

Russians in Latvia: Ethnic Identity and Ethnopolitical Change

Aadne Aasland

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Institute of Russian & East European Studies

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Abstract

Over a very short period conditions for the Russian population in Latvia have changed dramatically. From being representatives of the majority nationality enjoying a special status in the Soviet multinational empire, Russians have become a national minority in a Latvian nation-state. The thesis focuses on the implications of these changes for the ethnic identity of Russians living in Latvia; the changes are analysed through the perspective of ethnopolitical developments in the country.

An examination of relevant western and Latvian scholarly literature on ethnicity and nationality issues provides the theoretical framework within which to discuss the Russian question in Latvia. Conceptual issues are clarified and various explanations for the phenomenon of ethnicity are considered. The relationship between ethnicity and the political sphere is also examined. After this theoretical introduction, the thesis looks at Latvia's Russian question in a historical context. The history of the Russian population in Latvia is examined, with special attention being paid to the role of historians in the formation of public opinion on historical issues as well as to relevant topics from the period of Latvian independence in the interwar period. Soviet nationalities policies in general and in Latvia in particular are then discussed, and the role of the Russian nationality in the Soviet empire is analysed.

The responsibility for nationalities policies in Latvia was gradually transferred from the centre in Moscow to Latvia itself. The thesis therefore analyses Latvian nationalities policies in the period from 1988 to 1993. The main part of the thesis, however, focuses more directly on the Russian population itself. A major survey "Russians in Latvia 1992" was conducted by the author in cooperation with Latvian sociologists, and it is used extensively for the analysis of Russians' perceptions of their own role in Latvia. Apart from data on the general socio-economic and demographical characteristics of the Russian population, the survey provides information about Russians' evaluation of a wide range of issues, including political attitudes, interethnic relations, links with the historical motherland, Russia, citizenship, language and many more. The thesis contains an analysis of Russians' organisational structures and political activities in Latvia, and the experiences and opinions concerning the formation of a Russian party in the country are also discussed.

The main findings of the thesis are finally put into a theoretical framework. Both the intensity and content of Russian ethnic identity are here accounted for. Similarly, the question of the prospects for integration and/or assimilation of the Russian population is crucial in the final analysis. Also, in line with the ethnopolitical perspective, the thesis looks at various models of conflict resolution in ethnically divided societies and assesses their applicability to Latvia.

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Introduction

After the breakup of the Soviet Union the question of the nearly 25 million Russians living outside the Russian heartland is potentially one of the most explosive issues facing the new (and restored) post-Soviet states. In all these states except Armenia, Russians make up more than 5 per cent of the population, and the sudden change of status of the Russians, from being a majority nationality with a special status in the Soviet multinational state to that of ethnic minorities in what are normally implicitly or explicitly defined as nation-states or national states, is likely to have important implications for regional stability. All the Soviet successor states were in the process of redefining the concepts of statehood and nationhood, and one of the challenges of the new governments (including the Russian) in this respect would be how to deal with the Russian question. The Soviet republics had often been considered by the Russians to be just another part of the Soviet Union and therefore "their" national territory.¹ Were the new states *their* states as well, or did they "belong" first of all to the titular nationalities? Moreover, did the Russian government have a right, or even an obligation, to intervene in internal developments in the Soviet successor states in order to protect ethnic Russians who, often against their own will, had been isolated from their historic homeland?

The Russian question was not, however, a question only of high-level politics, but for each individual Russian it was a question of how to adapt to the new situation in which they found themselves. Reactions to radical change were different from one individual to another, and would often depend on former affiliation to the republic or territory in which they lived. A crucial question was therefore how the ethnic identity of these Russians would be affected by ethno-political change and how this would influence their cultural and political identification both with their present state of residence, as well as with their ethnic homeland, Russia.

This question is the main focus of this thesis, and it deals mainly with the Russian population in Latvia. There are several factors which make Latvia's Russian population a particularly interesting case to study. Firstly, Russians have a long history in the region, and even though most of the Russian population moved to Latvia after the Second World War, a relatively large proportion of Russians living in the country today have lived, or are descendants of Russians who have lived, in the region for several generations. Many Russians can still remember living in an independent Latvia, and others have parents or grandparents with such memories. The heterogeneity of the Russian population in terms of ethnic identification is therefore likely to be larger than for Russians in most of the other former Soviet republics, where only a very limited number of Russians have any pre-Soviet memories.

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Secondly, although the Russian population in Latvia is numerically relatively small - it makes up less than 4 per cent of the total Russian population in the 'near abroad' - when seen as a proportion of the total population in Latvia it is very large indeed. According to the 1989 census Russians in Latvia made up 34 per cent of Latvia's population, which put Latvia in second place among the Soviet republics in terms of the proportion of Russians; only in Kazakhstan did Russians make up a larger proportion (38 per cent). As pointed out above, most of the Russian influx has taken place in the period after the Second World War: according to the 1935 census only 9 per cent of the population was Russian. Similarly, the share of Latvians fell from 76 per cent in 1935 to 52 per cent in 1989. There can be no doubt that the demographic situation in Latvia has a strong impact on the way in which the Russian question in the country is being approached, and the ethnopolitical importance of this question for the state-(re)building process in Latvia can hardly be overestimated.

Thirdly, the legal status of most of the Russians in Latvia has not yet been defined. Only a minority of Russians have so far been granted Latvian citizenship, as they were not citizens, or direct descendants of citizens, of the Latvian Republic in the interwar period. Most Russians will, however, most probably have a chance in the future to apply for Latvian citizenship, which they can obtain through a naturalisation process. Those who are not citizens of Latvia can apply for Russian citizenship, which they will be granted automatically if they are not citizens, and have not applied for citizenship, of another state.² The questions of citizenship and of who actually "belongs" to the state are therefore particularly relevant for the case of Latvia.

As the title of the thesis suggests, the Russian population in Latvia is discussed through the perspectives of their ethnic identity and ethnopolitical developments in the country, and the thesis particularly analyses the relationship between the two. The thesis, thus, makes extensive use of relevant scholarly literature on ethnicity and ethnopolitical issues, which provides for the theoretical framework. This framework is outlined in the first chapter of the thesis, where conceptual questions are clarified, the phenomenon of ethnicity analysed, and the relationship between ethnicity and the political sphere discussed. Chapter 1 further contains a discussion of relevant Latvian literature in the field, which contrasts with the western scholarly analysis and shows the development in dealing with ethnic issues among Latvian scholars in the period from the early 1980s until the present.

Although the main focus of the thesis is the period from the formation of the Popular Front of Latvia in October 1988 until the elections to the new Latvian parliament, the *Saeima*, in June 1993, some discussion of issues further back in time is required, as present developments to a large extent are influenced by events in the past. Thus, Chapter 2 looks at the history of the Russian population in Latvia. This includes

a discussion of the way in which different historians have interpreted the role of Russia and Russians in Latvian history, and the subsequent effect on the interpretation of historical issues on the Russian population itself and their perception of their own role in Latvian society. Some relevant issues from the period of Latvian independence in the interwar period are also discussed in this chapter.

The Latvian ethnic scene is in many respects a legacy of Soviet nationality policies, and the third chapter of the thesis deals with those aspects of these policies which affected the Russian population in the Soviet Union in general, and in Latvia in particular. This leads on to an analysis in Chapter 4 of Latvian ethnopolitics in the period from 1988 onwards, when political forces in Latvia gradually came to determine nationality policies in the country: policies which again set the framework within which Russian residents in Latvia were now confined.

The chapters following deal more exclusively with the Russian population in Latvia itself: Chapter 5 presents and discusses a number of sociological characteristics of the Russian population which can be important factors in explaining their ethnic identification. There is then a chapter analysing Russian affiliations with their state of residence, Latvia, and their ethnic homeland, Russia. Chapter 7 looks at the political attitudes of the Russian population, particularly in relation to questions such as Latvian independence and citizenship legislation. The organisational activities of the Russian population in the indicated period are also reviewed and analysed in a separate chapter. Chapters 5 to 8 make extensive use of the results of a survey (called "Russians in Latvia Survey, 1992") which was conducted by this author in cooperation with sociologists from Latvia in the spring of 1992. Appendix 1 gives some more details of the survey methodology, while the questionnaire itself is reproduced in Appendix 2. Other sources of information include Latvian newspapers and journals, as well as interviews with politicians and other officials, journalists and scholars.

The final chapter puts the findings of the thesis into a theoretical framework as outlined in Chapter 1. This opens up for a discussion of the applicability of various models of regulation of interethnic conflict in multiethnic societies for the case of Latvia. The discussion draws both on particularities of Latvian ethnopolitics and characteristics of the Russian population living in Latvia which are discussed throughout the thesis.

It should be stressed that the thesis deals only with issues which are directly or indirectly related to ethnicity and/or Latvian ethnopolitical developments. There are, however, a number of issues which could be said to belong to the latter category, but unfortunately, due to limitation of space, these cannot be addressed in totality in this thesis. I have reasoned that it is better to concentrate on some aspects and discuss them in more detail than to bring in as many relevant aspects of the issue as possible without

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being able to provide a thorough discussion. This is why I do not look in any detail, for example, at the questions of the reactions in Russia or the West to the ethnopolitical situation in Latvia. Economic developments in Latvia which can influence the interethnic climate in the country are referred to but not analysed in full, whilst the importance of the continuing presence of Russian armed forces in Latvia receives only minimal attention. Although all these questions might have some influence on ethnic identification among Russians and, particularly, ethnopolitical developments in Latvia, I believe that a more thorough discussion of these issues would not have altered any of the main conclusions of the thesis.

It should be noted that there is no systematic discussion of events that have taken place in the period after the elections to the *Saeima* in June 1993. Only some events after that time are discussed in the text and, where this is thought to be appropriate, developments after June 1993 are briefly referred to in separate footnotes.

During my work on this thesis I have benefited from help and support, as well as a variety of perspectives as to how to approach the topic, from a very large number of people, and I would like to use this opportunity to express my gratitude to all of them.

First of all I would like to thank my two supervisors, Stephen White and Martin Dewhirst, for extremely valuable advice and comments on each of the draft versions of my chapters. Both supervisors have been available whenever I have needed advice and, considering their tight schedules, I have been delighted by the rapid feedback and priority given to my work. The supervisors have also had complementary functions: I received much advice from Stephen White about how to write and structure a Ph. D. thesis, and his professionalism and great insights in the field have given me confidence in my work. Martin Dewhirst was indispensable in supplying materials on the topic from a great variety of sources, and he is also the one who has removed most of the language mistakes and improved my English.

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My stays in Latvia have naturally had an enormous significance for the way in which I look upon the Russian question there. Being in Latvia during the January events in 1991 and the aborted August Coup later the same year has added perspectives that are of value not only for this thesis. Richard Bærug deserves thanks for encouraging me to go to Riga in the first place, and for letting me use the facilities of the *Ziemeļvalstu informācijas birojs* (Nordic Information Office) during my later stays. His colleagues there have also been very helpful. My teachers of Latvian at the Faculty of Foreign Languages of the University of Riga not only taught me the beauties of the Latvian language but they also took a personal interest in their students which I have never encountered elsewhere. My gratitude goes to all of them, although I will mention only a few by name: Valentina Gurtaja, Maija Brēde, Andrejs Veisbergs and Ieva Zauberga. They are certainly not to blame that I still confuse the Latvian participles; Ieva even gave me private lessons during sightseeing in London.

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In the middle of my work period I was lucky to have the chance to work for seven months as research assistant under Graham Smith at the University of Cambridge. This gave me the opportunity to discuss my topic and work with an area specialist who has also insights into ethno-political theory. My colleague Richard Mole was also very helpful during my stay in Cambridge, and Jane Wills gave me much practical advice in the use of SPSS for Macintosh.

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Although I have had the privilege of much good help and advice, I accept that I alone can be held responsible for any errors or shortcomings in this thesis.

Finally, a note on transliteration and spellings. The scheme used by the journal *Europe-Asia Studies* has served as a guide-line for transliteration from Russian. Latvian fonts and characters are usually used for Latvian words. Exceptions are names that are familiar to English-speaking readers in another form, such as Riga (not Rīga). Instead of transliterating Latvian names when written in Russian, their Latvian form is adopted when familiar to this author (Krūmiņš, not Krumin'sh). The present official names are used for the former Soviet republics. For space considerations, when there are quotations in Russian a translation is usually not provided, as I expect that the thesis will be read first of all by people with a knowledge of this language; quotations in Latvian or other languages, however, have been translated into English.

¹Brubaker (1994), p. 68.

²The text of the Russian law on citizenship was printed in *Russkii Put'*, 12 September 1992, p. 3.

1. Ethnicity and the Nationality Question in Scholarly Literature

On the 25th of January 1992 Latvian TV invited to a discussion on the subject "Is there a Russian question in Latvia?". All the programme participants agreed that the answer to this question had to be positive, but their views differed substantially when they were asked what should be understood by the "Russian question". One of the differences was reflected in the interpretation of the term "Russian". Whereas some of the participants emphasised that they by "Russians" understood the whole "Russian-speaking population" in Latvia, others were more concerned with issues regarding the so-called "real Russians"; those who are Russians by nationality.

The example above indicates that when we write about "Russians in Latvia", people may interpret the term "Russians" differently. One must therefore at the start of the thesis clarify who are considered to be Russians. However, the choice should not be arbitrary, and should be based on the scholarly literature in this field. The aim of this chapter is to provide the theoretical framework, within which the "Russian question" in Latvia can be discussed. In the first part of the chapter there will be an examination of some of the Western literature in the field, with a discussion of relevant terms that are widely used. The way in which the phenomenon of ethnicity is analysed by different scholars will be examined, and I will to some extent concentrate on questions related to ethnic (or national) identity, which is the most important concern of this thesis. Towards the end of the chapter I shall look at the way in which scholars in Latvia analyse or have analysed nationality issues. This section will not only contrast with Western analysis, but will also point to the changes that have taken place in Soviet and Latvian scholarly literature in the field since the early 1980s.

1.1. Ethnicity - the Conceptual Framework

Nationality issues are analysed by scholars in a large number of social and other sciences; by historians, political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists, geographers and others.¹ One of the problems concerning nationality issues is that they to a large extent have developed their own terminology, so that scholars in many cases write about the same phenomena but use a different vocabulary. In other cases the concepts being used have different meanings to different scholars, sometimes even within the same science. In this thesis reference will be made to theories from a number of different fields, and also from different countries and scientific traditions, and it is therefore necessary to clarify some of the concepts that are most widely used. I will

start with concepts related to ethnicity, since ethnic relations and ethnic identity are the main focus of this thesis.

In a study of 65 works dealing with aspects of ethnicity and of 27 different definitions of the term ethnicity from dictionaries and theoretical studies, Isajiw examined its common features.² He found that the attributes that were most often mentioned were common ancestry, and the same culture, religion or language. He suggested that most definitions asserted an ascriptive, involuntary nature of the phenomenon. The factor of mutual recognition and identification was another recurring aspect in most definitions.

The number of definitions of the terms related to ethnicity has increased substantially since Isajiw carried out this study, especially since the mid-1970s, when research on ethnicity started flourishing.³ One of the most controversial topics in the area centres on the nature of the criteria that define ethnicity. Both objective and subjective criteria have been used in defining the term. Those who use objective criteria usually define ethnicity in terms of religion, language, race, geographic location, a common history, culture and the like.⁴ They may include a cultural, territorial or biological content or a combination of these.⁵ Subjective definitions emphasise the socio-psychological aspects or the affective ties of ethnicity. Ethnic membership is here seen mostly as a subjective belief or a presumed identity.⁶ However, a majority of scholars now see a combination of subjective and objective criteria as essential for explaining ethnicity. Burgess, among others, recognised that subjective criteria are of great importance, but that they need to be based on some objective group realities. She provides a definition of ethnicity with both subjective and objective variables: Ethnicity is

the character, quality, or condition of ethnic group membership, based on an identity with and/or a consciousness of group belonging that is differentiated from others by symbolic "markers" (including, cultural, biological, or territorial), and is rooted in bonds of a shared past and perceived ethnic interests.⁷

In works on ethnicity one of the problems has been to come to an agreement on how to use the term "ethnic group". There has been a tendency that ethnic group and minority have become synonymous. This has been common among some American sociologists and political scientists. Thus in the "Dictionary of Modern Sociology" ethnic group is defined as: "a group with a common cultural tradition and a sense of identity which exists as a subgroup of a larger society".⁸ Most scholars do, however, seem to agree that the ethnic group need not be a subordinate part of a larger society but may also be the dominant element in a state, or may extend across a number of states. In this thesis the term "ethnic group" will also be used in this broader sense. Thus, Russians in Latvia will be regarded as an ethnic group (ethnos) whether they are representatives of the dominant nationality in the Soviet Union, as was the case until

recently, or a minority nationality in a Latvian state, which is the reality today. The fact that no formal distinction is made between the terms being used does not, however, indicate that I disregard the difference between the two statuses of the Russians in Latvia, and one of the main aims of the thesis is to analyse what this change has meant for their ethnic identity.

Brass argues that ethnic groups should be distinguished both from interest groups and from classes. Ethnic groups, unlike interest groups, are concerned with cultural matters, symbols and values, and also with issues of self-definition. He states further, that even though ethnic groups often act as interest groups pressing demands upon the state, some ethnic groups are completely internal to the community, and there are also ethnic groups with only potential political significance.⁹ Ethnic groups and classes are also distinguished in Brass' analysis. The former is seen as a more variable category since it is defined in relation to "cultural markers, practises or behaviour patterns and as potentially whole societies".¹⁰

McKay and Lewins have examined some definitional and conceptual problems surrounding the usage and interrelationships of the terms "ethnicity", "ethnic identity", and "ethnic group".¹¹ They support the view that the individual and group level of analysis should be kept separate, because "a high level of ethnic identification does not necessarily entail group formation and group formation does not necessarily involve a high level of ethnic identification among all individuals".¹² In other words, the consciousness level of individual group members may vary widely, and the level of interaction between the members does not necessarily reflect the level of ethnic identity in the group.

McKay and Lewins argue that "ethnic group" should be distinguished from "ethnic category". They criticise the frequent usage of "ethnic group" to include individuals who share certain "objective" characteristics such as religion, race, or national origin or some combination of these, without having a sense of belonging to the ethnic group or much interaction with their fellow ethnics. Only individuals who do regularly interact with fellow ethnics should, according to McKay and Lewins be regarded as belonging to an "ethnic group". On the other hand, individuals with certain common demographic characteristics but without this interaction belong to an "ethnic category".

McKay and Lewins also make a distinction between "ethnic awareness" and "ethnic consciousness". Ethnic awareness exists when an individual is aware that he or she possesses certain ethnic characteristics but where these characteristics are no more relevant to him or her than the other social characteristics which make up the individual. Ethnic consciousness exists when the ethnic characteristics assume considerable importance, and a "we" versus "them" mentality exists in relation to other ethnic groups. Thus, "ethnic consciousness" is more intense than "ethnic awareness".

The typology developed by McKay and Lewins, based on the discussion above, has two dimensions; ethnic structuration and ethnic identity. The first dimension is divided into ethnic groups and ethnic categories whereas the other dimension is divided into ethnic awareness and ethnic consciousness. By dichotomising the two dimensions an individual can fall into four different categories, as shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: Ethnic Identification and Structuration

| | | <u>Type of structuration</u> | |
|-----------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | | <i>Ethnic category (Low)</i> | <i>Ethnic group (High)</i> |
| <u>Type of identification</u> | <i>Ethnic awareness (Low)</i> | (I) Minimal cell | (II) Moderate cell |
| | <i>Ethnic consciousness (High)</i> | (III) Marginal cell | (IV) Maximum cell |

Source: Martinelli (1986), p. 198; McKay and Lewins (1978), p. 423.

De Vos and Romanucci-Ross criticised the model of McKay and Lewins because they found it to be too rigid.¹³ They claimed that the degree of ethnic identity is on a continuum informed by a high degree of complexity, and cannot be categorised into two groups. Phyllis Martinelli tested a number of ancestry Italian Americans in an attempt to determine if the types delineated in McKay and Lewins model could be distinguished.¹⁴ Her study did not fully confirm the McKay and Lewins typology, since only three of the four groups were distinguishable. Martinelli argued, however, that there *are* some differences between those who belong to an ethnic category and an ethnic group and between "those whose identity is strongly rooted in their ethnicity and those for whom an ethnic identity is only one of several strands that constitute the self".¹⁵

In this thesis I shall attempt to identify the level of ethnic stratification and ethnic identity among Russians living in Latvia. The degree to which there is a sense of belonging to a Russian ethnic group will be analysed, and the importance to Russians of ethnic characteristics will be examined. However, the variables that could be used to classify Russians into the four different groups according to the McKay and Lewins

model would, in my view, be too arbitrary to make such a classification justifiable. As long as one is aware of the different levels of ethnic stratification and identity, I also see no reason for the strong division between ethnic groups and categories, and between ethnic consciousness and awareness, at least for the purposes of this thesis.

In a large number of studies on nationality questions, and particularly in the study of nationalism, scholars have attempted to provide accurate definitions of the terms "nation" and "nationality". There must here be a brief comment on the ambiguous meanings of these terms, since some of the literature has relevance for this thesis.

"Nation" has often been used as a synonym for a state or its inhabitants, and "nationality" has been used to indicate citizenship. Although this usage has been criticised by a large number of scholars in the field of nationality questions, the distinction between state and nation is not always clear.¹⁶

One of the most prominent scholars in the field of nationalism, A. Smith has defined nation as "a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths an historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members."¹⁷ According to this definition, Russians in Russia constitute a nation, but Russians in Latvia lack features such as a common economy with the required mobility for members as well as the same legal rights and duties as Russians living in Russia. They can therefore not be considered part of a Russian nation.

Smith has developed his definition of nation from two components in line with Meinecke's distinction between the *Staatsnation* and the *Kulturnation*. The first component is what Smith calls the Western concept of a nation based on historic territory, legal-political community, legal-political equality of the members, and common civic culture and ideology.¹⁸ The second component is a non-Western and ethnic conception of the nation, the distinguishing feature of which being its emphasis on a community of birth and native culture. According to this second concept an individual remains a member of one's national community whether he stays in the community or emigrates to another. As one can see, Russians in Latvia would fit into this ethnic conception of a nation.¹⁹

It must be mentioned that there are scholars who define nation in more strictly socio-cultural terms than Smith does, and who use the concept in a way in which Russians in Latvia would easily fit in.²⁰ In Russian and also in Latvian language the terms nation (*natsiya/ nācija*) and nationality (*natsional'nost'/ tautība (nacionalitāte)*) do not have the connotation of having something to do with the state that the terms often do in English. Soviet scholars have, however, had similar difficulties in defining the terms as their Western counterparts have, and they have for example not agreed on the question of whether a group of people living apart from the ethnic group to which they belong

can be regarded part of this nation²¹ The relationship between the words *natsiya* and *natsional'nost'* is described in the English version of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia:

The term *natsional'nost'* which signifies a common ethnicity, is only one of the factors contributing to a nation or to nationhood. Thus, *natsional'nost'* is a narrower concept than "nation". The distinction between the two concepts helps explain why a group of people who are of the *natsional'nost'* of a particular nation but who do not live on its territory are not members of that nation.²²

Some of the concepts and terms used by scholars when writing about nationality issues have now been discussed. There will also be some more conceptual discussions when I will deal with Latvian scholarly works on nationality issues towards the end of this chapter. I have defined the concept "ethnic group", and argued that Russians in Latvia belong to such an ethnic group, but I still have not fulfilled the task which was set out in the beginning of the chapter; to define who should be considered Russians in Latvia. Some scholars, among them De Vos and Romanucci-Ross, argue that, strictly used, "nationality" is indistinguishable from "ethnic group".²³ There will, however, in this thesis be a slight difference in the usage of the two concepts. "Nationality" will be used as an operationalisation of the term "ethnic group", but due to certain considerations the two concepts do not completely overlap one another:

If one in line with the majority of contemporary Western scholars in the field argues that ethnic groups can only be self-defined, one must consider as belonging to the Russian ethnic group all those who regard themselves as Russians. However, there are some complications concerning how to proceed from this to an operative definition, for example how to choose respondents for our survey. In the Soviet Union the rule was that when children got their passports at the age of 16, their official nationality was always indicated. This nationality was automatically the same as the nationality of the parents. Only children of mixed marriages could choose their nationality, but it had to be the nationality of one of the parents.²⁴

The censuses and our survey do not ask for the official nationality when people are asked to report their nationality. Still, there will be people who expect that when they are asked about their nationality, they should report the official one. For a majority of people one would expect that the official nationality and the self-defined one would be the same, but this is not necessarily always the case, and I will give three examples to illustrate this. First, there are people in Latvia who regard Russian as their mother tongue, interact in a Russian environment and have a sense of belonging to a Russian culture, but whose parents are of another nationality. Such people will often report this other nationality to the census-takers, but would, if asked about national identity, regard themselves as Russians.²⁵ Second, it is not possible not to report any nationality, which means that people without any ethnic awareness are forced into a nationality category. Third, there is no category for Soviet nationality, since Soviet

nationality has never been recognised as a nationality on its own. There is, however, reason to believe that for a considerable number of individuals in Latvia there was (and for some still is) a Soviet identity which was stronger than the identity of belonging to any of the nationalities. In Yugoslavia there was another approach to this question, because people had the option to report a Yugoslav nationality to the census-takers.²⁶

In the first example above there are people who, according to our definitions, should be regarded as belonging to the ethnic group of Russians, but who are not regarded as Russians in the censuses or our survey.²⁷ This may be a weakness, but it would be technically difficult to include these people in our survey, since it is partly based on information from the census of 1989, and it is impossible to identify, based on this census, who should be regarded as Russians among those who are reported to belong to other nationalities (and similarly who among those reported as Russians should not be considered as such). The second and third examples include people who, strictly based on the definitions above, should not be regarded as Russians. However, these are groups that are of particular interest for our thesis, in that they are considered in censuses as Russians but have no or a very low degree of ethnic identity. One would therefore lose interesting information if they were not included in our survey, and they were included in the census anyway. Even though these groups do not fit into the definition which was given of ethnic group, they will be considered as belonging to the Russian nationality. With the considerations above in mind, I will for this thesis define nationalities as administratively recognised ethnic groups, and Russians will be regarded as those who report Russian as their nationality to the census-takers and in the questionnaires for our survey.

There could be good arguments for writing about the "Russian-speaking population" instead of Russians, and many scholars analyse ethnic relations in Latvia by dividing the population into Latvians and non-Latvians. However, since this thesis is very much concerned with questions related to ethnic identity, there are certain issues where we are interested in the Russian ethnic group as such, for example their relations to what is regarded their historic homeland, Russia, and also questions connected with being the largest nationality in a Soviet multinational state and seen as an "elder brother" for the other nationalities. A large part of the thesis will deal with questions that concern other nationalities in Latvia to the same extent as they concern Russians, at least from the point of view of these nationalities. When dealing with organisations such as *Interfront* and the Communist Party, it is not always easy to establish on basis of the surname whether a statement comes from a Russian, or for example a Belarusian or a Jew. From the context it should, however, be clear if it is important to keep to the definition of Russian in a stricter sense, and I do not believe that these inconsistencies will cause any further problems in the thesis.

1.2. Ethnicity - the Phenomenon

The phenomenon of ethnicity has by many people been regarded as paradoxical. The "liberal expectancy", a term introduced by M. Gordon, has been based on the idea that urbanisation would promote assimilation, and modern technology would lead to a convergence of economic and social systems.²⁸ The implication was an expected trend towards the world consisting of a relatively small number of homogeneous nation-states. The liberal expectancy has its parallel in the "radical expectancy", typically identified with Marxism and Marxist scholars. Marxists have regarded class as the relevant unit of analysis, and class is usually seen as having a much greater influence on the development of political and social systems than ethnic factors. The affective ties of ethnic groups were by most Marxists expected to disappear as class consciousness would unite individuals regardless of their ethnic background:

Despite predictions of the eradication of ethnicity in the modern age, there is empirical evidence suggesting that ethnicity has become more and more important, at least up to date. The number and intensity of ethnic conflicts have increased, and ethnicity has to some extent become a legitimate principle of political organisation.²⁹ In the following section the question of how ethnic identity and a sense of ethnic solidarity comes into being will first be examined. Further, I will look at the relations between ethnicity and the political sphere, and particularly attention will be paid to questions centring around ethnicity in states having a multinational character.

There have traditionally been two differing approaches to explaining ethnicity. The first, called the primordial approach, takes the view that ethnicity is something primordial and ascriptive and suggests a link between ethnicity and kinship.³⁰ The strong affectional links among people having common ancestry are emphasised, and ethnicity is seen as "a real and tangible quality with a real and tangible existence on its own".³¹ Some scholars, among them Van den Berghe, give a biological and genetic explanation for the existence of these primordial attachments.³²

The other approach, called the circumstantial, or the situational, recognises that an individual may have dual, or multiple, identities, and that the importance that an ethnic group member assigns his or her own ethnicity can change over time.³³ Researchers have found through empirical research that although people sharing ethnic identities usually hold to a myth of common descent, this myth is often of low biological validity.³⁴ Circumstantialists see ethnicity as a rational group response to social pressures and a basis for group action, especially when none other exists.³⁵ Patterson, for example, argues that ethnicity is a chosen form of identification and that

"ethnic loyalties reflect, and are maintained by, the underlying socio-economic interests of group members".³⁶

There are certain problems connected with the two approaches. Both sides have argued that the other side is restricted as to the range of ethnic behaviour it can explain: The primordial approach can, it is said, explain the persistence of ethnic identity over time, but is less able to explain why the intensity of ethnic identity can change and fluctuate and also be distributed differently within a group. The circumstantial approach, on the other hand, can explain the reason for fluctuation of ethnicity over time, but tends to ignore the affective significance of ethnic ties.³⁷

Richmond has argued that the notion of ancestral links should not be abandoned all together.³⁸ However, he suggests that ancestral links may be putative (attributed) rather than determined by actual genetic connections or acquired during early socialisation. Since ethnic group membership and identity are strongly related to culture, and cultures are in a constant state of flux, so will also membership and identity change and fluctuate over time, sometimes become more inclusive, at other times more exclusive. He argues that the difficulty in reconciling the primordial and the circumstantial approaches has been caused by a too simplistic and unitary view of culture.

G. M. Scott Jr. claims that the two approaches are not mutually exclusive, and that ethnic attachments can be both primordial and circumstantial at the same time. He offers a synthetic model based on the oppositional approach originated by Edvard Spicer.³⁹ According to this approach opposition is required for an ethnic group to have a strong identity and sense of solidarity. Ethnic groups can survive over longer periods living in relative isolation, but without their identity being challenged, it will likely be taken for granted to the point that it is considerably weakened.⁴⁰

Primordial sentiments are, according to Scott, "tied to the circumstances under which they are aroused or maintained", and his argument is that this most often occurs "when the members of an ethnic group face opposition from another group on the basis of their ethnic distinctiveness".⁴¹ When Spicer used his opposition approach to explain only persistent identity systems, Scott argues that opposition also can explain fluctuating ethnicity. Such fluctuating ethnicity along with fluctuating primordial sentiments are seen as results of the circumstance of fluctuating opposition.⁴²

This thesis is concerned with the degree of ethnic consciousness and ethnic group solidarity among Russians living in Latvia. I support the view that ethnic boundaries and identities are situationally defined⁴³, since there is strong evidence indicating this, but do not disregard the affective ties of ethnicity. One hypothesis in this thesis is that a sense of group consciousness exists at least among a majority of the Russians in Latvia, and that the intensity of this consciousness has increased over the last few years. In line with Scott's model, one could explain an increase in intensity

level of Russian ethnic identity as a consequence of an opposition to manifestations of a higher intensity of Latvian ethnic consciousness.

However, one would need to investigate thoroughly before such conclusions can be made. Many scholars emphasise that ethnic identity should be seen as only one out of many identities making up an individual.⁴⁴ It is not unlikely that opposition to Latvian ethnic mobilisation could have the effect among Russians that other forms of group solidarity would intensify, for example internationalist and Soviet sentiments. Apart from analysing the intensity of ethnic identity, I shall in this thesis also look at alternative forms of identity formation among Russians in Latvia. One should not exclude the possibility that the intensity of two or more forms of identity can increase simultaneously, which for example could result in people feeling more "Russian" and more "Soviet" at the same time. I believe that identity formation among Russians in Latvia can not be fully understood without analysing particularities with the Soviet regime and Soviet nationality policy, which will be examined in further detail in the next chapter.

The next focus of examination is the relationship between ethnicity and the political sphere. The traditional way of dealing with ethnic politics, was to see politics as a dependent variable, and the political sphere as acting in relation to already existing ethnic divisions.⁴⁵ Some scholars have challenged this approach. Cynthia H. Enloe, for example, considers it a rather passive notion of politics which implies that political actors have the limited task of managing the ethnic conflicts in a society.⁴⁶ She refers to empirical evidence suggesting that politics in itself can be an autonomous force which can create the sense of ethnic belonging of the individuals, and she also believes that politics can delineate social divisions between ethnic communities.⁴⁷

A number of scholars have analysed the relationship between a multinational state and its ethnic minorities, a subject which also has relevance for our thesis. One could maybe argue that Russians in Latvia should not be treated as a typical ethnic minority. They are in many respects in a special situation since their ethnic group constitutes a majority in another adjacent state. Since such ethnic groups can often count on support from their ethnic homeland, their demands to the authorities would be expected to carry extra weight.

Thomas Hylland Eriksen explicitly refers to the case of the Russians in Latvia when he analyses the relations between a nation-state and their ethnic minorities.⁴⁸ He is aware of that the Russians in Latvia have some peculiarities that it shares with a few other ethnic groups, but he does not see their situation as principally different from that of other ethnic minorities. I support Eriksen in this view, and will throughout the thesis consider Russians in Latvia a minority group. By minority a strictly numerical definition is employed, and the concept does here not have any connotations to position in the social structure.⁴⁹

Eriksen describes three major strategies which can be employed by the nation-state to deal with their ethnic minorities, not taking into account genocides, deportations of whole populations or removal of existing borders.⁵⁰ These are all strategies that will affect the ethnic sentiments of the group affected. The first strategy is to assimilate the ethnic minority. This strategy is characterised by an attempt to reduce or preferably destroy the ethnic identity of the minority group by force or by the use of other means. The aim is to replace this identity with the identity of the majority nationality of the state. Assimilation can take place through language policies, education, mass media etc.

A second strategy is characterised by dominance, or in some cases forced segregation. In this case the state does not attempt to assimilate the minority groups but at the same time deprives them of the political rights of the dominant group.⁵¹ The third strategy is for the state to distant itself from a nationalistic ideology either by establishing a federative state characterised by regional self-government or by advocating a multi-cultural ideology for the state, where citizenship is not connected with a particular ethnic identity.

Eriksen also points to the paradox that a nation-state can be accused of injustice both if it promotes equality as well as if it promotes difference between the ethnic groups:

If the state emphasises that all citizens should have the same duties and rights it could lead to the minorities getting the impression that the distinctive characters of their culture is not being respected and that they are discriminated against and disqualified because of their culture.[...] But if the state rather emphasises the right to cultural differences on their territory, members of minorities would feel that they are discriminated against out of opposite reasons.⁵²

The implication of a policy where all ethnic groups have the right to preserve their cultural distinctiveness can sometimes be that large segments of the population are deprived of taking part in the competition for resources.

I will give one example to illustrate Eriksen's point. In Latvia there have always been separate Russian and Latvian schools. If Latvian authorities were now to abolish the division between Latvian and Russian schools, it could make Russians complain about their situation being worsened, since it would be more difficult for the Russians to preserve their cultural distinctiveness. If, on the other hand, Russians were encouraged to go to Russian schools, with less emphasis on Latvian language and culture, and at the same time fluency of Latvian were a prerequisite for getting a higher position in Latvian society, such policy would also meet strong opposition from Russians.

Eriksen is quite clear in his preference for the third strategy referred to above. He gives evidence of the destructive potential of combining ethnic identity with the formidable power represented by the modern state.⁵³ There are also other scholars

arguing the case that a state consisting of many nationalities should be based on cultural pluralism and political accommodation. Lijphart has provided a model for how a state can cope with problems of extreme "cultural pluralism".⁵⁴ In the final chapter of the thesis we shall look closer at his model of "consociational democracy" and see how applicable it is to the situation in Latvia. "Majoritarian democracy" and "ethnic democracy" are alternative models which also will be discussed in the final chapter.

The position of Russians in Latvian ethnic stratification will depend on the characteristics of the group itself and also its actual place in the stratification system. A traditional way of classifying ethnic groups has been to distinguish between subordinate and superordinate ethnic groups. Some scholars noted the analytical difference between a politically superordinate group being in majority or minority in a society, between economic and political domination, and also of different degrees of interaction within and among the ethnic groups in the respective societies. We will now look at some models where these and other factors have been integrated.

Motyl uses the term "ethnic power" to describe the "combination of resources that position a given group in the ethnic hierarchy or region".⁵⁵ He is aware that ethnicity unlike class carries no connotation of power per se, but he argues that ethnic groups can still possess certain characteristics of a nonethnic nature, and that these characteristics give the groups involved different amounts of resources. The power of the ethnic group is therefore related to, but not identical with class power.

The author further argues that ethnic groups can be compared along several power dimensions, and he suggests the following; demographic size, social development, communications capacity, and organisational capacity. One should emphasise that Motyl here operates on the group level of analysis, and that the position of the individual is not necessarily reflected by the position of the group as a whole.

Based on an operationalisation of the different dimensions, Motyl classifies the ethnic groups into three different types; the hegemonic group, which is dominant in all or nearly all categories; the dominant group, dominating in a majority of categories; and the balanced group, possessing approximately the same degree of ethnic power as the other groups in the society involved.

Rothschild compares three models according to which a society may stratify their ethnic groups.⁵⁶ The first model is characterised by a categorical correspondence of ethnic superordination and subordination in all spheres of a society; political, social, economic, and cultural. There are structural and, when required, coercing sanctions enforcing the hierarchical arrangements. The second model is one of parallel ethnic segmentation which implies that "each ethnic community is internally stratified by socio-economic criteria and each has a political elite to represent its interests vis-à-vis the the corresponding elites of the other ethnic segments". In the third model, the cross-patterned reticulated, ethnic groups and social classes "cross-populate" each other. One

can find members of an ethnic group within each economic class and sector of society, but it is likely that there is some overrepresentation and underrepresentation of ethnic groups within the different economic classes and in the political leadership.

Both the vertical-hierarchical and the parallel-segmental model are regarded as ideal-schemes that do not exist in pure form in real life. By being more realistic, Rothschild considers the reticulate model to be the superior of the three to analyse developed multiethnic societies. The most important is that it allows for and even expects "diagonal, asymmetrical, and (...) changing cross-correlations between ethnicity (...) and class, status and power distributions (...)." ⁵⁷ Rothschild emphasises that "even though the third model facilitates transactions across ethnic boundaries", the model does not "assume (...) ethnic assimilation or even a high level of mutual ethnocultural sympathy". ⁵⁸ At the contrary, the interethnic relations may well be more competitive in this than the two other models, since people from different ethnic groups have access to the same rewards, but the actual or perceived discrepancies in the possibilities of gaining these rewards may cause ethnic conflict.

As we see, one can not analyse ethnic relations in Latvia by simply establishing which group is superordinate and which group is subordinate. Motyl's model points to the importance of taking into account more than one dimension when analysing the relative position of different ethnic groups in a society. However, for our thesis it is also important to look at stratification within an ethnic group, and Rothschild's model provides a tool by which one can analyse the correlations both between and within ethnic groups.

Liebersohn brings in another aspect of ethnic relations which is useful for our thesis, and that is the distinction between ethnic groups that are territorially based on the one hand and extraterritorial and dispersed groups on the other. ⁵⁹ He particularly looks at differences between societies where a migrant population dominates an indigenous population and societies where there is subordination of a migrant population by an indigenous (racial or) ethnic group. Whereas the indigenous population will usually have an established and stable organisation prior to the arrival of the migrants, migrants are as a rule required to make some institutional adaptations in view of the presence of the indigenous population. As a contrast "when the migrant population is superior in terms of technology (particularly weapons) and also more tightly organised than the indigenous group, the necessary conditions for maintaining the migrants' political and economic institutions are usually imposed on the indigenous population". ⁶⁰

Francis makes a similar analytical point when he distinguishes between primary and secondary ethnic groups. ⁶¹ Primary ethnic groups are national minorities which became minorities in the course of territorial annexation, whereas secondary ethnic groups are a result of large-scale migration. This is an essential difference since the primary ethnic group usually will continue to represent comprehensive subsocieties that

are capable of satisfying all social needs of their members whereas secondary ethnic groups are able to do so only in a limited way. The latter group is therefore more receptive to influence from the closest majority nation, whereas primary groups tend to be more concerned with retaining their ethnic identity.

As we argued above, it is not always easy to establish which ethnic group is superordinate and which is subordinate in a society, and the distinction made by Lieberman does not facilitate *this* task. I do, however, find it useful to look at the position of the migrant group in Latvia over time, both in political, economic, demographic and socio-cultural terms. In this connection it is again necessary to analyse the particularities of the Soviet state which in many respects is different from other empires in that it was not only based on "conquest, dynastic accumulation and economic aggrandisement but also on a distinctive ideology of Marxist internationalism".⁶² Also, even though Russians in Latvia have many of the characteristics of a secondary ethnic group, Russians in Latvia cannot be classified as immigrants in the usual understanding of the term, and it is not possible fully to appreciate the special status of the Russian population in Latvia and the rest of the Soviet empire without familiarity with Soviet nationalities policies (to be discussed in Chapter 3).

1.3. Latvian Scholars on Ethnic Issues

The following section deals with scholarly works on ethnic issues published in Latvia since the early 1980s. I shall concentrate on five works which have been published in Latvia during that period; two of them were written in the early 1980s, the third is based on articles published in the spring of 1988, the fourth was published in 1990, while the last is a political science text-book published in 1993. There are several reasons why such a literature survey is included in this thesis. It will, hopefully, clarify how different concepts and phenomena in the field have been interpreted by scholars in Latvia, and can shed light on differences between Latvian and Western scholars. Further, the survey will show the development which has taken place in the field over a relatively short time period, which also reflects the changes in other spheres of Latvian society. An interesting observation is that although there are radical differences between the five works, some scholars are involved in two, three and even four of them, either as contributors or on the editorial board. It should be noted that in Latvia most works on nationality issues have combined a theoretical and a practical approach, and although this chapter is mostly concerned with theoretical aspects, there will also be reference to some of the practical illustrations when they related to major concerns in this thesis.

The first work to be examined is a dictionary from 1981 published by the Latvian Academy of Sciences, which had the aim of analysing concepts, phenomena and processes in the field of nationality relations.⁶³ Although the dictionary is published in Latvian, the counterparts to the Latvian concepts in Russian are always referred to, and the dictionary is based on Soviet research in the field. The authors see it as one of their aims to clarify if there are any diverging views among socialist scholars in the area, and to indicate their own position in such cases. There is very limited reference to Western works in the book except, of course, the works of Marx and Engels. When the authors discuss more controversial issues, they usually argue that their position is the one which is most in line with the works of the so-called "classical Marxists", including the works of Lenin.

The dictionary gives one concept which is meant to include all different forms of ethnic group formations; the socio-ethnic community (*sociāletniskā kopība / sotsial'noetnicheskaya obshchnost'*). This concept, the authors argue, points to the dialectical unity between socioeconomic and ethnic factors underlying the existence of all ethnic communities. Socioeconomic factors are seen as the basis for all social phenomena and processes (including ethnic) and are regarded both stronger and more dynamic than ethnic factors. As ethnic factors are mentioned language, ethnic territory, culture, way of living, traditions and national psychology.

One form of socio-ethnic community is the nation (*nācija / natsiya*). The nation is defined as a stable, historically developed form of human community which is organised on the basis of common economic life, territory and language, combined with certain cultural and psychological traits. This definition is more or less identical with a definition provided by Stalin in 1913.⁶⁴ Concepts of nationhood used by most Western scholars have often been criticised in Soviet literature for being "idealistic" since they, in the scholars' view, reject or do not fully appreciate the role of objective factors as essential features of a nation. In the debate in the journal *Voprosy Istorii* on the conceptual and methodological framework for the field of nationality questions, which was referred to in a note in the preceding section, some scholars criticised the part of Stalin's definition of nationhood concerning a common "psychological make-up" as a constituent part, and claimed that national self-consciousness is not a permanent feature of nationhood that applies in the post-revolutionary setting.⁶⁵ Other scholars paid more attention to the social function of the nation, and treated nations as "integral socio-ethnic organisms".⁶⁶

The Latvian dictionary is in line with the majority of Soviet scholars in that objective factors dominate in the definition of nationhood. The nation is not seen by the authors as a biological or racial community, but as a product of the historic development of society. Nations are not an eternal form of human community but a historically temporary phenomenon, and therefore linked with the stage of social

development. They are seen as the most widespread forms of ethnic communities in the stages of capitalism and socialism. Since the mode of production underlies the structure of the nation there are also differences between capitalist and socialist nations, and the latter are characterised by socialist, friendly relations between the classes and social strata.

The authors claim that ethnic factors do not immediately disappear under socialism, but that such factors develop on a different basis and acquire a qualitatively new content. The question about at which stage national factors finally will disappear, if ever, was for a long time one of the most controversial questions in Soviet scholarly debates on the nationality issue.⁶⁷ In the Latvian dictionary the authors argue that even though the eradication of nations will not take place in the near future, national factors will inevitably lose their meaning in the long run.

National identity (*nacionālā apziņa* *natsional'noe soznanie*) is explained in the dictionary as a part of the general social identity and seen as an important social reality. National identity includes national feelings, national psychology, national self-identity, and national ideology. The authors argue that if one does not fully appreciate the existence of a national identity it can influence negatively attempts of strengthening the unity of the people, and thereby reduce the efficiency of international up-bringing. They also claim that anti-communists try to ascribe national identity to nationalism and chauvinism, and consider it a task for progressive forces to achieve a state in which proletarian internationalists ideas take root in the identity of working people of all nationalities.

While the Latvian dictionary illustrates the theoretical framework within which Soviet scholars on nationality issues to a large extent operated, the next book I will refer to gives an example of how this theory was applied when explaining actual phenomena in this sphere. One year after the publication of the dictionary the Institute of Scientific Communism of the University of Latvia published a collection of articles where the emphasis was put on defending the nationality policy of the CPSU against alleged falsifications by the Western "bourgeoisie".⁶⁸ Z. N. Mironova analyses works of contemporary sovietologists and claims that contemporary sovietology is characterised by such distortions as to oppose the phenomena of patriotism and internationalism.⁶⁹ She criticises the tendency of sovietologists to ignore the significance of patriotism and national factors in the works of Marx and Engels. The aim of such sovietologists is, according to Mironova, to bring the reader to believe that Soviet patriotism is not at all related to the phenomenon as it was interpreted by Marx and Engels. In Mironova's view, sovietologists deliberately confuse patriotism and nationalism, and ignore the class approach to patriotism which was the basis for the classical marxist-leninists in their analyses of the subject.

Mironova argues that in accordance with real patriotism, the Soviet country is the motherland (*rodina*) of the Soviet people. Soviet patriotism includes both pride of one's own nation and loyalty to the "progressive forces" of that nation. Still, the basis for a socialist fatherland (*otechestvo*) is, in Mironova's view, the state structure. Thus the common pride of the Soviet man is regarded deeper and broader than the natural national feelings of the different peoples (*narodov*) making up the Soviet country:

Оно вобрало в себе все лучшее, что создано трудом,
отвагой, творческим гением миллионов и миллионов
советских людей.

As common features of Soviet people of all nations and nationalities, Mironova points out Soviet patriotism, love of the socialist *rodina* (motherland), loyalty to the Party, collectivism, a communist attitude to work [sic!] and "irreconcilability towards any kind of deviation from the communist morality". This is all seen as the basis for the new human community: the "Soviet people".⁷⁰

The Latvian republic is subject to particular attention in Mironova's analysis. She refers to statistics indicating that a majority of the Latvian population knows Russian, and argues that this does not imply that Latvian language is withering away, since almost all Latvians report Latvian to be their mother tongue. Mironova points to the larger increase in the number of newspapers and journals in the republic published in Latvian compared to Russian, which in the author's view is evidence of a high level of national identity among Latvians. The increasing level of knowledge of Russian should, argues Mironova, rather be seen as a favourable phenomenon, which facilitates international communication and make Latvians familiar with achievements in socialist and world culture and science, and not be interpreted as an artificial imposing of Russian language.⁷¹

In the same work M. Krūmiņa writes about the phenomenon of nationalism, and analyses the reasons for the survivals of this phenomenon in Soviet society. Nationalism, in Krūmiņa's view, stems from capitalist ownership over the means of production, where the exploiting classes breed hatred and mistrust among different nationalities in order to distract attention from the real injustice in society.⁷² In a society of developed socialism, like Soviet society, the social and economic basis for nationalism is, according to Krūmiņa, eliminated. She claims that the friendship between all the nationalities in the multinational Soviet fatherland (*dzimtene*) grows stronger and stronger, and she also refers to the formation of a new human community, the Soviet people.

However, Krūmiņa admits that even in the Soviet Union there are people who on certain occasions maintain nationalist or chauvinist views, positions and traditions.⁷³ What, then are the reasons for the continued existence of such nationalism? Krūmiņa criticises scholars who see the survival of nationalism as a

consequence of the lack of congruence between the principles of nationalism and the way society actually is organised. Such theories are, in Krūmiņa's view, both incorrect and extreme. Similarly, she does not agree with scholars who explain the phenomenon in terms of subjective factors, for example that human consciousness lags behind social realities. Although she agrees that there can be conservative elements in the human character, she believes that the survival of nationalism are nevertheless to be explained by objective factors.

Krūmiņa pays much attention to forces struggling against socialism, and she believes that the pernicious propaganda of bourgeois ideology is an important factor in explaining why nationalism has not disappeared. Bourgeois nationalists, according to Krūmiņa, try to find "weak points" among the socialist countries with the aim of weakening the unity of the working people. The survival of nationalism can also partly be explained as a consequence of insufficient education in internationalism and "the spirit of friendship between the peoples". However, despite these admitted manifestations of nationalism and chauvinism in the Soviet Union, Krūmiņa is optimistic about the prospects for further rapprochement between the Soviet nationalities. In this connection she appreciates the "unselfish" help of the Russian people.⁷⁴

The next work to be examined is a collection of articles on nationality policy collected from the journal *Kommunist Latvii* in the spring of 1988.⁷⁵ In this book it is acknowledged that there are indeed negative aspects concerning the relations between different nationalities in the Soviet Union, and the authors admit that most works on nationality questions have been based on the mistaken assumption of an absence of problems in the area. It is further stated that *perestroika* exposed these problems and also provided the necessary conditions for solving them.⁷⁶

However, when it comes to the question of how to solve the problems, there are no really radical suggestions in the work. There should, according to the editors, be found a balance between the interests of the multinational union state and every national-state formation. Most of the authors in the book also claim that Leninist principles for nationality policies should be restored in all respects. Nationality problems should, it is argued, be solved peacefully without causing any damage to the "unitary Soviet people". Such problems can only find their solution through a harmonisation of national and international interests and by renewing socialism. It is further seen as possible by means of education and self-education to develop the qualities of both a healthy national identity and international maturity. The editors thus seek consolidation and unity between all Soviet nations and peoples - in the present and for the future.

I. Apine is concerned with historical questions as a source of identity for Soviet people and believes that the concealments, distortions and falsifications of historic

events that have taken place since the 1930s have contributed to distrust of history as a scientific discipline. In her article Apine analyses the democratic traditions of the different nationalities in Latvia.⁷⁷ Her main research is concentrated on the activities of the communists and social-democrats in the period of Latvian independence or, in Apine's words, "bourgeois Latvia".

Foreigners do often mistakenly, according to Apine, seem to believe that the internationalism of communists has no national aspects. She argues that working people do have natural national feelings, but that these feelings go together with the programme of liberation from the national yoke and national inequalities. On this background she argues that one must acknowledge the existence of a national identity:

Прошли те времена когда одно лишь упоминание понятия «национальное самосознание» вызывало подозрительное отношение и обществоведы уходили от анализа вполне реальных явлений национальной жизни, дабы не прослыть людьми с националистическими заварениями.

This national identity can, according to Apine, be used in the interests of socialist society.

As one aspect of national identity Apine points to a people's awareness of its history. National identity can in many cases act as the historic consciousness, or as the social memory of a people. With reference to other scholars, Apine claims that changes have taken place lately in the formation of national identity (presumably the Soviet Union). The increasing level of education of the population and higher qualifications among workers causes an increased interest in own and other peoples' history. Apine argues that the more historically educated a people is, the higher the level of its international maturity.

These considerations make Apine suggests some practical measures to increase the knowledge of historic questions among the population in Latvia. She does not support the idea that education in Latvian schools should be absolutely identical for Russian and Latvian children. Latvian youth has, for example, to be "armed" with knowledge about the "treacherous anti-national position of the Latvian bourgeoisie". Similarly, Apine describes a lack of knowledge about Latvian history among Russian-speaking youth in the republic. One example is the widespread belief that Latvia had no industry before 1940. Russian youth should also, in Apine's view, be told more about the participation of Latvian workers and communists in the October Revolution and the struggle against the German fascists during the Second World War. The most important in this respect, according to Apine, is to improve the quality of historical research.

In 1988 many scholars still considered one of the main duties of the Party to "strengthen the friendship between the peoples and to perfect national relations". Jelgava second party secretary A. Kirše argues that bombastic internationalist slogans

do not always reflect reality, and her article deals with ways of solving problems of internationalist upbringing.⁷⁹ Her aim is to "create immunity against nationalist psychology and bourgeois nationalist propaganda".⁸⁰ One of the aspects of internationalist upbringing which is stressed by the author is the free development of the national language combined with an increased influence of Russian as an important means of international communication. Kirše believes that lack of knowledge of languages could cause outbursts of national conflicts. She argues that knowledge of Russian is not only an advantage as a means of communication in a multinational environment, but it also opens up access to all sorts of scientific and political information, and the possibility of getting acquainted with the culture of other Soviet nationalities as well as world culture. The author also argues that Russian-speakers should learn Latvian, and she complains about the lack of qualified teachers of Latvian in Russian schools. As an example of how to improve this education Kirše mentions for example that more excursions to places related with revolutionary activities and military glory should be organised.

The next work to be examined here is a collection of papers presented to a conference under the title "Democratisation and National Rights" arranged by the Latvian Academy of Sciences in Riga in 1990.⁸¹ The papers centred around terminological discussions, the relation between the "rights of the nation" and "human rights" as well as questions directly concerning nationality issues in Latvia.

Brolišs' paper brings up conceptual, methodological and juridical questions in the field of nationality processes.⁸² He operates with a terminology which to a large extent corresponds with the terminology of the dictionary of 1981 in which Brolišs also was involved. However, instead of using the concept of socio-ethnic community, Brolišs operates with ethnosocial communities (*etnosociālas kopības*) and thereby pays more attention to the ethnic aspects of the concept. Brolišs further defines two concepts which were also referred to in the dictionary: national groups (*nacionālas grupas*) and extraterritorial national groups (*eksteritoriālas nacionālas grupas*) and explains the differences between these concepts. Ethnosocial communities, which can be both nations (*nācijas*) and ethnic groups (*tautības*) are historically relatively stable, unalterable and densely concentrated. These communities have, according to Brolišs, different qualities depending on their level of development, but Brolišs does not explain which features are necessary for an ethnosocial community to be called a nation. Although many national groups have existed for relatively long time periods, they are characterised by having been cut off from coethnics or being in diaspora. Such national groups are living in an environment where there is one other nationality which is dominant and/or there are many different nationalities living on a certain territory, and they are therefore subject to pressure for assimilation or merger with the other nationalities. Extraterritorial national groups usually consist of people from one

nationality who for a time have come to live and/or to work in a state dominated by other nationalities, people who for example have emigrated or been deported.

Brolišs argues that the term ethnosocial community should be distinguished from the term nationality (*nacionalitāte*) since the latter is most often used to describe the belonging of an individual or a group to an ethnos. He also emphasises the danger of misusing the concept, since in international law nationality is used in the meaning of belonging to a state or of citizenship.

Although not all nations have been recognised as nationally sovereign, every nation has, according to Brolišs, the right to self-determination through the formation of independent statehood or through voluntary participation in a union with other nations of a federative or confederative kind. Brolišs seems to imply that all ethnosocial communities have the same right, although he sees it as practically impossible to fulfil this right for all ethnic groups. In Brolišs' interpretation of international law, national groups cannot claim any right to territorial autonomy, even though they in some occasions are granted the right to political autonomy over a specific district. The right to cultural national autonomy on a non-territorial basis is, however, universal.

Brolišs admits that it can be difficult to define on a practical level the ethnosocial communities and national groups that live on a certain territory. Nevertheless, he gives his own view of the national composition of Latvia: there is only one nation living in Latvia, and that is the Latvians. As ethnic group Brolišs lists the Livs, the Jews and the Gypsies. There is also a large number of national groups living in Latvia: Russians, Ukrainians, Poles, Germans, Lithuanians, Estonians, Crimean Tatars and others. Extraterritorial national groups are people of Vietnamese, Polish, Angolian, Cuban and other nationalities who work and study in Latvia in accordance with the laws of the government.

Nationalism is in the Soviet tradition seen as an appalling evil, but in a paper elaborating on the phenomenon by Ausma Medne the concept is given a much more positive content.⁸³ Medne argues that common origin, language, culture and territory are facts that characterise peoples and nations, and that nationalism is a positive, emotional reaction to these facts, as expressed in love for, loyalty and the feeling of belonging to one's people, and, metaphorically, as communal bonds. However, nationalism is not seen as an ultimately positive force, and Medne recommends a distinction between aggressive and peace-seeking nationalism, claiming that the Latvian people pursue the latter. In an excursion through the history of the phenomenon of nationalism Medne stresses the importance of Herder's theories in the field, and in her view these theories are the most useful as a basis for the modern peace seeking nationalism.

Medne positively evaluates the heritage of Herder, especially his ideas of cultural nationalism, the great role he gave to language for the existence of a people, the

notions of an organic unity of the people, and also his attitude to the individual which should not be subordinated to the people as a whole.

Thus, Medne does not see nationalism as a temporary, but rather as a viable, persistent and popular phenomenon, which is not going to disappear as a consequence of rapid scientific and technological development. She holds that it is not possible artificially to create nations, but instead of using the example of the Soviet Union, she refers to events in Europe after the First World War and the case of Yugoslavia.

Medne uses a methodology proposed by Karl Deutsch to test the stability of a nation by looking at its endurance in coping with national catastrophies, national defeats and deep economic crises. The test confirms, in the author's view, the stability and the cultural viability of the Latvian people, and this stability is seen as a most important prerequisite for the right of a people to independent national statehood.

A topic which has been widely discussed in scholarly, and also popular, debates in Latvia in the field of nationality questions, is the relationship between human rights and the rights of a nation. Medne also briefly deals with this question in her paper. Since language, according to Medne, is a necessary means to every individual for development of their abilities, human rights are not a sufficient guarantee for the individual. There must also be guarantees for the protection of the language, culture and way of living. This protection is best guaranteed through independent statehood. Not only the individual, but also every people is, as Medne sees it, unique. If a people is not disturbed in its development, this is a guarantee both for the well-being of the people itself, but will also be reflected through the contribution of the people to the community of peoples.

Another scholar who deals with the relationship between human rights and the rights of the nation is Vorontsov.⁸⁴ He argues that the categories of the individual and the nation have their own specific characteristics with corresponding rights, and that it would be incorrect to subordinate one of them under the other. In his paper Vorontsov lists some international declarations from the United Nations where these rights are formulated. His interpretation of these declarations is that human rights and their guarantees are a basis for any democratic society. However, as he sees it, in some concrete historical situations these rights can be restricted for the sake of the preservation of the integrity of the nation. The rights of the nation are among others the right to own territory, culture and language as well as the possibility for economic activities.

In a situation where, due to for example migration processes, a considerable part of the population lives outside of their national homeland there arises the conflict, described by Vorontsov, between the aspirations of some nations to preserve their identity, also through legal actions, and the rights of every individual who can be restricted as a result of such actions. Vorontsov argues that laws aimed at protection of

the nation, such as the introduction of official language, restriction of migration and the right of voting should be seen as emergency measures, without which humanity could lose one of their most important elements: nations and peoples.

While one does not have to go back further than the late 1980s to be able to identify an official Soviet approach to ethnic issues, an approach to which very few scholars took the risk of not adhering, in Latvia today there is a much more open debate on such issues and substantial disagreements are being expressed among specialists in the field. Still, some views are more commonly held than others and, more importantly, the state needs to be able to interpret concepts and phenomena related to ethnic issues as a basis for its nationalities policies. In Chapter 4 we shall look at Latvian nationalities policies as expressed in legislation and its implementation, and we shall see that legislators make use of local research on ethnic issues. Even though one cannot talk about an official approach to these issues today, we shall now examine a political science textbook published in Riga in 1993 which shows what Latvian students are taught about these subjects.⁸⁵ This textbook should therefore give a representative picture of the position held by a majority of Latvian researchers in this field in the post-Soviet period.

The textbook does not depart greatly from the conceptual framework which was outlined in the dictionary which was examined above from the early 1980s and refined by Brolišs in 1990. One of the authors of the textbook, Ilga Apine, acknowledges the different traditions in the use of concepts in the field, and admits that the Latvian usage is in line with an East European tradition where the cultural aspects of a nation are emphasised. The differences between the adjectives "ethnic" and "national" are also explained in the book:

"Ethnic" involves only language, culture and self-identity, while
"national" includes a socio-economic component.⁸⁶

Apine presents a definition of various types of "ethnic communities" (ethnoses). A "nation" is defined as a people living in its historical motherland (Ukrainians in Ukraine, Latvians in Latvia, etc.). An ethnic group (*etniskā grupa*) is a small community living in an ethnically alien environment, and the textbook author mentions as examples Estonians in Abkhazia and Livs in Latvia.⁸⁷ Moreover, an "ethnographic group" or a "subethnos" is defined as a part of a nation with a distinctive mode of life (for example in terms of language), such as Latvia's Latgalians. Finally, a national group or national minority is an ethnic community which belongs to an ethnos, the majority of which lives outside its "appropriate" state formation (such as Russians, Belarusians, Ukrainians, Jews, Estonians, etc., in Latvia).⁸⁸ The conclusion the author comes to is that among the 108 ethnoses represented in Latvia, there is only one nation: the Latvian.

CHAPTER 1

This conceptual framework is referred to again when Apine attempts to stipulate the rights of various ethnic communities. Ethnic communities have, according to the author, rights that are different from the rights of the individual, and for the nation they are linked to the preservation of a national identity, language, culture, environment and territory. While the nation has the right to self-determination, including the right to form an independent state, other ethnic and national groups have the right to national cultural autonomy (see Chapters 2 and 4 of this thesis). Independent statehood is, according to Apine, not a goal in itself, but only an independent national state will give the nation the guarantee that its rights are being observed.

Apine asks the important question of what should be done if a nation wants independent statehood, while the national groups living in the historical territory of this nation are against such independence. Similarly, what should be done if the Latvian nation, through legislation, changes its language policies so that the Latvian language is proclaimed the state language, to be used in all spheres of society, at the same time as many Russians, whether out of conviction or indifference, argue that this is not democratic? The author asks if this could not be seen as a conflict between the rights of a nation and human rights.

An answer is not explicitly given to these questions, however. The author acknowledges that there can be conflicting interests between ethnic communities, and it is up to the political scientists and politicians to find solutions to these problems and in a democratic manner to seek an agreement on each occasion about what should be given priority. Implicitly, however, the answer seems to be clear to the author in the case of the Russians in Latvia. After some reflections on the Russification which took place in Latvia after the Soviet annexation, and on the need to improve the situation for the Latvian nation, the author states:

If a person in his/her historical fatherland loses the opportunity to use his/her mother tongue, then this is not only a violation of the rights of a nation, but also of the human rights of the individual. [...] It must further be emphasised that the loss of a people or a language, however small they may be, is a loss for the whole of humanity.⁸⁹

It is now time to sum up the main findings from this survey of Latvian scholarly literature on ethnic issues. Let us first look at the development which has taken place in terms of the range of topics open to discussion. The first two works which were examined were written at a time when debates in the Soviet Union in this field were very restricted. Although scholars were allowed to express diverging views on certain issues, there were clear rules as to what could and what could not be written. These two works can be regarded as clearly representative of the Soviet views at the time. The main differences among Soviet scholars centred around the questions of the importance of an ethnic identity and whether or not ethnic differences would disappear

in the future. In Latvia one could find representatives of different views on these questions. It is noteworthy, however, that the 1981 dictionary, despite its emphasis on proletarian internationalism, acknowledges national differences and makes it quite clear that national identity is a social reality. This, and the fact that the ultimate goal of merger (*sliyanie*) is played down, can be seen as a message to the indigenous population, assuring them that there is no threat to their national existence.

Reference to contemporary Western scholars, however, is minimal in these two works, and when Western works are referred to, it is mainly to point to their erroneous (and dangerous) analysis. The strong attacks on Western scholars leave no doubt against whom the "ideological struggle", used in the title of the second book, was to be directed.

By 1988, however, a certain development had taken place in Latvian scholarly literature in the field. Even though the articles examined here are not as outspoken as some other articles that were published in the Latvian unofficial press at the time, they illustrate that substantial changes had taken place since the early 1980s, and they also give an indication of how the Latvian Communist Party was trying to accommodate the pressure in society for real change. Since many positive references are given to the activities in the nationality sphere of the Soviet Communist Party, the work can also be seen as an example of a Latvian Communist Party manifesto at a time when the Party still seemed to believe that it could guide national sentiments in a desired direction. It is noteworthy that in this book such concepts as "the Soviet people", "international upbringing" and "bourgeois nationalism" have not yet been abandoned, and Leninist principles for solving the nationality question are acclaimed by most of the authors. Against this background it seems plausible to suggest that a majority of the Latvian scholars who specialised in the field of ethnic issues were adapting to the changes taking place rather than actively contributing to them.

Substantial changes in scholarly analysis were, however, soon to come, and by 1990 Latvian writings on ethnic issues had gone through a metamorphosis. Characteristic of the 1990 collection of papers is first of all the complete absence of references to Marxist-Leninist writings and to Communist Party policies. Even though many of the scholars have not completely abandoned traditional Soviet terminology, the concepts that are used in these papers have acquired a new content. Moreover, the range of topics open to analysis has been broadened significantly, and there do not seem to be any formal limits as to what can be written. For example, Medne's discussion of nationalism and her evaluation of Herder would have been unheard of just a few years earlier.

There are also, however, certain common features in the works by Latvian scholars on ethnic issues which we have examined. The first is the conceptual framework, where Latvian scholars as a rule hold to the cultural interpretation of

nationhood. A nation is hardly ever used as a synonym for the state. In this respect Latvian scholars are more consistent than scholars in the west, who have not been able to agree upon a common definition of nationhood. There is, however, the problem that when Latvian scholars interpret international documents containing, for example, guide-lines for the rights of the nation, they tend to see the nation as a cultural unit and not, as is often the case in international legislation, as a state formation. This is, for example, one of the problems with Vorontsov's analysis focusing on the rights of a nation. In the textbook published in 1993 the differences between the Western and Eastern concepts of a nation have been acknowledged, but there is no sign that Latvian scholars are about to abandon their well-established terminology which serves as a basis for much of Latvian analysis of ethnic issues and is used, *inter alia.*, in Latvian ethnic minority legislation.

Latvian scholarly literature in this field also tends to be adjusted to the ethnopolitical situation in Latvia (sometimes the former Soviet Union) at the time of publication. Examples are usually derived from the Latvian ethnic scene and the works often aim at providing a scholarly "scientific" analysis of current problems. As such, scholarly literature serves a practical purpose. One advantage of this approach is the usefulness of the analysis for decision-makers and legislators, who are provided with a theoretical foundation for their decisions. It is also common to meet references from scholarly literature in the public debate on ethnic issues. However, there are also certain disadvantages. Scholarly analysis in Latvia can sometimes become somewhat detached from general trends in works on ethnicity, and scholars often select topics which are useful for the political points they are trying to make, while contradictory or complementary research has a tendency to be overlooked. Let me give one example: Latvian scholars arguing the case for Latvian independent statehood and basing their argument on the assumption that all nations should have the right to independent statehood tend to ignore the problem of which of the many peoples in the world, many of whom live in what they regard as their historical fatherland and have all the features of a nation, should have the right to self-determination, including independent statehood.

The Russian population in most of the contemporary (post-Soviet) Latvian scholarly literature is treated as a "national group" or "national minority" with the cultural rights of such ethnic communities. Scholars have not on the whole adopted the view which is quite commonly held in some political circles in Latvia that only those non-Latvians who lived in Latvia before 1940 and their direct descendants should be regarded as ethnic minorities and thus be entitled to the corresponding rights. However, it is clear from the literature that it is the Latvian nation, ethnic Latvians, who have the ultimate claim to Latvian nationhood and are seen as the subjects in the nation-building process.

¹Some of the more general works on ethnicity, nationality issues and nationalism which have been used in this study are Barth (1968), Glazer and Moynihan (1985), De Vos and Romanucci-Ross (1982), van den Berghe (1981), A. D. Smith (1986 and 1991), Gellner (1983), Deutch (1966), Anderson (1983), Brass (1991), Kellas (1991) and Rothschild (1981).

²Isajiw (1970).

³Connor (1987).

⁴See e.g. Greeley, A. (1974).

⁵Burgess (1978).

⁶See e.g. Stone (1976)

⁷Burgess, op. cit., p. 270.

⁸Hoult, T. F.(ed.): *Dictionary of Modern Sociology*, Littlefield, Adams, p. 135.

⁹Brass, P. (1985), pp. 10-11.

¹⁰ibid., p.

¹¹McKay, J. & Lewins, F. (1978).

¹²ibid., pp. 417-18.

¹³De Vos, G. & Romanucci-Ross, L. (eds.) (1982), pp. xiii-iv.

¹⁴P. Martinelli (1986).

¹⁵ibid., p. 208.

¹⁶See discussion in W. Connor (1978) and in Krejčá and Velimsky (1981), chapter 3.

¹⁷Smith, A. (1991), p. 14.

¹⁸ibid., p. 11.

¹⁹For a similar distinction between different concepts of nation, see also Macartney (1968).

²⁰See e.g. H. Seton-Watson (1986) who defines nation as 'a community of people who believe themselves to share a cultural heritage'.

²¹See the debate in the Soviet journal *Voprosy Istorii* in 1966 (nos. 1, 4, 5, 9 and 12) and 1967 (nos. 2 and 3) billed as a "Discussion of the Concept: The Nation", where different views were expressed among Soviet scholars on, among others, the definition of nationhood.

²²*Great Soviet Encyclopedia* (Macmillan edition), Vol. 17, 1973, p. 356.

²³De Vos & Romanucci-Ross, op. cit.

²⁴See McAuley, M. (1984). In the same book, however, Rutland argues that there was some room for Soviet citizens to change their nationality. See Rutland (1984), p. 161.

²⁵In the Russian Society of Latvia (*Russkaya Obchshina Latvii* - ROL) (see chapter 8) members can be of any nationality as long as they identify with Russian culture. See *SM-segodnya*, 22 November 1990, p.2.

²⁶However, in 1981 only 5.4 per cent of the population reported Yugoslav as their nationality. D. Rusinow (1985), p. 160.

²⁷Zaslavsky has pointed to the same problem in (1980), pp. 47-48.

²⁸M. Gordon (1975).

²⁹See Rothschild (1981), p.31.

³⁰A typical example is H. Issacs (1975).

³¹See Motyl, A. J. (1987), p. 20.

³²Van den Berge, P. L. (1981).

³³Examples of scholars who subscribe to the circumstantial approach are: Patterson (1975) and Horowitz (1975).

³⁴See Enloe (1980), p. 5.

³⁵See Burgess, op. cit., p.267.

³⁶Patterson, op. cit., p. 305.

³⁷See Scott, G. M. jr. (1990).

³⁸Richmond, A. H. (1988), pp. 143-144.

³⁹Spicer, E. (1971).

⁴⁰Scott, op. cit., p. 168.

⁴¹ibid., p. 167.

⁴²ibid., pp. 163 and 167-68.

⁴³Barth, F. (1969).

⁴⁴See e.g. De Vos and Romanucci-Ross, op. cit., p. xiii. There can also be several layers of ethnic identity: see Arutiunov and Bromley (1978), p. 11.

- 45Examples of scholars who have dealt with ethnic questions in this way are Lijphardt (1968) and Nordinger (1972)
- 46Enloe (1980), p. 7.
- 47ibid. pp. 7-8.
- 48Eriksen, T. H. (1991a), p. 483.
- 49There are also differing views on whether Russians and other nationalities who have arrived in Latvia after the Soviet annexation, due to their late or illegitimate arrival, can be considered to be ethnic or national minorities and therefore enjoy the rights of national cultural autonomy. The question of the rights of minorities will be discussed later in the thesis.
- 50Eriksen, op. cit., p. 482-83.
- 51See Hechter's chapter on Internal Colonialism in Tiryakian and Rogowski (1985).
- 52Eriksen, op. cit., p. 484. [Author's translation from Norwegian.]
- 53ibid, p. 485 [author's translation from Norwegian].
- 54Lijphart, A. (1977). See also Kellas (1991), pp. 135-142.
- 55Motyl, op. cit., p. 28.
- 56Rothschild, op. cit.
- 57ibid., p. 84.
- 58ibid., p. 82.
- 59Liebersson, S. (1961).
- 60Liebersson, ibid., p. 904.
- 61Francis, E. K. (1976), pp. 6-8.
- 62Sakwa, R. (1990).
- 63I. Apine *et al.* (1981).
- 64Stalin's definition of a nation: "A nation is an historically evolved, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological makeup manifested in a common culture". Stalin (1950) [the definition was published in 1913], p. 16.
- 65See P. M. Rogachev and M. A. Sverdlin, *Voprosy istorii*, no. 1, 1966.
- 66M. S. Dzhususov, *Voprosy istorii*, no. 4, 1966.
- 67On this debate, see for example P. Duncan (1988).
- 68F. Rajevska *et al.* (eds.) (1982).
- 69Z. N. Mironova (1982).
- 70ibid., p. 15.
- 71ibid. pp. 17-18.
- 72Krūmiņa (1982), p. 23.
- 73ibid., p. 27.
- 74ibid., p. 29.
- 75V. Brokan (ed.) (1989).
- 76ibid., p. 4.
- 77I. Apine (1989).
- 78ibid., p. 21.
- 79A. Kirše (1989).
- 80ibid., p. 97.
- 81Apine and Vēbers (eds.) (1990).
- 82J. Brolišs (1990).
- 83A. Medne (1990).
- 84A. Vorontsov (1990).
- 85E. Semanis (ed.) (1993). The section called "The Rights of National and Ethnic Groups" (*Nacionālo un etnisko grupu tiesības*) (pp. 58-67) was written by Ilga Apine.
- 86ibid., p. 59.
- 87With the large number of concepts denoting various ethnic communities, it is rather strange that there is no conceptual distinction between Estonians in Abkhazia and indigenous Livs living in their historical fatherland which happens to be in the state of Latvia.
- 88It is a mystery to me why the author does not consider the Estonians in Abkhazia a national minority or national group, because I can see no analytical difference between them and Estonians living in Latvia.

⁸⁹*ibid.*, p. 61.

2. Russians in Latvia: Historical Perspectives

2.1. Introduction

Since this thesis deals mainly with relatively recent developments, space constraints do not permit a very detailed account of the history of Latvia or of the Russian population living there.¹ However, recent developments are not unaffected by events in the past, and past events tend to influence current perceptions. Some reflections on the historical background of the Russian population in Latvia is therefore regarded as crucial in order to understand Russians' reactions to the many changes that have taken place in Latvia over the past few years. It is true that only a minority of the Russians living in Latvia today have families which have lived in Latvia for more than a few generations. However, the Russian presence over many centuries in what today is Latvia and the long influence of Russia in the region still have important implications for Russians' sense of affiliation to the territory.

Instead of providing a conventional chronological survey of the history of the Russian population in Latvia, I have chosen a somewhat different approach. The chapter may appear somewhat unbalanced, as some issues receive much more attention than issues that perhaps would seem to be of much greater importance for the situation of Russians living in Latvia today. Let me therefore explain the reasoning behind the selection of topics for discussion in this chapter.

Firstly, one of the main aims of the chapter is to give some general background information about the Russian population in Latvia from a historical perspective. Since there are already a number of accounts of Latvian history in English which also consider ethnic issues, this chapter will deal in more depth with issues that have been discussed less thoroughly in English-language sources. This is why I shall not look here at a number of important issues, such as for example the background to the secret protocol of the Molotov-Ribbentrop treaty. Also, the period from the Second World War up to the Latvian *atmoda* (reawakening) which got underway in the late 1980s will not be analysed in this chapter, as the most important aspects of this period will be discussed in Chapter 3 in the sections about Soviet nationality policies in Latvia. The first and second sections of this chapter deal with the period before Latvia gained independence after World War I, while the third section looks at specific issues from the independence period.

Secondly, I want to show in this chapter how historians writing about Latvia have differed (and still differ) in terms of the significance they assign to the Russian influence in the region. This means that I will pay considerable attention to issues which have been subject to conflicting interpretations; some of these issues still continue to be controversial. These issues will be discussed most thoroughly in the first

section of the chapter. This section also implicitly problematises the links between what historians write about Russian influence in Latvia in ancient times and the messages they want to put forward about the justification for the presence of Russians in Latvia today.

Thirdly, although the period of Latvian independence lasted only 20 years, it is perhaps the period in Latvian history which is most often referred to in political debates in Latvia today. Experiences from the independence period have been brought up by different groups in Latvia, by some to point to the good treatment of non-Latvians in that period, by others to indicate that Latvian independence is a threat to ethnic minorities. The relevance of this period for the present process of nation-building in Latvia should not be underestimated. In the third section of this chapter I shall look at the experience of granting national cultural autonomy to the ethnic minorities, since this model has often been referred to by Latvian authorities as a model to follow today. I shall also briefly look at political activities and organisational life among Russians during this period. Although the situation in Latvia is not the same as it was 70 years ago, and Russians living in Latvia today have very different socio-economic characteristics from those of the Russians living in Latvia at that time, such a discussion at least gives an illustration of how Russians in Latvia in the past adapted themselves to independent Latvian statehood.

Fourthly, since history plays a crucial role in forming and maintaining ethnic identities, I shall discuss in the final section of the chapter how Russians themselves living in Latvia today interpret historical issues and assess their own role in Latvian society in a historical perspective. This section will be based on materials from the "Russians in Latvia" survey of 1992. It must also be emphasised that while Latvians, because of the still living memory of the independence period, have had a greater variety of historical interpretations to choose from, most Russians have usually been presented only with official Soviet historical accounts. Moreover, it was never in the interests of the majority of Russians in Latvia to question the Soviet interpretation of Latvian history, since in Soviet historiography the Russian presence in the republic was not only justified, but Russians were given a very prominent role. Today there is a variety of sources from which to be informed about historical facts, but in the same way as changing one's ethnic identity tends to be a slow process, the same can be said about adapting oneself to a completely different understanding of history. This is likely to be particularly true of the Russians in Latvia who have little to gain from the rewriting of history which has taken place over recent years.

2.2. The Origins of the Russian Presence in Latvia

A historical question which has not been uncontroversial is whether Balts and Slavs have common origins. Some historians, both from Russia, Latvia and the West, have argued that the Balts and the Slavs originate from one separate people, which later ramified into Baltic and Slavic tribes.² The authors of a three-volume work on Latvian history by the Academy of Sciences in Latvia, published in 1952, produce evidence of the alleged common origins of the Baltic and Slavic peoples.³ Others find such a theory to be incorrect, and base their argument on, among others, linguistic differences between the Balts and the Slavs.⁴ Without attempting to evaluate the correctness of the different positions here, we shall soon see that debates which discuss Slavic origins in the Baltic area are still very topical in Latvian newspapers and other mass media.

There is similarly some controversy over the question of the degree of Russian influence in Latvia in the time before German expansion into the area. One Russian historian writing in the period of Latvian independence, V. Preobrazhenskii, claims that there were close contacts and good relations between Russians and Latvians at that time.⁵ He argues that the two peoples influenced each other strongly, both culturally and linguistically, and provides a long list of words common to the Latvian and Russian languages. Preobrazhenskii also gives examples from Latvian folklore to show the positive attitudes of Latvians towards Russians. He concludes that:

(...) у латышей к русским сохранились чувства близости и симпатии, чего нельзя сказать об их отношении к заморским пришельцам-немцам.⁶

Some of the same arguments can be found in official Soviet historical accounts, although they tend to have a more vulgarised form and typically stress what they describe as the age-old friendship between the 'great' Russian and the Latvian peoples. In the work of the Academy of Sciences referred to above, 'bourgeois nationalists' are criticised for 'hiding the old cultural links and deep roots of age-old friendship' between the Russians and the Latvians and for contradicting the 'historical truth' by emphasising the 'Western orientation' of the local culture.⁷ Both linguistic and archeological findings are used to prove these close cultural links.

