LC)

*"The reforms are not being implemented properly, because, sadly, the ministry, the School Board, the Rīga City Council and other local governments are not monitoring them. There are teachers who don't speak Latvian, and yet they're teaching the Latvian language!"* (Pēteris Tabūns)

*"We're not just talking about the law, there can be other mechanisms to encourage schools to move toward the Latvian language. There can be punitive sanctions, but there can also be various relief and benefits for those schools which demonstrate a higher proportion than 60:40 when it comes to teaching in Latvian."* (Raivis Dzintars, VL)

*"At many Russian schools, most teachers are quite able to teach in Latvian, and even if they speak Russian in every other class where they should have been speaking Latvian, I do not think that a big scandal is necessary. At the same time, however, we must monitor the situation so as to ensure that it does not worsen."* (Ilmārs Mežs, JL)

##### 5. The meaning of the Latvian language in integration and languages which are spoken in the public sphere

Respondents do not have unanimous views as to the role of the Latvian language in the integration process. Most respondents think that the language plays a decisive role and must be seen as an element without which integration would not be possible. Representatives of radically nationalist, conservatively nationalist and centrist parties all believe that when people learn and speak the Latvian language, it demonstrates respect and loyalty vis-à-vis the Latvian state, and it shows that these people want to become integrated into Latvian society. Strengthening the status of the Latvian language as the state language, moreover, will help the language to survive, prevent the emergence of a country with two communities, and help to resolve other politically sensitive issues, too.

*"The Latvian language has a decisive role. The main goal of language policy has to be to strengthen the Latvian language and to enhance its quality. The second and even more important role of language policy is to prevent the emergence of a country with two communities – the distribution of power on the basis of language and culture."* (Dzintars Ābiķis, TP)

*"It must be the foundation. To a great extent, when the language issue is resolved, other issues will be resolved more easily."* (Raivis Dzintars, VL)

*"This is one of the basic elements for becoming integrated into the society in which you live. I think that it is even the main element. Language helps you to feel a territorial sense of belonging to this place, you belong to the state and the political system, you respect it. We have*

democracy, so accept the rules of the game! If you don't speak the language, you cannot become a part of this social and political environment. For that reason, the Latvian language is one of the basic elements, and ethnic integration is not possible without it." (Ansis Dobelis, LSDSP)

"Language is of decisive importance, and that has to be true, because it is only logical that language learning is not the only indicator of loyalty toward the country and its society, but it is of fundamental importance nonetheless. You cannot be loyal toward this country if you don't learn the language." (Māris Grīnblats, TB/LNNK)

Representatives of minority parties believe that the Latvian language is just one factor in promoting integration. People must learn and speak the Latvian language, but Latvia's society is multicultural, and so thought must be given to the right of other ethnic groups to speak its own language, as opposed to insisting strictly that the state language must be spoken. Respondents think that the speaking of other languages will strengthen Latvia as a state and will not threaten the Latvian language.

"This is one of the factors in integration. I would say that it is necessary to teach the official state language, but that is not enough to facilitate integration." (Boriss Cilevičs, TSP)

"In the public integration process, both languages must be of equal value. The quality of Latvian language teaching must be enhanced at Russian schools, Latvian culture must be taught. Making the minority language a state language and ensuring that as many people as possible speak Russian – that is a necessary part of integration, too." (Natālija Jolkina, PCTVL)

"The Latvian language must be one of the languages for interethnic communications, one of the languages. I am not saying that the Latvian language must be the only language which brings the people of Latvia together. It is certainly true that any Latvian should be able to talk to any other resident of Latvia and be understood, receive an answer in Latvian, and not be forced to speak another language. On the other hand, people of various nationalities do not have to speak Latvian only because it is the state language. They speak Russian, which is a language that is in circulation along with the Latvian language. I believe that this strengthens the state, and it absolutely does not weaken the Latvian language." (Igoris Pimenovs, JC)

Some respondents, particularly from minority parties, argue that the Latvian language does not facilitate integration. They agree that people need to learn and speak the language, because it is the state language, but it is not a factor which unifies society. Instead, society is unified through various social issues, and integration occurs not in the entire society, but rather among groups that are brought together by interests that people have in common.