According to the authors of this work, Latvians and Russians were united in the struggle against foreign aggression:

Древнелатышские племена в одиночке не могли бы успешно сопротивляться расширению этой датско-шведской агрессии, если бы за их спиной не стояла могучая Киевская Русь - самое крупное государство в Европе.⁸

And:

Вместе с балтийскими народностями против феодально-католической агрессии боролся великий русский народ, которому принадлежит решающая роль в приостановлении дальнейшего продвижения на восток разбойничьих банд крестоносцев.⁹

The political links with Old Rus' are therefore seen as an important factor for the "progressive development" of the old Latvian tribes.¹⁰

A later revised work from 1971 by the same institution does not differ substantially from the work referred to above.¹¹ This work also highlights the enormous Russian cultural influence on Latvian culture. The political links between Old Rus' and the old Latvian tribes are strongly emphasised, and the authors argue that for a period Old Rus' dominated most parts of Latvian territory politically, and also that Zemgalians and Kurs paid tributes to the princes of Old Rus'.¹² Since the eastern Slavs are seen to have been more developed than the Latvians economically, politically and culturally, they are considered by the authors to have had a great progressive influence on the non-Slav nationalities.¹³

Latvian émigré historians give a picture of the period up to the 13th century that differs considerably from the official Soviet historical accounts. Alfred Bilmanis argues that the Slavs have no more claim to original settlement of the Baltic lands than do the Germans or the Finns.¹⁴ According to Bilmanis, the Slavs of Novgorod managed to establish a spearhead in the originally Latvian fortress of Pleskava (Pskov), but that was the farthest penetration of the Slavs into originally Latvian territory at that time.¹⁵ He claims that there is a 'natural geographical border' containing a system of lakes, rivers, swamps and marshes between the territories of the Latvians and the Slavs, which has continued into modern times.¹⁶

Instead of praising any friendship between the Latvians and the Russians, Bilmanis refers to a large number of fortified castles in Latvia that formed a planned defense system directed against the eastern Slavs.¹⁷ Both Russians and slavified Vikings attacked Latvian settlements, but without much success. Another émigré Latvian, Arnolds Spekke, acknowledges that the Russian principalities of Polotsk, Novgorod and Pskov exercised considerable pressure on the Latvians from the 10th to the 11th century. However, he limits this pressure to only the eastern parts of Latvia and territories along the Daugava river.¹⁸ According to Spekke there are comparatively few Latvian words borrowed from Russian.¹⁹ Spekke also points to the absence of Russian relics found in excavations on Latvian territory, even in areas that have often been thought to have been dominated by Russians.²⁰

A. Klīve uses a stronger vocabulary in his argumentation that Latvia *de facto* has been dependent on Russia only for a short time.²¹

....Latvians [, Lithuanians and Estonians] have lived on the Baltic shores for thousands of years. None of them has anything in common with the Russians.²²

He emphasises the chequered relations with the Slavs:

In order to safeguard external independence Latvia [and Estonia] for centuries fought a number of bloody wars against the aggressive expansion of Slavism.²³

Klīve also argues against the view that the Latvians and the Russians were united in the struggle against foreign aggression:

Not desiring to ask for Russian assistance, the heroic fighters surrendered to the [German] invaders' superiority in 1290.²⁴

His contempt for the Russians is expressed *inter alia* in the following passage:

These people [the Great Russians] were not interested in cultivating their land, but instead started imperialistic wars and searched for new territories outside their borders.²⁵

The question of the degree of Slavic influence in the Baltic area is still controversial and is occasionally discussed in the Latvian media. In an article in the *Interfront* newspaper *Edinstvo*, A. Fomenko argues that contemporary Russians are no less rooted in this area than are contemporary Latvians, Estonians and Lithuanians:

Наши предки славяне жили здесь когда ни о каком приоритете коренной нации и помину не было: славянские князья и племенные вожди чужды и ливы о таких высоких материях не рассуждали.²⁶

I will also refer more extensively to a debate in the local Daugavpils newspaper *Dinaburg*, because it illustrates the main views on the issue and also shows how debates about history are used in the present political struggle. The debate started with an article written by a candidate of history, V. Vasilev.²⁷ He argued that Slavic tribes, the ancestors of the Russians, lived on the coast of the Baltic Sea long before this sea was called the Baltic in the 11th century. Their golden age was, according to Vasilev, approximately 1000 years B. C., and after that they were gradually pressed to the east and south by German tribes. Later, in the 11th and 12th centuries, the direct ancestors of the Russians came back to the Baltic area, when Slavic tribes settled amongst the eastern Baltic and Finno-Ugric tribes. The relations between the Slavs and these tribes had, according to Vasilev, a peaceful character. There were no wars between the tribes, which is explained by a number of factors, the most important being the vastness of the territory and the low density of the population. Vasilev further points to the close association between Balts and Slavs in terms of language, religion and way of living.

In the second half of the 9th century Russian statehood was established and this, combined with the later adoption of Christianity, favoured the development of culture and the economy. Russians were therefore, Vasilev argues,

(...) на более высоком уровне развития по отношению к прибалтийским племенам, пребывавшим в язычестве.

Vasilev writes that a large-scale movement from Old Rus' towards the Baltic coast took place at this time and that the Baltic area thus came under influence of Russian princes. The Russians were also, according to Vasilev, the first to make the Balts familiar with Christianity and with written language, although

(...) насильно в христианскую веру не обращали.

Doctor of History R. Denisova has many critical remarks to make on Vasilev's article.²⁸ Her main proposition is that the origins of Russian settlement in Latvia are to be found in the period of Peter the Great. She argues that Vasilev, without any basis in serious research, is trying to disinform readers who are not familiar with ancient Baltic history.

She starts by examining Vasilev's argument that the ancestors of the Russians lived near the Baltic Sea in ancient times, and claims that this is erroneous. The group of people in question spoke an Old-European and not a Slavonic language, and their territory never reached the shores of the Baltic Sea, according to Denisova. She also criticises Vasilev's claims that the first Russian state appeared in the eastern part of the Baltic area, and argues that the first Russian state was Kievan Rus'. Denisova finds other inaccuracies in the article, but her main objection to Vasilev is that

(...) в (...) «кратком экскурсе» в историю остались незамеченными коренные жители Балтии. Они здесь как бы отсутствуют. Им отведена роль сторонних наблюдателей. Но ведь, Балтия - коренная территория латышей, литовцев и эстонцев.

In Denisova's view, Vasilev wants to provide scientific support for the case for a longstanding Slavic presence on the Baltic coast by "proving" the existence of ancient Slavic and Russian roots in the Baltic area. Her article thus ends with an appeal:

Не будем политизировать древнюю историю. Оставим эту область в ведении специалистов. Они на основании своих исследований никогда не станут делать спекулятивных выводов.

The editors of the newspaper comment upon the polemics of the two historians.²⁹ They point to the difficulties for the ordinary reader in making judgements about the reliability of the authors' often contradictory arguments and conclusions. The editors argue that scholars usually make use of only some of the available sources, and that political and ideological considerations are often decisive in determining their selection. This is the case both for Vasilev and for Denisova.

In the editors' view, Denisova is right when she criticises Vasilev for paying too little attention to the indigenous peoples of the Baltic area. However, Denisova can also be blamed for neglecting the "geographical and ethnic proximity" between the Balts

and the proto-Slavs. The editors further do not agree with Denisova that Slavic tribes did not live on the shores of the Baltic sea in ancient times, and they refer to Western historians who claim that these tribes were indeed Slavic. Denisova's attacks on Vasilev could therefore just as well be directed against herself, since she does not refer to controversial views and arguments that do not support her own theories.

The editors think it would be futile to base conclusions about the ethnic situation in Latvia today on the ethnic composition of various tribes living in Latvia more than one thousand years ago:

По прошествии многих тысячелетий, веков и лет говорить о том, кровь каких именно древних племен и народов течет в жилах современных латышей, русских, беларусов можно лишь весьма предположительно. Достоверно только одно - многих. В конце двадцатого века шестая графа в паспорте вообще выглядит анахронизмом. Реальное значение приобретают совсем иные понятия - нация, язык, культура.

It would, of course, be crucial for a historian writing about these issues to establish which of these historians (if any) are right in their presentation of historical events and developments. For the concerns of this thesis, however, such an evaluation is not seen as very important. What I want to show through referring to this debate is the way in which historians in Latvia use historical issues in support of their political outlooks. Since the general public has no opportunity to control the information which is presented to them, they will tend to select the information which is mostly in conformity with the information they want to obtain. As we shall see in later chapters, Russians and Latvians tend to use very different sources for obtaining information, including information about historical issues. Not all newspapers or history text books present two or more sides of an issue, as *Dinaburg* did in this case. There is, thus, a danger that Russians and Latvians will have completely different information about historical issues and interpret such issues in radically different ways, lacking even knowledge about the main argumentation used by people with a different view. For future generations much will depend on the teaching of history to the younger generations: the synchronisation of history textbooks in both the Latvian and the Russian languages and the success in educating students how to obtain and evaluate various, and often conflicting, pieces of information.

2.3. Russians in Latvia before World War I

Latvian history from the 13th century until independent statehood was gained after World War I is often divided into several periods. The period from the 13th century until 1561 is called the period of the Livonian state; from 1561 to 1629, the

Polish period; and from 1629 to 1710, the Swedish period. In the 18th century Latvian territory was gradually incorporated into the Russian empire, where it remained until 1918 (see Maps 1 and 2, Appendix 3).³⁰

There are no exact figures for the number of Russians living in Latvia ['Latvia' is here and later sometimes used for the present territory of the Republic of Latvia] during the long period of foreign domination. Most of the Russians who lived on the territory in the 10th and 11th centuries were forced out after the German conquest. However, although the Germans sought to eradicate traces of Russian influence and the Orthodox faith, they wanted at the same time to keep up trade links with Russia. Such links even intensified over the following centuries, notably with the Polotsk, Vitebsk and Smolensk regions. There were therefore all the time some Russians in Latvia engaging in trade. In the 14th century a suburb of Russian merchants with their own churches and trading centres existed in Riga, and there were also Russian settlements in other Livonian centres.³¹

The authorities in Riga attempted to gain a monopoly on trade to and from Russia, and restrictions were put on traffic on the Daugava river. However, Russians living in Riga enjoyed the same rights as other inhabitants, and Russian merchants were in a favourable position since they were free to conduct trade with Russia as well as with other countries through the Baltic Sea. Russian merchants were often used as mediators between their kinsmen in the east and Livonian Germans.³²

Being a Russian in Livonia, however, also involved a certain amount of risk. There were frequent attacks on Russian land and cities near the Livonian-Russian border, and Russians also attacked Livonia at times. In periods when such attacks took place Russians suffered heavily.³³ According to historian A. A. Pommer, conditions were particularly difficult after Russian troops under Ivan III entered Livonia in 1481 and 1501-02.³⁴

When most parts of Latvia came under Polish influence in the 16th century, trade between Livonia and Russia became almost negligible. Relations between Poland and Russia were hostile, and this affected Livonian links with Russia. However, at the same time a large number of Russians came to Latvia. The deteriorating conditions in Russia at that time, due partly to the Polish-Lithuanian and Swedish interventions as well as to the activities of the *oprichnina* introduced by Ivan the Terrible, made many Russian peasants leave their homeland. This was the first wave of escapees from Russia to Latvia.³⁵

In the 17th century the local political situation changed again. Livonia and Riga came under the Swedish Crown, the eastern region Latgale remained under Polish rule, and the Duke of Courland became a vassal under the Polish king. The position of Russians in these states varied considerably and depended to a certain extent on the relations between the respective state and Russia.

The majority of Russians lived in Latgale. The main reason for this was the split in the Russian Orthodox Church in the second half of the 17th century. The so-called Old Believers were persecuted in Russia, and a large number escaped in different directions. Those who came to Latvia were usually from the districts of Novgorod and Pskov. There were also other reasons for leaving Russia, such as to escape from cruel treatment by landowners, from imprisonment, and from recruitment into the armed forces.³⁶ The Polish authorities in Latgale not only permitted the escapees to settle in areas close to the Russian borders, but they even granted Russian farmers certain privileges. Polish landowners usually regarded Russians as a cheap labour force and welcomed the escapees. The landlords were in constant need of additional workers on their lands, partly because of losses in battles and epidemics in the region from 1650 onwards.³⁷

There were also other reasons why the largest number of Russians was to be found in Latgale. This area is geographically close to Russia and the small communities consisting predominantly of Old Believers attracted other Russians to settle there. The Old Believers' Church attracted believers also from the Orthodox Church, which lacked a strong organisation, church buildings and priests in the region. The church is probably the most important factor in explaining why Russian culture has been preserved to such an extent, retaining the Russian language and traditions. The Old Believers strictly regulated the life of their congregation, and marriages between Old Believers and people of other religious communities were not allowed. Old Believers claim today that there were never any conflicts between them and the local, native population, although they usually lived quite separately and the Old Believers did not always know the local language. They explain this by referring to the difficult history of the Latvians, which made them responsive to the "separatist" tendencies of the Old Believers.³⁸

The Duke of Courland, Jacob (1642-1682), gave Russians permission to settle along the left bank of the Daugava river (in the region where Jēkabpils is situated today). The Russians who settled there were predominantly engaged in the trade which took place on the river. The Orthodox believers came under influence of the Jesuit and Uniate Churches, and in the 18th century the majority of Russians in this region were members of the Uniate Church.

In Riga and in Livonia the Swedes tried to eradicate all traces of Russianness. Buildings and churches which had belonged to Russian merchants were destroyed. At the same time the links between the Russians in Livonia and those living along the Daugava river were cut off, due to the wars between Sweden and Poland.

The exodus of escapees continued after Russia gained control over Livonia as a result of the Great Nordic War (1710-21). However, in the Lifland *guberniya* (province) (this was the name of one of the Baltic provinces of the Russian empire)

there was now a risk that the escapees would be handed over to Russia, especially after commissions were set up to find and take back to Russia escapees who had hidden in the Baltic provinces. In Courland the government seldom interfered with the landowners, and escapees were safer there than in Livonia.³⁹ Russians who settled in areas where there was no existing Russian community became much more easily assimilated with the Latvians. Today one can meet many Latvians with Russian names, and some of them have Russian ancestors from this period.

After the first division of Poland in 1773 Latgale became part of the Russian empire, and in 1795 (the third partition of Poland) the same happened to Courland. This meant that the whole of present Latvian territory was now under the Russian Tsar, and the number of legal immigrants from Russia proper increased. There were traders and petty bourgeoisie (*meshchan'e*), peasants who had bought their freedom, and officers and soldiers who remained in the territory after the Great Nordic War.⁴⁰ It was, however, only in the second half of the 19th century that the number of Russians coming to Latvia in a legal way exceeded the number arriving illegally.⁴¹

The Russian peasants who settled on the land of German and Polish landowners had, with a few exceptions, the same legal status as the local peasants.⁴² Russians who established their own communities in the cities and villages were in a special category. One example is the Russian colony in Riga; the Moscow "Vorstadt" (suburb). Russians were not allowed to settle in the centre of Riga, and there were strict restrictions as to what goods they could sell, and to whom. The Russians also had a special court and administration. Under Catherine II the implementation of the General City Statute of 1785 improved the conditions for urban Russians, since they were now allowed unrestricted participation in all forms of trade and could also take part in the administration of the towns. The reform was, however, abolished just a few months after the death of Catherine II, and the Russians were again deprived of their right to trade freely.

The administrative boundaries of the Baltic provinces did not correspond to the local ethnic boundaries. The Latvians lived in *Kurlandskaya* and *Liflyandskaya gubernii* (the Courland and Lifland provinces), but the latter province also included the southern part of today's Estonia with a predominantly Estonian population. Latgale, the eastern part of Livonia, was administered as part of the *Vitebsk guberniya*, and did not enjoy the same limited degree of autonomy as did the other two provinces.⁴³

Serfdom was abolished in the province of Courland in 1817 and in Lifland in 1819, and the Baltic provinces thereby preceded the abolition of serfdom in Russia by more than 40 years. This did not, however, give the peasants the right to buy land. Only further agrarian reforms between 1840 and 1860 made it possible for the peasants gradually to consolidate their position. In Latgale, where most of the Russian peasants

lived, the abolition of serfdom did not take place until 1861, since Latgale was still part of the province of Vitebsk.

In the 1840s there was a tendency among Latvian peasants to convert to the Orthodox faith.⁴⁴ They hoped that by taking the religion of the Tsar and the Russian people they would improve their legal and economic status and be supported against the tyranny of their German landowners. The German authorities considered this trend to have been instigated by the Orthodox clergy.

The growing economic strength of the local peasantry led to a revival of Latvian national feeling. In the last part of the 19th century the Tsarist government pursued a policy of Russification caused by the desire to turn the region into a culturally integral part of the Russian state.⁴⁵ The policy of Russification was not really aimed at increasing the number of Russians in the region. In Latgale, however, after the Polish uprising in 1863, the Tsarist government wanted to increase Russian ownership of land at the expense of the Polish landowners. Russian peasants now had the chance to buy land in the region, and a significant number of Russian peasants from the eastern parts of Russia took out bank loans and bought plots of land.

This policy of Russification was aimed primarily at the local German elite, but it unwittingly facilitated the emergence of the Latvian state. The idea of establishing an independent state of Latvia was put forward openly during the 1905 uprising. The turmoil in Russia soon spread to the towns in the Latvian territories, and in the final phase the action moved from the towns to the countryside. The 1905 uprising showed the strength of the Latvian reaction to German and Russian economic and political pressure at the time.

The Russian population in Latvia as a whole increased in this period. The policies of Russification meant that it became more important to place Russians in administrative positions, and, since Russian became of greater importance in education, there was a demand for Russian teachers. It is, however, difficult to say how much of the increase can be ascribed to the policies of Russification. The reforms in the 1860s were also important, because all people were now granted the right freely to move around in the empire. Both industry and trade developed more rapidly in the Baltic *gubernii* than in most other parts of Russia. The uneven development increased geographic mobility, and there was a migration of Russians into the Baltic territories in this period, especially into the cities. There were also many Russians, predominantly Old Believers, who moved from Latgale to the provinces of Lifland and Kurland, and especially to Riga.

The first universal census of the population of the Russian empire was carried out in 1897. This census defined nationality in terms of a person's mother tongue. Thus all those living in Latvia who reported Russian to be their mother tongue, which was the case with many Jews and Belarusians, were considered to be Russian by

nationality. Zavarina has pointed to the inaccuracy of the figures when only mother tongue is used to define nationality. In order to reduce such inaccuracies, she combined the entry on mother tongue with another question in the census, the one on religious affiliation, and considered as Russians people who reported Russian to be their mother tongue and who belonged either to the Russian Orthodox Church or to the Old Believers.⁴⁶ The number of Russians in Latvia when using only the indication of mother tongue was almost 155,000, whereas when a combination of the two factors is used the number is reduced by nine thousand.

Table 2.1 gives the number of Russians (according to mother tongue and religion) in different parts of Latvia in 1897. Only those parts of the provinces of Lifland and Vitebsk which belong to the present Latvian republic are included in this table.⁴⁷

Table 2.1: Russians in Latvia 1897

| <i>Guberniya</i> | Orthodox and "Edinovertsy"* | OldBelievers | Total | As % of total population in province |
|------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|--------|--|
| Lifland | 36,526 | 10,458 | 46,984 | 6.2 |
| Kurland | 15,270 | 8,089 | 23,359 | 3.5 |
| Vitebsk** | 28,301 | 46,974 | 75,275 | 15.0 |

*"Edinoverie" is the name of an Old Believer sect which reached an organisational compromise with the official Orthodox Church.

**Includes only *Dvinskii*, *Rezhitskii* and *Lyutsinskii uezdy* (districts).

Source: Zavarina (1986), p. 40.

In 1897 the Russians made up just over 8 per cent of the population in Latvia (as defined by one criterion only; see Figure 3.1 in Chapter 3) and thereby comprised the second largest nationality. The majority of Russians were concentrated in the Latgalian *uezdy* (districts) and in some cities (notably Riga, with more than 43,000 Russians).

Some interesting information is revealed by looking at the national composition of Riga separately. The proportion of different nationalities in Riga has changed very much from one period to another, and only rarely have Latvians made up a majority of the inhabitants of their capital. For example, from the end of the 18th until the middle of the 19th century 40-46 per cent of Riga's population was made up by Germans. In the same period the proportion of Latvians decreased, from approximately one third in 1767 to less than 19 per cent in 1844. The share of Russians, however, increased from 14 per cent to more than 30 per cent.⁴⁸ From the second part of the 19th century the proportion of Latvians started to increase, because many Latvians moved to the city

from the countryside. Although the proportion of Russians decreased to 17 per cent in 1881 (and remained so in 1897), the actual number of Russians in Riga continued to increase, and reached 43,000 in 1897.⁴⁹

The industrialisation of the Baltic area continued into our century, and by 1913 the number of Russians in Latvia had increased by 70,000. The major part of this increase was caused by a natural population growth; the mechanical increase of Russians was on average 1600 people each year.⁵⁰

2.4. Russians in Latvia in the Interwar Period

In recent debates about whether or not Latvia should again become an independent state (or rather: restore its independent statehood), one of the issues which was often raised concerned the prospects for ethnic minorities in an independent Latvia. Supporters of Latvian independence tended to emphasise the liberal minority legislation of the Latvian republic in the interwar period.⁵¹ Opponents of such independence, on the other hand, often argued that there had been many violations of the rights of the national minorities in the Latvian (sometimes called "bourgeois") republic, particularly after authoritarian rule was introduced in 1934.⁵² After briefly summing up the demographic development of the Russian minority in the independence period, I shall, in this section, look at the minority legislation of the Latvian state. I shall also examine the actual implementation of this legislation, with a focus on the Russian minority. Moreover, in the second part of the section I shall discuss the political activities and social organisations of the Russian minority in the same period.

2.4.1. Demographic Developments

The population of Latvia, totalling 2,552,000 in 1914, had decreased to 1,596,000 in 1920, a drop of 37 per cent.⁵³ No other countries lost such a large share of their population during World War I. This war, the Russian Revolution and the Civil War also reduced the number of Russians in Latvia significantly. There was a mass evacuation of Russians in 1915 and 1916. Thus, in 1920 there were only 91,500 Russians left (5.9 per cent of the total population).⁵⁴ In Riga the number of Eastern Slavs (most of whom were Russians) was reduced from 89,000 in 1913 to 12,000 in 1920.⁵⁵

By 1925 the number of Russians had increased to 154,000 (8.5 per cent of Latvia's population).⁵⁶ The number of Russians continued to increase, and reached 168,000 in 1935, but their proportion of the population in Latvia changed very little in

the period from 1925 to 1935 when it was 8.8 per cent (see Figure 3.1 in the next chapter).

The largest part of the increase of Russians in the period up to the census in 1935 was caused by a natural growth. There were also a significant number of émigrés, mainly refugees, coming from Russia, particularly in the first years after the formation of the Latvian republic. Some of the Russians who had left during World War I were now returning to Latvia. Moreover, some of the increase was caused by several thousand Jews registering as Russians, which counted in part for a drop in the total Jewish population by 1935.⁵⁷ There were also others who changed their nationalities in the various censuses, due to assimilation and/or lack of self-identification with a particular nationality. Still, relatively few Russians assimilated to the Latvians. The Belarusians, living predominantly in the border regions of Latgale and being predominantly Catholics, had a much greater tendency to be assimilated to the indigenous Catholic population.⁵⁸ One should, however, also mention that several sources regard the census results of 1935 as somewhat inaccurate.⁵⁹ For example the demographers Mežgailis and Zvidriņš give a figure for the number of Belarusians in Latvia which is larger than indicated by the official results of the 1935 census.⁶⁰

In 1930 approximately three quarters of the Russians in Latvia were peasants, living in compact settlements along the Soviet frontier, predominantly in Latgale.⁶¹ They were Orthodox and Old Believers in about equal proportions.⁶² In 1938 there were about 15,000 Russian workers in various enterprises, 3000 merchants, and the same number of Russians working in the transport sector. There were a further 2000 Russian representatives of the so-called "free professions", while 600 worked in hospitals and 2600 had other professions.⁶³ The proportion belonging to the *intelligentsiya* was smaller for Russians than for both Germans and Jews. The overall majority of Russians in Latvia during the independence period were either always citizens of Latvia or were granted citizenship after 5 years of residence in the republic.⁶⁴

2.4.2. Ethnic Minority Legislation

The Latvian state was constituted as an independent, democratic republic, with a distinctly national character. Nevertheless, the question of guarantees for the rights of the minorities was considered essential by the authorities. Thus, along with the "Declaration of Independence" of 18 November 1918 the National People's Council also issued a "Political Platform" where the rights of national minorities were recognised in both political and cultural terms. The fourth part of this platform reads as follows:

"Rights of the National Minorities:

1. The National Minorities send their representatives to the Constituent Assembly and legislative authorities according to the principle of proportional representation.
2. The national minorities which are represented in the National People's Council⁶⁵ take part in the Provisional Government (based on the principle of Coalition for the formation of the Government).
3. The cultural and national rights of the national groups are to be guaranteed in the Constitution.⁶⁶

In the first draft of the constitution bill the general principle of equality before the law was established, and the document also authorised the different national groups to use their own language in speech and writing and to set up autonomous corporations.⁶⁷ However, some problems arose. The Social Democrats and the Latgalians had objections to the part of the draft which contained stipulations about the rights of the minorities, and this part was therefore never passed. Even if these objections were not linked to the questions about the rights of the national minorities, the result was that the Latvian constitution lacked even general regulations on such rights.⁶⁸

There was, however, some legislation on minority rights in Latvia already, quite independent of the constitution.⁶⁹ A statutory law on cultural autonomy was passed 18 December 1919, and was based on the Declaration of Policy issued by the Latvian State Council 18 November one year earlier. Equal cultural, political and economic rights were granted to all national minorities. The minorities obtained permission to establish their own school departments within the National Ministry of Education, and the nationalities were provided with the right to administer their own schools. The head of each minority's school administration was to represent his nationality in all cultural questions. He also had the right to participate as an adviser in Cabinet sessions concerning his nationality's cultural affairs. The school administration was to determine the types of schools, as well as the syllabuses and standards for examinations to be used in their schools; the only restriction on their curricula was the compulsory teaching of Latvian history, geography and language. The national schools were to receive financial support from the state budget in accordance with the number of pupils.

There were, however, some limits to school autonomy. The law defined the status only of Russian secondary schools. The Russian department under the Ministry of Education could not therefore influence decisions concerning primary schools, for example the opening of new schools, the selection and appointment of teachers, etc.⁷⁰

Latvia was obliged, as a member of the League of Nations, to give additional guarantees to national minorities. In September 1920 the League called for an explicit

assurance from the Latvian government that it would protect the interests of national minority groups on its territory. Discussions over this matter lasted for almost three years, but in July 1923 the Latvian representative to the League submitted a Declaration in general terms, accepting the principles of the guarantee article of the League.⁷¹ However, the Declaration also contained a proviso to the effect that 'any legislation enacted for the protection of minorities would have to conform to the constitution and could not be allowed to prejudice the requirements of Latvian sovereignty or the social needs of the majority group'.⁷² The League of Nations Council, which was authorised to deal with all forms of complaints from the minorities, accepted these terms, and 1 September 1929 the League assumed responsibility for the welfare of all minority groups in Latvia.

Laws and regulations by the state and local authorities were published only in Latvian. Until 1932 there was no separate language law, but laws often had special paragraphs about language usage. One law of 6 December 1918 on the establishment of judicial institutions, for example, stipulated that the language to be used in the courts was to be Latvian, but one would also have the right to use Russian and German in certain circumstances.

It would not be correct to say that there were no tensions in the relations between the various ethnic groups in Latvia in the period of parliamentary democracy which lasted from 1920 to 1934. There were, indeed, certain tensions which sometimes came up to the surface. Some Orthodox Russians, for example, complained about specific Latvian policies which they felt were directed against their religion.⁷³ There were also complaints about the expression of anti-Russian attitudes in the Latvian press in the mid 1920-s.⁷⁴ Certain local policies of the Latvian government were also frequently attacked, in particular its policies towards the Latgalian region, where most of the Russians lived.⁷⁵ There was also discontent with the financing of Russian schools, which were said to receive too few resources, which forced a number of them to close down. A certain degree of tension is, however, unlikely to be avoided in any multiethnic society, and Latvia was no exception. It seems, however, that the ethnic minorities had channels through which they could express their grievances. Compared with many other European states, Latvia in the 1920s could be seen as an example to be followed in the treatment of ethnic minorities, perhaps surpassed only by Estonia, where the rights of such minorities were even better secured.

Even before the introduction of authoritarian rule in 1934 there were some indications that policies were moving in a more ethnocentric direction. In 1931 the minister of education Keniņš initiated a struggle for "Latvian cultural unity" directed against the minorities' self-administration over their own schools. Fierce attacks appeared in the Latvian press about 'minority privileges'.⁷⁶ In 1932 a law, "Regulations about Official Language", was issued, where the right to use languages

other than Latvian was considerably restricted. At the same time Russian was taken off the list of compulsory subjects in Latvian schools.⁷⁷ However, the minister did not succeed in putting an end to school autonomy, and he was removed in 1933.

The situation changed radically, however, with the introduction of authoritarian rule under Karlis Ulmanis in 1934.⁷⁸ While the first part of the independence period had been characterised by nation-building efforts through parliamentary methods with a well-developed system for the protection of ethnic minorities, during the period of authoritarian rule many of the rights of the ethnic minorities were withdrawn. If the goal in the 1920s had been a "Latvian Latvia (*latvisku Latvija*)", after 1934 one of the dominant slogans was "Latvia for the (ethnic) Latvians (*Latvija - Latviešiem*)".⁷⁹ The minorities lost their right to autonomy over their schools, and their influence over cultural matters became only of a consultative kind. The number of Russian schools was significantly reduced. Parents in ethnically mixed marriages could no longer choose which schools their children should attend.⁸⁰

Although many publications which the authorities considered to be "unreliable or subversive" were forced to close down, the largest, and often critical, Russian-language newspaper *Segodnya* continued to publish, probably because the newspaper enjoyed a wide circle of readers outside Latvia and the authorities wanted to avoid possible negative reactions from abroad.⁸¹ Other newspapers and journals were prohibited, however, such as the journal *Zakon i Sud* which was closed down in 1938. In the economic sphere the Ulmanis government also took certain Latvianization measures.⁸² It became more difficult for representatives of the ethnic minorities to find work at the Latvian-dominated state-owned enterprises.

Against this background one could say that the experiences of the ethnic minorities in the independence period were mixed. Those who today are worried about Latvian nationalism will not have any problem in finding manifestations of such nationalism during this period, particularly if they concentrate on the last years before the Soviet annexation. In debates in the late 1980s and early 1990s about the desirability of independent Latvian statehood arguments were put forward to show that Latvian independence would be a threat to the ethnic minorities living in Latvia.⁸³ However, it must be emphasised that there were not many European countries which had a better developed system than Latvia in the interwar period for the protection of the interests of ethnic minorities. Moreover, in the light of the treatment of ethnic minorities in the Soviet Union and many other countries in the late 1930s and 1940s, the Latvian record certainly looks quite good. Even though one should not paint the independence period in unrealistically bright colours, there are indeed traits in Latvian legislation of the time which could also be useful today. In a later chapter we shall examine the way in which the concept of cultural autonomy for the ethnic minorities is being implemented in Latvia at present. However, perhaps the most important lesson from the

independence period in terms of minority rights would be that such rights tend to be best protected under parliamentary and democratic rule, combined with relatively stable socio-economic conditions.⁸⁴ Whenever there is a threat to democracy, because of economic or political chaos, for example, independent statehood in itself is not likely either to solve or to aggravate the ethnic tensions which have a tendency to increase in such a situation. In Chapter 4, which examines Latvian nationality policies, we shall look at how the idea of cultural autonomy for the ethnic minorities is being implemented in Latvia at the present time.

2.4.3. Russian Political Activities and Social Organisations (1920-1940)

The national minorities in Latvia were granted representation in the *Saeima* under the electoral law. The Russian share of representatives in the *Saeima* varied from 3 to 6 percent, which was significantly less than the Russian share of the population. Table 2.2 lists the different minority parties that were represented in the *Saeima* (the total number of deputies in the *Saeima* was 100) and the distribution of deputies from these parties in the period from 1922 to 1934. As can be seen from the table, Russians were split between many different parties. This is also seen as one of the reasons for the relatively low number of Russian representatives in the *Saeima*. The Russians were not a homogeneous group, but were split in terms of religion, economic interests and ideological convictions. The divisions were particularly deep between the large body of Russian farmers and the small elite of Russian officials and merchants.⁸⁵ It was therefore difficult for these parties to consolidate on one political platform, and they often fought among themselves.⁸⁶

It has further been argued that Russians did not have a high level of political culture, and also that their national identity was weakly developed.⁸⁷ Many Russians therefore did not bother to vote, or they voted for parties which were not considered to be parties established particularly for the Russian minority and which did not aim at

Table 2.2: National Minority Parties in Parliament 1922-1934

| | 1922-25 (%) | 1925-28 (%) | 1928-31 (%) | 1931-34 (%) |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Old Believers | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Greek Orthodox Russians | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Union of R. Municipal Employees | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Russian Farmer Union | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Russian National Democrats | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Russian Parties Total | 3 | 5 | 6 | 6 |
| Germans | 6 | 5 | 6 | 6 |
| Jewish Parties Total* | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| Poles | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Total | 15 | 16 | 18 | 19 |

* Includes: Agudas Israel, Misrachi, Ceire Zion
Source: Kavass and Sprudz (1972).

defending the interests specifically of the Russian community. One can question whether voting for such parties should be regarded as a sign of lack of national identity, but a significant number of Russians voted for left-wing parties for social reasons, and the representation of the parties of the Russian minority was thereby lower than it could have been. In an article in the Latvian Russian newspaper *Slovo*, campaigning for unity among the Russian minority, Beglotsvetov wrote in 1927:

(... Р)усское меньшинство далеко не использовало своих избирательных прав, что должно быть отнесено исключительно на счет разрозненности русской общественности и слабости гражданского долга перед своими сородичами.⁸⁸

According to Beglotsvetov there were no discriminatory policies that caused the underrepresentation of Russians in parliament:

(... Р)усское население Латвии уступает до двух третей принадлежащих ему по праву мест другим национальностям и - не по чужой, а исключительно по своей собственной вине.⁸⁹

After some initial success in cooperation among the minority parties, it was soon obvious that the heterogeneous parties held conflicting opinions. A Minority Committee which had been established in May 1920 to supply the deputies with materials such as translations of Latvian documents soon experienced financial problems as the members did not pay their membership dues, and the office was closed one year later.⁹⁰ In 1926 the 16 representatives of minority parties joined forces again over demands in school and national questions; but again the alliance did not last long.

It seemed that a minority bloc in parliament could function only in times when there was a danger to minority positions.

However, even though there was not always political unity among the minority representatives, the many factions and coalitions in the *Saeima* often made their votes a decisive factor, and the parties used this power to draw political concessions from the other parties. This is how Bilmanis, himself a prominent Latvian politician in the Latvian republic, interprets the role of the minority bloc in the *Saeima*:

Their lack of interest in Latvian national unity, their desire to improve their own position at all costs, [...], led them to [give] their votes in the *Saeima* to whichever bloc had the most to offer them in return. [...]. [Through] an unexpected [temporary] alliance, the national minority parties and the Left Wing bloc gained a working majority in parliament over the agrarian group, even though the latter represented a larger segment of the population. In exchange for their support, the Latvian Socialists supported the demands of the national minorities for such concessions as economic privileges, [...] and [fewer] obstacles to the acquisition of Latvian citizenship.⁹¹

There were also a large number and variety of social organisations among Russians in the interwar period.⁹² The first wave of the establishment of Russian societies can be dated as far back as the 1850s and 60s, when there was a great interest among local Russians in their culture and traditions. Russian organisational life became even more active during the years of Latvian independence, however, particularly before the introduction of authoritarian rule in 1934. The centre of Russian organisational activities was naturally Riga, as it was here that the largest part of the Russian intelligentsia was living.

Of the many organisations which existed in the independence period I shall mention only a few of the most influential.⁹³ One of the first organisations to be founded (first in 1918, and after an interruption again in 1919) was the "National-Democratic Union" (NDU - *Natsional'no-Demokraticheskii Soyuz*), which declared its aim to be to utilise the newly acquired freedom to unite the local Russian population for the realisation of its political, social and material interests. One of the central tasks of the organisation soon became to help Russian émigrés arriving from Soviet Russia. The NDU did not succeed in uniting all Russians, as it was mainly the intelligentsia which took part in its activities. Moreover, the first split in the organisation came as early as June 1920, leading to the foundation of the "Russian Society in Latvia" . Although the two organisations had similar goals, they did not cooperate, and a fierce rivalry developed between them, often characterised by mutual accusations. In the end the NDU came out as the stronger of the two, but in 1923 it was forced to split into two organisations, as the new law on social organisations required a differentiation between political and non-political organisations.

One of these successor organisations, the "Russian National Union in Latvia" (RNUL - *Russkii Natsional'ny Soyuz v Latvii*), concerned itself mainly with political issues. The organisation was not as influential as its predecessor, however, and although it was quite active in nominating candidates for the *Saeima* and the Riga Duma (city council), it never succeeded in having one of its candidates elected to parliament. Still, the organisation attempted to influence the deputies in the *Saeima* by referring to its authority as representing the interests of Latvia's Russian community. From 1928 onwards the position of the organisation gradually weakened.

The second of the NDU successor organisations was called the "Russian National Association" (RNA - *Russkoe Natsional'noe Ob'edinenie*). Although the RNA did not completely distance itself from politics, it was engaged first of all in cultural, educational, legal, religious and health issues and was also involved in charitable activities. Several smaller organisations joined the RNA on its foundation, and it continued to grow. Feigmane writes that to a considerable extent the RNA succeeded in uniting the heterogenous Russian community, although its success should not be exaggerated.⁹⁴ The organisation was active in protesting against the school reforms proposed by the Minister of Education, Keniņš, in the early 1930s. It was also politically active in lobbying in the *Saeima*, and particularly in trying to influence the voting of the Russian deputies. Its activities continued after Ulmanis had introduced authoritarian rule. By 1938 the RNA had become an umbrella organisation for 27 smaller organisations; the organisation was prohibited in 1940 by the Soviet authorities.

The level of activity of most Russian organisations was considerably reduced after 1934, as a result of the new political climate in the country. Organisations with a political profile were forced to close down. The state also started to interfere with the internal activities of other social organisations, which now came under the administration of the Ministry of Education. The political department of the Ministry of the Interior also started to interfere in the activities of the social organisations. The 1938 law "On Unprofitable Organisations and Unions" also complicated the situation for many of the organisations, as all societies had to be reregistered. During this process some of the organisations were forced to merge, while others had to change their names. In spite of all this, Russian organisational life continued until the fatal events of 1940. As was stated in the introduction, however, these events and the events that followed will not be examined in this chapter.

2.5. Russian Perceptions of the Role of Russians in Latvian Society

Robert Jervis argues that what one learns from key events in international history is an important factor in determining the images that shape the interpretation of

incoming information.⁹⁵ In the first section of this chapter we pointed to different interpretations of Latvian history and we emphasised the different views on the role of Russians and the Russian influence in Latvia. During the Soviet period most Russians had access only to the official Soviet view on historical events in Latvia, and since most Russians arrived in Latvia after its incorporation into the Soviet Union they did not have any memories of independent Latvia or easy access to such memories of family members who had lived in Latvia during the independence period of the interwar years. Unofficial views were presented as remnants of bourgeois nationalism, untruthful and unacceptable.

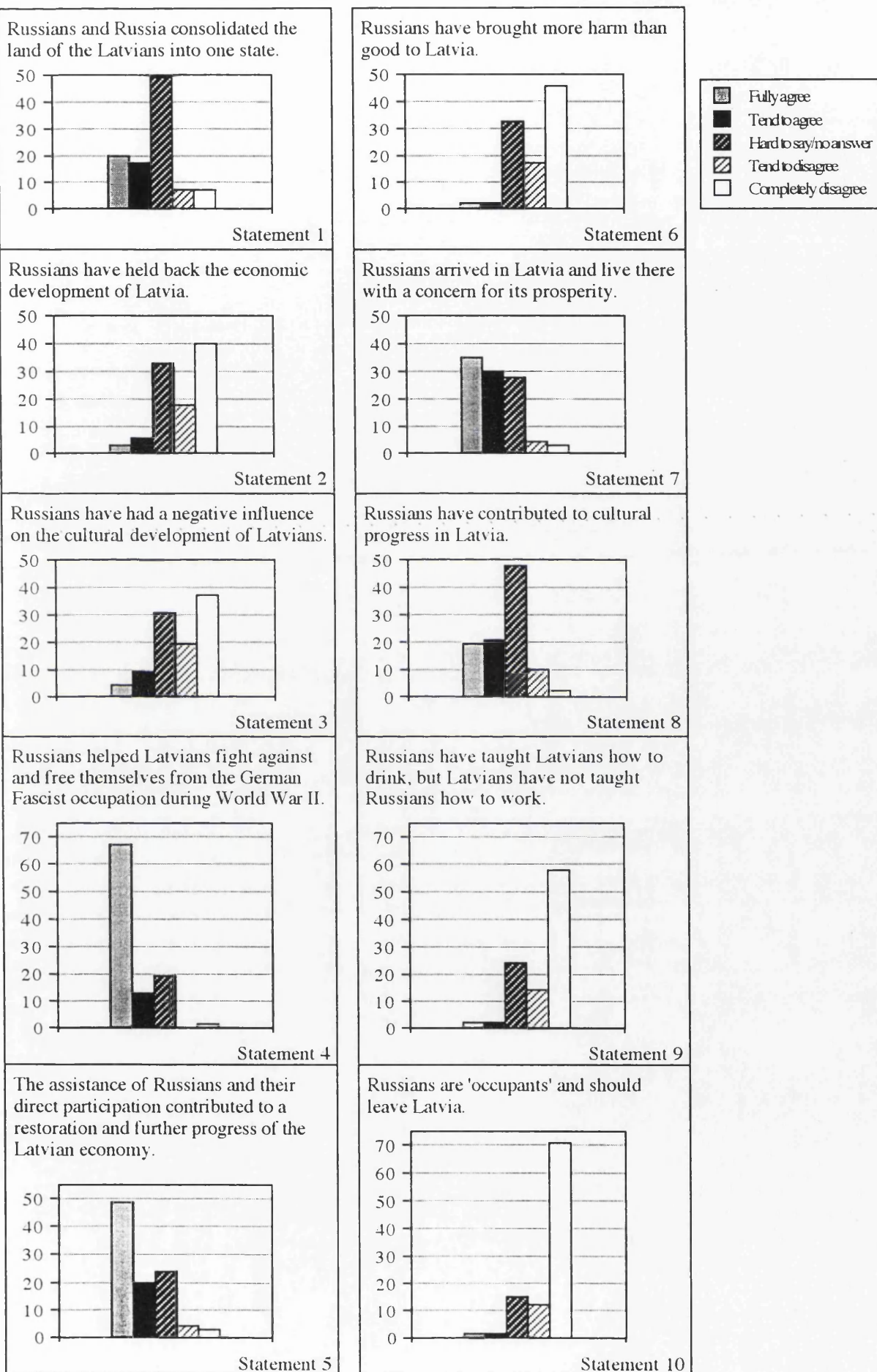
From the late 1980s, however, the policies of *glasnost*⁹⁶ encouraged the expression of alternative interpretations of historical events. Progressive Latvian newspapers started to print articles on history which would have been unheard of a year or two earlier. These articles challenged many of the beliefs about the historical past which a majority of Soviet people had had no opportunities to question. In this connection the role of the Russian people at various junctions of Latvian history also became open to new interpretations. From being presented as a 'big brother' of the other Soviet nationalities deserving respect for the contribution made to Latvian economic prosperity, it was now often held that there was in fact no economic prosperity in Latvia and that Russian immigration had retarded rather than speeded up Latvian economic development.

Russian reactions to the reinterpretation of historical events have not been uniform. Some Russians have insisted on not letting the old truths go, and have fiercely resisted any new ways of assessing their role in Latvian society. Others take a humbler position by considering the interpretation of Latvian history to be a task for the Latvians in which they do not want to interfere. The 1992 "Russians in Latvia" survey contained a number of questions related to the role of Russians in Latvia and is useful as a tool for assessing Russians' evaluation of their own positive and negative contributions to Latvian progress.

A list of ten statements was presented to respondents, and they were asked to indicate to which extent they agreed with each of them. The list of statements and the distribution of answers are illustrated in Figure 2.1. Some of the questions were related to the interpretation of historical events. Almost half the respondents were indecisive on the question of whether Russians and Russia had consolidated the land of the Latvians into one state. Still, more Russians were inclined to agree than to disagree with this statement. There was less hesitation regarding the question of whether Russians had contributed in helping Latvians to fight against and free themselves from the Nazi occupation during World War II. Two thirds of the respondents fully agreed with such a proposition, while only a minuscule number indicated that they disagreed. Similarly,

Figure 2.1: Historical Questions

Survey Question: To which extent do you agree with the following statements?



Source: "Russians in Latvia" survey, 1992.

this way. The highest number of points received by any of our respondents was 41. After systematising the results the following conclusion emerged:

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Group one: Very positive (10 to 19 points) | 51 per cent |
| Group two: Positive (20 to 29 points) | 38 per cent |
| Group three: Hesitant or negative (30 to 41 points)..... | 11 per cent |

This scale can be used as a tool for analysing how various groups of Russians evaluate their own role in Latvian society. It is therefore important to establish whether there is a relationship between this variable, which can be labelled "evaluation of the Russians' role in Latvia", and other variables about which the survey provides information. Some important findings were made by using crosstabulation, and statistical significance tests were employed to control whether these findings were significant.

We could not prove that there is a relationship between the gender of the respondents and their evaluation of the Russians' role in Latvia. Neither did type of occupation⁹⁶ seem to be of importance for Russians' evaluation of this question. The impact of differences in terms of size of family income was also too small to be statistically significant.

The variable for the evaluation of the Russians' role in Latvia was, however, strongly related to a number of other variables. The ethnic composition of the family of the respondent proved to be one very important factor. Russians with a Latvian spouse, for example, were almost four times more likely to be associated with a hesitant or negative evaluation of the Russians' role in Latvia than were Russians who were married to a Russian or other Slav. Similarly, only one third of Russians with a Latvian father or mother gave a very positive evaluation of the Russians' role in Latvia, while the same was true of more than half of those, both of whose parents were Russians.

There was also significant regional variance, which is illustrated in Table 2.3. In general, Russians in cities were much more likely to give a positive evaluation of the Russians' role in Latvia than were Russians in rural districts. This was particularly evident in the case of Riga, where 64 per cent of the respondents were found in Group 1. Russians in Latgale were much less positive, as shown by the table. Russians in Latgale have on average lived in Latvia longer than Russians in other Latvian regions, and the length of stay in Latvia is another factor which correlates with the variable in question. Of particular importance for the responses was whether or not the respondent was born in Latvia. Russians who were born in Latvia and whose parents had also lived in Latvia and not moved to the republic were more hesitant or negative than other respondents in their evaluation of the Russians' role there. The most positive evaluations came from Russians who had arrived in Latvia during the last 15 years.

TABLE 2.2: Relations Between Evaluation of the Russians' Role in Latvia and Type of Settlement

| N = 591 | Evaluation of the Russians' Role in Latvia: | | |
|---------------------------|---|----------------------------|--|
| | Group 1 Very positive (%) | Group 2 Positive (%) | Group 3 Hesitant or Negative (%) |
| Cities (total) | 58 | 32 | 10 |
| Riga | 64 | 29 | 7 |
| Latgalian cities | 41 | 37 | 22 |
| Other cities | 54 | 40 | 6 |
| Rural districts (total) | 33 | 52 | 15 |
| Latgale's rural districts | 37 | 47 | 16 |
| Other rural districts | 32 | 54 | 14 |

Source: "Russians in Latvia" survey, 1992.

The better a respondent knew Latvian, the more likely s/he was to have a generally critical attitude towards the Russians contribution to Latvian progress. However, the correlation was not as strong as for the other variables mentioned above. It is also interesting that it was the best educated Russians who were most positive in their evaluation of the role of Russians in Latvia. While four in ten Russians with only primary education fell into Group 1, the same was true of more than six in ten Russians with higher education. Similarly, a respondent with higher education had half the likelihood of falling into Group 3 as compared to a person with primary education. This is, perhaps, somewhat surprising, because one would expect that Russians with a higher education would have read more history and be more familiar with alternative interpretations, and therefore would be less categorical in their evaluation of the role of Russians in Latvia.

A positive evaluation of the role of Russians in Latvia was more common among the older age-groups than among young respondents. Young Russians seemed to be more receptive to new interpretations of historical events than were Russians in the older generations who are often less flexible and tend to be less willing to reconsider what they have regarded as historical truths.

To conclude, the responses to the questions in the questionnaire indicate that most Russians have a very positive evaluation of their own role in Latvian society. Although one could register some hesitancy regarding whether Russians had "consolidated the land of the Latvians into one state" and also regarding the Russians' contribution to Latvian cultural progress, there was little doubt among the majority of Russians that they had liberated the Latvians from German occupation and also that they had contributed to the rebuilding and progress of the Latvian economy. These are

propositions which have been repeatedly and uncritically put forward in Soviet accounts of Latvian history: in the mass media, school text books and political speeches. It is not unlikely that one of the reasons why Russians are so reluctant to give a more self-critical assessment of their own historical role in Latvia is that they are afraid that this could put the whole legitimacy of their presence in Latvia into question. We have, however, seen that to a considerable extent the evaluation of historical topics is related to other variables, the most important of which seemed to be the ethnic composition of the family of the respondent, type of settlement and region of residence, level of education, language knowledge and age. It would, of course, have been interesting to compare the responses which Russians gave to these questions with responses given by ethnic Latvians, which are likely to differ substantially. However, since our survey included only Russians there was no possibility of making such a comparison. The institutes which organised the survey, however, plan to conduct a similar survey in the near future with the important difference that it would have a representative sample from the entire population of Latvia. This would enable us to make comparisons between the responses given by different ethnic groups living in Latvia to the questions discussed here, as well as to observe whether Russians' responses have changed since our survey was conducted.

Historical arguments are used extensively in political statements and debates in Latvia (and elsewhere), and although most historians would agree that there is a need for objectiveness and truthfulness, our excursion shows that the presentation of history tends to be influenced by the message the historian seeks to convey. Historians, thus, have had, and continue to have, a great impact on forming public opinion about historically related issues and, as the section about the Russian role in Latvia in ancient history showed, in particular concerning issues which ordinary people do not normally have the opportunity to evaluate themselves. *Glasnost*¹ opened up the opportunity to present alternatives to the official Soviet view on Latvian history. Although there is no reason to believe that the writing of history will not be influenced by the historians' personal outlook and opinions, the fact that there is now more openness about historical issues and more room for diverse interpretations of an event at least gives people an opportunity to make their own judgements. There is a risk, however, that this freedom could be used first of all to select sources which confirm already existing opinions and prejudices. On the other hand, one cannot expect people to change deep-rooted attitudes and historical outlooks overnight, particularly if alternative interpretations do not accord with a person's material or social interests.

¹For more general works on Latvian history in different periods, see Spekke (1957), Svābe (1950) and (1958), Bilmanis (1951), Zūtis et. al. (ed.) (1952), Drizul (ed.) (1971), Kostanda (ed.) (1992), Kirby (1990), Von Rauch (1974), Hiden and Salmon (1991), Misiunas and Taagepera (1983), Lieven (1993).

²See, f.ex., Preobrazhenskii (1992), p. 7, Zūtis et al. (1952).

³Zūtis, *ibid.*

⁴See e.g. Bilmanis (1951).

⁵See V. Preobrazhenskii (1992).

⁶*ibid.*, p. 11.

⁷Zūtis, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

⁸*ibid.*, p.46.

⁹*ibid.*, p. 71.

¹⁰*ibid.*, p. 49.

¹¹Drizul (ed.) (1971).

¹²*ibid.*, p. 31. The Zemgals and the Kurs (Courland took its name from the Kurs) were two Latvian tribes which lived to the northeast and northwest, respectively, of the Lithuanian eastern Baltic. (See, f. ex., Encyclopedia Americana (T. Shabad), "Latvia", vol. 17, 1990, p. 55-56.)

¹³Drizul, *op. cit.*, p21.

¹⁴Bilmanis, *op. cit.* pp. 28-29.

¹⁵For a similar view, see also Svābe (1925), p. 80.

¹⁶Bilmanis, *op. cit.*, p. 17 and p. 339.

¹⁷*ibid.* p. 43

¹⁸A. Spekke (1951), p. 113.

¹⁹*ibid.*

²⁰*ibid.*, p. 114-119.

²¹A. Klive (1953), p.34.

²²*ibid.* p. 24

²³*ibid.*

²⁴*ibid.* p.25

²⁵*ibid.* p. 27

²⁶A. Fomenko (1991).

²⁷V. Vasilyev, (1991).

²⁸R. Denisova (1992).

²⁹"Ot redaktsii", *Dinaburg*, 6 March 1992, p. 2.

³⁰Pommer (1992), p. 17. Livonia here refers to the state which was formed as a result of the German conquest of Latvia in the 13th century and which covered most of what today is Estonia and Latvia.

³¹Bilmanis, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

³²Pommer, *op. cit.*, p.21.

³³*ibid.*, p.23.

³⁴*ibid.* pp. 23-24.

³⁵A. A. Zavarina, (1986), p.10.

³⁶There was no obligatory recruitment of soldiers on Latvian territory until 1797, although after the Russian annexation of Livland, German landlords would sometimes sell their serfs to the Russian army. Pshenichnikov (1910), p. 6 and p. 10.

³⁷Zavarina, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

³⁸The yearbook of the Old Believers Church in Latvia, 1990, p. 34. Author's interview with Fr. Ioann Miroljubov, Chairman of the Church Council of the Old Believers' Pomorskaya Church of Latvia, January 1991.

³⁹In 1783, on the initiative of the Governor General of the Baltic *gubernii* Braun, there was an attempt to discover the number of Russians in Courland. He had complained to Catherine II that the Duchy of Courland did not hand over escapees despite an agreement dating from 1660. Braun wrote in this connection: "The escapee who ends up in Courland drowns there and disappears without trace". A commission was set up to find and send back the Russians then in Courland. The result, however, was that they found such a large number of escapees that they had to abandon their task. See Pshenichnikov, *op. cit.*, p. 7, and [Author unknown]: "Beglye v Kurlyandiyu", *Pribaltiiskii Sbornik*, no. 37, 1905, p. 545.

⁴⁰Pshenichnikov, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

- ⁴¹Zavarina, op. cit., p. 36.
- ⁴²ibid., p. 50.
- ⁴³J. Rutkis (ed.) (1967), pp. 216-217.
- ⁴⁴Pommern writes that although the local German authorities succeeded in restricting the number of converts, about 40.000 Latvians at some point registered as Orthodox believers. Op. cit., p.35.
- ⁴⁵E. C. Thaden (ed.) (1981), see particularly chapters by Thaden and Plakans.
- ⁴⁶Even Zavarina's estimate of the number of Russians in Latvia is probably not quite accurate, as there were Russians in Latvia who did not belong to any of the two mentioned religious communities.
- ⁴⁷The table is based on figures in Zavarina, op. cit. p. 40.
- ⁴⁸Fedotov (1992), p. 54.
- ⁴⁹ibid.
- ⁵⁰E. Smekhov: "Russkaya obshchina Latvii", *Russkaya Rech*, no. 1, 1990.
- ⁵¹See, f. ex., Feigmane (1992). Feigmane is a typical proponent of the harmony model in her account of Latvian history. Thus, in the introduction to her book on Russian Societies in Latvia in the period from 1920 - 1940 she writes: "Latvia has always been characterised by the multinational composition of her population. Despite this, however, Latvia never experienced any interethnic conflicts" [author's translation from Russian].
- ⁵²See for example *Utro Yurmaly*, no. 1, 1991, p. 3.
- ⁵³Spekke, op. cit., p.361. According to some sources, there were only 1.480.000 people living in Latvia in 1919. See Fedotov, op. cit., p. 58.
- ⁵⁴Kaz'mina (1991) p. 193. Smekhov (1990) operates with the proportion of Russians as 7.8%, but this number includes all Ukrainians and Belarusians.
- ⁵⁵Fedotov, op. cit., p. 61.
- ⁵⁶Smekhov, op.cit. Beglotsvetov presents a figure of 232,000 Russians in 1925, but it follows from what he writes later that he considers the substantial Belarusian minority (and probably also the Ukrainians) to be part of the Russian minority. By deducting the number of Catholics from the general number of Russians in his material, one arrives at the same number as in Smekhov's article. See Beglotsvetov (1928), pp. 95-101.
- ⁵⁷Bilmanis, op. cit., p.347.
- ⁵⁸Author's interview with M. Mitrofanov, journalist on *Dinaburg* (Daugavpils), February 1993.
- ⁵⁹Vitolinš (1986), p. 68, Levitskii (1991), p. 125.
- ⁶⁰Mežgailis and Zvidriņš (1973), pp. 150-52. The reason for the inaccuracies, where the number of Latvians was set several thousands higher than the actual number, has been explained as being a result of the policy of "Latvianization" in the late 1930s, when the authorities wanted to show that the proportion of Latvians was increasing. Author's interview with Miroslav Mitrofanov, journalist in the newspaper *Dinaburg*, February 1993.
- ⁶¹Macartney (1968), p. 519.
- ⁶²Beglotsvetov, op. cit., p. 97. According to Beglotsvetov, 45 per cent of the Russians were Orthodox, 38 per cent Old Believers and 16 per cent Catholics.
- ⁶³Zeile (1989), p. 126.
- ⁶⁴Apine (1993), p. 65.
- ⁶⁵For more information about The National People's Council, see von Rauch (1970) p. 54.
- ⁶⁶Garleff (1989), p. 215 [author's translation from German].
- ⁶⁷Von Rauch, op. cit., p. 136.
- ⁶⁸See Garleff, op. cit., p. 215.
- ⁶⁹Zile (1981).
- ⁷⁰Levitskii (1991),p. 114.
- ⁷¹See Zile, op. cit.
- ⁷²Von Rauch, op. cit, p. 136.
- ⁷³See Archbishop Ioann's articles in *Slovo*, (1926-27) and (1927-27). *Sbornik gazety Slovo* (1926-27) and *Vtoroi sbornik gazety Slovo* (1927-28), Riga: Izdanie Aktsionernogo Obshchestva Dela "Salamandra".
- ⁷⁴See articles in *Segodnya*, 3 September 1926, 10 February 1927, 3 June 1927.
- ⁷⁵Zorin', *Sbornik gazety Slovo* (1926-27), (op. cit.), p. 76.
- ⁷⁶Loeber (1992).
- ⁷⁷Levitskii, op. cit., p. 122.

⁷⁸See von Rauch, op. cit.; Vardys's chapter in Vardys and Misiunas (1978); and Hiden & Salmon (1991) for the background to the introduction of authoritarian rule in Latvia and its consequences.

⁷⁹Apine, op. cit., p. 66.

⁸⁰Levitskii, op. cit., p. 124.

⁸¹Zeile, op. cit., p. 126.

⁸²For example, after 1936 a number of enterprises owned by representatives of national minorities were taken over by the state through a new Credit Bank without the consent of the directors or the stock-holders, as they allegedly had difficulties in paying off debts; or they were given an arbitrarily low fixed compensation so that the transaction would have the appearance of a normal purchase. See *ibid.*, p. 124.

⁸³See e.g. *Edinstvo*, 13 March 1990, p. 5 and *Utro Yurmaly*, no. 1, 1991, p. 3.

⁸⁴See Kalnciema (1990), p. 74.

⁸⁵Garleff (1978), p. 82.

⁸⁶See I. Krūmiņa (1992).

⁸⁷Beglotsvetov, op. cit.

⁸⁸*ibid.*, p. 96.

⁸⁹*ibid.*

⁹⁰Garleff (1978), p. 87.

⁹¹Bilmanis, op. cit.

⁹²The main source used for this and the following paragraphs is Feigmane (1992).

⁹³For a detailed description of organisations engaged in culture, sports, education, charity, religious questions, as well as student and youth organisations, professional organisations and organisations for Russian émigrés, see Feigmane (1992), and for a briefer survey of Russian organisations see Zeile, op. cit., pp. 126-129, or Feigmane (1990).

⁹⁴Feigmane (1992), pp. 16-17.

⁹⁵Jervis (1976), see Chapter 6.

⁹⁶We differentiated between manual workers, specialists (*spetsialisty*), professionals (*sluzhashchie*) and others.

3. Soviet Nationality Policy until the Mid-1980s

3.1. Introduction

In the first chapter the relationship between ethnicity and the political sphere was examined, and I supported the view that there is an interaction between the two, so that changes in the political sphere influence ethnic identification and also that ethnic processes have an impact on politics. One can therefore assume that the ethnic identity of Russians in Latvia is influenced by the nationality policy which has been conducted there, and I believe that an understanding of their situation requires familiarity with the peculiarities of this policy. In this thesis nationality policy will be used in a broad sense to include all policies (or absence of policies) which affect certain national groups or national relations, whether the effects are intentional or not.

This chapter and the following one deal with nationality policy; both in the Soviet Union in general, and specifically in Latvia. There seems to be agreement that the nature of the nationality problem has shifted markedly through time, and that there is a need for historical periodisation.¹ This chapter looks at nationality policy in the period up to the mid 1980s. Even though Latvia became a part of the Soviet Union as a result of the events just before and during World War II, and was therefore subject to Soviet nationality policy for a shorter time than most of the other Soviet republics, a brief account of the roots and the historical background of this policy is nevertheless seen as essential. There will then be an examination of some of the main principles underlying Soviet nationality policy. However, whereas most authors have analysed the nationality issue in the Soviet Union mainly by looking at its significance for the stability of the Soviet regime, the aim is here to discuss aspects that are of significance for the formation, maintenance or eradication of ethnic identity, especially among Russians. Particular attention will therefore be paid to the special status of the Russians in the Soviet empire.² Soviet nationality policy more specifically towards Latvia, and its implications, will be dealt with in the last section of this chapter, with a discussion of the alleged planned russification and sovietization of the republic caused by, among others, the large influx of Russian immigrants there. Then, in the next chapter, the emphasis will be on more recent developments.

3.2. Soviet Nationality Policy

3.2.1. Background and Principles

In the autumn of 1917 the Bolsheviks began to take control of most territory of a large multinational empire, and a new practical nationality policy had to be devised. This policy could not be based solely on Marx's and Engels's writings on the nationality question. Connor claims that Marx and Engels never attempted a detailed exposition of the questions of nations and nationalism, and that they never gave a clear answer to what would happen to nations in the postcapitalist period.³ In the Manifesto they wrote that the nation would survive the revolution, at least for a time, but the question of whether all national differences between the nationalities faced extermination has been subject to different interpretations. This is, as has already been pointed out, reflected in the writings of Soviet scholars, and is also indicated in public announcements from Soviet leaders.

On the way to communism, Marx and Engels had to recognise both the existence as well as the significance of the nation, and of the class struggle within national boundaries. In this connection nationalism could be used in the interests of the working class movement. Demands for national independence could be supported as long as they stimulated the ripening and fall of capitalism, and had to be combatted if they delayed this development.⁴

It was the task of the Bolsheviks to adopt Marxist theory to the conditions of the multinational Russian empire. Lenin declared that all nations have the right to self-determination, and he emphasised that he had in mind the right to secession and the formation of independent states, and not simply national cultural autonomy as advanced by the Austrian social democrats.⁵ That Lenin affirmed the right to secede does not imply that he would advocate secession, and he argued that the interests of the proletariat were best served by the existence of large states, which offered the maximum potential for economic development.⁶ This view was also shared by Stalin. Even though Stalin asserted in 1913 that the victorious communists would introduce a policy of 'national equality', this did not apply to all nations. Whereas 'such crystalised units as Poland, Lithuania, the Ukraine, the Caucasus, and so forth' would be granted regional autonomy, Stalin explicitly denied such an autonomy to smaller nations such as the Latvians.⁷

There is good reason to believe that the established principle of national self-determination increased the support for the Bolsheviks among the non-Russian nationalities in the period between February and October 1917, when the liberals and their coalition partners were more indifferent to national demands.⁸ When the Bolshevik party became the ruling party, however, difficulties arose as to how to

reconcile the absolute principle of the nation's right to self-determination and the security interests and the territorial integrity of the new state. The doctrine was adjusted to these new conditions. Self-determination was redefined as a right only for the proletariat. Some scholars write about the differences over this issue between Lenin and Stalin.⁹ However, even if their views on certain issues were divergent, all the Bolsheviks considered that partial political demands such as the nation's right to self-determination were relative, and that such demands had to be rejected when they were opposed to the general socialist movement.¹⁰

When the USSR was established in 1924, a federal state structure was adopted, and the right of the minorities to secession was recognised. Further, the class unity of the new socialist state was preserved by the unitary party's monopoly of power. The guiding principle of Soviet federalism was, as Stalin put it, to be "national in form but socialist in content". However, there were very few governmental institutions commonly associated with federations elsewhere. For example, the deputies for the Russian Federal Parliament, the Congress of Soviets, were elected on the basis of population, and there was no upper chamber of the legislature to provide the ethnic units with representation without regard to size.¹¹ The creation of the People's Commissariat of Nationalities, led by Stalin, in 1917 was the only measure taken which recognised potential problems between ethnic minorities.¹²

The nationality policy of the 1920s was nevertheless conducted in a 'relatively tolerant climate'.¹³ The Soviet leadership declared that Russian chauvinism was the main problem in nationality relations, and initiated a programme of developing the cultures of the non-Russian nationalities. A policy of elite cooptation or "indigenisation" (*korenizatsiya*) was put into practice, where members of the non-Russian nationalities were recruited into government and party positions.¹⁴ Schools using the local languages were set up and the use of these languages promoted in most spheres of society. This policy was in line with the 'dialectics' of nationality relations as they were seen by the Bolsheviks, where each nation and nationality was to be given opportunities for full national self-realisation (flowering/*rastsvet*). Simultaneously, on the basis of a common social structure and through "mutual enrichment", a rapprochement (*sblizhenie*) of nations and nationalities would take place, before there was an eventual merger (*sliyanie*).

However, as Stalin consolidated political power, the nationality policy gradually changed. By the early 1930s ideological uniformity started to be imposed on all national cultures. The collectivization of agriculture with the liquidation of the kulaks (*raskulachivanie*) had enormous implications both for Russians as well as for non-Russian national minorities. National elites were arrested and often killed, and under Stalin's rule entire nationalities were deported from their traditional homelands. It should, however, also be emphasised that there were indeed people who genuinely

believed that it was time to move on from the epoch of the flowering of national cultures to a more internationalist outlook.¹⁵ From the mid-1930s Stalin openly started praising the Russian people for its historical and contemporary qualities. Its role as an "elder brother" in the "Soviet family of nations" was expressed on several occasions, perhaps most articulately in Stalin's toast to the Great Russian People at the Victory Parade in front of the Kremlin in June 1945.¹⁶

Soviet nationality policy in the post-war period contained several elements, and only those aspects that are of particular concern to this thesis can be discussed here. There was a relaxation of the policy of mass overt coercion after Stalin's death, and the subsequent leaders relied more on institutional structures to prevent the voicing of nationalist sentiments. Khrushchev does not seem to have been particularly sympathetic to ethnic claims.¹⁷ He promoted a campaign against religion, and his educational reform of 1958 eliminated the obligatory study of the native language in the non-Russian regions.¹⁸ His plan of dividing the country into economic regions (*sovnarkhozy*) was also perceived as a threat by the national minorities which had their own union republic.¹⁹

Despite the fact that on several occasions the nationality problem in the Soviet Union was officially declared to be "solved", and Brezhnev in the 1970s announced that a new entity, the "Soviet people" (*sovetskii narod*) had been created, the Soviet leaders nevertheless had to recognise that national self-assertion among non-Russians as well as Russians was becoming increasingly visible. Nationality policy under Brezhnev and his successors was characterised by the attempt to find a proper balance between repression and tolerance.²⁰ The leaders would use coercion against national dissent when there was a perceived threat to the stability of the regime, whereas they would tolerate manifestations of national sentiments when such a threat was not seen as imminent.

The Soviet leaders had, indeed, a series of coercive measures at their disposal to use against uncontrolled outbursts of national sentiment. The KGB, the militia and the armed forces all played a major role in the repression of national dissent.²¹ Implied coercion, in the form of the persistent implicit threat to activate these institutions, is also likely to have prevented a larger number of demonstrations with a national character and other unofficial manifestations of ethnic demands. An efficient censorship of the press was another aspect of this policy, where the only articles on nationality questions to be admitted were those denouncing nationalism and praising "internationalist" attitudes and actions.

Even though mass overt coercion was utilised on occasion as a means of controlling national dissent, such a policy did not go well with the picture of a "happy family of nations", and could be used only if there was no alternative. The leadership had to rely on other means to contain nationalist sentiments. A more subtle way of

exerting influence on the development of nationality relations was to encourage migration, particularly of Russians, into non-Russian republics and areas. Since Russians and other Slavs, for reasons to be discussed below, were thought to be more loyal to the regime than the other nationalities, many seemed to believe that a considerable number of Russians in the union republics would have a stabilising effect on the local populations. The need to obtain a *propiska* (residence permit) for settlement in a certain area was a means by which migration could be directed to areas approved by the authorities. However, the Soviet leaders do not seem to have utilised this policy efficiently²². This could be interpreted as if Russian and Slavic migration was a natural process solely determined by socio-economic developments, without any monitoring from above. However, the localisation of industry in areas where there was a need to import raw materials, energy and labour in order to produce goods which then would be transported to markets a long distance away from the place of the production, is at least an indication of a somewhat different agenda.²³ We shall discuss this question in some more detail in the section below dealing with nationality policies in Latvia.

The significance of Soviet federalism for the formation and maintenance of national identity must also be commented upon. Scholars of ethnicity in multiethnic states have argued that the convergence of ethnic and administrative boundaries can facilitate politicisation of ethnicity. In the competition for the allocation of social values there is a tendency that when ethnicity is identified with political structures, demands are aggregated on ethnic rather than functional lines.²⁴ It is, on the basis of such findings, relevant to ask whether Soviet federalism has had this effect.

Let us first consider some arguments weighing against such an evaluation. First, Soviet federalism in practice allowed only a very limited degree of autonomy to the federated nationalities.²⁵ The supremacy of the central state and government was always insisted on, and although the state structure was supposed to accommodate differences in culture and interests between the nationalities, the more important party was by definition unitary and based on centralist principles. Second, the adoption of a federal constitutional structure was useful in containing nationalist sentiments. The granting of a right to secession gave the nationalities the impression that the federal arrangements were voluntary. As has already been noted, Soviet policy in practice recognised the legitimacy of national identity within the framework of the Soviet state, and in the 1970s and 80s the merger of nationalities was either not mentioned or relegated into the distant future. Since national identity did not seem to be fading away, the federal structure could be used to channel national sentiments into areas that were not perceived to be a threat to the regime's stability, and thereby prevent a politicisation of ethnicity.

Probably the most important part of this policy was the new emphasis on cooptation of national elites. Whereas the central state and party institutions were dominated by Russians and other Slavs, the highest posts in the national republics would usually be held by the indigenous nationality. This would give the local population the impression of being ruled by their own nationality, but at the same time the central leadership had several means by which they could exert control: The leaders would usually be carefully selected by the central leadership, and even though some local leaders were accused of localism (*mestnichestvo*), most of these leaders would be loyal to the regime and the central leadership to which they owed their high positions. One of the intentions behind this policy was therefore to use the national elites as an instrument for conveying the political will of the central Soviet leadership to the non-Russian periphery. The centre also had the control mechanism through the Second Secretary of the republican Central Committee who would usually be a Russian or at least a Slav.²⁶

Even though federalism was the established principle, the Soviet leadership at the same time promoted a policy of consensus based more on social than on national criteria. An important part of this policy was the promotion of the use of the Russian language in nearly all spheres of society, a policy which could facilitate the cultural assimilation of the nationalities.²⁷ According to Michael Rywkin, Russian was assumed to be the *lingua franca* 'not only as an instrument of communication, but as a device for integrating all the nations of the USSR into one "Soviet People"'.²⁸ Indeed, the number of non-Russians who were reported to know Russian increased considerably according to the censuses.²⁹ A policy of economic equalisation (*uravnilovka*) of the national republics was also promoted, aiming at reducing national differences. People could, when reading statistical material organised according to the federal division, ascertain that the relative economic development in terms of material living conditions was proceeding faster in most of the union republics than in Russia proper, and this could also be confirmed by personal observation by those who had been to other parts of the country.³⁰ Educational progress and economic development of the republics were believed by many to be the necessary and sufficient conditions for overcoming antagonistic national differences.

There are, however, other arguments and evidence indicating that the federative structure of the USSR facilitated rather than prevented politicisation of ethnicity. However formal and symbolic the institutions and the administrative framework of the national territories were, they provided a base where ethnic sentiments easily developed and could be expressed. Both the party and the state were organised according to the same territorial-administrative divisions (although there was no Russian Communist Party). In the absence of other autonomous subsystems in the social and economic spheres, the republican state and party structures became the only channels available for

aggregation and articulation of national interests.³¹ Conflicts over investment and resource allocation between the republics were often seen as nationality conflicts, even though many of the political battles were fought undercover. Carrère d'Encausse points to an increasing conflict in the party leadership between the technocrats, who would often support claims from the republics based on economic rationality, whereas the established central political elite was not willing to give up any of its decision-making power.³² The Party gradually became less homogeneous, and the room for differences was utilised by local elites with national, regional or even strictly personal interests.

The policy of the cooptation of national elites also had effects which could cause national discontent. In several cases there was dissatisfaction among the elite of the predominantly Russian settler community, often counting on support from the other non-indigenous nationalities.³³ On some occasions the Russian elites in the republics would demand a larger or proportional representation in the local political leaderships. The federative structure, combined with the recording and publication of the nationality of all cadres, could sometimes make it difficult to reconcile the conflict between the titular nationalities wanting control over their territory, and other nationalities arguing the case for 'fair' representation in the political leadership.

It is also doubtful whether the policy of cultural and economic equalisation between the republics actually contributed to a harmonisation of nationality relations. As we have seen in Chapter 1, the proposition that modernisation, urbanisation and equalisation would lead to ethnic sentiments' withering away has proved wrong. On the contrary, there is reason to believe that there is a connection between modernisation of society and the increased level of ethnic identity. Instead of facilitating integration, modernisation can serve as a framework for ethnic sentiments. Modernisation policies seem to have had similar effects in the Soviet Union as in other multiethnic developing societies. As groups come into contact and competition with one another, ethnic differences are perceived. This heightens the feeling of ethnic identity of all the groups involved, and generally results in animosities and tensions. Greater geographical mixing of the various ethnic groups may even increase the level of ethnic identity.³⁴ It is correct that many republics experienced economic progress under Soviet rule, and although the Russians were still better off than most of the other nationalities, the gap was being reduced. This did not, however, have the effect that these nationalities were satisfied with the state of affairs. Many non-Russians believed that their economic perspectives would have been considerably brighter without the interference from the centre. The growing dissatisfaction among the Russians themselves can also be seen as a result of perceived relative deprivation, and even though they were politically dominant, they were faced with increased competition from formerly subordinated

groups. The question of the special position of the Russians will be discussed more thoroughly below.

To conclude, the federative system did not prevent, and in some respects seems to have facilitated, a politicisation of ethnicity. Especially when the legitimacy of the Soviet regime started to be openly questioned, the already established administrative organisation of the state, largely along ethnic lines, was probably a contributing factor in explaining why much of the opposition to the regime centred around nationality issues. However, it is not certain that any other form of organisation of the large multiethnic state would have been more successful in dealing with the nationality issue, and the Soviet leadership may have had a limited choice. After all, whether it was mostly due to outright or implied coercion, flexibility and tolerance of national differences, or economic progress; the Soviet Union for a long time had more success than many other multiethnic states in containing nationalist sentiments.³⁵

3.3. The Russians and the Soviet State

Russian national identity takes many different forms, and the spectrum of religious, cultural and specifically nationalist attitudes among Russians is very broad and varied. Soviet leaders always had to take the responses of the Russians into account when devising a nationality policy, due to the large number and historical role of this nationality. At the same time, the policies of the Soviet regime have undoubtedly influenced and to some extent changed Russian national identity. It is hardly possible fully to comprehend the situation of the Russians living in Latvia today without some familiarity with the special role of the Russians in the Soviet empire. There is therefore a need for a brief discussion of the interrelationship between Soviet policies and the status of the Russians in the Soviet Union.

The multiethnic Soviet society, being a legacy of the Russian empire, was characterised by a dominant plurality core (the Russians) and an aggregate of peripheral groups.³⁶ This opened up the way for tension between Marxist-Leninist theory on the national question, emphasising equality between all nationalities, and the reality of a historically and numerically dominant nationality, which traditionally had viewed itself as entitled to hegemony. When the multiethnic character of the Soviet Union was accepted through the formation of more or less homogeneous federal subdivisions, the relations of power between the union republics would necessarily have to be grossly asymmetrical. The dominant position of the Russians could easily awaken fears among subordinate groups about their very existence. Thus, when the Soviet leadership after

Stalin sought to maintain cohesion without relying on continual repression, they had a difficult task.³⁷

The legitimacy of the Soviet regime relied most of all on the loyalty of the Russians, and the provision of some form of concessions to Russian national feeling was seen as needed for their support. The result was that Russian nationalism was progressively integrated into the ideology. The party selected items from the Russian cultural and historical heritage that would serve the dynamics of the Soviet state through their nationalistic value. Soviet history before the Revolution became Russian history, and the continuity between the Russian and the Soviet empires was thereby emphasised. Thus, the state formed a necessary alliance with nationalism, called it "Soviet patriotism" (whereas real patriotism was stigmatised as "bourgeois nationalism"), and used it to try to legitimate the Soviet state among the Russians.³⁸ The victory in the Soviet War against Germany, "the Great Fatherland War", is also an important factor in explaining the legitimacy of the Soviet regime and the Communist Party among a significant proportion of the Russian population. R. G. Suny even states that with the Great Fatherland War, Russia (*rodina*) and the Soviet Union became one indivisible polity, and that the war became its part of the "foundation myth" of Soviet power.³⁹

There are many factors suggesting an advantageous inequity for Russians in Soviet life. Although many Russians claim that they have always been ruled by foreigners⁴⁰, when looking at the relative representation of the different nationalities within the party, KGB and military elites, one finds that there was a clear overrepresentation of Russians in the leaderships of all these institutions. Whereas the Russians in 1970 comprised 53.3 per cent of the USSR population, Russians made up 60.9 per cent of the Union-wide party membership, 57.2 per cent of the Central Committee membership, and 56 per cent of the Politburo and Party Secretariat membership. 72.5 per cent of the members of the Council of Ministers and all but one Central Committee secretaries were Russians in 1972.⁴¹ However, as Parming states, even if the representation were ethnically representative for the USSR population, non-Russians would still perceive the Russians as dominant.⁴² Despite the policy of indigenisation of national elites, the Russians were also represented in large proportions high up in the hierarchy in the union republics, whereas the other nationalities (with the exception of Ukrainians and Belorussians) would usually be confined to their own national territory.⁴³

The status of the Russian language is another sign that Russians had a privileged position in Soviet society. There is much evidence indicating that a very good knowledge of Russian was a prerequisite for occupying higher positions, and there was a tendency to make Russian the language of instruction not only in higher but also in secondary education. There is, of course, the case to be made that in a vast

country like the Soviet Union it is essential to have one official language of government, and since more than half the population reported Russian to be their mother tongue, it seems natural that this language should be Russian. It has, however, also been argued that the great efforts made to ensure that non-Russians knew Russian were for their own good, since the non-Slavic population would benefit most from a fluent knowledge of Russian which would enable them to be more competitive with native speakers of Russian. W. B. Kory, arguing this point, admits that linguistic assimilation is the first and probably the most important step in the assimilation process.⁴⁴ Linguistic russification policies can therefore just as well be seen first of all as serving the interests of the Soviet regime. The language policies were, however, also in the interests of the Russian population migrating to, or simply spending their vacations in, different parts of the Soviet Union. They could be certain that *their* language, and not the local one, would be used as the means of communication.

The particular relationship between the Russian nationality and the Soviet regime is also illustrated by other factors. For example, of all the Soviet national republics, only the Russians were not granted separate party organisations and institutions.⁴⁵ The Russian republic got their own newspaper, *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, as late as in 1956.⁴⁶ Whether this should be seen as discrimination⁴⁷, or rather a sign of their privileged position in the all-union party⁴⁸, it all the same indicates that the Russians were not treated just like any other nationality.