"Integration on the basis of the Latvian language is not the principle of integration, absolutely not. It is the state language, a very rich and good language, but it needs to be spoken in contacts with the state and nothing more." (Aleksandrs Brandavs, LPP)

"Everyone needs to speak the Latvian language, yes, but I doubt that the Latvian language somehow brings the entire nation together." (Aleksandrs Golubovs, LSP)

"It is not important, because integration does not occur on the basis of language, it is a social process. People integrate in different strata – businessmen socialise at one level, football players integrate at another, hoboes – at still another. There is no particular stratification in terms of language, this involved other laws, psychological laws. The main thing in Latvia is not the language – people can switch languages on the basis if the situation." (Nikolajs Kabanovs, PCTVL)

It has to be noted that representatives of the elite also have different views as to the speaking of Latvian and other languages in the public sector. Some representatives of centrist and conservatively nationalist parties feel that everyone must speak Latvian in the public sector, because by law, it is the state language. The status of the state language means that everyone must speak Latvian and that everyone has the right to receive an answer in Latvian.

*“Our position is that people must make do with the Latvian language in the public sphere. People who have come to Latvia from abroad and those who did not learn Russian during the Soviet period should not have problems in stores, taxis, barber shops or, God forbid, at any government institution if they only speak Latvian.” (Māris Grīnblats, TB/LNNK)*

*“We have a single state language. We do not have two state languages, we do not have two communities.” (Jānis Strazdiņš, ZZS)*

*“We have laws to say that the Latvian language is the state language and that Latvian is spoken at all government institutions. In the public space, Russian is spoken quite often, the English language is entering the process, as well. In the public space, everyone has the right to communicate in the state language – this is more than just a simple right.” (Andris Bērziņš, ZZS)*

Some representatives of minority parties, for their part, say that any language can be spoken in the public space. They argue that each resident of Latvia has the right to receive an answer not only in the state language but also, and mostly, in his or her native language. Furthermore people who speak several languages have a greater wealth of knowledge.

*“I think that any language can be spoken in public, and the more languages we hear, the better it will be. We don’t need to think only about the Latvian language, it is fine for people to speak other languages, as well. The more languages someone speaks, the better it is for that person.” (Aleksandrs Golubovs, LSP)*

*“Optimally, the person can receive information in his or her native language. My fundamental position speaks to people who approach me as a politician, who speak to a government employee during working hours. That means that we are employed people, and we have to speak to others in their native language. When we are not at work and go somewhere to receive services, then we have the right to receive the information in our native language, to speak our native language.” (Nikolajs Kabanovs, PCTVL)*

*“In local government areas where the proportion of minority residents is at least 20%, we have to have two languages in the presentation of public information.” (Natālija Jolkina, PCTVL)*

## **6. The role of the mass media in the integration process**

In talking about the role of the mass media in Latvia’s integration process, representatives of political parties argue that it is a very important or even the most important role. Respondents think that the mass media not only reflect what is happening, they also shape public opinion and help to set the public agenda.

*“Experts and theorists have long since said that an education system – schools and the mass media – are the two most powerful mechanisms for influencing public consciousness.” (Raivis Dzintars, VL)*

*“In the world, and particularly in Latvia, the mass media set the public agenda, not just in part, but to the greatest extent. They can change the agenda so quickly that it is sometimes quite unimaginable.” (Almers Ludviks, LPP)*

*“The media not just reflect, but also shape public thinking.” (Boriss Cilēvičs, TSP)*

The media can not only unify, but also split up society. Representatives of the elite, moreover, think that it is precisely the mass media which can change public opinion on various integration-related issues, both in a positive and a negative sense.

*“One thing is that the mass media at this time are splitting people up.” (Ainārs Latkovskis, JL)*

*“A newspaper can, literally with just one headline, cause wide ranges of society to oppose another group, and I think that our newspapers have a very low sense of responsibility in*

this sense. We have lots of newspapers which engage in ethnic mobilisation. That's not right, it is even dangerous." (Igor Pimenovs, JC)

"I think that the mass media can foment hatred in the most direct way, but at the same time, the media can have a very positive effect on the integration process and on people's attitudes toward one another." (Almers Ludviks, LPP)

"The mass media have a very important role, because they are the ones which can raise this issue to the sky or cause it to sink into hell." (Ināra Ostrovska, JD/ZZS)

"The mass media can turn integration in the positive direction by shaping public thought with the help of positive examples. The mass media can also, however, do quite the opposite, causing an escalation toward a conflict situation." (Andris Bērziņš, ZZS)

Respondents think that the importance of the role of the mass media in the integration process is dictated by two factors. First, there is public trust in the mass media and the information which they present.

"The media are of great importance, because people trust them. This is seen in all surveys. Where do people place their trust? They trust the church, they trust educational institutions, they trust the mass media. They believe in them and trust them." (Eiženija Aldermane, LC)

Second, there are two different information spaces in Latvia. Each of them uses a different language and is focused more or less on a single audience – Latvian or Russian speakers. They also offer different information, or the same information from different perspectives.

"There are two information spaces, one in the state language, and one in another language which, in relation to the state language, is a foreign language." (Anta Rugāte, TP)

"There are still two information spaces in Latvian. Imagine a foreigner who can read in Latvian and Russian but does not live in Latvia – if he reads both the Latvian and the Russian speaking media, then he will get the impression that they are writing about two completely different countries." (Boriss Cilēvičs, TSP)

"These two information spaces deal with politically sensitive issues – language issues, education reforms. They write different things. The Latvian language press writes one thing, and some of the papers in Russian write something completely different, with very different accents. People are fed with narcotics. The Latvian language newspapers write that we are the best, we need all rights. This means constantly looking at the past, it is whining and pitying oneself, denying or scorning others, or even seeking to expel others. On the other hand, some Russian language mass media write that we are oppressed, we are second or third class people, we are being attacked." (Eiženija Aldermane, LC)

"Diena, Latvijas Avīze and Neatkarīgā write about what is happening in Parliament. The Russian press writes about what governors are doing across the border, what Putin is doing, what visits he has made, the factories that are being built in Russia – these are details which do not affect Russian speakers in Latvia at all, they have nothing to do with Latvia or the Baltic States. That helps to improve the self-esteem of Russians, and it strengthens their sense of belonging not to Latvia, but to Russia." (Ansis Dobelis, LSDSP)

Representatives of all of the political parties talked about some fairly negative aspects as to the role of the mass media. Respondents questioned the objectivity and independence of the mass media resources, because most belong to the private sector in which profits are of key importance. What's more, the publication of information is dictated by media owners and, even more, by editors. Accordingly, the media mostly public information which attracts a larger audience, thus ensuring greater profits, or else satisfying the goals of the media owner or editor.

Some respondents also say that the issue of integration should not be seen as one which ensures profits for the owners of the mass media.

*“There is no question that the subjective views of journalists, editors or mass media owners are focused on society. It is often hard to say whether the views presented in the mass media are those of the editor or owner, as opposed to a reflection of public opinion.” (Ilmārs Mežs, JL)*

*“Because all of the media here belong to private business, each owner wants his newspaper or television station to have better ratings. People simply deal with their business, and private business cannot influence integration. On the contrary, it serves the needs of disintegration.” (Aleksandrs Brandavs, LPP)*

*“The mass media today are all privately held, and this is not discussed on any broadcasting station, the newspapers pay virtually no attention to it. Why? Because everyone says that if you pay them, then they will produce a broadcast, write an article, show something. All of that costs money, no one does anything for free. That’s why the processes of integration are presented hardly anywhere – no one pays money to have that happen.” (Juris Žuravļovs, Motherland)*

Respondents also stress that Latvia’s mass media are politicised. They speak of the fact that print media reflect the ideas and activities of specific parties. Russian language media outlets mostly reflect the activities of political parties such as PCTVL, the TSP and JC, while the Latvian language media offer comparatively more information about the activities of the TP and JL.

On the other hand, some respondents cite examples from their personal experience – a mass media outlet refused to publish their articles or offer them airtime. Respondents say that this is because of the politics of the specific mass media outlets – undesirable information is simply excluded.

*“Sadly, there are media outlets which are basically subject to a single party. That is wrong – the media must be more independent of politicised impressions. But the fact is that sometimes the media push things in one direction or another, someone tries to direct them in political terms.” (Almers Ludviks, LPP)*

*“The normal integration process will be impossible without the mass media. You can become a citizen, but if you live in a completely different information space, the main political party which is discussed in the Russian press is PCTVL and, right now, Harmony Centre, there are articles about what they do. The Latvian press proportionally reflects the opposite wing – it writes about the People’s Party and New Era.” (Ansis Dobelis, LSDSP)*

*“I’m surprised and, to some extent, worried about the fact that two newspapers, Chas and Vesti Segodniya, as well as the Petit and Fenster publishing houses have proclaimed themselves to be supporters of a single party. I understand that they’ll continue to demonstrate their independence and write about parties and views which do not coincide with those of PCTVL, but basically they have told us that they support that single party. That does not promote public trust in the mass media, and so, to a certain extent, it also does not promote public integration.” (Igoris Pimenovs, JC)*