Despite the advantageous position of the Russians in many spheres of Soviet life, many Russians had the feeling of being used by the regime. Their advantages could in many occasions also spell difficulties for the Russian ethnic group. It is open to question whether the Russian oligarchy in the Soviet leadership, distant and detached as it was from the general Russian population, should be considered its representatives. Nevertheless, the overrepresentation of Russians in the leadership was a reason why the other nationalities identified Russians with the Soviet regime, and it partly explains the hostility they often met in the union republics. There are numerous examples showing how the Russians themselves became victims of the policies of the regime. For all the nationalities there was an understanding that aggressive manifestations of ethnic self-assertion could not be accepted, but this applied even more to the Russians than to most of the other nationalities because of the very size of the Russian ethnic group. A successful nationality policy enjoying the support of all the nationalities would require restraint on the dominant ethnic group. Many romantic traditional and religious symbols of Russian ethnocentrism were suppressed, since they would increase the "alienness" of Russian culture for the non-Russian ethnic groups of the Soviet Union. Only those aspects of Russian tradition and sentiment that the authorities believed could infuse life into the propaganda of Marxism-Leninism were tolerated.⁴⁹ The destruction of Russian Orthodox churches was an assault on the Russian nation as

well as on the church, and the systematic obliteration of the traditional names of ancient towns and regions cut off whole generations from their cultural heritage. As Denitch notes, the former "prison of nationalities" had become 'a prison for the ethnic Russians themselves'.⁵⁰

As long as there was economic progress, it seems that for a majority of Russians these drawbacks were compensated for by the benefits provided by the regime. The flood of rhetorical praise for Russian virtues, the glorification of Slavonic messianic accomplishments, and the extension of the language were all parts of the 'pleasure of dominance'. Western scholars have often stated that the notion of a "Soviet people" never became a social or psychological reality, and this is correct if we understand the term to mean that national identities would wither away. However, even if the "Soviet people" never became an objective reality for the whole population, at least a considerable number of Russians, whom we are interested in here, had a sense of pride in belonging to the Soviet state. It is important in this connection to recall the difference between the individual and group level of analysis which was referred to in chapter 1. For a number of Russian individuals there is likely to have been a subjective sense of belonging to a Soviet people, even if the concept was treated with the utmost suspicion by most non-Russians. Soviet "patriotism" was often combined with a national pride in being Russian, and there is reason to believe that national pride and Soviet patriotism could, as put by Azrael, in fact co-exist and be mutually reinforcing.⁵¹ Research on ethnicity has shown that various communal loyalties can operate in different yet complementary spheres of social life, and so there is no necessary contradiction between Russian national identity and a sense of belonging to the "Soviet people".⁵²

For many Russians the pride in being Soviet diminished with deteriorating social conditions, when discrepancies between growing expectations and the reality broadened. Rampant alcoholism, higher mortality rates and serious environmental problems were indications that the Russian nation itself was in danger. The Russian village was in a dismal state, and living conditions for many of those who went to the cities for a better life, often without a *propiska*, were not much better. Modernisation policies sponsored by the Soviet regime were often blamed. The decline in the ability of official Marxism to generate support for the Soviet system, combined with the greater liberties permitted under *glasnost* and the increased level of expression of national sentiments among the other nationalities can explain the growth of Russian ethnocentrism.⁵³

Russian ethnocentrism takes many different forms, and the distinction I will make here is an oversimplification both of the many groups involved and of individual positions. Nevertheless, Russian ethnocentrism can be divided into two broad groups which in my view illustrate its main aspects. The first group recognises the Soviet state

as the legitimate heir of the Russian empire, but rejects Marxist-Leninist ideology, or pays less attention to ideologies as such, which they judge by their usefulness to the state.⁵⁴ The second group conceives Russian ethnicity as basically cultural or spiritual in nature, and the main concern is the preservation of Russian national culture rather than the Soviet state.⁵⁵ There are signs that the influence of both these groups increased in the 1980s, but their relative importance and support are hard to evaluate.

The more than 25 million Russians of the former Soviet Union living outside the RSFSR and making up 18.5 per cent of the total Russian population deserve special attention.⁵⁶ Table 3.1. shows the distribution of Russians in the various union republics of the (former) USSR from 1959 to 1989 and the proportion of Russians seen in relation to the total population of each republic. Relatively little research has been carried out to investigate whether there are any distinguishing features that make these Russians different from those living in their traditionally ethnic homelands in terms of ethnic identity.⁵⁷ Consequently it is important to emphasise that the considerations below are aimed at pointing to factors that are seen as decisive to explain possible differences, and that they will not give an exhaustive answer about the extent to which such differences exist. There is, however, a hope that this thesis, in dealing particularly with one group of these Russians, can fill some of the gaps existing in research on this subject.

There are several factors that indicate that the Russian population in non-Russian areas had the ability to maintain its ethnic identity. First, the Russians were usually confined to the largest cities⁵⁸, and the concentration of Russians in the major cities of the Union republics made Russians comprise more than 20 per cent of the population in all the capitals, with the exception of Tbilisi and Erevan.⁵⁹ The Russians who moved to these cities therefore usually came to an established Russian or Russian-speaking environment, where they met with other Russians in their neighbourhood and their work place. It was not always necessary to interact with the indigenous population, and when such interaction took place, it was usually implied that Russian was the language of communication. The Russians also had enough Russian-language newspapers, periodicals and programs on radio and TV to manage without knowledge of the local language. The high geographical mobility of the Russian migrant population should also be emphasised. Many Russians did not move to another republic on a permanent basis, but were searching all the time for other places to move to where there were better material and social conditions. This made them less inclined to get rooted in

Table 3.1: Russian Population in the USSR

| Republic | 1959 | | | 1970 | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|--|--|
| | Russian population of republic | | | Russian population of republic | | |
| | total (1000s) | as share of total Russian population in the USSR (%) | as share of total population of republic (%) | total (1000s) | as share of total Russian population in the USSR (%) | as share of total population of republic (%) |
| RSFSR | 97864 | 85.8 | 83.3 | 107748 | 83.5 | 82.8 |
| Ukraine | 7091 | 6.2 | 16.9 | 9126 | 7.1 | 19.4 |
| Belarus | 659 | 0.6 | 8.2 | 938 | 0.7 | 10.4 |
| Uzbekistan | 1091 | 1.0 | 13.5 | 1473 | 1.1 | 12.5 |
| Kazakhstan | 3974 | 3.5 | 42.7 | 5522 | 4.3 | 42.4 |
| Georgia | 408 | 0.4 | 10.1 | 397 | 0.3 | 8.5 |
| Azerbaijan | 501 | 0.4 | 13.6 | 510 | 0.4 | 10.0 |
| Lithuania | 231 | 0.2 | 8.5 | 268 | 0.2 | 8.6 |
| Moldova | 293 | 0.3 | 10.2 | 414 | 0.3 | 11.6 |
| Latvia | 556 | 0.5 | 26.6 | 705 | 0.5 | 29.8 |
| Kirgizstan | 654 | 0.6 | 31.6 | 856 | 0.7 | 29.2 |
| Tajikistan | 263 | 0.2 | 13.3 | 344 | 0.3 | 11.9 |
| Armenia | 56 | 0.1 | 3.2 | 66 | 0.1 | 2.7 |
| Turkmenistan | 263 | 0.2 | 17.3 | 313 | 0.2 | 14.5 |
| Estonia | 240 | 0.2 | 20.1 | 335 | 0.3 | 24.7 |
| Total | 114114 | | | 129015 | | |

| Republic | 1979 | | | 1989 | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|--|--|
| | Russian population of republic | | | Russian population of republic | | |
| | total (1000s) | as share of total Russian population in the USSR (%) | as share of total population of republic (%) | total (1000s) | as share of total Russian population in the USSR (%) | as share of total population of republic (%) |
| RSFSR | 113522 | 82.6 | 82.6 | 119866 | 82.6 | 81.5 |
| Ukraine | 10472 | 7.6 | 21.1 | 11356 | 7.8 | 22.1 |
| Belarus | 1134 | 0.8 | 11.9 | 1342 | 0.9 | 13.2 |
| Uzbekistan | 1666 | 1.2 | 10.8 | 1653 | 1.1 | 8.3 |
| Kazakhstan | 5991 | 4.4 | 40.8 | 6228 | 4.3 | 37.8 |
| Georgia | 372 | 0.3 | 7.4 | 341 | 0.2 | 6.3 |
| Azerbaijan | 475 | 0.3 | 7.9 | 392 | 0.3 | 5.6 |
| Lithuania | 303 | 0.2 | 8.9 | 344 | 0.2 | 9.4 |
| Moldova | 506 | 0.4 | 12.8 | 562 | 0.4 | 13.0 |
| Latvia | 821 | 0.6 | 32.8 | 906 | 0.6 | 34.0 |
| Kirgizstan | 912 | 0.7 | 25.9 | 917 | 0.6 | 21.5 |
| Tajikistan | 395 | 0.3 | 10.4 | 388 | 0.3 | 7.6 |
| Armenia | 70 | 0.1 | 2.3 | 52 | 0.0 | 1.6 |
| Turkmenistan | 349 | 0.3 | 12.6 | 334 | 0.2 | 9.5 |
| Estonia | 409 | 0.3 | 27.9 | 475 | 0.3 | 30.3 |
| Total | 137397 | | | 145155 | | |

Source: Compiled using data from Arutyunyan (1992), p. 19.

the republic they moved to, and the local culture, history and traditions often did not affect or even interest them. With the exception of a few closed cities, the whole territory of the Soviet Union represented one single labour market.⁶⁰

The maintenance of Russian identity was also facilitated by the educational system, where Russian children usually would attend Russian-language schools. Whereas the schools in the local languages, which were attended mainly by the indigenous population, would to a certain extent reflect local conditions, Russian-language schools were more or less identical all over the Soviet Union. Instead of emphasising the history of the region, general Soviet history was taught, which for the pre-revolutionary period would mean the history of Russia.

All this meant that for Russians moving to a new place of residence within the Soviet Union there was a familiar environment to which they could easily adapt. Republican borders were seen as symbolic, and only to a minor degree affected considerations about where to move. Only rarely did Russians assimilate to other nationalities, and when it happened it was mainly children of mixed marriages between a Russian and a representative of the indigenous population who at the age of 16 indicated the indigenous nationality in their passport.⁶¹ Since there were also considerable numbers of non-Russians who migrated out of their national territories, these nationalities would usually use the Russian language and send their children to Russian schools, and there was therefore a tendency for these nationalities, and especially the Ukrainians and Belorussians, to assimilate to the Russian population. The internal passport system delayed this process somewhat, but the trend could be seen by looking at intermarriages, where there was a strong tendency for children of a non-indigenous parent and a Russian to choose Russian as their nationality.⁶²

However, even though Russians in the union republics were able to maintain their ethnic identity, there are also signs that the content of this identity changed considerably. Modernisation and, particularly, urbanisation detached many Russians from their traditional homelands, and thereby from the continuity with the past. Such a group of people was likely to be more receptive to the continued ideological emphasis by the Soviet authorities upon the supposed unity of the "Soviet people". Instead of focusing on distinctly Russians concerns and problems, it was implicitly understood that Russians should ensure the stability and the welfare of the entire multiethnic state. The limits within which they could maintain their separate group identity were restricted.⁶³ Russian identity and pride were to be satisfied through their role of being "first among equals", and especially those Russians living in the non-Russian republics would ensure that Russian attentions and energies were kept focused on the union-wide level.

The social role of Russians in the non-Russian republics was not limited only to representing statehood. In some regions, in more recent years most notably in Central

Asia and Kazakhstan, Russians were important agents of modernisation, and were often seen as representatives of a more developed culture in backward and traditionalist regions.⁶⁴ The social role of Russians in this region was naturally very different from their role in the Baltic republics, where modernisation had taken place at a much earlier stage and where Russians tended to regard the local cultures as more developed than their own. The actual living conditions of Russians also varied significantly from one republic to another, and even within the republics, determined by historical circumstances as well as by the social characteristics of the Russian population living there.

The fact that relatively few Russians outside Russia were fluent in the local language, and that they tended to integrate socially mostly with fellow Russians or other Slaves, does not imply that they had not been influenced by the local nationalities and their way of living. On the contrary, there is evidence showing that Russians in the republics often adopted values and norms of nationalities living in their local environment which distinguished them from Russians of the core-group. Russians in the Baltic, for example, often felt themselves to be more westernised but also more reserved than their coethnics in Russia.⁶⁵ There is an abundance of anecdotal evidence of Russians from the republics moving or travelling to the Russian Federation and feeling complete strangers there. At the same time, the local populations in the republics were usually more positive towards Russians who had lived there for a long time and adopted local customs, traditions and culture than towards Russians who had arrived more recently. In 1978 Matthews Pavlovich suggested that the Russian diaspora was in the process of acquiring an identity of its own, different from the Russian core group in Russia.⁶⁶ However, although Russians lost contact 'not only with their former social milieu, but also with the traditional mores of Russian society', this does not seem to have been enough to create a sense of common identity among Russians in, for example, Latvia and Kazakhstan, as opposed to the identity of Russians in Russia itself. If Russians adopted a different identity, it was more likely to be as "Russians in Kazakhstan" or "Russians in Latvia" and not as much as a Russian diaspora or "Russians outside Russia".

Towards the end of the 1980s, however, differences between the Russian core group, living in traditionally Russian areas of the RSFSR, and Russians living in other union republics became more evident. Their reactions to the political changes and the many manifestations of ethnic sentiments among the non-Russian nationalities tended to take somewhat diverging forms. As a result of increasing ethnocentrism in the union republics the ethnic awareness among both groups of Russians increased as well. However, to Russians in the republics such an awareness was more often linked to the status of being non-indigenous or "Russian-speaking" than to a sense of belonging to a more narrowly defined Russian ethnos. Russians in Russia tended to focus mostly on

internal Russian problems and were more concerned with the deteriorating state of Russia and with how to improve it, whether inside or outside a Soviet framework.⁶⁷ There was, thus, often deep discontent among core-group Russians with the empire in its present form. They tended to think that Russia had wasted too many resources on the material support of the Soviet peripheries, with the result that living conditions in the republics had become considerably better than in Russia itself.⁶⁸ Russians living in the RSFSR were therefore inclined to take the position that Russia could no longer afford to subsidise the union republics economically. This opinion was intensified by what Russians believed to be a lack of gratitude among people living in the republics for the support they had received from Russia and a tendency to blame Russia and Russians for all the misfortunes which had taken place during the Soviet period.

There can be no doubt that the preservation of the Soviet Union was regarded as an important issue also by a large proportion of Russians living in the RSFSR. They were often proud of belonging to an empire which inspired a sense of greatness through belonging to a world super-power. However, this question was usually not of the same overriding importance to them as it was to the majority of Russians living in the republics. Russians in the republics tended to see their well-being as dependent on the continued existence of the Soviet state and the symbolic character of the borders between the republics. They were therefore more inclined than their coethnics in Russia to take an 'internationalist' position. Moreover, Russians often depended upon all-union structures as their source of income, and many were afraid that their future physical and material security would be threatened were their republic to become independent.

It should again be emphasised that the intention of this examination of Soviet nationality policy has been to provide a general picture of the conditions for the formation, persistence, transformation and eradication of ethnic identity among Russians in the Soviet Union. This is seen as necessary for an understanding of the situation of the Russians living in Latvia today. In such a general discussion major regional and individual differences and peculiarities have to be overlooked. The next section, dealing with Soviet nationality policy specifically towards Latvia, will accordingly consider these further issues in more detail.

3.4. Soviet Nationality Policy in Latvia

When the importance of Soviet nationality policy for ethnic identity in Latvia has been discussed in western literature, most scholars have concentrated on the implications for the Latvian ethnic group. This section, examining nationality policy in

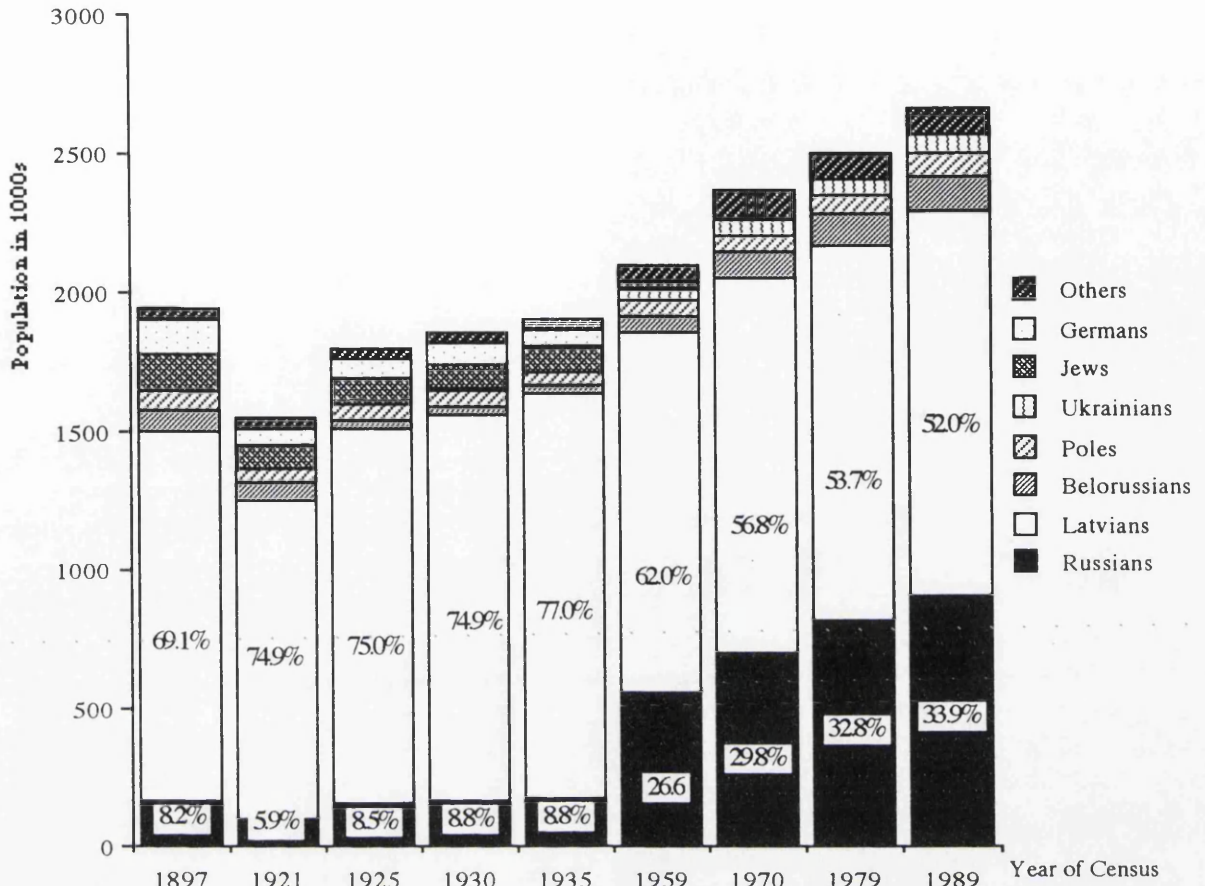
Latvia up to the mid-1980s, puts more emphasis on those aspects of this policy which are seen as likely to have influenced the Russian population living (or moving) there, and particularly the content and level of their ethnic self-consciousness. The analysis will focus on policy developments in three areas: industrialisation and immigration; cadre policies; and education. At the end of the section there will be an assessment of the impact of these policies on ethnic identification among Russians in the republic.

3.4.1. Industrialisation and Immigration

Immediately after World War II the Soviets began extensive industrialisation in Latvia. The republic, which already had a developed industry before the war, provided favourable conditions for capital investment: The level of education and training was higher than in most other parts of the Soviet Union, the republic represented a skilled labour reserve and, compared to other industrialised areas, relatively little of the well-developed infrastructure had been destroyed during the war.

The rapid large-scale industrialisation facilitated the integration of Latvia into the Soviet Union. The centralised system of planning and management was an important aspect of this integration, as also was the collectivization of agriculture. Centralised control continued into the late Gorbachev era, and figures from the early 1980s suggest that all key enterprises and the majority of the larger plants and factories were subordinated to all-union ministries or Union-republic ministries with supervising agencies both in Moscow and in Riga. Less than 15 per cent of industry was directly controlled by republican ministries.⁶⁹

Industrialisation was accompanied by a large influx of immigrants, predominantly Russians and other Slavs. This immigration, together with low birthrates among Latvians, significantly changed the national composition of the republic, as can be seen from Figure 3.1. In 1935 the Russian share of the population in Latvia was 8.8 per cent, but by 1959 the share had increased to 26.6 per cent and in 1989 it was 34.0 per cent. The total number of Russians was 4.4 times higher in 1989 than in 1935. The share of Latvians went down from 77.0 per cent of the population in 1935 to 62.0 per cent in 1959 and was as low as 52.0 per cent in 1989.⁷⁰ It is noteworthy that the number of Latvians is actually lower than it was before the war. Immigration was particularly large in the years immediately after the war, and the

Figure 3.1: Changes in Nationality Composition of Latvia 1897-1989

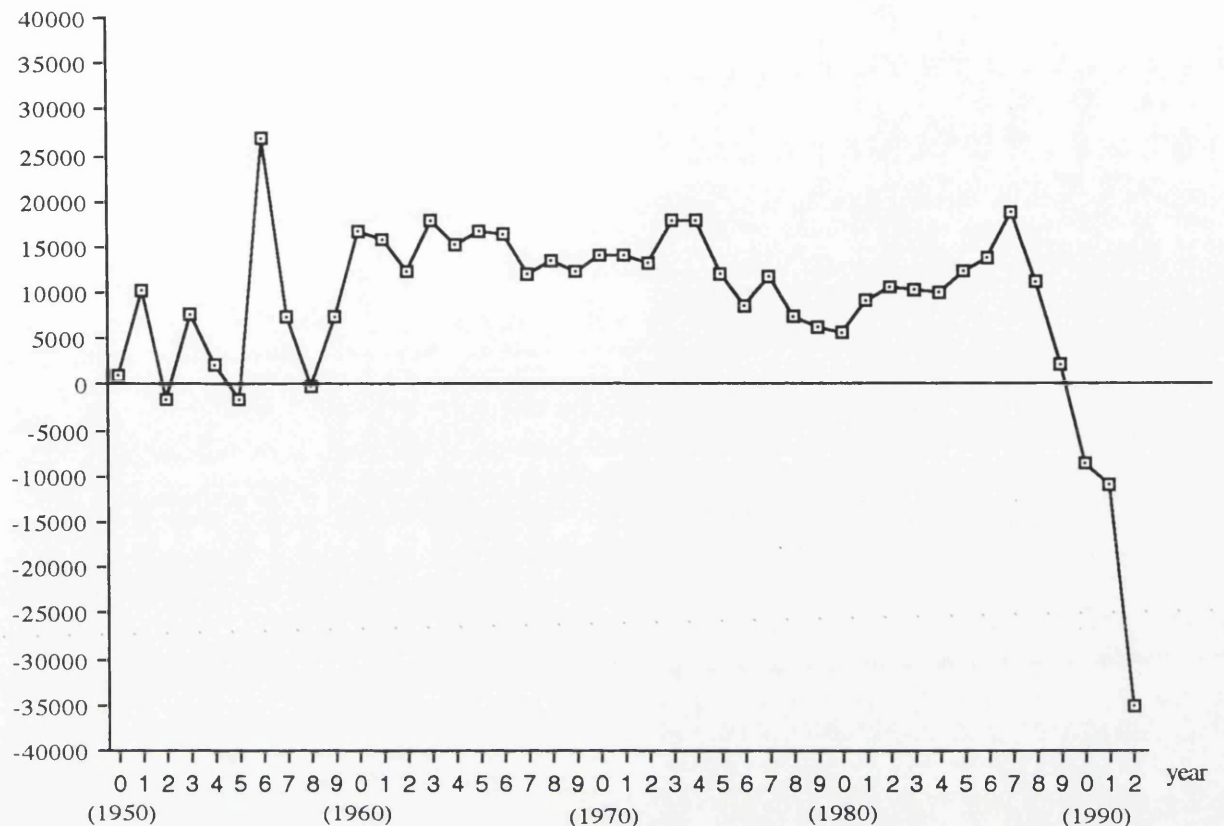
Source: Gubolgo (ed.) (1991).

deportations of Latvians to the eastern parts of the Soviet Union further contributed to intensify the changes in the national composition of the population. After Stalin's death in 1953, immigration largely stopped, which Misiunas and Taagepera explain as a wait-and-see attitude on the part of people and officials.⁷¹ In some years the outflow from the republic even surpassed the inflow. The leadership of the republic instituted registration requirements for those living in the cities, and there were also requirements for a knowledge of Latvian for many positions. However, in 1956 and 1957 many of the Latvians who had been deported just before, during and after the war returned, which may be one explanation why the influx of immigrants in 1956 exceeded that of the six preceding years combined. The new influx of immigrants, combined with the newly acquired republican economic powers resulting from the reforms in the mid 1950s, is seen as one of the reasons for the nationally orientated policies that were articulated and implemented in the following years.⁷² Republican leaders, among them the Deputy Chairman of the Latvian Council of Ministers, Edvards Berklavs, openly questioned the policy of continuous industrialisation and the mechanical growth of the population accompanying it.⁷³ The Berklavs group suggested cutting back production

in the machine building and diesel industries and increasing investments in light and food industry instead.⁷⁴

During the purge in 1959 the party condemned these efforts to reduce the influx of immigrants and characterised them as a result of 'national isolation which created obstacles for the development of the forces of production'.⁷⁵ Immigration was again encouraged; the annual number of immigrants can be observed in Figure 3.2. It is noteworthy that the number of people moving to Latvia from other republics in the period from 1959 to 1988 was markedly higher than the natural increase. Immigration accounted for 51.2 per cent of the total population growth in 1959-69, 66.7 per cent in 1970-78 and 58.1 per cent in 1979-88.⁷⁶ The Kosygin economic reforms required increased production through greater efficiency rather than through an increase in workers, and Latvian planners had considerable success in accomplishing this by setting maximum labour limits for all Riga industries, for example. Nevertheless, the population influx did not slow down, and according to Juris Dreifelds, this can partly be explained by the increased demand for labour in the rapidly growing service sector.⁷⁷

The immigration of Russians continued in the 1960s and 1970s, and the net immigration rate amounted at times to almost 1 per cent of the existing population per year. The net immigration rate is based on the difference between the number of immigrants and emigrants. In the 1960s and 1970s approximately 50 per cent of the immigrants came from the RSFSR, 15 per cent from Belorussia, 14 per cent from the Ukraine and 7 per cent from Lithuania.⁷⁸ Many of the newcomers did not stay in Latvia for a long time, and the actual number of immigrants was from 1960-65 on average almost 48,000 a year, whereas almost 32,000 left the republic, giving an annual net growth of almost 16,000 a year (see Figure 3.2). At the same time the rate of natural increase dropped from 6.7 per thousand in 1960 to a low of 1.0 per cent in 1979. The mechanical population growth was thereby higher than the natural increase of the population from 1960 to 1988. Even though the net immigration rate was lower in the 1970s and 1980s than it was in the 1960s, immigration remained high until the end of the 1980s, and in 1990 net immigration was, for the first time since the 1950s, negative.

Figure 3.2: Annual Net Immigration to Latvia (1950-1992).

Source: Smith (ed.) (1994b) and Mezs (1992), p. 20.

There is some disagreement among scholars regarding the question of whether the large influx of Russians into Latvia was caused by a deliberate policy devised by the Soviet authorities for russification purposes, or whether this immigration can be explained by strictly socio-economic factors. Some do not believe that there was a planned policy for the russification of Latvia, and argue that the immigration was caused by an acute demand for labour supply in industry, caused by the low birth rates in Latvia. Indeed, there is a great deal of evidence to support such an opinion. For example, immigration was larger in Estonia and Latvia than it was in Lithuania, and there seems to be no rational reason why the Soviet authorities would want to russify only two of the three Baltic republics. The lower number of immigrants to Lithuania can be explained by different socio-economic conditions in the three republics. Lithuania had not undergone the same level of industrialisation as the two other republics before the war, and the priority of the Soviet authorities was to invest in areas where the expected return on investment would be the highest. When industrialisation in Lithuania started to expand after Stalin's death, the republic also had a sufficient

supply of labour from its large rural population, since Lithuania for a long time had a much higher birth rate than both Latvia and Estonia.⁷⁹

Apart from in the late 1940s, when some of the immigration into Latvia was involuntary, in the form of functionaries assigned and forced labour dispatched to the republic, most of the immigration was voluntary. Such immigration can be explained by the favourable social and material living conditions in the republic compared to many other republics of the Soviet Union.⁸⁰ It is usually acknowledged that the Baltic republics enjoyed the highest standard of living in the Soviet Union⁸¹, and the Baltic republics also attracted many citizens from other republics by their more Western atmosphere and way of life. These republics were commonly referred to in the rest of the Soviet Union as "*sovetskaya zagranitsa*" (the Soviet abroad).

Many analysts still believe that there were motives other than considerations of pure economic profitability underlying the policy of large-scale industrialisation. Latvian émigré A. Šilde in 1965 argued that one of the concealed aims behind the industrialisation of Latvia was to enable a Russian labour force to flow into the republic.⁸² He is supported by Lubova Zīle, who argues that the policy of the Communist Party was aimed at the destruction of the national identity of all Soviet nationalities, and Russians were used for this purpose when they were sent into all the republics in order to Russify them. The party leaders, according to Zīle, believed that a sizeable Russian section of the population in each republic would be a stabiliser which would lessen the national identity of the indigenous population and suppress outbursts of nationalist sentiment.⁸³ Misiunas and Taagepera argue that the industrial proletariat was seen by the Soviet leadership as superior to the peasantry and more supportive of the Soviet regime, and they therefore believe that one of the aims behind industrialisation in the Baltic area was to stabilise the former independent countries.⁸⁴

What, then, is the evidence suggesting that the influx of Russians was part of a deliberate policy of russification, other than the proposition that a large Russian settlement in Latvia was politically very convenient for the authorities? Writers on the subject have usually not denied that, given the location of large-scale industry in Latvia, there was a need for labour supplies from outside. However, the economic rationale behind the location of so much industry in Latvia, where there was a lack of labour, raw materials and energy, and usually a long distance from the markets where the products were sold, has been questioned. One example of 'ill-fated' policies was the building of a giant textile mill in Ogre, a small town not far from Riga. Nearly all the workers were reported to be non-Latvians who had been imported mainly from Russia and the two other Slavic republics. The mill obtained nearly all its raw materials from Central Asia or from overseas, and the production was sold primarily outside the republic.⁸⁵ The cost of many of the projects in terms of ecological and environmental destruction was, according to critics, not integrated into the favourable figures that the

Soviet authorities and local party leaders would refer to when they were supplying evidence of rapid economic growth in the republic. The events of the late 1950s also indicate that republican leaders, had they been in control, would have devised another policy with more emphasis on the light and food industries and production for the republic's home market.

The system of so-called *örgnabor* " (organised recruitment of labour), which took place in the three Slavic republics in order to tempt workers to settle in Latvia, is another indication of intentional russification. Job vacancies in Latvia were often better advertised in Russian cities than in the republic itself. It is not seen as a coincidence that it was the Slavic population, thought to be the most loyal to the Soviet regime, which was subject to such recruitment initiatives.⁸⁶

It is hardly possible fully to evaluate the degree to which the large influx of Russians into Latvia was part of a deliberate policy of russification of the republic. What is clear, however, is that migration processes are not immune to politics, since different policies in this area, with a different pace of industrialisation, different requirements on residence permits, and a different recruitment policy would certainly have had an impact on the number of immigrants. As we have seen, there is evidence suggesting that immigration to Latvia was a natural process in many respects, since very few Russians were sent into the republic by force. At the same time few if any measures were employed by the Soviet authorities to restrict such immigration, and it therefore seems that a high number of Russians and other Slavs in Latvia was seen in Moscow official circles as a desirable development.

Scholarly differences on questions of migration have also been reflected in popular attitudes among the population of Latvia. According to Dzintra Bungis, the perceptions of migration among Latvians and non-Latvians have been vastly different. Whereas most newcomers to Latvia (predominantly Russians) would see migration as a normal process 'associated with the chance to improve their standard of living and enjoy a more westernised way of live', Latvians, in contrast, 'associate migration with all those policies from Moscow that fostered the russification of Latvia'.⁸⁷ In the same article, however, Bungis refers to an opinion poll conducted in 1989 where 79.1 per cent of the respondents said that migration should be halted.⁸⁸ This suggests a negative attitude to migration not only among Latvians, but also among a large number of non-Latvians and even among people who had earlier immigrated to Latvia themselves. Shortages in housing and consumer goods, which have often been perceived as a result of the increasing mechanical growth of the population, have affected Latvians and Russians alike. Differing popular views on the question of migration should therefore be explained not so much by nationality differences as by the interests of individuals connected with opportunities for free settlement in all parts of the (former) Soviet Union.

3.4.2. Cadre Policies

In an analysis of nationality policy in Latvia one cannot overlook the importance of cadre policies, since it is often assumed that the more strongly a nationality is represented in the leadership, the more responsive the leadership would normally be to the ethnopolitical claims of that nationality. Some caution must, however, be exercised in order not to arrive at hasty conclusions about nationality representation and actual political influence. As Rasma Karklins has noted, Soviet biographical data about the nationality of people in leadership positions are based on their administrative identification in their internal passports, and do not necessarily reflect their self-identification. Moreover, even if a leader identifies with a certain nationality, his ethnopolitical profile may not correspond to his ethnic identity.⁸⁹ We have already seen that the Soviet regime relied on cooptation of native elites in the republics, and a high level of representation of the indigenous nationality may merely signify that such a policy has been successful. At the same time there are many cases where seemingly well coopted native elites have become advocates of national causes, and on such occasions it seems that the share of national leaders in the leadership has played a significant role. Some statistical material on nationality representation in the leadership of Latvia is therefore useful, but the following examination of cadre developments in Latvia will also introduce factors illustrating that the share of the different nationalities in the Latvian leadership has not always reflected ethnopolitical influence.

At the time of the annexation of Latvia, its Communist Party was negligible, with only one thousand members.⁹⁰ By 1946 the number had increased ten times, and approximately half of the members were Latvian.⁹¹ A large proportion of these Latvians were, however, so-called "Russian Latvians"; i.e., Latvians who were children of the old Latvian Bolsheviks, educated and socialised in the Soviet Union, and returned to Latvia after Soviet control was established there. Most of these Latvians, estimated to be about one hundred thousand people⁹², were considered to be particularly loyal to the Soviet regime. They often did not know the Latvian language, and were unfamiliar with Latvian culture and traditions. According to Juris Dreifelds, many of them seemed to be 'more russified than the Russians'.⁹³ Such "Russian Latvians" were considered by the Soviet authorities to be very suitable for filling key positions, because they would give the impression that a large part of the leadership was indigenous, whereas they were much easier to integrate into the ruling apparatus than native-born Latvians. Their loyalty to the Soviet cause was the most important qualification for their appointments, and made cooptation an easy task. It should,

however, be emphasised that there was a big variation in the social composition and political outlook of the "Russian Latvians".⁹⁴

Due to the lack of indigenous cadres in Latvia, during the first years of Soviet rule most of the leaders were brought in from other parts of the Soviet Union. Thus, at the beginning of 1953 the share of Latvians in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Latvia was 38.9 per cent, in the Latvian Council of Ministers 43.9 per cent; and 34 per cent of the Party's district and city committees' secretaries were Latvians.⁹⁵ Were it not for the "Russian Latvians", the Latvian share would have been even lower. However, destalinisation brought radical changes in the composition of the republic's elite. Latvians started to join the Party, and Russian functionaries were gradually pushed out. Towards the end of 1958 the most important decision-making body in the republic, the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, had out of ten members, only one Russian.⁹⁶ At the same time there was a shift of emphasis from the "Russian Latvians" to the indigenous group of old communists who had remained in Latvia during the years of independence. The new forces in the local ruling apparatus promoted policies that were not approved by or were even opposed to the policies of the central Soviet leadership.

After the attempts at reform by the "Berkļavs group" were stopped, the local ruling apparatus was purged periodically until 1962, and the new leaders were in many respects different from the leaders in the late 1950s. The purges had made the new leaders reluctant to articulate national interests explicitly. The privileges and relatively high level of social security provided to the elite of functionaries as long as they did not 'experiment' were also important.⁹⁷ The "Russian Latvians", who were preferred by the Soviet leadership, became more influential again. In the 1970s the Party leader, the Prime Minister and the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet were all Latvians who had come from Russia with a minimal knowledge of Latvian.⁹⁸ The share of Latvians in the top political leadership of the republic went down. In the early 1970s only 42 per cent of the seats in the Central Committee of the party were occupied by Latvians.⁹⁹ Still, many party and government positions retained a high representation of Latvians; 73 per cent of district chairmen and 71 per cent of the Council of Ministers had Latvian names, and 72 per cent of the members of the Supreme Soviet were Latvians.¹⁰⁰ It has not been established how many of these Latvians were actually born in the republic or spoke Latvian. A study from Riga in 1967-68, however, suggested that people born outside Latvia were proportionally better represented in higher positions in the republic, and similarly the locally born were underrepresented in leadership positions.¹⁰¹

There are no exact figures for the share of Russians in the Latvian Communist Party, but the share of Latvians has been suggested in figures from 1966 and 1973, indicating that respectively 33 and 43-46 per cent of Party members were Latvians.¹⁰²

The percentage of the population in Latvia that was recruited to Communist Party membership continued to be lower than the USSR average, but this does not seem to apply to the Russians living in the republic. Even though no accurate data are available for explaining the low level of Party membership among Latvians, various reasons have been suggested. First, there was never a large communist movement in Latvia, and despite the fact that the Communist Party was traditionally larger here than in Estonia and Lithuania, it seems that the interest among Latvians in Party membership was low. This lack of interest may also be explained by a lower degree of legitimacy for the Soviet regime among Latvians than among other nationalities living in the republic. Second, since admission to the Party was regulated, there can also have been a lack of candidates that were seen as worthy of becoming members. Moreover, compared to most of the other nationalities living in Latvia, Latvians more often live in the countryside, where the number of Party members was usually lower than in urban areas.

The subjective evaluation of cadre policies is also of great importance. However, there is very little material on the different nationalities' perceptions of the representation of their own and other nationalities in leading positions. In an interesting survey of predominantly Jewish and Russian emigrants to the United States from 1979 to 1982 Rasma Karklins found that the respondents perceived that Russians had better access to government and Party positions in the RSFSR, and the same applied to the titular nationalities of their respective republics. However, Latvia was one of the two republics where Russians were seen as holding an equal or even superior position.¹⁰³

There are many reasons why different nationalities tend to view cadre policies differently, and, as Karklins notes, what is regarded as just is often subjective and dependent on context.¹⁰⁴ In the case of Latvia, Russian and other immigrants have tended to favour proportional representation, using arguments of equality. Latvians, on the other hand, have been inclined to argue that they, as the indigenous nationality, should have some overrepresentation. This has been of particular importance to many Latvians, since their share of the population has decreased in their own republic, and many have felt a threat of national extinction.

3.4.3. Education

The educational system is generally acknowledged to be one of the most important state instruments for socialisation, and policies in this sphere undoubtedly influence both national identity and nationality relations. In the period of Latvian independence there was a 12-year school system and, as was described in Chapter 2, a considerable number of different schools for ethnic minorities, and also many private

schools. The Soviet reorganisation was aimed at the integration of schools in Latvia into the Soviet 11-year school system. Private and national schools were closed, and schools in the republic were divided into schools with Russian or Latvian language of instruction respectively. Drastic revisions were introduced in the curricula, where "unsuitable subjects" were dropped.

The Khrushchev school reform of 1958 suggested that the formerly compulsory second language training in all schools was to be made optional.¹⁰⁵ This implied that the Latvian language would become a voluntary subject in Russian-language schools, whereas Latvians would no longer be obliged to study Russian. In Latvia there was great opposition to this reform, and the nationally-minded republican leaders defended the compulsory study of Latvian as well as of Russian. They feared that the local language would be dropped by many pupils in the Russian-language schools, were they given the choice. At the same time Latvian children who did not choose Russian-language schools would have problems in obtaining higher education and in the army, and their career opportunities in general would be reduced.¹⁰⁶ Latvia was thus one of the two republics (the other one was Azerbaijan) which did not at first pass the law proposed by Khrushchev. On the contrary, in March 1959 the Supreme Soviet of Latvia increased the number of compulsory hours for the study of the Latvian language, as well as of Latvian literature, history and geography for the Russian-language schools.¹⁰⁷

However, education policies in Latvia were aligned with education policies in the rest of the Soviet Union after the purge of the "Berkļavs group". Training in a second language became voluntary, and the study of Russian was given a more preferential treatment throughout the school system. In Russian-language schools the number of hours for studying Latvian was gradually decreased, whereas in Latvian-language schools more time was devoted to Russian than to the native language.¹⁰⁸ A 10-year curriculum was introduced in 1964 in all Latvian schools, but in 1965 the 11-year curriculum was reintroduced in Latvian schools where the language of instruction was not Russian. However, most of the extra time was reported to be allocated to the study of Russian.¹⁰⁹ There is little statistical material on the number of pupils who opted out of either Russian or Latvian language lessons. The material available clearly indicates, however, that the majority of Latvians did study Russian.¹¹⁰ There seems to have been considerable pressure on Latvians to become bilingual, both because of the better prospects for the future for those who knew Russian, and because of the psychological pressure which was put on those "bourgeois nationalists" who did not study the language of "internationalist communication".¹¹¹ Russians did not come under the same pressure to study Latvian, although knowledge of Latvian was recommended. Latvian received, for example, less attention in Russian schools in 1972-73 than did any other "foreign language" available.¹¹² The low number of

Russians who reported knowledge of Latvian in the censuses of 1970 and 1979 indicates that teaching of Latvian in Russian schools was not taken seriously. For example, whereas 47 per cent of Latvians reported fluency in Russian in 1970 and 60 per cent in 1979, only 18 and 22 per cent respectively of Russians reported a knowledge of Latvian.¹¹³ In the Russian-language schools very little time was devoted to study of the local history, geography and culture, and many pupils in these schools also regarded such topics as 'of no use in practical life'.¹¹⁴

Both Russians and Latvians would normally attend a school with instruction in their mother tongue, although this tendency was stronger for Russians than for Latvians. However, members of other nationalities had only the choice between schools using the Latvian or the Russian language. In Latvia a majority of such children would attend Russian-language schools, which parents often preferred since they were regarded as a means of broadening career opportunities for their children on an all-union level.¹¹⁵ With the socialisation potential of the school system, these children were not only subject to Russian influence in linguistic terms, but the schools often defined the environment for social interaction. What developed was a Russian-speaking community, consisting of many different nationalities, but with common group characteristics in terms of value system, outlook and social norms. This community, although dominated by Russians, was only to a minor degree centred around a traditional Russian national culture, and the schools emphasised 'internationalist' attitudes. The school system therefore facilitated linguistic, and to a certain extent cultural, assimilation between Russians and other nationalities. However, since Latvians would usually have their own schools, where they interacted in a predominantly Latvian environment, the school system at the same time contributed to the preservation of a Latvian national identity.

Another aspect of the school policy of the 1960s was an increasing number of so-called mixed schools (*smeshannye shkoly*). In spite of the name, these schools do not signify that Russian and Latvian pupils attended the same classes, as formal teaching periods were held separately for each language group. In 1967 out of a total of 1500 schools, 240 of them were mixed, i.e. bilingual¹¹⁶, but these schools tended to be larger than other schools, so the share of children attending such schools was higher.¹¹⁷ The experience of these mixed schools was, indeed, mixed. The idea was that closer contact between pupils and teachers of different nationalities would further 'internationalism', and officially such schools were often declared to be a great success.¹¹⁸ Most observers today, on the other hand, believe that mixed schools as they were practised in Latvia did not facilitate any friendship between the nationalities.¹¹⁹ The presence of two separate groups within the same school building often intensified the pupils' perception of two antagonistic groups; "we" against "them". This also corresponds with the findings which were referred to in the first

chapter, that greater contacts between ethnic groups under certain conditions tend to strengthen rather than lessen ethnic identity, and may strain group relations.

3.5. Conclusion: Soviet Nationality Policy and the Effect on Russian Ethnic Identity in Latvia

It is, of course, difficult to assess the precise impact of the policy trends discussed in this chapter on the national identification of Russians in Latvia. Nevertheless, some aspects of these policies appear to have worked for the maintenance of a Russian identity. The large and increasing number of Russian immigrants into the major Latvian cities prevented a dramatic change of environment for the majority of those Russians who arrived in the republic, and Russian-language schools, almost identical to the schools in the rest of the Soviet Union, further facilitated their children's socialisation into such a Russian environment:

Russians living in Latvia were continuously praised for their contribution to the considerable achievements of the republic. The role of the Russians in the liberation of Latvia from Nazi occupation has been particularly emphasised. Many Russians, thus, gradually became convinced that their presence in the republic was also to the advantage of the Latvian nation.¹²⁰ Since they were treated as an "elder brother" of the other nationalities, many Russians also developed a sense of being "masters" of the republic and of the whole country.¹²¹ A privileged status for the Russian language and a high proportion of Russians in the Party leadership were therefore regarded as a natural state of affairs.

Figures for intermarriage, language use and demographic changes which will be presented in later chapters further indicate the maintenance of a Russian national identity in Latvia. However, the content of this national identity seems to have changed significantly. The reasons for such changes, which first were discussed on a union-wide level, also seem to apply to Latvia. Many Russian immigrants coming to Latvia lost their attachment to their ethnic homelands, their religion and their cultural traditions. An 'internationalist' outlook and attitudes were expected by Russians in exchange for a relatively privileged position in the republic. Even though most Russians continued to identify themselves as Russians in the censuses, many of them did not, in practice, regard themselves primarily as representatives of the Russian nation, but rather as representatives of the Soviet state.

Some analysts have, correctly, argued that ethnic Latvians in the republican leadership did not necessarily represent the interests of their nationality.¹²² It should, however, be emphasised that this also seems to be the case with Russians and ethnic

Russian leaders, both in Riga and in Moscow. There was often pressure on all leaders to enact policies intended to weaken any and all national identity. Many Russians undoubtedly gained from the policies of the leadership, but the same can be said about a large number of Latvians who were loyal to the regime. There are cases of Russians in Latvia and in the other Baltic republics who were recruited into work in local industry and also were offered new flats, whereas many indigenous people had to wait for twenty years or more to get an apartment.¹²³ On the other hand, it has also been argued that many Latvians deliberately avoided employment in industry, where there would often be obsolete equipment, a lack of catering - and other facilities, and often monotonous work and inconvenient shifts.¹²⁴ If we disregard material living conditions, both Latvians and Russians also suffered from the policy of sovietisation and the attempts to create an 'internationalist', socialist, secularised culture. This culture naturally contained more elements from Russian than from Latvian culture, due to the dominant position of the Russians in Soviet society. However, in so far as Russian culture was promoted, it was a crippled and impoverished version of it.

This chapter has for the most part dealt with Soviet nationality policies in the pre-Gorbachev era. During this period the ethnic composition of Latvia changed dramatically, and this is one of the main reasons why ethnopolitical issues are of such major importance in Latvia today. The reforms under Gorbachev were crucial, since the new freedoms could be exploited by the national leadership in the union republics to seek greater autonomy from Moscow. However, it would lead too far to discuss in detail the changes which took place in Soviet nationality policies under Gorbachev, and even more so as the main trends of these policies should already be familiar to the readers of this thesis. For our purposes I therefore believe it is more appropriate now to proceed to nationality policies in Latvia from the late 1980s onwards, although one should bear in mind that these policies, at least initially, were designed within the context of Gorbachev's reforms.

¹Rutland (1984), Seton-Watson (1986), p. 24.

²The question of whether the Soviet Union could be called an empire or not has been a controversial question. I will in this thesis follow Hosking and Lieven in arguing that despite of the unique features of the multinational state there are some general 'imperial' characteristics which set the USSR in a broader chronological and geographical framework as the 'last of the great European empires' (Hosking 1988, pp. 13-16, Lieven 1988, p. 28). For other views see Rutland (1984) and Sakwa (1989), p. 302, 316. For a more thorough discussion of this issue, see Pearson (1991) pp. 92-93.

³Connor (1984), chapter 1.

⁴Østerud (1984).

⁵Lenin (1961), vol. 25, pp. 255-320.

⁶P. Duncan (1991).

⁷See Connor, op. cit., p.36.

⁸See Nettl (1967).

⁹E.g. Pipes (1964).

¹⁰Østerud, op. cit.

¹¹Hazard (1971), p.86.

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- ¹²For more on this Commissariat, see Carrère d'Encausse (1978b), pp. 40-41.
- ¹³Sakwa (1989), p. 299.
- ¹⁴G. Simon (1991).
- ¹⁵See Gitelman (1989), p. 147.
- ¹⁶Barghoorn (1956).
- ¹⁷See Nahaylo and Swoboda (1990), pp. 129-146.
- ¹⁸Rywkin (1982).
- ¹⁹See Maley (1991).
- ²⁰S. Bialer (1980):, p. 212.
- ²¹Gitelman, op. cit., p. 152.
- ²²Connor (op. cit.).
- ²³It could, however, be argued that soviet politicians, who did not operate according to signals from the market, had completely different intentions in mind when they took decisions about where to locate new industries. For a thorough discussion of whether Russian immigration to non-Russian republics was a deliberate policy or a consequence of socio-economic developments, see Kolstø (1994).
- ²⁴Rakowska Harmstone (1986), Rothschild (1981), ch.5.
- ²⁵The lack of implementation of the Soviet constitution made Stephan Kux conclude that an American village de facto has more independence and self-government than a Soviet republic. Kux (1990), p. 2.
- ²⁶See e.g. Miller (1977).
- ²⁷One should, however, be careful about drawing conclusions regarding the intentions behind the policy of promoting Russian language. There could indeed be more than one intention; for example to favour Russian hegemony, and/or to facilitate communications, control, and the dissemination of knowledge and cultural creations. See Pool (1978).
- ²⁸Rywkin (1988), p. 94.
- ²⁹See Anderson and Silver (1990).
- ³⁰This phenomenon is by Klaus van Beyme explained as "welfare imperialism" which accompanied the "economic imperialism" of the Russian republic. Van Beyme (1991), p. 107.
- ³¹Rakowska Harmstone, op. cit.
- ³²Carrère d'Encausse, op. cit., pp. 52-53.
- ³³Lapidus (1984), p. 575.
- ³⁴See Rothschild (op. cit), chapter 4.
- ³⁵The considerable success of Soviet nationality policy made prominent scholars writing about the nationality issue in the Soviet Union conclude that '...although the political self-assertion is likely to increase significantly over the next decade, (....), rising nationalism, in the absence of a major military conflict on Soviet territory, is unlikely to pose a serious threat to the stability of the Soviet system.' (Lapidus, 1984, p.580), and '...Western commentators have been too eager to see in Soviet multiethnic society a threat to the Soviet state.' (McAuley, 1984, p.204).
- ³⁶Rakowska-Harmstone (1986), p. 235.
- ³⁷See Denitch (1980) pp. 315-324.
- ³⁸See Besançon (1986).
- ³⁹Suny (1988).
- ⁴⁰For a discussion of the background of such claims, see e.g. Sinyavsky (1988), p.31
- ⁴¹See Parming (1977), p. 24. Moreover, most of the non-Russian leaders of these institutions seem to have made their careers centrally and been more committed to central regime goals than to the concerns of their nationality. See Farmer (1985) p. 50. It is noteworthy that in the formally supreme body of state power, The Supreme Soviet, Russians were underrepresented. In 1974, for example, out of 1517 deputies, 659 or 43.4 percent were Russians. In the Soviet of the Nationalities the proportion of Russians was only 28.9 percent, whereas in the Soviet of the Union their proportion was 57.7 percent. ("Verkhovnyi sovet SSSR: devyatogo sozyva", Moscow 1974, p. 30). This was, of course, due to the system of elections to the two chambers. Since it is generally acknowledged that the powers of the Supreme Soviet used to be mostly of a symbolic kind, the relatively low proportion of Russians in this institution also had a rather symbolic significance.
- ⁴²Parming, op. cit., p. 24. See also Karklins (1990) for the same argument.
- ⁴³However, top positions in the union republics were usually filled by Slavs who were sent in from the centre, and the Soviet authorities had a tendency to avoid drawing on the Russian settler communities. See Miller (1977), p. 35.
- ⁴⁴Kory (1980), p. 289.

⁴⁵A Russian Communist Party was established as late as in 1990, and in the same year some other republican institutions, such as a Russian trade union organisation, a Komsomol, and an Academy of Sciences were finally established. See White (1991), p. 166.

⁴⁶Allworth (1980), p. 24.

⁴⁷See e.g. A. Preobrazhenskii (1990).

⁴⁸E.g. Bialer (1980), p. 217.

⁴⁹See Barghoorn (1986), p. 34.

⁵⁰Denitch (1980), p. 320.

⁵¹Azrael (1978), p. 374.

⁵²See Chapter 1.

⁵³See Barghoorn (1986), Dunlop (1988), and Hammer (1988).

⁵⁴Hammer (1988), p. 13, Szporluk (1980), p. 41.

⁵⁵*ibid.*

⁵⁶Based on the census of 1989 (see Table 3.1). If one takes into account Russians who live in autonomous republics and districts of the RSFSR as well, one finds that approximately 34 million Russians live outside what is considered their traditional homeland. For comparison, in 1917 approximately 6 million or 8 percent of the Russian population lived outside the Russian Federation, Sheehy (1991), p. 78. See also Aasland (1994) and Kolstø (1994) for more on the Russian diaspora.

⁵⁷Kolstø is one of the few scholars who has investigated this question more thoroughly. See e.g. Kolstø (1992).

⁵⁸Sheehy, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

⁵⁹The relatively low number of Russians in the Armenian and Georgian capitals is also reflected on a republican level, where the two republics are those with the lowest share of Russians in the population (2 and 7 percent respectively according to the 1989 census).

⁶⁰Kolstø and Jedemskij (1992).

⁶¹Karklins (1986), p. 39.

⁶²*ibid.*

⁶³Rasiak (1980) p. 160.

⁶⁴See e.g. Gudkov (1992).

⁶⁵Apine (1994). Russians in Central Asia and the Caucasus, on the other hand, not only had a stronger tendency than Russians in the European part of the former Soviet Union to condemn divorce and having children outside marriage, but they also had on average fewer divorces, higher birth-rates, lower rates of alcohol consumption and usually had more respect for their parents and elderly people than Russians in the RSFSR. Arutyunyan and Drobyzheva (1992) and Starikov (1993), p. 186.

⁶⁶Pavlovich (1980).

⁶⁷The concern for the state of Russia was strong among both groups of Russian ethnocentrists which were referred to above. The first group often took the view that Russians should reconverge on their native land and 'develop a self-consciousness as an ethnic group instead of being pawns in the hands of empire-building governments, under whatever ideological pretext'. Pospelovsky (1980), p. 129. The second group held a more expansionist position as to how to increase the prestige of Russia.

⁶⁸Starikov, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

⁶⁹Misiunas and Taagepera (1983) pp. 180 and 228; Dellenbrant (1990) p. 115; Zamascikov (1990) p. 92.

⁷⁰Mežs (1992), p. 7.

⁷¹Misiunas and Taagepera, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

⁷²*ibid.*

⁷³Zile (1991) p. 33-34.

⁷⁴Dreifelds (1977) p. 143.

⁷⁵Zile, *op. cit.*, p. 34. [Author's translation from Latvian.]

⁷⁶Bungs (1990) p. 28

⁷⁷Dreifelds (1977) p. 142

⁷⁸Mēgailis (1985), p. 259.

⁷⁹Aasland (1991).

⁸⁰Vardys (1966), p. 59.

⁸¹For some areas where Latvia fared better than other republics, see Krūmiņš, (1990), p. 521.

⁸²Silde (1965).

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- ⁸³Zile (1991) p. 33.
⁸⁴Misiunas and Taagepera, op.cit., p.104.
⁸⁵Zamascikov, op. cit., p. 92.
⁸⁶Aasland, op. cit.
⁸⁷Bungs, op. cit., p. 29.
⁸⁸The poll was published in *Padomju Jaunatne*, 1 September 1989. See Bungs, *ibid.*, p. 27.
⁸⁹See Karklins (1990), op. cit., pp. 44-45.
⁹⁰Zamascikov, op. cit., p. 88.
⁹¹Misiunas and Taagepera, op. cit., p. 78.
⁹²Meġailis and Zvidriņš (1973).
⁹³Dreifelds (1977), op. cit., p.144.
⁹⁴Silde (1990), p. 70.
⁹⁵Zile, op. cit., p. 35.
⁹⁶Levits (1990), p. 60.
⁹⁷*ibid.* p. 61.
⁹⁸Also, from 1940 to 1989 all Party leaders were "Russian Latvians" (Jānis Kalnberziņš (1940-59), Arvids Pelše (1959-66), Augusts Voss (1966-1984) , Boriss Pugo (1984-1988).
⁹⁹Parming (1977), op. cit., p.53.
¹⁰⁰Dreifelds (1977), op. cit., p. 144.
¹⁰¹Meġailis and Zvidriņš, p. 364-366.
¹⁰²Parming (1977), p. 51, operates with a share of Latvians in 1973 of maximum 43 percent, whereas *Partiinaya zhizn'*, vol. 25, no. 50, July 1974, refers to a share of 46 percent.
¹⁰³Karklins (1987).
¹⁰⁴Karklins (1990), p. 46.
¹⁰⁵For more on this reform, see Bilinsky (1962).
¹⁰⁶See Dreifelds, op. cit.
¹⁰⁷*ibid.*
¹⁰⁸Babris (1967), p. 12.
¹⁰⁹Dreifelds, p. 140.
¹¹⁰*ibid.* p. 139.
¹¹¹*ibid.* and Misiunas and Taagepera (1983), pp. 187-188.
¹¹²Dreifelds, p. 140.
¹¹³Smith (1994b).
¹¹⁴Mlechin (1990), p. 4.
¹¹⁵Taagepera (1990), pp. 138-39.
¹¹⁶Misiunas and Taagepera, op. cit., p. 189.
¹¹⁷Krūmiņš, op. cit., p. 531.
¹¹⁸See for example *Циņa*, 6 May 1970.
¹¹⁹E.g. Mlechin, op. cit.
¹²⁰Zile, op. cit.
¹²¹*ibid.*
¹²²See for example Dreifelds (1977), p. 144.
¹²³Kirch (1992).
¹²⁴See e.g. Krūmiņš, op. cit., p. 528.

4. Latvian Ethnopolitics 1988-93

4.1. Introduction

With the formation of popular movements in the Baltic States in the late 1980s and the gradual decline in the influence of the Communist Party, both within the republics themselves and in Moscow, the ethnopolitical situation in the three countries changed dramatically. The popular movements were soon to test, and on several occasions to stretch, the limits of *glasnost'* and *perestroika*. Initially the setting up of such popular movements had been encouraged by Moscow as a basis for promoting the cause of economic reform in the region. However, what started off as relatively modest requests for changes within the system soon developed into a movement for fundamental social transformations and, ultimately, independent statehood. Such transformations clearly went far beyond the changes Gorbachev had envisaged when he initiated the reforms. The new freedoms were soon to be taken for granted, and it proved to be impossible for Moscow to control the course of events.

This chapter deals with Latvian nationality policies in the period from the first initiatives for the foundation of a popular front in the early summer of 1988 and the elections to the new Latvian parliament, the *Saeima*, five years later. The new nationality policies in Latvia had a great impact on ethnic identification among Russians in the republic. Such policies were undoubtedly influenced by tactical considerations concerning how to win support for the movement and the degree to which it was feasible to challenge Moscow, but there can similarly be no doubt that in most respects the agenda for the nationalities policies and the direction in which to proceed were defined in Latvia itself. Latvian nationality policies will therefore for the greater part in this chapter be treated as an autonomous force, and programmes and political actions will be analysed in accordance with their face value, with only a few references to possible hidden agendas and tactical considerations. This also seems to be the best approach in order to understand how Russians themselves perceived the changes taking place in Latvian society.

In this chapter there is no attempt at providing a comprehensive account of all events related to nationality policies in Latvia in the above-mentioned period, as this would lead too far. Instead, the chapter seeks to discuss some of the main elements of these policies by focusing on certain relevant issues. One should, however, not completely ignore the time factor, because nationalities policies in Latvia changed significantly over this period. This also makes it appropriate to ask whether a periodisation of Latvian nationality policies at this time can be attempted.

The first section of the chapter looks at the background to the emergence of the Popular Front (*Latvijas Tautas Fronte* - LFT), and seeks mainly to address the

question of what role the ethnic factor played in the LTF's quest for self-determination. This section will focus on the tension between an ethnic and a territorial concept of the state in forming Latvian nationality policies. A central question concerns whom the LTF leaders and activists considered to be the "real owners" of Latvia.

Citizenship has emerged as perhaps the most hotly contested issue in Latvian politics over recent years, and the second section focuses on the citizenship debate in Latvia. The question of who should and who should not become a citizen affects all ethnic groups but, since Russians make up the largest group of non-citizens, the issue is politically most problematic and has the greatest disruptive potential among the Russian diaspora. The section will, thus, concentrate mainly on the ethnic dimension of the citizenship issue.

Section three deals with three other relevant ethno-political issues in Latvia in this same period. I shall first look at the language issue by focusing on the language law of 1989 and subsequent amendments to this law. Then the section examines the idea of national cultural autonomy and Latvian legislation in this field. Finally, the questions of entering of nationality (ethnicity) into Latvian passports and of the right freely to choose one's nationality will be discussed.

Throughout the chapter a general trend towards the radicalisation of Latvian ethno-politics can be appreciated. In the concluding section of the chapter I shall therefore present some theories as to why such a movement in an ethnocentric direction has taken place in Latvian ethno-politics.

4.2. The Popular Movement and Nationality Issues

Although the structural conditions for the politicisation of nationalism had been present in Latvia for a long time¹, it was Gorbachev's reforms from above which made it possible for a popular movement with nationalist aspirations to emerge. Starting in 1986, a period of national awakening can be identified, when the Latvian population used the policies of *glasnost* to rediscover its history and to express its grievances publicly. The emphasis on *demokratizatsiya* in Gorbachev's programme of reforms was particularly welcomed by the Latvian population, who attached a great deal of emotional significance to the period of "democratic rule" in the interwar period.

The authorities in Moscow seem at first to have been sympathetic to, and even to have encouraged, the idea of setting up organisations in the Baltic republics which could boost radical economic and social reform, since the three republics were regarded as the most likely to implement such reforms successfully. The founding of the Popular Front of Latvia took place in October 1988, a few months after a similar popular

movement had been founded in Estonia. As in Estonia, the creative intelligentsia played an important role in the process of setting up the organisation, and a plenum at the Writers' Union of Latvia in June 1988 spurred the establishment of a Popular Front in Latvia.² The goal of the LTF was to press for radical reforms, but it was emphasised that such reforms would take place within the framework of all-union *perestroika*.

The nationality policy of the LTF was outlined in the programme adopted at the first congress.³ It is worth noting that the name of the movement was deliberately chosen so that it would reflect territory rather than ethnicity. The LTF thought it to be necessary completely to revise the nationality policies which were being practised, which were said to be based on Stalinist dogmas and doctrines. The movement came out in support of basing nationality relations on the Leninist principles of self-determination and equality among nations within the Soviet Union.⁴

The special status of the Latvian nation in Latvia was emphasised in the programme: the

НФЛ исходит из того, что латышский народ имеет в республике статус коренной нации, ибо Латвия является исторической территорией латышского народа, единственным местом в мире, где могут сохраняться и развиваться латышская нация, язык и латышская культура.⁵

Against this background the programme stipulated that, in accordance with the national self-determination of the Latvian people, there should be a proviso which guaranteed a majority of ethnic Latvians in all local and republican councils in Latvia. It was implicitly understood that the "non-natives" would have to accept the priority of the natives, and that these "non-natives" were to play a less important role than ethnic Latvians in the process of self-determination.

Although the role of the Latvian language and culture were emphasised in the LTF programme, the movement was also concerned with the "ethnic interests" of other nationalities. In this connection, the self-preservation of the various nationalities living in Latvia was seen as dependent upon the republic's sovereignty. Uncontrolled immigration was attacked, in the context of the critical demographic situation in the republic. It was stressed that no nationalities would be deported from the republic. However, the programme at the same time read that the

НФЛ призывает правительство Латвийской ССР к сотрудничеству с правительствами других республик с тем, чтобы на принципе добровольности помочь жертвам сталинской национальной политики вернуться на свою родину.⁶

Although the LTF was open to all nationalities, there was an overwhelming majority of Latvians at its founding congress.⁷ At this congress some of the resolutions were perceived by many non-Latvians as evidence that the organisation was first of all a

pressure group for ethnic Latvians. In resolution No. 8, for example, which was aimed at restricting Russian immigration, Russians were described as 'a huge mass of badly qualified and uncultured people', and as such posing a direct threat to vital Latvian interests.⁸ Similar attitudes were expressed by some, but far from all, leading LTF spokesmen, and this may have been one of the reasons for the low support for the organisation among Russians and other non-Latvians in its first year of its existence. A poll taken in late 1988 indicated that the LTF enjoyed the support of 74 per cent of ethnic Latvians but of only 10 per cent of Russians in the republic.⁹ The membership of the organisation was not exclusively Latvian, though: non-Latvians made up 10-15 per cent of the members of the LTF.¹⁰

There were also many LTF spokesmen who thought the pro-Latvian bias to be unfortunate, and who tried to integrate the national minorities under the LTF umbrella. In November 1988 Latvia's Association of National-Cultural Societies (in Russian it went under the acronym *ANKOL*¹¹) was set up under the auspices of the front. One month later the LTF, in cooperation with the Communist Party of Latvia, took the initiative to set up a Nationalities' Forum, seen as a setting in which the various nationalities living in Latvia could express their grievances and discuss their problems and concerns.¹² It was believed that by taking an interest in the cultural development of the national minorities one would expand the support base for the Front and avoid a political split between the Latvian and non-Latvian parts of the population.¹³ These initiatives were also commonly used for propaganda purposes as evidence that the presence of a popular front, far from being harmful to the interests of the Russian-speaking population, actually ensured the protection of the interests of the ethnic minorities.

The Front, moreover, sought to reach non-Latvian Russian-speakers through its weekly newspaper *Atmoda*, which was published in both Latvian and Russian. Although the main bulk of the materials in the two editions was identical, the Russian edition contained articles which were aimed specifically at informing the Russian part of the population about Latvian history, culture and traditions: issues which it was thought that many Russians in Latvia were not too familiar with.¹⁴ Similarly the Russian edition contained articles which dealt with topics such as the Russian Orthodox Church, ancient Russian traditions and Russian national identity.¹⁵

This first period of the LTF's existence was characterised by an intense national awakening among the Latvian population. What is interesting, in this connection, is that a similar national awakening was also expected from the other nationalities living in Latvia. National nihilism was seen as an evil, and to possess a strong national identity was regarded as the natural state of a human being, although during the years of Soviet rule such a national or ethnic identity had been under great pressure.¹⁶ The situation for Russians was thought to be particularly difficult: it was argued that the Soviet regime

had succeeded in depriving large segments of the ethnic Russian population of their ethnic identity, and that a majority of Russians therefore did not possess such an identity.¹⁷

This lack of ethnic identity also explained why so many Russians had left their "homeland" and moved to other areas of the USSR where material living conditions were better. As a well-known Latvian poet, Knuts Skuenieks, put it:

... мне представляется, что русский народ из всех остальных находится в самом плачевном положении. Вот свидетельство тому: сейчас около 60 миллионов (sic) - а то и больше (sic!) - русских живут за пределами своей родины. Нам как малому народу кажется просто непонятным такое повальное отсутствие элементарного патриотизма. ... (Мы) всё-таки рассматриваем национальный аспект как определённую форму реального самовыражения человека, коллектива.¹⁸

A common view among both Russians and Latvians supporting the LTF and the idea of Latvian sovereignty was that the question of Latvian independence should be decided exclusively by the Latvian nation itself (ethnic Latvians). Consequently, Russians living in Latvia should support the Latvians in their struggle for such sovereignty, or at least not interfere.¹⁹ In line with Lenin's principles on the national question, the struggle of small nations for their national self-determination was considered to be both legitimate and justified. There were also analysts who based their arguments in support of Latvia's or the Latvians' right to self-determination - sometimes it was specified that this was the exclusive right of the indigenous population of Latvia - on international principles which were stipulated in documents of the United Nations and other international organisations.²⁰

The signals given to the ethnic minorities were thus from the very start not uniform, and there appeared to be certain tensions between nationalist radicals and more centrist LTF leaders in their approach to the Russian question. The fact that there were, indeed, forces in Latvian politics that would like to see most Russian immigrants leave Latvia was exploited in parts of the Russian-language press, which often cited the most extreme articles in Latvian nationalist newspapers in order to discredit the popular movement as a whole.²¹

There were two additional events in Latvia which made Russians more cautious about supporting the popular movement. Many Russians felt uneasy about the initiative in the spring of 1989 of some pro-independence organisations to found a movement of citizens of the interwar Republic of Latvia and their direct descendants with the aim of conducting a referendum among such citizens on independence.²² Although the citizens' committees did not receive full backing from the LTF, many LTF leaders

refused to distance themselves from the Committee and its political goals, and Russians often did not differentiate between the two movements.

The second shock to many Russians was the surprising move of the Popular Front leadership in late May of the same year to call for a discussion of whether "sovereignty" within the Soviet Union, which had been the official goal of the movement, should not be replaced with a demand for full political independence from the USSR.²³ Many Russians were unprepared for this step, and the radicalisation of the movement and the general mood among the Latvian population convinced a greater number of Russians that if Latvia were to become an independent state, their own role in this state would be one of second-class citizens.

However, by the summer of 1989 the LTF put more emphasis on gaining the support of the ethnic minorities for the independence struggle, so that the popular movement would become a real mass movement. They were quite successful in this respect, and some Russians who had formerly been sceptical of the popular movement now became convinced that an independent Latvia would become a democratic state where the interests of all nationalities were going to be protected. The LTF leadership emphasised that although the organisation was in favour of full independence for Latvia, it gave priority to the parliamentary route, through the elections to the republican Supreme Council in the spring of 1990, in order to achieve this goal.²⁴ All permanent residents of Latvia would have the right to take part in these elections.

A publication on interethnic relations of July 1989, 'The Latvian Popular Front's ideological platform, based on the idea of creating an independent and democratic Latvia, for the consolidation of various nationalities living in Latvia', gives an illustration of the more conciliatory approach to the ethnic minorities.²⁵ Although it was still stated that the Latvian nation was the "carrier" (*nositel'*) of Latvian sovereignty, this was the only reference of a special status of ethnic Latvians in the statement. At the same time, all citizens of Latvia who supported the idea of the formation of an independent Latvian state, regardless of their nationality, were referred to as the guarantors (*garanty*) of Latvian sovereignty.

The statement stressed the economic problems facing the republic, and it was claimed that these problems would have the best chance of being solved in an independent and democratic Latvia. The traditions from the interwar Republic of Latvia were referred to and used as evidence that an independent Latvian state would respect the rights of national minorities, such as the right to national cultural autonomy. National minorities were also directly encouraged to join the popular movement:

НФЛ (Народный Фронт Латвии) считает, что наиболее надёжной гарантией соблюдения прав всех национальных групп является участие принадлежащих к ним лиц в (об)суждении, разработке и осуществлении программы создания политической, экономической, и правовой основы независимого Латвийского государства.²⁶

After assurances that a liberal approach to the question of Latvian citizenship would be chosen (see next section), it was concluded in the statement:

НФЛ заверяет всех жителей Латвии, что на трудном пути к независимости Латвия будет последовательно придерживаться демократических методов действия.²⁷

There are likely to be several reasons why the Popular Front leaders found it necessary to put so much emphasis on reassuring the national minorities about their position in an independent Latvia. One of the reasons was probably that the popular movement initially received support mainly from ethnic Latvians, while Russians tended to be sceptical of, or at least indifferent to, the movement. At the same time it was acknowledged by Latvian politicians that if Latvia were to gain independent statehood, which had now become the ultimate goal, they would have to count on support from the ethnic minorities, given the demographic situation in Latvia.²⁸ By promoting policies which took into account the interests of the national minorities and by demonstrating that the LTF was indeed a popular movement which enjoyed support from all national groups in Latvia, it was hoped that this would increase the legitimacy of the Latvian claims for independence both in Moscow and with the international community.

After the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and its secret protocols had become familiar to the public, the rhetoric of the independence movement slightly changed as well. While it had been common to argue the case for independence by referring to the Leninist principle of national self-determination, the focus was now changed to territorial and legal issues. It was argued that the logical conclusion of the illegal incorporation of Latvia into the Soviet Union was the "calm restoration" of the Republic of Latvia. Latvians had a claim to their own state, not so much because they constituted a nationality with the right to self-determination, but rather because the Latvian state *de jure* had never ceased to exist. When a parliamentary commission in Moscow which had been set up in the summer of 1989 to look into the historical background of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact concluded that the incorporation of the Baltic republics into the Soviet Union had not taken place in accordance with international law, this legal argument gained even more legitimacy.²⁹ Ironically, however, although there was a tendency to abandon purely ethnic arguments, the legal status of the (predominantly Russian) immigrants who had arrived in Latvia in the Soviet period now became open to question. At first there was little reason for alarm, as it was only the citizens'

committee and a few related organisations which made this point, and usually not very explicitly, while leading Popular Front spokesmen emphasised that Latvian independence would be in the interests of all the people of Latvia, regardless of nationality.³⁰

In the elections to the Latvian Supreme Soviet (later that year to be renamed Council) in March 1990, a majority of the elected candidates had been supported by the Popular Front. In many of the districts where the LTF candidates had been successful, there was a majority of non-Latvian voters.³¹ The success of LTF candidates in the elections was an indication of a general trend among the Russian population towards increased support for the independence cause (see Chapter 7 for a more detailed discussion of this issue). While democratic principles continued to be emphasised in the period leading up to independence, particularly within the LTF leadership, there were also forces within the organisation, often at a grassroots level, inspired by the arguments of the Citizens' Committee movement, whose nationalist aspirations on several occasions came up to the surface.

The independence struggle tended to be presented by LTF spokesmen not as a conflict between different nationalities:

This is by no means an ethnic or social conflict. If one examines who forms the core contingent supporting the opposition, one could characterise the conflict as one between civil society and representatives of the military complex.³²

Such a description was intensified during the January 1991 events, when the Latvian mass media carried films and photographs from the barricades in Riga, where Russian democrats were seen joining their Latvian brothers and sisters in their struggle against a totalitarian regime based in Moscow.

Considerable support for independence among Russians in Latvia, as demonstrated in the March 1991 poll on independence and the seeming victory of Russian democrats in the aborted August coup of the same year, made both Latvian and, particularly, Western observers optimistic about the prospects for ethnic harmony in Latvia once the goal of Latvian independence had been achieved. Erik Rudenshiold, for example, thought there was a general willingness among Latvian politicians to guarantee the rights of all ethnic groups, and he wrote in an otherwise well balanced account of Latvian ethnopolitics:

The short duration, surprising quiescence and sudden reversal of the August cabal left most Latvian residents relieved and ready to move from an ethnic to a national agenda.³³

Nils Muiznieks arrived at similar conclusions:

There appeared to be a willingness on both sides to come to mutually acceptable agreements (....). The prospects for peaceful resolution of (....) conflicts appear positive, given the past lack of bloodshed in the region, the emergence of political pluralism and a vibrant independent press, and the severing of links between the local pro-Soviet movement and Soviet security forces.³⁴

Although there have still not been any serious incidents of inter-ethnic violence in Latvia, it would, in my view, not be correct to say that mutually acceptable agreements on crucial issues have so far been worked out.³⁵ Developments after independence was restored have rather had the opposite outcome, where distrust has been created among Russians towards Latvian politicians and politics in general.³⁶ It seems reasonable to argue that the citizenship issue has been the most important factor in intensifying interethnic tensions in Latvia. The following section will therefore examine this issue in more detail.

4.3. The Citizenship Issue

There were calls for a separate Latvian citizenship even before the founding congress of the Popular Front, but initially the idea was for the creation of Latvian SSR citizenship to go along with Soviet citizenship as a means by which immigration could be halted.³⁷ At the founding congress of the LTF in October 1988, delegates discussed citizenship-related issues, but refrained from adopting actual resolutions on citizenship itself.³⁸ The idea of a Latvian SSR "non-state" citizenship was disregarded by many Latvian politicians, and particularly by the Citizens' Committee, whose spokesmen considered it merely an attempt to legalise the occupation and incorporation of Latvia into the USSR.³⁹ However, after full independence had been declared to be the ultimate goal of the popular movement, the question arose as to who should be entitled to citizenship of such an independent Latvian state. This question soon became one of the most, if not the most, controversial issues in Latvian politics, and suggestions as to how the issue should best be solved have taken up a great amount of space in Latvian newspapers over the last few years.

Although the number of proposed solutions to the problem of citizenship has been very large, it is still possible to identify three main models of such solutions which illustrate the main differences in the citizenship debate. The important factor in differentiating between the models is their answer to the question of who should constitute the initial community of citizens. Closely interlinked is the question of who should have the authority to make decisions on the citizenship issue. In addition the question of naturalisation of new citizens has been of considerable importance, but as

will be seen, there is no uniform view on this question among the supporters of any of the three models.

The first model will be called the 'option of restored pre-1940 citizenship', and was first identified with the Citizens' Committee of Latvia, but gradually gained ascendancy also among large segments of LTF activists. The "zero option" model, which is the most liberal of the three, was supported by prominent Latvian politicians, but was later abandoned by a majority of them, and came to enjoy support first of all among Russian-dominated organisations and parties. In their purified form, the two models mentioned could be labelled "ideal-type" models, because they have more or less fixed answers as to who should automatically be regarded as citizens of Latvia. The third model can be placed between the two "ideal-type" models, and contains some form of compromise solution between the two. In the following I shall examine each of the three models separately.

4.3.1. The "Restored pre-1940 Citizenship" Option

The formation of the Citizens' Committee in Latvia did much to radicalise the citizenship debate in the republic. By registering the names of all the citizens in the inter-war republic and their descendants, the Citizens' Committee advocated a conception of political community based firmly on descent. The idea behind the registration was to conduct a referendum on independence among pre-war citizens and their descendants, as it was claimed that they continued to be the only citizens of Latvia and were therefore the only persons who had the right to participate in the restoration of the Latvian state. There were, indeed, strong legal arguments in support of their views. If one accepted the generally recognised view that the incorporation of Latvia into the Soviet Union had been illegal, one could argue that the country was under no obligation to accommodate those who had settled in Latvia during the years of Soviet rule.⁴⁰

Although there can be no doubt that the small size of the Latvian nation and its weakening ethnodemographic position was an important factor in determining the position taken by the Citizens' Committee on the citizenship issue, it was continually stressed that the initial community of citizens was to be defined in territorial, not in ethnic, terms. About one quarter of the citizens of the interwar Republic of Latvia had been non-Latvians, and there were no political initiatives which sought to exclude them or their descendants from Latvian citizenship. The most important thing for the citizens' movement was strict adherence to the Latvian constitution, *Satversme*.⁴¹

The Citizens' Committee also held the view that only the *Saeima*, which was to be elected by the pre-war citizens and their direct descendants, had the authority and legitimacy to give guide-lines for naturalisation of new citizens and to adopt new

citizenship legislation. The Supreme Council was regarded as a "body of the occupying regime" and had no right to decide on questions of such vital importance.⁴² The proponents of this model had different opinions on which law should eventually be adopted by the *Saeima*, but there were relatively few who advocated that the law on citizenship from the interwar republic should be reinstated. However, this question was considered by many right-wing politicians to be of secondary importance, as long as there was a strict adherence to the principle that the ultimate decision was to be made, directly or indirectly, by what was regarded as the only true citizenry of Latvia.