*“There’s a problem in Latvia with independent mass media outlets. Sadly, that also applies to the newspaper Diena, which I have encountered. Because I represent the New Democrats, they have refused to accept three articles from me without any good reason. I believe that this is a violation of democracy. The articles were accepted by other newspapers, and I had no problems.” (Ināra Ostrovska, JD/ZZS)*

*“The situation with television is a complete catastrophe, because private television stations are much more independent and objective than public television, which is financed by taxpayers. Public preferences are visible there. I don’t think that there have been any instructions, but the fact is that I have not appeared on public television for several years. I do not exist in the space of Latvian Television. The news programme on the second channel sometimes invites me to comment, but the first channel never does. I think that the last local*

government election in Rīga was dictated by Latvian Television. This is a direct aspect of national policy.” (Boriss Cilēvičs, TSP)

When talking about the fact that the Latvian mass media are politicised, some representatives of the elite suggest that the Russian language mass media are linked to a neighbouring country – specifically, Russia. They think that some Russian language newspapers are under the control of the neighbouring country and seek to satisfy its goal of splitting up society and ensuring that some groups oppose the Latvian state.

“Some people in Latvia don’t even live in the Latvian information space, but in the information space which some neighbouring country clearly dictates and controls in part or in full.” (Raivis Dzintars, VL)

“It is too bad that the Russian language press is very closely linked to the politics of Moscow, it reflects Moscow’s position on many issues. It seems that these newspapers take their orders from someone else.” (Dzintars Ābiķis, TP)

“Some of the Russian language media do a very bad job. They should write about our lives in Latvia, they should say that everyone needs to speak the language and understand everything that is happening here. It seems that they are the mass media of another country. That is very harmful, but the press is free. We cannot put the reins on the press, or else there will be a big scandal in the world.” (Pēteris Tabūns, TB/LNNK)

Some respondents who spoke of the role of the mass media in integration point to newspapers which are tolerant toward ethnic groups which are not a part of their audience, as well as those which make less tolerant and sometimes offensive, scornful or even hateful statements. Respondents say that *Telegraf* is the most tolerant of the Russian language newspapers, but they do not say the same about any Latvian language newspaper. When it comes to less tolerant Latvian newspapers, they cite *Latvijas Avīze*, adding that the same can be said about the Russian language newspapers *Chas* and *Vesti Segodniya*.

“Latvijas Avīze publishes all kinds of articles about the terrible Russians who drink alcohol on 9 May. That’s a big celebration for me, even though I’m an advisor to a minister.” (Aleksandrs Brandavs, LPP)

“There is an exaggerated reaction in the Russian press, and only Telegraf can be said to be a fairly objective newspaper. Latvijas Avīze sometimes tries too hard to get Latvians to feel offence or a sense of being harmed. If they choose between calming people down or firing them up, they always choose to fire them up. The same is true with Chas and Vesti Segodniya – they will never miss a chance to mock Latvia and the Latvians, to smirk about them. Often they do not even bother to try to find out the truth. Newspapers on both sides can be accused of devoting very little effort toward learning the views of the others, they mostly just go on about their own views.” (Ilmārs Mežs, JL)

“Chas and Vesti Segodniya absolutely do not promote consolidation in society, they do what they can to make sure that there are as many people in Latvia who speak the state language poorly, who are focused not on the Latvian information space, but on the Russian information space. In terms of politics, they support the positions of Moscow, not those of the European Union. The newspaper *Telegraf* is a bit more liberal.” (Dzintars Ābiķis, TP)

“Chas and Vesti Segodniya are always on the knife’s edge in terms of violating the law – they foment hatred.” (Pēteris Tabūns, TB/LNNK)

Some respondents say that there is a need to seek out alternative solutions so that the mass media become more tolerant and do things which promote public integration. The representative of the radically nationalist party says that one alternative would be to set up a new mass media outlet that is supported by the state or by non-governmental organisations. A representative of a centrist party suggests that the government should finance special publications in the newspapers or broadcasts on television – that could be a second alternative. The representative of a minority party, for his part, says that a third option is to establish a

regulator for the mass media which would guarantee comparatively more independent media positions.