Significant segments of the Citizen' Committee and the Latvian National Independence Movement (LNNK - *Latvijas Nacionālas Neatkarības Kustība*)⁴³, however, openly identified the survival of the Latvian nation as the primary goal. To them, strict adherence to the constitution was only a means by which this goal could be achieved. A political and cultural environment dominated by ethnic Latvians was seen as essential in preserving the Latvian nation from extinction.⁴⁴ Ethnic arguments were sometimes used in the propaganda for the "restored citizenship" model. At the Latvian Citizens' Congress it was thus stressed that there should be an "ethnically pure attitude towards citizenship, there should be no hypocrisy, there is nothing shameful in Latvian-like Latvia".⁴⁵ Several spokesmen for the movement argued that if the non-native proportion of the population exceeded 25 per cent, this would pose a long-term threat to the Latvian nation.⁴⁶ It was subsequently argued that such considerations should be taken into account when working on Latvian citizenship legislation. According to Mariss Grinbalts, one of the leaders of the citizens' movement in Latvia, this could be done by introducing a system of quotas with regard to the acquisition of citizenship:

Размеры квоты следовало бы рассчитать таким образом, чтобы обеспечить определённый удельный вес латышей среди граждан. Так как в 1940 году латыши составляли примерно три четверти от всех латвийских подданных, то ежегодную квоту можно высчитать, если разделить сумму естественного и механического прироста латышей в предыдущем году на три.⁴⁷

What, then, would be the status of Russians and other immigrants according to the "restored pre-1940 citizenship" model? One of the leaders of the Latvian National Independence Movement in an interview in the Russian-language newspaper *SM-segodnya* claimed that Russian immigrants would not even have the status of second-class citizens; they would be 'nobodies'.⁴⁸ Russians who had arrived in Latvia after the Soviet annexation had arrived illegally, according to international law and the 1927 Latvian law on immigration. They were thus seen as illegal immigrants with no legal rights in the Republic of Latvia.

The citizens' movement referred to international conventions which prohibit an occupying force from moving its citizens to territories it has occupied.⁴⁹ Since such illegal actions had already taken place, it was claimed that it was the responsibility of the occupying state (the Soviet Union) to remove their citizens from occupied Latvia. This involved the "repatriation" of Russian immigrants to their "homeland".⁵⁰ As was stated in a resolution to 'Latvian citizens' published in the Citizens' Congress newspaper 'Pilsonis' (Citizens):

The departure to their fatherland of the colonists will cause some temporary problems for the Soviet Union; for Latvia it is a question of life or death.⁵¹

The fate of the "colonists" themselves was not mentioned in the resolution.

4.3.2. The "Zero Option" Model for Citizenship

Since the "zero option" citizenship model was supported by a majority of Russians and spokesmen for the Russophone population, it will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7, which examines the political attitudes of the Russian population in Latvia. However, it is necessary briefly to present the model already in this chapter, as it had a certain influence on Latvian nationality policies, at least in the first stages of the period of analysis, and also because it gives a fuller picture of the whole range of views in the citizenship debate.

The "zero option" model for citizenship was first put forward by Juris Bojārs when he advocated the introduction of Latvian citizenship for all the inhabitants on the territory of the Latvian SSR at the time.⁵² The zero option implied that there should be no requirements for obtaining Latvian citizenship, except for having a residence permit in Latvia. After Latvian independence was recognised by Russia and the rest of the international community, a Latvian SSR citizenship alongside a Soviet citizenship was no longer feasible, and the "zero option" most often came to be understood as the granting of Latvian citizenship to Soviet citizens who resided in Latvia permanently before or on the date of independence (considered to be either 4 May 1990, when independence was declared through a transition period, or 21 August 1991, the day of the declaration of full independence).

The "zero option" had somewhat different meanings to advocates of this model. While some of them argued that citizenship should be granted **automatically** to all permanent residents on one particular date, others held the view that Latvian citizenship should be obtained only by people who **applied** for it.⁵³ Supporters of the "zero option" model also held fundamentally different views regarding the question of whether citizenship should also be granted to personnel in the Soviet Armed Forces.⁵⁴

Moreover, it could also be argued that a certain residence requirement is compatible with the "zero option" model. Since the model is linked to permanent residence, this concept must be given an operationable definition, and the concept could, for example, be residence in Latvia over a certain number of years.⁵⁵ Since a majority of Russians according to a number of opinion polls were in favour of the "zero option" model for citizenship but at the same time supported certain residence requirements for obtaining such citizenship, it seems plausible to suggest that such residence requirements did not contradict the main principles of the "zero option" model.

Crucial for the proponents of the "zero option" model was the need for an immediate settlement of the issue. It was argued that the elections to the Supreme Council of 1990 had been free and fair, which had also been confirmed by international observers. Since the Supreme Council was seen as a democratically elected body, it was also claimed that it should have the authority to adopt a law on citizenship. The argument put forward by national radicals that deputies to the Supreme Council had been elected from military electoral districts was not seen as relevant, as these deputies had been stripped of their mandates in the late summer of 1991.⁵⁶ For a more detailed discussion of the arguments which have been put forward in favour of the "zero option" model, I refer to chapter 7.

4.3.3. Towards a "Compromise Solution"?

It has been argued from both ends of the spectrum in the citizenship debate that any departure from the pure models would imply unacceptable violations of fundamental principles which cannot be open to negotiation. The very concept of "compromise" in the citizenship debate has therefore been criticised. I agree that the concept can have some unfortunate connotations, particularly because it seems to suggest a willingness to find mutually acceptable solutions to the issue among its adherents, while the actual situation has been that such a willingness for a great part has been absent. However, in the absence of a better term, solutions to the citizenship issue which involve some form of combination of elements from the two other models will here be called "compromise solutions". Latvian citizenship should not, according to this model, be granted to all those who settled in Latvia in the post-war period, but at the same time some settlers should have a chance to become citizens if they qualified according to certain requirements.

Many of the LTF spokesmen were initially in favour of adopting some form of the "zero option" for citizenship.⁵⁷ The statement of July 1989 which was referred to in the last section also contained some reference to the citizenship issue which, despite the

10-year residence requirement, must be classified as a "zero option" solution. It was here stated that

(основой) гражданства Латвии является свободное волеизъявление её жителей, независимо от их национальности, социальной и религиозной принадлежности, поддерживающих идею независимости Латвии и готовых проводить эту идею в жизнь. НФЛ выступает за предоставление гражданства независимой Латвийской республики всем постоянным жителям Латвии, прожившим на её территории к моменту регистрации гражданства не менее 10 лет.⁵⁸

A swift radicalisation of the popular movement and of Latvian politics was to follow, and this radicalisation became particularly visible in the autumn of 1991, just after independence had been declared and recognised internationally. Thus, when the Supreme Council of Latvia adopted a resolution on citizenship in October 1991, it rejected the "zero option" model, while the "compromise solution" which was adopted was in effect much more restrictive towards the immigrant population than previous statements of leading Latvian politicians had been indicating.⁵⁹

The Supreme Council resolution was called "On the Renewal of the Republic of Latvia's Citizens' Rights and Fundamental Principles of Naturalisation".⁶⁰ Although it was stated that the citizenship law of 23 August continued to exist, the large immigration into Latvia of USSR citizens had not been agreed in any treaty between the Republic of Latvia and the USSR, and there was therefore a need for new regulations on citizenship which would 'eliminate the consequences of the USSR's occupation and annexation of Latvia and (...) renew the legal rights of the community of citizens of the Republic of Latvia'.⁶¹ The 'USSR citizens' living in Latvia were not regarded as members of the community of Latvian citizens, and in this respect the resolution could be seen as leaning towards the "restored pre-1940 citizenship" option.

However, since the Supreme Council regarded itself as a legitimate body of power in the period of transition to independence, a majority of deputies claimed that it had the competence to resolve the citizenship issue. The parliament, thus, adopted guide-lines for the naturalisation of new citizens. Some groups would upon request automatically be granted citizenship. They included persons who were not citizens of the interwar Republic, but who had arrived legally in Latvia before 17 June 1940 and were now living and had permanent residence in Latvia.

Most Russians, however, had arrived in Latvia after the Second World War, and if they lived and had permanent residence in Latvia they would be granted citizenship only if they fulfilled a number of strict requirements. These included knowledge of Latvian at a conversational level, renunciation of previous citizenship, at least 16 years of residence in Latvia, and knowledge of the Latvian constitution. In addition they would be required to swear an oath of loyalty to the Republic of Latvia.

The resolution further stipulated that citizenship would not be granted to persons who had 'turned against the Republic of Latvia's independence', using anti-constitutional methods; persons who had been imprisoned for 'premeditated criminal acts', persons who were serving in the Soviet Armed Forces or state security services; persons who had 'spread chauvinism, fascism, communism or other totalitarian, as well as social class, dictatorial, ideas'; persons who were registered in medical institutions for drug abuse and/or as chronic alcoholics; persons who lived without a legal source of income, and others.

A compromise solution somehow presupposed that the Supreme Council was competent to resolve the citizenship issue, and this was the main difference from the "restored citizenship" model. It was thus expected that a law on citizenship would be adopted relatively quickly, with naturalisation of new citizens starting before the elections to the new *Saeima*. The Supreme Council passed a draft law on citizenship on its first reading in November 1991 with only few amendments from the citizenship resolution adopted one month earlier.⁶² However, the law would acquire legal force only after a second reading.

In the meantime the Supreme Council adopted legislation which gave citizenship automatically also to persons who had not been citizens of Latvia in 1940 or their descendants. According to a Supreme Council resolution of 28 October 1992, persons who had lived permanently in Latvia before 1914 (and as such would have been entitled to citizenship according to the citizenship law of 1919) but who had not "formally" been registered as citizens, and their direct descendants, were to be considered citizens of Latvia.⁶³ Although this did not involve post-war immigrants, it was still seen as a break with the principle that decisions which involved changes of the size of the community of citizens of Latvia could be taken only by a *Saeima* elected by citizens of Latvia or, alternatively, a referendum among the "true citizens" of Latvia.

In the winter of 1993 a majority of deputies in the Supreme Council voted in favour of a proposal that ethnic Latvians, whether or not they had been citizens of other states, should have the right to Latvian citizenship if they wanted it. They would, however, as a rule have to renounce their former citizenship. This was the first time in the citizenship debate in Latvia that the acquisition of citizenship had been explicitly linked to ethnicity.⁶⁴ The *Ravnopravie* (Equal Rights) faction in the parliament (see chapter 8) voted in favour of the proposal, although its deputies deplored the fact that ethnicity could be used as a principle for granting citizenship. According to Tatyana Zhdanok, a prominent *Ravnopravie* spokeswoman, the faction would support any proposals which implied that the present community of citizens would be broadened.⁶⁵ National radicals, on the other hand, although generally in favour of measures which would increase the Latvian share of the population, were strongly opposed to this concrete proposal. They thought that it would undermine the principle that only the new

Saeima (elected by "true citizens") was competent to take measures which would change the present community of citizens.⁶⁶ Before this resolution was put into effect, it was decided to consult international organisations in order to confirm that the proposed amendments did not break with the norms of the international community. This was seen by some deputies as a way deliberately to avoid further discussion of the issue until the new *Saeima* was elected in June of the same year.⁶⁷

By acknowledging that Latvia should not be considered a *new* but a *restored* state, more and more politicians came to support the idea that the logical conclusion of this was that the same applied to the citizenship question, so that citizenship should first be restored only to the original citizenry of the interwar republic. Although the Supreme Council had declared itself to be competent to resolve the issue, the majority of deputies in the parliament did not have an interest in passing citizenship legislation quickly, despite many assurances of the opposite, and they managed to retard the legislative process.⁶⁸ Since there were no established guide-lines for the naturalisation of new citizens, the result was that only citizens of the interwar republic and their direct descendants would be entitled to take part in the elections to the new *Saeima*. This must be considered to have been a success for the national independence movement and the national radicals, whose main principles in the citizenship debate had gained ascendancy despite initially having been outvoted in the Supreme Council.

The resolution adopted on 28 October about recognising as citizens also persons who had lived in Latvia in 1914 was ignored by the Department for Citizenship and Immigration when it worked out guide-lines for the registration of the Latvian population. Certain amendments were therefore required so that it could come into legal force. On 5 January 1993 the Supreme Council, with a great number of deputies absent, voted against such amendments.⁶⁹ This can be seen as another victory for nationalist forces in Latvia.⁷⁰

4.4. Other issues

4.4.1. The Language Issue

As we saw in the previous chapter, the Russian language enjoyed a privileged status in all the republics of the former Soviet Union. After Latvia was annexed by the Soviet Union, the area in which only the Russian language was used was artificially broadened. Russians did not have to learn Latvian in the same way that Latvians had to study Russian, and it was expected that interethnic communication would take place in the Soviet *lingua franca*. At the same time language continued to be perhaps the most important feature by which one ethnic group could be identified from others. Rasma

Karklins has underlined the importance of language, alongside with geographical/territorial belonging, for national identity in the former Soviet Union.⁷¹

In the awakening process the Popular Front soon came to identify as one of its main tasks the improvement of the status of the Latvian language in the land historically inhabited by Latvians. The Front thus advocated policies which would guarantee the use of Latvian as the language of official documents within the boundaries of the national republic, as well as the right of the indigenous residents to be able to speak the native language everywhere in their native land. However, the Russian language was also given a significant role in the early documents of the organisation. Thus, the first programme of the Popular Front read:

Граждане, обращаясь в государственные органы, учреждения, организации, предприятия Латвийской ССР, могут пользоваться как латышским, так и русским языком и получать официальные документы на любом языке по своему выбору. В сфере социального обслуживания должно обеспечиваться свободное использование латышского и русского языков.⁷²

On 5 May 1989 a language law was passed.⁷³ Latvian was declared to be the official state language of Latvia. However, the Latvian language law was less categorical in its restrictions on the use of Russian than was its Estonian counterpart which had been passed in January of the same year.⁷⁴ The choice between using Latvian or Russian in official and other public situations was not regulated by law but belonged to the speaker.⁷⁵ The law provided for the use of Russian in all spheres of public activity except with regard to place names and labels on goods manufactured in Latvia. It also included the legal provision of Russian as a language of communication among nationalities. However, the law contained elements which pointed to the supreme status of the Latvian language. Perhaps most importantly, the law stipulated that state employees would be required to learn the state language within a three year period, i.e., by 5 May 1992.

Subsequent instructions specified the demands for language proficiency for different groups of employees.⁷⁶ The main principle was that language proficiency should be required to the extent that it was necessary in order to fulfil one's work tasks. Since the need for language proficiency varied from one job category to another, three different levels of language requirements were specified in the instructions. While only some basic understanding and elementary oral skills would be required from employees and service personnel with only limited interactions with the public, oral and written fluency would be required from employees who had broader contacts with the public, and from most employees with administrative work tasks.

The law was to come into force in May 1992, but at the end of March 1992 a large number of amendments to the law were adopted.⁷⁷ The main difference from the

"old" version was that all references except one which indicated a special role for the Russian language in Latvia had been removed. The exception was Article 8, which read that 'State Government and administrative bodies, institutions, enterprises, organisations must accept and must review documents submitted by residents in Latvian, English, German and Russian'. The state language could now be used in all written replies by an official to an individual, regardless of the language in which the official had been approached. However, it was also stated in the law that the above-mentioned institutions and their officials '*may* [author's italics] also provide a reply in the language in which the person has applied to them'.⁷⁸

Although some deputies from the Popular Front fraction in the parliament claimed that the amendments to the law had been only minor and did not concern the basic principles of the law, critics on the contrary claimed that the parliament had in essence passed a new law, and deliberately done so only one month before the law was to come into effect.⁷⁹ In the words of a Supreme Council deputy,

(В) первом законе речь шла о введении реального двуязычия, во втором речь идёт уже о полном вытеснении русского языка из всех сфер.⁸⁰

Another critic, B. Osipov, pointed to the fact that the first 1989 version of the law had contained a clause stipulating that it was the responsibility of the government to provide for the teaching of the Latvian language to the adult population. This clause which, according to Osipov, had never been implemented in practice, had been dropped from the amended version of the law.⁸¹

Boris Tsilevich ascribed the amended version of the law to the ethnocentric concept of the Latvian state.⁸² Latvia was, he claimed, seen as a state belonging the Latvians; the Latvians were consequently to be regarded as the masters on the Latvian land. All other nationalities were, in Tsilevich's view, regarded as aliens, who are obliged to 'adapt themselves to their masters' (*podlazhivat'sya pod khozyaev*). Indeed, the new introduction in the amended version of the law pointed in this direction. It was stated here that 'Latvia is the only ethnic territory [sic] in the world which is inhabited by the Latvian nation'.

Tsilevich admitted that the Latvian language had suffered during Soviet rule in Latvia. He had therefore been in favour of introducing the Latvian language as the state language of Latvia, which would make it possible to use the Latvian language all over Latvian territory.⁸³ However, Tsilevich thought that the situation had changed after the achievement of independent Latvian statehood. In this new situation some liberalisation of the language requirements should be expected, due to the fact that 48 per cent of the Latvian population regarded Russian as their mother tongue.⁸⁴ Instead, a law had been adopted which had dramatically reduced the possibilities of using other languages, and the Russian language had been deprived of the status of a 'normative language'

(defined as a language environment providing social and communicative functions).⁸⁵ The fact that the local authorities were not provided with the right to use Russian as a regional official language along with the state language, even in districts where the Russophone population makes up a majority, and where there are long traditions of large settlements of Russians (such as in Latgale in East Latvia), was also subject to criticism.

The language law was criticised for not containing clear criteria as to who would be required to pass a language test. According to the law such criteria were to be specified by a resolution of the Council of Ministers, which again referred to departmental instructions, but many sceptics claimed that they were highly arbitrary. There was widespread resentment of the fact that the level of Latvian required from particular groups of employees was constantly being raised, and that it did not correspond to the language knowledge actually required to fulfil individual work tasks.⁸⁶ Examinations often focused on medieval Latvian history and culture and tended not to be connected with professional requirements.⁸⁷

4.4.2. National Cultural Autonomy

The Republic of Latvia's liberal legislation for its ethnic minorities in the inter-war period has often been presented as evidence that the national minorities would be much better off in an independent Latvia than they had been, and would ever be, in the Soviet Union. The idea of national cultural autonomy for ethnic minorities was one of the pillars of interwar nationality policies in Latvia (see chapter 4), and the LFT considered the experience from that period to be so positive that it wanted to adopt the same concept for an independent Latvia. This would, it was hoped, also increase the legitimacy of Latvian independence in the international community, and make national minorities more favourably inclined towards the independence cause.

Thus, on 13 March 1991 the Latvian Supreme Council adopted the "Law on the Free Development of National and Ethnic Groups in Latvia and the Right to Cultural Autonomy".⁸⁸ The text makes use of Broliiss's terminology which was referred to in Chapter 1. The law differentiates between the Latvian nation, the ancient Liv indigenous nationality (*tautība*), and other ethnic and national groups currently living in Latvia (Paragraph 4). Equal rights are guaranteed for all residents of Latvia regardless of nationality, in accordance with international norms on human rights (Paragraph 1). Moreover, all nationalities and ethnic groups living in Latvia are guaranteed cultural autonomy and cultural self-administration (*pašvaldība*).

According to Paragraph 5 of the law, people can freely organise their national societies and organisations, and the government is responsible for promoting their

activities and for financial support. The law also reads that national and ethnic groups can send their own representatives to the Supreme Council's "Consultative Nationalities Council", and through its intermediary role participate in the process of drafting laws (Paragraph 7). The law, however, neither specifies the duties of this council, nor how it is to be formed.⁸⁹

A number of paragraphs in the law deal with questions related to language, education and culture.⁹⁰ There are provisions in the law for certain economic privileges for national cultural organisations. For example, these organisations do not have to pay taxes on their property and profits, and all gifts and contributions to such organisations are also exempted from taxes (Paragraph 14).

The law was passed without much debate, and it was unanimously adopted by the Latvian parliament, which was a rare event. The law has subsequently been evaluated positively by most commentators.⁹¹ There have, however, also been critical voices. One of the main critics of the law on national cultural autonomy is Boris Tsilevich.⁹² He acknowledges that the law has many positive aspects, but as a whole he sees it as a failure because of what he describes as several insufficiencies. Tsilevich criticises the lack of definitions of the terminology used in the law. The law operates with terminology used in traditional Soviet writings on nationality issues, where the terms "nation", "national group" and "ethnic group" have acquired meaning different from that in the West. Such terms should therefore, in Tsilevich's opinion, have been defined or explained in the law.

However, Tsilevich's main objection to the law is its declaratory form:

Торжественно провозглашая определённые права, закон не предусматривает никаких гарантий, никаких процедур, нормативов, механизмов реализации.

Various examples are provided to demonstrate how the implementation of the law depends on the good-will of the bureaucrats. The law stipulates the responsibility of the government to contribute materially to the activities of national cultural organisations but, according to Tsilevich different organisations are not guaranteed equal financial support. He gives examples of organisations which use every occasion to praise the Latvian government and therefore count on support from the authorities, while organisations less supportive of the policies of the government have to manage without such support.

More than two years after the law on national cultural autonomy was passed a Consultative Nationalities Council had still not been established, as the law had stipulated. No mechanisms for elections to this council had been adopted, and even if such a council were to be established, it would still have only a consultative function. Leading politicians in the parliament have opted for a mechanism whereby national cultural organisations elect representatives to this council, according to a principle of

"parity" (i.e., irrespective of the size of the respective ethnic group), but no agreement has been reached, partly because the Russians want a larger number of representatives.⁹³ Many spokesmen for the national minorities are also sceptical of the idea that the representatives are to be elected only from "non-political" organisations, and they point out that only a small part of the national minorities population in Latvia participates in such organisations (see Chapter 8). These spokesmen are therefore afraid that such a council would be used by the Latvian authorities only for propaganda purposes, to show to the world how "democratically" national minorities are treated in Latvia.⁹⁴

According to Tsilevich, the term "autonomy" used in the law completely lacks content.⁹⁵ Whereas Estonian and Latvian cultural autonomy in the period of independence involved some real self-administration over issues such as education and culture, no references are made to such arrangements in the Latvian law of 1991. Tsilevich points to the fact that of the 100 officials working in the Ministry of Education, only 3 belonged to any of the national minorities, and they did not occupy any of the most influential positions. This made it hard to talk of any autonomy over school issues. The same could be said about the area of culture, according to Tsilevich. Had national minorities had any autonomy in this field, it would have been impossible to close down one of the leading Russian theatres with an international reputation; the Riga Youth Theatre, he believed.⁹⁶

The concept of cultural national autonomy from the first independence period has been adopted also in Latvian legislation, but although the actual implementation of the law is only in its initial phase, Tsilevich appears to be right when he argues that the practical content of this concept has changed somewhat from that of the Latvian Republic in the interwar period. We saw in Chapter 2 that the ethnic minorities in the 1920s had a great degree of influence over their own schools, and the law on cultural autonomy of 1991 does not provide for any such school autonomy. A counterargument would, however, be that some form of standardised school system is in the interest of the ethnic minorities themselves, who will easier be integrated into a Latvian environment if they receive more or less the same type of education as Latvian children of the same age. The debate on this issue is likely to continue, as the law only stipulates the broad principles of national cultural autonomy, while much of the practical implementation of the law will have to be determined later.

4.4.3. A Free Choice of Nationality?

The law referred to above on "The Free Development..." provides for the right of individuals at the age of 16 freely to choose nationality in accordance with their national identity; nationality can also be changed.⁹⁷ This is, as we have seen, different

from the Soviet practice introduced in the 1930s where the individual automatically inherited the nationality of his/her parents. However, there is no specification in the Latvian law of whether an individual has the right to choose not to have any official nationality. In addition, the law does not state whether or not Latvia is to continue the practice from the Soviet period of registering nationality in the passport, such as was the case with the notorious "fifth point" in Soviet internal passports.

So far there are no indications that Latvian authorities intend to remove the statement of nationality from Latvian passports. Indeed, according to the "Law on the Registration of Residents" itself, each individual has to register his/her nationality for the official register of the population, and new passports that are issued all refer to the nationality (ethnicity) of the holder.⁹⁸ The same concerns children as well. There were examples of parents who wanted to leave it to their children to decide their own nationality according to their self-consciousness, but they were not allowed to do so.⁹⁹

If the Law on the Registration of Residents does not directly contradict the law on "Free Development", the latter law is directly contradicted by internal instructions elaborated in the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, which was given the responsibility for the registration of the Latvian population.¹⁰⁰ According to these instructions, individuals had to report the official nationality of their parents to the registration officials. Only if the parents were of different nationalities could the individual choose his/her own nationality, but they did not really have a free choice, as they would still have to choose the nationality of one of their parents:

(С)овершеннолетнему лицу национальность записывается как национальность одного из родителей, соответственно записи в паспорте. В этих случаях во время регистрации менять национальность не разрешается.¹⁰¹

Another peculiarity in the instructions points to a lack of terminological consistency. When reporting nationality, ethnic Latvians were asked to put a cross in the appropriate box. It was further stated:

Гражданину (-ке) другой национальности надо вписать полное название соответствующего государства (...).¹⁰²

Nationality and citizenship here seem to be confused. It is obvious that this entry is not asking about citizenship, as citizenship is to be stated at another place in the form. It rather seems to be an expression of the idea that every nationality has an ethnic homeland which can be identified as a state. Critics of these instructions, however, rightly argue that this is not always the case. The instructions can therefore easily be read as if non-Latvians do not really belong to Latvia, whether they are citizens of Latvia or not.

It is worth noting that the registration of nationality is an uncommon practice in most countries, with the exception of Soviet and post-Soviet states, and that such a

practice did not exist during the period of Latvian independence. In an interview with the author in February 1993, Andrejs Panteļējevs, the chairman of the Supreme Council Standing Commission on Human Rights and Nationality Questions, admitted the discrepancies between Latvian legislation and the instructions referred to above. He claimed, however, that identification of nationality had been requested by smaller national groups in Latvia, which allegedly would feel more secure if their nationality were officially registered. In Panteļējevs' view, these discrepancies would disappear when a new parliament was elected which had the authority to enforce the implementation of its own legislation. The Popular Front leader, Uldis Augstkalns, however, believed there would be a need to state nationality in Latvian passports in the foreseeable future, due to the continuing unfavourable demographic situation in Latvia.¹⁰³ Critics, on the other hand, including the present author, have argued that ethnic self-identity tends to be reinforced by the registration of an official nationality in the passport and other official documents, and believe that the Latvian practice in this area could serve artificially to strengthen ethnicity and to retard natural integration processes.¹⁰⁴

4.5. Conclusions

To many Russians living in Latvia as well as to a number of western observers the radicalisation of Latvian ethnopolitics after the aborted August 1991 coup and the restoration of Latvian independence came as a big surprise. Before that time there had been widespread expectations that if Latvia again became an independent state, this would be the best guarantee of harmonious ethnic relations in the republic. This chapter has showed that these expectations have not, at least until the present, been fulfilled. Let us therefore look at some suggestions why independent statehood was unlikely to become a panacea for resolving multiethnic tensions in Latvia.¹⁰⁵

One explanation, although unsatisfactory, would be that conflict will inevitably develop between ethnic groups living together in the same territory if there are no oppressive forces to prevent this from taking place. According to this theory, interethnic conflict did not develop in the Soviet Union because the regime could employ direct or more subtle means of coercion which deterred people from expressing their interethnic grievances. As soon as such forces are removed, the theory goes, latent interethnic tensions are free to manifest themselves.

There is, however, an abundance of evidence of ethnic groups that successfully coexist without being under any form of outside pressures. Even in Latvia, as we shall see (Chapter 6), tensions are mostly confined to the political level and there seems to be less tension in areas where personal interaction between different ethnic groups takes

place. Indeed, one of the most remarkable features of the Latvian transition to independence has been the absence of interethnic violence. Thus, although one should not disregard the possibility that part of the explanation for the radicalisation of Latvian ethnopolitics can be found in the general liberalisation of political life which has also made it acceptable to express views that it was impossible to express openly before, one must also look for additional explanatory factors.

A related and somewhat more plausible explanation would be that Latvian politicians were not sincere when they talked about equal rights and the "zero option" for citizenship in the first phases of the independence struggle, and that their real intentions were all the time to strengthen the ethnic Latvian predominance.¹⁰⁶ However, since they thought the support of Russians and other ethnic minorities was needed in order to gain legitimacy for the independence cause, first of all in Moscow but also in the international community, they had to give some concessions to these groups. When independence had been regained, according to this theory, there was no longer any need for support from Latvia's Russian community, and the politicians could reveal their "true intentions". Some Russian critics who adhere to this theory believe that the ultimate goal of Latvian politicians is a Latvia free or almost free of other ethnic groups, and that only pressure from Russia, the international community or Russians living in Latvia themselves has prevented even more stringent measures from being introduced to implement their plans.

There are, however, strong arguments against such theories as well. Latvian politicians continue to take diametrically differing views on ethnopolitical issues, and it is unlikely that most of those politicians who do not agree with the national radicals in reality share all their political views. There have been suggestions that Latvian politicians from the outset of the independence struggle agreed on the ultimate goals, but that they deliberately split into various factions which could complement each other in order to achieve these goals. Conspiracy theories are popular in the post-Soviet states, but I believe one should be careful about accepting such theories uncritically. In my opinion, substantial and real political differences are being expressed on the Latvian ethnopolitical scene, not simply fabricated ones.

This is not to say that Latvian politicians have not taken tactical considerations into account. One of the main reasons for the radicalisation of the popular movement may be that this was seen as necessary by LTF politicians in order to regain some of the initiative from the LNNK and the Citizens' Committee movement, which seemed to have had considerable success in establishing their own powerbase in Latvian politics. A powerful Citizens' Congress could have posed a serious threat to politicians in the Supreme Council, and, by adopting parts of their political programme, LTF politicians may have hoped to avoid the risk that the electorate would abandon them. It is also possible that LTF politicians, many of whom had occupied leading positions in the

Soviet period, found it necessary to play on anti-Russian sentiments in the population in order to distract attention from their own political past or from a poor economic performance.¹⁰⁷

Another factor which may have contributed to the radicalisation of Latvian ethnopolitics is the speed by which Latvia gained *de facto* independence.¹⁰⁸ Latvian politicians suddenly found themselves with political control, and if they earlier had believed that it would be necessary to give some concessions to Russia (the Soviet Union) for their independence, for example in the form of guarantees to the Russian-speaking minorities living in Latvia, such guarantees were no longer required. In this situation ethnopolitical radicalisation could also be used as a way of weakening political opponents.

There are also observers who see the Bolshevik political culture of Latvia as one of the reasons for increasing ethnocentrism in Latvian politics.¹⁰⁹ Such a culture is reflected in politicians regarding all political opponents as enemies and a threat to state security, and in a lack of ability or willingness of these same politicians to seek compromises. This argument should not be rejected, although one could argue that the lack of willingness to seek compromises with the opposition was also a characteristic feature of Latvian politics in the interwar independence period. Moreover, it can be argued that there indeed *are* political forces who represent a threat to Latvian state security, or who would pose such a threat in a crisis situation. This could be a good reason why Latvian politicians want to make sure that such forces are unable to influence political life in the country.

Unstable bilateral relations with Russia are another factor which is likely to have influenced Latvian ethnopolitics. Russia's involvement in Latvian political developments and its continual, and often exaggerated, stress on "gross violations" of the rights of the Russian-speaking population in Latvia in the Russian press and international fora have created an atmosphere in which dialogue and cooperation have become more difficult. The linking of the questions of a withdrawal of Russian troops and the situation for the Russian-speaking population has also been badly received among Latvian politicians, who regard this as evidence that Russia will seek to retain political influence over internal developments in Latvia. In this situation many Russians in Latvia find themselves in a loyalty conflict. However, if they express sympathy with Russia's involvement, this is often interpreted as a sign that the Russian population cannot be fully trusted, and makes Latvian politicians even more convinced that political dominance of ethnic Latvians must be ensured in order to protect national interests. The result is more alienation among certain segments of the Russian population, and less trust on its part in Latvian politicians and politics.

Indeed, part of the explanation for the radicalisation of Latvian ethnopolitics described in this chapter can probably be found in the Russian population itself, or in

the way this population is perceived by the ethnic Latvians in the country. Russians' involvement in Interfront and similar organisations which actively opposed the independence cause and initiated actions aimed at preserving the Soviet state and political system probably made many Latvians and Latvian politicians sceptical about providing all residents of the republic with full political rights. Such signals were intercepted and sometimes exploited by Latvian politicians, receptive as they were to the interests of their electorate. Although far from all Russians were sympathetic to the Soviet "loyalist" organisations in Latvia (as we shall see in later chapters), many Latvians perceived a threat that at least a substantial number of recent Russian immigrants would not respect Latvian independence, were a critical situation to emerge. In the next chapters of the thesis the Russian population in Latvia will be examined from a variety of angles, and I hope that the discussion will make it easier to assess to what extent the perceived threat from the Russian population was realistic, and whether Latvian ethnopolitics in effect increased rather than reduced the risk of interethnic conflict in the country.

¹Graham Smith has pointed to three important structural conditions: a well-developed collective consciousness of nationhood; the presence of a native cultural intelligentsia with a vested interest in the social reproduction of their languages and cultures; and, finally, the Balts had amassed a multiplicity of grievances which easily fitted the template of nationalism. Smith (1994).

²After the Plenum a coalition of 17 well-known intellectuals, of whom two were Russians, wrote a letter which called for the foundation of a Popular Front. For more details, see Bungs (1988). L. M. Drobizheva gives an account of the role of the intelligentsia in the popular movements in the Baltic republics. See L. Drobizheva (1991).

³For the text of the programme see *Daugava*, no. 12, 1988, pp. 72-83.

⁴*ibid.*, Paragraphs I.3 (p. 73) and IV.1 (p. 76).

⁵*ibid.*, Paragraph IV.3.

⁶*ibid.*, Paragraph IV.5.

⁷Dreifelds (1989).

⁸See B. Kagarlitsky (1990), p. 47.

⁹*Atmoda*, 16 January, 1989.

¹⁰Dzintra Bungs suggests that non-Latvians constituted 15 per cent of the LTF. See Bungs (1989). A somewhat lower figure, 10 per cent, was suggested by J. Brolišs (1989), p. 183.

¹¹*Assotsiatsiya Natsional'no-Kul'turnykh Obshchestv Latvii*.

¹²*Latvijas PSR Tautu Foruma Materiali*, Riga: Avots, 1989.

¹³See N. R. Muiznieks (1989), pp. 20-22.

¹⁴See e.g. the article about the traditional Latvian Midsummernight Festival, Jani; Signe Senfelde: "Večer trav, Večer tsvetov, Večer L. ģo", *Atmoda* (Russian edition), 23 June 1989, p. 1; and the article about the historical background for Latvia's incorporation in the USSR; Elita Veidemane, "Kak ustanovili Sovetskuyu vlast' v Latvii", *Atmoda* (Russian edition), 17 July 1989, p. 1.

¹⁵E.g. article written by the leader of the Central Council of the Old Believers' Church of Latvia, Ioann Miroljubov: "Dolgii put' k prazdniku", *Atmoda* (Russian edition), 24 April 1989, p. 3, and A. Panshin, "Problema Solzhenitsyna", *Atmoda* (Russian edition), 5 June 1989, p. 14.

¹⁶This was also reflected in the Popular Front Programme. See *Daugava*, no. 12, 1988, pp. 76-77.

¹⁷One of the most comprehensive accounts of this view can be found in a Tallinn-based journal. See article by Vladimir Nevskii, *Raduga*, no. 5, 1992.

¹⁸K. Skuenieks (1990), p. 226.

¹⁹See, for example, M. Gorskii, "K ne-latysham", *Atmoda* (Russian edition), 15 May 1989, p. 3.

²⁰Egils Levits, "Pravo latyshskogo naroda kak men'shinstva na svoe gosudarstvo", *Atmoda* (Russian edition), 23 June 1989, p. 2.

²¹See, for example, *Edinstvo*, 17 December, 1990, p. 4; and *Novosti Rigi*, 22 May 1991.

- ²²The initiative to create these Citizens' Committees came from Latvia's National Independence movement and the Environmental Protection Club, but gradually other groups joined them in their efforts to set up such committees. For more on the Committee, see Muiznieks (1990).
- ²³*Padomju Jaunatne*, 2 June, 1989.
- ²⁴Muiznieks (1989), op. cit., pp. 20-22.
- ²⁵*Atmoda* (Russian edition), 17 July, 1989, p. 1.
- ²⁶ibid.
- ²⁷ibid.
- ²⁸Dreifelds (1990-91), pp. 65-66.
- ²⁹Smith (ed.) (1994b).
- ³⁰Such considerations were also expressed in the amended programmes of the Popular Front. See, for example, *Baltiiskoe Vremya*, 8 January 1991, pp. 4-5.
- ³¹The election results gave the following composition of the Supreme Concil as constituted on 4 May 1990: The LTF and associated deputies made up a total of 144 deputies, while the Russian-dominated Equal Rights faction made up 53 deputies. *Latvijas Republikas Augstākās Padomes un Valdības ziņotājs, no. 23, 7 June 1990*.
- ³²*Atmoda*, 8 May, 1990. See R. Karklins (1990b).
- ³³Rudenshiold (1992), p. 614.
- ³⁴Muiznieks (1993), p. 201.
- ³⁵This has also had the effect that some western observers tend to be more pessimistic about future prospects for interethnic harmony. See, e.g., Kolstø (1994).
- ³⁶See Apine (1994).
- ³⁷Smith (1994b).
- ³⁸Smith, Aasland and Mole (1994).
- ³⁹*Atmoda*, 12 June 1989.
- ⁴⁰Aasland (1994).
- ⁴¹*Satversme* was also the name of the right-wing faction in the parliament which represented the same political views.
- ⁴²See debate in *Diena* November 1992 - February 1993 where representatives of most political parties and movements were asked about their attitudes to the citizenship issue. A majority held the view that only the *Saeima* elected by citizens of Latvia has the competence to decide on such a vital question. A summing up of the debate was published in *Diena*, 9 February 1993, p. 2. See e.g. *Diena* 5 February 1993, p. 2.
- ⁴³I do not make a distinction here between the Citizens' Committee/the Citizens' Congress on the one hand and the Latvian National Independence Movement on the other, as they for a long time had cross-cutting memberships; for the most part they had the same views on the citizenship issue, although they chose somewhat different paths to achieve their goals. See *Diena*, 18 June 1991, pp. 4-5.
- ⁴⁴See, for example, the interview with Juris Dobelis in *SM-segodnya*, 17 October 1992, p. 1.
- ⁴⁵FBIS-SOV-90-085, p. 89.
- ⁴⁶Kvernørød (1993).
- ⁴⁷*Diena*, 18 December 1992, p. 2.
- ⁴⁸*SM-segodnya*, 11 September 1991, p. 1. This interview with Visvaldis Lacis caused a sensation in most of the Russian-language press, while certain LNNK spokesmen claimed that Lacis had been misquoted. Lacis himself, however, never denied that he had been quoted correctly.
- ⁴⁹What is being referred to is the Geneva Convention of 1949, ratified by the Soviet Union in 1954.
- ⁵⁰*Pilsonis*, 17-23 September, 1991, p. 1.
- ⁵¹ibid. [Author's translation from Latvian]
- ⁵²Kvernørød (1993).
- ⁵³The Lithuanian law on citizenship, which was adopted in November 1989, can be classified as a version of the 'zero option' model. Citizenship was granted automatically to citizens of the interwar Republic of Lithuania and their descendants. The same was true of people born and permanently residing in Lithuania without citizenship of another state. Other permanent residents of Lithuania were given two years to decide whether to take Lithuanian citizenship or not. The law did not stipulate any additional requirements in terms of language knowledge or length of residency in Lithuania. The text of the law can be found in FBIS-SOV-90-002, pp. 43-47.
- ⁵⁴Author's interview with Andrei Vorontsov, leader of the Baltic Constitutional Party (see Chapter 8) and journalist on the Russian-language newspaper *SM-segodnya*, Riga, February 1993.

⁵⁵See Kolstø, (1994) op. cit.

⁵⁶See *Diena*, 26 January, 1993, p. 2.

⁵⁷This includes the Chairman of the Supreme Council of Latvia, Anatolijs Gorbunovs. See Kolstø (1993), p. 35.

⁵⁸*Atmoda* (Russian edition), 17 July, 1989, p. 1.

⁵⁹As late as in the winter and spring of 1991 western observers did not believe that the more radical solutions to the citizenship issue would be adopted. See e.g. Kionka (1991) and Aasland (1991).

⁶⁰For the text of the resolution, see *Diena*, 18 October 1991. An English translation has been printed in the pamphlet *About the Republic of Latvia*, a collection of laws and resolutions collected by the Standing Commission on Human Rights and National Questions under the Supreme Council of Latvia (Riga, 1992, pp. 51-53).

⁶¹ibid.

⁶²For the text of the law, see *About the Republic of Latvia*, op. cit. pp. 54-62

⁶³"Par Latvijas Republikas pilsoņu tiseību atzīšanas nosacījumiem personām, kuras pirms 1914. gada 1. augustā dzīvoja Latvijas robežās, un viņu pēcnācējiem", *APMP* (supplement to *Diena*), 6 November 1992, p. 2.

⁶⁴See *SM-segodnya*, 11 February 1993, p. 1.

⁶⁵Author's interview, Riga, February 1993.

⁶⁶*Diena*, 28 January 1993, p. 1.

⁶⁷This opinion was, for example, held by the chairman of the Supreme Council Standing Commission on Human Rights and National Questions, Andrejs Panteļējevs. Author's interview, Riga, February 1993. See also *Diena*, 6 March 1993, p. 1.

⁶⁸See e.g. interview with Gorbunovs, *Diena*, 28 November 1993, p. 2.

⁶⁹See K. Matveev, "Natsional'nye fundamentalisty uchatsya na oshibkakh svoikh predshestvennikov", *Opponent* (Riga), no. 8, February 1993, p. 6.

⁷⁰Although this chapter deals with the period up to the elections of the *Saeima* in 1993 only, a brief update on the citizenship issue is nevertheless seen as appropriate. By March 1994 a law on citizenship had still not been adopted in Latvia. The first reading of a draft law was passed in the autumn of 1993, stipulating requirements of 10 years of residence in Latvia, knowledge of the Latvian language and with a quota system whereby different groups of non-citizens would be ranked so that ethnic Latvians and spouses of present citizens would have the right to become citizens first, then persons born in Latvia, and so on. It was, however, decided that the citizenship legislation must be in accordance with recommendations from the Council of Europe, and the draft law was therefore sent to the Council for an evaluation. The recommendations from the Council with a number of suggestions to amendments were received in Latvia in February 1994 (the comments were published in *SM-segodnya* 24-25 February 1994). The main objection of the council concerned the quota system which would give the Latvian government the authority to define the size of the quotas on an annual basis. The Council of Europe recommended a system whereby each individuals would know when he or she could become a citizen of Latvia if they fulfilled all the stipulated requirements.

⁷¹Karklins (1986), p. 26.

⁷²"Programma Narodnogo Fronta Latvii", *Daugava*, no. 12, 1988, p. 76.

⁷³The Russian text of the law can be found in *Sovetskaya Latviya*, 7 May 1989, p. 3.

⁷⁴For comparison, the Estonian law was published in *Sovetskaya Estoniya*, 22 January 1989, pp. 2-3.

⁷⁵See Article 4.

⁷⁶"Polozhenie o znanii latyshskogo yazyka kak gosudarstvennogo yazyka Latviiskoi Respubliki i ego proverke", *Diena* (Russian edition), 21 May 1991, p. 2.

⁷⁷The new law has been published in English in *About the Republic of Latvia*, op. cit.

⁷⁸ibid, Article 9.

⁷⁹See *SM-segodnya*, 30 April 1992, p. 2.

⁸⁰Interview with O. Shiptsov, ibid.

⁸¹Interview in *SM-segodnya*, 30 April 1992. p. 2.

⁸²Boris Tsilevich, "Yazyk v zakone i vne zakona", *SM-segodnya*, 15 April 1992. p. 2.

⁸³See e.g. his article in *Atmoda* 8 January 1990, (Russian Edition), pp. 4-5: "Poputki ili soratniki?".

⁸⁴Tsilevich (1993).

⁸⁵According to Tsilevich, before 1939 there was also a German 'normative culture' in Latvia, while Polish and Yiddish normative cultures existed in certain districts. See ibid.

- ⁸⁶Smith, Aasland and Mole, op. cit.
- ⁸⁷Boris Tsilevich (1993b).
- ⁸⁸The text of the law is printed in English in *About the Republic of Latvia*, op. cit.
- ⁸⁹For more on the idea behind this consultative council, see *Diena*, 2nd part, 21 February 1991.
- ⁹⁰See Paragraphs 8, 9, 10, 11, 13 and 15.
- ⁹¹See f. ex. *Diena*, 15 March 1991 p. 1; *Baltiiskoe Vremya*, 4 April 1991, p. 2.
- ⁹²See his article in *SM-segodnya*, 4 September 1992, p.12.
- ⁹³Author's interview with Andrejs Pantelējevs, op.cit., February 1993.
- ⁹⁴In author's interviews with Boris Tsilevich, Abrams Klotskins, Oleg Vovk and Tatyana Zhdanok in February, 1993, all of them expressed such concerns.
- ⁹⁵*SM-segodnya*, 4 September 1992, (op.cit.), p.12
- ⁹⁶For more reactions to the closure of this theatre, see e.g. N. Kisis: "Skol'ko russkim teatrov nuzhno?", *Russkii Put'*, 30 August 1992, p. 5.
- ⁹⁷Paragraph 2.
- ⁹⁸For the text of this law (of 11 December 1991), see *Opponent*, no. 7, October 1992, p. 3.
- ⁹⁹Tsilevich, (1993b), op. cit.
- ¹⁰⁰"Dopolnennoe i izmenennoe polozhenie o zapolnenii blankov pervichnogo ucheta registratsii zhitelei", published in *Opponent*, no. 7, October 1992, pp. 5-6.
- ¹⁰¹ibid.
- ¹⁰²ibid., p. 5.
- ¹⁰³Author's interview with Augstkalns in Riga, February 1993.
- ¹⁰⁴Aasland (1994b).
- ¹⁰⁵Some of my arguments are taken from Pål Kolstø's many publications on these issues, see particularly Kolstø (1994), chapter 5.
- ¹⁰⁶This argument can be found in different forms in many articles of the Latvian Russians-language press, particularly in newspapers such as *Panorama Latvii*. See e.g. article written by Yurii Teplyakov in this newspaper, 2 February 1992, p. 3.
- ¹⁰⁷This was also the case in many of the other post-Soviet republics. See e.g. Aasland (1994).
- ¹⁰⁸Apine (1994).
- ¹⁰⁹Boris Tsilevich is one of them. See his article "Kontseptiya natsional'nogo gosudarstva: zavetam Lenina verny?" in *SM-segodnya*, 29 January 1992, p. 2.

5. Social Characteristics of Russians in Latvia

As a result of the major changes that have taken place in Latvian society since the Second World War, Russians living in Latvia today have very different social and geographical characteristics compared to Russians who lived in Latvia during the years of Latvian independence. This chapter attempts to systematise information about the geographical distribution, occupational and age structure, educational level, language usage, citizenship, etc., in order to give a picture of the most significant characteristics of the Russian population in the country. There are two main sources used in this chapter. Data from the census of 1989 are extensively used.¹ Although this involves the risk that some of it may now be dated, due to all the events that have taken place since then, this is on most occasions the most recent information available, and should give a relatively accurate picture of the situation as it was at the beginning of the Latvian "awakening" process. When more up-dated data exist and are considered reliable, there is also reference to such data. Moreover, the chapter includes some material from the "Russians in Latvia" survey conducted in the spring of 1992. Information that is not provided in the census is included here, such as information about religious affiliations, living conditions, reasons for settlement in Latvia and length of stay there. This material also provides the opportunity of checking for possible relationships with other variables.

Although the chapter concentrates on information about the Russian population, it is useful for our purposes to compare the data concerning Russians with the corresponding data for other nationalities in Latvia. In order not to bring in too many figures that would complicate the analysis, emphasis will be put on comparing figures for the Russians with those of the largest and indigenous nationality in Latvia, the Latvians. Figures for other nationalities will be provided only when they are particularly unexpected or revealing for the major concerns of this thesis. Since the survey was conducted exclusively among the Russian population in Latvia, the scope for comparison between the nationalities is more limited when using material from the survey.

The chapter is divided into four parts. The first part deals with the geographical distribution of Russians in Latvia, by comparing the share of Russians and Latvians in different regions, as well as urban and rural areas, and also by examining the proportion of the Russian population living in these various types of settlements. Part one further contains information on the length of stay of Russians in Latvia, their place of birth and reasons for moving to the republic. Some more recent information about the distribution of citizens and non-citizens according to nationality is also included in this part. Age and gender structure of the Russian and Latvian populations is examined

in part two. In this part there is also an examination of the marital structure, and particular emphasis will be put on patterns of intermarriage. Part three looks at the educational and occupational structure of Russians as compared with Latvians, and some indications of their material living conditions are also discussed. The last part deals with questions related to language usage, and particularly the degree of fluency in Latvian, and there is further an examination of the religious affiliations and activities of the Russian population in Latvia.

5.1. Geographical Distribution, Length of Stay and Reasons for Moving to Latvia, Distribution of Citizens and Non-Citizens

According to the census of 1989 there were almost 2.7 million people living in Latvia. Just over 0.9 million, or 34 per cent, of them were Russians, whereas 1.4 million (52 per cent) were Latvians. Other nationalities in Latvia included Belarusians (4.5 per cent), Poles (3.5 per cent) and Ukrainians (2.3 per cent). It should again be stressed that these figures are based on the self-identification which takes place when a respondent reports his or her nationality to a census-taker.

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 show the percentage of Russians and Latvians in all municipalities of Latvia (see Map 3, Appendix 3), and these administrative districts and cities are listed under the region to which they geographically belong. The district borders and the borders of the regions do not always overlap, and in cases where a district territory is divided between two different regions, I have listed the district under the region in which the majority of the district population lives.² One should also note that in this table Riga is treated separately, due to its large population and its special status as the capital city.

The tables show that whereas Latvians dominate numerically in most of the rural areas, the share of Russians is larger in urban areas, and is especially large in the seven biggest cities of Latvia, which are all independent administrative units.³ By adding up the population figures in all these cities, one finds that Russians make up 47 per cent of the population in the largest cities, whereas 37 per cent are Latvians. It is noteworthy that Latvians do not make up a majority in any of these cities, and in four of the seven there are more Russians than Latvians.

The "most Latvian" city is Jelgava, where 49.7 per cent are Latvians and 34.7 per cent Russians. In the Latgalian city of Daugavpils only 13 per cent of the population is Latvian and more than 58 per cent Russian. There are two factors explaining the large number of Russians in Daugavpils. Firstly, there is the general trend that most Russians live in the largest cities, and Daugavpils is the second largest city of Latvia

Table 5.1: Geographical Distribution of Russians and Latvians in Latvia

| | Total population (1000s) | Russian population (%) | Latvian population (%) | Russians as share of all Russians in Latvia (%) | Latvians as share of all Latvians in Latvia (%) |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--|--|
| Kurzeme region | | | | | |
| Ventspils district | 15.7 | 8.2 | 85.9 | 0.1 | 1.0 |
| Talsi district | 50.0 | 5.0 | 89.8 | 0.3 | 3.2 |
| Kuldīga district | 41.0 | 8.0 | 84.4 | 0.4 | 2.5 |
| Tukums district** | 58.6 | 12.1 | 79.0 | 0.8 | 3.3 |
| Liepāja district | 54.3 | 9.2 | 79.2 | 0.6 | 3.1 |
| Saldus district | 39.5 | 7.0 | 80.7 | 0.3 | 2.3 |
| City of Ventspils* | 50.6 | 39.4 | 43.0 | 2.2 | 1.6 |
| City of Liepāja* | 114.5 | 43.1 | 38.8 | 5.4 | 3.2 |
| Total region | 424.2 | 21.5 | 66.1 | 10.1 | 20.2 |
| Zemgale region | | | | | |
| Dobele district | 44.4 | 18.7 | 63.7 | 0.9 | 2.0 |
| Jelgava district | 39.1 | 21.3 | 61.1 | 0.9 | 1.7 |
| Bauska district | 55.9 | 14.3 | 68.4 | 0.9 | 2.8 |
| Aizkraukle district | 44.5 | 16.6 | 73.7 | 0.8 | 2.4 |
| Jēkabpils district** | 61.0 | 27.1 | 61.6 | 1.8 | 2.7 |
| City of Jūrmala* | 60.6 | 42.1 | 44.2 | 2.8 | 1.9 |
| City of Jelgava* | 74.1 | 34.7 | 49.7 | 2.8 | 2.7 |
| Total region | 379.7 | 26.3 | 59.1 | 11.0 | 16.2 |
| Vidzeme region | | | | | |
| Limbaži district | 41.1 | 8.0 | 85.4 | 0.4 | 2.5 |
| Valmiera district | 62.7 | 14.3 | 78.5 | 1.0 | 3.5 |
| Valka district | 37.4 | 17.4 | 74.3 | 0.7 | 2.0 |
| Alūksne district** | 28.9 | 18.2 | 75.0 | 0.6 | 1.6 |
| Rīga district** | 150.9 | 29.5 | 58.1 | 4.9 | 6.3 |
| Cēsis district | 64.3 | 12.8 | 81.3 | 0.9 | 3.8 |
| Gulbene district | 29.9 | 15.5 | 79.8 | 0.5 | 1.7 |
| Ogre district** | 65.8 | 20.1 | 70.5 | 1.5 | 3.3 |
| Madona district** | 49.5 | 12.4 | 82.3 | 0.7 | 2.9 |
| Total region | 530.5 | 19.0 | 72.5 | 11.1 | 27.7 |
| Latgale region | | | | | |
| Balvi district** | 33.9 | 24.5 | 71.8 | 0.9 | 1.8 |
| Rēzekne district | 43.4 | 41.7 | 53.3 | 2.0 | 1.7 |
| Ludza district | 42.5 | 38.4 | 53.4 | 1.8 | 1.6 |
| Preiļi district | 46.0 | 29.9 | 63.5 | 1.5 | 2.1 |
| Daugavpils district | 47.1 | 40.8 | 35.9 | 2.1 | 1.2 |
| Krāslava district | 41.5 | 27.4 | 43.2 | 1.3 | 1.3 |
| City of Rēzekne* | 42.5 | 55.0 | 37.3 | 2.6 | 1.1 |
| City of Daugavpils* | 124.9 | 58.3 | 13.0 | 8.0 | 1.2 |
| Total region | 421.8 | 43.4 | 39.4 | 20.2 | 12.0 |
| City of Rīga*** | 910.5 | 47.3 | 36.5 | 47.5 | 23.9 |
| Total | 2666.6 | 34.0 | 52.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

* These cities are independent administrative units (municipalities). The population numbers in these cities are not included in the figure for the population in the geographical districts surrounding them.

** District borders do not fully correspond with region borders. The districts are listed in the region where the majority of the population lives (see Map 3, Appendix 1).

*** In this table the City of Riga is treated separately from the other regions.

Source: Data compiled from *1989. gada vīssavienības tautas skaitīšanas rezultāti* (Part I), pp.127-132.

Table 5.2: Geographical Distribution of Russians and Latvians in Latvia: Urban and Rural Areas

| | Total population | | Population in urban areas | | Population in rural areas | |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------|---------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| | Urban (%) | Rural (%) | Russians (%) | Latvians (%) | Russians (%) | Latvians (%) |
| Kurzeme region | | | | | | |
| Ventspils district | 7.6 | 92.4 | 1.4 | 96.4 | 8.8 | 85.1 |
| Talsi district | 46.9 | 53.1 | 5.1 | 89.4 | 4.8 | 90.2 |
| Kuldīga district | 50.2 | 49.8 | 12.7 | 79.0 | 3.3 | 89.8 |
| Tukums district** | 44.5 | 55.5 | 19.2 | 70.4 | 6.4 | 86.0 |
| Liepāja district | 34.8 | 65.2 | 9.6 | 80.8 | 8.9 | 78.4 |
| Saldus district | 40.7 | 59.3 | 12.6 | 78.4 | 3.2 | 82.2 |
| City of Ventspils* | 100.0 | | 39.4 | 43.0 | | |
| City of Liepāja* | 100.0 | | 43.1 | 38.8 | | |
| Total region | 64.0 | 36.0 | 30.2 | 55.6 | 6.0 | 84.8 |
| Zemgale region | | | | | | |
| Dobele district | 44.4 | 55.6 | 24.1 | 60.6 | 14.4 | 66.1 |
| Jelgava district | 20.8 | 79.2 | 30.0 | 56.6 | 19.0 | 62.2 |
| Bauska district | 28.4 | 71.6 | 16.9 | 70.8 | 13.3 | 67.5 |
| Aizkraukle district | 54.8 | 45.2 | 22.0 | 68.7 | 10.2 | 79.9 |
| Jākabpils district** | 57.3 | 42.7 | 35.5 | 51.3 | 15.9 | 75.4 |
| City of Jūrmala* | 100.0 | | 42.1 | 44.2 | | |
| City of Jelgava* | 100.0 | | 34.7 | 49.7 | | |
| Total region | 62.6 | 37.4 | 33.2 | 53.0 | 14.8 | 69.3 |
| Vidzeme region | | | | | | |
| Limbaži district | 43.0 | 57.0 | 9.5 | 84.5 | 6.9 | 86.2 |
| Valmiera district | 57.9 | 42.1 | 17.4 | 76.1 | 10.0 | 81.9 |
| Valka district | 51.1 | 48.9 | 24.0 | 67.1 | 10.4 | 81.9 |
| Alūksne district** | 43.4 | 56.6 | 21.8 | 70.0 | 15.4 | 78.8 |
| Rīga district** | 26.5 | 73.5 | 34.1 | 52.3 | 27.8 | 60.1 |
| Cēsis district | 37.6 | 62.4 | 16.5 | 78.2 | 10.7 | 83.1 |
| Gulbene district | 34.6 | 65.4 | 27.7 | 66.6 | 9.1 | 86.8 |
| Ogre district** | 62.5 | 37.5 | 26.8 | 62.3 | 8.9 | 84.1 |
| Madona district** | 39.3 | 60.7 | 15.0 | 80.2 | 10.7 | 83.6 |
| Total region | 41.6 | 58.4 | 22.5 | 68.9 | 16.5 | 75.1 |
| Latgale region | | | | | | |
| Balvi district** | 41.4 | 58.6 | 37.4 | 57.1 | 15.4 | 82.2 |
| Rēzekne district | 17.8 | 82.2 | 48.6 | 44.6 | 40.2 | 55.2 |
| Ludza district | 41.0 | 59.0 | 46.8 | 44.8 | 32.6 | 59.4 |
| Preiļi district | 47.2 | 52.8 | 40.6 | 51.1 | 20.3 | 74.6 |
| Daugavpils district | 9.2 | 90.8 | 33.5 | 43.5 | 41.5 | 35.2 |
| Krāslava district | 38.0 | 62.0 | 30.8 | 38.5 | 25.3 | 46.0 |
| City of Rēzekne* | 100.0 | | 55.0 | 37.3 | | |
| City of Daugavpils* | 100.0 | | 58.3 | 13.0 | | |
| Total region | 58.9 | 41.1 | 51.7 | 28.3 | 31.6 | 55.3 |
| City of Rīga*** | 100.0 | | 47.3 | 36.5 | | |
| Total | 70.8 | 29.2 | 40.7 | 44.0 | 17.5 | 71.5 |

* These cities are independent administrative units (municipalities). The population numbers in these cities are not included in the figure for the population in the geographical districts surrounding them.

** District borders do not fully correspond with region borders. The districts are listed in the region where the majority of the population lives (see Map 3, Appendix 1).

*** In this table the City of Riga is treated separately from the other regions.

Source: Data compiled from *1989. gada vissavienības tautas skaitīšanas rezultāti*, (Part I) pp.127-132.

and has a developed industry which has attracted many Russians. Secondly, Daugavpils is situated in the Latgale region, which we have already seen is the part of Latvia where most Russians traditionally have lived. The table shows that the second largest Latgalian city, Rezekne, also has a larger proportion of Russians (55 per cent) than cities situated in other parts of Latvia. In the cities of the Kurzeme region the proportion of Russians is also relatively high (Liepāja 43 per cent and Ventspils 39 per cent), taking into account the low number of Russians living in this region. These cities are both important sea-ports with large immigrant populations. There have also been a large number of military personnel living in these cities, and even though people serving in the army have normally not been included in the census, their family members and also civil employees providing services for the army have usually had residence permits, and have therefore been included. In the capital, where 31.3 per cent of the total population of Latvia live, there are also more Russians than Latvians. They make up 47.3 and 36.5 per cent respectively.

The districts listed in the tables all contain smaller cities or towns, with populations varying from less than 400 to about 40,000. In these urban areas Russians comprise only 23.9 per cent of the population. The regional variation is significant, as can be seen from Table 5.2. In Latgale more than 30 per cent of the urban population is Russian (Daugavpils and Rezekne not included). The proportion of Russians is particularly high in urban areas in the districts of Rezekne (48.6 per cent) and Ludza (46.8 per cent). There is also a high proportion of Russians in smaller cities and towns in other regions, particularly where there is a developed industry. One example is the city of Olaine, not far from Riga, where there is a big chemical plant. 47 per cent of the population is Russian and only 33 per cent Latvian. Very few Russians live in smaller urban areas in the Kurzeme (Courland) region in the west, and in the districts of Ventspils and Talsi the Russian proportion of the urban population is only 1.4 per cent and 5.1 per cent respectively.

In rural areas the proportion of Russians is usually very small. In such areas Latvians are in a clear majority, with a share of 71.5 per cent compared with a Russian minority of 17.5 per cent. There are the same regional variations as for the population in smaller cities and towns. The proportion of Russians is larger in the rural parts of Latgale than in rural areas of other regions, and in this respect the difference between Latgale and Kurzeme is striking. Whereas the proportion of Russians in Latgalian rural areas in total is more than 30 per cent, and more than 40 per cent in the districts of Daugavpils and Rezekne, Russians make up less than 10 per cent in rural areas of all districts of Kurzeme and less than 5 per cent in the districts of Kuldīga, Saldus and Talsi. In the northern and central parts of Latvia, Vidzeme, the proportion of Russians in rural areas varies from 6.9 per cent in Limbaži to 27.8 per cent in the rural district of

Riga. In Zemgale in the south the proportion of Russians in rural areas varies from 10.2 per cent in Aizkraukle district to 19 per cent in Jelgava district.

The fact that Russians make up a large proportion of the population in Latgale does not mean that the majority of Russians live in this region, as can also be seen from Table 5.1. Almost half the Russians (47 per cent) live in Riga, and 71 per cent live in the seven largest cities. Further, 14 per cent of Russians live in smaller cities and towns, and only 15 per cent in rural areas. The Latvian population is less urban; only 36 per cent of Latvians live in the seven largest cities, 24 per cent live in smaller urban settlements, whereas 40 per cent of the Latvian population lives in rural areas.

There is also some variation between the regions in terms of the share of the Russian population living in each region. The largest proportion of Russians (Riga excluded) live in the region of Latgale (20 per cent), and the rest are relatively equally distributed between the three other regions, with slightly more than 10 per cent of the Russian population in each. The fact that more than 10 per cent of the Russians live in Kurzeme is caused by the relatively large proportion of the population living in the two large cities of that region. Less than 3 per cent of all the Russians in Latvia live in Kurzeme's other districts.

In order to ensure a representative sample of the Russian population in Latvia for our survey, we used the information about the geographical distribution of Russians from the census. Since we assume that region and type of settlement can be decisive factors in determining attitudes and ethnic identity, we needed a sample where the geographical characteristics correspond with the characteristics of the Russian population as a whole. Appendix 1 gives more details about the principles and practical measures that were employed to secure a geographically representative sample.

The census provides no exact data on the length of stay of Russians living in Latvia, but there is information on the birthplace of Russians, saying that of the 905,000 Russians living in Latvia in 1989, almost 500,000, or 54 per cent, were born in the republic (see Table 5.3). More than one third (36 per cent) were born in the Russian Federation, whereas the majority of the remaining 9 per cent were born in the two other Slavic-dominated former Soviet republics, Ukraine and Belarus. The share of ethnic Latvians born outside the republic is naturally much lower (3 per cent). Still, compared for example to Ukrainians and Belarusians, among whom only 19 and 31 per cent respectively were born in Latvia, the share of Russians born in the republic must be considered relatively high. In our survey, which covers only the population in age groups from 15 years and upwards, the percentage reporting to have been born in Latvia is naturally somewhat lower. 49 per cent of our respondents said they had been born in the republic.

Table 5.3: Birthplace of Russians Living in Latvia

| | (1000s) | (%) |
|------------------------------|---------|-------|
| Latvia | 496 | 54.7 |
| RSFSR | 328 | 36.2 |
| Ukraine | 22 | 2.4 |
| Belarus | 20 | 2.2 |
| Caucasian Republics | 4 | 0.4 |
| Central Asia | 16 | 1.8 |
| Moldova | 1 | 0.1 |
| Lithuania/Estonia | 12 | 1.3 |
| In other places/Not reported | 6 | 0.7 |
| Total | 906 | 100.0 |

Sources: Data compiled from *1989. gada vissavienības tautas skaitīšanas rezultāti* (Part II), p. 30.

In the survey there was also a question about when the respondent and his or her family came to take up residence in Latvia. The replies are illustrated in Table 5.4. Almost one in six reported that their family took up residence in Latvia before the mid-1940s, while 19 per cent came in the second half of the 1940s and 24 per cent in the 1950s. Moreover, 29 per cent reported residence in Latvia from the 1960s and 1970s, whereas only 12 per cent had moved to Latvia in the 1980s or beginning of the 1990s. It should be noted that 6 per cent of the respondents did not answer this question, and they were usually people who reported that they were born in Latvia and therefore probably thought that this question did not apply to them. As many as 84 per cent of the Russians in the survey had lived in Latvia for more than 15 years, 11 per cent from 5 to 15 years and only 3 per cent of the respondents had moved to Latvia during the last 5 years.

Table 5.4: Arrival in Latvia

Survey Question: When did you and your family take up residence in Latvia?

| N = 554 (37 missing) | Before mid-1940s (%) | 1945-1949 (%) | 1950s (%) | 1960s or 1970s (%) | 1980s (%) |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|--------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| All respondents | 16 | 19 | 24 | 29 | 12 |

Source: "Russians in Latvia" survey, 1992.

There are also some regional differences in terms of length of stay in Latvia. Russians in Latgale appear to have lived in Latvia for a longer time than Russians in other parts of the country. The proportion of Russians in Latgale who had come to Latvia before the 1940s was more than 30 per cent. While 60 per cent of the Russians in Latgale said they had been born in Latvia, the corresponding percentage for the country as a whole was 42 per cent.

The respondents were not only asked to indicate whether they and their families had been born in Latvia but also, if they had not, to indicate where they moved from when they took up residence in the republic. A majority of those who had not been born in Latvia had moved from the Russian Federation (42 per cent of the respondents), and the others came predominantly from the two other Slavic republics (3 per cent from each). While 42 per cent of the respondents reported that their families had moved to Latvia from the Russian Federation, 5 per cent had moved from Belarus and 4 per cent from Ukraine.

The reasons for taking up residence in Latvia have been many, and the respondents were asked why they had moved to the republic according to an already prepared list of possible reasons (see questions 155 to 169 in Appendix 2). Three of the fifteen alternatives were chosen more frequently than the others. The first of these was that respondents had moved to Latvia in their childhood with their parents. A substantial number had been directed to work in Latvia after finishing their education. The third large group had moved to Latvia because they had married people living there. Some alternatives were also quite commonly chosen, although not as often as the three mentioned above. These include moving to Latvia because of invitations to work in enterprises, ministries or the civil service, invitations from family and friends, remaining in Latvia after studies in the republic, or moving to (or remaining in) Latvia after demobilisation from the Soviet Armed Forces. Relatively few indicated *orgnabor* (organised recruitment of labour) as their reason for taking up residence in the republic. Moreover, only very few respondents reported the higher material standard of living, greater opportunities for cultural development, or favourable climatic conditions to be such reasons.

In 1992 the Latvian authorities started to register the population living in Latvia, and during this registration it was established for each individual whether or not s/he would be considered to be a citizen according to Latvian regulations on citizenship (people were regarded as citizens if they had been citizens of the Republic of Latvia in 1940; so were their direct descendants, with a few exceptions, see Chapter 4). At the beginning of 1994 there were 2,410,800 people who had gone through this registration, while the State Statistical Committee of Latvia operated with a population of 2,566,000 living in Latvia. This means that approximately 96 per cent of the population had been registered.⁴ Of the registered population 1,720,302 (71.4 per cent) were citizens, while the rest were classified as "foreigners". In the following I shall use the neutral term "non-citizen" instead of the negatively loaded "foreigner".

Although some information had been published on the population during the process of registration, in January 1994 the aggregated figures for the different nationalities were published for the first time in the newspaper *Diena*.⁵ Table 5.5 is based on information from the *Diena* article. The table shows that most of the Latvians

living in Latvia are citizens, and that Latvians make up almost 80 per cent of Latvia's citizenry at present. There are, however, more than 22,000 Latvians who did not fulfil the requirements for citizenship according to the regulations (or practices) at the time of their registration. They are usually Latvians who lived or have (grand)parents who lived outside Latvia (usually somewhere in Russia) in the independence period, but who have returned or come to Latvia at a later stage and are not now automatically entitled to citizenship of Latvia.

Table 5.5: Distribution of Citizens and Non-Citizens According to Nationality

| | Registered population in 1000s | Citizens (%) | Non-citizens (%) | As proportion of all citizens in Latvia (%) |
|-------------|--------------------------------|--------------|------------------|---|
| Latvians | 1,377 | 98.4 | 1.6 | 78.8 |
| Russians | 722 | 38.5 | 61.5 | 16.2 |
| Poles | 62 | 61.4 | 38.6 | 2.2 |
| Belarusians | 103 | 19.8 | 80.2 | 1.2 |
| Ukrainians | 64 | 6.2 | 93.8 | 0.3 |
| Lithuanians | 33 | 21.2 | 78.8 | 0.4 |
| Jews | 15 | 45.1 | 54.9 | 0.4 |
| Others | 34 | 31.4 | 68.6 | 0.6 |
| Total | 2,410 | 71.4 | 28.6 | 100.0 |

Source: Calculations are based on E. Vēbers and P. Karnups: "Ārvalstnieku problēma ir Rīgas lieta", *Diena*, 26 January 1994, p. 4.

Less than 40 per cent of the Russians living in Latvia are citizens, according to the registration results. The registration shows that the number of Russians in Latvia has been reduced from more than 900,000 in 1989 to 722,000 in 1994, although there are expected to be quite a few Russians among the estimated 4 per cent of the population who have not been through registration. While Russians, according to the registration data, make up 30 per cent of the registered population, they amount to only 16 per cent of Latvia's current citizens.

The registration data also reveal some interesting information on the distribution of citizens and non-citizens among the other larger nationalities living in Latvia. The Poles tend to be more strongly rooted in Latvia than any of the other non-indigenous nationalities, which is reflected in the fact that more than 60 per cent of the registered Poles fulfilled the requirements for citizenship. The proportion of citizens was also higher among Jews than it was among Russians. Russians, however, had a significantly higher proportion of citizens than had Belarusians, Ukrainians and Lithuanians.

The article in *Diena* also contained data on the distribution of citizens and non-citizens in the various administrative cities and districts of Latvia, and Table 5.6 was compiled on the basis of these data. The nationality breakdown of each of the districts was not yet available (March 1994). Nevertheless, if one compares this table with Table 5.1 showing the percentage of Russians and Latvians in each of the municipalities, one can see that there is a systematic correspondence between the proportion of citizens and the proportion of Latvians in each of the districts (see also Map 3 in Appendix 3). The proportion of citizens is naturally highest in the rural districts of Kurzeme and in some of the rural districts of Vidzeme, while it is noticeably lower in most of the Latvian cities. The relationship is not perfect, however. It is noteworthy that even though many of the districts of Latgale have a relatively large number of Russians, the percentage of the population in these districts who are citizens is still relatively high. Taking into account the large non-Latvian population in the cities of Rēzekne and Daugavpils, the proportion of non-citizens there is also lower than could have been expected. This seems to confirm that Russians in Latgale on average have stayed longer in Latvia than Russians in other parts of the country; in the cities in particular.

It must be emphasised that the number of non-citizens is particularly large in the capital, where more than 330,000 persons were not entitled to Latvian citizenship at the time of their registration. They comprise almost half the non-citizens of the whole country. There is one city where the proportion of citizens is still lower, however, and that is the port city of Liepāja, the largest city of Kurzeme, where only just over half the population are citizens. The proportion of citizens is likely to increase in the future, as most non-citizens will try to obtain Latvian citizenship. The speed of the increase, however, will depend on future citizenship legislation and the terms of naturalisation of non-citizens, as well as on the factors which determine the rate of departure of non-Latvians from the country.

5.2. Age and Sex Distribution, Marital Status and Intermarriage

In 1989 the average Russian in Latvia was 34.4 years of age, whereas the average Latvian was almost three years older. Table 5.7 shows the age structure of the Russian and the Latvian population. Whereas 57 per cent of the Russians were of working age⁶, the corresponding proportion of Latvians was 54 per cent. However, when looking separately at the age distribution in urban and rural settlements one finds that the difference between Latvians and Russians living in the cities is small: 58 per cent of Russians and 56 per cent of Latvians living in the cities are of working age, and the average age is 34.3 and 35.7 years respectively. In the countryside the share of Russians of working age is 55 per cent, whereas the share of Latvians is 50 per cent.

Table 5.6: Geographical Distribution of Citizens and Non-Citizens in Latvia

| | Total registered population (1000s) | Citizens | | Non-citizens | |
|--------------------------------|--|----------|------|--------------|------|
| | | (1000s) | (%) | (1000s) | (%) |
| Kurzeme region | | | | | |
| Talsi district | 50.4 | 47.7 | 94.6 | 2.8 | 5.4 |
| Kuldiga district | 38.8 | 36.0 | 92.8 | 2.8 | 7.2 |
| Tukums district** | 55.4 | 48.0 | 86.6 | 7.4 | 13.4 |
| Saldus district | 38.5 | 32.4 | 84.2 | 6.1 | 15.8 |
| Liepaja district | 47.3 | 42.6 | 90.1 | 4.7 | 9.9 |
| City of Liepaja* | 93.5 | 47.7 | 51.0 | 45.8 | 49.0 |
| Ventspils (city and district)* | 53.4 | 36.5 | 68.4 | 16.9 | 31.6 |
| Total region | 377.3 | 290.9 | 77.1 | 86.5 | 22.3 |
| Zemgale region | | | | | |
| Dobele district | 40.4 | 30.5 | 75.5 | 10.0 | 24.5 |
| Bauska district | 54.2 | 40.3 | 74.4 | 14.0 | 25.6 |
| Aizkraukle district | 43.5 | 36.2 | 83.2 | 7.3 | 16.8 |
| Jekabpils district** | 60.1 | 48.7 | 81.0 | 11.4 | 19.0 |
| City of Jurmala* | 53.0 | 33.6 | 63.4 | 19.4 | 36.6 |
| Jelgava (city and district)* | 105.1 | 68.9 | 65.3 | 36.2 | 34.7 |
| Total region | 356.3 | 258.2 | 72.5 | 98.3 | 27.5 |
| Vidzeme region | | | | | |
| Limbazi district | 41.2 | 37.0 | 89.8 | 4.2 | 10.2 |
| Valmiera district | 62.1 | 52.4 | 84.4 | 9.8 | 15.6 |
| Valka district | 37.0 | 29.7 | 80.3 | 7.3 | 19.7 |
| Aluksne district** | 27.1 | 24.6 | 90.8 | 2.5 | 9.2 |
| Riga district** | 137.7 | 99.8 | 72.5 | 37.9 | 27.5 |
| Cesis district | 61.3 | 53.5 | 87.3 | 7.8 | 12.7 |
| Gulbene district | 29.7 | 26.8 | 90.2 | 2.9 | 9.8 |
| Ogre district** | 62.3 | 51.2 | 82.2 | 11.1 | 17.8 |
| Madona district** | 48.3 | 44.9 | 93.0 | 3.4 | 7.0 |
| Total region | 506.7 | 419.9 | 82.9 | 86.9 | 17.1 |
| Latgale region | | | | | |
| Balvi district** | 33.8 | 31.3 | 92.6 | 2.6 | 7.4 |
| Ludza district | 39.5 | 34.8 | 88.1 | 4.7 | 11.9 |
| Preili district | 44.9 | 40.8 | 90.9 | 4.0 | 9.1 |
| Daugavpils district | 42.9 | 34.0 | 79.3 | 8.9 | 20.7 |
| Kraslava district | 40.0 | 32.3 | 80.8 | 7.7 | 19.2 |
| City of Daugavpils* | 116.4 | 72.3 | 62.1 | 44.1 | 37.9 |
| Rezekne (city and district)* | 83.7 | 73.8 | 88.2 | 9.9 | 11.8 |
| Total region | 401.2 | 319.3 | 79.6 | 81.9 | 20.4 |
| City of Riga*** | 769.5 | 432.3 | 56.2 | 337.2 | 43.8 |
| Total | 2410.8 | 1720.3 | 71.4 | 690.5 | 28.6 |

* In the data published in *Diena*, based on electoral districts (and not municipalities), only 4 of the 7 largest cities were treated as individual administrative units. The others were added to the adjacent (rural) district.

** District borders do not fully correspond with region borders (see Tables 5.1 and 5.2).

*** The City of Riga is still treated separately from the other regions.

Source: Calculations are based on E. Vēbers and P. Karnups: "Ārvalstnieku problēma ir Rīgas lieta", *Diena*, 26 January 1994, p. 4.

This can be explained by the larger share of the Latvian population being in the older age-groups. An interesting feature is that the share of Belarusians and Ukrainians who are of working age is much higher than both for Latvians and for Russians. For both these nationalities the proportion of the population which is of working age is higher than 67 per cent.

Table 5.7: Age Structure by Nationality

| | Russians | | Latvians | |
|----------------|----------|-------|----------|-------|
| | (1000s) | (%) | (1000s) | (%) |
| 0-9 years | 146 | 16.1 | 215 | 15.5 |
| 10-19 years | 126 | 13.9 | 195 | 14.0 |
| 20-29 years | 138 | 15.2 | 191 | 13.8 |
| 30-39 years | 150 | 16.6 | 168 | 12.1 |
| 40-49 years | 105 | 11.6 | 177 | 12.8 |
| 50-59 years | 106 | 11.7 | 178 | 12.8 |
| 60-69 years | 85 | 9.4 | 131 | 9.4 |
| 70-79 years | 37 | 4.1 | 83 | 6.0 |
| 80 years + | 13 | 1.4 | 50 | 3.6 |
| Total | 906 | 100.0 | 1388 | 100.0 |
| < working age | 222 | 24.5 | 330 | 23.8 |
| of working age | 520 | 57.4 | 745 | 53.7 |
| > working age | 164 | 18.1 | 313 | 22.6 |

Source: Data compiled from *1989. gada vissavienības tautas skaitīšanas rezultāti* (Part II), p. 31.

Since we know the distribution of Russians in the different age-groups, there is also adjustment for age in the survey. The number of Russians in different age-groups in the survey corresponds with the actual age distribution of Russians in the population.⁷

Mostly as a result of the Second World War and the deportations after the war there are more women than men living in Latvia. In 1989 the population was 46.5 per cent male and 53.5 per cent female. The gap is somewhat larger for Latvians (45.8 per cent / 54.2 per cent) than for Russians (46.8 per cent / 53.2 per cent) (see Table 5.8). The tendency that a higher share of an immigrant population is usually male than female is either not the case for Russians in Latvia, or the tendency is outweighed by an already predominantly female Russian population in the republic.⁸

Table 5.8: Sex Distribution by Nationality

| | Total | Russians | | Latvians | |
|--------------------|---------|----------|------|----------|------|
| | (1000s) | (1000s) | (%) | (1000s) | (%) |
| Men | 1238.8 | 423.8 | 34.2 | 635.0 | 51.3 |
| Women | 1427.8 | 481.7 | 33.7 | 752.8 | 52.7 |
| Urban areas | | | | | |
| Men | 869.6 | 357.2 | 41.1 | 373.9 | 43.0 |
| Women | 1019.0 | 412.4 | 40.5 | 457.3 | 44.9 |
| Rural areas | | | | | |
| Men | 369.2 | 66.7 | 18.1 | 261.0 | 70.7 |
| Women | 408.8 | 69.3 | 17.0 | 295.5 | 72.3 |

Source: *1989. gada vissavienības tautas skaitīšanas rezultāti* (Part II), pp. 32, 33, 35, 36, 38, 39.

The pattern described above is also reflected in terms of marital status. Whereas 66.8 per cent of Latvian and 67.6 per cent of Russian men over 16 are married, the corresponding proportions for women are 53.3 and 58.2 per cent. (Table 5.9) The percentage of men who have never been married is 21.4 per cent for Russians and 22.1 per cent for Latvians, whereas for women the percentages are 13.4 per cent and 17.4 per cent respectively. There are insignificant differences between Russians and Latvians in terms of number of divorces. Both Russians and Latvians have a lower number of married people than do the other major nationalities in Latvia, and compared for example to Belarusians and Ukrainians, this difference is significant.

Table 5.9: Marital Status by Nationality

| | Total | Married | Never been married | Widow(er)s | Divorced |
|---------------------------------------|---------|---------|--------------------|------------|----------|
| | (1000s) | (%) | (%) | (%) | (%) |
| Men (16 years old and older) | | | | | |
| All nationalities | 930 | 67.8 | 21.4 | 3.2 | 7.3 |
| Russians | 310 | 67.6 | 21.4 | 2.6 | 8.0 |
| Latvians | 467 | 66.8 | 22.1 | 3.7 | 7.1 |
| Others | 153 | 71.1 | 19.3 | 2.8 | 6.4 |
| Women (16 years old and older) | | | | | |
| All nationalities | 1130 | 56.0 | 15.4 | 17.7 | 10.7 |
| Russians | 373 | 58.2 | 13.4 | 16.1 | 12.0 |
| Latvians | 590 | 53.3 | 17.4 | 19.1 | 10.0 |
| Others | 167 | 60.4 | 12.5 | 16.6 | 10.1 |

Source: Data compiled from *1989. gada vissavienības tautas skaitīšanas rezultāti* (Part II), p. 40.

Mixed marriages can be seen as one of the most important components of ethnic processes, because ethnically homogeneous marriages tend to enhance the stability of the ethnic group through the transfer of language, culture and social values. Children in ethnically mixed marriages, on the other hand, tend to adopt cultural characteristics of both parents, and such marriages can thus serve as a bridge between different nationalities and reduce interethnic tensions. The census of 1989 does not provide information about mixed marriages, and Table 5.10 is based on the registration of new marriages in the years of 1978 and 1988. The table shows that mixed marriages are much more common among Russians than among Latvians. As many as 37.4 per cent of those Russians who married in 1988 chose a partner of a different nationality, whereas the corresponding proportion among Latvians was 19.9 per cent. There were only minor differences between men and women in this respect. In 1988 mixed marriages among Russians had become more widespread as compared to 1978, but in the same period there was a weak tendency among Latvians more often to marry within their nationality.⁹

Table 5.10: Intermarriage by Nationality

| | 1978 | | 1988 | |
|--------------|------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|---|
| | Newly registered marriages (1000s) | With partner of different nationality (%) | Newly registered marriages (1000s) | With partner of different nationality (%) |
| Russians | 19 | 35.0 | 18 | 37.4 |
| Latvians | 23 | 20.5 | 24 | 19.9 |
| Women | | | | |
| Russians | 10 | 35.1 | 9 | 37.6 |
| Latvians | 12 | 21.0 | 12 | 20.0 |
| Men | | | | |
| Russians | 10 | 34.8 | 9 | 37.1 |
| Latvians | 12 | 20.0 | 12 | 19.7 |

Source: *Demograficheskii ezhegodnik 1989*, Moscow: Finansy i Statistika (Goskomstat), 1989.

A. I. Kholmogorov has studied the phenomenon of mixed marriages in Latvia in somewhat more detail.¹⁰ His findings are based on data about mixed marriages from the 1960s, which implies that some of the findings could be dated. Nevertheless, one can believe that the main tendencies are still valid. Kholmogorov's data suggest that Russian men have a greater tendency to marry Latvian women than Russian women to marry Latvian men. Of those who married a person of a different nationality, 37.9 per cent of Russian men and 41.2 per cent of Russian women married another Slav, and 40.6 per cent and 25.1 per cent respectively married a Latvian, whereas 18.2 per cent and 33.7 per cent married partners of some other nationality. Mixed marriages were

more common in towns and cities than in rural areas, and Kholmogorov found that age, occupational structure and density of a nationality in a certain area were the factors most strongly correlated with the frequency of mixed marriages.

In our survey 62 per cent of the respondents were married, 6 per cent were widows/widowers, 11 per cent divorced and 19 per cent had never been married. Those who were married were asked to indicate the nationality of their husband or wife. The results, which are illustrated in Table 5.11, provide the main trends in the pattern of intermarriage among the Russian population. More than 70 per cent of the married respondents had a Russian spouse, just under 10 per cent were married to a Latvian, while the remaining 20 per cent had a spouse of a different nationality (mostly Belarusian or Ukrainian). Although there was a slightly greater tendency for women to marry a Latvian, the difference between men and women was relatively small. It is, however, noteworthy that younger Russians were less likely to have a Latvian spouse than were Russians in the older generations. On the other hand, marriage to a person of a non-Russian but Slavic nationality was most common in the younger age groups. Specialists (*spetsialisty*) were more likely than both manual workers and professionals (*sluzhashchie*) to marry a Latvian, but income level and level of education did not seem to affect the choice of nationality of the spouse. When looking at different geographical areas separately, some quite interesting trends could be observed. Intermarriage between a Russian and a Latvian was least common in the Latgalian cities, and only 6 per cent of the respondents here were married to a Latvian. This is not unexpected, taking into account the small number of Latvians living in these cities. However, the largest proportion of Latvian-Russian marriages was not to be found in those rural districts where Latvians make up a clear majority, but in the Latgalian rural districts. Only just over half the married respondents there had the same nationality as their spouse. Moreover, respondents who themselves were the offspring of mixed Russian-Latvian parents were naturally much more likely than others to marry a Latvian spouse. In fact, one quarter of our respondents who had either a Latvian mother or a Latvian father were married to a Latvian.

Table 5.11: Nationality of Spouse

| N = 452 (139 not married or missing) | Russian | Latvian | Ukrainian | Belarusian | Other |
|--|---------|---------|-----------|------------|-------|
| | (%) | (%) | (%) | (%) | (%) |
| Married respondents | 71 | 10 | 8 | 6 | 5 |

Source: "Russians in Latvia" survey, 1992.

The survey further contains information on the nationality of the parents of the respondents. These findings confirmed the main trends for mixed marriages. Three quarters of the respondents had both a Russian mother and a Russian father, while the

remaining quarter had parents of different nationalities. However, only six per cent of the respondents had a Latvian mother or father, so that in most cases both parents were of a Slavic nationality. Although it was slightly more common to have a Latvian father than a Latvian mother, the difference was very small. The smaller share of Russians having a Latvian-parent than spouse can probably be explained by the fact that many of the parents of the respondents had married before they arrived in Latvia, when the likelihood that they would marry a Latvian was very small. Naturally, Russians who were born in Latvia had a much greater likelihood of having a Latvian parent than Russians who had arrived in Latvia at a later stage. More than 15 per cent of those respondents who were born in Latvia and whose family was also born there had a Latvian mother or father, while the same was true of less than 2 per cent of those who were not born in the republic. Moreover, there has also been a weak tendency for children of mixed Russian-Latvian marriages to choose the Latvian nationality at the age of 16, which naturally reduces the likelihood of a Russian having a Latvian parent.

Although there are a large number of mixed marriages in Latvia, our survey confirms that there is a clear tendency among Russians to marry Russians or other Slavs rather than Latvians. Had the nationality of one partner in a marriage been independent of the other partner's nationality, one could have expected that about half the married respondents would have been married to a Latvian. In this perspective the number of Russian-Latvian marriages must be considered to be relatively low.¹¹

5.3. Education, Occupational Status, Standard of Living

The census of 1989 differentiated between seven levels of education: higher, higher incompleter, specialised secondary, secondary, secondary incompleter, primary, and lower than primary. In order to make the material more comprehensive, in Table 5.12 these levels are divided into four categories. The table shows that the level of education is higher among Russians than Latvians. Whereas 14.3 per cent of Russians have completed higher education, this applies to only 9.6 per cent of the Latvians. There are also more Russians than Latvians who have either completed specialised secondary education or started higher education without completing it. At the same time, there are more Latvians than Russians who have uncompleted secondary education or lower. When treating urban and rural areas separately, one finds that Russians in cities and towns have more education than Latvians, suggesting that the larger proportion of Russians with a higher education cannot solely be explained by the larger share of Latvians living in rural areas. In rural areas, on the other hand, there is a slightly larger proportion of Latvians with a higher education compared to Russians. Thus, there seems to be a greater difference among Russians than among Latvians in urban and rural areas in terms of education.

Table 5.12: Education in Latvia by Nationality

| | Education among age group 15 years + | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|--|
| | higher (%) | uncompleted higher or specialised middle (%) | general middle (%) | uncompleted middle and lower (%) |
| All nationalities | 11.5 | 19.1 | 29.8 | 23.4 |
| Russians | 14.3 | 20.1 | 32.0 | 19.4 |
| Latvians | 9.6 | 18.5 | 27.8 | 27.1 |

Source: *1989. gada vissaviemības tautas skaitīšanas rezultāti* (Part II), pp. 43-44.

Although there is not always an association between level of education and qualifications for a particular job, the fact that Russians, at least according to the census, have a higher level of education than Latvians suggests that the Russian population in Latvia should not be seen as a huge mass of unskilled workers. The situation is, as these figures indicate, more nuanced. It is open to question whether the higher level of education among Russians should be interpreted as a result of better access to educational institutions due to a privileged position in Latvian society; a better command of Russian, which we have seen has been a requirement for obtaining higher education; or whether the differences can be explained by cultural differences, for example in terms of attitude to education. Similarly, the census operates with broad categories, and naturally does not problematise the question of the quality of different types of education; higher technical education, which typically has had a high proportion of Russians, is juxtaposed with higher education in the humanities, where Latvians usually have made up a larger share. It could therefore be argued that the fact that relatively many Russians have Soviet-type higher education should not lead us to conclude that their educational level is very high. Without discussing these questions in more detail here, it should be noted that the level of education in Latvia (as defined in the censuses), regardless of nationality, has been higher than in most other Soviet republics, the RSFSR included.¹²

The census of 1989 also classifies the population according to main source of income (see Table 5.13.). Paid work, either in the form of employment by the state or self-employment, was the main source of income for 56 per cent of Russians and 53 per cent of Latvians. In 1989 there were fewer Russians than Latvians receiving pensions, scholarships and other state benefits (18 and 22 per cent respectively). This can be explained by the difference in age structure between the Russian and the Latvian populations, Russians having a larger share of people who are of working age.

Table 5.13: Main Source of Income by Nationality

| | Employed work (%) | Individual work (%) | Pensions and other state benefits (%) | Rely on other people's income (%) |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| All nationalities | 54.7 | 0.2 | 20.0 | 24.0 |
| Russians | 55.5 | 0.2 | 17.6 | 26.6 |
| Latvians | 51.9 | 0.6 | 21.9 | 25.5 |
| Urban areas | | | | |
| All nationalities | 57.2 | 0.05 | 18.5 | 24.1 |
| Russians | 56.4 | 0.03 | 16.8 | 26.7 |
| Latvians | 55.3 | 0.1 | 20.0 | 24.4 |
| Rural areas | | | | |
| All nationalities | 48.7 | 1.3 | 23.8 | 26.0 |
| Russians | 50.7 | 1.0 | 21.6 | 26.4 |
| Latvians | 46.9 | 1.3 | 24.6 | 27.1 |

Source: Data compiled from *1989. gada vissavienības tautas skaitīšanas rezultāti*. (Part II), p. 45.

In Soviet statistics the population has traditionally been classified into three groups; blue collar workers, white collar workers and collective farmers. This classification is also used in the 1989 census, but there is also a fourth category for people who either are self-employed, or in other ways do not fit into any of the three main categories. Table 5.14 (see next page) shows that, in comparison with Latvians, a larger proportion of Russians is classified as blue- and white collar workers, whereas relatively few Russians are collective farmers. Some of these differences are less clearly marked when adjustments are made for settlement in urban and rural areas, and there are only minor differences in cities and towns. In rural areas, however, there are more workers and fewer collective farmers among the Russian than among the Latvian population.

The traditional Soviet classification of classes has been criticised for not always reflecting the actual type of work in which an individual is engaged. The 1989 Latvian census also operates with another classification of the working population; people whose work is predominantly of an intellectual kind, and people who are engaged in some form of physical work. Table 5.15 shows that there are more Russians than Latvians whose work is classified as intellectual. However, the difference is not large, and can probably largely be explained by the greater share of Latvians working in agriculture.

Table 5.14: Occupational Composition of Population in Latvia by Nationality (Soviet Typology)

| | Workers (%) | Employees (%) | Collective farmers (%) | Others (%) |
|--------------------|----------------|------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| All nationalities | 56.7 | 33.7 | 9.4 | 0.2 |
| Russians | 59.1 | 37.4 | 3.3 | 0.2 |
| Latvians | 54.6 | 31.0 | 14.2 | 0.2 |
| Urban areas | | | | |
| All nationalities | 59.8 | 38.6 | 1.4 | 0.2 |
| Russians | 59.2 | 40.2 | 0.5 | 0.2 |
| Latvians | 60.3 | 37.0 | 2.5 | 0.2 |
| Rural areas | | | | |
| All nationalities | 48.0 | 19.7 | 32.1 | 0.2 |
| Russians | 59.0 | 20.3 | 20.5 | 0.2 |
| Latvians | 44.6 | 20.4 | 34.9 | 0.2 |

Source: Data from *1989. gada vissavienības tautas skaitīšanas rezultāti* (Part II), p. 45.

Table 5.15: Type of Work by Nationality

| | Total work force (1000s) | Share of work force engaged in (%) | Share of Russians engaged in (%) | Share of Latvians engaged in (%) | Russians among those engaged in (%) | Latvians among those engaged in (%) |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mainly intellectual work | 516 | 35.4 | 37.8 | 33.8 | 36.8 | 47.2 |
| Mainly physical work | 943 | 64.6 | 62.2 | 66.2 | 33.2 | 50.6 |

Source: Data from *1989. gada vissavienības tautas skaitīšanas rezultāti* (Part II), pp.51-52.

The census data also provide information on the distribution of nationalities in different occupational sectors. Table 5.16 shows the number of Russians and Latvians working in the different sectors, the national composition of each of the sectors (only Russians and Latvians included), as well as the percentage of the total Russian and Latvian populations working in these sectors. An average sector consists of 34.5 per cent Russians and 49.4 per cent Latvians. It follows from the table that although many sectors have a national composition which is close to the average, this does not apply to all of them. Thus, Russians have a greater than average proportion working in industry, transport and administration, and in all these sectors the proportion of Latvians is relatively low. In fact, in all these sectors the number of Russians is higher than the number of Latvians, even in absolute terms. There are particularly few Latvians working in administration, a sector where they make up only 28 per cent. Russians, on the other hand, have a lower-than-average representation in sectors such as agriculture, forestry, and culture and art, in all of which Latvians dominate.

Relatively many Latvians worked in communist party and social organisations, but Russians are not as underrepresented as many of the other nationalities in this sector.

Table 5.16: Occupational Sector by Nationality

| | Total work force | Share of working population in sector | Share of working Russian population in sector | Share of working Latvian population in sector | Russians as share of sector | Latvians as share of sector |
|----------------------------|------------------------|--|---|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | (1000s) | (%) | (%) | (%) | (%) | (%) |
| Industry | 448 | 30.7 | 37.0 | 25.2 | 41.5 | 40.6 |
| Agriculture | 221 | 15.1 | 6.8 | 21.9 | 15.5 | 71.5 |
| Forestry | 9 | 0.6 | 0.2 | 0.9 | 11.1 | 81.5 |
| Transport | 99 | 6.8 | 8.6 | 5.1 | 43.5 | 37.2 |
| Communications | 21 | 1.4 | 1.3 | 1.5 | 32.8 | 53.8 |
| Construction | 125 | 8.6 | 8.7 | 8.3 | 34.9 | 47.2 |
| Commerce and catering | 120 | 8.2 | 8.5 | 8.2 | 35.8 | 49.5 |
| Municipal services | 38 | 2.6 | 2.7 | 2.6 | 35.4 | 49.6 |
| Health sector | 78 | 5.4 | 4.7 | 5.8 | 30.4 | 53.4 |
| Education | 107 | 7.3 | 6.8 | 8.1 | 32.0 | 54.6 |
| Culture and art | 24 | 1.7 | 1.0 | 2.3 | 21.2 | 69.2 |
| Science | 33 | 2.3 | 2.5 | 2.3 | 37.7 | 49.1 |
| Administration | 61 | 4.2 | 6.0 | 2.4 | 49.0 | 28.2 |
| Party/Social organisations | 7 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 0.6 | 30.2 | 59.5 |
| Others | 67 | 4.6 | 4.8 | 4.7 | 35.8 | 49.8 |
| Total | 1458 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | - | - |
| Average Sector | - | - | - | - | 34.5 | 49.4 |

Source: Data from *1989. gada vissavienības tautas skaitīšanas rezultāti* (Part II), p. 46.

Even though a large proportion of Russians work in industry (37 per cent, as compared with 25 per cent of Latvians), Table 5.16 nevertheless shows that the majority of Russians work in other sectors, and that there is a significant degree of variation among Russians in terms of their sector of work. The Russian population in Latvia should therefore not be seen as a homogeneous mass of industrial blue-collar workers.

The fact that Latvians have dominated the 'creative' sector, culture and art, is undoubtedly of great importance both for Russians and for Latvians. In the case of the Latvians, this has made them less susceptible to cultural Russification or Sovietisation.¹³ Russians, on the other hand, have, as we shall see, suffered from the absence of a local creative elite rooted in Russian culture.

There are few indications in the census data regarding occupational status that Russians as a group in 1989 had a privileged position in Latvian society. However, there may be differences between the nationalities that are not discernible in the census

material. Since there is little information on the criteria for classification into different "classes" or types of work, one would suspect that such a classification could be rather arbitrary. No statistics are available to classify the population according, for example, to position in the occupational hierarchy as superiors and subordinates. Some indications of an advantageous position for Russians were referred to in Chapter 3. Even though social and economic advantages are not necessarily the only considerations taken into account when choosing one's nationality, one would expect that if Russians were in a clearly advantageous position people born into mixed Russian-Latvian marriages would tend to choose Russian rather than Latvian nationality at the age of 16. The tendency has, however, rather been that such children have chosen Latvian nationality, although this trend does not seem to have been very strong.¹⁴

Even though there is little material to indicate if there are any differences in terms of standard of living between Latvians and Russians, the "Russians in Latvia" survey of 1992 contains substantial information on the living conditions of the Russian population in Latvia. It should, however, be emphasised that the survey was conducted at one particular point of time, characterised by, among others, high inflation and energy shortages, and the findings cannot be interpreted as an objective evaluation of the long-term economic conditions under which Russians in Latvia live. The material suggests that there are differences in terms of economic status within the Russian population, although relatively few Russians seem to be economically prosperous, and even fewer on the verge of starvation.

The respondents were asked to report their monthly household income divided by the number of members in the household, and the results can be found in table 5.17. One should not, of course, consider the rouble salary as the only measurement of standard of living, since it is well known that economic well-being in Latvia has been highly dependent also on other factors, such as connections and access to goods through one's place of work. However, by the time the survey was conducted in the spring of 1992, money had gained a much more decisive role in the economy as the means by which to obtain consumer goods. The money necessary for a basic existence (*prozhitochnyi minimum*) for one person at the time when the survey was conducted was set by the government at 1200 roubles a month.¹⁵ and this should at least give some idea of the purchasing power of the rouble. The difficult economic situation of the average Russian is indicated by the fact that more than two thirds of the respondents reported an income under this minimum. Only 6 per cent of the respondents reported an income per each household member of 2000 roubles or more. It should be noted that in surveys of this kind respondents are likely to report only their official income, whereas unofficial sources of income tend not to be revealed. Since a large share of family

income is likely to have been obtained from sources outside the official economy, the actual incomes were probably higher than indicated by the respondents in our survey.

Table 5.17: Income

Survey Question: What is the average monthly income per capita in your household (the total of all incomes of all members of your household divided by the number of members of your household, including children)?

| N = 577 (14 missing) | Less than 200 rbs. (%) | 200- 300 rbs. (%) | 300- 500 rbs. (%) | 500- 700 rbs. (%) | 700- 1000 rbs. (%) | 1000- 1500 rbs. (%) | 1500- 2000 rbs. (%) | More than 2000 rbs. (%) |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Total | 2 | 2 | 13 | 20 | 27 | 17 | 14 | 6 |

Source: "Russians in Latvia" survey, 1992.

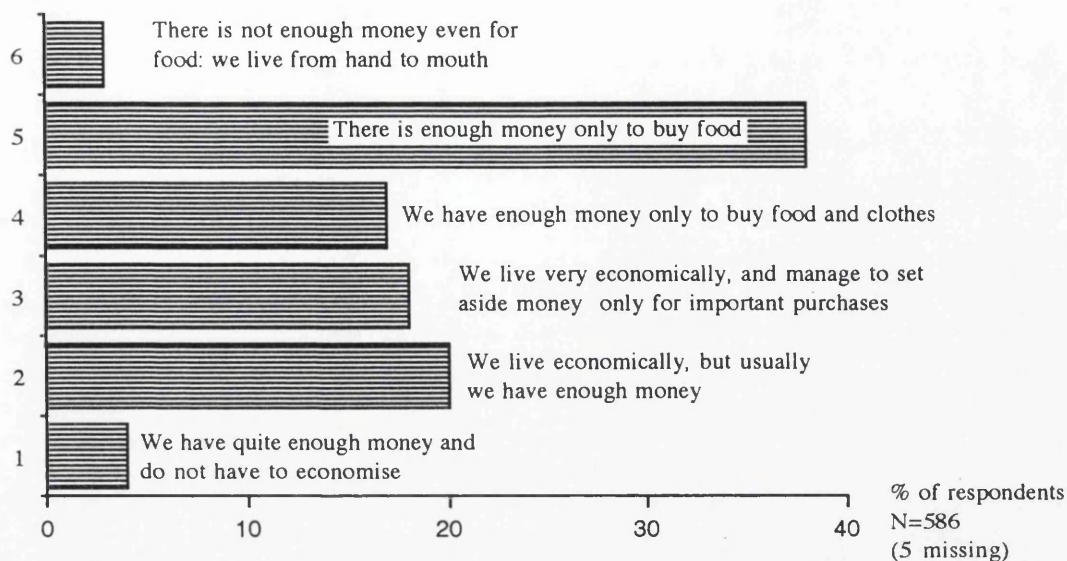
It is noteworthy that men indicated a significantly higher level of income than did female respondents. Since the respondents were asked about their household and not individual income, the difference is too large to be accounted for by the income differences between males and females in single households. It seems that men and women have different conceptions of household income, which could be due to, for example, differences in terms of information about the income of each family member. One explanation could be that male respondents are better informed about, or are less reluctant about including, incomes which stem from the unofficial sector. There were also significant regional differences, with Russians in Latgale (both urban and rural districts) reporting the lowest incomes, Russians in Riga in an intermediary position, and Russians in the rest of the Latvia reporting the highest incomes. The length of stay in Latvia did not influence income levels, but there was a tendency for Russians with a good knowledge of Latvian to live in households with a higher income than had other Russians.

The respondents were further asked to report which of the statements listed in Figure 5.1 gave the best description of the financial situation in their family. A large percentage reported, as can be seen from the figure, that they have enough money only to buy food, but only 3 per cent reported that they live from hand to mouth. 6 per cent of the respondents had so much money that they did not have to economise.

A majority (80 per cent) of Russians live in separate flats, according to the results of the survey, whereas 6 per cent have their own house. Moreover, 3 per cent live in one part of an individual house, while 5 per cent live in so-called "communal flats" (*kommunal'nye kvartiry*), where they share kitchen and toilet facilities with a number of tenants. An additional 3 per cent live in student flats or some type of hostel.

Figure 5.1: Perception of Household Economy

Survey question: Which of the following statements would you say gives the best description of your household economy?



Source: "Russians in Latvia" survey, 1992

The respondents were also asked to evaluate their housing conditions: 38 per cent characterised them as good or fairly good, whereas 22 per cent found them to be poor or unbearable. The largest group, though, (40 per cent) reported average housing conditions. For control purposes, in another place in the questionnaire the respondents were asked to indicate to what degree they were satisfied with their housing conditions, and the results confirmed the trend as indicated above. Almost 20 per cent were completely satisfied with their housing conditions, and one third of the respondents tended to be more satisfied than dissatisfied. At the other end of the scale there were 11 per cent who were completely dissatisfied and 24 per cent who said they were more dissatisfied than satisfied. There were also 11 per cent who found this question too difficult to answer.

Information about the purchase of articles of consumption tends to be more reliable than income as a measurement of standard of living, and the survey gave the following indication of the availability of certain consumer goods: almost 30 per cent of the respondents disposed of a car in their household, 96 per cent had access to a refrigerator, 83 per cent had a colour TV at home, whereas 11 per cent had some video equipment in their family.

The survey gave more information about material living conditions among Russians in Latvia (see the questionnaire in Appendix 2), but I shall not go into more

detail in this thesis.¹⁶ The utility of such information is limited for our purposes, as there is no reference group with which the Russians can be compared, and will therefore become more useful after a similar survey conducted at another point of time, which will give the opportunity for time series analysis.

5.4. Language Fluency and Religion

The census of 1989 reveals some interesting information on language fluency among the different nationalities living in Latvia. People were asked to indicate their "native language" (*rodnoi yazyk*) as well as a second Soviet language they were fluent in (*svobodno vladeet / brīvi parvalda*). Table 5.18 shows that the overall majority of both Russians and Latvians reported the language of their nationality as their native language. This tendency was somewhat stronger for Russians than for Latvians. Only 1.1 per cent of Russians regarded Latvian as their native language, and this percentage was higher in rural areas (3.2 per cent) than in towns and cities (0.8 per cent). On the other hand, the 2.6 per cent of Latvians regarding Russian as their native language lived predominantly in urban areas. It is noteworthy that the number of Russians and Latvians reporting a third language as their native language is negligible. The other nationalities living in Latvia also usually regard the language of their nationality as their native language, but of those who in 1989 reported another language as their native, the majority reported the Russian language. The percentage of Russians reporting their native language to be different from Russian decreased slightly from 1959 to 1989. In the same period the number of Latvians adopting Russian as their native language increased, but the rate of change was rather moderate.

From 1970 Soviet censuses also included information about fluency in a second Soviet language. The table shows that the percentage of Latvians fluent in Russian is much higher than that of Russians fluent in Latvian. In 1989 only 22 per cent of Russians living in Latvia reported fluency in Latvian either as their first or as a second language. The proportion of Latvians fluent in Russian was then 68 per cent. The percentage of Latvians with no fluency in Latvian is small (1.3 per cent), but larger than the percentage of Russians not fluent in Russian (0.1 per cent). Three quarters of Russians and one third of Latvians reported fluency only in one language. The table also shows that a higher percentage of Russians tend to know Latvian in rural than in urban areas, whereas the percentage of Latvians knowing Russian is higher in urban areas.

Table 5.18: Native Language and Fluency in Second (Soviet) Language* by Nationality

| | Total number (1000s) | Native language | | | Fluency as second language in... | | Fluency only in native language (%) |
|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------|----------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| | | Russian (%) | Latvian (%) | Other (%) | Russian (%) | Latvian (%) | |
| Russians | 906 | 98.8 | 1.1 | 0.09 | 1.1 | 21.1 | 76.0 |
| Latvians | 1388 | 2.6 | 97.4 | 0.06 | 65.7 | 1.3 | 32.6 |
| Urban areas | | | | | | | |
| Russians | 770 | 99.1 | 0.8 | 0.09 | 0.8 | 20.1 | 77.3 |
| Latvians | 831 | 3.4 | 96.6 | 0.06 | 71.3 | 1.8 | 26.5 |
| Rural areas | | | | | | | |
| Russians | 136 | 96.7 | 3.2 | 0.1 | 2.7 | 27.1 | 68.9 |
| Latvians | 557 | 1.4 | 98.6 | 0.06 | 57.3 | 0.6 | 66.1 |

* People were asked to indicate fluency only in one language other than their native language.

Source: Compiled from *1989. gada vissaviemības tautas skaitīšanas rezultāti* (Part II), p. 42.

Some changes in terms of language fluency among Russians and Latvians took place in the period from 1970 to 1989.¹⁷ The proportion of Russians fluent in Latvian (including Russians who reported Latvian as their native language) increased from 17 per cent in 1970 to 22 per cent in 1989. In the same period the proportion of Latvians fluent in Russian increased much faster, from 45 per cent in 1970 to 68 per cent in 1989.

Some caution should be applied when analysing the figures for language fluency in the censuses. First, the census form constrained people to report fluency in only one second language, which to a certain extent may underestimate the degree of language fluency. Second, what is reported in the census is a subjective interpretation of language fluency, and there may be individual differences as to how much knowledge of a language is required for one to say that one speaks it fluently. There could even be differences between the nationalities in this respect. Third, language policies have been subject to many controversies in Latvian society, and it could be that some people have secondary motives when answering these questions in the census, and particularly the question about second language. There may, for example, have been Latvians who refused to admit fluency in Russian in reaction against what they considered to be Russification policies.

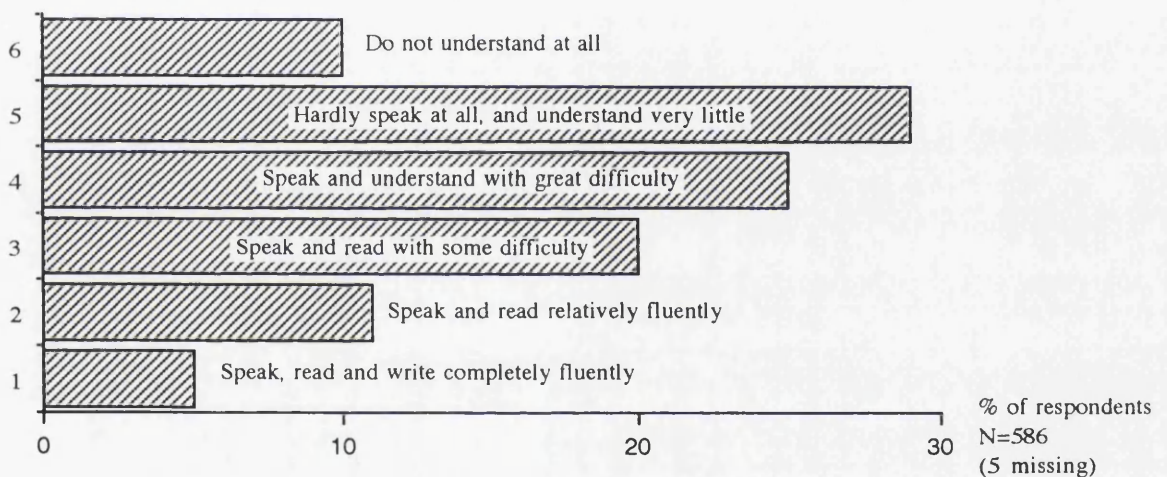
The "Russians in Latvia" survey also contains questions about language fluency, and this material has three advantages compared to the material in the census. Firstly, the figures are more up to date, as the survey was conducted just before the new language law was implemented in May 1992. Secondly, the scale is more detailed in the survey than in the census, and whereas the census operates with only two categories for language fluency, the survey makes it possible to estimate the degree of

language knowledge by operating with six different categories. Finally, by the use of the survey results one can establish if other characteristics, such as age, type of settlement, length of stay in Latvia etc., correlate with the degree of language fluency.

Let us first take a look at the degree of language fluency in the Russian population as a whole. The six categories by which the respondents could classify their knowledge of Latvian are listed in Figure 5.2, as is also the distribution of the replies. There are, as we see, only 5 per cent who report that they are absolutely fluent in the language, but there is also a low number (10 per cent) reporting absolutely no knowledge of Latvian. If we add up the number of people speaking and reading Latvian, even with some difficulty, we find that this applies to 36 per cent of the respondents. More than half the respondents know some Latvian, but their knowledge is very limited, and seems to be of a kind where it is impossible to use it for personal contacts or other purposes.

Figure 5.2: Language Fluency

Survey question: Please indicate to what degree you know the Latvian language



Source: "Russians in Latvia" survey, 1992.

From the survey results it seems that age does not have a strong effect on language knowledge. People between 15 and 30 did not report a higher knowledge of Latvian than did other age-groups. Since we did not distribute questionnaires to people under 15 we cannot say anything certain about people below that age. Neither was level of education a decisive factor for language fluency, although people with **very** little education reported less knowledge of Latvian than others. One could expect that people who have lived in Latvia for a long time know Latvian better than others. This also seems to be the case. More than half of those whose family had moved to Latvia before

the mid-1940s speak and read Latvian, although many of them with some difficulty. It is, however, quite remarkable that as many as 21 per cent of Russians who have lived in Latvia all their life speak practically no Latvian and/or do not understand Latvian at all.

There are also great geographical differences in terms of language knowledge. The most important factor seems to be the density of the Russian population in the area in question. Russians living in areas with a large Russian population are less likely to know Latvian than Russians living in Latvian-dominated areas. One example is the district of Talsi in Kurzeme, the district with the lowest proportion of Russians in the whole of Latvia (5 per cent). Here only 18 per cent of our respondents reported that they could understand very little or no Latvian, compared with an average of almost 40 per cent.

It was expected that people married to Latvians would be more likely to know the Latvian language than others, and the survey confirmed that this was the case. On the other hand, it was quite surprising to find that more than one in four Russians married to a Latvian understood very little or no Latvian. Respondents with a Latvian parent fared somewhat better: one in eight knew very little or no Latvian, whereas 40 per cent had a good knowledge of the language.

It is also of some interest to examine the degree of language fluency in languages other than Latvian in order to find out whether there is a correlation between knowledge of Latvian and knowledge of other languages. Our hypothesis is that there is such a positive correlation, so that people with a knowledge of foreign languages are more inclined also to know Latvian. On the basis of the findings referred to above, one would expect that the low level of knowledge of Latvian among the Russian population in Latvia is also reflected in a similar low degree of fluency in other foreign languages.

The survey confirmed this hypothesis. A very small proportion of Russians are fluent in foreign languages such as English, German, French, Polish, Lithuanian and Estonian. Only 3 per cent reported that they could speak, read and write fluently in English, and between 0 and 1 per cent in all the other languages listed above. Moreover, 15 per cent of the respondents were able to speak, understand and write in English only with the use of a dictionary. The corresponding percentage for German was 6 per cent, but for all the other listed languages was negligible. Respectively 20 and 17 per cent of the respondents could speak and understand some English and German with great difficulty, whereas the rest of the respondents either reported no knowledge of the listed languages or did not answer this question on language fluency.

The respondents in our survey were further asked to indicate for which purposes they regarded knowledge of Latvian to be essential. The majority (71 per cent) thought that knowledge of Latvian was necessary for social purposes. The second and third most frequently mentioned purposes were respectively to improve the cultural level of interethnic contacts (40 per cent) and to carry out tasks and duties related to

work (37 per cent). More than one third of the respondents further thought it to be essential to know Latvian in order to watch programs on TV in the Latvian language. Less frequently mentioned were purposes such as reading newspapers and journals (24 per cent), taking part in organisational and political life (22 per cent), reading Latvian fiction (15 per cent), and reading specialised literature in Latvian (13 per cent). Only 6 per cent saw it as necessary to know Latvian in order to take part in individual cultural activities.

Two questions were put only to respondents without fluency in Latvian. First they were asked to report whether or not they were studying Latvian at the present time (the spring of 1992). It should be noted that this was just before the implementation of the new language law (referred to in more detail in chapter 4), which implied that many were expecting to take language examinations in the near future in order to be sure of keeping their jobs. A total of 43 per cent of those answering this question were studying Latvian at that time, whereas 57 per cent were not. However, the respondents were also asked whether they wished to study Latvian, and 72 per cent of those who gave an answer to this question claimed to have such a wish, while 28 per cent admitted that they did not wish to study Latvian.

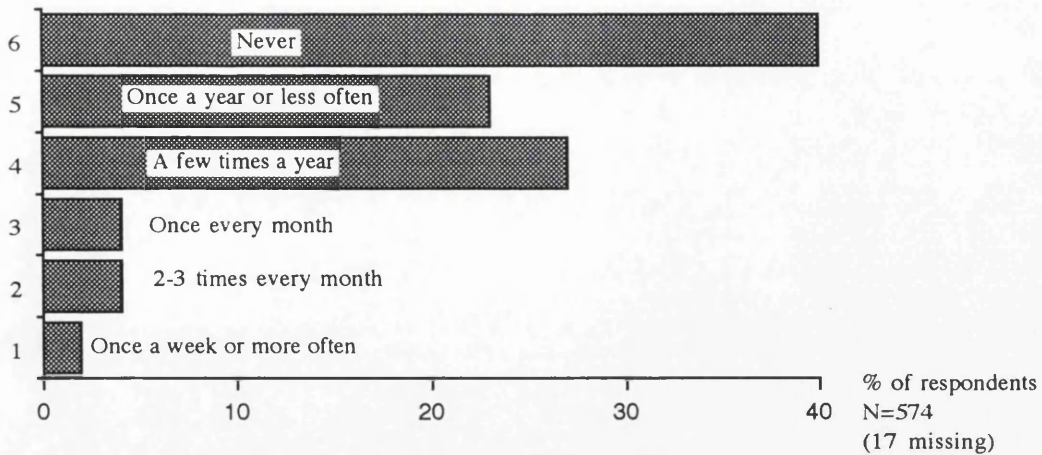
We have already seen that the Russian population in the interwar Latvian republic was relatively evenly distributed between Russian Orthodox and Old Believers. The antireligious campaigns of the Soviet regime and the general secularisation of society are, however, likely to have changed this picture. In recent years there has been a religious revival in most regions of the former Soviet Union, as well as a new focus on religion as a carrier of national identity. It is therefore of great importance to examine to what extent Russians in Latvia are influenced by this religious revival, and to study the links between religious affiliations and ethnic identification.

The census of 1989 does not provide information about religious affiliations, but there were two questions in the survey related to the subject of religion. First, the respondents were asked to state to which religious community they belong. The majority of Russians in Latvia are Russian Orthodox; 55 per cent of the respondents reported adherence to this church. According to the survey, 8 per cent belong to the Old Believers' Church and 3 per cent belong to other religious communities. More than one third of the respondents classified themselves as non-believers.

The respondents were also asked how often they go to church. The results, which are illustrated in Figure 5.3, show that the Russian population, as a rule, does not visit church on a regular basis. Only 2 per cent of the respondents claimed to go to church every week or more often, 10 per cent visit the church monthly or more often, whereas a majority of 63 per cent visit their church less than once a year or do not go to church at all.

Figure 5.3: Frequency of Church Visits

Survey Question: How often do you visit church?



Source: "Russians in Latvia" survey, 1992

There are significant differences between men and women in terms of religious affiliations and activities. Whereas half the Russian men regard themselves as non-believers, the same is true of only 21 per cent of Russian women. Women also visit the church more regularly than men, and the probability that a woman will visit a church at least a few times every month is twice as big as the probability that a man will do the same. Age has a small effect on religious affiliations and activities, and the proportion of non-believers is evenly distributed between the age-groups. The results show, however, that the youngest and the oldest generations have the largest proportion of the most frequent churchgoers, but the oldest age-group also has a larger proportion among those who virtually or absolutely never visit the church.

Our survey shows, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, that Russians in urban areas are no less religious than are Russians in rural areas. In fact rather the reverse seems to be the case. Whereas 68 per cent of Russians in the cities reported affiliation to a religious community, only 59 per cent of Russians in rural districts reported the same. Moreover, Russians in the cities go to church more regularly than do Russians in rural areas. There is also significant regional variation. Russians in Latgale have a greater tendency to be affiliated with a religious community than Russians in other regions, and this is the case for cities as well as for rural districts. In Latgale one also finds the largest proportion of Russians belonging to the Old Believers' church. According to our estimates, approximately a quarter of Russians living in Latgale are Old Believers, which is more than three times the proportion of Old Believers in Latvia as a whole.¹⁸

5.5. Conclusions

So far in this chapter we have referred to census and survey data which, it is to be hoped, provide some useful information about the social characteristics of the Russian population in Latvia. The chapter contains a large number of figures, and although such figures can sometimes speak for themselves, on most occasions some form of evaluation and interpretation is also required. Thus, at this stage it seems appropriate to ask what all the figures which have been presented actually convey about the position of Russians living in Latvia, and why they are of significance for an understanding of Russian ethnic identity in the country.

The most important conclusion to be drawn is that there is a great diversity among Russians in terms of their social characteristics. Russians, far from being a homogeneous group of people, differ widely when it comes to characteristics such as regional settlement; length of stay and reasons for moving to Latvia; occupation and level of education; language knowledge; and religious affiliation and practice. Russians in Latvia therefore have very different experiences, which will influence their perception of their position in Latvian society. A person with a mixed Latvian-Russian family background, who has lived in Latvia all his/her life and has a fluent command of the Latvian language cannot be expected to share the outlook of a recent Russian immigrant who came to Latvia only because of better work prospects and who has interacted only in a Russian-language environment.

We have also compared some of the social characteristics of Russians with those of ethnic Latvians, and seen that there is a relationship between a number of such characteristics and ethnicity. Apart from the obvious differences in terms of language and religion, the most important trend is that Russians more often than Latvians live in large cities where they sometimes even make up a majority. It can therefore be argued that the Russian question in Latvia first of all can be seen as an urban concern. Most of Latvian industry is concentrated in the cities, and the occupational structure among Russians and Latvians differs significantly. Most notably, Russians dominate in technically related professions, while they have a very low proportion within the creative intelligentsia. There is reason to assume that the differences between Latvians and Russians are large enough for them to have different roles in Latvian society, and ethnicity is therefore likely to be one of the important factors at work in the social stratification in the country.

Social characteristics will be decisive for future integration and/or assimilation of the Russian population, and information about these characteristics is crucial in order to assess the prospects for such processes. In the final chapter there will be a discussion of whether Russians in Latvia are likely to become assimilated, and some of this discussion will be based on considerations of the materials referred to in this

chapter. Similarly, as we have already seen in Chapter 2, Russian attitudes and outlooks, which are more thoroughly discussed in other chapters, are analysed by checking for relationships between the responses to such questions and social characteristics examined in this chapter. Thus, apart from age and gender of the respondent, we also check for variables such as ethnic composition of the family; length of stay in Latvia; income level; language fluency; and place and type of residence. Therefore, if one wants to know the actual distribution of Russians in the various categories, information from this chapter should be of use.

¹Such census data were published in *1989. gada vissavienības tautas skaitīšanas rezultāti, Latvijas PSR*, Riga: Latvijas PSR Valsts statistikas komiteja, 1990. Some of the data are compiled from Part I of the publication called "Demogāfiskie rādītāji", while the rest are from Part II: "Atsevišķu tautību iedzīvotājus raksturojošie rādītāji".

²There seem to be some diverging views on the actual borders of the four Latvian regions. My division is based on information received from the sociologists who took part in organising the survey. Other scholars apply a slightly different administrative division, e.g. Vēbers and Karnups (1994).

³Mežs (1992) has a thorough discussion of the developments in the ethnic composition of Latvian cities and rural districts with emphasis on the Latvian ethnos. See also Zvidriņš and Vanovska (1992), pp. 44-67.

⁴As explained in the previous chapter, there were certain categories of the population that were not allowed to register, while others refused to go through the registration process.

⁵Vēbers and Karnups (1994).

⁶Defined as 16 - 60 years for men and 16-55 years for women.

⁷For a more detailed description of these adjustments, see Appendix 1.

⁸The same adjustments as for age are made for sex in order to secure a representative sample. See Appendix 1.

⁹Developments in the proportion of mixed marriages among different nationalities in Latvia in the period from 1959 to 1980 are presented in a table in Zvidriņš (1986), which shows that the share of mixed marriages increased somewhat for most nationalities in this period. Among Ukrainians, Belarusians, Lithuanians and Poles living in Latvia only between 10 to 20 percent married homogeneously in 1980. The proportion was much larger for Jews. However, after the Latvians the Russians had the greatest tendency among the largest nationalities living in Latvia to marry a person of the same nationality.

¹⁰Kholmogorov (1970).

¹¹There are diverging views among scholars on the importance of mixed marriages in Latvia. While Dreifelds (1990/91) holds the view that mixed marriages in Latvia are widespread and serve to minimise ethnic tensions, Rudenshields (1992) sees the Latvians' tendency to endogamy (resistance to marriage outside one's nationality) as one of the main reasons for the low level of interaction between some of the ethnic groups in Latvia.

¹²*Narodnoe khozyaistvo SSSR v 1989 g.*, Moscow: Finansy i statistika, 1990, p. 180.

¹³See G. Smith (1990).

¹⁴See Karklins (1987), pp. 37-38.

¹⁵*Diena*, 5 March 1992, p. 5.

¹⁶The large number of questions related to material living conditions were requested by the Latvian sociologists participating in the survey, whose primary aim was to evaluate the living conditions of Russians in Latvia.

¹⁷In 1959 the question about second language fluency was not asked.

¹⁸An interesting point is that respondents indicating affiliations with the Old Believers' Church report less frequent visits to church than do respondents of other religious communities.

6. 'Russians in Latvia' or 'Latvian Russians'?¹

The redefined position of Russians in Latvia has significant implications for their ethnic identification. The breakup of the Soviet Union and the restoration of the Latvian state were very unlikely to leave Russians unaffected. Although it was still possible for Russians to believe that political developments would bring about a revival of a Russian-dominated empire, they nevertheless had to recognise that the present authorities no longer treated them as the "elder brother" of the other nationalities, at least for the time being. A Soviet or international identity could still exist, but such an identity was seriously challenged by the rapid geopolitical changes in the new post-Soviet polities, with a new and different stratification of the ethnic groups.

Although the ethnic identification of Russians was likely to change, the direction, speed and content of such change would not be uniform. The Russians were not a homogeneous group of people, and their reactions to changes taking place would therefore vary. In this chapter I will first look at factors determining the way in which Russians perceived their new role, and by discussing different groups of Russians I will show that Russians had varied interests and prospects in an independent Latvian state. Next I will use survey material to look at the level of integration of Russians into Latvian society, and also examine the links they have with Russia. This will lead on to the final section where I shall use survey results to examine the meaning of 'Latvia' and 'Russia' to Russians living in Latvia.

6.1. Classification of the Russian Population

In a paper dealing specifically with the question of Russian diaspora identity in the new states of the former Soviet Union Pål Kolstø differentiates between two dimensions of identity: cultural self-understanding and political loyalty, and argues that there may be a discrepancy between these two dimensions in the case of ethnic minorities.² A diaspora has the choice between three cultural identities: It can adopt the culture of the larger society in the state (assimilation); identify with its ethnic core group outside the state; or it can develop a self-understanding of its own. Diaspora populations also have three options of political identity: political loyalty towards the state of residence; loyalty to another state (usually the historical homeland of the ethnic group or the state in which the majority of the core group lives); or the creation of new states of their own. By dichotomising the two dimensions Kolstø introduces a typology of different identity positions which Russians in the new states may adopt.

In the case of the Russian diaspora there is the complication that the historic homeland, Russia, may mean different things to different Russians, as is also stressed by Kolstø. Some Russians identify with the present-day Russian Federation, whereas others look back to the Tsarist Empire and do not recognise what has happened since then. A third group may identify only with the Soviet Union. There are even those to whom Russia is nothing but an abstract idea which has never existed in reality. However, as we have seen, different forms of identification are not mutually exclusive, and a Russian may well identify with the Russian empire, the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation and see them all as expressions of the Russian idea.

Kolstø's typology can be used to identify different categories of Russians in Latvia. Russians may, for example, identify both culturally and politically with Russia (or the Soviet Union), and thereby refuse to adopt an identity as citizens of Latvia. These Russians may not even recognise the existence of a Latvian state, or they may see themselves as nationals of a foreign state and not as a national minority. Russians who adopt a political identity as citizens of Latvia but retain their traditional Russian cultural identity are described by Kolstø as an integrated minority. Russians may further adopt Latvian culture, and gradually forget their mother tongue, and then, although their sense of being Russians may continue to exist, they are likely to become assimilated to the Latvians. There are also Russians who see themselves as Russians, but Russians of a special kind and distinct from the core group, although they may identify politically with the Russian homeland or the new state.

As we see, Russians have many options for identification in the new geopolitical circumstances. Which factors will determine their choice? There are strong reasons to assume that much will be decided by the attitudes and actions of the dominant ethnic group, the Latvians. The way the Latvian authorities deal with their "Russian question" will be crucial here. There are few, if any, examples in the modern world where there has been successful forced assimilation of ethnic minorities, and experience shows that such attempts more often have had the opposite effect, with ethnic identity being intensified. Political and social developments in Latvia are nevertheless of vital importance for Russian identification. While it is difficult to force a cultural identity upon people, a political identity is more likely to be influenced by political actions, and the way Latvian authorities deal with issues such as, for example, decisions about who should be entitled to Latvian citizenship, will have a major effect on the political identification of Russians living in Latvia. Political integration can make cultural assimilation more likely, and it is hard to conceive the cultural assimilation of a group of people which has not first been integrated politically. However, although political integration seems to be a precondition for assimilation, a politically integrated minority does not necessarily lose its distinctive cultural identity.

There are also other factors which are likely to be significant in determining identification among Russians. Individual Russians will tend to be influenced by the choice of other Russians in their milieu. The compactness of Russians in the region is thus likely to be a significant factor. Russians who live in relative isolation from other Russians in Latvian-dominated areas would tend to be more likely to assimilate to the dominant ethnic group, while it is easier for Russians who live in Russian-dominated areas to retain their cultural identity. At the same time, Russians who live in a region or city where the density of Russians is particularly high are likely to feel more secure and less vulnerable, which may lessen the importance to them of ethnic difference.³ Moreover, Russians from ethnically mixed marriages would be expected to integrate and assimilate more easily than do Russians who interact with other people only in a purely ethnic Russian (or Slavic) environment.

The length of stay in Latvia is also likely to be a very important factor in determining the reactions of Russians to their redefined position and also influencing ethnic identification. Russians who have lived in Latvia for a long time would be expected to have developed closer attachments to the territory than have newcomers to the republic. One should, however, emphasise that there are likely to be many exceptions, and the reasons for moving to Latvia may be just as important as the actual length of residence in the republic. People who came in the late 1940s with the army or as party or state functionaries would often seem to have much greater problems adapting to new political and social conditions than Russians who moved to the region in recent years but with the awareness that they were moving to a different country.

The Russian population is, as has already been stressed, far from being a homogeneous group of people. It can, for analytical reasons, be useful to classify Russians in Latvia into a few major groups, and the level of integration would be the variable that would best serve our purposes. A classification would necessarily be broad, and some important dimensions and individual positions would have to be ignored.⁴

The first group consists of Russians who are well integrated into Latvian society, speak the Latvian language, and identify with and see their future in an independent Latvian state. Russians belonging to this group usually have roots in Latvia going generations back in time, but they may also have moved to Latvia later. The most significant feature characterising these Russians is that they have chosen to link their future to Latvia and the Latvian people. It has to be emphasised that these Russians need not necessarily be sympathetic to all the transformations taking place in Latvian society.

The second group consists of Russians who are less well integrated into Latvian society, but still have a sense of identification with the place where they now live and are interested in its prosperity. This group would mainly consist of immigrants who

came to Latvia on their own initiative or were recruited to work in Latvian industry because there was a need for their skills and labour.

A third group of Russians is not integrated into Latvian society at all. It is made up of people who moved around in the Soviet Union searching for a good life. They would often be people who found work in large, centrally-run enterprises, and they would normally be willing to move if there were prospects for a better life in another region. This group not only is not well integrated into Latvian society, but it also has a weak sense of ethnic or regional identity linking them to one particular area. They are Russians who "just happened to be" in Latvia when the republic became independent.

Finally, the fourth group of Russians consists of people who came to, and continued to live in, Latvia in the role of representatives of "the centre". This group consists of military personnel, functionaries in the Communist Party, the KGB, and other Soviet institutions. They are people who usually had very negative attitudes to the independence movement, and were also opposed to all other changes which represented a threat to their privileged position in the republic. Instead of integrating into Latvian society they made an effort to spread an 'internationalist' outlook, to which Latvians and Russians alike were expected to conform.

Reactions of Russians to new realities would necessarily be different for Russians belonging to each of the four groups. The boundaries between these groups of Russians need not be fixed, and may change with time, depending on future social and political developments. It should therefore be possible for people who would now be classified in, for example, the second group to become completely integrated and acquire the characteristics of the first. However, the opposite trend is also possible, where so-called 'integrated Russians' may become alienated from Latvian society, and one could even have a scenario where Russians in all four groups are amalgamated into one, single, Russian community. The possible implications and dangers involved if this should happen have been seriously discussed by Latvian and Russian political leaders.⁵

Two ways of classifying the Russian population have now been presented. Firstly, Russians were classified according to their ethnic identity, in the way Pål Kolstø suggested in his typology of Russian diaspora identities. Secondly, they were classified according to their level of integration into Latvian society. Although there will be no attempt in this chapter to pigeon-hole the Russian population into completely different classes or groups, it will be useful to keep these distinctions in mind when we now proceed to examine and discuss results from the survey dealing with related issues.

6.2. The Survey and Russian Integration

6.2.1. Selection of Mass Media

Mass media have an important role in the process of forming public opinion, and it is clear that the choice people make in terms of selection of information from newspapers, TV and radio is crucial for their perception of political and social processes. In Latvia people have a wide choice of newspapers, TV and radio programmes by which to be informed about events taking place in society. These mass media often have a very different outlook and represent fundamentally opposed political views. Thus, people who keep informed about political developments only by, for example, reading one newspaper or listening to one radio programme will tend to be influenced by the way political views are presented in that particular mass medium.

For Russians in Latvia there is the additional element that they can receive information both from sources both in Russia and Latvia. In the Soviet period Russians could subscribe to and buy the major Moscow newspapers, and they were also able to watch Soviet central TV. When Latvia became independent, however, newspapers from Russia became much more expensive, and it also became more difficult for non-subscribers to obtain such newspapers. Transmission of Russian TV programmes continued, but there was a constant threat that they would be stopped because the Latvian authorities were no longer willing to or able to pay in hard currency for Russian programmes in an already difficult economic situation.⁶ Plans to cut down on TV transmissions from Russia raised protests from many Russians who still felt strong links with Russia and political and social developments there.⁷

The selection by Russians of the mass media they use can be seen as an indication of the level of integration of Russians into Latvian society. Russians who received all their information from Russian and, although to a lesser extent, Latvian Russian-language newspapers, journals, radio and TV were less likely to be familiar with the issues which were of most concern to ethnic Latvians. Such issues naturally tended to be presented more thoroughly in the Latvian-language than the Russian-language media whether printed in Riga or Moscow. However, Russians in Latvia did not need to know the Latvian language in order to obtain information about local issues. Latvian TV and radio put a strong emphasis on supplying information to the Russian-speaking population about events taking place in the country through their Russian-language programmes. So, of course, did the Latvian Russian-language press, although their information did not always accord with the taste of the Latvian authorities.

The "Russians in Latvia" survey which was conducted in the spring of 1992 shows the break-down of the Russian population in Latvia in terms of their selection of

mass media at that time.⁸ Let us first look at how frequently Russians selected the various TV channels and radio stations, as illustrated in Table 6.1. The table shows that the groups of listeners to Latvian radio in the Russian language and to Russian radio were approximately the same size. More than one third of the respondents answering this question said that they listened to these radio stations daily. Programmes in the Latvian language were less popular, and only one in four respondents listened to programmes in the Latvian language once a week or more often; the majority of these were fluent in Latvian.⁹ Other radio stations were, as the table shows, less popular.

Table 6.1: Radio and TV Transmissions

Survey Question: How often do you listen to or watch the following radio and TV transmissions?

| | Daily | 3-6 times a week | 1-2 times a week | Less than once a week | Do not listen/ watch | No answer |
|----------------------------|-------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| N = 591 | (%) | (%) | (%) | (%) | (%) | (%) |
| Latvian radio (in Latvian) | 10 | 5 | 10 | 8 | 36 | 32 |
| Latvian radio (in Russian) | 35 | 16 | 17 | 8 | 14 | 9 |
| Russian radio | 34 | 16 | 12 | 6 | 17 | 15 |
| Radio Liberty | 4 | 5 | 5 | 10 | 46 | 30 |
| BBC Russian service | 2 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 55 | 35 |
| Latvian TV (in Latvian) | 11 | 7 | 12 | 11 | 31 | 28 |
| Latvian TV (in Russian) | 43 | 18 | 19 | 6 | 6 | 7 |
| Russian TV | 66 | 13 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 8 |
| TV from other states | 11 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 40 | 36 |

Source: "Russians in Latvia" survey, 1992.

However, when it comes to TV, the survey clearly shows that programmes from Russia had a larger number of Russian viewers than locally produced programmes. Two thirds of the respondents said that they watched Russian TV on a daily basis. Still, Latvian TV also had a relatively large number of viewers, although most of the respondents watched programmes only in the Russian language. Eight out of ten respondents watched Latvian TV in Russian at least once a week, while for Latvian TV in the Latvian language the same was true of only three in ten respondents. Programmes in the Latvian language were, of course, most popular among Russians who had a good command of the Latvian language, and likewise, Russians with a Latvian mother or father, or married to a Latvian, were more likely to watch these programmes than were other Russians. These characteristics did not, however, affect the viewing frequencies of TV from Russia, which was watched by a majority of the respondents regardless of their knowledge of Latvian or the ethnic composition of their family.¹⁰ However, Russian TV was watched more often by respondents in the cities

(especially in Riga) than in rural areas, and also tended to be most popular with the older generations.

The survey confirms that if an end was to be put to the transmission of TV programmes from Russia in Latvia this would strongly affect the viewing habits of the Russian population living there. One could argue that since a majority of Russians, through their viewing habits, show that they prefer Russian TV to Latvian TV, this could retard their integration into Latvian society. However, it should also be stressed that only a small minority of Russians watch Russian TV only (3 per cent, according to our survey). The overwhelming majority of the respondents watch programmes both from Russia and from Latvia. Some Russians themselves argue that the fact that there are higher viewing figures for Russian than for Latvian TV should be an incentive to Latvian TV to make more programmes of real interest to Latvia's large Russian-speaking community.

Table 6.2: Presentation of Russians on Radio and TV

Survey Question: In your opinion, how are Russians presented in the programs of...

| N = 591 | Usually objectively/ truthfully (%) | It varies/ hard to say (%) | Usually biased/ distorted (%) | No answer (%) |
|----------------------------|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| Latvian radio (in Latvian) | 4 | 47 | 19 | 30 |
| Latvian radio (in Russian) | 18 | 57 | 14 | 11 |
| Russian radio | 24 | 47 | 7 | 22 |
| Latvian TV (in Latvian) | 5 | 42 | 22 | 31 |
| Latvian TV (in Russian) | 18 | 54 | 14 | 14 |
| Russian TV | 31 | 51 | 5 | 13 |

Source: "Russians in Latvia" survey, 1992.

Respondents in the survey also give Russian TV stations a more positive evaluation than Latvian stations in terms of their presentation of Russians in their programmes (see Table 6.2). When taking only the responses of those who answered the questions into account¹¹, one finds that more than one third of the respondents thought Russian TV usually presented Russians in an objective and truthful way. Only 6 per cent thought the presentation of Russians in Russian programmes tended to be biased or distorted. The opinion about Latvian TV in Russian was more neutral, while Latvian TV in Latvian received the most negative evaluation. Only 7 per cent of the Russians in the survey who answered this question thought Latvian TV programmes in Latvian gave a truthful and objective presentation of Russians, while one third thought the opposite. The pattern was almost identical for radio stations, with Russian radio being evaluated as giving the most truthful presentation of Russians, while Latvian

radio programmes (especially those in the Latvian language) were thought to give the most distorted presentation. It seems to be a paradox, however, that 13 per cent of those who claimed not to understand Latvian at all still had the opinion that Latvian radio in the Latvian language presents Russians in a distorted way.

Table 6.3: Most Popular Newspapers and Journals among Russians in Latvia.

| N = 591 | Read newspaper/journal (%) | Subscribe to newspaper/journal (%) |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Latvian newspapers¹ | | |
| SM segodnya | 55 | 39 |
| Diena ² | 25 | 6 |
| Rigas Balss ² | 12 | 4 |
| Panorama Latvii | 9 | 3 |
| Russkii Put' | 6 | 3 |
| Zemlya | 3 | 2 |
| Local newspapers | 17 | 2 |
| Newspapers in Latvian | 1 | 1 |
| Russian newspapers | | |
| Argumenty i fakty | 25 | 25 |
| Izvestiya | 12 | 10 |
| Komsomol'skaya pravda | 11 | 8 |
| Trud | 7 | 7 |
| Pravda | 4 | 3 |
| Sem'ya | 4 | 3 |
| Megapolis EXPRESS | 3 | 1 |
| Sovetskii sport | 3 | 3 |
| Journals³ | | |
| Rabotnitsa | 14 | 13 |
| Krest'yanka | 11 | 12 |
| Ogonyok | 8 | 3 |
| Zdorov'e | 7 | 7 |
| Literature journals ⁴ | 7 | 6 |
| Smena | 6 | 4 |
| Nauka i zhizn' | 5 | 4 |

1 If not otherwise stated, the newspapers are in the Russian language.

2 This newspaper/journal has both a Russian and a Latvian edition.

3 Most of the popular journals were published in Russia.

4 Published either in Latvia (for example, Daugava and Rodnik) or in Russia.

Source: "Russians in Latvia" survey, 1992.

The respondents were also asked in an open question to list the newspapers and journals they respectively read on a regular basis or to which they were subscribers. The responses to these questions have been systematised and are illustrated in Table 6.3. One can see from the table that newspapers which were published in Latvia were both being read and subscribed to more often than newspapers from Russia. However,

Russians had a clear tendency to prefer newspapers in their own language. Although some of the newspapers on the list have both a Latvian and a Russian edition, one can assume that the overall majority of Russians read the Russian edition. This must be the conclusion when taking into account that other important newspapers which were published only in Latvian were listed only by a very small proportion of the respondents.¹²

The tables show that newspapers identified with the Communist past or Soviet ideology were not particularly popular among the Russian population. Of course, in 1992 the publication of many of the former newspapers belonging to the Communist Party of Latvia (*Sovetskaya Latvija*) or *Interfront* (*Edinstvo*) were prohibited. However, there were still newspapers regarded as representing the same political outlook (such as the newspaper *Panorama Latvii*), but they did not have very many readers. This tendency is also confirmed when it comes to Russian newspapers. The liberal *Argumenty i fakty*, for example, had a much larger number of readers than the hard-liner papers such as *Pravda*. The newspaper with most Russian readers, *SM-segodnya* - according to the survey it was read regularly by more than half the Russian population in Latvia - deserves some attention. The newspaper (which had changed its name from *Sovetskaya molodezh*) had been famous for its critical attitude to the authorities, and was one of the most outspoken newspapers in its critique of the Communist Party in the early Gorbachev era. It was then very popular among Latvians and Russians alike. As the Popular Front became more influential in Latvian politics, the newspaper started to criticise what it regarded as increasing ethnocentrism in the movement and in Latvian politics in general, and it thereby soon became a mouth piece for segments of Latvia's Russian-speaking population. The newspaper was subsequently criticised by many Latvians for giving a distorted picture of Latvian political developments.

The second most popular republican newspaper among Russians was *Diena*, which was often regarded as a government newspaper, although it became independent and privately owned in April 1992. One in four Russians read this newspaper regularly, according to the survey. The weekly newspaper of the major Russian society in Latvia, *Russkaya Obshchina Latvii*, was read by 6 per cent of the respondents. The survey further indicates that while many newspapers published in Latvia were through retailers, Russian newspapers were mainly received through subscription. This seems to confirm the observation that Russian newspapers were generally hard to obtain at newsagents.

Although newspapers published in Latvia had a larger circle of readers than newspapers from Russia, the opposite was the case with journals. The four journals which had the highest number of readers were all published in Russia. This can probably be explained by the fact that few journals in the Russian language are

published in Latvia and that those that exist tend to have a specialised focus so that they attract only a small circle of readers. Russians in our survey did not generally read journals in the Latvian language.

6.2.2. Private Libraries

Russians in Latvia seem to have relatively large collections of books¹³, but their collections only to a minor degree reflect the fact that they live in Latvia. While 84 per cent of the respondents reported that they had many books by Russian authors in their book collection, only 13 per cent had many books by Latvian authors. This must be regarded as a small proportion, taking into account that 30 per cent of the respondents had many books by English-language authors, and there were only slightly more respondents who said they had many books by Latvian authors than respondents who said they had many books by German authors. However, when taking into account those who reported that Latvian authors were at least represented in their book collection, this percentage was considerably larger than the percentage who reported that they had books by German authors. The conclusion must nevertheless be that Russians seem to be very strongly orientated towards Russian literature.

When we take a closer look at various groups of Russians in terms of their book collection, we find that the groups which one would expect to be the most likely to have a large number of Latvian books do indeed have more such books than other groups. For example, the likelihood of having a large number of books by Latvian authors was almost three times higher among Russians married to a Latvian than among other Russians, and Russians with a Latvian mother or father were also more likely than others to have many books by Latvian authors. The level of language knowledge was also of importance, but did not correlate as strongly as the ethnic composition of the family. Russians in Latgale, and especially in the rural districts, had more books by Latvian authors than Russians in other parts of Latvia, which again is an indication of the tendency of these Russians to be better integrated into Latvian society than others. However, when checking for such factors as place of birth and length of stay in Latvia, these did not seem to be of such major importance as could have been expected for determining the number of books by Latvian authors among the Russian population.

6.2.3. Contacts with Relatives

Most Russians in Latvia have relatives in non-Latvian regions of the former Soviet Union with whom they keep close contacts. Almost three in four respondents in our survey reported that they had close contacts with relatives in Russia, 19 per cent with relatives in Ukraine, 15 per cent in Belarus and 11 per cent in the two other Baltic states; while 8 per cent reported having relatives in other parts of the former Soviet Union. Less than 13 per cent of the respondents did not have close contacts with relatives in any regions outside Latvia.

One of the most serious concerns of Russians in Latvia has naturally been how to maintain these close links with relatives after Latvia has become an independent state. A number of practical problems have emerged. Price increases on all forms of transport have made it more difficult to visit relatives who, without moving, suddenly live 'abroad'. Moreover, many Russians have problems with adjusting to the new rates for mail and telephone calls, which (even when taking inflation into account) have increased many times. There seems, however, to be some understanding among Russians of the necessity of these changes, and a willingness to cope with the new circumstances. What really has upset many Russians is the introduction of a strict visa regime between Latvia and the CIS states, whereby Russians will have to apply and pay in hard currency for a visa in order to visit relatives, and the majority who are non-citizens must in addition obtain a permit to return to Latvia.¹⁴ Moreover, Russians in Latvia cannot expect to have many visitors from Russia, because of the comparatively high prices for a visa due to the low value of the Russian rouble, and the time-consuming procedures for first obtaining the visa from the nearest Latvian embassy or consulate, of which there are not many in Russia. One of the main arguments in favour of a strict visa regime between Latvia and Russia was to stop some of the illegal traffic of goods and labour over the border. It has been argued, however, that the main victims have become ordinary 'citizens' (in fact, most of those travelling from the Latvian side of the border are non-citizens) travelling to see relatives abroad. Visa regulations are, however, still subject to negotiation, and there could be prospects for an agreement between the two countries which will make it easier for relatives to cross the Latvian-Russian border.

6.2.4. Interethnic Attitudes

It seems to be a common view among both Russians and Latvians that ethnic relations on an everyday level are relatively good.¹⁵ Indeed, one of the most remarkable features of the transition towards restored Latvian statehood has been the absence of inter-ethnic violence. There are, on the other hand, also indications that people in Latvia

tend to interact predominantly with people belonging to their own ethnic group, or groups that are culturally and/or linguistically close to their own. Attitudes of Russians to other ethnic groups would be of vital importance for the question of the integration of Russians into Latvian society; in particular Russian attitudes towards the majority ethnic group in Latvia, the Latvians, would be crucial.¹⁶ Instead of asking Russians directly about their opinion of Latvians, we chose to ask how Russians would react in certain social situations involving interaction with Latvians. Thus, Russians were asked questions related to having Latvians as neighbours, co-workers, friends, and sons- or daughters-in-law. The responses would indicate whether Russians were inclusive or exclusive when it comes to contact with Latvians, and what forms of social relations with Latvians they regarded as acceptable and unacceptable.

Although one has to take into account that some respondents may have given what they thought to be the 'correct' responses to these questions, it nevertheless seems that Russians are not very exclusive when it comes to social interactions with other nationalities. Table 6.4. shows how the respondents replied to the four questions on this issue. As can be seen from the table, only 8 per cent of the respondents said they would react in a negative way if their son or daughter married a Latvian, and a majority said they would react positively. This result could indicate that Russians do not put very much emphasis on the nationality of their sons- or daughters-in-law, or it could simply be a reflection of Latvians having a relatively high status among Russians in Latvia. Other surveys carried out among Russians in former Soviet republics indicate that the latter is the case, since Russians in the Baltic region and Transcaucasus were usually not against their relatives marrying representatives of the indigenous population, whereas they were generally much more negative to such marriages in Central Asia and Kazakhstan.¹⁷

In the next question the respondents were asked whether nationality composition in an area would be of importance if they were to choose a different place of residence, and nationality was here not specified. While 45 per cent of the respondents did not find nationality composition of the area to be particularly important, there were also 28 per cent who attached at least some degree of importance to the nationalities factor. Approximately the same percentage agreed with the view that it was best to work with colleagues of one's own nationality. However, people were less concerned with the nationality of the people with whom they spend their free time. In the question asking whom the respondents preferred to spend their free time with, as many as 82 per cent replied that nationality was not important to them.

A closer examination of how the responses to these questions correlate with other variables reveals some interesting information. It can, for example, be observed that people who work in close contact with Latvians are much less likely than others to agree with the view that it is better to work in a mono-ethnic environment. While 19 per

cent of respondents in this category agreed or tended to agree with such a view, the same was true of 35 per cent of those Russians who only sometimes, or never, worked in close contact with Latvians. This seems to indicate that Russians who work with Latvians generally have positive experiences with inter-ethnic contacts at the workplace.

Table 6.4: Nationality relations

Survey Question: What would your reaction be if your daughter or son married a Latvian?

| | Very positive (%) | Positive (%) | Hard to say/ no answer (%) | Negative (%) | Very negative (%) |
|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| N = 591 | | | | | |
| All respondents | 7 | 47 | 38 | 5 | 3 |

Survey Question: If you were to choose a different place of residence, would the national composition of the place be important for your choice?

| | Very important (%) | Important (%) | Hard to say/ no answer (%) | Not very important (%) | Completely unimportant (%) |
|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| N = 591 | | | | | |
| All respondents | 8 | 20 | 27 | 19 | 26 |

Survey Question: To what extent do you share the view that it is best to work with colleagues only of one's own nationality?

| | Fully agree (%) | Tend to agree (%) | Hard to say/ no answer (%) | Tend to disagree (%) | Completely disagree (%) |
|-----------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| N = 591 | | | | | |
| All respondents | 9 | 17 | 35 | 31 | 18 |

Survey Question: With whom do you prefer to spend your free time?

| | Predominantly with people of own nationality (%) | With Latvians (%) | Nationality not important (%) | No answer (%) |
|-----------------|---|----------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| N = 591 | | | | |
| All respondents | 17 | 1 | 81 | 1 |

Source: "Russians in Latvia" survey, 1992.

Russians with a Latvian parent or spouse tend to be more tolerant than others in terms of interaction with people of other nationalities. The importance of interethnic marriage as a bridge between ethnic groups seems to be vital. The overwhelming majority (97 per cent) of Russians who had married a Latvian said they would be positive to their son or daughter doing the same. Other Russians married to a person of a different nationality (usually Slavs) were also more positive than Russians in monoethnic marriages to the idea of their children marrying a Latvian. However, these same Russians were more likely than others to agree with the opinion that it was best to work only with people from one's own nationality. Russians with Russian parents were generally much more negative than Russians with a Latvian parent and somewhat

more negative than Russians with a parent of a different, but non-Latvian, nationality, to the four types of interaction examined in the survey.

Level of knowledge of the Latvian language was another factor of significance for the attitudes of Russians towards interaction with other nationalities. Russians with a fluent or good command of the Latvian language were particularly positive to the idea of their children marrying a Latvian. Length of stay in the republic was also of some importance; in particular, Russians who had arrived in Latvia over the last 15 years tended to be the least enthusiastic about socialising with Latvians. Although the place of living was not as significant as some of the other variables, there was still a tendency that Russians in Latgale's rural districts were the Russians who put the least emphasis on nationality differences, while Russians in Riga tended to be more-than-averagely concerned with the ethnic composition of the place of residence, and were also more likely to agree that it was best to work with fellow Russians.

The more education a respondent had had, the more likely s/he was to regard the ethnic composition of his/her place of residence as very important. While, for example, 17 per cent of Russians with only primary education in the survey were concerned with the nationality composition of their new place of residence, the corresponding percentage for Russians with a higher education was 35 per cent. Similarly, manual workers were less concerned than specialists and professionals with the ethnic composition of their place of residence.

The following were the most typical characteristics among those who preferred to spend their spare time with fellow Russians: they had moved to Latvia during the last 15 years (and were, consequently, not born in Latvia); they did not work in close contact with Latvians; they had a poor or non-existent knowledge of the Latvian language; they were married to another Slav (not necessarily a Russian); they had an average income; they were male and aged somewhere between 15-54 years, working as a professional; both their parents were Russian; they lived in Riga (or some other urban area); and they had higher education.

6.2.5. Interethnic Relations

There were several questions in the survey dealing with the quality of interethnic relations in Latvia. Russians were, for example, asked to compare ethnic relations at the time of the survey (the spring of 1992) with the situation in the mid-1980s. As expected, and as has also been indicated in other surveys¹⁸, most respondents (almost 80 per cent) thought interethnic relations had deteriorated. Only 1 per cent of the respondents said that ethnic relations had improved. When asked to characterise ethnic relations as seen at present, only 1 person out of the 591 respondents characterised them as **very** good. There were, at the other end of the scale,

very few who characterised ethnic relations as **very** bad (8 per cent), but almost half the respondents thought that interethnic relations were bad rather than good (Table 6.5).

Table 6.5: Evaluation of Inter-ethnic Relations

Survey Question: How would you evaluate inter-ethnic relations in Latvia today as compared with such relations in the mid-1980s?

| | Improved (%) | The same (%) | Deteriorated (%) | No answer (%) |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|
| N = 591 | | | | |
| All respondents | 1 | 19 | 79 | 1 |

Survey Question: Could you please give a characteristic of inter-ethnic relations in Latvia at the present time?

| | Very good (%) | Good rather than bad (%) | Hard to say/ no answer (%) | Bad rather than good (%) | Very bad (%) |
|-----------------|------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| N = 591 | | | | | |
| All respondents | 0 | 11 | 33 | 48 | 8 |

Source: "Russians in Latvia" survey, 1992.

The perceived deterioration of interethnic relations probably has many causes. Latvian politicians often argue that the main reason for present tensions is that Russians are not willing to give up their privileged position in Latvian society and come to terms with their new social role as an ethnic minority.¹⁹ The continued presence of the Russian army and what is seen as Russian interference in Latvian affairs are other factors causing Latvian resentment which can be directed towards the Russians living in Latvia.²⁰ Moreover, the deteriorating economic situation, where Russians, due to their predominance in unprofitable and vulnerable industries, are likely to become most affected by increasing unemployment, is also likely to be an important factor in explaining interethnic tension. In this situation political initiatives which are perceived to favour one ethnic group at the expense of others tend to aggravate interethnic relations.

Our survey, however, confirms the impression that interethnic tension in Latvia is primarily of an impersonal kind and that conflicts are more common among strangers than among people who know each other. When Russians were asked to characterise where and how often ethnic incidents take place, it was made clear that most of them take place in public places, such as public transport, in services, state institutions and so on. Very few reported ethnic tension in their work-place or among neighbours.

6.2.6. Nationality Discrimination

Almost half the Russians claimed that they, or members of their family, had experienced some form of infringement of their rights in Latvia because of their nationality. These infringements were first of all related to promotion at work, but also

(as Table 6.6. shows) concerned education and the acquisition of property. People with higher education were more inclined than others to say that they had experienced discrimination because of their nationality, which could indicate that they were more aware of their "rights" than others. Similarly, young people reported more infringements than people in the older age groups: 57 per cent of people under 30 indicated that they had experienced infringements of some kind, while the same was true of only 35 per cent of people over 55. There were also some regional variations, with Russians in Riga being clearly overrepresented among those claiming to have experienced at least one form of the infringements which were asked about in the survey. The ethnic composition of the family did not correspond with the responses to these questions, but Russians who had lived in Latvia all their life and whose family was also from Latvia were least likely to have experienced discrimination because of their nationality. Finally, the better their command of the Latvian language, the less likely Russians were to report having experienced any infringements of their or family members' rights.

Table 6.6: Discrimination because of Nationality

Survey Question: Have either you or any members of your family encountered episodes in Latvia where your rights have been infringed because of your nationality?

| N = 591 | Promotions at work (%) | In obtaining education (%) | In acquiring property (%) | In obtaining a place to live (%) | In obtaining a higher salary (%) |
|-----------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|
| All respondents | 24 | 18 | 17 | 13 | 11 |

Source: "Russians in Latvia" survey, 1992.

6.2.7. Remain in Latvia, or Leave?

Dissatisfaction with the political situation and with their uncertain future prospects does not necessarily imply that most Russians intended to leave Latvia. In fact, when asked whether they intended to leave, taking into account the economic and political situation in Latvia and the CIS, only 4 per cent of the respondents in the survey said that they had decided to leave Latvia. Not more than 9 per cent were more likely to leave than to stay, whereas a significant number were undecided (Table 6.7.). The majority of respondents were, as illustrated in the table, more likely to stay than to leave. If we calculate the number of Russians who would leave from the 13 per cent who said they had decided or were most likely to leave Latvia, we find that just over 100,000 would leave the country. One should, however, not see these figures as exact estimates of how many Russians will actually leave Latvia, since it is easier to say in a survey that one wants to leave than it is in reality to do so. Moreover, changing

conditions in Latvia and/or the CIS could change the figures radically. As the former leader of the Department of Nationalities Affairs under the Supreme Council of Latvia pointed out in March 1993, the number of Russians who have said that they want to leave Latvia has increased dramatically, from a negligible number a few years ago to 20 per cent of the entire Russian population of Latvia in 1993.¹

Table 6.7: Intention to stay in or to leave Latvia

Survey Question: Taking into account the present political and economic situation in Latvia and the CIS, do you intend to leave Latvia?

| | Decided to leave | More likely to leave than to stay | Hard to say/ no answer | More likely to stay than to leave | Decided to stay |
|-----------------|---------------------|---|---------------------------|---|--------------------|
| N = 591 | (%) | (%) | (%) | (%) | (%) |
| All respondents | 4 | 9 | 27 | 24 | 36 |

Source: "Russians in Latvia" survey, 1992.

Which groups, then, are the most likely to leave Latvia? If we take the survey as a guide, it does not seem as though the economic position of the respondents correlates with plans about leaving, since the proportion of people who are relatively well off economically and people who can afford to buy hardly anything but food have approximately the same rate of potential leavers. It is noteworthy that people with higher education are the most decisive about leaving Latvia, and so far it is precisely Russians with higher education who have been leaving most frequently.² Similarly, professionals more frequently reported an intention to leave than did manual workers. Old age pensioners were naturally those who were least likely to go. There seem to be two main reasons why well educated professionals were those who most often expressed the wish to leave Latvia. Firstly, professionals tended to be more dissatisfied with economic and political conditions in Latvia than were other groups. Secondly, professionals would tend to have more resources and therefore have a better chance of finding work and settling down in a new region.

The most significant determining factors for plans about the future are, however, the length of stay in Latvia and the nationality of the parents. None of the respondents who had a Latvian mother or father was likely to leave Latvia. Of those born in Latvia with parents (regardless of nationality) who were also born in Latvia, only 3 per cent indicated that they were more likely to leave than to stay. These are Russians who tend to be well integrated into Latvian society, and they will also normally be automatically entitled to Latvian citizenship. The corresponding percentage for those who arrived in Latvia during the last 15 years was 32 per cent. They are Russians who are likely to be the last to obtain citizenship, both because of their late arrival in the republic and because their level of knowledge of the Latvian language is generally low. However, although the level of language knowledge was important for

the question about leaving, a considerable proportion of those who were fluent in or had a good knowledge of the Latvian language also intended to leave the republic. Russians who reported that they had experienced discrimination because of their nationality were naturally more determined to leave than others, but we also find people who wanted to leave among those who are generally satisfied with life in Latvia, so the question of whether to leave or to stay seems to be more complex than to centre only around general discontent with politics and the economy, prospects for citizenship and interethnic relations.

The situation in the CIS, and especially in Russia, is likely to be particularly decisive for the decision on whether to leave or to stay. Although the economic situation in Latvia has deteriorated, Russians are well aware that the situation in Russia is no better, and they seem to fear that the prospects for a recovery there are bleak. Parents who if they were thinking only of themselves would sometimes have been inclined to leave Latvia often take this into consideration when they think of where future prospects would be best for their children.