*“The government should think about its own mass media resource. Russians should not be pushed away, we need to show them that there’s a choice – they should not just look to the East and look at the past, they can become a part of our society and accept the norms of this country, as is the case in any other civilised country. Someone who wants to live in a country becomes a part of the society. There have to be alternative mass media outlets, perhaps ones that are supported by the state or by non-governmental organisations, so as to offer them a different information space.” (Raivis Dzintars, VL)*

*“If we do not have state mass media or special broadcasts which are financed from the national budget, then there will be no integration. Private business is private business, but if there is not a state newspaper in Russian, then there will be no integration.” (Aleksandrs Brandavs, LPP)*

*“We need to enhance the independence of the media, somehow achieve their independence. Perhaps there could be a regulator for the mass media, one that would ensure far greater independence in the positions of the newspapers.” (Natālija Jolkina, PCTVL)*

## **7. The role of public organisations in the integration process**

When talking about the role of non-governmental organisations in the process of integration in Latvia, representatives of the elite all say that the role should be greater. Respondents think that NGOs can have an important role in the integration process, but right now they are weak, and they do episodic, as opposed to ongoing work. Trends indicate, however, that there is growth in the activities of NGOs, and respondents say that this should continue.

*“They could have a greater role, because non-governmental organisations are comparatively weak and without much influence. They’re often set up for the purposes of a single project, and when the project ends, the organisation ends up spending years in something like a coma.” (Ilmārs Mežs, JL)*

*“Of course, their role is very important, but we must remember that these organisations are not at an optimal level. They are at a minimum level, but they are developing, and we have enormous potential here. For that reason, we have to give a lot of thought to this issue.” (Anta Rugāte, TP)*

*“I think that the role has to be great. Non-governmental organisations are only just appearing in this country. There are lots of them, but non-governmental organisations are only set up as ones which know how to work. What’s more, most of these organisations are not strong when it comes to writing up project proposals, organising and managing projects. (Eiženija Aldermane, LC)*

Respondents think that there are several factors which hinder the increase in the number of NGOs, as well as their growth. First, fairly few people in Latvia are active in the work of NGOs. Second, those who are active are even fewer in number, and representatives of the elite think that they rotate from one organisation to another.

*“There are lots of NGOs, but the number of active people is very small. I have worked for youth organisations, and when I meet with other organisations such as the Latvian Youth Council, the people are always the same. They spend some time with the Greens, they work for the ‘House’ club, then they work for the Latvian Youth Council. There are very few active people” (Ansis Dobelis, LSDSP)*

Second, non-governmental organisations face the problem of financing. Membership fees do not support them, because they have few members, and there are limited opportunities

to receive financing from the state or the European Union. Some respondents also say that NGO financing opportunities shrank when Latvia joined the European Union, because some funding sources shifted their focus on other, less democratic regions.

*“Helplessness still dominates in many cases. At meetings of NGOs we hear the complaint that the state doesn’t give us money, so we cannot do anything.” (Eiženija Aldermane, LC)*

*“Particularly since our accession to the European Union, there have been extremely limited opportunities to find money. There are two major sources in most cases – the European Commission and the Integration Fund, and the criteria, to put it mildly, are quite foggy. Without government support or at least a neutral attitude, it is not possible to find money. This is a filter of some kind, many NGOs which are considered to be too critical are eliminated from the process.” (Boriss Cilēvičs, TSP)*

Third, the growth of non-governmental organisations is hindered by a lack of government support. The state can support NGOs not just financially, but also by expanding their range of operations and putting an end to differentiated attitudes. Representatives of political parties think that the role of NGOs will not increase if the state does not appreciate their work and if certain NGOs receive more support than others for entirely subjective reasons.

*“As long as the government does not support non-governmental organisations, as long as it does not delegate its functions to non-governmental organisations, their role will remain negligible. It is normal practice in democracies that some state functions can be handled by non-governmental organisations with considerably fewer resources and much greater motivation. That isn’t really happening here.” (Ansis Dobelis, LSDSP)*

*“NGOs take part in quite a few European Union investment programmes which are related specifically to integration, so they receive money and pursue good ideas and projects which are sometimes not very global. Instead, they do very good work in a certain environment, in society. Something is done, and that is very important. We don’t need a bulldozer to deal with the whole country and say that we have achieved something. NGOs are already changing and improving the situation.” (Almers Ludviks, LPP)*

*“The more public organisations work on public integration, the greater the effect on the process of integration. Alas, I do not see any government policy that would support these organisations.” (Natālija Jolkina, PCTVL)*

Respondents admit that NGOs are not always independent, and they do not always achieve their own goals. The operations of NGOs depend on the source of financing, and on the ability of an organisation to reach its goals. Respondents think that some NGOs are closely linked to political parties and their work, because often they require the kind of political support which only parties can offer. The yearning for the support of political parties often means that NGOs become subordinated to them.

*“It all depends on where non-governmental organisations receive their financing, that has lots to do with their working style and results.” (Raivis Dzintars, VL)*

*“Political parties – the PCTVL political headquarters – use non-governmental organisations as their satellites.” (Ainārs Latkovskis, JL)*

*“Organisations which work in politically sensitive areas inevitably get dragged into political battles among parties. Organisations inevitably want to achieve things, they seek out allies among parties, because otherwise they cannot achieve their goal – not unless they have the support of political parties. That, however, means that non-governmental organisations are dragged into politics, and the party which does not support the specific goals of the organisation creates more negative attitudes toward the organisation. That sucks the organisation into the control of a single party to a greater degree, and that means that there are certain problems in the non-governmental sector.” (Igoris Pimenovs, JC)*



Representatives of the elite think that the role of various non-governmental organisations in integration is dictated both by their goals and by their independence. If a non-governmental organisation has initially used certain principles to define the part of society which it supports, as well as the one which it does not support, then that does not promote integration. Respondents say that the best example of organisations which promote integration are the ones which do not divide society up into groups, instead bringing in various people in pursuit of a solution to a problem that is important to them.

*"In terms of the goals of a non-governmental organisation, if it clearly says that one group is good and another is bad, that one group has rights and others do not, then integration is not promoted. The work such an organisation is not focused on integration, understanding and tolerance."* (Ansis Dobelis, LSDSP)

*"There are lots of public organisations, all kinds of Russian organisations which are a part of the anti-Latvian campaign and do evil deeds. There are, however, also many organisations which do normal work and try to ensure that integration does happen."* (Pēteris Tabūns, TB/LNNK)

*"There is an organisation called Aspazija, it is an organisation for differently abled women. Russian women take part in its work, too. There is no separation, they deal with differently abled women, and that's that. They're interested in the essence of the matter, and there are no problems with language at all. Russian women who have not spoken Latvian before start to talk, they're not shy, because they are all unified by the fact of the disease and related issues, they defend their rights. The issue is not who you are, what your skin colour is, whether you're a Russian, Latvian or Ukrainian."* (Ainārs Latkovskis, JL)

## **8. The role of politicians and political parties in the integration process**

Representatives of political parties think that parties and politicians have a key role to play in the process of integration. When political parties are in power, the statements and activities of their representatives become widely known through the mass media. Irrespective of the reason why a politician makes a certain statement or does certain things, there is a greater or lesser effect on public opinion.

*"Politicians play a very important role, because they determine this country's basic strategy in terms of politics, the law and the direction in which we are going. If they take a careless decision or approve a careless law in the political arena, then that can cause fairly serious problems in the integration process as a whole."* (Andris Bērziņš, ZZS)

*"Politicians try to shape the views of the public and their supporters to a certain extent. If a politician keeps repeating the idea that Latvians are oppressed or that Russians are in the status of indentured servants or slaves, if they use such terms, then that is an attempt to influence public opinion to a certain extent."* (Ilmārs Mežs, JL)

Politicians can use the things that they say and do not only to promote integration, but also to hinder it. Respondents say that some politicians promote intolerance and hatred, thus splitting up society, instead of calling for tolerance and mutual understanding. Because of things which politicians do, integration and the relationship among ethnic groups have become politicised. It cannot be denied, moreover, that some political parties use integration and other, no less sensitive related issues, in writing up their programmes and seeking votes.

*"Politicians can strengthen and shape understanding and tolerance through their statements, announcements and activities, but they can also encourage great intolerance and hatred. Sadly, there are often efforts to politicise the integration process for political purposes. Sadly, radical forces are the most visible in the integration process, they make various pronouncements."* (Almers Ludviks, LPP)

"If we didn't have various radical parties, then perhaps integration would be much more successful. Right here in Parliament, there have been statements to say that non-Latvians and everyone else must leave this country. That does not promote integration." (Aleksandrs Golubovs, LSP)

"It is precisely the wisdom and correct activities of politicians which ensures that integration is successful or unsuccessful. There are political forces which shape policies and seek voters on the basis of fomenting hatred and splitting up society. That is pitiful. If politicians have no other content in their political activities then just this one note, then that is pitiful and dangerous. Radical political forces build their careers on such relationships." (Jānis Straziņš, ZZS)

Some representatives of the elite point to specific political parties which, as far as they are concerned, spend too much time focusing on interethnic relations, arguing that they do not do work which promotes public integration. Respondents say that parties which do not promote integration include TB/LNNK, PCTVL, the LSP and, to a limited extent, the TSP and JC.