The overall majority of those indicating an intention to leave Latvia wanted to move to Russia, and for a majority of Russians this seems to be the most realistic alternative. There are, however, a large number of practical problems involved for those who decide to leave. Economic compensation for those leaving is minimal, and most Russians are not even allowed to sell their apartments in Latvia. The cost of moving furniture and other belongings is also considerable. Most urban areas with living conditions similar to those in Latvian cities are inaccessible to Russians from Latvia because of the lack of housing and job opportunities; more likely places of settlement for newcomers would be Russian cities in the provinces or impoverished rural areas. These are usually unattractive alternatives for the predominantly urban Russians.²³

It would, in my opinion, not be correct to explain the fact that quite a large number of Russians still want to leave Latvia solely as a reaction to the increasing pressure Russians living there are facing because the authorities want them to leave. There are, indeed, Russians who over the last few years have experienced an intensification of their ethnic consciousness and who therefore want to live in Russia where they have their roots and feel they belong. Both Russia, Latvia and the West have been criticised for not doing enough for these people.²⁴ However, some Latvian national radicals want to make conditions for those Russians who are not willing to integrate into Latvian society so unpleasant that they will prefer to leave. It also seems that they have had at least some success in this respect. Since the majority of Russians still intend to stay in Latvia and those who leave tend to be some of the best educated and business-like elements of the population, one may, however, question whether the consequences of such policies would be in the overall interests of the Latvian people.

6.2.8. Choice of Citizenship

Russians in Latvia were not familiar with the terms for acquiring citizenship at the time when our survey was carried out (the spring of 1992). They were, however, familiar with the terms for naturalisation which were listed in the Supreme Council Resolution of 15 October 1991 (and which was discussed in more detail in Chapter 4). In the survey we asked the respondents to presuppose a situation where no decisions had yet been made concerning who should be entitled to citizenship of Latvia. The respondents were then asked which citizenship(s) they would take if they were free to choose (leaving open the possibility of dual citizenship).

Some of the respondents said they found it too difficult to answer this question (11 per cent), and a few (2 per cent) did not answer it at all, but the responses for those who did respond were as follows: More than three in four said they would choose citizenship of Latvia, while 52 per cent expressed a wish to obtain Russian citizenship. Both figures include people who wanted dual Latvian-Russian citizenship (38 per cent of the respondents). Just over 3 per cent would choose citizenship of another state, and 7 per cent would not choose any citizenship even if they had a choice.

It has been confirmed in other surveys and also during the registration of the population of Latvia that a majority of Russians want to obtain Latvian citizenship. According to the registration data, 90 per cent of those who were registered but did not automatically become citizens of Latvia expressed their wish to do so.²⁵ This seems, however, to be an exaggerated estimation of those who actually want to become citizens of Latvia because, as several Russians told me when visiting registration offices in Riga in February 1993, it is always safer to leave all possibilities open. At the same time, by April 1994 only about 23,000 residents of Latvia had applied for citizenship of Russia.²⁶

The majority of Russians thus wanted to obtain Latvian citizenship, and there are many possible reasons why this is so. The high figures have been used to show that Russians in Latvia are well integrated into Latvian society, or at least that they are interested in becoming so. This explanation seems to describe the situation of a large number of Russians, but there are probably other motivations that are of importance. The Russian-language press has pointed out several areas in which non-citizens would not have the same rights as citizens²⁷, and Russians might think that they would have a better life if they become citizens and opted for Latvian citizenship simply out of security reasons. There could also be tactical considerations involved. For example, if most Russians express a will to become loyal citizens of Latvia, in denying them this opportunity the Latvian authorities are placed in a position where they would be subject

to more criticism from abroad, which could be in the interests of many Russians who are opposed to the Latvian political leadership.

6.3. Russian Perceptions of 'Latvia' and 'Russia'

So far in this chapter some issues which in various ways give an indication of the level of integration of Russians into Latvian society have been discussed, and I have also emphasised issues which show to what degree Russians are orientated towards other countries, especially towards Russia. In the following section I will deal more specifically with the question of the self-identification of Russians in Latvia by examining what Latvia and Russia, respectively, mean to those Russians living in this country. Is it the case that to the majority of Russians Latvia is just a territory where circumstances have forced them to live, or are there deeper and stronger attachments involved? Similarly, what does Russia mean to Russians living outside its territory? Do Russians in Latvia consider Russia their motherland, or is Russia simply seen as just another neighbouring state?

The respondents in our survey were asked to indicate what Latvia and Russia mean to them personally according to an already prepared list of alternatives. This list, including the percentages of Russians choosing the various alternatives, is illustrated in Table 6.8. When analysing the results, one should take into account that although the respondents were told that they could indicate more than one answer, it is likely that many would indicate only those alternatives which expressed what they most strongly associated with the two territories. When, for example, only 28 per cent of the respondents chose the alternative that Latvia is a state whose right to independence they respect, this should not, in my opinion, be seen as a suggestion that all the remaining 72 per cent do not respect Latvian independence, but rather that just under one third of the respondents thought Latvian independent statehood was an important factor in their perception of Latvia.

Table 6.8: Identification with “Latvia” and “Russia”**Survey Question:****What is Latvia for you personally?¹**

| N = 591 | (%) |
|--|-----|
| The motherland of my ancestors | 17 |
| My motherland | 39 |
| A territory on which circumstances have forced me to live | 36 |
| A state whose right to independence I respect | 28 |
| A state I will leave as soon as I find it difficult to live here | 12 |
| A country I will not leave under any circumstances | 15 |
| Historically Latvia has been and remains a part of Russia | 23 |

Survey Question:**What is Russia for you personally?¹**

| N = 591 | (%) |
|--|-----|
| The motherland of my parents | 45 |
| The motherland of my ancestors | 37 |
| My motherland | 34 |
| A country where my relatives live | 41 |
| A state which defends the rights of Russians | 30 |
| A state where I would consider settling down | 12 |
| A state where I would not like to live | 4 |
| Russia is just a neighbouring state | 11 |

¹ Respondents were asked to indicate for as many alternatives as appropriate.

Source: "Russians in Latvia" survey, 1992.

The table shows that more Russians seem to regard Latvia rather than Russia as their motherland. The decisive factor here was whether the respondents had been born in Latvia or not. 76 per cent of those born in Latvia reported Latvia as their motherland, whereas the corresponding percentage for those who had lived in Latvia for more than 15 years but were not born there was only 13 per cent. As a consequence, the percentage of Russians regarding Latvia as their motherland was much larger within the younger than the older age groups. The level of language knowledge was another important factor in deciding whether Russians saw Latvia or Russia as their motherland. According to our survey data, two out of three of those with a fluent or good command of the Latvian language and only one in five among those with minimal or no understanding of Latvian regarded Latvia as their motherland. Moreover, the likelihood of a person who was not born in Latvia regarding Latvia as his/her motherland increased significantly with increased level of language knowledge.

Only 4 per cent of the respondents who were born in Latvia and whose parents were also born in Latvia considered Russia to be their motherland. There was a marked difference between Russians in urban and rural districts, with Russians in the Latvian cities being much more likely to regard Russia as their motherland. The exceptions were the two Latgalian cities of Daugavpils and Rezekne (where, as was noted in chapter 5, a larger share of Russians were born in Latvia in comparison to other cities). There were also more men than women who regarded Russia as their motherland, while women were more likely than men to regard Latvia as their motherland. The level of education was another correlating factor. While almost half the respondents with

higher education regarded Russia as their motherland, the same was true of less than a quarter of the respondents with primary (or uncompleted secondary) education.

While 17 per cent of the respondents indicated that Latvia was the motherland of their ancestors, 37 per cent said the same about Russia, and 45 per cent thought of Russia as the motherland of their parents. This indicates that Russians generally feel stronger historical attachments to Russia than to Latvia. Moreover, 41 per cent said that Russia was a country where their relatives lived. The great importance of the links with Russia is also indicated by the fact that only 11 per cent of the respondents thought of Russia as just a neighbouring state.

Relatively few of the respondents saw a link between their concept of 'Russia' and 'Latvia' and their preferences in terms of settlement. Only 4 per cent of the respondents said that Russia was a state where they would not like to live, but at the same time only 12 per cent said that they would consider settling down in Russia. The same pattern was true regarding Latvia. While 12 per cent of the respondents said that they would leave Latvia as soon as they found it difficult to live there, not more than 15 per cent reported that they would not leave Latvia under any circumstances. The low number of responses to these questions could be a result of the way the questions were phrased. People who, for example, do not want to live in Russia may not have indicated this here because they did not see any connection between this attitude and what 'Russia' means to them personally.

When more than one third of the respondents said that they thought of Latvia as a territory on which circumstances had forced them to live, this must therefore be regarded as a relatively high proportion. These would tend to be people who have generally not chosen to live in Latvia; they often 'just happened to be living in Latvia' when the country became independent. They are likely to have many of the characteristics of the third group of Russians, the "migrants", whom we referred to earlier in the chapter. One would thus expect these people to have lived in Latvia for a short time and to have a low degree of integration into Latvian society, as indicated by a low level of fluency in the Latvian language and the absence of family relations with ethnic Latvians.

This is a picture which also corresponds with the findings in the survey. The decisive factor is again whether the person in question was born in Latvia or not; among those who were not born in Latvia, the likelihood of a person perceiving Latvia as a territory on which circumstances had forced them to live increased, the shorter the period s/he had lived in Latvia. Thus, more than two out of three of those who had arrived in Latvia over the last 15 years said that Latvia to them was a territory on which circumstances had forced them to live. Only 3 per cent of Russians with a Latvian mother or father gave the same response. This way of perceiving Latvia was also much more widespread within the older age-groups than among younger people, most of

whom were born in Latvia. It was found more than three times more frequently among people with a poor or non-existent knowledge of Latvian than among people who were fluent in, or had a good command of, the language.

Although one would tend to expect that most of the 'migrants' would be found among manual workers, among people with a low level of income and education, this was contradicted by the survey results. Those who said that Latvia was a territory on which circumstances had forced them to live were overrepresented among people with a higher education and in the professional sphere, and the level of income was not significant.

It is hard to interpret the fact that 28 per cent of the respondents indicated that Latvia was a state whose right to independence they respected. There could be many people who respected Latvian independence but who did not see it as one of the most important characteristics when they were asked what Latvia was to them personally. It is, however, noteworthy that Russians in Riga more often than Russians from other regions responded affirmatively to this question. The same applies to people with a higher education. Length of stay in Latvia does not, however, correlate with the responses to this question. Moreover, people with a knowledge of Latvian were no less likely to indicate that they respected Latvian independence than others. Most probably, Russians who saw Latvia as their motherland and spoke the Latvian language did not find it necessary to declare that they also respected Latvian independence.

The view that Latvia has been and remains a part of Russia could be associated with an imperial identity, and when 23 per cent of the respondents perceive Latvia in this way this must be seen as an indication that such a perception of Latvia is quite widespread among Russians there. This also confirms the findings in chapter 3 regarding the attitude of Russians to historical issues. It is again useful to identify which groups of Russians are most inclined to have what I would call an imperial outlook. When checking for various variables, one finds that language knowledge is of major significance. The likelihood that a person would respond affirmatively to this question was twice as high among Russians with little or no knowledge of the Latvian language than it was among those who knew the language well. Russians who were born in Latvia were also more reluctant than other Russians to share this attitude. The imperial identity seems to be more prevalent in Riga than anywhere else in Latvia, and it was least prevalent in Latgale. Moreover, it was more often found among people with a higher education. People who had economic problems were more likely to have 'imperialistic' attitudes than were respondents who were better off economically.

To many Russians Russia is not only the motherland in an abstract sense, but is also seen as a state defending the rights of Russians. Almost one third of the respondents saw Russia as a state having such a role. The pattern of responses was quite similar to the pattern of answers to the previous question discussed, but it is

noteworthy that more people in the cities counted on help from Russia than did people in rural areas. Another interesting feature was that Russians who had lived a long time in Latvia were rather more inclined to see Russia as a state defending their rights than were Russians who had arrived in Latvia more recently.

Finally, Russians who regarded Russia as just a neighbouring state (11 per cent of the respondents) were overrepresented in Latgale, among people with lower education, among people who were born in Latvia and among people with a good knowledge of Latvian.

6.4. Conclusions

There are different ways of evaluating the level of integration of Russians into Latvian society. In the previous chapter we looked at aspects such as language fluency and various social characteristics, and we saw that there were important differences between the Russian population and the dominant ethnic group in Latvia, the Latvians. In this chapter we have looked at other aspects which, it is hoped, have given a more complementary picture of the cultural orientations of Russians in Latvia. What, then, do the survey findings suggest about Russian identification and the level of integration into Latvian society? Although the findings are not unambiguous and contain certain contradictions, there are some important general trends that can be observed.

We emphasised the importance of the selection of mass media, where the survey shows that very few Russians are orientated only towards Russia, and that Latvian radio, TV and newspapers (although predominantly in the Russian language) are relatively popular among the Russian population. However, there seems to be a gap between Russians and Latvians in terms of their choice of mass media, and therefore also in terms of the information they obtain from the same media. With some exceptions, the most popular mass media among Russians are those which concentrate on dealing with the problems facing the Russian population in the republic, and through their selection of mass media Russians are therefore not likely to become so familiar with the concerns of ethnic Latvians.²⁸ Those Russians who read newspapers with a larger ethnic Latvian circle of readers, or watch or listen to programmes from Latvian radio and TV, are usually those who are already integrated into Latvian society. They tend to have a better knowledge of the Latvian language and they often come from ethnically mixed (Russian-Latvian) families.

The survey shows that there are certain characteristics which tend to increase the likelihood of Russians expressing general satisfaction with important aspects of life in Latvia. These Russians have more interaction with Latvians and are more positive towards such interaction, they report fewer incidents of nationality discrimination, and

they generally have a stronger attachment to the Latvian territory. The significance of interethnic marriage has already been emphasised. Likewise, even moderate fluency in the Latvian language and familiarity with Latvian history and culture are shown to diminish the feeling of interethnic tension. This is probably also intensified by the tendency of ethnic Latvians to be more positive towards those who have lived in Latvia for a long time and have adopted local customs, traditions and culture. Thus, length of residence in Latvia is another significant factor in explaining level of integration.

The issues which have been discussed in this chapter have mostly centered around the question of Russian cultural identity. Pål Kolstø, as we saw early in the chapter, also emphasises that there is a political dimension of identity, and this dimension has not become less relevant seen in the light of the major political changes which have taken place in Latvia over the last few years. In the following chapter we shall deal more closely with the political dimension as we examine the reactions of the Russian population to their redefined position in what they used to think of as a privileged region of the large Soviet state, but which is now a small nation-state dominated by another ethnic group.

¹A considerable part of this chapter is forthcoming in Aasland (1994b).

²Kolstø (1992).

³Rothchild (1981).

⁴My classification is based on elements from A. Klotskin's classification of the Russian population at the conference "The New Russian Diaspora" in Lielupe, Latvia, 11-13 November 1992; and my interview with A. Panteļējevs in Riga, February 1993.

⁵Interview with Panteļējevs, op. cit.

⁶See N. Batasheva, "TV-93 v kadre i za kadrom", *Russkii Put'*, 30 December 1992, p. 6; *Izvestiya*, 25 December 1992, p. 2.

⁷Author's interview with Vladimir Steshenko, formerly director of the Department for Nationalities Affairs under the Supreme Council of Latvia, Deputy editor of *SM-segodnya*, February 1993.

⁸Since then prices and accessibility of newspapers, journals, TV and radio programmes have changed, and the results should therefore be regarded as representative only for the particular time when the survey was conducted.

⁹In fact, one in three Russians who had a fluent or a good command of the Latvian language reported that they listened to Latvian radio in Latvian daily, while the same was true of less than two per cent among those who had a poor or non-existent knowledge of the language.

¹⁰Anatol Lieven believes that the reason for the large frequency of viewers of Russian TV is the relatively poor quality of the programmes in Latvian TV, which also makes Latvians watch TV programmes from Russia. Lieven (1993).

¹¹The figures in the tables are calculated on the basis of all respondents including those who did not answer the question.

¹²These include newspapers with a relatively large circulation, such as *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* and *Latvijas Jaunatne*.

¹³The survey showed that more than 3/4 of the respondents had more than 50 books in their private book collection.

¹⁴See article by Boris Tsilevich, "Novye Rubezhi", *SM-segodnya*, 29 July 1992, p. 1.

¹⁵See e.g. Apine (1994), and author's interviews with a number of politicians, journalists and ordinary people in Latvia.

¹⁶Of course, attitudes of Latvians towards Russians are at least as important, but since the survey concentrates on Russians it does not provide such information.

¹⁷The lower social status of Russians in the Baltic region and the Transcaucasus seems to be confirmed by the responses of the indigenous populations in the same republics. The indigenous populations in these areas said they disliked Russians much more frequently than did the indigenous populations in Central Asia and Kazakhstan. Gudkov (1992).

¹⁸It is noteworthy that when Latvians have been asked the same question they tend to have a much less pessimistic view on the developments in the interethnic relations in the country. See e.g. Apine (1994).

¹⁹Author's interview with prominent Latvian politicians in March 1992, November 1992 and February 1993; e.g. the leader of the Popular Front of Latvia, U. Augstkalns, February 1993.

²⁰Thus, many Russian politicians who are generally critical of the Latvian government, also strongly support the immediate and unconditional departure of the Russian Army, since its presence has no positive effects for the Russian population. This view was expressed, among others, by the leader of the Baltic Constitutional Party, Andrei Vorontsov, in a conversation with this author in February 1993.

²¹Interview with Vladimir Steshenko in *Smena*, (St. Petersburg), 30 March 1993, p. 3.

²²Smith (ed.) (1994b).

²³Mlechin (1990).

²⁴Interview with Pantelejevs, op. cit.

²⁵O. F. Knudsen (1993): "Mer samling enn splittelse i Latvia", *Aftenposten*, 4.6.93

²⁶Information obtained from the Russian Embassy in Latvia, April 1994. The embassy official could not guarantee that the figure was exact, because some of the applicants may have moved to Russia after obtaining citizenship of Russia.

²⁷These include the right to ownership of land and other natural resources; the right freely to choose one's place of residence in Latvia and freely to return to Latvia; the right to possess registered weapons; and the right freely to take part in joint stock companies. See e.g. *Opponent*, no. 7, October 1992, p. 2.

²⁸There is reason to believe that the same could be the case with Latvians and their information about the concerns of the Russian population, but we have no survey material to support this assertion.

7. Russian Attitudes Towards Independence and Citizenship

The Latvians in Latvia took full advantage of the policies of *glasnost*¹ and *perestroika*, so that what started off as relatively modest requests for changes within the system soon developed into a movement for fundamental social transformation and, ultimately, independent statehood. There was soon general agreement among ethnic Latvians about the direction in which to proceed and also about the final goal, which was full independence from Moscow. Diverging views centred around the pace of reform and the tactical approach as to how to reach the goal, but the main principles were almost uncontested.

While ethnic Latvians tended to agree on these crucial issues, attitudes among the Russian population in Latvia were much less uniform. In this chapter Russian attitudes towards two major political issues in Latvia over the last few years will be examined. The first section will deal with the question of Russian attitudes towards independent Latvian statehood. There will be an attempt to explain why some Russians resisted Latvian independence so fiercely, while others supported it wholeheartedly. Then Russian reactions to citizenship legislation (or the lack of such) will be discussed. The question of citizenship was soon to become one of the most pressing issues facing the Russian population after Latvia gained *de facto* independence. More than 60 per cent of the Russians (see Table 5.5) did not automatically qualify for Latvian citizenship according to the guidelines stipulated in the Supreme Council Resolution of 15 October 1991¹, and while their status had been that of 'internal migrants', secure in their Soviet citizenship, they suddenly had to realise that they were in the process of becoming 'international migrants of contested legitimacy and uncertain membership'.² In the final section of this chapter I will present and discuss arguments which have been presented by Russian spokesmen in favour of a more liberal and inclusive citizenship legislation.

7.1. Russians and Latvian Independence

7.1.1. Before Independence

The question of independent Latvian statehood did not appear on the Latvian political agenda at the start of the *perestroika* period. However, at the Second Congress of the Popular Front of Latvia in October 1989 a new programme was adopted whereby the ultimate goal of the popular movement was declared to be the restoration of an independent and demilitarised Latvian state.³ In order to understand Russian reactions

to these developments, it is appropriate briefly to give some of the main reasons for this political radicalisation of the popular movement.⁴

Firstly, the reluctance in Moscow to support plans for economic autonomy seems to be an important factor in explaining why the Popular Front came to support outright secession from the Soviet Union. When declarations about *perestroika* and *glasnost* did not materialise in practical policies for more autonomy over economic issues, Latvian politicians and economic leaders soon lost patience with the slow pace of reform and came to believe that they would be better off in an independent state.

Secondly, there were organisations and movements to the right of the Popular Front which put pressure on the Front to take a more radical stance on the question of independence. The Estonian example of organising Citizens' Committees was followed in Latvia, and by the first Congress of Citizens in April-May 1990 more than 900,000 'citizens' and 'citizen candidates' had been registered.⁵ As this movement gained more authority and support, the pressure on the Popular Movement increased.

Thirdly, although the reforms did not proceed at a pace which suited Latvian nationalists, the policies of *glasnost* undoubtedly broadened the agenda for acceptable political initiatives which, although often condemned in Moscow, could be stopped only by the use of force.⁶ However, employing force to stop peaceful Baltic initiatives, it was felt, would be unacceptable to the political leadership in Moscow, as it would undermine the whole idea of the reforms. There were thus activists in all the three Baltic republics who stretched the limits within which to operate as far as possible, which made for a radicalisation of the whole movement. It was not difficult for the educated classes in Latvian society to mobilise support for independence, since they could play on the threats to the ethnic survival of the Latvian nation.⁷

Perceived threats to the survival of the Latvian nation were not usually among the most pressing concerns for Russians living in Latvia. Some Russians were, nonetheless, inclined to sympathise with the claims of ethnic Latvians that their nation was under the threat of extinction. These Russians included some people with an ethnically mixed family background and Russians who in other ways interacted closely with ethnic Latvians. The same often applied to some of the integrated Russians who had lived in Latvia for a long time and experienced the deportations of Latvians during and after the Second World War, and who deplored the consequences of the incorporation of Latvia into the Soviet Union.

The first opinion polls asking about full Latvian independence showed that although a significant proportion of Russians supported this idea, the majority of Russians tended to be sceptical or strongly against it. One such opinion poll was published in *Padomju Jaunatne* in July 1989.⁸ In response to a question about whether only full independence could secure real prosperity for Latvia, only 9 per cent of Russians and other non-Latvians said that they fully agreed with such an opinion, while

among ethnic Latvians the corresponding proportion was 57 per cent. There were a further 17 per cent of the non-Latvians who partly agreed with this opinion. However, more than half the non-Latvian respondents did not agree, while the same was true of only one in ten Latvian respondents.

In the course of the following year there was a tendency among both Latvians and Russians to become more supportive of the cause of independence. According to an opinion poll published in *Atmoda* in June 1990, the Supreme Council declaration of 4 May 1990 on a transition period towards independence was supported by a clear majority of respondents (70 per cent).⁹ There were still some important variations between the different ethnic groups. While the declaration was supported by 92 per cent of ethnic Latvians, only 48 per cent of Russians and other non-Latvians gave it their support, according to this poll. On the other hand, 42 per cent of non-Latvians did not support the declaration.

A poll undertaken by a number of Latvian newspapers (some of them published in Russian) revealed some interesting information about the different attitudes to the question of independence between Latvians on the one hand and other ethnic groups on the other.¹⁰ While more than half the Russians supported the idea of a federation, this idea was supported by only 5 per cent of the Latvians. Even among those who supported full independence, Latvians and non-Latvians (most of whom were Russians) had very different ideas about how to proceed towards this goal. The majority of Latvians (62 per cent) thought that the Supreme Council of Latvia should adopt a resolution about independence at its first session (this view was shared by only 38 per cent of those non-Latvians who supported the idea of independence), while most Russians and other non-Latvians (71 per cent) thought that it would be necessary first to secure an economic base for independence, and also that one should first ensure agreement from Moscow.

Latvians and non-Latvians did not have the same expectations about the changes which would occur if Latvia were to gain independence. The same poll indicated that Latvians had far more positive expectations of the implications of independence. A clear majority of Latvians thought that independence would increase the salaries of those who worked hard, that democratic rights would be broadened and also that industry would reach the level of the most developed countries. Non-Latvians took a much more sceptical view. More than two thirds of them thought that independence would lead to unemployment (this view was shared by only one fifth of the Latvians). There were furthermore clear majorities among non-Latvians who believed that non-Latvians would be discriminated against, that supplies of essential consumer goods would be reduced and that the number of people living on below-minimum incomes would increase. One third of the non-Latvian respondents believed that if Latvia were to become

independent, it would no longer be possible to meet up with friends and relatives living in the USSR.

It was quite clear that Russians generally were much less enthusiastic about the prospects for Latvian independent statehood than were ethnic Latvians. As was noted in Chapter 3, Russians had a much stronger tendency than the other nationalities to identify with the Soviet Union as a whole. Many did not think of themselves first of all as Russians, but rather as Soviet citizens, and were indifferent to or could not understand the ethnic revival taking place among Latvians. Some argued the superiority of an 'internationalist' rather than a 'narrow ethnic' self-understanding. One of the reactions was the creation of *Interfront* and similar organisations and movements, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

There was often a link between the defence of Soviet structures and concrete material interests.¹¹ Independence represented a threat to Russians working in large all-union enterprises, in work related to the Soviet Army and in certain types of administrative or governmental work related to Soviet institutions. While ethnic Latvians working in the same institutions could transfer from a Soviet ideology (if they had ever had one) to an ideology based on the national idea, this was hardly an option for Russian 'colonists'.

Many Russians greatly feared the signs of increasing ethnocentrism among Latvian politicians and Latvians in general, and such fears were fuelled by reports in some of the Russian-language mass media. They consequently pinned their hopes on Soviet structures, on the Communist Party and the Soviet Army, which were often regarded as their only protection against becoming second-class citizens in an ethnic Latvian nation-state. An additional cause of discontent were political developments in Russia, where Yel'tsin, possibly out of tactical considerations, paid most of his political attention to internal Russian matters. He was also interested in keeping on good terms with the national leaderships in the union republics, which could be his allies in the struggle against the centre. This had the effect that many Russians felt betrayed by Yel'tsin, and those Russians who were looking for support from Moscow would most typically find such support among the most conservative elements in Russian politics, who tended to be the least interested in reaching compromises with the political leaderships in the union republics.¹²

There were, indeed, many Russians to whom the alliance with conservative forces in Moscow was intolerable, but who still could not wholeheartedly support Latvian independence. Political apathy and confusion were often the result. Some Russians, many of whom had never been politically active, tended to isolate themselves and tried to ignore political developments in the country.¹³ Some of these Russians focused all their attention on how to survive economically, and there were a number of Russians who had success in this period, setting up their own, private businesses.¹⁴

However, opinion polls showed that there was increasing support among Russians for Latvian independence. This support probably reached a peak with the January 1991 events when a great number of Russians joined the ethnic Latvians on the barricades with the aim of defending democratic rule in Latvia. The January events and the attempts in Moscow to put the blame for what happened on the Baltic governments inclined many Russians to interpret relations between the Soviet Union and the Baltic States as a struggle between dictatorship and democracy. The signing by Yel'tsin and Gorbunovs of an "Agreement on the Basic Principles for Inter-state Relations Between the Russian Federation and the Latvian Republic" 13 January 1991 increased the prestige of the Latvian parliament among those Russians in Latvia who supported Yel'tsin in his struggle against conservative forces in Moscow.¹⁵

Likewise, a gradual reinterpretation of historical events opened the eyes of many Russians to injustices in the past. Indeed, informed about the illegality of Latvia's incorporation into the Soviet Union, many Russians felt morally obliged to support the restoration of an independent Latvian state. Also, some Russians changed their attitude as they became more accustomed to the idea of living away from their historical homeland. They might have understood that the Soviet Union was in the process of radical transformation anyhow, and believed that they would be better off in a small, politically stable Latvian state than in a Soviet Union where the prospects of political change for the better were much more uncertain.

Economic issues were probably even more important, and one of the main reasons why many Russians came to support Latvian independence was the slow pace of economic reform at a time when people had increasing economic expectations.¹⁶ The analogy with the case of political reform seems evident, in that many Russians believed that economic reform would be more likely to succeed in the smaller western-orientated Baltic economies than in the Soviet Union as a whole.

Although many Russians were fearful of Baltic ultranationalism, the mood in the popular movement changed from a focus on strictly ethnic concerns to paying more attention to general changes in economic and political structures.¹⁷ Given the demographic situation in Latvia, ethnic Latvians understood that if they were going to gain independent statehood they would have to count on support from the ethnic minorities. It was therefore important to promote policies that took into account the interests of the ethnic minorities in the republic.¹⁸ The adoption of a law on national cultural autonomy in April 1990 (see Chapter 4) and frequent statements that all permanent residents would be granted citizenship of Latvia reassured Russians that they would not become second-class citizens if Latvia were to become independent.

Thus, when all permanent residents of Latvia were asked in a referendum (or, as the Latvian government preferred to call it, "independence poll") on 3 March 1991 if they 'supported the restoration of an independent and democratic Latvia', a significant

proportion of Russians voted "yes".¹⁹ There are no exact estimates of the ethnic distribution of the votes in the poll since voters were not asked to indicate their nationality on the ballot paper. Approximately three out of four of the voters voted for independence, and when taking into account that only 52 per cent of the population was Latvian, this implies that a significant proportion of Russians and other non-Latvians must have voted for independence. There was a majority of yes votes in all the electoral districts of Latvia, including the cities of Riga, where Latvians made up just over one third of the population, and even Daugavpils, where only 13 per cent of the population was ethnic Latvian. Indeed, as has been pointed out by many observers after the poll, it was the Latvian Russians' vote for independence which clinched success for the pro-independence forces in Latvia.

However, the majority of Russians are still likely to have voted against independence. One source suggests that approximately 38 per cent of Russians and other non-Latvians voted for independence, but it is not clear whether or not those who did not take part in the vote are included in this estimate.²⁰ Anyhow, the Russian vote for independence seems to have been somewhat lower than opinion polls indicated only weeks before the poll.²¹ Taagepera's suggestion of why this phenomenon took place in Estonia could be valid for the Latvian case as well:

There seemed to be people among the immigrants in Estonia who knew they ought to support independence but in the safety of the election booth gave vent to primordial fears and antipathies.²²

In many respects the January 1991 events and the independence poll served to broaden the cleavage between those Russians who were for and those who were against independence. People were forced to make up their minds about the issue, and they were subject to pressure from both sides. A realisation that the two sides might even become involved in armed conflict added a new degree of seriousness to the question. Latvian politicians and many pro-independence observers emphasised that there was not really an ethnic conflict in Latvia, but that the conflict was between radical democrats and supporters of old-style policies.²³ Russians who openly supported independence were naturally regarded as 'ours' by Latvians, while Russians who fought for the preservation of the old Soviet structures were disdained not so much because they were Russians, but rather because they played the game of the empire. Some of the main actors in the non-independence camp were themselves ethnic Latvians, and this served to reduce ethnic tension between Russians and Latvians.

7.1.2. After Independence

There were several indications that support among Russians for Latvian independence increased in the days just after the aborted coup of August 1991. The role of Russian democrats in Moscow and a few other Russian cities in quelling the reactionary forces increased the prestige of Russians both in Latvia and in Russia.²⁴ Only a few Russians in Latvia had openly supported the coup, most remaining loyal to the Latvian authorities or deciding not to become involved. Latvians realised that their independence was achieved at this time largely because of Russian resistance to the attempted coup. At last Russians had shown to the rest of the world that they were not a 'nation of slaves' and that they would not accept being treated as such either.

Those Russians who had been the most active in the anti-independence camp had, of course, a very difficult time. Many of them left Latvia for Russia because they realised that it would not be easy to hide their political past. All newspapers and organisations which had previously advocated their views were prohibited, and for a time the political landscape was completely dominated by the victors. Russians who had actively fought against independence, and who decided to stay in Latvia, disappeared from the political scene.

Despite the seeming harmony in ethnic relations and a generally positive, or at least wait-and-see, attitude among Russians towards Latvian independence at the time when independence was recognised by Moscow and the rest of the international community, the months to come were abruptly to change this picture. The Supreme Council resolution of 15 October on citizenship, defining as citizens of Latvia only those who had been citizens of the interwar republic of Latvia and their direct descendants, did much to increase Russian anxiety about their future in an independent Latvian state. When the popular movement had achieved its most important goal, it again turned into a more purely ethnic Latvian movement. There was no longer any need for the support of the Russian (or non-Latvian) population, and the time had come to deal with issues such as the demographic imbalance and to remove the residue of many decades of Soviet rule.

Still, Russians could not do anything but recognise that Latvia had become an independent state, at the same time as most of them had become objects, and were no longer subjects, in the formation of a new society.²⁵ With a lack of organisational structures within which to channel frustrations and discontent, political apathy among the Russian population grew. Also, more and more Russians who had actively fought for independence and voted 'yes' in the poll in March became more sceptical about the turn of events. In some respects the former cleavages between Russians who were for and against independence became less distinct, as the Russian population faced new, and often common, problems.

There was never any strong pressure in Latvia to join the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Still, with the dependence of the Latvian economy on the CIS states, and particularly Russia, there were forces who thought that Latvia would be better off as a member of the Commonwealth. Russians in Latvia were much more inclined than ethnic Latvians to take such a view. To Russians there was the additional factor of political stability, which is likely to have played a significant role in forming their attitudes towards the CIS. Many Russians thought that their rights would be better protected under the auspices of the CIS states, and also that for Latvia to join they would have to reach agreements with the other CIS states on questions such as citizenship, education and other issues of importance to the Russian population. The idea of a commonwealth of independent states also attracted Russians, because in such a commonwealth they would not become as isolated from their ethnic homeland as they would in a state without any formal links with the former Soviet republics. Russian attitudes towards the CIS were also influenced by economic considerations, since Russians working in industry were aware of how dependent their factories were on inputs from the former Soviet states, and thought it would be easier to keep up these important economic links if Latvia entered the Commonwealth.

Thus, almost half the respondents in our survey, when asked to what extent they agreed that Latvia should have joined the CIS, either fully agreed or tended to agree with this opinion (see Table 7.1). Only 5 per cent completely disagreed with the view that Latvia should have entered the CIS, while 13 per cent tended to disagree. The proportion of undecided Russians was also large (one third of the respondents).

Table 7.1: Attitudes Towards the CIS

Survey Question: To which degree do you agree with the opinion that Latvia should have joined the CIS?

| | Fully agree | Tend to agree | Hard to say/ no answer | Tend to disagree | Completely disagree |
|-----------------|-------------|---------------|---------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| N = 591 | (%) | (%) | (%) | (%) | (%) |
| All respondents | 28 | 21 | 33 | 13 | 5 |

Source: "Russians in Latvia" survey, 1992.

There was great variety between different groups of Russians in terms of the responses to this question. As could have been expected, Russians with a mixed Russian-Latvian family background were less likely than other Russians to think that Latvia should have participated in the CIS. The same was true of Russians with a fluent or good command of the Latvian language. However, even among Russians who knew the Latvian language well a large proportion (20 per cent) fully agreed that Latvia should have joined the Commonwealth.

Age seems to be one of the most crucial variables in determining Russian attitudes towards Latvia's relations with the CIS. Russians in the older age-groups were much more inclined than others to agree with the view that Latvia should have joined the Commonwealth. Thus, among respondents in the age-group of 55 years and older, nearly half the respondents fully agreed that Latvia should have joined the CIS, while the same was true of less than 18 per cent among respondents under 30 years of age. While the level of education did not seem to correlate with responses to this question, Russians with a lower income were more likely to take a pro-CIS view.

There were also considerable regional differences. Russians in the cities were generally much more supportive than Russians in rural areas of the idea that Latvia should have joined the CIS, but Russians in Riga were, perhaps surprisingly, somewhat less so than Russians in some of the other large cities. The exception was again Latgale, where urban Russians were less enthusiastic about Latvia joining the CIS. The fact that most of the Russians in the cities worked in industry, where the lack of inputs from Russia and the other CIS states would have the most severe effects, is probably one of the main explanations why Russians in the cities were more likely to take a pro-CIS view than were Russians in rural districts. This corresponds with the findings that manual workers were more inclined to agree with the view that Latvia should have joined the CIS than were Russians in other professions.

There are certainly Russians in Latvia who would defend Latvia's right to independent statehood regardless of the political and social conditions in the country, and there are also Russians who would not support Latvian independence under any circumstances. Most Russians seem, however, to link the question of independence to political and social developments in the country, and particularly to issues which affect the conditions of the Russian population living there. Russian attitudes towards Latvian independence thus depend upon the way in which such issues are resolved. I will now proceed to examine Russian attitudes towards the most controversial and hotly debated political issue in Latvia: the question of who should be entitled to enjoy Latvian citizenship.

7.2. The Citizenship Issue

In Chapter 4 we discussed citizenship legislation in Latvia and examined the various models for a solution to this issue. This section is not intended as a continuation (or repetition) of the debate on the citizenship issue, but is meant to present the most typical position of ethnic Russians and their spokesmen in more detail. According to the present law on citizenship in Latvia, most Russians in Latvia do not automatically qualify for Latvian citizenship, since they were not citizens of the interwar

Latvian republic or direct descendants of such a citizen.²⁶ There can be no doubt that most Russians have been highly critical of the way the Latvian authorities have dealt with the citizenship issue. It would, however, be a simplification to say that all Russians have supported the so-called "zero option" model for citizenship, if by the "zero option" model one understands a situation whereby all permanent residents of Latvia are automatically entitled to Latvian citizenship.²⁷ We have, however, already seen that the "zero option" contains a broader range of solutions to the problem of citizenship, and Russians seem to have very different views on the issue. Thus, although a majority of Russians have been in favour of a more liberal citizenship legislation than the one proposed in the Resolution on Citizenship of 1992, a significant proportion of Russians nevertheless seem to be in favour of certain requirements for obtaining citizenship which are not in accordance with a strict interpretation of the "zero option" solution.

It was Russian hard-liners, politically represented by the *Interfront*, and other anti-independence forces of Soviet Latvia who most fiercely came out against the idea of a separate Latvian citizenship outside the legal system of the USSR.²⁸ They were not always against a Latvian SSR citizenship, but this citizenship was to be valid only in combination with USSR citizenship. This was also argued to be in accordance with the Soviet law "On USSR Citizenship" which in Paragraph 435 stated that every citizen of the Soviet republics was at the same time a citizen of the USSR. The status of the Latvian SSR's citizenship should thus be worked out in accordance with the laws of the USSR, as well as with other state regulations.

The actual "zero option" model for citizenship is linked to a separate Latvian citizenship, and is thus not related to the question of the USSR citizenship. The question of such a separate Latvian citizenship was not seriously discussed by the Supreme Council of Latvia until a transitional period to independence had been declared in May 1990. There have been, as indicated in Chapter 4, several disputed points regarding the "zero option" model. Firstly, there was the question of whether or not permanent residents of Latvia should automatically be regarded as citizens of Latvia, whether they wanted such citizenship or not. There were, in fact, very few Russians who argued the case for automatic citizenship, and most Russian spokesmen were of the opinion that all permanent residents should have the possibility of **applying** for such citizenship.²⁹

Secondly, there was no agreement on whether or not dual Latvian-USSR or Latvian-Russian citizenship should be tolerated.³⁰ Some Russians saw dual citizenship as a means by which the interests of the non-Latvian minorities could be protected, since dual citizenship would require negotiations on a state level concerning the rights and duties of citizens of both states. They tended to believe that Russians with a USSR

(and later Russian) citizenship would feel more secure and less vulnerable, at the same time as their Latvian citizenship would grant them the same status as other citizens of Latvia. Others understood the Latvian authorities' objections to such dual citizenship, based on the potential conflict of loyalty which people with a dual citizenship could experience if the interests of the two states of which they were citizens were divergent (at its most extreme, in an armed conflict between the two states). There were also Russians who pointed to the risk that the speed of integration of Russians and other non-Latvians into a Latvian citizenry would slow down if they retained their Soviet citizenship or became citizens of another post-Soviet state.

Thirdly, whether or not to grant citizenship to personnel in the Soviet armed forces stationed in Latvia and their family members was a question which was not always clearly addressed by Russian political spokesmen, and there were also diverging views on this question among the Russian public. Naturally, many Russians protested against the 'Resolution on Citizenship' October 1991 proposing that military personnel in the Soviet armed forces and their family members would be denied citizenship, and there was also discontent with registration practises where even civilian employees working at various types of military institutions were defined as military personnel.³¹ However, there were also proponents of the "zero option" solution who regarded the Soviet armed forces as an occupying force and who accordingly were in favour of excluding at least some parts of the military from the right to obtain Latvian citizenship.³²

Fourthly, there were different ideas about the need to fulfil a number of requirements in order to obtain citizenship. There were Russians who said they were in favour of the "zero option" but who at the same time thought it should be necessary for citizenship applicants to have been a permanent resident of Latvia for a certain number of years. The logic behind this argument was that all permanent residents would have the chance to become citizens, although they could not all become so immediately.

As has been demonstrated above, supporters of the "zero option" citizenship model may have very different views regarding various questions related to the citizenship issue. After Latvia regained independence *de facto* the "zero option" has most typically been defined as 'the automatic granting of the possibility to obtain Latvian citizenship to all Soviet citizens residing within Latvian territory on or before August 21, 1991'.³³ There is, thus, no distinction made between the legal status of those who were citizens in the interwar republic of Latvia and post-war immigrants. The status of the Soviet armed forces in this "zero option" model, however, remains unclear.

Russians in our survey were asked to what extent the Supreme Council Resolution on Citizenship of 15 October 1991 (see Chapter 4) satisfied them personally. The responses to this question are illustrated in Table 7.2. Very few

Russians seemed to be satisfied with this Resolution. Only 6 per cent of the respondents said that the Resolution either fully or partly satisfied them, while the Resolution completely failed to satisfy almost half the respondents.

Table 7.2: Supreme Council Resolution

Survey Question: To which degree does the Supreme Council resolution of 15 October 1991 about citizenship satisfy you personally?

| N = 591 | Fully satisfies (%) | Mostly satisfies (%) | Hard to say/ no answer (%) | Mostly does not satisfy (%) | Does not satisfy at all (%) |
|-----------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| All respondents | 2 | 4 | 22 | 23 | 49 |

Source: "Russians in Latvia" survey, 1992.

Russians in urban areas, where most of the post-war immigrants live, were clearly less satisfied with the Resolution than were Russians in rural areas, with respondents in Latgale tending to be less dissatisfied than Russians in other Latvian regions. Russians in Latgale, as has been pointed to earlier, tend to have lived in Latvia for a longer time than Russians in the other regions of Latvia, and this seems to be significant in explaining the responses to this question. People who were born in Latvia naturally tended to be more satisfied than others with the Citizenship Resolution, and this was particularly the case with Russians who would be granted citizenship automatically according to the stipulations outlined in the Resolution.

As could perhaps have been expected, the Supreme Council Resolution, which stipulated language requirements for citizenship applicants, was considered to be least satisfactory by Russians with a poor or non-existent knowledge of the Latvian language. Russians married to a Latvian were also much less critical of the Resolution than were unmarried Russians or Russians with a Slavic spouse. The nationality of the parents was a further correlating factor, with Russians having a Latvian parent being somewhat less dissatisfied with the Resolution than were other Russians. However, this factor was not as significant in determining attitudes to the Resolution as was the nationality of the spouse. Moreover, Russians with a higher education were clearly less satisfied with the Supreme Council Resolution than were Russians with only primary education. Finally, the older the respondent, the less the Resolution tended to satisfy him/her.

According to an opinion poll undertaken by the Latvian opinion poll institute *Viedoklis* in the period from December 1991 to January 1992 and presented in the Danish newspaper *Weekendavisen*, three out of four Russians agreed (either fully or partly) with the view that all permanent residents of Latvia should have the right to become citizens (the "zero option").³⁴ This view was shared by less than one third of ethnic Latvians. At the same time many Russians supported certain requirements in

terms of length of residency in Latvia for obtaining citizenship. In fact 60 per cent of the ethnic Russian respondents agreed that one ought to have lived in Latvia for at least ten years in order to become a citizen. There was also a considerable percentage of ethnic Russians (53 per cent) agreeing with the view that there should be certain requirements in terms of knowledge of the Latvian language, familiarity with Latvian history and culture, and an oath of loyalty to the Latvian state. While more than two thirds of ethnic Latvians agreed that only citizens of the interwar republic of Latvia should have the right to Latvian citizenship at present, the corresponding proportion among ethnic Russians was 18 per cent.

A survey among ethnic Russians in four Baltic cities, including the Latvian cities of Daugavpils and Riga (making up more than half of Latvia's Russian population), which was undertaken in February 1993, revealed that Russian opposition to drafted citizenship legislation had intensified.³⁵ In Riga nearly all respondents (98 per cent) found the citizenship laws³⁶ unfair in relation to the Russian population, and although Russians in Daugavpils were somewhat less inclined to take this view, almost nine in ten respondents there still thought that Latvian citizenship laws were unfair.

There was still, however, a majority of Russians in these two cities who supported certain residence requirements in order to obtain Latvian citizenship. Such requirements were supported by approximately 60 per cent of the respondents in the two cities surveyed. There was much less support for other requirements. The view that only those who knew the Latvian language should be entitled to Latvian citizenship was shared by 4 per cent of respondents in Riga and only 1 per cent in Daugavpils, where also fewer respondents had a command of the Latvian language. Only 12-13 per cent of the respondents in the two cities thought citizenship applicants should give an oath of loyalty to the Latvian state. As could have been expected, few Russians wanted to restrict citizenship to those who were born in Latvia in the interwar period and their descendants. Only 5 per cent of respondents in Riga and 15 per cent in Daugavpils (where the proportion of Russians who fulfil this requirement is larger) were in favour of such a requirement.

The survey further revealed that only 9 per cent of the respondents in Riga and 13 per cent in Daugavpils thought that it should be necessary to renounce citizenship of other states in order to obtain Latvian citizenship. Although a large proportion was undecided on this question, there was still a clear majority in both Riga and Daugavpils supporting the possibility of dual citizenship.

Various surveys about citizenship have given very divergent results, and the wording of the question seems to have great significance for the responses given.³⁷ Thus, even within the same survey there are many examples of respondents giving what seem to be contradictory responses, for example when they support the "zero option" and at the same time want language requirements for obtaining citizenship.

There are nevertheless two major trends which appear to be common for all the surveys. The first is that ethnic Russians are in favour of a much more liberal citizenship legislation than are ethnic Latvians. The second is that Russians are generally not in favour of legislation which differentiates between those who were citizens of the interwar republic of Latvia (and their direct descendants) and post-war immigrants.

There are certain fairly obvious reasons why Russians tend to support more liberal citizenship legislation more strongly than do ethnic Latvians. Russians do not perceive a threat to their ethnic survival as a nation, but most Latvians do. Many Russians therefore have problems understanding Latvians' concern about the demographic situation in Latvia. As was pointed to in Chapter 2, Russians tend to believe that their presence in Latvia has had a positive impact on economic development, and contributed to the republic's prosperity. Their point of reference is Russia or other Soviet republics, and in comparison with most of these republics Latvia has indeed been much better off economically.³⁸ They consequently see the Russian presence as justified, and cannot understand why Russians should be denied citizenship. Moreover, since the majority of Russians are post-war immigrants, or children of such immigrants, Russians would tend to be affected by a strict citizenship legislation to a much greater degree than would Latvians, who were usually citizens or descendants of citizens of the interwar republic.³⁹ This is naturally likely to influence their attitudes concerning the citizenship issue.

It is quite clear from the survey data presented above that most Russians in Latvia are in favour of a very liberal citizenship legislation. Let us now proceed to examine arguments which have been most commonly used by Russian spokesmen in support of a more inclusive solution to the issue.⁴⁰ Such arguments fall into three different groups. The first group of arguments can be labelled legal arguments. These are arguments pointing to the violation of legal principles which are established in international laws and treaties signed by Latvia, or to a lack of definition of the status of non-citizens. The second group are political arguments. They are arguments which look at the potential political consequences of a strict citizenship legislation and explain why these would not be in the interests of the population of Latvia. Finally, the third group of arguments can be called arguments of justice. These arguments centre around the alleged unfairness stemming from legislation according to which people who, for example, were born in Latvia, pay taxes in Latvia or voted in favour of an 'independent and democratic' Latvia are not automatically entitled to Latvian citizenship.

Several legal arguments have been employed to show that proposed citizenship legislation in Latvia is not in accordance with certain legal principles. There has been much criticism of the way in which the restored state model has been adopted in Latvia, whereby the Latvian state and its citizenry are considered to be identical with that of the

interwar Latvian republic.⁴¹ In the view of many Russians Latvia should, taking the time factor into account, have been established as a new, democratic republic, with a new Constitution. As the leader of the "Russian Constitutional Party" Andrei Vorontsov puts it:

Вопрос гражданства - это всего лишь часть решения задачи построения новой, демократической Латвии, установления режима «второй республики».⁴²

Since the initial body of citizens is ordinarily defined by new states in territorial terms⁴³, it follows from the above argument that the citizenry of Latvia should include all those residing on Latvian territory. Vorontsov lists some exceptions to this rule: for example, people who prefer to become citizens of another state should have this right if the other state accepts it, and Soviet military personnel should not have the right to Latvian citizenship.

Some Russians, and among them Mikhail Gavrilov from the Centre for a Democratic Initiative Party, argued that if one were actually restoring the interwar Latvian Republic, the logical consequence would be that the law on citizenship from that republic should still be in force. In 1919 (when the demographic situation in Latvia was radically different) the Latvian parliament adopted the "zero option" model for citizenship, and only five years of residence was required in order to obtain Latvian citizenship.⁴⁴ However,

(...) говоря о независимости 1918 года, отрицают демократическое решение о гражданстве, принятое в те годы. Провозглашается восстановление независимости но ставится вопрос о новом законе о гражданстве, который принимать сразу не желают, затягивают его принятие. Где логика?⁴⁵

The legal status of the Supreme Council of Latvia has also been disputed. As mentioned earlier, although the Supreme Council saw itself as competent to resolve the citizenship issue, the view held by the national radicals that the Supreme Council was a body of the occupying regime and as such was incompetent to solve issues of such great importance as the citizenship issue in practice gradually gained ascendancy. Russian deputies, however, continued to argue that the Supreme Council was elected democratically and recognised by the international community as the supreme legislative body of Latvia. It should therefore also have the power to solve all problems regarding state building. If it did not, this would lead to some paradoxes, as pointed to by the Russian deputy Vladlen Dozortsev, who originally belonged to the Popular Front fraction of the parliament:

(...) немедленно возникают вопросы: почему тогда законна Декларация о независимости? Почему законен документ о выходе из СССР? Почему законны сами мандаты радикалов в незаконном парламенте? Что они там делают? Почему они вообще баллотировались, а не бойкотировали выборы?⁴⁶

The Supreme Council was elected by all adults living in Latvia, and this parliament adopted a large number of important resolutions and laws which have had serious implications for those living in Latvia. It has therefore been argued that the Supreme Council deputies actually disenfranchised part of their own electorate (deprived it of political rights), while at the same time retaining their own mandates.

Russians who are concerned with the legal aspects of the citizenship issue tend to claim that the division between citizens and non-citizens is arbitrary and contradicts international agreements signed by Latvia. Many Russian spokesmen are convinced that if the draft law on citizenship were to be implemented, it would mean systematic violation of human rights.⁴⁷ It would, it is argued, specifically be a violation of the UN Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, which was signed by Latvia in May 1990.⁴⁸ This convention, subject to certain conditions, obliges the signatory states to grant its nationality (citizenship) to a person born on its territory who would otherwise be stateless.⁴⁹ Proposed citizenship legislation would also, it is said, contradict some other international agreements, such as the Declaration on the Rights of the Child.

The comparison of non-citizens in Latvia with immigrants in other European countries is not accepted by many Russian (and also other⁵⁰) legal experts. Their view is that while immigrants were usually aware of the fact that they would not automatically become citizens of the country to which they moved, most current non-citizens living in Latvia went there as Soviet citizens in accordance with Soviet law which was in force in Latvia on their arrival. They therefore had no reason to expect that they would be deprived of citizenship at a later stage. Furthermore, some critics have pointed to the absurdity of speaking about "naturalisation" of people who were born and grew up in Latvia. In the words of Boris Tsilevich:

If we consider the problem purely juridically it (re)presents a misuse of of juridical power. The present situation is "informal", not foreseen by any law. We are constantly dealing not with the formal law but some frivolous interpretation of legislative norms.⁵¹

Some Russians have argued that Latvia has an obligation to give citizenship to all its residents who want it because of Latvia's ratification of the "Agreement on the Basic Principles for Inter-state Relations Between the Russian Federation and the Latvian Republic", which was signed by Yel'tsin and Gorbunovs on January 13, 1991.⁵² According to the third article of this agreement the RSFSR and the Latvian Republic

берут на себя взаимные обязательства гарантировать лицам, живущим на момент подписания настоящего Договора на территориях (РСФСР) и Латвийской Республики и являющимся ныне гражданами СССР, право сохранить или получить гражданство (РСФСР) или Латвийской Республики в соответствии с их свободным волеизъявлением.⁵³

In the view of many Russians this can only be interpreted as a guarantee of the "zero option" for citizenship.⁵⁴

Russians have criticised the lack of clear guide-lines as to the respect in which the rights and obligations of "citizens" and "non-citizens" will differ. When the parliament started discussing certain criteria for obtaining citizenship, most moderate politicians were quick to emphasise that apart from the right to elect and be elected, the two categories would enjoy the same rights and have the same duties. It was particularly stressed that "citizens" and "non-citizens" would be treated as equals in the economic sphere.⁵⁵

However, a number of new laws were adopted (by the "illegal" Supreme Council) which specified different criteria for "citizens" and "non-citizens". According to a Constitutional Act, adopted by the Supreme Council on 10 December 1991, non-citizens do not have the right of access to state office. Similarly, non-citizens do not have the right to own and dispose of land and other natural resources. There are also restrictions on the freedom to reside in Latvia and return there.⁵⁶ The old Soviet *propiska* system is in practice maintained for non-citizens, so that they are required to ask for permission when they want to move within the borders of Latvia. Russian non-citizens are also worried that they may not be allowed to return to Latvia after a holiday or visit abroad.⁵⁷

Non-citizens also have some disadvantages in the privatisation process. The Law on Joint-Stock Companies of 5 December 1990 specifies certain restrictions for participation in private enterprise for non-citizens. After much debate the Latvian parliament in the autumn of 1992 adopted a Law on Privatisation of State Property, whereby state property would be distributed in accordance with the length of time a person had resided in Latvia. However, citizens were to receive 15 additional certificates (equal to 15 years of residence), while the number of certificates received by non-citizens who were not born in Latvia was to be reduced by 5.⁵⁸

In Chapter 5 we found that almost 90 per cent of the Russian population in Latvia had lived there for more than 15 years, which means that the proposed residence requirement of 16 years for naturalisation would not be problematic for most Russians if the draft citizenship legislation of November 1991 were to be implemented. However, as Russian spokesmen have pointed out, during the registration of the population of Latvia it was often difficult to prove residence in Latvia for 16 years. The

notion of 'permanent resident' had never been clearly defined. Thus, 'non-citizens' who were born in Latvia but left it for temporary work on the basis of a contract, for studies in other parts of the Soviet Union, or to serve as officers in the Soviet armed forces outside Latvia would be registered as permanent residents only from the day they returned to Latvia.⁵⁹ Moreover, not only army personnel but also their family members were to be registered only from the date of their demobilisation from the armed forces. People who lived in student hostels or rented apartments in houses owned by the military were denied registration altogether. Examples of people registered as military personnel included kindergarten teachers working in kindergartens financed by the armed forces, music teachers and other civilian employees.⁶⁰

Although substantial legal arguments have been used by Russians in their campaign against an exclusive citizenship legislation, it is arguments about the unfavourable political consequences of such legislation which have dominated their call for an inclusive law on citizenship. The main political argument has been that almost one third of the residents of Latvia in practice have been deprived of its citizenship rights.⁶¹ Being excluded from taking part in political decision-making, 'non-citizens' do not have the opportunity to protect their interests and influence political processes by legal means. Although there are no ethnic criteria for obtaining citizenship, the arguments used to justify a strict citizenship law illustrate that the issue is very much related to ethnicity. When only one third of non-Latvians are regarded as 'citizens', while almost all ethnic Latvians are defined as such, this automatically adds an ethnic dimension to the issue. Some Russians, thus, have argued that not only their individual interests but also their interests as an ethnic group risk not being protected under current legislation.

Most Russians are, as the previous chapter showed, not very likely to leave Latvia, some because they regard Latvia as their motherland and would not even consider living in another country, others because of the generally better living conditions in Latvia as compared with most places in Russia. An exclusive citizenship law would therefore, it is argued, mean that an integration of the Russian population would become much more problematic. One cannot expect that Russians, even those who initially were sympathetic to the demands for Latvian independence, will uphold a loyalty towards the Latvian state if they or their co-ethnics are deprived of political rights. This could, the argument goes, lead to political alienation and increasing ethnic tension, and could even contribute to the formation of the 'fifth column' which Latvian authorities so frequently warn about.

One of the consequences of present citizenship legislation could thus be that one creates the bi-communal society which prominent Latvian politicians, such as Andrejs Panteļejevs, see as one of the more serious dangers for Latvia.⁶² In a situation of economic hardship and increasing unemployment, the lack of opportunities to reduce

frustration through legal political channels could lead to social unrest; and with the considerable risk that such unrest would acquire an ethnic character, the potential conflict could be severe.

Many Russians who cannot obtain citizenship in Latvia, or who find the required 'naturalisation' process humiliating or fear that they will not pass the language exam, might opt for Russian citizenship, which they can acquire without many formalities. As has been pointed out by Boris Tsilevich, the majority of Latvian Russians who take Russian citizenship do not intend to move to Russia; they want to remain in Latvia under Russian protection.⁶³ To have a large number of citizens of a foreign state, and from Latvia's point of view Russia is not like any other foreign state, could, in Tsilevich's view, potentially be a very great destabilising factor for Latvia's future:

Взаимоотношения Латвийской Республики с собственными русскоговорящими гражданами - это ее внутреннее дело, и очень непросто было бы оправдать какое-либо вмешательство в эти отношения со стороны России. Отношение же к живущим в Латвии российским гражданам - это совсем другое дело, даже весьма жесткие шаги, направленные на защиту их интересов, могут быть поняты и приняты мировым сообществом (...).⁶⁴

If conditions for non-Latvians were to be so unpleasant that a larger number of Russians started leaving Latvia, it would be intellectuals and businessmen who would be most likely to leave because of their higher mobility.⁶⁵ These are, it is argued, Russians whom Latvia should be most anxious not to lose, because of their significance for the Latvian economy.⁶⁶ Elderly people and those who could not easily find work in Russia would be most likely to remain in Latvia, so the Russian "problem" would be far from resolved. One radical solution to the citizenship question, which has been proposed only by the most extreme wing of the right-wing nationalists, would be to define all post-war immigrants as foreigners who reside illegally in Latvia and demand their departure, but by introducing such measures Latvia would most probably face severe consequences in terms of reactions from the Russian government, the rest of the international community and also from those who were to be deported. This scenario is therefore considered realistic only by a few Russian hard-liners.

While a reasonable residence requirement was tolerated by many Russians, there was more scepticism about the proposed language exams for citizenship applicants. An underlying reason for this scepticism was, of course, that many Russians knew they would have problems passing such a language test. However, Russians who knew the Latvian language well also had objections against such an exam. One of the arguments was that the Latvian language should not be required in certain regions where the Russian-speaking population dominated numerically and had

done so for centuries. Only about 20 per cent of ethnic Russians were fluent in Latvian in pre-war Latvia, but their right to citizenship had never been questioned.⁶⁷

Furthermore, language exams had already started to take place for employees in certain professions after the amended Language Law was adopted in May 1992. There were many complaints from Russians about arbitrariness and lack of correspondence between the language level required for the job of the employees and the knowledge required in order to pass the exams.⁶⁸ Many Russians thus feared that the same could take place in language exams for citizenship, since the required level of achievement would tend to be based on subjective criteria. It was further pointed out that people working in the exam commissions received low salaries and that they often accepted such work because they were 'patriots' with the aim of saving the Latvian nation from extinction.⁶⁹

The third category of arguments was referred to as "arguments of justice". In newspaper articles, letters to the editors, radio and TV interviews and in demonstrations Russians have appealed to common sense in order to show that the proposed citizenship legislation is unfair with regard to the Russian or Russian-speaking population of Latvia. The main argument is that it is unfair that Russians who have lived in Latvia for a long time, who have worked and paid taxes and contributed to the Latvian economy, and maybe even were born there, are suddenly being deprived of citizenship simply because they were not citizens of the interwar republic or descendants of such citizens. These people, it is claimed, had no reason to believe that they were not the equal of others living in the republic, but now they are in danger of becoming second-class citizens or "aliens" whose well-being will be dependent on the good will of the authorities. At the same time the authorities, it is argued, are all the time moving in a more restrictive direction, broadening the range of areas where the rights of citizens and non-citizens differ. Since one cannot blame Russians collectively for the crimes committed during the Soviet period, individual Russians who have lived in Latvia in accordance with the law and used their freedom of movement as citizens of the Soviet Union to settle down in Latvia should not become new victims in an attempt to rectify former mistreatment of Latvians. If there is a conflict between individual human rights and the collective rights of an ethnic group, then the individual rights should have priority, goes the argument.

There is another aspect which Russians often refer to when they argue that an inclusive citizenship law is the only fair solution in relation to the Russian-speaking population. The argument is that Russians assumed a liberal citizenship law would be adopted because of a number of statements from leading Latvian politicians on the issue in the period leading up to independence. Latvian authorities soon understood that in order to gain independence it would be necessary to have the support of national minorities, including the Russians. Russians were, thus, encouraged to join the

Popular Front and to vote for Latvian independence, and there was a general informal agreement that Russians would all be given the option of initial citizenship in return. Those who argued for a more restrictive citizenship solution were said to be a small minority without any possibility of determining the political outcome in their favour. On the eve of the referendum *Diena* published an interview with the Supreme Council deputy and secretary of its Constitutional Committee, Rolands Rikards:

Граждане СССР, которые 3 марта проголосуют за свободную, демократическую и независимую Латвию, - потенциальные граждане ЛР, своим отношением засвидетельствовавшие лояльность к государству (.)⁷⁰

Consequently, Russians who voted for a free, democratic and independent Latvia often felt betrayed, and they have often claimed that the Latvian authorities have not kept their promise. As soon as Latvia had gained independence, the need for Russian support was no longer so acute, and slogans such as "For your and our freedom" and "Latvia - our common home" were replaced with "A Latvian Latvia" and "Desovietisation, Decolonisation, Deoccupation".

7.3. Conclusion

While various groups of Russians had different views and interests regarding the question of Latvian independence, most Russians were in favour of a more liberal and inclusive citizenship legislation than proposed by the Latvian parliament. However, while all Russians had a say on the question of independence, it was left to the new *Saeima*, elected by citizens of the Latvian pre-war republic, to adopt a new citizenship law. Since approximately one third of the non-Latvians were citizens and had a vote, and since some Latvians had a more moderate view on the citizenship and other issues, the parliament was not completely dominated by ethnic Latvians or by parties in favour of a restrictive legislation on citizenship.⁷¹ Nevertheless, it was already clear a long time before the elections that the "zero option" favoured by most Russians would not be accepted by the parliament or the predominantly Latvian electorate.

A great number of parties had been established which, although their programmes differed in respect to the terms of naturalisation of new citizens, all accepted the restored state model with initial citizenship being granted only according to the pre-1940 principle. Russian and other non-citizens were, however, not allowed membership in political parties, and there were few parties claiming to represent their views. In the following chapter we shall examine the Russian political response to this situation, and particularly look at the organisational structure within which Russians could articulate and mobilise support for their interests.

¹The official title of the resolution is: "On the Renewal of the Republic of Latvia Citizenship Rights and the Main Principles of Naturalisation", but it will here be called the Resolution on Citizenship, which is also the name it is known by in Latvia. An English translation of the law was published in the pamphlet *About the Republic of Latvia* by the Standing Commission on Human Rights and National Questions under the Supreme Council of Latvia, Riga, 1992, pp. 51-53. The draft law on citizenship of November the same year was published in the same pamphlet, pp. 54-62.

²Brubaker (1992), p. 269.

³Sandström (1991), p. 37.

⁴The general radicalisation of the popular movement on the question of independence should be kept separately from the discussion of the ethnopolitical radicalisation in Latvia which was discussed in Chapter 4, although some of the reasons coincide.

⁵Muiznieks (1990).

⁶See Eglitis (1993).

⁷See Zaslavsky (1992).

⁸*Padomju Jaunatne* 27.07.89, p. 4. The opinion poll was conducted by the Centre of Research of Public Opinion at the Institute of History of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Latvia.

⁹*Atmoda* 26.06.90, p. 11. This poll was conducted by the Latvian Sociology Association.

¹⁰*Sovetskaya molodezh*, 27 April 1990, p. 1. This cannot be seen as a representative survey, but nevertheless tendencies seem to be reliable. The poll seems to be in accordance with other polls taken up at the same time in that 92 per cent of Latvians and 45 per cent of Russians and other non-Latvians supported independence.

¹¹Starikov, E. (1993).

¹²Kolstø (1993), p. 200.

¹³See *Russkii Put'*, 26 September 1992, p. 3.

¹⁴Indeed, it was generally acknowledged that Russians (and Jews) dominated private business in Latvia. See e.g. *Ekspress*, no. 47, 5-11 December 1992, p. 4.

¹⁵*Diena*, 25 January 1991, p. 1.

¹⁶See G. Smith (ed.) (1994b).

¹⁷Tsilevich (1993).

¹⁸Dreifelds (1990/91).

¹⁹For the results, see Bungs (1991) and (1991b).

²⁰Brigita Zepa cited in Bojārs (1993), p. 144. The Latvian ambassador to the Russian Federation suggested that half the Russian-speaking population in Latvia voted in favour of independence, but it is not clear which sources his estimates are based on. See *Rossiiskie Vesti*, 1 July 93, p. 7. One western source, Anatol Lieven, calculated that the non-Latvian vote in favour of independence was probably in the range of 27 to 38 per cent. Lieven (1993).

²¹In early March 38 per cent of the non-Latvian population were reported to be in favour of independence according to a survey conducted by *Latvijas sociālo pētījumu centrs* (Latvian Centre for Social Research). Zepa (1992).

²²Taagepeera (1992), "Ethnic relations in Estonia, 1991", *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. XXIII, no. 2, p. 127.

²³Juris Bojārs expressed this view in an interview with the author in August 1991.

²⁴This author was in Riga during the Coup and took part in the celebration of Baltic independence in front of the Freedom Monument on 23 August. Those speakers who greeted the Russian democratic movement and who emphasised the role of all nationalities in gaining independence received more applause than speakers who saw independence as a victory of the Latvian ethnos. The meeting was suddenly interrupted by intense applause. We soon realised that a person carrying a large Russian tricolour was moving down the main road of Riga and approaching the meeting. Short interviews with people in the streets of Riga in those days also seemed to suggest that Latvian independence was not supported by ethnic Latvians only.

²⁵Author's interview with Boris Tsilevich, February 1993.

²⁶In Chapter 5 we saw that while 38 per cent of the Russian population were citizens of Latvia (according to statistics from the registration of the Latvian population), 62 per cent were not. See Vābers and Karnups (1994) and Table 5.5.

²⁷Lane (1993), p. 39. See Chapter 3 for a more thorough analysis of the citizenship issue.

²⁸Kvernørd, M. (1993).

²⁹Bojārs has argued that the "zero option" implies that permanent residents automatically become citizens of Latvia, which he, rightly, argues would be an infringement of the rights of those who do not want citizenship of Latvia. This is, however, a somewhat questionable interpretation of the "zero option" model. Many supporters of the "zero option" model, for example, favoured the Lithuanian solution, whereby those who were citizens of the interwar republic would be granted citizenship automatically, while others would have to apply within a certain time period to obtain it. See Bojārs (1993).

³⁰In the previous chapter we saw that 38 per cent of the respondents in our survey would have opted for dual Russian-Latvian citizenship if there had been such an option.

³¹See *SM-segodnya*, 22 August 1992, p.1.

³²E.g. the leader of the Russian Constitutional Party, Andrei Vorontsov. See *Diena*, 22 December 1992, p. 2.

³³*Atmoda* (English edition), no. 19, October 1991.

³⁴*Weekendavisen*, 13.-19 March 1992, p. 18. There were 1000 respondents in the survey.

³⁵Smith, Aasland and Mole (1994).

³⁶The question which was asked was: *Chto kasaetsya nyneshnykh grazhdanskikh prav, schitaete li vy, chto spravedlivy po otnosheniyu k russkomu naseleniyu v Latvii?* [Authors' translation: Regarding citizenship laws, do you think they are fair in relation to the Russian community in Latvia?] See *ibid.* A fuller discussion of this survey is forthcoming in G. Smith (ed.) (1994b).

³⁷For some other surveys on the citizenship question, see Kvernørød (1993) *op.cit.*

³⁸Aasland (1991).

³⁹Only 22,000 Latvians - most of them so-called "Russian Latvians" whose (grand)parents lived in Russia during Latvian independence in the interwar period - are registered as "foreigners" or non-citizens. See Table 5.5 (Chapter 5).

⁴⁰Since I in this chapter focus on the views of ethnic Russians, there is the danger that some of the argumentation in this section may seem somewhat biased, as certain counterarguments (which are less frequently referred to by Russians) are not thoroughly presented. I would therefore like to stress that the overrepresentation of arguments in favour of more liberal citizenship legislation should not be seen as insensitivity of this author towards the concerns of ethnic Latvians. The most important arguments in favour of strict legislation on citizenship were, however, presented in Chapter 4.

⁴¹For a discussion of the restored state model and the new state model, see Brubaker (1992), *op. cit.*

⁴²*Diena*, 22 December 1992, p. 2.

⁴³Brubaker, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

⁴⁴*SM segodnya*, 27 November 1991, p. 3.

⁴⁵*Diena*, 22 January 1993, p. 2.

⁴⁶*Diena*, 26 January 1993, p. 2.

⁴⁷See f.ex. *Opponent*, no. 4, 1992.

⁴⁸Tsilevich, B. (1993b).

⁴⁹The counterargument is that the persons would not be stateless, because Russia, as the legal successor state of the USSR, has guaranteed citizenship to all former USSR citizens who want it.

⁵⁰In this thesis I do not look in detail at evaluations by international experts of Latvian citizenship legislation, and it suffices here to say that such evaluations have been rather contradictory. Thus, participants in the citizenship debate with diametrically different views have been able to find support in their argumentation from various reports written by international experts and organisations. Kolstø (1994) lists some of them.

⁵¹Tsilevich (1993), *op.cit.*, p.9.

⁵²See, for example, *Russkii Put'*, no. 9 (December 1991), p. 2.

⁵³*Diena*, 25 January 1991 (*prilozhenie*).

⁵⁴There are three main reasons why Latvian politicians claim that this agreement does not bind them to adopt the "zero option" model for citizenship. Firstly, they claim that the statement which has been cited was qualified by the fourth article of the agreement where all people living in the territory of the signatory states are guaranteed "*vybor grazhdanstva soglasno zakonodatel'stvu strany prozhivaniya* (author's italics) *i Dogovoru, zaklyuchennomu mezhdru [RSFSR] i Latviiskoi Respublikoi po voprosam grazhdanstva.*" This has been interpreted as if Latvia is free to define its own citizenship legislation. In response, Russians argue that domestic law cannot modify the substance of the treaty commitment, but only regulate minor issues of procedure. Secondly, it has been argued that since the disputed article makes a reference to the USSR, a state which no longer exists, the agreement cannot have legal force. The counter-argument is that the USSR was not a party to the treaty, and this should therefore not influence the essence of the agreement. Thirdly, the treaty has not been ratified by the Russian parliament, and until it has been ratified by both parts, it cannot be said to have legal force. Fourthly, if it were to be ratified, there would still be the argument that the Supreme Council of Latvia was not a legitimate body of representation of the Latvian republic. See Kvernørød, op.cit.; Kolstø (1994), op. cit.

⁵⁵The prime minister, Godmanis, for example was against citizens and non-citizens being treated differently in the economic sphere. See *SM segodnya*, 4 September 1992, p. 1.

⁵⁶Originally the Law on Entry and Residence of Foreigners and Stateless Persons on the Territory of Latvia was intended to concern only those persons who did not permanently reside in Latvia at the moment of its adoption (June 1992). The resolution envisaged a special law regarding permanent residents by December 1992, but no such law has been adopted as of yet.

⁵⁷For more restrictions in the rights of citizens as listed by a Russian-language newspaper, the mouthpiece of the Equal Rights fraction in the Latvian parliament, *Opponent*, no. 7, October, 1992, p. 2. See also *Russkii Put'*, no. 9, December, 1991, p. 2.

⁵⁸See *SM segodnya*, 4 September 1992, p. 1.

⁵⁹See *Russkii put'*, no. 4, 1993, p. 4.

⁶⁰For more on this, see Tsilevich (1993b).

⁶¹See for example *SM segodnya*, 27 November 1991, p. 3.

⁶²This point has been argued for example by Abrams Klotskins, head of the Department of Journalism, Russian-language section, University of Riga, at the conference "The New Russian Diaspora" in Lielupe, Latvia, 11-13 November, 1992.

⁶³For a more thorough exposition of this argument, see *SM segodnya*, 9 May 1992, p. 1-2.

⁶⁴ibid.

⁶⁵See Krickus (1993).

⁶⁶Interview with Abrams Klotskins in February 1993.

⁶⁷Personal interview with representatives of the *Russkaya Obshchina Latvii* in Daugavpils, February 1992.

⁶⁸G. Smith (ed.) (1994b).

⁶⁹Author's interview with Miroslav Mitrofanov, journalist in the Daugavpils newspaper *Dinaburg* and local politician, February 1993.

⁷⁰*Diena*, 2 March 1991, p. 1.

⁷¹For the June 1992 election results, see Bungs (1993) or *Diena*, 18 June 1993..

8. Russian Organisational Life in Latvia

Although Russians in early 1994 made up more than 30 per cent of the population in Latvia, they did not have any representatives in the Latvian government. All ministers but one were ethnic Latvians, although Latvians made up only 57 per cent of the country's population according to data from the registration of the population of Latvia.¹ Ethnic Latvians also dominated the new parliament, the *Saeima*, elected in June 1993 (only about 7 out of 100 deputies are non-Latvians) and in local government.² Against this background one could argue that the interests of Russians and other minority ethnic groups after the elections to the *Saeima* were poorly represented.³

Despite poor representation of Russians in the most influential political positions in Latvia, there is still some political activity among the Russian population in Latvia. This chapter has two main aims. Firstly, it seeks to provide an overview of predominantly political organisations in Latvia in which Russians participate. Secondly, and closely interlinked with this, the chapter discusses what role ethnicity plays in the organisational life of Russians in Latvia. While carrying out research on these issues I have found that relatively few Russians are now taking an active part in organisations which are dominated by ethnic Latvians, or in organisations where the ethnic composition of the membership reflects the ethnic composition of the population as a whole. After the disintegration of the Popular Front, most organisations have become more monoethnic in character, or at least there is a division between organisations dominated by, respectively, Latvians and non-Latvians. The focus in this chapter will thus be on organisations which are dominated by Russians, or at least in which Russians play a prominent role. Other organisations will, with one important exception regarding the multi-ethnic "Latvian Support Foundation" of Jānis Jurkāns, be overlooked.⁴

Some of the organisations which will be discussed have a cultural profile, but most of them have at some point or other become involved in politics, whether this has been intentional or not. Purely cultural organisations are many in number, but most of them have a very low membership, and will therefore not be discussed in great detail. The same applies to the Orthodox and the Old Believers' Churches, which are both to be considered large Russian-dominated organisations; their influence is discussed elsewhere.

The first section of this chapter will deal with organisations which are no longer present on the political scene in Latvia, but which were important and very visible in the period leading up to the August 1991 coup. I am here first of all thinking of the Communist Party of Latvia (on the CPSU platform) and *Interfront*. Section two

provides information about the spectrum of Russian or Russian-dominated organisations in Latvia as of the summer of 1993 (some of the organisations were prohibited in October 1993 due to alleged anti-constitutional activities), and there will also be some information about the level of support for some of these organisations among the respondents in the survey. There are different opinions among Russians in Latvia on whether there is a need for a "Russian" political party in Latvia, and the third section will refer to some of the arguments put forward in this debate. It will look more closely at the most recent attempt at founding such a party and the experiment of preparing a "Russian" electoral list for the 1993 elections to the *Saeima*. A few other political parties or movements which seem to have considerable appeal among Russians will also be presented and compared. Although the chapter will show that there is a large number of Russian-dominated organisations in Latvia, this should not overshadow the fact that the activity level among the Russian public is generally very low, and much lower than among their ethnic Latvian neighbours. I shall therefore conclude the chapter by presenting some of the major factors which may serve to explain this lack of interest in cultural and political organisation.

8.1. Soviet "Loyalist" Organisations

8.1.1. The Communist Party of Latvia

Developments in the Communist Party of Latvia were in many respects different from developments in the two other Baltic republics. While the majority of Communist Party members in Estonia and Lithuania came to support the independence cause and a split with the central party organisation, in Latvia the opposite was the case. In April 1990 a minority (approximately 25,000 members) consisting predominantly of ethnic Latvians, broke off from the central organisation and formed the Independent Communist Party of Latvia, later to be renamed the Latvian Democratic Labour Party. The remaining majority (more than 100,000 members⁵), loyal to the central party structures in the USSR, was to become even more dominated by Russians and other Slavs than it had been before the split.⁶ This majority took control over the party apparatus and the property of the party. A significant number of ethnic Latvians remained in the party, however, such as the leader of the party, Alfreds Rubiks. The party, thus, never acquired the image of being a party only for ethnic Russians or the Russian-speaking population. Rather it became a mouthpiece for forces interested in the preservation of Soviet power in Latvia, forces which for reasons which have already been discussed tended to be of Slavic origin.

With its developed organisational structure, financial resources, and links with the central party organisation in Moscow, the Communist Party of Latvia remained one of the most important bastions of Soviet power in the republic until the August 1991 coup. The Communist Party claimed to support the interests of the Russian-speaking population, but many Russian-speaking observers argued that the party was more concerned with preserving Soviet structures which were in the interests of the party itself than the rights of the Russian-speaking population. It thus used the Russian question as a card whereby it could increase support from large segments of the population by trying to convince it that Russian rights would be protected only through the centre and the Soviet president.⁷

In a survey in May 1990, 4 per cent of ethnic Latvians and 35 per cent of Russians and other Slavs were reported to support the Communist Party of Latvia.⁸ The Communist Party had received considerable support in the Supreme Council elections of 18 March 1990, and 59 of the 200 deputies remained Communist Party members when they were elected. In the parliament Communist Party deputies participated in the minority *Ravnopravie* (Equal Rights) faction (to be discussed in the last section), and although it considered the Supreme Council to be a democratically elected legislative body, it nevertheless took the view that the Supreme Council had passed discriminatory laws against minorities, and that much of its legislation violated Soviet law. One of the main goals thus became to defend, or renew, the Soviet Constitution in Latvia.⁹

The Communist Party took a very negative view of Latvian independence. It never recognised that the incorporation of Latvia into the Soviet Union had been in violation of international law. It was stated in Party documents as late as in July 1990 that

(с)оциалистический выбор большинства латышского народа летом 1940 года имел закономерный характер, явился результатом многолетней борьбы трудящихся за свои социальные и политические права. Мы отвергаем антинаучные, спекулятивные трактовки событий 1940 года в угоду сепаратистским, антисоциалистическим силам.¹⁰

However, as the party gradually lost more and more support, it adopted programmes which to a greater extent reflected the general mood of reform in society and in the central party organisation in Moscow. It supported the idea of a "Latvia which is sovereign, governed by the rule of law and internationally recognised, but remaining a part of the USSR on the basis of a new Union Treaty".¹¹ A decision about secession from the Soviet Union was not ruled out, at least not in theory, but the party believed it would have to take place through a referendum in which all inhabitants of Latvia should have the right to vote. The party emphasised that the most important

principle was the protection of human rights, which would have priority over the interests of particular classes, nationalities or other social groups.¹² Although the party acknowledged that the Latvian language should be the "state" language in Latvia, it advocated that the Russian language should also have the status of an official language. Students in Latvia should, according to the party programme, have the right to receive secondary and higher education in the Russian language.¹³

During the dramatic events in August 1991 the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party was one of six organisations in Latvia which sent out a leaflet to the population with a number of statements showing that it supported the attempted coup:

Чрезвычайное положение - это не угроза суверенитету Латвии, а путь к справедливости, согласию и равноправию всех людей, населяющих республику. (...) Мы призываем всех к выдержке, спокойствию, соблюдению требований Закона о чрезвычайном положении!¹⁴

As a consequence, shortly after the coup failed the party was officially declared unconstitutional through a parliamentary decree.¹⁵

8.1.2. Interfront

An organisation which shared a political platform with the Communist Party on many issues was the International Workers' Front of the Latvian SSR, or "Interfront", which appeared on the Baltic political scene in the autumn of 1988. Its founding congress was held in Riga on 7-8 January 1989.¹⁶ Interfront leaders argued that there was a need for this organisation because the population wanted to take part in the *perestroika* process more actively. In addition, many Interfront spokesmen believed that the organisation should be a mouthpiece for the Russian-speaking population and a defender of their interests, since these interests were not, it was said, sufficiently protected through the policies of the Popular Front, the Supreme Council or the CPL.¹⁷

The CPL was thought by many Interfront activists to be too passive.¹⁸ Many of them wanted to see Interfront as a counterweight to the Popular Front of Latvia, which had been founded three months earlier.¹⁹ Although leaders stressed their support for *perestroika*, it was clear from the start that Interfront understood this concept very differently from the Popular Front. Issues on which the two movements had diametrically different views included the questions of the leading role of the Communist Party, the indivisibility of the Soviet Union and the defence of socialism in Latvia.²⁰ Interfront spokesmen argued that the Popular Front movement represented a threat to the Russian-speaking population, because it was a movement for national (ethnic) awakening and national (ethnic) revenge.²¹

Although the programmes of the CPL and Interfront were almost identical, CPL leaders nevertheless initially looked upon the formation of a separate political organisation with a certain degree of scepticism.²² Relations between the two organisations, however, improved after the CPL split in April 1990.²³ To a large extent they also had an overlapping membership. The new party leader, Alfreds Rubiks, spoke of Interfront in much more positive terms than his predecessors had done, and he even suggested that the CPL and Interfront should form a bloc before the next elections to the Supreme Council. The CPL and Interfront cooperated on organising a number of demonstrations, and they often succeeded in mobilising rather large masses of people to come to protest against the threats against the Soviet constitution in Latvia. Most of the demonstrators were Russian speakers, which could be clearly seen from the language used on the banners.²⁴

It has been claimed that Interfront opposed the idea that Latvian be made the state language of the republic.²⁵ This may be true about some of the Interfront activists, but is not representative of the policy of the organisation, where in the statutes it was stated that

ИФ (Интерфронт) одобряет статус латышского языка как государственного.²⁶

And in the words of a prominent Interfront spokesman, Belaichuk, in his speech at the founding congress:

Мы признаём правильным решение о признании латышского языка государственным языком республики. Мы согласны с тем, что необходимо постепенно, сохраняя чувство равновесия, расширять сферу применения латышского языка в нашей республике.²⁷

The organisation, however, did not approve of the way in which language policies were being implemented in Latvia. A common argument was that one could not expect people to know the Latvian language if they had never had the chance to learn it. It was consequently argued that much greater resources should be assigned to language instruction:

Мы (...) считаем, что необходимо сосредоточить основные силы, основные ассигнования на преподавании литературного латышского языка в детских садах, в школах, в вузах и техникумах.²⁸

Interfront also strongly opposed any policy which sought to diminish the role of the Russian language in Latvia. Russian should, according to the Interfront programme, have the role of an official (but not necessarily state) language.

Certain groups of Russians were more inclined than others to be sympathetic to Interfront's programme and activities. Interfront often came out with criticism of the way in which the Soviet armed forces in Latvia were treated, and one of its main tasks

soon became to improve the conditions for officers, war veterans and retired personnel from the armed forces, and their families. Interfront thus came to enjoy wide support among these groups. In addition, Interfront seemed to appeal to workers and managers in all-union industries, where the opposition against Latvian independence was particularly strong. All-union factories were also the centre of the United Council of Work Collectives (OSTK), which can be said to have been the "workers' arm" of Interfront and whose activities were directed against attempts to remove these all-union factories from the control of Moscow.²⁹ OSTK had considerable support in these factories, but their attempts to organise political strikes were only minimally successful.

It is not easy to give an exact estimate of the degree of support Interfront enjoyed among Russians in Latvia. Such support seemed to fluctuate with political and economic developments in the republic, as well as with the activities of the organisation itself, and Interfront never had a stable membership. The Interfront leadership claimed more than 300,000 members and approximately 600,000 supporters in the spring of 1989.³⁰ This was undoubtedly an exaggeration, for many Russians had a wait-and-see attitude towards the organisation when it was founded. However, as Interfront came more and more to form an alliance with hard-line political groupings in the rest of the USSR, a large number of Russians gradually came to distance themselves from the organisation. Interfront's position during the January 1991 events in particular made many Russians take a much more sceptical view of Interfront.

Interfront did not fare too well in the March 1990 elections to the Supreme Council, when only one of its nominated candidates was elected a deputy. Public opinion polls nevertheless showed that the organisation enjoyed considerable support among non-Latvians. While only 3 per cent of the ethnic Latvian respondents said that they supported Interfront in a poll conducted in the spring of 1990, 30 per cent of non-Latvians reported support for the organisation. This was, however, less than the percentage supporting the Popular Front (34 per cent).³¹ One year later a similar opinion poll showed that Interfront still enjoyed less support than the Popular Front among Russians and other non-Latvians. Only 4 per cent of the ethnic Russian respondents said that they fully supported Interfront, while 23 per cent supported it generally. The corresponding percentages for the Popular Front were 5 and 37 per cent respectively.³²

8.2. The Landscape of Russian-dominated Organisations in Latvia

8.2.1. The Russian Society in Latvia (ROL)

In November and December 1990 a series of articles was published in the Russian-language newspaper *SM-segodnya* to facilitate the formation of an interest organisation of Russians in Latvia; "Russians" meaning 'all those who regard themselves as such'.³³ The author of the articles, Edgard Smekhov, who at the founding congress of ROL (*Russkaya Obshchina Latvii*) in March 1991 was elected the organisation's first president, argued that Russians were being manipulated by various political forces; there was, in his view, no doubt that there was a need for an organisation which would express the interests of Russians in Latvia. His question was whether it would be possible to find a basis for the organisation which would make it possible to unite the heterogeneous Russian population.

In Smekhov's view, this problem could not be solved through the formation of a Russian political party, since Russians, like all other nationalities, did not and never would share the same political platform; they would consequently join different political parties and blocs reflecting their political views and interests. Religion could not become a unifying force either, not only due to the fact that Russians belonged to several different confessions, or that many Russians had lost their religious belief, but also, as Smekhov saw it, because all religions were, per definition, international, and should not be used as a means of national unification. Moreover, Russian consolidation should not be sought through the idea of "cultural autonomy", according to Smekhov. A very small number of Russians had joined the existing cultural societies in Latvia, and Smekhov believed this was a result of the difficult psychological state that Russians were in at the present time:

До культурных ли обществ русским в Латвии в настоящий момент, если ни один из них в полной мере не уверен в своей будущей судьбе? Если люди экономически раздроблены и разобщены, если не знают, кто они в Латвии: то ли 'мигранты', то ли 'оккупанты', то ли, по последней версии, 'колонисты'.³⁴

Smekhov's idea was therefore a unification of Russians according to another principle, which he described as the ability of Russians in hard times to forget about internal differences and consolidate themselves for the sake of a common goal:

Это - способность объединиться на принципах взаимопомощи, это - соборность для принятия ответственных решений в интересах всех, это - артельность и общинность. Это - община.

In his article, Smekhov stipulated what he thought should be the main principles of ROL, but he made it clear that ROL would be a democratic organisation, and would be open for suggestions from others.

Smekhov's initiative was well received by a number of Russians who did not see *Interfront* as a true representative of the Russian population in Latvia, but who still believed there was a need for a Russian organisation which dealt not only with the cultural demands of the Russian minority. At the founding congress in March 1991, the goals and organisational structure of ROL were defined in the ROL statutes.³⁵ One of the main goals was to help ROL members to adapt to the dramatic socio-economic changes taking place in Latvian society, where, as the leader put it, 'Russians found themselves at the epicentre of the national awakening of *another* nation'.³⁶ A number of ROL activities were suggested at this congress. The organisation was to be based on mutual help and support among its members, and membership fees would be regulated in accordance with the income of the members. It was further hoped that the organisation would become involved in business and receive income from such activities, and ROL would also rely on Russian companies supporting the organisation. Another important part of the programme was to work for a spiritual and cultural-educational revival of the Russian nation, and in this connection ROL took the initiative to open a private university in Riga. This university, where the main language of tuition would be Russian, was to be sponsored by ROL and Russian business and would also, when possible, be financed through contributions from the students themselves and their parents.³⁷

ROL soon opened offices in Riga, started to publish its own newspaper, *Russkii Put'*, and arranged a number of conferences and seminars with topics related to the Russian community in Latvia in the past and present. The organisation also had its own sociological section dealing with public opinion among the Russian population. However, it was soon to become clear that although ROL had more members than other Russian organisations in Latvia, it would never become so all-inclusive as some of the initiators had been hoping. According to some sceptics, ROL would not have the means required to support its members financially, and some were critical of the economic administration of the organisation.³⁸ Moreover, although this was long hidden from the public, ROL suffered from serious tensions within its leadership and among its members.

Such tensions were openly expressed at the third conference of ROL in June 1992, just over a year after the founding congress. There was considerable dissatisfaction with the style of the leadership, and especially with that of the president, Smekhov, who was thought to be too authoritarian.³⁹ Without going into more detail about the reasons for the grievances, the conference ended up with ROL splitting up into two factions, both of which regarded themselves as representing the authentic ROL

organisation. There can be no doubt that the crisis in ROL was a serious blow to the idea of a Russian interest organisation in Latvia, although both organisations have managed to continue some of their activities, and the newspaper *Russkii Put'* was still being published.

Although ROL had its centre in Riga, ROL representatives from other regions in Latvia demanded more autonomy from the central organisation. In the Latgalian city of Daugavpils, for example, ROL took a more active part in local politics than in other Latvian regions, and after the split at the third conference ROL in Daugavpils sought more independence from Riga and became involved in forming a political opposition to the local government in the city.⁴⁰ Some of the leaders of ROL in Daugavpils had been deputies in the dissolved Daugavpils city council, and there were also activists from Interfront and the Soviet-loyalist wing of the Communist Party.

Although ROL had been associated with pro-Soviet sympathies and activities, especially among certain Latvian politicians with a right-wing or nationalist political platform, the leading spokesmen in the organisation had always emphasised the importance of cooperation with the existing elected government bodies.⁴¹ There is strong reason to believe, however, that after Interfront had been forced off the political scene, some Interfront activists hoped to continue their political struggle from within ROL. The general mood in the organisation also became more pessimistic and confrontational during the autumn of 1991 and the spring of 1992, due to the lack of support for the organisation by the Latvian authorities and a turn to the right on questions of citizenship, language legislation, and so on.⁴²

In our survey we asked the respondents about the degree of their support for four of the typical Russian organisations in Latvia (see Table 8.1 on the next page, which also includes the Russian support for other organisations and movements in Latvia). A larger percentage of respondents were able to express their view on ROL than was the case with the three other organisations to be discussed below. This seemed to confirm the general observation that most Russians in Latvia were at least somewhat familiar with the objectives and activities of ROL. ROL also received more media attention than other Russian organisations in Latvia, at least at the time when our survey was conducted. Nevertheless, 17 and 27 per cent of the respondents respectively did not answer this question or did not have an opinion about ROL.

If any one of the Russian organisations could claim to be representative of Russians in Latvia in the spring of 1992, that organisation was ROL, which enjoyed at least some degree of support from 45 per cent of the respondents in our survey. Only one in ten respondents either tended not to support ROL, or did not support the organisation at all.

Table 8.1: Support for Organisations and Movements

Survey Question: To what extent to you support the activities of the following political parties, social organisations and movements?

| | Fully support | Tend to support | Hard to say/no answer | Tend not to support | Do not support at all |
|--|---------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| N = 519 | (%) | (%) | (%) | (%) | (%) |
| Latvian Popular Front | 1 | 3 | 35 | 21 | 40 |
| Latvian Farmers' Union | 2 | 9 | 68 | 7 | 14 |
| Latvian National Independence Movement (LNNK) | 0 | 1 | 46 | 6 | 47 |
| Latvian Democratic Workers' Party | 2 | 6 | 62 | 8 | 22 |
| Congress of Latvian Citizens' Committee | 1 | 3 | 48 | 7 | 41 |
| Club for Environmental Protection | 14 | 17 | 48 | 4 | 17 |
| Latvian Social Democratic Labour Party (LSDSP) | 0 | 1 | 70 | 8 | 21 |
| Latvian Social Democratic Party (LSDP) | 0 | 2 | 71 | 7 | 20 |
| Centre for a Democratic Initiative | 6 | 13 | 67 | 2 | 12 |
| Russian Community of Latvia (ROL) | 23 | 23 | 44 | 1 | 9 |
| Balto-Slavic Society | 8 | 20 | 57 | 4 | 11 |
| Latvian Society for Russian Culture (LORK) | 14 | 17 | 52 | 4 | 13 |
| Latvian Association for a Rebirth of Russia (LAVR) | 9 | 16 | 61 | 4 | 10 |

Source: "Russians in Latvia" survey, 1992.

ROL was more popular among Russians in urban than in rural areas, and the organisation enjoyed most support among Russians in Riga. An interesting feature is that manual workers tended to be less supportive of ROL than were specialists and professionals, and the more education a respondent had, the more likely s/he was to indicate support for ROL. Russians with a good knowledge of the Latvian language might have felt so secure in Latvia that they did not feel the same need for a Russian interest organisation; they tended to be less supportive of ROL than those with a poor language knowledge. Similarly, the organisation enjoyed more support from Russian immigrants than from Russians who had been born in Latvia, and especially when compared with Russians whose family also came from Latvia.

8.2.2. The Latvian Society for Russian Culture (LORK)

One of the first new Russian organisations to be formed in Latvia in the wake of the *Atmoda* (awakening) process was the Latvian Society for Russian Culture (LORK). The organisation was founded on 4 March 1989. The organisation was, according to the statutes, open to anyone, independent of nationality, who valued Russian culture and the Russian language.⁴³ One of the main principles of the organisation was not to confuse

возрождение русской национальной культуры и русского народа с противодействием национальным чаяниям других народов, в частности латышского.⁴⁴

The organisation, thus, actively supported the Popular Front of Latvia and adopted the LFT programme as its political platform. For example, on many occasions it came out with open support for full political independence for Latvia.⁴⁵ The main aims of the organisation were to develop Russian national identity and Russian spiritual culture, to organise Russian national schools, to defend human rights and to support charities.

LORK representatives always tended to emphasise that in order to coexist with the Latvians, Russians in Latvia would have to show respect for Latvian culture and traditions. As one of the most prominent LORK spokesmen, the writer Yurii Abyzov, put it,

Мы существуем в специфических условиях, находясь в нише латышского народа. Ведь только латышский народ живёт здесь на своей исконной земле, в своей истории, со своим языком, со своими перспективами. Наша культура за пределами этой земли, там наши Ясная Поляна, могила Достоевского.⁴⁶

The organisation mostly consisted of intellectuals, writers, publicists and academics, and it was often assumed that the organisation enjoyed only minor support from, for example, Russian manual workers.

There can be no doubt that it was LORK's association with the LFT which caused the most controversy among Latvian Russians. The Interfront newspaper *Edinstvo* soon published two articles which both contained fierce criticism of the political platform of the organisation.⁴⁷ Neither did Interfront representatives approve of LORK's claim to represent the interests of the Russian population in Latvia. 'How can LORK, whose membership covers not more than 0.03 per cent of the Russian population in Latvia, claim to represent the interests of Russians better than does Interfront, which has a membership of 300,000 and 600,000 supporters?', they asked. LORK's support of LFT language policies was also attacked in the same articles:

Как может ЛОРК называть себя обществом русской культуры, если выступает против русского языка в Латвии?⁴⁸

Despite many critical articles about LORK in some of the Latvian Russian-language newspapers, according to our survey more Russians seemed to be ignorant about the organisation than actually opposed to it. As can be seen from Table 8.1, when asked to indicate the degree of support for LORK, more than half the respondents in the survey either skipped the question or indicated that they found it too difficult to answer. Only 16 per cent were inclined not to support LORK, while 31 per cent either fully supported or tended to support the organisation. Thus, although LORK could not claim

to represent all Russians living in Latvia, the organisation was at least supported by a greater share of the Russian population than indicated by their membership figures.

Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, LORK did not enjoy much stronger support among Russians with higher education, and neither was there a significant correlation between the level of language fluency and the degree of support for the organisation. LORK had about the same proportion of supporters among manual workers as among professionals. Females, however, tended to be more supportive of LORK than males. There was also significant regional variance, with Russians in Riga and other large cities (except in Latgale) being most inclined at least to express an opinion on the organisation; Russians there also tended to give a more negative evaluation of LORK than did Russians in other Latvian settlements. Russians from a mixed Latvian-Russian family background were also more likely than others to express their opinion about the organisation; taking into account LORK's emphasis on respect for Latvian culture and traditions, these Russians were naturally more likely to support LORK than Russians from an ethnically homogeneous Russian family.

8.2.3. The Latvian Association for the Revival of Russia (LAVR)

Another Russian organisation in Latvia *Latviiskaya Assotsiatsiya Vozrozhdeniyu Rossii* (LAVR) was quite different from the Russian organisations in Latvia described above in that its activities were concentrated not so much on how to improve the conditions for Russians living in Latvia as on how Russians in Latvia could contribute to a revival of Russia itself.⁴⁹ However, LAVR spokesmen also saw the fate of Russians in Latvia as contingent upon a successful solution to the question of the Russians living in Russia. The background to the formation of LAVR was that some Russians in Latvia had found the state of Russia after 70 years of communist rule devastating. Thus, in November 1989 they resolved to form an organisation which would contribute to the revival of Russia, the *rodina* (motherland), so that it could regain its former strength. Solzhenitsyn's pamphlet *Kak Nam Obustroit' Rossiya* (How to Rebuild Russia) served as a model for how to rebuild the Russian state. According to V. Tikhomirov, the president of LAVR,

истинно русский, (...) куда бы ни забрасывала его судьба, носит Россию в сердце, тайно страдая за её судьбу и, при первой возможности, способствуя её выздоровлению.⁵⁰

LAVR spokesmen thus criticised ROL for a lack of interest in Russia's fate. One example which was mentioned were the January 1991 events. According to LAVR spokesmen, ROL should then have come out in open support of Latvian independence, but they kept silent. Another incident was in February/March the same year, when

LAVR openly supported El'tsin in his struggle against 'reactionary forces' in Moscow, while ROL allegedly did not take a stance. Although LAVR was primarily a non-political organisation,

есть в истории моменты, когда лишь совесть должна
определять твоё поведение, когда смолчать - это
тоже позиция.⁵¹

ROL was therefore thought by many LAVR activists to be an Interfront-inspired organisation, although of a more 'mature' kind.

In line with LAVR objectives, the organisation actively offered assistance to Russians who wanted to move to Russia.⁵² LAVR was particularly involved with some projects which aimed at resettling Russians from Latvia in Russian rural districts.⁵³ Its spokesmen argued against the opinion that Latvian Russians, who tended to be city-dwellers, would not be able to settle in the Russian countryside.⁵⁴ They could provide many examples of families who belonged to the Russian urban intelligentsia who had settled successfully in the district of Novgorod.⁵⁵

One of the main aims of LAVR was thus to work for a mechanism whereby people who, of their own will, had decided to move from Latvia to Russia would be supported socially, materially, and technically. One idea as to how to arrange this was to create an exchange of Russians who wanted to move to Russia with Latvians who wanted to live in Latvia. On many occasions the organisation was accused of running errands for Latvian nationalists, since it had supposedly given in to pressure and provided help to those who wanted a Russian exodus from Latvia.⁵⁶ LAVR activities were not, however, confined to supporting Russians who wanted to leave Latvia. The organisation also promoted a cultural programme with emphasis on a revival of Russian cultural traditions in Latvia.

LAVR has never enjoyed a very large membership among Russians in Latvia, and interviews with Russians seemed to indicate that many of them had hardly heard of LAVR or its activities. This was confirmed by our survey, where LAVR was one of the four Russian organisations of which we asked for an evaluation. Almost one quarter of the respondents did not answer this question, while 38 per cent indicated that it was difficult to answer it (see Table 8.1). However, of those who had an opinion about LAVR, more respondents were supportive of the organisation than were not. There were 23 per cent who fully supported LAVR, 41 per cent tended to support it, while respectively 10 and 26 per cent either tended not to support, or did not support the organisation at all. Russians in the capital were not only more likely to have an opinion on LAVR, but they were also more positive than other Russians in their evaluation of the organisation. This again probably had to do with the fact that this organisation too had its centre in Riga, and that its activities had been focused upon more often there than in other parts of the country.

More than half the respondents who came from an ethnically mixed family background found it difficult to answer this question. The same was true of Russians with a fluent or good command of the Latvian language. To them the question of the revival of Russia did not seem to be a priority. These groups of Russians were nevertheless not much more negative than others in their evaluation of LAVR. The most negative evaluation of LAVR came from Russians who were born in Latvia, and whose parents also had been born there, while Russians who were born in other republics, notably Russia, but had arrived in Latvia more than 15 years ago were the most positive. To the latter the state of Russia and Russian culture seemed to be a much more acute problem than to Russians who had never lived in Russia.

8.2.4. Other Organisations and Movements

All the organisations which have been discussed above have in some way or another become involved in politics, whether this was one of the main objectives of the organisations or not. There are, however, also a number of Russian organisations, predominantly of a cultural kind, which stress their apolitical nature. One of these is *Balto-Slavyanskoe Obshchestvo* (Balto-Slavic Society - BSO), an organisation which was founded in the summer of 1988 and set itself the task of reviving the cultural heritage and national pride of the Russian people in Latvia, of helping those who had settled in the republic recently to adapt themselves to its conditions, and to promote mutual enrichment of cultures of all the nationalities living in Latvia.⁵⁷ The organisation has, however, not avoided controversies and different opinions among members about the activities on which BSO should concentrate and about whether or not to take a stance on political issues.⁵⁸ Moreover, although the organisation was meant to keep away from politics, there were members of the organisation who, without speaking in BSO's name, openly criticised the policies of the Latvian government. This made many Latvian politicians suspicious about the organisation, and BSO (like ROL) had, allegedly, even been accused by the Latvian minister of defence of being a base for anticonstitutional activities.⁵⁹

BSO was supported by 28 per cent of the respondents in our survey, whereas 15 per cent did not support it. The rest of the respondents either did not answer this question (23 per cent) or did not have an opinion about BSO (34 per cent). This indicates the same lack of interest in, or familiarity with, BSO among Russians as was the case with most of the other Russian-dominated organisations which were discussed above.

One should also take into consideration the local variations characterising the landscape of Russian organisations. For example, *Balto-Slavyanskoe Obshchestvo* in

Daugavpils was completely different from BSO with headquarters in Riga. In Daugavpils BSO was the name of an organisation which was founded in the winter of 1991 with the aim of acting as a counterweight to Interfront and other Soviet-loyalist forces in the city; the initiators wanted to show the Latvians that there were many Russians in Daugavpils who supported the Popular Front and the idea of Latvian independence. However, in an interview in February 1993, Lyudmila Koroleva, the head of BSO in Daugavpils, told the present author that the organisation could now proceed to concentrate first of all on cultural issues, as the political struggle for independence was ended.⁶⁰ While both ROL and BSO in Daugavpils took an active part in the political life of the city there was also a third "Russian" organisation there, *Rusichi*, which did not want to become involved in politics and was engaged mainly in cultural activities.⁶¹

While there was a number of other, usually locally based, Russian organisations with a predominantly cultural profile (one of the most significant was *Rizhskaya Russkaya Obshchina* (The Russian Community in Riga), there were also a few other organisations which, although numerically rather small, should be mentioned because of their special character. One of these organisations, which was briefly referred to in the previous chapter, is *Assotsiatsiya Rossiiskikh Grazhdan Latvii* (the Association of Russian Citizens of Latvia), which was founded in January 1992 in order to defend the interests of those who decided to become citizens of Russia.⁶² To become a Russian citizen while remaining in Latvia was seen by many as more attractive than going through the process of becoming a citizen of Latvia. As an observer in *SM-segodnya* put it:

Не высчитывайте, сколько лет или месяцев вам осталось до нелепого 16-летнего ценза, не копите денег на взятки языковым и прочим комиссиям, не лебезите, не занскивайте. Становитесь гражданами России (или Украины, или Беларуси) и не отрекайтесь от проклинаемого тут славянского роду-племени.⁶³

It was thought that Russian citizens in Latvia would need an organisation which could defend their political and economic interests vis-a-vis the Latvian and Russian authorities. The organisation was highly critical of the Latvian government and initiated actions of non-violent protest which aroused negative reactions in the Latvian-language press.⁶⁴

There were also organisations with a clearer pro-communist, or rather pro-Soviet, profile. Two of them deserve to be mentioned here, as they were quite often referred to in the Latvian mass media. The Union of Communists (*Soyuz Kommunistov*) and the Society for the Protection of the Rights of War Veterans (*Obshchestvo Zashchity Prav Veteranov*) were more or less identical in terms of programmes and activities, and I shall not differentiate here between the two.

Information about the two organisations is rather scarce. They worked for a renewal of the Soviet Union and the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic. When the Communist Party of Latvia and related pro-Soviet organisations had to bring their activities to an end after the August 1991 coup, the two organisations in question continued to work for the same goals. Since most of the former communists realised that their time was up, most of them disappeared from the Latvian political scene. However, a few of the most astute spokesmen for the Soviet cause continued to be politically active, and they were most often people who had little to lose by doing so. According to one source, both organisations consisted for the great part of veterans from the Second World War and retired officers.⁶⁵ These people had lost many of their former privileges, and their future in Latvia looked rather bleak. However, both of the organisations seemed to enjoy very little support among the larger segments of the Russian population, particularly among the youth.

In connection with the October 1993 events in Moscow, the Latvian authorities claimed that the two organisations above, as well as the *Assotsiatsiya Rossiiskikh Grazhdan Latvii*, had discredited themselves by organising anti-constitutional activities. At a press conference the Latvian minister of the interior, Ģirts Valdis Kristovskis, referred to 22 occasions during the preceding six months when these organisations had allegedly been pursuing activities directed against the Latvian state by openly calling for actions aimed at renewing the old communist system and the Soviet Union. They were also said to maintain close links with ultra-nationalist forces in Russia, whose main goal was to restore the Soviet empire. On these grounds the three organisations were prohibited.⁶⁶ Members of the three organisations reacted with astonishment and fury to this decision. The leader of the Society for the Protection of the Rights of War Veterans, Al'bert Lebedev, characterised it as a serious provocation and asserted that his organisation had not committed any criminal offence. "Or can they not allow us to express our views?", he asked rhetorically.⁶⁷

Grazhdanskoe Soglasie (Civil Accord, GS) was a completely different type of organisation which consisted of people of different nationalities, although Slavs predominated. As the name of the organisation indicates, GS sought first of all to promote ethnic harmony and the formation of a civil society in Latvia. A majority of the activists were intellectuals - journalists, scientists and politicians - and they were very active in public debates in Latvia, although usually in an individual capacity. However, on some occasions the group published joint statements on what it regarded as particularly important issues.⁶⁸ GS was, for example, strongly in favour of the zero-option solution to the question of citizenship, and believed the citizen/non-citizen differentiation to be artificial. Although the group was one of the most consistent defenders of the rights of non-citizens in Latvia, and sought to internationalise the

whole issue, it did not enjoy much support in leading political circles, and was also not very well known among the Russian public in general.⁶⁹

8.3. "Russian" Political Parties in Latvia?

As seen in Chapter 2, during the Latvian independence period all the larger ethnic minorities had one or more political parties to represent their interests in the *Saeima*. Thus, the Russians were represented by 5 different political parties, which all had deputies in the Latvian parliament. Not all Russians voted for these so-called "Russian parties", however, and many Russians, in particular supported the Latvian social democrats. Over the last few years there have been several attempts at forming "Russian" parties in Latvia.⁷⁰ I shall concentrate here on the last and most serious attempt, the foundation of the Baltic Constitutional Party (*Baltiiskaya Konstitutsionnaya Partiya*, BKP, more commonly known as the "Russian Party"), which was founded in the autumn of 1992.⁷¹ In the June 1993 elections to the new *Saeima* this party and the Party of the Centre for a Democratic Initiative (*Partiya Tsentra Demokraticheskoi Initsiativy*, PTsDI) joined forces and formed a common electoral list, called the "Russian National Democratic list" or the "Russian list". However, the party is not represented in the *Saeima*, since the list received well below the minimum 4 per cent of the total votes necessary for the candidates to be eligible for a seat in the parliament.⁷² There are divergent views on the question of whether there is a need for a Russian party in Latvia, and this section will examine some of the main arguments which have been put forward from both sides in this debate. The reasons why the Russian list was not more successful in the 1993 elections will then be discussed, and in this connection it can also be useful to look at some other political organisations which are likely to have received a larger share of Russian votes.

The idea of creating the "Russian Party" came from one of the journalists on the Russian-language newspaper *SM-segodnya*, Andrei Vorontsov. In two articles in September 1992 he outlined the main reasons why he thought there was a need for a Russian Party and explained how he envisaged the programme and functions of such a party.⁷³ When Vorontsov talked about a Russian party, he did not have in mind a party where membership would be reserved for ethnic Russians:

Для меня «русская партия» - это понятие, определяющее тот объединяющий стержень, который может сплотить нелатышей на создание сильной политической организации, выражающей их интересы.

According to Vorontsov, all existing political parties in Latvia, regardless of their slogans and political programmes, were in effect mono-ethnic (Latvian).

The creation of a Russian Party was seen as a necessary response to the ethnocentrism characteristic of Latvian politicians and as the only possible way to defend the interests of non-Latvians who after the August 1991 coup found themselves without political protection. Vorontsov thought it to be particularly important to protect those who were not citizens, or direct descendants of citizens, of Latvia before 1940, who not only confronted the threat of not becoming citizens in the future, but who according to Latvian legislation were also likely to lose out in the important first phase of the privatisation process. According to Vorontsov, the non-Latvian population should take control over its own fate and stop believing that Russia, the West or Latvian democrats would come to their rescue.⁷⁴

The fear that the formation of a "Russian Party" would split the population of Latvia into two halves was seen as irrelevant by Vorontsov. Such a split had already taken place, in his view, and he blamed organisations such as the Popular Front and the LNNK and their politicians in the parliament for this:

Принимаемые сегодня законы проводят между
национального разделения по самому сердцу
Латвии.⁷⁵

Despite the efforts of Latvian politicians to give another impression, Latvian politics and political parties had in effect become mono-ethnic, in Vorontsov's opinion. He nevertheless emphasised that the Russian party should operate within the framework of Latvian legislation and the Latvian constitution. Vorontsov also distanced himself from the idea that the Russian party would become a mouthpiece of Russian chauvinism:

Когда я пишу слово «русская партия», я имею в виду
не некую организацию, выступающую за пресловутую
русскую идею или добивающуюся каких-то
шовинистических целей.⁷⁶

Instead of using the word "Russian" in the name of the party, Vorontsov thought that the name should reflect one of the main aims of the party; to work for a new Latvian constitution reflecting the situation in the 1990s. Moreover, a united Baltic in a united Europe was believed to be in the interests of the non-indigenous population of the Baltic states, and the party would seek to speed up the integration of the three Baltic states; hence the name of the party: the Baltic Constitutional Party. However, Vorontsov left no doubt that the party was in effect a party for Russians:

Всем нам следует прежде всего помнить о том, что
мы принадлежим к одной общине - с одинаковыми
проблемами, бедами и требованиями. (...) Русская
община должна ощутить себя силой.⁷⁷

Vorontsov had quite clear ideas about how Russians should behave in the difficult situation in which they now found themselves. One of the slogans he advocated was "loyalty in return for rights" (*loyal'nost' v obmen na prava*). As long as

Russians were given the same political and economic opportunities as the indigenous population, they should, in Vorontsov's opinion, be loyal towards a democratic Latvian state and obey its laws. However, if they were treated unfairly, as second-class citizens, Russians should use all possible legal means to express their disloyalty towards such a nationalist authoritarian regime. Possible methods of expressing such disloyalty could include various forms of political protests, strikes and demonstrations, the export of capital out of the state, and so on. The strongest way of expressing disloyalty towards the regime would, according to Vorontsov, be to take the citizenship of a neighbouring state. This would cause instability in Latvia and could even threaten its independence.⁷⁸

According to Mikhail Gavrilov, leader of PTsDI, by the winter of 1993 the consolidation of the Russian part of the population had only just begun. In his opinion, it had started

как раз потому, что латышская община как бы
вытеснила нелатышей из своей среды.⁷⁹

Gavrilov hoped that Russians would vote for "their" parties, but he thought that taking into account the heterogeneous character of the Russian population, and particularly of the relatively small group of Russian citizens who would be able to vote in the elections, it would be better to have at least two "Russian" electoral lists. In this way Russians could reach the goal of 20 of "their own" deputies in the *Saeima*, he believed, implying that these deputies would cooperate on questions vital for the Russian population.

There were also spokesmen for the Russophone population who did not support the idea of a "Russian party".⁸⁰ One of the most active critics of this idea was the self-proclaimed "cosmopolitan" intellectual and journalist Boris Tsilevich. According to Tsilevich,

(...) такой шаг означает полную капитуляцию, принятие навязываемых нам правил игры, согласие с националистической концепцией радикалов, с тем, что именно этническое происхождение является главной базой для объединения.⁸¹

Thus, Tsilevich did not believe that the formation of a "Russian party" was a constructive idea. He feared a situation where a candidate's ethnicity, and not his/her professional or moral qualities, would become the decisive factor when people made up their minds about whom to vote for. Moreover, in Tsilevich's view one should rather fight for general human rights for all nationalities than for the rights of one particular ethnic group. Tsilevich argued that the formation of a strong Russian party would show that Russians had accepted the ethnic division of society and that their main concern had now become to make their own position in this society a little more comfortable. This could, he feared, deepen the tendencies to apartheid in Latvian society.

Similar arguments were put forward by an observer in the Russian-language newspaper *Baltiiskaya gazeta* when it was clear that the BKP and PTsDI had decided to form a joint electoral list, "the Russian National Democratic list", for the 1993 elections to the Latvian *Saeima*.⁸² Zalman Kats characterised this decision as a blind alley. He acknowledged that it was hard to be a Russian speaker in Latvia. However, Russian speakers were in fact very different people, belonging to different ethnic groups, and with different religions and ideological outlooks, and Kats believed that forming a political block for the Russian-speaking population was a step in the direction of creating a bi-communal society (*dvukhobshchinnoe obshchestvo*), which all people in Latvia should seek to avoid. Kats, thus, did not believe in the idea that "together we are a force":

Кто - вместе? И против кого вместе? И, наконец, главное: за что мы - русскоязычные - вместе? За повторение ошибок Народного фронта, нынешнего Сейма и будущих право-национальных блоков?⁸³

The Russian list received only just over 1 per cent of the votes in the elections to the *Saeima* in June 1993, and since Russians and other non-Latvians were estimated to constitute about a third of the voters in the elections, this means that the Russian list must have received below 5 per cent of Russian votes. There are several possible reasons why the Russian list performed so poorly.⁸⁴ Firstly, it can be seen as an indication that Russians did not approve of the idea that non-Latvians necessarily had the same interests, problems and demands. Few Russians seemed to believe that Russians should vote for one particular party merely or largely because of their ethnic affiliation. As such the election results were a victory for those who had argued against political organisations based on ethnic principles. It was made clear that Russians and other non-Latvians did not share the same political outlooks and economic interests, and this was also reflected in their voting behaviour.

Secondly, the Russian list may have received less votes because most of its front-line figures were non-citizens who were thus unable to stand for election. The Russian list contained very few candidates who were well known to the public, and the leaders of the coalition themselves admitted that this was a severe problem.⁸⁵ Oleg Vovk, one of the leaders of the PTsDI, thought that this problem could be solved if the more experienced and well-known leaders asked their supporters to vote for the Russian list, and thereby serve as a form of political guarantors.⁸⁶ However, in Latvia, as is also the case in many of the other post-Soviet states, people have a tendency to vote for names rather than political programmes, and since the Russian list contained very few names familiar to the electorate, many voters seem to have had doubts about whether the candidates on the list would have the necessary competence and experience

to be an effective deputy in the *Saeima*. Many thought it safer to vote for better-known candidates on other lists.

Thirdly, one cannot exclude the possibility that the results would have been more promising, seen from the perspective of the "Russian list", had non-citizens been allowed to participate in the elections. Our survey results show that non-citizens tended to take a more confrontational position towards Latvian policies and the leading political forces in the country, and the "Russian list" had a programme emphasising the rights of this group of people. It is therefore possible that the "Russian list" would have had more appeal to non-citizens than to citizens. There were, however, other political forces which were also very critical to policies conducted by the Latvian leadership. It could well be that Russian non-citizens, had they had the right to vote, would also have been reluctant to give their vote to parties or movements which saw themselves first of all as defenders of the interests of particular ethnic groups.

Although very few Russians voted for the Russian list, their voting behaviour is likely to have been very different from that of Latvian voters. There are two lists in particular which seem to have received the overwhelming majority of Russian votes. Although their candidates, in contrast to those on the Russian list, emphasised that they would work for the interests of all people in Latvia regardless of their ethnicity, the focus in their electoral campaigns was directed at issues which tended to be of greater concern to the non-Latvian part of the population. This was particularly the case with the movement *Ravnopravie* (Equal Rights).⁸⁷

Ravnopravie was well known to the whole population of Latvia, since it had been one of the factions of the Supreme Council in the period leading up to Latvian independence and also after independence had been gained.⁸⁸ Many of its spokesmen were former members of the Communist Party of Latvia (including its notorious leader, Alfreds Rubiks), whereas others had joined the movement at a later stage and were not to the same extent compromised by their communist past. The movement did not enjoy much support among ethnic Latvians, in particular because it had opposed the idea of Latvian independence.⁸⁹ To many Russians and other Russophone people, however, *Ravnopravie* was considered the firmest and most consistent defender of their rights. On the citizenship issue *Ravnopravie* was a strong advocate of the "zero option", and it emphasised the problems faced by a non-Latvian registering as a resident or citizen of Latvia.⁹⁰ *Ravnopravie* was also concerned with the language issue and the problems faced by people who did not know the Latvian language, for example concerning job security. As part of their programme they therefore recommended that language courses should be organised and financed by the authorities.⁹¹

Although *Ravnopravie* did not see itself as the representative of any particular ethnic group, it did not overlook the relevance of ethnicity in Latvian politics. In one of the declarations of the movement it was claimed that state-building processes in Latvia

had been carried out in a way such as to strengthen the privileged position of the indigenous population:

За последние два года ВС (Верховный Совет) и правительство сделали всё возможное для создания поощряющих реэмиграцию невыносимых условий жизни для некоренного населения Латвии.⁹²

The division between citizens and non-citizens was also explained in ethnic terms, as a way of putting psychological pressure on non-Latvians to leave the country as well as preventing them from taking part in the elections to the *Saeima*. *Ravnopravie* believed that confidence in the future of all national groups in Latvia could not be established without pursuing policies of national concord; such policies were seen as the only way of solving the national question in Latvia.⁹³

The second political movement which enjoyed substantial support among Russian voters was the Latvian Support Foundation (*Latvijas Atbalstu Fonds*), which was founded in November 1992 by the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jānis Jurkāns. The foundation, which also went under the name of "Jurkāns's Foundation", was set up as a charity which would sponsor specific projects aimed at solving some of the major problems of the country.⁹⁴ Its financial means were to come from various firms in Latvia which were sympathetic to the activities of the foundation. The greater part of these firms were owned by non-Latvians.

In January 1993 it became clear that Jurkāns intended to run for the elections to the *Saeima* and that his foundation would draft a political programme and present a list of candidates. The list was called "Concord for Latvia - Rebirth for the Economy" (*Saskaņa Latvijai - atdzimšana tautsaimniecībai*), and its programme seemed to appeal first of all to non-Latvian voters. The main slogan of the movement was "Food, Heating and Security for Every Inhabitant of Latvia"⁹⁵, and although the movement was in favour of a restoration of the interwar Republic of Latvia, it advocated inclusive citizenship legislation and harmony among the various nationalities living in the republic. The group was in a much better financial position than BKP, PTsDI and *Ravnopravie*, supported as it was by donations from prosperous Latvian firms. The connection between the foundation and Latvian business was a factor which was also exploited by other groups when they were trying to persuade the electorate that their position was more independent, as they were not involved in financial speculations. However, Jurkāns and his companions did not make any secret of the firms from which the foundation had received financial support.⁹⁶

While the Russian National Democratic List received only an insignificant share of the votes in the June 1993 elections, both *Ravnopravie* and "Concord for Latvia" fared much better. *Ravnopravie* won 7 seats (out of 100) in the *Saeima*, and "Concord for Latvia" won 13, with respectively 6 and 12 per cent of the votes.⁹⁷ The election

results also showed great regional differences. In Latgale, where a larger proportion of the population is Russian, the "Russian list" obtained almost 3 per cent, *Ravnopravie* 16 per cent, and "Concord for Latvia" 23 per cent of votes cast.⁹⁸

The turnout of about 90 per cent must be considered to be remarkably high.⁹⁹ It implies that a clear majority of Russian citizens took part in the elections. The election results further indicate that although a considerable share of the Russian electorate gave their vote to *Ravnopravie*, the "Concord for Latvia" list most probably received a much larger share of Russian votes. The political past of *Ravnopravie* prevented many Russians, and also those who in principle agreed with the new programme of the movement, from voting for the list. Politicians from *Ravnopravie* who had not only opposed Latvian independence, but also supported the military intervention in January 1991 and even the August 1991 coup, still occupied leading positions in the movement, and were not seen as trustworthy by many. This discredited the movement in the eyes of many Russians with more liberal attitudes. There are, however, strong reasons to suggest that *Ravnopravie* would have obtained a greater proportion of Russian votes had non-citizens enjoyed the right to vote in the elections. Russian non-citizens, as a rule, were more likely to identify with the Soviet past and less inclined to see Latvian independence as a goal than were the better integrated citizens. To many non-citizens the most important thing was that *Ravnopravie* was, like the Communist Party earlier, seen as the most consistent and uncompromised defender of the rights of the Russian-speaking population.

If Jurkāns's foundation enjoyed more support, this can partly be explained by the personal authority and popularity of the leader himself, particularly among non-Latvians. In his capacity as Latvia's minister of foreign affairs, Jurkāns had advocated a more lenient citizenship law and worked for the normalisation of bilateral relations with Russia. This cost him his place in the government, but increased his popularity among Latvian Russians. There were also many Russians who hoped that the fact that his foundation received support from some of the most prosperous businesses in Latvia was an indication that Jurkāns actually could achieve something in the economic sphere, which seemed to be the greatest concern for the majority of Russians. Moreover, there were many Russians, and also Latvians, to whom the appeals for ethnic harmony and a civil society found resonance. These people also tended to be sympathetic to the fact that "Concord for Latvia", to a greater extent than other electoral lists, contained Latvian and non-Latvian names in approximately equal numbers. On the other hand, there were also Russians who had become sceptical about judgements of liberal Russian and other non-Latvian politicians (Jurkāns himself is an ethnic Pole) who stood at the centre of the struggle for independence. Many thought that these Popular Front activists had been much too optimistic about what the future in an independent Latvia would bring for the non-Latvian population, and would not give

them their vote once again.¹⁰⁰ However, as the election results show, such sentiments cannot have been too widespread, at least among Russian citizens.

8.4. Conclusions

While clearly there is a high level of discontent amongst the Russian population in Latvia, some of which is directed against the citizenship legislation, this is not translated into organised political opposition. In this regard the large number of social organisations with a predominantly Russian or Slavic membership in Latvia gives a misleading impression of the activity level of the Russian population in the country. As we have seen, there is a broad range of institutions, ranging from religious and cultural organisations to more politically orientated parties, organisations and movements. Most of them have a very small membership, and the number of people taking an active part in their activities is also very small. Many of the existing organisations do not cooperate with one another, some even work against the others, even though the main aims are often the same. The low political activity level among the Russian population was also confirmed by our survey.

It would seem that there are a number of reasons for the low activity level and the lack of unity among Russian-dominated organisations. Firstly, Russians in Latvia are far from being a homogeneous group of people, and their historic origins and attitudes to their future in the Latvian state differ widely. People belonging to various sub-groups of the Russian population have different interests and have few reasons to unite. To a "migrant" worker the main concern may be how to avoid unemployment and feed family members; a peasant Old Believer might see the revival of his confession and his culture as the main concern; while a retired officer may be preoccupied with the problem of who will pay him a pension and how to keep his previously free accommodation.¹⁰¹ The few concerns uniting them are the Russian language, their self-identification as Russians (although "Russian" may have a variety of meanings), and the fact that they live in a post-Soviet state outside Russia. It is doubtful whether this is enough to instil within the Russian population a great sense of unity. Indeed, as has been demonstrated in this chapter, many Russians argue strongly against political organisations based on ethnicity, since they fear that this will increase the significance of ethnic differences and stand in the way of political integration.

Secondly, there is the lack of an intellectual, humanitarian elite among Russians in these three states. Such an elite, integrated into Latvian society, existed in Latvia between the world wars, but suffered great losses during the deportations and Stalin years.¹⁰² This had serious implications for the continuity of Russian culture in Latvia. Russians in Latvia, as seen in Chapter 5, did not have a lower level of education than

- ¹⁵See "Postonavlennye Verkhovnogo Soveta Latvii Respubliki - O prekrashchenii deyatelnosti nekotorykh obshchestvennykh i obshchestvenno-politicheskikh organizatsii", *Diena*, (prilozhenie), 27 September 1991, p. 3.
- ¹⁶*Sovetskaya Latvija*, 8 January 1989, p. 1.
- ¹⁷See the Interfront newspaper *Edinstvo*, 22 March 1989, p. 3.
- ¹⁸*Edinstvo*, 20 April 1989, p. 2.
- ¹⁹*Edinstvo*, 22 March 1989, p. 2.
- ²⁰See, for example, the speech of one of the Interfront leaders, A. K. Belaichuk, at the founding congress, *Sovetskaya Latvija*, 10 January 1989, p. 3.
- ²¹*Edinstvo*, 20 April 1989, p. 2.
- ²²See, for example, *Edinstvo* 13 March 1990, p. 7, where an Interfront representative defends the organisation against criticism from the CPL leader, Vagris.
- ²³*Edinstvo*, 12 April 1990, p. 1.
- ²⁴I personally went as an observer on some of the Interfront demonstrations, and at one of the demonstrations in January 1991 I approached the two persons carrying the only placard I could see which was written in the Latvian language. I asked in Latvian whether the people who carried it spoke Latvian, but they answered me bluntly in Russian that they did not.
- ²⁵Muiznieks (1990b), p. 21.
- ²⁶*Edinstvo*, 13 March 1990, p. 7.
- ²⁷From A. K. Belaichuk's speech to the founding congress of Interfront, cited from *Sovetskaya Latvija*, 10 January 1989, p. 3.
- ²⁸*ibid.*
- ²⁹See Muiznieks, op.cit., Lieven (1993), p. 193.
- ³⁰*Edinstvo*, 20 April 1989, p. 7.
- ³¹*Atmoda*, (Latvian edition), 26 May 1990, p. 11.
- ³²*Atmoda*, (English edition), 31 June 1991, p. 6.
- ³³Smekhov, E., "Sud'ba russkikh v Latvii zavisi ot russkikh", *SM-segodnya*, 21 November 1990, p. 3.
- ³⁴*ibid.*
- ³⁵*Russkii Put'*, no. 1, September 1991, p. 2.
- ³⁶Author's interview with Edgar Smekhov, January 1991.
- ³⁷See *SM-segodnya*, 3 September 1991, p. 2.
- ³⁸See *Russkii Put'*, 13 June 1992, p. 3.
- ³⁹For more details of the crisis in ROL in June 1992, see *ibid.*, pp. 1-4.
- ⁴⁰Author's conversation with the leader and other representatives of the *Russkaya Obshchina Latvii v Daugavpilsē*, Daugavpils, February 1993.
- ⁴¹See *Baltiiskoe Vremya*, 14 May 1991., p. 2.
- ⁴²This can be observed by reading ROL's newspaper *Russkii Put'* from that period.
- ⁴³The statutes of LORK can be found in *Atmoda*, (Russian edition), 10 April 1989, p. 8.
- ⁴⁴*Atmoda*, (Russian edition), 10 April 1989, p. 8.
- ⁴⁵See, for example, *Rigass Balss*, 10 March 1989.
- ⁴⁶*SM-segodnya*, 28 February 1991, p. 3.
- ⁴⁷*Edinstvo*, 5 April 1989 and 20 April 1989, p. 7.
- ⁴⁸*ibid.*
- ⁴⁹See the organization's newspaper *Korni*, no. 1, [August 1991], p. 1. Much of my information about the organisation has been obtained from this newspaper, the first issue of which came out after the August 1991 coup. The second issue came out in December the same year. The statutes of the organisation can be found in *Korni*, no. 2, December 1991, p. 4.
- ⁵⁰*Korni*, no. 2, December 1991, p. 3.
- ⁵¹*ibid.*
- ⁵²There was also another organisation which was engaged in providing help to Russians who wanted to move to Russia; the Liepāja Fund "Rodina" (Motherland). See *Russkii Put'*, No. 6 (10-16 February) 1992, p. 3.
- ⁵³See *Diena*, 11 June 1991, p. 4.
- ⁵⁴For a somewhat different view, see A. Gurin: "A ya v Rossii, domoi khochu", *Russkii put'*, no. 4, September 1991, p. 2.

⁵⁵Korni, no. 2, December 1991, p. 3.

⁵⁶See, for example, *Novosti Rigi*, 5 July 1991, p. 4.

⁵⁷FBIS-SOV-88-151, 15 August 1988, p. 38. Personal interview with the leader of the organisation, Viktor Popov in January 1991.

⁵⁸See, for example, *Atmoda* (Russian edition), 19 June 1989, p. 6.

⁵⁹Author's interview with Oleg Vovk, one of the leaders of the Centre of a Democratic Initiative movement, February 1993.

⁶⁰Korolyova admitted, however, that BSO was still dependent upon the local administration in the localities in which they were situated, and in order to become independent they hoped to undertake business activities.

⁶¹Author's interview with the leader of *Rusichi*, Boris Yudin, February 1993.

⁶²See *SM-segodnya*, 12 May 1992, p. 1.

⁶³Katin, P., "Khvatit Unizhat'sya", *SM-segodnya*, 13 March 1992, p. 2.

⁶⁴See *Panorama Latvii*, 9 December 1992, p. 1.

⁶⁵Indāns and Kalniņš, "Nelatviešu intereses: stereotipi un realitāte Latvijā", *Diena*, 6 October 1993, p. 2.

⁶⁶*Diena*, 7 October 1993, p. 1.

⁶⁷*Diena*, 8 October 1993, p. 1.

⁶⁸See, for example the "Memorandum of Civil Agreement Group", printed for the conference "Citizenship and Language Laws of the Newly Independent States of Europe", Copenhagen, 10-11 January, 1993.

⁶⁹Some new Russian-dominated organisations have appeared in Latvia after the June 1993 elections, the most significant of which is undoubtedly *Liga Apatridov Latvii* (the League of Aliens of Latvia), first established under the name of *Soyuz Negrazhdan Latvii* (Union of Non-citizens of Latvia), and is, as the name indicates, an interest organisation for non-citizens living in Latvia. However, since the organisation was established as late as the winter of 1993-94, and as the thesis deals first of all with the period ending with the elections of the new *Saeima* in June 1993, there will be no discussion of this organisation here.

⁷⁰According to one source there have been at least three serious attempts to do so. Author's interview with one of the leaders of the Centre for a Democratic Initiative, Oleg Vovk, in Riga, February 1993.

⁷¹No such Russian party existed when our survey was undertaken in the spring of 1992, and there are thus no questions about support for a Russian party in the survey.

⁷²For the "Law on the Fifth Elections to the Parliament" see the *Diena* supplement *AP MP*, 6 November 1992. The election results were published in *Diena*, 18 June 1993.

⁷³Vorontsov, A., "Pis'ma o russkoi partii - Pis'mo pervoe: Nazvanie, mesto i vremya", *SM-segodnya*, 9 September 1992, p. 1. and "Pis'ma o russkoi partii - Pis'mo vtoroe: Programma, vremya i mesto", *SM-segodnya*, 18 September 1992, p. 1.

⁷⁴See interview with Vorontsov in *Panorama Latvii*, 4 February 1993, p. 3.

⁷⁵Vorontsov, A., "Pis'ma o russkoi partii - Pis'mo pervoe ...", op. cit.

⁷⁶ibid.

⁷⁷From interview in *SM-segodnya*, 19 February 1993, p. 3.

⁷⁸Vorontsov, A. "Pis'ma o russkoi partii - Pis'mo vtoroe...", op. cit.

⁷⁹See interview in *SM-segodnya*, 19 February 1993, p. 3.

⁸⁰There were different views on this issue within the editorial board of the leading Russian-language newspaper in Latvia, *SM-Segodnya*. See *Smena* 30 March 1993,

⁸¹Tsilevich, B., "Na iskhode tret'ego goda", *SM-segodnya*, 24 February 1993, p. 3.

⁸²Kats, Zalman., "Na orekhi ot Vorontsova: Russkii predvyborny spisok - eto ne latviiskii put'", *Baltiiskaya gazeta*, 13 March 1993, p. 2.

⁸³ibid.

⁸⁴This author had an interview with the leader of the Baltic Constitutional Party, Andrei Vorontsov, in February 1993, where he estimated that the Russian list would gain about 10 seats in the *Saeima*.

⁸⁵*SM-segodnya*, 19 February 1993, p. 3.

⁸⁶ibid.

⁸⁷The organisation was registered as a movement and not a political party, since the law on political parties had specified that only citizens could be members of political parties in Latvia, and *Ravnopravie* had a majority of non-citizens among its members and supporters. See *SM-segodnya*, 19 February 1993, p. 3.

⁸⁸The faction initially had 53 of the 200 seats in the Supreme Council. See Chapter 4.

⁸⁹In the summer of 1992, 16 of the *Ravnopravie* deputies were stripped of their mandates by the majority of the Supreme Council for having supported the August 1991 coup.

⁹⁰See e.g. *Opponent*, no. 7, October 1992.

⁹¹*Diena*, 5 October 1993, p. 2.

⁹²"Programmnoe zayavlenie dvizheniya za sotsial'nyi progress i ravnopravie (dvizhenie Ravnopravie)", *Opponent*, no. 8, February 1993, p. 1.

⁹³*ibid.*

⁹⁴Bungs (1993b), p. 33.

⁹⁵*SM-segodnya*, 19 February 1993, p. 3.

⁹⁶See *Baltiiskaya gazeta*, 13 March 1993, p. 2.

⁹⁷*Diena*, 18 June 1993.

⁹⁸*ibid.*

⁹⁹Bungs (1993), p. 6. The turn-out was considerably higher than in the parliamentary elections in both Estonia and Lithuania.

¹⁰⁰*SM- Segodnya*, 25 February 1993.

¹⁰¹Mitrofanov, M.: "Prichiny bessiliya russkikh", *Dinaburg*, 11 August 1992, p. 2.

¹⁰²Feigmane (1992) (see also Chapter 2 of this thesis); Mitrofanov (1992).

¹⁰³Moreover, in Latvia, as opposed to Estonia, only citizens of Latvia have the right to vote in local elections.

9. Russian Identity and Ethnically Divided Societies

The preceding chapters have looked at the Russian population in Latvia from a variety of angles, but the focus so far has, for the greater part, been on empirical findings. It is now time to return to the framework which was outlined in the first chapter of the thesis in order to systematise these findings and put them into a more theoretical context. Instead of treating nationality as something given, which has been a common practice in Sovietology, we must again problematise questions related to ethnic identity, such as the questions of the intensity and content of Russian ethnic identity in Latvia, ethnic boundaries and fluctuating ethnicity. These crucial questions will be addressed in the first section of this chapter.

The chapter also has another and, perhaps, more ambitious aim. A recurring theme of the thesis has been the past and present ethnopolitics in Latvia, with an emphasis on the underlying principles and motives behind the policies conducted in this area. In the second section of this chapter I shall explore the utility of various models of conflict regulation in ethnically divided societies and assess their applicability to the situation in Latvia.¹ As a polity still in transition, the emerging political system in Latvia does not lend itself to easy labelling or classification. The tendencies in this area have so far pointed in different directions. What is clear, however, is that the mere size, background and special characteristics of the Russian population in Latvia are factors which have had and will continue to have a strong impact on ethnic policies in the country, regardless of whether or not Russians themselves will be directly involved in forming such policies. Although Latvia was never *de jure* a part of the Soviet Union, there is also a Soviet legacy which will have an impact on the ethnic situation in Latvia for decades to come. Particularities of the Soviet experience, which have also been examined in this thesis, must therefore be taken into account when we discuss the utility for Latvia of the models.

9.1. Russian Ethnic Identity - Main Findings

Perhaps the most important finding of the thesis has been that the Russian population in Latvia, far from being a homogeneous community of people, consists of individuals with a very large degree of variation in terms of a number of crucial characteristics, including their affiliations to the state in which they live and to their ethnic homeland, Russia. Our findings suggest great differences, regarding both the intensity and the content of ethnic identity, while social transformations at a political level have had the effect of shaking established identities and bringing former identities into flux. While it is not yet clear which form Russian ethnic identity will take in the

future, theories which have been developed in the field of ethnicity can be useful as tools in the interpretation of ethnic processes.

In the following I shall apply three models which are relevant for the discussion of Russian ethnic identity in Latvia. The first model, developed by McKay and Lewins and presented in the first chapter, deals with questions of intensity of ethnic identification and structuration. I shall use this model as the framework for a discussion of the intensity of Russian ethnic identification and structuration in Latvia. The second model, Pål Kolstø's typology of diaspora identities, which was briefly presented in Chapter 6, will be applied for a discussion of the content of such identification. Finally, I shall, by applying Phillipe van den Berghe's list of factors conducive to assimilation, discuss whether Russians in Latvia are likely to retain their ethnic identity as Russians or are more likely to assimilate to the Latvians.

9.1.1. Intensity of Ethnic Identification and Structuration

In Chapter 1 we presented an ethnic typology developed by McKay and Lewins which emphasised the dimensions of ethnic structuration and identification among ethnic groups.² Although there will be no attempt to classify the Russian population strictly into one of the four cells in Figure 1.1, it is still interesting and relevant to discuss the level of identification and structuration among Russians living in Latvia.

The findings in this thesis seem to support the view which is now most commonly held by scholars on ethnicity that ethnicity tends to be transitory and situationally defined. Most Russians have been aware all the time that they possess certain ethnic characteristics. However, while this has provided them with a sense of ethnic identity, they have simultaneously held a variety of other identifications: with families, villages or towns, regions, age and sex groups, classes and religious communities, and others. Such affiliations have been invoked for different purposes and on different occasions. Thus, the relevance of ethnicity has varied from one person to another, and for the individual changed with time and situation.³

There is much evidence that ethnicity has become more relevant for a majority of Russians living in Latvia over the last few years. This can probably be explained largely by the sudden and marked rise in the ethnic consciousness among ethnic Latvians, which required some form of response from non-Latvians in the population. The politicisation of ethnicity which took place as a result of the change of the relative status of the Russian population in relation to ethnic Latvians is another important factor. The response has, to a considerable extent, taken the form of an ethnic revival and increased level of ethnic (or communal) identification among Russians. Russians have become more aware of their ethnic affiliations, their history, culture and

traditions.⁴ Russians have also gradually become politically more assertive when it comes to defending their interests from a Russian or Russophone (and not "internationalist") position. Ethnicity has indeed become a legitimate basis for the articulation of interests.

The findings of our thesis, however, suggest a great variation concerning the level of ethnic identification among Russians in Latvia. A large number of people who have been treated as Russians in this thesis see nationality simply as a category which they have to report to the census-takers, but which lacks practical content to them personally. Many of them continue to see themselves as "internationalists" and consider ethnic nationalism to be an evil. However, it is important to stress that although ethnicity is determined by one's own self-identification, this self-identification tends to be strongly influenced by the way in which one is identified by other people. When people are treated as different, they usually soon come to look upon themselves as different as well. Thus, intensified ethnic identity among Russians in Latvia has often been a response or reaction to the Latvians' stress on ethnic affiliation which became more pronounced in the *atmoda* period.

The cultural, political and economic differentials between groups in Latvia have increased over the last few years, which has made Russians and Latvians alike more self-conscious about their ethnic bonds and interests. It could, perhaps, have been expected that those Russians who had lived in Latvia for a long time and especially those who personally gained from the changes would be better off renouncing their ethnic identity and assimilating or integrating more fully into Latvian society. Although some Russians are better integrated into Latvian society than others, there are, however, no indications that these Russians are in the process of losing their ethnic identity. Most of the well integrated Russians are far from supportive of proposed citizenship legislation, because they regard it as unfair to the Russophones in the country, and they have also been very reluctant to join Latvian-dominated political parties and movements.⁵ This seems to confirm the theory that an ethnic group is not simply a transitory association created to pursue members' material and political interests. There seem to be certain non-rational or deeper sentiments involved.⁶ It suggests that the widespread feeling of deprivation and victimisation among a large number of Russians has also affected Russians who themselves are not affected by the changes, by strengthening their group identity and contributing to a sense of collective interests, regardless of status in Latvian society. One should, however, not disregard structural reasons for this, such as the institutionalisation of ethnicity in Latvian society, as well as the additional factor that Latvians themselves are not always willing to accept Russians as "one of us".

The analysis of intensity of ethnic identity is centred on the individual, and collective identities are seen as composed of aggregates of individual identities.⁷ Let us now proceed to consider the level of the collective by focusing on the second dimension in McKay and Lewins's typology: the level of ethnic structuration among Russians in Latvia. In order to assess this level it is necessary to look at the group cohesiveness of the Russians and the ties within the ethnic group.

Our findings seem to suggest that the ties among Russians are relatively, although far from extremely, strong. We have found that Russians do have a feeling of collective identity which is based on cultural traits and lifeways, and which matter both to the Russians themselves and to other ethnic groups in Latvia with whom they interact.⁸ Some indications point in the direction of a high level of ethnic structuration. It could be argued, for example, that there is a tendency to endogamy among Russians in Latvia (resistance to marriage outside their nationality). This was confirmed by the survey, where we found that only a small number of Russians had a Latvian spouse.⁹ There are also other findings which seem to suggest relatively strong group affiliation among the Russians. Russians interact mostly in a Russian-language environment, and almost all Russians have retained Russian as their mother tongue. Their interpretation of social and political processes is formed by their selection of mass media, and since Russians mostly read Russian-language newspapers and watch Russian TV, their perception of the world and political outlooks tend to be different from those of ethnic Latvians. In addition, Russians usually live in areas where there are many other Russian speakers, send their children to Russian-language schools and, if they have not been completely secularised, belong to one of the two Russian church communities in Latvia.

However, the fact that Russians tend to distinguish between themselves and ethnic Latvians does not necessarily imply that ethnicity is the most salient factor for group formation. There are also indications that the boundaries between communal groups in Latvia do not so much go between the ethnic groups living there, but rather between two socio-linguistic communities: the Latvians and the Russophone population. However, the latter is numerically and culturally dominated by ethnic Russians, so that many of the smaller ethnic groups living in Latvia have adopted many of the cultural traits of the Russians, most importantly the language. It must be stressed that the majority of those who live in Latvia and are neither Latvians or Russians are eastern Slavs and, thus, belong to ethnic groups which culturally are closer to the Russians than to the Latvians. There are several findings showing that most Russians do not differentiate so strongly between a Russian and a Ukrainian or a Belarusian. Although, as was stated above, Russians rarely find a Latvian spouse, they do not necessarily prefer fellow Russians to other eastern Slavs when they choose a partner to marry. It could, of course, be argued that these Slavs to a considerable extent have been

russified in Latvia, and that their official ethnicity does not reflect their ethnic identification. One could, when taking such considerations into account, perhaps further argue that the Russian-speaking population should be defined as a distinctive ethnic group.

There are, however, several arguments against doing so. Although the Russophone population has some of the features of an ethnic group, there are also signs that more narrowly defined ethnicity is in the process of becoming a more relevant marker for some of these dispersed ethnic groups, and that ethnic boundaries in the future will be more clearly defined and become of greater importance.¹⁰ This also affects the Russian population. The ethnic revival in the post-Soviet states has, as already noted, made many people, to whom ethnicity was only something they reported to census takers but without much significance for their actual life, more interested in finding their roots and taking up the traditions and learning the language of their own ethnic group. One result is that group ties within the ethnic groups are in the process of being strengthened. Interaction and organisation between co-ethnics also seem to acquire a greater significance. Ethnicity among smaller ethnic groups has already become more important in organisational life in Latvia.

The ethnic revival has also affected the Russians. A number of Russian organisations have emerged on Latvia's cultural and political scene. However, while most other ethnic groups define their membership in strictly ethnic terms, Russian organisations are normally open to representatives of all nationalities who share a sense of affiliation with Russian culture. The numerical dominance of ethnic Russians in such organisations is evident, but there are also people who officially belong to other ethnic groups who have joined these Russian organisations. In this respect the Russian ethnos is open and inclusive, which can probably be explained by the lack of a sense of threat to the survival of the Russian ethnos which often manifests itself among smaller ethnic groups, including the Latvians, and which makes them more defensive and closed to "outsiders". At present it has become more urgent for Russian activists to define the content of Russian ethnic identity than to define strict group boundaries.

The Latvian authorities also have some influence in determining the structuration of ethnic groups in Latvia. Ethnic or communal groups tend to be politicised through policies which have diverging effects on the ethnic groups living in the state. As Ted Robert Gurr notes:

In general, any actions or policies that seem likely to alter the balance of power and well-being among groups provide one or both affected parties with an impetus to conflict, the disadvantaged seeking to improve their lot, the advantaged aiming to consolidate theirs.¹¹

With the political changes that have taken place in Latvia and the rest of the former Soviet Union, the political and economic status of both Latvians and Russians would

be affected by any change of policies, whether the new policies were designed specifically to protect or improve the status of a certain group or not. In Latvia the authorities have taken measures explicitly aimed at improving the status of ethnic Latvians, who are thought to have been discriminated against during the period of Soviet rule in Latvia. This has had the effect that ethnicity, or communality, has indeed become politicised in Latvia in the period which has been studied in this thesis. There can be no doubt that Russians in Latvia have suffered from a relative deterioration in their living conditions in relation to the Latvians in Latvia since the *atmoda* (awakening) got underway. Such developments have induced a higher level of ethnic (or communal) structuration among the Russians and Russophones.

Latvian politicians have tended to be more reluctant to deal with a great Russophone group with strong internal ties and with great political and economic claims than with smaller groups of ethnic minorities. This is likely to have been one of the reasons why the Latvian authorities have been so active in supporting the establishment of national cultural organisations for smaller minorities who formerly tended to identify with the Russians or the Russophones, such as the Jews, the Poles, Belarusians, Ukrainians, etc.¹² They have also had some success in establishing institutional links between themselves and such organisations. The authorities have, however, been less enthusiastic about, and often shown signs of ignoring, the more politicised organisations which have a strong support base among the ethnic minorities, and particularly organisations which have expressed objections against the nationalities policies being conducted in Latvia.

The institutionalisation of ethnicity in Latvia through the practice of officially registering nationality in passports and other official documents has resulted in attention being focused on ethnicity rather than on other forms of group formation, with the result that ethnicity has become one of the most important identifying factors. The recurrent practice of stressing the dramatic changes which have taken place in the proportion of ethnic Latvians in Latvia has also contributed to this phenomenon. Such practices work against assimilation of ethnic minorities to the Latvians and can thus strengthen the boundaries between Latvians on the one hand and the other nationalities living in Latvia on the other. This further impedes national integration across ethnic divisions.

9.1.2. The Content of Russian Identity in Latvia

While McKay and Lewins focus on the important question of the intensity of ethnic identification and structuration, one cannot discuss the question of Russian identity in Latvia without going into more detail regarding the content of this identity.

As has been suggested throughout this thesis, being "Russian" has meant and continues to mean different things to different people. Pål Kolstø's typology of Russian diaspora identities, which was introduced in Chapter 6, seems in this respect to be very relevant.¹³ We referred in that chapter to Kolstø's distinction between the cultural and political dimensions of identity, and pointed to Kolstø's emphasis on the political dimension which scholarly works on the subject have had a tendency to ignore.

What Pål Kolstø understands by political identity, or 'political loyalty', which is the concept he uses, has less to do with political sympathies and attitudes than with the recognition of belonging to a political structure, whether this structure actually exists at present or not. In Chapter 6 some of the of political "identity options" open to Russians were presented. Russians have the option of continued political loyalty towards the historic fatherland, they can identify with their state of residence, or they can seek to create a state of their own.¹⁴

Cultural identity can also take various forms. Russians can first of all retain (or regain) a traditional Russian self-understanding. It should, however, be emphasised that culture is not a static concept, and what Russians understand by traditional Russian culture is likely to vary considerably over time and from person to person. Russians can also seek to adopt the culture of the dominant nationality, the Latvians. In order to do so they would first have to adopt the Latvian language, preferably making it the mother tongue of their children. They could do so through sending their children to Latvian-language schools, which could speed up assimilation processes. As a third alternative, Russians can 'develop a self-understanding of their own'.

Pål Kolstø's typology is useful as a tool for a further discussion, based on the findings in the thesis, of the different forms Russian identity in Latvia may take. Nine theoretically possible positions or 'identity options', according to which the Russian population can be classified, can be identified. These positions are illustrated in Figure 9.1. We shall now make an attempt to evaluate the relevance of the suggested categories for the situation in Latvia.

Our findings suggest that most Russians in Latvia are to be found in positions A1 or A2, while B2, C1 and C2 also seem to have a certain degree of relevance. Other positions can either be considered to be unrealistic (B1 and B3), or they are not characteristic for a significant number of Russians in Latvia.

Figure 9.3: Russian Ethnic Identity in Latvia

| | | <u>Cultural Identity:</u> | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | | "Historic fatherland" (A) | state of residence (B) | new (C) |
| <u>Political identity:</u> | "Historic fatherland" | (1) Soviet/iridentist Russian (A1) | empty (B1) | "new Cossacks" (C1) |
| | state of residence | (2) integrated minority (A2) | assimilation (B2) | integrated new diaspora (C2) |
| | new | (3) duplicated nation state (A3) | empty (B3) | new nation state (C3) |

Source: Pål Kolstø (1992).

There are few indications that a large number of Russians have adopted or are in the process of adopting a Latvian cultural identity (B). Russians still tend to have Russian as their mother tongue, they read newspapers and listen to radio and watch TV programmes predominantly in their own language, and their domestic libraries consist largely of Russian literature. However, acculturation and assimilation (see below) can take place through ethnically mixed marriages, where the trend now is that the children take the nationality of the indigenous parent and also tend to adopt his/her ethnic identity. Although a Russian cultural identity is the most common, the content and intensity of this identity seem to vary. Some seek their cultural impulses from Russia, rely on the Russian mass media and contacts with their relatives there (A), whereas others have become "Latvian Russians" who identify firstly with the Latvian territory and feel foreign when they go to Russia (C). However, there does not seem to be a common Russian identity among all (or even a majority) of Russians in Latvia to make it plausible to suggest that the Russian (or Russian-speaking) population in Latvia on an aggregate level has acquired a separate, distinguishable identity.

One will find that persons who are to be found in category B2 (but often are Latvian, and not Russian, by nationality according to our operational definition presented in Chapter 1) usually have an ethnically mixed family background. In such mixed families parents often want to help their children to upward social mobility. Some parents believe that if they send their children to Latvian-language schools, where they learn to speak Latvian fluently and interact in an ethnic Latvian environment, this will improve the future position of their children in Latvian society. Language is, of course, the first stage in the assimilation process.

While most Russians have retained their cultural identity as Russians (A), usually with a certain element of a separate regional identity as 'Russians in Latvia' (C), their political identity has proved to be much more elastic and thus more difficult to categorise. The lack of compactness in the Russian settlement makes Russians aware of the futility of demanding territorial autonomy within the Latvian state. There have been certain suggestions that Daugavpils or Riga should opt for independence from Latvia, but such proposals have never been taken seriously by any political actors and not by Russians living in these cities themselves. It has therefore never been a viable option for Russians in Latvia to seek to create a state of their own (row 3 in Figure 9.1). The main difference is therefore between those who see Russia (in some form) as the territorial unit with which they identify (1), and Russians who have come to identify first of all with the Latvian state (2). There are, however, also Russians who identify first of all with a certain region or city (for example Latgale or Riga) and do not have any strong sense of belonging to any existing state.

Our survey disclosed that a significant number of Russians continued to believe that Latvia had been and would remain a part of Russia. It is, perhaps, unnecessary to assert that the present political loyalties of Russians with such imperial attitudes are most unlikely to lie with the present, independent Latvian state. There are, on the other hand, many Russians who see Russia just as another neighbouring state and who are determined that their future should be linked to Latvia only. The largest number of Russians, however, seem to be unsettled and are difficult to categorise into one of the two positions. Their political identity over the last years has fluctuated in response to the dramatic political developments which have taken place in Latvia and the rest of the (former) Soviet Union. The unstable political situation in Russia, and insecurity about the future status of many Russians in Latvia itself, make it unlikely that the political component of the Russian identity in Latvia will end its fluctuation in the near future. It is, for the same reasons, too early to predict whether most Russians will be found in position A1 or A2, and much will depend on future developments in Russia and the other CIS states, as well as on domestic ethnopolitics in Latvia.

What is clear, however, is that the question of Russian political loyalties is likely to become one of the most important factors in determining the degree and form of Russian integration into Latvian society. Many Russians at present continue to regard themselves first of all as Soviet, or former Soviet, citizens. To many of them being Russian has only a secondary significance or is thought to be relevant only for official purposes. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union this form of identification is, however, likely to change, although it might be a slow process. The findings of this thesis suggest that Russian allegiances in the future are likely to remain unsettled.

9.1.3. Prospects for the Future Assimilation of Russians in Latvia

In the two preceding sections I have briefly touched upon the question of whether or not it is likely that Russians in the future will assimilate to the Latvians. In this section I will attempt a more thoroughgoing analysis of the prospects for such assimilation. Before this discussion there should be a brief clarification of the concept of 'assimilation' and the related, but not identical, concept of 'acculturation'. The latter concept is usually defined as the modification of the culture of a group through contacts with other groups. It implies the acquisition or exchange of cultural traits.¹⁵ Assimilation, on the other hand, involves an originally distinct group losing its subjective identity and becoming absorbed in the social structure of another group.¹⁶ Acculturation is typically the first of the assimilative processes to occur, and acculturation is, indeed, a necessary condition for assimilation. However, complete assimilation involves more than acquiring the language the moral and religious ideas and the customs of the dominant group. A subjective element is involved - a feeling of identity with the core society. Thus, assimilation occurs when the core society becomes an important positive referent for members of the ethnic group in question.

The following is an attempt to assess the prospects for assimilation of Russians in Latvia by pointing to a number of conditions conducive to assimilation and discussing whether or not such conditions are present in Latvia. Philippe van den Berghe has presented a list of conditions which he argues are favourable for assimilation. Some additional factors which are of importance for the special case of Latvia will also be presented. Van den Berghe employs a reductionist model of assimilation, assuming that individuals make 'selfish cost/benefit calculations based on alternative strategies of ethnic nepotism versus assimilation'.¹⁷ The question of assimilation tends to involve a tension between what van den Berghe calls the ethnically centripetal force of kin selection and the centrifugal force of fitness maximisation through other means. Assimilation takes place, according to van den Berghe, when the balance favours the centrifugal force.

The first factor conducive for assimilation listed by van den Berghe is related to the physical features of the ethnic groups. According to van den Berghe, the greater the phenotypic resemblance between groups, the more likely assimilation is to take place. Groups that are more or less indistinguishable from the dominant group are more readily accepted than groups looking very different from this group.

Not much material and data is available to evaluate the physical resemblance between Russians and Latvians. Many people, both Russians and Latvians, claim that they can easily discern a Russian from a Latvian without knowing the person. Russians and Latvians are therefore not completely indistinguishable. However, it seems that differences in dressing, hair-style, make-up and conduct more often act as criteria for

identification than physical features or phenotype. The relatively large number of mixed marriages in Latvia implies that few people can be regarded as 'pure' Russians or Latvians. Identification of a person's nationality based on physical features is not always an easy task, and if a person speaks the Latvian language without a Russian accent, he and she will automatically be regarded as Latvian, regardless of a 'Slavic' appearance. The physical differences between Russians and Latvians can therefore not be seen as a major obstacle to assimilation.

Assimilation becomes more likely the greater the cultural similarity between the groups, according to the second point in van den Berghe's list. Such a similarity makes it easier for subordinate groups to acculturate, which, as was argued above, is a precondition for assimilation. Culturally similar groups also tend to be more easily accepted by the dominant group. There are, indeed, evident cultural differences between Russians and Latvians in Latvia, to which both groups tend to assign considerable significance. Most importantly, there is the difference of language. Particularly the Latvians, but also many Russians in Latvia, attach more significance to language than to any other cultural characteristics. In order to assimilate, Russians need not only to learn the Latvian language - we saw that only a minority of the Russians have a good command of the Latvian language - but it also needs to work as their native tongue. The overall majority of Russians consider Russian, and only Russian, to be their mother tongue. Even if a greater proportion of Russians are likely to learn Latvian in the future, this does not necessarily mean that Russians will be more likely to assimilate. It has already been argued that while many Latvians became fluent in Russian as knowledge of that language was a requirement for upward social mobility, only very few of them lost their native language or their ethnic identity as a result, and there is no reason to assume that Russians necessarily will be very different.

It is well known that the long history of coexistence in Latvia has not obliterated other cultural differences between Russians and Latvians either. The importance of religious affiliation should not be underestimated, even in the rather secularised Latvian society of today. Although most Russians, as our survey indicates, do not visit the Church on a regular basis, the norms and traditions of Orthodoxy will undoubtedly continue to have an impact on the identity of Russians. Russians and Latvians also have different traditions in literature and folklore, in way of living and social norms. It is on the other hand important to stress that culture is in a constant state of flux, and the content of both Russian and Latvian culture has changed and will continue to change in the future.¹⁸ At present, however, there are few signs of cultural assimilation among Russians, except among people from an ethnically mixed family background, and the tendency over recent years has been that the number of mixed marriages has fallen. An important question is to what extent Russians will be able and willing to preserve their specific cultural traits if the pull towards assimilation is strong. This question will,

however, depend on factors to be discussed below. The conclusion must be that the cultural differences between Russians and Latvians are of such an order that, seen in isolation, they are likely to work against assimilation.

The next factor in van den Berghe's list of factors favouring assimilation concerns the size of the ethnic group in question. The smaller the group is in relation to the rest of the population, the more likely assimilation is to take place. With more than 30 per cent of the population of Latvia, Russians make up a large and visible minority as seen both from the point of view of the Latvians as well as the Russians themselves. Such a large number of Russians would, if van den Berghe's proposition is correct, clearly work against assimilation. Even though the proportion of Latvians might increase in years to come, our survey results show that it is very unlikely that a major exodus of Russians will take place, at least in the short run. Thus, Russians will make up a considerable minority in Latvia even if the official policy towards national minorities changes. Another factor which is of importance here is the great number of Russians living in Russia. Although the extent of contacts with Russians in Russia will depend on, among other factors, the relations between the two countries on a governmental level, Russians in Latvia are likely to be able to receive books and newspapers, watch Russian television programmes and maintain personal contacts with Russians living in Russia, which will make it easier to preserve a Russian identity while still being a part of Latvian society.

Lower-status groups are, according to van den Berghe, more likely to assimilate than high-status groups. Assimilation is likely to take place if this involves prospects for upward class mobility. The Latvian census data do not provide much evidence suggesting that the status level among Russians and Latvians in 1989 was very different. In 1989 Russians had a high level of education and were well represented in most occupational sectors. There can be no doubt, however, that the relative status of Russians in Latvia since then has fallen. This is a factor which may work in favour of assimilation. There are relatively more Russians than Latvians among blue-collar workers, and van den Berghe argues that working classes are more motivated than others to shed their ethnicity. The lower number of Russians among the creative intelligentsia, in art, culture and the media is also of importance, since the maintenance of ethnic identity often requires an active creative elite within the ethnic group.¹⁹ Further, the policies of the Latvian parliament and government, as well as autonomous processes in society, can alter the social status of the Russian population even further. Factors such as privatisation of property, higher rates of unemployment, or fewer opportunities to obtain an education in Russian may all affect the position of Russians in Latvian society. If the economic advantages to be derived from merging are substantial, there is a greater likelihood that at least some Russians will assimilate. We have, however, seen that this outcome is not automatic. Loss of ethnic power can lead

to ethnic mobilisation also among people who personally would have the option to assimilate and who would gain from planned economic or political changes.