"Some parties are real parasites when it comes to interethnic relations, they say bad things about various ethnic groups, they demand certain privileges. Sometimes the things that they do are on the border of fomenting hatred, etc. We know which parties do this most often – PCTVL, Harmony Centre to a lesser degree, it is a bit more tolerant. There is the Socialist Party. At the other end of the spectrum, the most serious party is For the Fatherland and Freedom, which sometimes comes up with brilliant ideas about tearing down monuments or talking about the repatriation of non-Latvians – something which is similar to deportation." (Dzintars Ābiķis, TP)

"We have always said that we want integration, but others do not really want it. For the Fatherland and Freedom, for instance, has a very good slogan – 'Latvia for Latvians!' That's all they say!" (Aleksandrs Golubovs, LSP)

In talking about the role of political parties and politicians in the process of integration, respondents say that politicians shouldn't do anything active in this area, focusing more on the development of the country and the welfare of the people. When discussing these and other politically sensitive issues, politicians should be moderate in their statements and undertake responsibility for what they say. Perhaps, in order to avoid the fomenting of ethnic hatred, stricter norms should be instituted in the law which would force politicians to be liable when they do specific things.

"Political parties should not exacerbate issues of nationality. Political parties need to talk about the development and positions of the state, not about race, nationality or gender. Politicians must think about how to improve people's lives." (Ināra Ostrovska, JD/ZZS)

"To a great extent, all political parties fail to understand the number of potential voters who are sick and tired of these manifestations of Russian and Latvian nationalism. The best thing that existing politicians could do is to refrain from any active work, because most of what politicians do, sadly, simply worsens the situation." (Boriss Cīlēvičs, TSP)

"There is one thing that I can say – people need to be careful about what they say. Political rhetoric has become harsh. There needs to be a sense of responsibility. The issue of gays and lesbians is one example. If you are in power, you cannot call people to go out into the streets and to behave in a disorderly fashion, not if you are someone who is interested in order and security. Politicians need to be moderate in their statements about these issues. Moderation promotes stability in the area of integration." (Ainārs Latkovskis, JL)

"I think that we need to take a much more serious look at laws about the fomenting of ethnic hatred, and particularly on the part of politicians. There are many precedents, but there have been few criminal cases. Look at the minutes of parliamentary meetings – you see people calling on others to beat up Russians, lots of other things. We need to do something when people foment hatred and violence on the basis of ethnicity. They should be punished very seriously." (Ansis Dobelis, LSDSP)

Representatives of some political parties say that public integration is not an issue that will be resolved quickly or one which yields up material benefits. People who enter politics often do so for material reasons, not because they have professional interest. The integration issue can be used to review party programmes and to make promises, but a resolution to the problems is a time-intensive and, therefore, often disadvantageous process.

*“Sadly, we do not have professional politicians, we have people who want to be elected for four years so that they can earn some money. I know lots of people like that, I’m sad to say. I think that only those people who already earn money or who can maintain their level of finances can enter politics, because they don’t have to think about political benefits, just about Latvia’s development.”* (Aleksandrs Brandavs, LPP)

*“Politics in Latvia today are a whole set of political and economic groups, and people in those groups think more about their pockets than about integration. There is an integration specialist in every cell, of course, and the issue is developed, but within parties, these people don’t play much of a role. They’re needed more so that the West can be shown that we have someone who is responsible for integration.”* (Nikolajs Kabanovs, PCTVL)

*“I am very pessimistic about the good attitude of political parties toward public integration, because I don’t see any serious steps or initiatives. Integration is seen more as a castle in the sky that should be built, but this needs special money, space and time. It is a boring issue, there are no immediate returns. We all want to leave in peace, we want everyone to be satisfied, we want there to be no problems in this country, but in order to do the everyday work, we have to lose a lot of time, and parties don’t really have any need to do that.”* (Igoris Pimenovs, JC)

## **9. Political party ideas about the future of public integration**

The representative of the radically nationalist party (VL) thinks that ethnic policy and naturalisation rules must be as strict as possible, because otherwise people who are opponents to Latvian statehood find it easier to become citizens. Because the proportion of ethnic Latvians in Latvia has declined, the awarding of citizenship to non-Latvians should be limited through naturalisation quotas – comparing the number of newly naturalised citizens to the number of newborn Latvians, and assessing each case of naturalisation individually.

According to this man, it is necessary to strengthen the policy of speaking the state language in everyday life, emphasising an increase in the speaking of the Latvian language. He thinks that as the speaking of Latvian increases and stabilises in Latvia, other integration-related issues will be resolved too – education reforms in minority schools, as well as the issue of new citizens and their Latvian language skills.

Representatives of the conservatively nationalist party (TB/LNNK) also say that rules for naturalisation must be made more strict, and the awarding of citizenship should be an exception, not an everyday phenomenon. They add, however, that limitations on naturalisation should not apply to those who have arrived in Latvia since the restoration of its independence.

These politicians don’t support any attempt to amend the basic principles of the Latvian Constitution, and that applies to proposals that non-citizens be allowed to vote in local government elections and that the positions of the state language be weakened in various areas of public life and governance. Latvian is and will remain the only state language, and it must be spoken to a level where there are no situations in which it becomes necessary to speak a different language. For that reason, most classes in minority schools should be taught in Latvian.

The representatives of the conservatively nationalist party say that people should not be judged on the basis of their ethnic origins, but instead on the basis of whether they accept the rules of the game in Latvia and try to become included in society. It has to be stressed,

however, that ethnic integration is just a small part of public integration, and more attention must be devoted to the economic aspects of integration and public welfare.

Representatives of centrist parties (JD, JL, LC, LPP, LSDSP, TP, ZZS) argue that the naturalisation process must continue at the current pace, but perhaps it could be speeded up because the issue is still far too political, and comparatively large numbers of people are still excluded from political processes.

These respondents think that there must be more work on bringing the state language to life, which could be achieved through special programmes and a focus on those territories in which few people speak Latvian. Minority school reforms are one aspect of this policy.

Representatives of centrist parties also say, however, that if we are to facilitate integration and various related process, there must be understanding, tolerance and more dialogue among groups in society. It is necessary to explain things that are happening and to talk about how processes are developing. There should be no populist slogans and polemics about them, because that drives people crazy and makes it hard to know how the situation will end up.

Some representatives of centrist parties call for more attention to public welfare and social issues, as opposed to the ethnic aspect. Social issues can bring society together, and if they are resolved, other problems will be resolved, too. These people think that ethnic conflicts will disappear when the economic situation in Latvia is evened out to a greater degree.

Representatives of minority parties (Motherland, JC, TSP) say that first of all there has to be a shift in public thinking about the essence of integration. The dominant idea now is that only non-Latvians need to integrate into Latvian society, but integration is not a one-way street for just one segment of society. Rather, it involves co-existence and interaction, including respect toward the representatives of other nationalities, as well as the need to learn about the language and culture of the other nationalities.

There are two communities in Latvia right now – those who speak Latvian, and those who speak Russian, and representatives of minority parties think that dialogue between the two groups represents a set of activities which involve an attempt by Latvian speakers to explain their position and to get Russian speakers to accept it. Latvia's society, however, must become a community which brings the two sides together and facilitates bilateral dialogue in the true sense of the word. Russian, moreover, should be granted the status of an official minority language, as opposed to a foreign language.

Representatives of moderate minority parties think that more attention must be devoted in future to the non-governmental sector, reducing the influence of political parties and politicians on same. Integration would move in a positive direction if politicians stopped doing purposeful or sub-conscious things which affect integration in various ways, and if public organisations were more involved in working with people and offering them consultations.

On certain issues, representatives of the LSP and PCTVL have more radical views. They think that naturalisation requirements should be made easier if public integration is an issue. They want automatic citizenship for anyone who has been born in Latvia, and they want easier naturalisation terms for older people, arguing that the existing process is too hard for them. When it comes to the Latvian language and other languages, they don't deny that people must learn the Latvian language, but there must be equal status for the Latvian and Russian language in the public sphere.

In future, according to these members of the elite, the rights of non-citizens must be expanded, particularly in terms of allowing them to vote in local government elections. More attention must be devoted to implementing the requirements of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, and norms about minority rights must be addressed in Latvian law. If minorities and non-citizens are denied their rights, that excludes them from society, and that is in violation of the principles of democracy and makes it impossible to talk

about public integration. They add that integration is not a forced process – it must be a natural and gradual one.