Van den Berghe further asserts that when an ethnic group is widely dispersed it is more likely to assimilate than when it is concentrated in one geographical area. This proposition seems to be confirmed by Latvian census data and the findings in our survey. In areas where the density of Russians is low, there are more Russians who report Latvian as their native language, and/or report no fluency in Russian. The concentration of Russians is relatively high in all parts of Latvia, although there is significant variation from one region to another as well as from urban to rural areas. Compared to for example Estonia, where Russians to a large extent are confined to the northern parts of the country and make up islands of non-Estonian geographical areas, Russians in Latvia usually do not live in Russian 'ghettos'. Even in Latvian cities where the number of Russians is large, there is normally also a substantial number of Latvians. One exception is the city of Daugavpils, the second largest city, where Latvians, as we have seen, make up only 12 percent. However, although Russians in Latvia to a large extent are territorially dispersed, the concentration of Russians is still relatively high in most Latvian regions, and in most cases high enough to prevent assimilation.

Finally, van den Berghe argues that immigrant groups are more likely to assimilate than native groups. According to van den Berghe immigration normally involves geographical dispersion and a reduction in the network of intraethnic ties. Also, immigrants are normally at a disadvantage vis à vis natives and rely heavily on them. In the case of the Russians in Latvia these factors must be somewhat modified. It has been asserted throughout this thesis that a very considerable number of Russians are immigrants. However, Chapter 3 showed that Russian immigrants in Latvia had a status which in many respects differed from the status of immigrants in most other countries. Russians moved to areas where many Russians already lived, and a reduction in the network of intraethnic ties did not occur or was not seen as a major problem. There were usually no requirements about (or need for) learning the local language, and moving to Latvia did not involve any major change in the way of living.²⁰ Thus, the immigration of Russians into Latvia did not have the effect that Russians were assimilated.

In the late 1980s, however, changes in Latvian and Soviet society made it more legitimate to question the high rate of migration to Latvian territory. The status of the immigrant population subsequently changed, as described elsewhere. Thus, immigrants in Latvia became more vulnerable.

In order to assess the prospects for the assimilation of Russians in Latvia it is important to take the time factor into account. Assimilation is unlikely to take place in the near future, since cultural ethnic identification normally does not change quickly.

Time is required both for an individual to erase the memory of his or her past, and also for individuals of the core society to forget that certain other people used to belong to a distinct ethnic group. Thus, in practice, assimilation is most likely to take place through intermarriage, where a rational choice is made by parents in mixed marriages to socialise their children in the culture of the dominant nationality.

It is also important to stress that it takes two to assimilate, and that for assimilation to take place there must be both the desire of the subordinate group and acceptance by the dominant group. Such an acceptance does not seem to exist in Latvia at present, at least not at the political level. Nationality is likely to continue to be registered and written into Latvian passports, which can have the effect of intensifying ethnic identity and strengthening ethnic boundaries. This is not unexpected, taking into account the concern which has been demonstrated by the Latvian authorities about the 'threatened position' of the Latvian nation, its culture and language.

The passport system is not the only area where official policies can have an effect on the rate of assimilation. The argument that politics has an impact on ethnicity has already been argued for in Chapter 1. Legislation and policies of the Latvian parliament and government will be of major importance for deciding whether a large number of Russians will become assimilated. There are, as we have seen, many controversial political issues in Latvia, and the way they are dealt with by the Latvian authorities can affect the desirability as seen by Russians to assimilate. The attitude of the Latvian authorities to assimilation is, of course, very significant. It must again be emphasised that there is an interaction between the political sphere and ethnicity, so that the policies that will be conducted by the Latvian authorities will also depend on ethnic processes taking place in Latvian society. Thus, the factors that have been examined in this chapter, such as the size and social characteristics of the Russian, Latvian and other nationalities, will all be taken into account by the authorities when devising a nationality policy.

Some other characteristics of the ethnic group are also of significance for the question of assimilation. The cohesiveness of the ethnic group is dependent on the degree of ethnic institutionalisation. The more institutional completeness present, the stronger the maintenance of ethnic identity, and the more unlikely assimilation becomes. When an ethnic group has many different types of separate institutions, this usually correlates with a large number of social ties within the group and fewer outside the group. In Latvia Russians and Latvians share the same state institutions, and the parliament, state bureaucracy and governmental positions are not officially distributed in accordance with ethnic affiliations. In practice, however, such institutions tend to be dominated by ethnic Latvians. The most important form of ethnic institutionalisation in Latvia is the school system, where there tends to be a strong correlation between the ethnicity of the children and the schools' language of instruction. I shall not here

discuss whether the separation of Russian and Latvian schools is good or bad, but there can be no doubt that it is not conducive to assimilation.

Chapter 8 showed that there is a large number of different types of organisations in Latvia claiming to represent the interests of the Russian or Russophone population in Latvia. The large number of such organisations cannot, however, be taken as evidence of a high level of Russian participation. The vast majority of Russians are neither members of nor actively involved in any of these organisations. The organisational structure in Latvia is, however, strongly affected by ethnicity. Both membership and support of political parties are, for example, usually strongly related to ethnic affiliations, although formally all parties are open to members of any nationality. It has also been demonstrated that Russians so far have been reluctant to support attempts to establish a Russian party in Latvia. Whether this is a rejection of the whole idea of a Russian party, or should be seen more as a lack of support of the leaders or programmes of the concrete parties or as a reflection of Russians relying more on other parties or movements to defend their interests, has been open to different interpretations.

There are also a number of other factors which will be decisive in determining the rate of assimilation among Russians. Economic and political developments in Russia itself will, of course, be crucial. A politically stable and prosperous Russia would be more likely to seek to maintain friendly relations with her Latvian neighbours, and it would be more difficult for Latvian politicians to play on the potential threat of Russian "fifth columnists" in Latvia. However, the opposite scenario could also prove to be conducive to assimilation: if Russians in Latvia see that they are much better off in Latvia than they would be in Russia, they could decide to associate their own and their children's future with Latvia, with Russia becoming less relevant to them as a point of reference.

The discussion above suggests that the factors unfavourable for assimilation carry more weight than do the favourable factors, so the prospects of assimilation of a large number of Russians in Latvia in the foreseeable future look very slim indeed. However, even if most Russians are likely to retain their cultural identity, there is still the potential for a higher level of political identification by Russians with the Latvian state. This will, among others, depend on future Latvian ethnopolitics, and this takes us to the next section of this chapter, where I shall look at different ways in which states deal with their ethnopolitical problems and how these affect the political integration of the various ethnic groups in society.

9.2. Latvia and the Regulation of Inter-Ethnic Conflict

9.2.1. Four Models of Conflict Regulation in Ethnically Divided Societies

In this section I shall discuss the applicability to Latvia of some models of conflict regulation (or prevention) in ethnically divided societies. Before doing so, some assumptions must be made. Firstly, Latvia is regarded as an ethnically divided society with substantial cultural differences and with (potential) conflicts which there is a need to accommodate or prevent from developing. The preceding chapters should have made it clear that ethnic differences in Latvia are salient and politically relevant. One could discuss whether Latvia is a bi-communal society or a society with one dominant nation (the Latvians) and a plurality of ethnic groups. However, it here suffices to assert that there indeed **are** marked cultural differences between the ethnic Latvians, on the one hand, and other ethnic groups living in Latvia, on the other, that these cultural differences have been politicised over the period which has been analysed in this thesis, and that there is a potential for ethnic conflict.

Secondly, it will be assumed that ethnic problems in Latvia will be dealt with within the confines of the Latvian state. This assumption is, perhaps, more problematic. The Latvian government could pursue policies which, if not directly forcing Russians and representatives of other nationalities to leave Latvia, have the intended effect that they decide to leave. Our findings suggest, however, that relatively few Russians are ready to leave Latvia, taking into account conditions in the Russian Federation and other CIS states. Even if a larger number of Russians were to choose to leave, ethnic minorities would still make up a large proportion of the population in the country. Thus, it seems reasonable to suggest that ethnopolitical issues would not disappear even with a considerable exodus of non-Latvians.

Thirdly, we assume that Latvia will aim at being recognised as a democratic state or, at least, that it will possess the formal institutions associated with a democracy. This assumption seems plausible, since most states in the world today acknowledge the supremacy of democratic principles, at least in theory. The geographic location of Latvia, its size and its dependence on links with west European states are also factors which are likely to make the Latvian authorities interested in preserving a democratic image. It should be stressed, however, that we do not assume that all inhabitants of Latvia will necessarily have the right or opportunity to participate fully in political life. Democracy is seen more as a continuum than as a dichotomy. What is important for our concerns is that the state justifies its monopoly on the legal use of force by referring to itself as the legitimate representative of the 'people'.

Taking the three assumptions above into account we can ignore alternatives employed to accommodate communal conflicts such as genocide, forced removal, territorial partition, imposed assimilation and involuntary segregation.²¹ All the four models for conflict regulation (or avoidance) which will now be presented bear some resemblance to democracy, but I shall start with a model which in its nature is anti-democratic, despite the presence of elected political institutions.

A 'herrenvolk democracy' is a model of a state in which democracy is limited to the dominant ethnic group and forcibly denied to other groups. According to such a model, ethnic minorities are excluded from integrating fully into the body politic on the basis of ethnicity (or race). The hegemony of the core nation is preserved through denying political, civil and social rights to people belonging to ethnic groups other than the dominant nation. The state is identified with and serves the core nation, which perceives itself as the owners of the state. Such a 'herrenvolk democracy' is characterised by a system of social apartheid, and South Africa before 1990 is a typical example of a state which seemed to fit well with this model. Not only is such a model regarded as unacceptable in the contemporary world, it is also more likely to suppress rather than to resolve interethnic conflict.

A second model is that of liberal democracy. What is characteristic of this state model is that ethnicity is privatised, and ethnic affiliations are ignored by the state. All individuals enjoy equal civil and political rights and are judged by merit. Ethnic groups are free to choose whether to keep or drop their sub-cultures, whether to live apart or mix. However, the state provides the conditions for acculturation and assimilation. Integration of the various ethnic groups living in the state is sought through policies aimed at nation-building. Thus, the state tends to forge a 'common language, identity, nationalism and national institutions for its citizens'.²² The goal is a society where the citizens, irrespective of ethnic background, are mobilised into a national political community.

However, while individual rights in a liberal democracy are maximised, the state tends to ignore the importance of collective rights. Although ethnic groups are free to form their own organisations and even political parties, the state authorities are under no obligation to recognise these communal organisations as representatives of the ethnic group as a whole. For a liberal democracy to work, the state must thus be successful in its nation-building efforts, so that the most important social values are shared by all ethnic groups living in the state. Otherwise the result will often be a sense of deprivation among groups which perceive themselves as disadvantaged or have other rules for social organisation. The rules of social mobility will often favour some, but not all, ethnic groups, and ideologies of equality may serve to justify inequality where they fail to account for cultural differences.²³ Thus, one inherent danger with the model

of liberal democracy is that it is often perceived as a 'tyranny of the majority', in which certain ethnic groups find themselves permanently disadvantaged.²⁴

In a "consociational democracy" ethnicity is incorporated as a structural element in the political organisation of the state. The state is not associated with any of the constituent groups, and one of its tasks is to reconcile differences between them. According to Lijphart, who considers this model to be the best fitted to solve problems of extreme 'cultural pluralism', consociational democracy is based on the following institutional arrangements²⁵:

1. A 'Grand Coalition' in the government of the state, consisting of representatives of all the segments (for our purposes 'ethnic groups'). This is otherwise known as 'elite accommodation', since it is the leaders ('elites') of the segments who come together at the centre of the state to settle disputes.
2. A proportional representation electoral system, and a proportional system for sharing public expenditure and public employment amongst the segments according to the size of each.
3. A 'mutual veto' system, whereby a segment can veto government decisions in matters of vital concern to it.
4. Autonomy for each segment, either through a territorial government in a federal or devolution system, or through institutions (e.g., educational) which confer some self-government on the segment.²⁶

Lijphart has also provided a list of conditions which work in favour of consociational democracy, and it can implicitly be understood that if too many of these conditions are not fulfilled, it becomes difficult for a consociational democracy to function.²⁷ The size of and proportions between the ethnic groups involved are crucial factors: a multiple balance of power among the ethnic groups is seen as more conducive to consociational democracy than a dual balance of power or a hegemony by one of the ethnic groups. As Lijphart notes, if

one segment has a clear majority its leaders may attempt to dominate rather than cooperate with the rival minority. And in a society with two segments of approximately equal size, the leaders of both may hope to win a majority and to achieve their aims by domination instead of cooperation.²⁸

Other structural factors which Lijphart believes are favourable to consociational democracy include the following: the country's size is small rather than large; the elites of each of the segments have the power to acquire the acceptance by their followers of the process of 'elite accommodation'; the segments are homogeneous and isolated rather than internally divided and scattered; and there is a sense of loyalty to the state beyond the loyalty to the segments.

Liberal democracies and consociational democracies have in common the factor that the state retains an ethnically-neutral position. Sammy Smoha has argued that there

is another model of multiethnic democracy which he calls 'ethnic democracy' in which the state sides and is identified with one of the ethnic groups, and the dominance of this group is institutionalised.²⁹ An ethnic democracy encapsulates three characteristic features. Firstly, the core nation is accorded institutionalised dominance over the state. Such dominance reaches beyond the numerical proportion of the majority in the population. Secondly, individual civil and political rights are enjoyed universally. Such rights would include the right of assembly and association, freedom of the press, an independent judiciary, a multi-party system, and free and fair elections. Thirdly, certain collective rights are normally extended to ethnic minorities.³⁰

Thus, in contrast to a 'herrenvolk democracy', political and civil rights are extended to the entire population. However, it is typical for an ethnic democracy that non-dominant groups are thought to have a relatively lesser claim to the state and are sometimes even regarded as not fully loyal.³¹ The dominant group in such a state tends to fill all, or nearly all, the highest offices, and the symbols, official language, religion and immigration policy also usually reflect the ethnic dominance of this group. By combining elements of political and civil democracy with explicit ethnic dominance, an ethnic democracy attempts to preserve ethnopolitical stability based on the contradictions and tensions inherent in such a system.

After this brief presentation of each of the models, it is now time to proceed to a discussion of the applicability of each of these models to the case of Latvia.

9.2.2. Latvia - An "Ethnic Democracy"?

Of the four models described above, there are in my view several reasons to argue that Latvia comes closest to resembling an "ethnic democracy". The applicability of the other three models is, as we shall see, more problematic, although all of them have, or could have, some relevance for the situation in Latvia. In the discussion below I shall first look at the situation in Latvia and point out why Latvia could be labelled an "ethnic democracy", but I shall also give examples of features from the other models which can be found in Latvian ethnopolitics. I shall then point out some of the reasons why Latvia is developing into an ethnic democracy and why the other models of conflict resolution are less likely to gain ascendancy.

The way the citizenship issue has been resolved (or rather not been resolved) in Latvia has made some observers - in the West, in Russia and in Latvia itself - argue that the state has introduced, or is in the process of introducing, a system of apartheid designed to secure ethnically more homogeneous polities. Accusations of 'ethnic cleansing', 'fascism' and 'gross violations of human rights' are commonly directed against the Latvian authorities. If such accusations were true, one could, indeed, argue

that the model of 'herrenvolk democracy' would be an apposite description of the Latvian state.

However, in reality the situation is much more complex. While a 'herrenvolk democracy' would imply that ethnic minorities are excluded from citizenship or other political or civil rights because of their ethnic affiliations, membership of the citizen-state is based not on ethnic criteria but on citizenship of the interwar Republic of Latvia or on being a descendant of a citizen from that period. Russians and other non-citizens who do not qualify for citizenship according to these rules have the potential to become citizens with time and on acquiring a basic knowledge of the Latvian language. With a few exceptions, they are not excluded from the body politic for an indefinite future. It can also be argued that Latvia cannot take on the whole responsibility for the large Russian-speaking population which was sent in from Russia or other Soviet republics (it is often implied with russification or sovietization purposes) in the absence of any agreement between the *de jure* always existing independent Latvian state and an occupying regime. If one accepts these premises and holds that present-day citizens constitute the legitimate citizenry of Latvia, there is no differential treatment of ethnic groups in Latvia, at least in what concerns political and civil rights.

Whether or not to accept the premises above, however, seems to be the core issue. As was argued in a previous chapter, and has been acknowledged by both sides in the citizenship debate, the citizenship issue has important ethnic connotations. It has been claimed that the division between citizens and non-citizens is a civilised way of reducing the influence of Russian-speakers in Latvian society. The fact that some Russians are entitled to citizenship according to present rules cannot conceal the fact that the majority of non-citizens are made up by non-Latvians. The ethnic division is therefore a salient one. Even though it would be difficult to argue that Latvia is a 'herrenvolk democracy' according to a strict definition of the term, if one believes that all residents of Latvia should be automatically entitled to immediate citizenship it seems plausible to argue that Latvia has some of the features of this model, in that political and certain civil rights are enjoyed only by one part of the population, whereas a large group of residents are deprived of such rights.³²

The consociational model has been rejected as applicable to Latvia by the Latvian authorities, although there are some features characteristic of this model which have been applied by the state in its treatment of its ethnic minorities. An underlying principle of this model is that deep divisions and disputes cannot be eliminated and therefore should be taken as givens. The fact that different ethnic groups can have differing interests and political outlooks has been recognised by the authorities in Latvia.³³ As referred to in Chapter 4, the formation of a Nationalities Council has been provided for in Latvian legislation. However, even if such a council were to be established, it is designed only to have a consultative function. There are no signs of

political power-sharing in Latvia. Ethnic groups are assigned a certain degree of self-management over cultural, educational and religious affairs, but political institutions are completely dominated by ethnic Latvians.

Some conditions conducive for consociational democracy were presented above, and it should be clear from the list that Latvia is not a state where consociationalism would be likely to be very successful, at least at present. The only condition which seems completely to fit with the situation in Latvia is the size of the country. According to Lijphart, a small size enhances a spirit of cooperativeness and accommodation and reduces the burdens of decision-making, rendering the country easier to govern.³⁴

There are, however, many factors which seem to be unfavourable for the establishment of a consociational democracy. The first, and probably most important, is related to the size and special status of the Latvian nation. While some spokespersons from the Russian-speaking population have argued that there are two almost identically large segments, or socio-ethnic communities, in Latvia, the division is presented by the Latvian authorities rather as that of ethnic Latvians and a number of smaller ethnic groups. The special status of the Latvians is never questioned by the dominant ethnic group in the country, and there is no reason to believe that the Latvians would be willing to give up their dominant position. It can be useful to refer to the important difference between *homeland* and *immigrant* ethnic groups which has been referred to elsewhere. It has been asserted that the definition of these terms is subjective rather than factual³⁵, but although Russians may perceive themselves differently, ethnic Latvians as a rule look upon the Russians in Latvia as an immigrant population, with fewer claims to the state than those of the Latvians themselves. That Latvians would be willing voluntarily to give up their dominant position and institutionalise a system of power-sharing with Russians or the Russian-speaking population can be regarded as highly unrealistic.

Although a majority of Russians in Latvia live in cities, they live geographically scattered all over the country, so that a consociational structure based on the geographical distribution of the various ethnic groups would not be feasible in Latvia. The heterogeneous character of the Russian population has been emphasised in different places in this thesis, and this heterogeneity would be another obstacle to institutionalised power-sharing. Chapter 8 showed how difficult it has been for Russians to organise themselves according to an ethnic principle, largely because of their lack of common interests, a variety of political outlooks and different levels of identification with the Latvian state. Latvians, on the other hand, were much more successful in consolidating themselves for the common cause of Latvian independence. There does not seem to be any such common cause that would have the potential to unite the Russian population in the same way as ethnic Latvians joined forces in the late

1980s. However, the radicalisation of Latvian ethnopolitics since the autumn of 1991 has caused a great degree of resentment among the ethnic minorities and had a certain unifying effect on people who in the independence struggle had taken up diametrically different positions.

The lack of an identifiable Russian elite is probably another factor in explaining why a Russians consolidation in Latvia has not taken place. For reasons explained in Chapter 8, the Russian cultural intelligentsia is very small and tends to be detached both politically and socially from the predominantly working immigrant population. The Russian technical intelligentsia was often linked to the large, centrally run, enterprises, and such links tend to serve as a drawback under present conditions. Moreover, the lack of rewards for and restrictions set on entering into political life have made many of the more progressive younger Russians inclined to devote themselves to business - often quite successfully - rather than to pursue an uncertain political career.

At present there is also a lack of overarching loyalties to the Latvian state among Russians in Latvia. Many Russians seem to identify more with Russia or the (former) Soviet Union than with their state of residence, although, as has also been stressed, more Russians see Latvia, rather than Russia, as their motherland.³⁶ A critical question in this connection is whether Russians would have been more loyal to the Latvian state if all permanent residents of Latvia had been given equal status and full political rights. There have been many Russians who have argued that one cannot be loyal to a state which is not loyal to oneself. The Latvian argument is that while Russians might seem to be loyal towards Latvia at present, often because this is regarded as beneficial to them personally, the only chance Russians would have to show their 'true' loyalties would be in a crisis situation, for example in a conflict between Russia and Latvia. In such a situation there are many Latvians who fear that Russians in Latvia would side with the Russian state.

Some scholars have argued that the presence of the conditions discussed above are not necessary for a consociational democracy to work.³⁷ It can further be claimed that the introduction of a consociational method of segmental autonomy would increase the segmental isolation and homogenisation which again would be conducive for consociational democracy. Taking these considerations into account, our conclusion must nevertheless be that consociational democracy is both an unrealistic and unfeasible method of conflict regulation in Latvia.

There are some indications that Latvia in the future could develop into a liberal democracy, but there are at the same time several reasons why the Latvian state should not be classified in these terms at present. The most important objection would be the fact that the Latvian state is far from ethnically neutral. As we have seen, it is almost an exception when political leaders in Latvia in political statements do not in some way or another touch upon the difficult demographic position of the Latvian ethnos, and

Latvians as an ethnic group, as opposed to citizens of Latvia, are mentioned in a number of legislative acts. There may be good reasons why this is so, and I shall discuss some of them below. I could provide additional arguments here against classifying Latvia as a liberal democracy, but I shall present these arguments when I explain why I find Smoha's model of ethnic democracy particularly applicable to Latvia.

Latvia, indeed, has many of the characteristics of an ethnic democracy. One ethnic group dominates the state and is identified with the state. According to Latvian legislation, the Latvian ethnos has the status of a nation, whereas other ethnoses are referred to as national or ethnic groups.³⁸ These ethnic groups are seen as having less claim to the state than ethnic Latvians and should adapt themselves to the conditions stipulated by the Latvians. Ethnic minorities, or large segments of these minorities, are further not considered to be loyal to the state. The present Minister of Justice, Egils Levits, considered to be a centrist Latvian politician, sums up the present state concept in Latvia in an interview with the Russian-language newspaper *SM-segodnya*:

Латвия - это государственное образование латышской нации. Есть представители национальных меньшинств, признающие это государство и осознающие свою к нему принадлежность. А есть часть бывших граждан СССР, для которых это государство - чужое. Они к нему нелояльны, а часть их даже активно против него выступала и выступает. (...) Нелогично предоставлять гражданство тем, кто к нему не лоялен.

The Latvian state is institutionally dominated by ethnic Latvians, far beyond the numerical proportion of Latvians in the population, regardless of whether or not non-citizens are counted. Not only are the Latvian government and parliament almost exclusively made up of ethnic Latvians; Latvians are also 'over-represented' in local government, in ministries and in other influential positions within the state. Although there is no proviso guaranteeing a majority of ethnic Latvians in governments at the local or republican level, as had been suggested in the first Popular Front programme, there are other mechanisms which ensure a Latvian majority without such a clause. The regulations that only citizens will have the right to vote and be elected in local elections, which have been adopted by the *Saeima*, should ensure Latvian political dominance at all levels, at least in the foreseeable future.

Some Russian-speaking politicians complain that gerrymandering has taken place in Latvian politics with the aim of constructing electoral districts ensuring a Latvian dominance. Since Russians and other non-Latvians live predominantly in the cities, rural districts outside the cities have been included in elections to the city council, and such rural districts were, allegedly, even allotted a greater number of seats than their share of the population would justify.⁴⁰ If this has been the case, one would

assume that the need for gerrymandering should be reduced when non-citizens no longer have the right to vote in local elections.

The Latvian state is considered to be the expression of the national aspirations of the Latvian nation. State symbols, the national anthem, national holidays and the state language are all manifestations of the superior status of the Latvians. There are several examples of Latvian officials making public statements and identifying themselves first and foremost with one part of the population.⁴¹ The continuing practice of registering an official nationality (which it is difficult to change) in Latvian passports and other official documents can also be seen as evidence that little attention is given to nation-building processes through emphasising territorial and civil values, since the focus is still very much on ethnicity and ethnic issues.

Political and civil rights are accorded to all citizens of Latvia regardless of ethnicity. The question of citizenship is, of course, problematic. However, taking into account the specific historical circumstances in Latvia, and since most non-Latvians (except certain categories which were mentioned in Chapter 4) will have the chance to become citizens in the future, I am inclined to argue that such rights are enjoyed universally.

My argument should not, however, be taken as an indication of my support for Latvian citizenship legislation. It must also be qualified by the uncertainty in which non-citizens in Latvia have found and still find themselves, because of the lack of guide-lines regarding their rights and duties and opportunities for obtaining citizenship in the future, and the restrictions of rights which were earlier declared to apply to all residents of Latvia and which have been changed so that they now relate only to citizens of the republic. In addition, it now seems that naturalisation of citizens might take place according to a quota system, according to which the Latvian government, because of the demographic situation in Latvia or for other reasons, at any point of time in the future can reduce the size of the quotas and thereby restrict naturalisation of candidates who according to the stipulated requirements qualify for citizenship. If a large proportion of the Latvian population remain non-citizens and without any certainty of ever becoming citizens, there is, in my view, a risk that Latvia could slide into a mild form of a 'herrenvolk democracy', where citizenship, rather than ethnicity, would be the key for entering into the body politic.

However, characteristic of an ethnic democracy is also its provision of certain collective rights to ethnic minorities. In Latvia the "Law on the Free Development of National and Ethnic Groups..." (see Chapter 4) stipulates a number of collective rights which are enjoyed by ethnic minorities in Latvia regardless of the citizenship status of the individual. Such rights are, as we have seen, typically confined to the cultural sphere, and should not be confused with the extensive collective political rights and power-sharing provided for in a consociational democracy. There have been attempts

by certain nationalist groups in the parliament to change the text of the above-mentioned law in order to limit certain rights only to citizens of Latvia. A proposal from the *Tēvzemei un Brīvībai* (For the Fatherland and Freedom) faction in parliament specified a number of rights that according to the faction should be guaranteed only to citizens.⁴² They included the right not to be exposed to nationality discrimination; the right to choose one's occupation in accordance with one's abilities and qualifications; the right to set up national social organisations; the right to preserve national traditions; the right to use national symbols and celebrate national holidays; the right to maintain contacts with co-ethnics in the historical homeland; and the right to obtain higher education in the native language outside Latvia on the basis of inter-state agreements. However, this proposal was voted down by the Latvian parliament, so that these and a number of other rights are still enjoyed universally - at least on paper - by all inhabitants of Latvia, irrespective of citizenship status.

Let us now consider some of the reasons why the model of ethnic democracy seems to be the most useful in describing the situation in Latvia. The form of nationalism which is characteristic of East European countries seems to be conducive for ethnic democracy to develop. As has been noted by Smooha and Hanf:

Since nationalism in Eastern Europe tends to be integral and exclusionary as opposed to Western nationalism which tends to be open, inclusive and coterminous with citizenship, there is a strong possibility for some of the democratising states there to become ethnic democracies.⁴³

As was pointed out in Chapter 1, according to the ethnic conception of the nation which is characteristic of a number of non-Western countries and typical for Eastern Europe, emphasis is put on the nation as a community of birth and native culture. The nation's right to self-determination is, thus, interpreted as the right of a specific ethnic group, usually the dominant or titular one, to full expression through the formation of its own state. Moreover, the ethnic concept of the state was not weakened during the Soviet period. On the contrary, the continuing identification of the union republics with the titular nationality living there made the titular nation the subject in the struggle for national independence.

The historical geography of ethnicity in Latvia is an important reason why so many characteristics of the ethnic democracy model have been adopted in that country. Ethnic Latvians as a *homeland* ethnic group tended to possess a more intense ethnic identity than the majority of immigrant Russians. This was soon to be expressed in patterns of political organisation.⁴⁴ As we showed in Chapter 4, both the real and the mythical historical attachment of Latvians to the Latvian land have been stressed in Latvian accounts of the history of the country, while links with Russia and the Russians have tended to be overlooked or interpreted as something which was imposed against the will of the Latvians. Russians, on the other hand, have usually not seen

themselves as newcomers to Latvia, because of the long history of Russian settlement in, and traditions of Russian political control over, Latvian territories. To them the period of independent Latvian statehood has often been seen as a short and insignificant interruption of legitimate Russian rule in the region. Such sentiments have been seized on by many Latvians who were thereby confirmed in their conviction that Latvian independence can be secured only through ethnic Latvian dominance over state institutions.

Another factor which one should always bear in mind when discussing Latvian ethnopolitics is the dramatic demographic changes which took place in the country during the period of Soviet rule. The continuing fall in the proportion of Latvians in the republic in combination with the restrictions which the regime put on expressing most forms of national feeling indeed made Latvians insecure about their future as an ethnic group. In the course of 50 years the Latvian state had been transformed almost beyond recognition. Experience has made many Latvians convinced that a future without any threat to the survival of the Latvian nation (*ethnos*) can be secured only through political hegemony. These sentiments are often exploited by Latvian politicians in their campaigns for votes and supporters.

Many Latvian politicians believe it is their duty to ensure that the non-Latvian share of the population does not exceed 25 per cent, which is commonly regarded as the maximum share of 'aliens' which a national state can tolerate in order not to develop into a bi-communal or multi-communal society. Ethnic Latvians made up 79 per cent of the electorate to the *Saeima* which was elected in June 1993.⁴⁵ The citizenship issue is therefore seen as crucial in preserving ethnic Latvian hegemony. By granting citizenship to those who have been married to citizens for more than 5 years, the share of Latvians among the electorate would be reduced to 71 per cent, and this is as far as many Latvian politicians would go in granting citizenship to present non-citizens.⁴⁶

Ethnic democracy and the characteristic features of an ethnic democracy are usually not seen as goals in themselves, but as necessary in order to create a national state. Since it is thought to be impossible to integrate (read assimilate) the large number of Russians living in Latvia into a Latvian environment, the only way of preserving the desired national character of the state is to restrict entrance into its citizenry. There are, indeed, Latvian politicians who emphasise nation-building and integration of Russians, but they are at present in a minority. And there is hardly any doubt about what non-Latvian citizens are to integrate into: not only are people expected to know the Latvian language, language examinations require knowledge of Latvian history, cultural traditions and symbols, which clearly illustrates the links between the Latvian *ethnos* and the Latvian state.

Finally, let us also not overlook the question of power-relations between the ethnic groups living in Latvia. Ethnic democracy is not only a way of securing the

cultural survival of the Latvians, but can also be seen as a way of increasing the prospects of upward social mobility for one particular group (citizens who are predominantly ethnic Latvians) at the expense of other groups living on the same territory. The introduction of language requirements for most influential positions has been a way of ensuring Latvian hegemony over the political, administrative and economic elites of the country.⁴⁷ Some economic privileges are restricted to citizens. It could be and has been argued that Russians can learn Latvian and become citizens, and that they can then compete on equal terms with the Latvians. The problem is that Russians are likely to fall behind in the crucial first stages of the transition to a market economy. Many Latvians perceive the Russians as inseparable from the nationality which enjoyed a privileged role during Soviet colonial rule. Such a perception can serve as a justification for why the roles should now be reversed, with Russians in a subordinate position. It seems to be acknowledged among most Latvians and Latvian politicians alike that many, or most, of the Russians should not personally be blamed for the crimes of the Soviet regime, as they to a large extent were victims themselves of this regime. The collective right of the Latvian nation to political dominance does not, however, seem to be questioned by the same Latvians.

9.3. Conclusions

What, then, are the prospects for regulating interethnic relations in Latvia? I believe there are several factors that will be decisive. It could be argued that the absence of interethnic violence in the country in itself is a sign of interethnic harmony, and indeed, when looking at other regions on the same continent, and also in a post-Soviet context, it may seem irrelevant to focus so much attention on interethnic relations in Latvia and the two other Baltic states, where the situation must be considered to be idyllic in comparison. When some observers use terms such as "ethnic cleansing", "apartheid" or "gross violations of human rights" to describe the situation in Latvia, they either have not studied the realities, or they have some secondary motives.

Still, as this thesis has shown, the ethnopolitical situation in Latvia is quite complex, and the absence of violence does not imply that there is no tension between the ethnic groups living in Latvia, at least on a political level. Although it is quite common to refer to unproblematic relations between the various nationalities in Latvia, most people would agree certain difficulties do exist, although some would see the demographic situation in Latvia as the root of the problem, while others would focus on the rights of ethnic minorities. Although Latvia now is in a process of state-building and nation-building, ethnopolitical developments will to a large extent be determined by events which have taken place in the past, and I believe there are three main factors,

which can all be seen as legacies of the Soviet period, which will continue to shape interethnic relations in Latvia in the future.

Firstly, as has been stressed before, one cannot ignore the demographic developments which started after World War II and which are very important in explaining ethnic Latvian attitudes towards Russians and other immigrants. History knows many examples of peoples which have disappeared, and although it has been argued that the Latvian nation is more strongly consolidated today than it was in 1940⁴⁸, there can be no doubt that many Latvians feel a perceived threat not only against the survival of the nation, but, perhaps more importantly, against not being able to be and feel "Latvian" in Latvia. The Soviet legacy is visible in terms of the state of the economy, industry, housing and work morale, and it is natural that many see all this not only as a consequence of the Soviet system, but blame Russian immigration for many of the present deficiencies. The demographic situation in Latvia will surely continue to be taken into account by Latvian politicians when devising future policies, and ambitious politicians who look for leading positions will have to show their commitment to protect the interests of the Latvian nation.

Secondly, the special status of the Russians in the Soviet empire, which has been analysed in this thesis, is likely to impede Russian integration, because it will take time before they are treated by the Latvians just like any other nationality, at least as long as many Russians themselves do not look upon themselves as a national or ethnic minority in Latvia. Many Russians do not accept the fact that the Soviet Union has disintegrated, or they hope for some form of a resurrection of the Russian empire with a prominent role for the Russian nation. To them Latvian independence is seen only a temporary, and unfortunate, phenomenon. As long as attitudes like these are widespread among the Russian population, they are likely to be identified with the Russians as a group, and to a certain extent stigmatise them. Some Russians have lived a privileged life in Latvia, and when the privileges are taken away from them, it is difficult to adjust to the new situation. At the same time, there are Latvians who think that they, as the state-bearing nation, are entitled to preferential treatment by the state.⁴⁹

Thirdly, the institutionalisation of nationality (ethnicity) in Latvia, which was strengthened during the Soviet period, is another factor which is likely to slow down integration processes. The fact that Latvia has chosen an ethnic (not civic) concept of the nation is largely a legacy from the past, and this is reflected not only in legislation, but tends also to be almost universally recognised and accepted by representatives of all the ethnic groups living in Latvia. Many Russians, however, see Latvia not as state of and for the Latvian nation (read *ethnos* or *Latyshskaya natsiya*) only, but as a state of and for the "Latvian people" (*Latviiskii narod*), of which they consider themselves to be a part. Even though the ethnic concept of the nation has been accepted by most Russians in Latvia, there is no universal agreement on whether it is this nation or the

whole "people of Latvia" which is the foundation of the state, and there are also many Latvians who emphasise civic values as fundamental for Latvian statehood. The tension between the accent on ethnic and civic aspects in the state-(re)building process is likely to continue in the future, but at present, for reasons discussed above, it is the ethnic concept of the state which seems to have gained ascendancy.

Although ethnopolitical developments in Latvia to a large extent will be influenced by these legacies of the past, there are also other factors which will be crucial for determining the ethnopolitical situation in Latvia in the future, and I will here point to some that to me seem to be the most important. Economic developments and the success in transforming the Latvian economy are likely to be decisive in this regard. Russians have been overrepresented in many of the large, unprofitable industries which are now threatened by bankruptcy or great reductions in staff. If these Russians cannot find alternative employment and the government fails in bringing economic prosperity for its "citizens" (including residents who are, in strictly legal terms, non-citizens), the risk that ethnic unrest may develop would be likely to increase. There are, on the other hand, also those who have argued that economic hardship brings people closer together, because ordinary people allegedly have common interests.⁵⁰ If one group of the population is likely to suffer more than others, however, this does not seem conducive to interethnic harmony. Economic stability is also required for the Latvian state to take on its responsibility for financial support to the cultural development of the Russian and other ethnic minorities. Russians, however, seem to be more active in defending their economic interests than in the struggle for greater financial support for their cultural needs.

Developments in Russia and the attitudes and actions the Russian government takes towards the Russian population in the post-Soviet states in general, and in Latvia in particular, will also influence ethnopolitical developments in the country. There is no reason to doubt that many Russian politicians have a genuine concern for Russians and other former Soviet citizens who suddenly find themselves in the diaspora, and often perceive it as a duty to protect their interest. At the same time there are also forces which are more inclined to use the Russian population in the post-Soviet states as a political card and as a means by which Russia can retain influence in the post-Soviet polities. Responsible politicians are subject to constant pressure from forces on the far right (or left: the distinction is often hard to draw) to take tougher measures in order to support Russians in Latvia who, it is argued, are subject to discrimination and violations of their rights. Many Russians in Latvia also want a greater involvement from Russia, while others are sceptical of any form of Russian pressure, which they believe will only serve to exacerbate the situation. The tendency to make a troop withdrawal from Latvia conditional upon an improvement in the treatment of Russian residents in the country is an indication that the Russian president and government have

not, in reality, fully recognised Latvian independence, which could cause distrust among Latvians about the loyalty of Russians, were a more serious threat to Latvian independence to develop. The state of the bilateral relations between Russia and Latvia is therefore likely to be of great importance.

The West has only limited opportunities to influence ethnopolitical developments in Latvia, but these opportunities should also be considered in a discussion of what will determine future Latvian ethnopolitics. Leading political forces in Latvia have more than once expressed their intention to seek a closer Latvian integration into European economic and political structures, and in order to do so they seem to be determined to comply with certain standards for the treatment of ethnic minorities. Citizenship legislation, for example, is subject to evaluation by the Council of Europe. One of the problems in this respect is insufficient familiarity with the Latvian ethnic scene among many European politicians, so that European recommendations do not always consider the particularities of Latvian and Soviet history. Without intimate knowledge of the unique ethnopolitical situation in Latvia, there is the danger that so-called expert missions may become discredited in the eyes both of the Latvian authorities and minority groups in Latvia, or their findings exploited by the same groups. Another problem is that it is not possible for the international community to find universally applicable norms for how to deal with ethnic issues, and many western countries themselves have ethnic minority problems which they have not been able to solve.

As we have seen, there are many factors which to various degrees will determine future ethnopolitical developments in Latvia, and many of these factors will not, or will only indirectly, be influenced by the Russian population itself. Russians in Latvia have to live with the legacies of the past, and they can, of course, not be expected to have a major impact on political developments in Russia or the rest of Europe. With the, at least temporarily, limited opportunities for most Russians to participate in political life in Latvia, their impact on political developments there may also be restricted. However, whatever the political situation and conditions for Russians in Latvia, there will, on an individual level, be a number of decisions to be made for each Russian. Some of the most important of these for many Russians are whether to stay in Latvia, or perhaps leave the country; whether to opt for citizenship of Latvia, for Russian citizenship, or not to opt for any citizenship at all; whether to join political or social organisations or movements, or to stay outside politics; whether to learn the Latvian language and try to integrate into Latvian society; and how to define their personal relationship with Russia. In this thesis I have discussed some of the factors which are likely to determine the choice the individual makes to these questions. It is, however, also important to stress that the choices Russians make on an aggregate

level are likely to affect the ethnopolitical situation in Latvia, and thereby the conditions under which Russians there are going to live in the future.

¹The discussion of the models is partly based on the Cambridge project "Ethnicity and Citizenship in the Baltic States" where I worked as research assistant under Dr. Graham Smith. See G. Smith (ed.) (1994b); and Smith, Aasland and Mole (1994).

²It should be emphasised that in this thesis I have chosen to use the terms "ethnic group" and "nationality", which I shall also do in this chapter. See Chapter 1.

³See J. Okumora (1981).

⁴See Apine (1994), p. 128.

⁵Smith, Aasland and Mole, op.cit.

⁶See W. A. Douglass (1988).

⁷A. D. Smith (1993), p. 28.

⁸See Gurr (1993), chapter 1.

⁹See Chapter 5. See also Dreifelds (1990/91) and Rudenshiold (1992) for different views on the role of intermarriage in Latvia.

¹⁰See Apine (1994), op. cit.

¹¹Gurr, op. cit, p. 37.

¹²See A. Veisbergs (1993).

¹³Kolstø (1992).

¹⁴I would like to remind that the first of the three options is not as straightforward as it might seem, because the concept of historic fatherland needs clarification. While some Russians would tend to identify with the present Russian Federation, others see Russia as a synonym of the Tsarist Empire, and consequently identify with this empire and its borders before the Revolution. There are, moreover, a significant number of Russians who continue to regard themselves first of all as Soviet citizens, and their Russianness is linked to the special status Russians enjoyed in the former Soviet Union. This group tends to have the greatest psychological problems with accepting the present political arrangements.

¹⁵M. M. Gordon (1964).

¹⁶Van den Berghe (1981), p. 216.

¹⁷ibid. p. 217.

¹⁸Ref. Chapter 1.

¹⁹See Graham Smith, "The Latvians", in G. Smith (ed.) (1990).

²⁰Lieberson's (1961) distinction between subordinate and superordinate immigrant groups is here significant. Ref. Chapter 1.

²¹D. Horowitz (1985)

²²Smoha (1990), p. 390.

²³T. H. Eriksen (1991b), p. 271.

²⁴A. Lijphart (1977), p. 238.

²⁵ibid. See also Kellas, op. cit., pp. 135-142.

²⁶Cited from Kellas, op.cit., p. 137.

²⁷Lijphardt, op. cit., chapter 3.

²⁸ibid., p. 55.

²⁹S. Smooha (1990); S. Smooha and T. Hanf (1992); O. Yiftachel (1992); G. Smith, Aa. Aasland and R. Mole (1994).

³⁰Yiftachel, op. cit. pp. 126-127.

³¹Smooha and Hanf, op. cit., p. 32.

³²My personal opinion, however, is that the specific historical circumstances in Latvia and the fact that most Russians and other non-citizens currently resident in Latvia have the chance to become citizens, under certain conditions, make the model of 'herrenvolk democracy' inadequate as a description of the situation in Latvia.

³³See the discussion of national cultural autonomy in Chapter 4.

³⁴Lijphart, op.cit., p. 65.

³⁵A. D. Smith (1981).

³⁶This has also been emphasised in Latvia's Russian-language press. See *SM-segodnya*, 27 October 1993, p. 3.

³⁷See A. Pappalardo (1981).

³⁸See Chapter 1 and the law on national cultural autonomy which was presented in Chapter 4.

³⁹*SM-segodnya*, 16 October 1993, p. 3.

⁴⁰Author's interview with leader of the Centre of a Democratic Initiative, Oleg Vovk, Riga, January 1991.

⁴¹See e.g. interview with Anatolij Gorbunovs, *Diena*, 26 November 1992, p. 2.

⁴²*Diena*, 12 November 1993, p. 1, *Sovetskaya Molodezh*, 12 November 1993, p. 1.

⁴³Smoha and Hanf, *ibid.*, p. 32.

⁴⁴See Esman (1985).

⁴⁵*SM-segodnya*, 30 November 1993, p. 1.

⁴⁶*ibid.*

⁴⁷Private business, however, seems to be controlled by Russians and other non-Latvians. They have here found a niche. This has made some Latvian politicians complain not only that much of the economic activities in Latvia are controlled by the (Russian-dominated) mafia, but also that Latvians should have certain privileges also in the economic sphere. This view was expressed by A. Ručs in an interview with this author in February 1993. Such views seem to be held only by a minority of Latvian politicians, however, and should not be confused with the official political line in the country.

⁴⁸Brubaker (1994), p. 77.

⁴⁹Such views were expressed by Andrejs Ručs, the notorious head of the Vidzeme District Council and one of the leaders of the *Tēvzeme un Brīvība* party, in an interview with this author in Riga, February 1991.

⁵⁰See e.g. Apine (1994).

Appendix 1: Survey Methodology

Three different institutions were involved in the survey: The Latvian sociological firm SOCIO, The Technological University of the Russian Society of Latvia (ROL) and the University of Glasgow. The survey design had therefore to be adjusted to the needs and requirements of all three institutions. The wording of the questionnaire is reproduced in Appendix 2. Since the institutions differed somewhat regarding the particular areas of interest to their research, some of the questions were included in the questionnaire because of a request from one or both of the two other institutions, although they have not been considered to be relevant for a thorough analysis in this thesis.

A number of important decisions were made in order to ensure a representative sample and valid survey results:

1. A pilot survey was carried out on 10 respondents in order to test the prepared questionnaire; and some corrections were introduced in order to clarify a few questions.
2. The sample design was based on the census of 1989 which gave detailed information about the distribution of different nationalities living in the various administrative districts of Latvia at that time. The census was seen as adequately reliable for sampling purposes, and it represented the most up-to-date source of information about the population to which we had access.
3. Since we did not have the financial means to carry out the survey in all the administrative units of Latvia, we had to make a selection of geographical units. This selection should reflect the distribution of Russians in Latvia in terms of type of settlement (rural/urban), density of Russians in the area and special historical circumstances. Since the great majority of Russians in Latvia (67 per cent) live in one of the seven largest cities (which are all independent administrative units), it was natural to include all these cities in the survey. In the subsequent analysis we chose to keep the capital separate, due to its size and particularities. The Latgalian cities of Daugavpils and Rezekne were treated as one unit in the analysis because of the historical role of Latgale which distinguishes this region from other areas of Latvia and because of the density of Russians (Russians making up more than 50 per cent of the population in both cities). In the analysis the four remaining large towns have been referred to as 'other cities'. The rural districts (which include smaller cities) were selected according to similar principles. We decided that six rural districts would suffice. Two of them should be in Latgale (Daugavpils and Kraslava) because of the regional factors mentioned above, the other four were to be selected according to the principle of density of Russians in the respective district. Two districts were selected where

Russians made up from 10 to 30 per cent of the total district population (Riga and Valka), the other two were districts where they made up less than 10 per cent (Ventspils and Talsi).

4. The number of respondents in each city or district was chosen so that there would be a representative distribution of respondents in each unit which would reflect the distribution in Latvia as a whole when taking into consideration the factors mentioned above. Since 48 per cent of all Russians live in Riga, 48 per cent of the respondents should also be selected from this city. Similarly, since about 10 per cent of Russians in Latvia live in the rural districts of Latgale, the percentage of respondents in our survey from such districts should be the same, and they were distributed in accordance with the size of the Russian population in the two selected districts.¹ The number of questionnaires was originally much larger (more than 2000), due to the specific interests of the researchers in SOCIO. They required a larger number of respondents in some of the cities where they carried out case studies. The final sample which is used in this survey consists of 591 respondents, and they were selected randomly out of this larger number by the computer, taking into account not only the geographical distribution of the respondents, but also their age and sex distribution. The number is large enough to compare the different types of settlement, although the number of respondents in rural areas where less than 10 per cent of the population are Russians is too small to be treated separately, so that in the analysis we normally make a distinction only between Latgalian and other rural districts.

5. The field work took place in March and April 1992. Various methods were used in order to select respondents to the survey. Most respondents were approached in their homes, while some were approached at their place of work. Since the sociologists with whom I cooperated had previously carried out similar surveys, they had more information than I had about the distribution of the population within the various geographical units. We also used local sociologists in some of these units to assist in drawing a map of the population in each unit. The selection of respondents required a certain degree of subjective judgement, since there was no information about the Russian population in each unit which made it possible accurately to establish where they lived and worked. Respondents were thus approached in different types of settlements and work places in each geographical unit. With some geographical variation, in the residential areas (never less than five areas in any unit) a system of random selection of flats/houses was established. At work places similar methods were employed. In rural districts with few Russians, there was a need for assistance from local inhabitants in order to find Russians. All in all, although our sampling method does not provide a completely random sample, it can be considered the best possible method with the available statistics and financial means, and when compared to the

population as a whole, our sample proved to be representative on all important parameters.

6. It was decided that only Russians should be approached, and every respondent was told that it was a survey among Russians in Latvia only. However, when we received the questionnaires, there were always many respondents who had filled in the questionnaire but reported a nationality other than Russian (few of them were Latvians, but there were many Ukrainians, Belarusians or Jews, while some did not report their nationality). Such questionnaires were subsequently removed, and the analysis is based exclusively on respondents who reported Russian as their nationality. There are some problems involved here which are discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 1.

7. Since we did not have the capacity to arrange time-consuming personal interviews with a large number of respondents, the questionnaires were distributed to each individual respondent by local distributors (usually students) who had received training and were familiar with the questionnaire. Each respondent was first given some guidance by the distributor as to how to fill in the questionnaire properly. They were then left with the questionnaire until the distributors later came to collect them. Any problems which the respondents had encountered while filling in the questionnaire could be addressed at this stage. All the distributors were native Russian speakers, which was deliberate, as other studies have shown that Russians sometimes do not trust ethnic Latvian interviewers and see them as representatives of the state, and therefore are less willing to participate and to answer the questions frankly. We also made a point of emphasising the Glasgow University connection, which seemed to have the effect that people took the survey more seriously and were less suspicious about how the results would later be used. The response rate was very satisfactory: more than 90 per cent of the respondents approached were willing to take part in the survey.

8. The data entry took place in Latvia by specialists working for SOCIO, with this author present only in a control function. Cleaning of the data was also executed in Latvia, before the disc with the data file was handed over to me. The data were run on SPSS for Macintosh, version 4.0. The statistical significance of all correlations referred to in this thesis has been tested by using significance tests², and if there are relationships which are not statistically significant (the significance level 0.05 was chosen), they have been treated as non-existent.

¹For the distribution of Russians in each administrative unit in Latvia, see Table 5.1, Chapter 5.

²Tests that were used are the chi-quadrat test, the phi coefficient test, and the Pearson's *r* test.

Appendix 2: The Questionnaire

The wording of the questionnaire was as follows:

ЛАТВИЙСКИЙ ИССЛЕДОВАТЕЛЬСКИЙ ЦЕНТР «СОЦИО»

ТЕХНОЛОГИЧЕСКИЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ РУССКОЙ ОБЩИНЫ ЛАТВИИ

THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

проводят совместное исследование, целью которого является изучение реального положения русских в настоящее время в Латвии. Анкета анонимная, фамилия и имя не указываются.

Просьба к Вам - заполнить анкету. Внимательно прочитайте каждый вопрос и предложенные варианты ответов. Выбрав наиболее приемлемый для Вас ответ, обведите кружком шифр. Если ни один из предложенных вариантов ответов не отражает Ваше мнение, то напишите свой ответ в соответствующем месте.

Просим высказывать только свою личную точку зрения.

Рига, Glasgow - 1992

НАЗОВИТЕ, ПОЖАЛУЙСТА, ИСТОЧНИКИ СРЕДСТВ СУЩЕСТВОВАНИЯ ВАШЕЙ СЕМЬИ:

| | Да |
|---|----|
| 1. Работа на предприятии, в учреждении | 1 |
| 2. Работа в колхозе | 1 |
| 3. Работа у предпринимателя | 1 |
| 4. Личное подсобное хозяйство | 1 |
| 5. Самостоятельная предпринимательская работа | 1 |
| 6. Помощь со стороны родителей | 1 |
| 7. Стипендия | 1 |
| 8. Пенсия | 1 |
| 9. Другие источники _____ | 1 |
| (назовите их) | |

ОТМЕТЬТЕ, ПОЖАЛУЙСТА, КТО КРОМЕ ВАС И ВАШЕЙ ЖЕНЫ (МУЖА) ЕЩЕ ПРОЖИВАЕТ В ВАШЕЙ СЕМЬЕ?:

| | Да | | Да |
|---------------------------|----|------------------|----|
| 10. Мать (теща, свекровь) | 1 | 14. Дети | 1 |
| 11. Отец (тест, свекор) | 1 | 15. Тетки, дядья | 1 |
| 12. Бабушки | 1 | 16. Другие _____ | 1 |
| 13. Дедушки | 1 | (напишите) | |

17. Каков среднемесячный доход на одного члена Вашей семьи (сумму доходов всех членов семьи разделите на количество членов семьи, включая малолетних детей) ?

- | | | | |
|----------------------|---|-------------------------|---|
| - До 200 руб. | 1 | - от 700 до 1000 руб. | 5 |
| - от 200 до 300 руб. | 2 | - от 1000 до 1500 руб. | 6 |
| - от 300 до 500 руб. | 3 | - от 1500 до 2000 руб. | 7 |
| - от 500 до 700 руб. | 4 | - более 2000 руб. _____ | 8 |
- Если более 2000 - напишите, сколько.

18. Какое из предлагаемых суждений полнее всего характеризует распределение денег в Вашей семье?

- | | |
|--|---|
| - Денег вполне хватает, специально не экономим. | 1 |
| - Живем экономно, но денег обычно хватает. | 2 |
| - Живем очень экономно, на важные покупки с трудом откладываем деньги. | 3 |
| - Нам только и хватает денег на еду и одежду. | 4 |
| - Пожалуй, денег хватает лишь на еду. | 5 |
| - Денег не хватает даже на еду, живем впроголодь. | 6 |

19. Как бы Вы оценили свои жилищные условия?

- | | | | |
|---------------------|---|-----------------------|---|
| - Вполне хорошие | 1 | - Пожалуй, не важные | 4 |
| - Пожалуй, неплохие | 2 | - Плохие, невыносимые | 5 |
| - Средние | 3 | | |

20. Допускаете ли Вы возможность того, что безработица коснется лично Вас?

- Да - 1 Трудно сказать - 2 Нет - 3

21. Как, по Вашему мнению, изменились сегодня по сравнению с серединой 80-х годов отношения между людьми разных национальностей, проживающими в Латвийской Республике?

- 1 - улучшились
2 - остались на прежнем уровне
3 - ухудшились

22. Попробуйте, пожалуйста, дать оценку отношений между людьми разных национальностей в Латвийской Республике в настоящее время:

- | | | | | |
|---------------|----------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| Очень хорошие | Скорее хорошие, чем плохие | Трудно сказать | Скорее плохие, чем хорошие | Очень плохие |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**ГДЕ И КАК ЧАСТО ЛИЧНО У ВАС ВОЗНИКАЮТ КОНФЛИКТЫ
МЕЖНАЦИОНАЛЬНОГО ХАРАКТЕРА?**

| | Часто | Редко | Никогда |
|--|-------|-------|---------|
| 23. В государственных учреждениях | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 24. В трудовом (учебном) коллективе | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 25. На улице, в транспорте | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 26. В сфере бытового обслуживания, в торговле | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 27. В учреждениях здравоохранения | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 28. По месту жительства | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 29. В других местах _____ (напишите, где) | 1 | 2 | 3 |

**СЧИТАЕТЕ ЛИ ВЫ ПРАВИЛЬНЫМ ПРЕДОСТАВЛЕНИЕ ЛЮДЯМ ПРЕИМУЩЕСТВ
В ЗАВИСИМОСТИ ОТ ИХ НАЦИОНАЛЬНОСТИ...**

| | Да, это правиль- но | Да, в от- дельных случаях | Трудно сказать | Нет, это недопус- тимо |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| 30. В получении образования | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 31. В обеспечении благоустроенным жильем | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 32. В служебном, профессио- нальном росте | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 33. В получении более высокого заработка | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 34. В приобретении собст- венности | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 35. При выборах в представи- тельные органы власти | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 36. При выдвижении в депу- таты Верховного Совета | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 37. При назначении на руко- водящие администра- тивные должности | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 38. При выдвижении на вы- борные должности в об- щественных организациях | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

**39. Как Вы оцениваете деятельность Верховного Совета Латвийской
Республики по разработке законов?**

| | | | | |
|------------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| Принятые законы хороши | В основном, принимаются неплохие законы | Трудно сказать, мне трудно судить | Принято много сла- бых, не- удачных законов | Почти все принятые законы слабы и неудачны |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

40. В какой мере Вы поддерживаете политику, проводимую Советом Министров Латвийской Республики?

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Полностью поддерживаю | Частично поддерживаю | Трудно сказать | Совсем не поддерживаю |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

41. Согласны ли Вы с мнением, что при нормальном общественном строе безработица является неизбежным злом?

Да - 1 Трудно сказать - 2 Нет - 3

В КАКОЙ СТЕПЕНИ ВЫ ПОДДЕРЖИВАЕТЕ ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТЬ СЛЕДУЮЩИХ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИХ ПАРТИЙ, ОБЩЕСТВЕННЫХ ДВИЖЕНИЙ И ОРГАНИЗАЦИЙ?

| | Полно- стью под- дер- жи- ваю | Скорее поддер- живаю, чем не поддер- живаю | Трудно сказать | Скорее не под- держи- ваю, чем поддер- живаю | Совер- шенно не под- держи- ваю |
|--|--|---|-------------------|---|---|
| 42. Народный фронт Латвии | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 43. Союз сельскохозяйст- венников Латвии | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 44. Демократическая партия труда Латвии | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 45. ДННЛ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 46. Латвийский комитет конгресса граждан Латвийской Республики | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 47. Клуб защиты среды | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 48. Русская община Латвии (РОЛ) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 49. Латвийское общество рус- ской культуры (ЛОРК) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 50. ЛСДРП | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 51. ЛСДП | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 52. Центр демократических инициатив (ЦДИ) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 53. Балто-славянское общество | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 54. Латвийская ассоциация содействия возрождению России (ЛАВР) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 55. Другое _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (напишите) | | | | | |

НАПИШИТЕ, ПОЖАЛУЙСТА, НАЗВАНИЯ ГАЗЕТ И ЖУРНАЛОВ, КОТОРЫЕ ВЫ БОЛЕЕ ИЛИ МЕНЕЕ РЕГУЛЯРНО ЧИТАЕТЕ:

| Газеты | Журналы |
|--------|---------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

НАПИШИТЕ, ПОЖАЛУЙСТА, НАЗВАНИЯ ГАЗЕТ И ЖУРНАЛОВ, КОТОРЫЕ ВЫПИСЫВАЮТСЯ ВАМИ И ВАШЕЙ СЕМЬЕЙ:

| Газеты | Журналы |
|--------|---------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

ОТВЕТЬЕ ПОЖАЛУЙСТА, КАК ВЫ СЛУШАЕТЕ И СМОТРИТЕ ПЕРЕДАЧИ ...

| | Еже- дне- вно | 3-6 раз в неде- лю | 1-2 раза в неде- лю | Реже 1 раза в неделю | Не слу- шаю |
|---|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Латвийского радио: | | | | | |
| 56. - на латышском языке | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 57. - на русском языке | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 58. Российского радио | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 59. Радио «Свобода» | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 60. Русская служба BBC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 61. «Немецкая волна» | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 62. «Голос Америки» | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 63. Радио других государств | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 64. Другие радиопередачи | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Латвийского телевидения: | | | | | |
| 65. - на латышском языке | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 66. - на русском языке | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 67. - ретрансляции новостей CNN на английском языке | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 68. - ретрансляции «3sat» на немецком языке | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 69. Российского телевидения | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 70. Телевидения других госу- дарств | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 71. Спутникового телевидения | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

КАК, ПО ВАШЕМУ МНЕНИЮ, ПОКАЗЫВАЮТСЯ РУССКИЕ В ПЕРЕДАЧАХ ...

| | Преимущественно объективно, правдиво | Когда как, трудно сказать | Преимущественно предвзято, искаженно |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Латвийского радио: | | | |
| 72. - на латышском языке | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 73. - на русском языке | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 74. Российского радио | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 75. Радио других государств | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Латвийского телевидения: | | | |
| 76. - на латышском языке | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 77. - на русском языке | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 78. Российского телевидения | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 79. Телевидения других государств | 1 | 2 | 3 |

ГДЕ ВАШИ ДЕТИ ИЛИ ВЫ ПЛАНИРУЕТЕ ПОЛУЧИТЬ СРЕДНЕЕ СПЕЦИАЛЬНОЕ, ИЛИ ВЫСШЕЕ, ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ?

| | Да | Трудно сказать | Нет |
|-----------------------------|----|----------------|-----|
| 80. В Латвийской Республике | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 81. В Российской Федерации | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 82. В другом государстве | 1 | 2 | 3 |

ОТМЕТЬТЕ, ПОЖАЛУЙСТА, КАКОЙ ИЗ ПЕРЕЧИСЛЕННЫХ ЯЗЫКОВ ДЛЯ ВАС ЯВЛЯЕТСЯ РОДНЫМ (можно указать несколько):

| | Да | | Да |
|----------------|----|-----------------|----|
| 83. Латышский | 1 | 87. Белорусский | 1 |
| 84. Русский | 1 | 88. Литовский | 1 |
| 85. Польский | 1 | 89. Другой | 1 |
| 86. Украинский | 1 | (напишите) | |

90. Укажите, пожалуйста, в какой степени Вы владеете латышским языком?

| | |
|--|---|
| - Совершенно свободно разговариваю, читаю и пишу | 1 |
| - Относительно свободно говорю и читаю | 2 |
| - Говорю и читаю с некоторыми затруднениями | 3 |
| - С большими затруднениями говорю и понимаю | 4 |
| - Практически не говорю и очень плохо понимаю | 5 |
| - Совершенно не понимаю | 6 |

В КАКИХ ЦЕЛЯХ, ПО ВАШЕМУ МНЕНИЮ, НЕОБХОДИМО ВЛАДЕНИЕ ЛАТЫШСКИМ ЯЗЫКОМ?

| | | |
|------|--|---|
| 91. | Для выполнения производственно-трудовых и профессиональных задач | 1 |
| 92. | Для участия в общественно-политической жизни | 1 |
| 93. | С целью повышения уровня культуры межнационального общения | 1 |
| 94. | Для участия в художественной самодеятельности | 1 |
| 95. | Для чтения латышской художественной литературы | 1 |
| 96. | Для чтения газет и журналов | 1 |
| 97. | Для чтения специальной литературы на латышском языке | 1 |
| 98. | Для общения | 1 |
| 99. | Для просмотра телепередач | 1 |
| 100. | Для посещения театров, концертов, выставок, музеев | 1 |

СЛЕДУЮЩИЕ ВОПРОСЫ ТОЛЬКО ДЛЯ ТЕХ, КТО В НЕДОСТАТОЧНОЙ СТЕПЕНИ ВЛАДЕЕТ ЛАТЫШСКИМ ЯЗЫКОМ:

101. Изучаете ли Вы в настоящее время латышский язык?

Да - 1 Нет - 2

102. Имеется ли у Вас желание изучать латышский язык?

Да - 1 Нет - 2

В КАКОЙ СТЕПЕНИ ВЫ ВЛАДЕЕТЕ ДРУГИМИ ЯЗЫКАМИ?

| | Свободно разговори- ваю, читаю и пишу | Разговори- ваю, пони- маю, читаю со словарем | С большим трудом го- ворю и по- нимаю | Совер- шенно не по- нимаю |
|---------------------------------|--|---|--|------------------------------------|
| 103. Английским | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 104. Немецким | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 105. Французским | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 106. Польским | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 107. Литовским | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 108. Эстонским | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 109. Другим _____ (напишите) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

110. Ваша семья живет . . .

- В индивидуальном, своем доме 1
- В своей части индивидуального дома 2
- В отдельной квартире 3
- В общей (коммунальной) квартире 4
- В общежитии 5
- В другом помещении _____ 6

(напишите)

111. Сколько у Вас комнат?

- Одна комната 1
- Две комнаты 2
- Три комнаты 3
- Четыре комнаты 4
- Более 4-х комнат 5

112. Укажите, пожалуйста, размер жилой площади, которая приходится на одного человека в Вашей семье:

| | | | |
|-----------------|---|--------------------|---|
| - До 6 кв.м. | 1 | - 13 - 16 кв.м. | 4 |
| - 6 - 9 кв.м. | 2 | - 17 - 20 кв.м. | 5 |
| - 10 - 12 кв.м. | 3 | - 21 и более кв.м. | 6 |

УКАЖИТЕ, ПОЖАЛУЙСТА, ИМЕЕТСЯ ЛИ В ВАШЕМ ЖИЛЬЕ ...

| | Да | | Да |
|----------------------------|----|-----------------------------|----|
| 113. Электричество | 1 | 118. Газ | 1 |
| 114. Центральное отопление | 1 | 119. Электроплита напольная | 1 |
| 115. Водопровод | 1 | 120. Ванна, душ | 1 |
| 116. Канализация | 1 | 121. Мусоропровод | 1 |
| 117. Горячее водоснабжение | 1 | | |

ИМЕЕТСЯ ЛИ В ВАШЕЙ СЕМЬЕ ...

| | Да | | Да |
|--------------------------------|----|---|----|
| 122. Черно-белый телевизор | 1 | 131. Мебельный гарнитур | 1 |
| 123. Цветной телевизор | 1 | 132. Ковры | 1 |
| 124. Радиоаппаратура | 1 | 133. Спортивное, туристическое снаряжение | 1 |
| 125. Фото-киноаппаратура | 1 | 134. Охотничье, рыболовное снаряжение | 1 |
| 126. Видеоаппаратура | 1 | 135. Легковой автомобиль | 1 |
| 127. Музыкальные инструменты | 1 | 136. Моторная лодка, катер | 1 |
| 128. Холодильник | 1 | | |
| 129. Стиральная машина | 1 | | |
| 130. Швейная, вязальная машина | 1 | | |

137. Есть ли у Вас домашняя библиотека?

| | | | |
|---------------------------|---|----------------------|---|
| - Домашней библиотеки нет | 1 | - От 200 до 500 книг | 4 |
| - До 50 книг | 2 | - Более 500 книг | 5 |
| - От 50 до 200 книг | 3 | | |

ОТМЕТЬТЕ, ПОЖАЛУЙСТА, КАКИЕ КНИГИ ИМЕЮТСЯ В ВАШЕЙ БИБЛИОТЕКЕ?

| | Много | Мало | Почти нет, или нет |
|--------------------------|-------|------|--------------------|
| 138. Русских писателей | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 139. Латышских писателей | 1 | 2 | 3 |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|
| 103. Английских писателей | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 104. Немецких писателей | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 105. Польских писателей | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 106. Других _____ (напишите) | 1 | 2 | 3 |

УКАЖИТЕ, ПОЖАЛУЙСТА, ИМЕЕТ ЛИ ВАША СЕМЬЯ ...

| | |
|--|----|
| | Да |
| 144. Садовый участок, дачу | 1 |
| 145. Огород | 1 |
| 146. Приусадебный участок, или земельный участок с постройкой | 1 |
| 147. Ничего нет, но хотел бы иметь | 1 |
| 148. Ничего нет, и не хотел бы иметь | 1 |

149. В какой мере Вы удовлетворены жилищными условиями?

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Полностью удовлетво- рен | Скорее удов- летворен, чем не удовлетво- рен | Затруд- няюсь ответить | Скорее не удовлетво- рен, чем удовлетворен | Совершенно не удовлет- ворен |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

ХОТЕЛИ БЫ ВЫ ИМЕТЬ ЖИЛЬЕ В СВОЕЙ СОБСТВЕННОСТИ?

| | |
|--|----|
| | Да |
| 150. Да, нужен выкуп жилья у государства | 1 |
| 151. Да, в результате безвозмездной (без выкупа) передачи жилья | 1 |
| 152. Да, хотел бы построить свой дом | 1 |
| 153. Не хочу иметь жилье в своей собственности | 1 |

154. Укажите, пожалуйста, с какого времени Вы и Ваша семья проживаете в Латвии?

| | |
|--|---|
| - До середины 1940 года | 1 |
| - С середины 1940 года до конца 40-х годов | 2 |
| - С 50-х годов | 3 |
| - С 60-х - 70-х годов | 4 |
| - С 80-х - начала 90-х годов | 5 |

ОТМЕТЬТЕ, ПОЖАЛУЙСТА, ПРИЧИНЫ СВОЕГО ПЕРЕЕЗДА НА ЖИТЕЛЬСТВО В ЛАТВИЮ (можно указать несколько причин):

| | | | |
|--|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | Сильная причина | Слабая причина | Это не причина |
| 155. Приглашение родственников, друзей | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 156. Учеба в ПТУ, техникуме, ВУЗе | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 157. Приглашение предприятий, министерств, ведомств | 1 | 2 | 3 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 158. Направление на работу после окончания учебного заведения | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 159. Переезд в детстве с родителями | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 160. Приезд по оргнабору | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 161. Остался (приехал) после демобилизации | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 162. В результате замужества, женитьбы | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 163. После окончания срока заключения | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 164. Из-за климатических условий | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 165. Лучшие материальные условия жизни | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 166. Лучшие условия культурного развития | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 167. Большие возможности профессионального роста | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 168. Более широкий выбор работы | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 169. Другое _____ | 1 | 2 | |
| _____ (напишите) | 1 | 2 | |

170. Как лично Вы оказались в Латвии?

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| - Я здесь родился | 1 |
| - Из России | 2 |
| - С Украины | 3 |
| - Из Белоруссии | 4 |
| - С Закавказья | 5 |
| - Из Казахстана и Средней Азии | 6 |
| - Из других мест _____ | 7 |
| _____ (напишите, откуда) | |

КАК ВАША СЕМЬЯ ОКАЗАЛАСЬ В ЛАТВИИ?

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| | Да |
| 171. Здесь родились | 1 |
| 172. Из России | 1 |
| 173. С Украины | 1 |
| 174. Из Белоруссии | 1 |
| 175. С Закавказья | 1 |
| 176. Из Казахстана и Средней Азии | 1 |
| 177. Из других мест _____ | 1 |
| _____ (напишите, откуда) | |

178. Как долго лично Вы проживаете в Латвии?

| | | | |
|-------------|---|----------------|---|
| - До 5 лет | 1 | - Более 15 лет | 4 |
| - 5-10 лет | 2 | - С рождения | 5 |
| - 11-15 лет | 3 | | |

УКАЖИТЕ, ПОЖАЛУЙСТА, В КАКИХ МЕСТАХ ВНЕ ЛАТВИИ ВЫ ИМЕЕТЕ РОДСТВЕННИКОВ, С КОТОРЫМИ ПОДДЕРЖИВАЕТЕ ТЕСНЫЕ СВЯЗИ?

| | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| | Да |
| 179. В Российской Федерации | 1 |
| 180. На Украине | 1 |
| 181. В Беларуси | 1 |
| 182. В Литве, Эстонии | 1 |
| 183. В другом регионе _____ | 1 |
| (напишите) | |

184. Согласны ли Вы с мнением, что хорошее правительство никогда не допустит безработицу в своем государстве?

Да - 1

Трудно сказать - 2

Нет - 3

В СЛУЧАЕ ПОТЕРИ РАБОТЫ И СВОБОДЫ ВЫБОРА, КАК ВЫ БУДЕТЕ СЕБЯ ВЕСТИ (можно отметить несколько вариантов) ?

| | Да | Не знаю | Нет |
|---|----|------------|-----|
| 185. Буду искать работу только в соответствии со своей квалификацией и специальностью | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 186. Согласен на работу с предварительным переобучением | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 187. Буду жить на пособие по безработице | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 188. Согласен на любую работу | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 189. Займусь предпринимательской деятельностью | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 190. Перееду и буду работать в сельском хозяйстве | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 191. Попытаюсь устроиться на работу за границей | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 192. Буду участвовать в акциях протеста (митингах, забастовках и т.п.) | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 193. Другое _____ | | | |
| (напишите) | 1 | 2 | 3 |

194. Считаете ли Вы приемлемым для себя при некоторых обстоятельствах прибегнуть к такой форме борьбы за свои права, как забастовка?

Безусловно,
да

1

Вполне
возможно

2

Трудно
сказать

3

Вряд ли

4

Нет,
никогда

5

195. В какой степени Постановление «О гражданстве» от 15 октября 1991г., принятое Верховным Советом Латвийской Республики, Вас лично удовлетворяет?

| Полностью удовлетво- ряет | Скорее удов- летворяет, чем не удов- летворяет | Затруд- няюсь ответить | Скорее не удовлетво- ряет, чем удовлетво- ряет | Совершенно не удовлет- воряет |
|---------------------------------|---|------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

196. В конце 1991 года некоторые бывшие республики СССР создали Содружество Независимых Государств (СНГ). В данное содружество не вошли государства Балтии. В какой мере Вы согласны с мнением, что Латвия должна была бы входить в СНГ?

| Полностью согласен | Скорее согласен, чем не согласен | Трудно сказать | Скорее не согласен, чем согласен | Категори- чески против |
|-----------------------|--|-------------------|--|------------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

ЧЕМ ЛИЧНО ДЛЯ ВАС ЯВЛЯЕТСЯ ЛАТВИЯ (можно выбрать несколько вариантов ответов)?

| | Да |
|---|----|
| 197. Родиной моих предков | 1 |
| 198. Территорией, жить на которой меня вынудили обстоятельства | 1 |
| 199. Моей родиной | 1 |
| 200. Я уважаю право Латвии на независимость | 1 |
| 201. Государством, из которого я уеду, как только здесь мне станет плохо жить | 1 |
| 202. Землей, которую я не покину ни при каких условиях | 1 |
| 203. Исторически Латвия была и остается частью России | 1 |

ЧЕМ ЛИЧНО ДЛЯ ВАС ЯВЛЯЕТСЯ РОССИЯ?

| | Да |
|---|----|
| 204. Родиной моих родителей | 1 |
| 205. Родиной моих предков | 1 |
| 206. Моей родиной | 1 |
| 207. Страной, где живут мои родственники | 1 |
| 208. Государством, которое защитит права русских | 1 |
| 209. Государством, куда можно уехать на постоянное место жительства | 1 |
| 210. Государством, где бы я не хотел жить | 1 |
| 211. Россия - просто соседнее государство | 1 |

ПРИХОДИЛОСЬ ЛИ ЛИЧНО ВАМ, ИЛИ ЧЛЕНАМ ВАШЕЙ СЕМЬИ, СТАЛКИВАТЬСЯ У НАС, В ЛАТВИИ, СО СЛУЧАЯМИ НАРУШЕНИЯ ПРАВ ИЗ-ЗА НАЦИОНАЛЬНОЙ ПРИНАДЛЕЖНОСТИ . . .

| | Да |
|---|----|
| 212. В получении образования | 1 |
| 213. В обеспечении благоустроенным жильем | 1 |
| 214. В служебном, профессиональном росте | 1 |
| 215. В получении более высокого заработка | 1 |
| 216. В приобретении собственности | 1 |

217. Собираетесь ли Вы, учитывая складывающуюся в настоящее время политическую и экономическую обстановку в Латвии и в государствах СНГ выехать из Латвийской Республики?

| Решил уехать | Вероятнее, уеду, чем останусь | Трудно сказать | Вероятнее, останусь, чем уеду | Решил остаться |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

СЛЕДУЮЩИЙ ВОПРОС ТОЛЬКО ДЛЯ ТЕХ, КТО ДУМАЕТ ОБ ОТЪЕЗДЕ:
КУДА ИМЕННО ВЫ ХОТЕЛИ БЫ УЕХАТЬ ИЗ ЛАТВИИ НА ПОСТОЯННОЕ МЕСТО
ЖИТЕЛЬСТВА?

| | Да | | Да |
|-----------------------------|----|----------------------------|----|
| 218. В Российскую Федерацию | 1 | 226. В Швецию | 1 |
| 219. На Украину | 1 | 227. В Германию | 1 |
| 220. В Беларусь | 1 | 228. В Польшу | 1 |
| 221. В Литву, Эстонию | 1 | 229. В США | 1 |
| 222. В Закавказье | 1 | 230. В другую страну _____ | |
| 223. В Казахстан | 1 | (напишите) | 1 |
| 224. В Среднюю Азию | 1 | 231. Все равно куда | 1 |
| 225. В Финляндию | 1 | 232. Еще не решил | 1 |

ПРЕДПОЛОЖИМ СИТУАЦИЮ, ЧТО ВЕРХОВНЫЙ СОВЕТ ЛАТВИЙСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ ЕЩЕ НЕ ПРИНЯЛ ПОСТАНОВЛЕНИЕ О ГРАЖДАНСТВЕ, И У ВСЕХ ЖИТЕЛЕЙ ЛАТВИИ ИМЕЕТСЯ ВОЗМОЖНОСТЬ ВЫБОРА ГРАЖДАНСТВА. КАКОЕ ГРАЖДАНСТВО ХОТЕЛИ БЫ ПРИНЯТЬ ЛИЧНО ВЫ (можно отметить несколько позиций при условии выбора двойного гражданства) ?

| | Да |
|---|----|
| 233. Гражданство Латвийской Республики | 1 |
| 234. Гражданство России | 1 |
| 235. Гражданство другого государства _____ | 1 |
| (напишите, какого) | |
| 236. Гражданство той республики, где родился | 1 |
| 237. Не хотел бы принимать никакого гражданства | 1 |
| 238. Мне трудно ответить на этот вопрос | 1 |

239. Приходится ли Вам работать в тесном личном контакте с латышами?

Да - 1

Иногда - 2

Нет - 3

240. Как Вы отнесетесь к тому, что Ваша дочь (или сын) вступит в брак с латышом (латышкой)?

Очень благо-
приятно

1

Благопри-
ятно

2

Трудно
сказать

3

Неблаго-
приятно

4

Резко отри-
цательно

5

241. Если бы Вам пришлось выбирать другое место жительства, то имела ли бы для Вас значение национальность проживающих там?

Очень
большое

1

Большое

2

Трудно
сказать

3

Небольшое

4

Не имела бы
никакого
значения

5

242. В какой мере Вы согласны с мнением о том, что лучше всего работать в коллективе, состоящем из представителей только своей национальности?

Полностью
согласен

1

Скорее
согласен, чем
не согласен

2

Трудно
сказать

3

Скорее не
согласен,
чем согласен

4

Катего-
рически
против

5

243. В каких компаниях Вы предпочитаете проводить свободное время (занятия спортом, прогулки, праздники, выпивки)?

- С людьми преимущественно своей национальности 1
- С латышами 2
- В данном случае национальность не имеет значения 3

ГЕОГРАФИЧЕСКОЕ ПОЛОЖЕНИЕ И ТЕНДЕНЦИИ ИСТОРИЧЕСКИХ ПРОЦЕССОВ ОПРЕДЕЛИЛИ ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИЕ ЛАТЫШЕЙ И РУССКИХ. КОЛИЧЕСТВО И КАЧЕСТВО ДАННОГО ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИЯ ОБЪЯСНЯЮТСЯ И ПОНИМАЮТСЯ ЛЮДЬМИ НЕОДИНАКОВО, ПОРОЙ - ПРОТИВОРЕЧИВО.

МОГЛИ БЫ ВЫ ОТМЕТИТЬ, ЧТО ДАЛИ РУССКИЕ ПОЛОЖИТЕЛЬНОГО ДЛЯ ЛАТЫШЕЙ И ЛАТВИИ? Напишите, пожалуйста.

А ЧТО, ПО ВАШЕМУ МНЕНИЮ, ПРИНЕСЛИ РУССКИЕ ОТРИЦАТЕЛЬНОГО ДЛЯ ЛАТЫШЕЙ И ЛАТВИИ? Напишите, пожалуйста.

В КАКОЙ МЕРЕ ВЫ СОГЛАСНЫ СО СЛЕДУЮЩИМИ СУЖДЕНИЯМИ:

| | Полно- стью согла- сен | Скорее согла- сен | Трудно сказать | Скорее не со- гласен | Катего- рически не со- гласен |
|--|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| 244. "Русские и Россия объединили земли латышей в одно государство" | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 245. "Русские затормозили экономическое развитие Латвии" | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 246. "Русские отрицательно повлияли на культурное развитие латышей" | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 247. "Русские помогли латышам бороться и освободиться от немецко-фашистских захватчиков в годы 2-ой мировой войны" | 1 Полно- стью согла- сен | 2 Скорее согла- сен | 3 Трудно сказать | 4 Скорее не со- гласен | 5 Катего- рически не со- гласен |
| 248. "Помощь русских и их прямое участие способствовало восстановлению и дальнейшему развитию экономики Латвии" | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 249. "Русские принесли Латвии больше вреда, чем пользы" | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 250. "Русские приехали в Латвию и живут в ней, заботясь о ее благополучии" | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

APPENDIX 2

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 251. "Русские способствовали развитию культуры в Латвии" | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 252. "Русские научили латышей пить, а латыши не научили русских работать" | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 253. "Русские являются оккупантами и должны покинуть Латвию" | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

А ТЕПЕРЬ СООБЩИТЕ, ПОЖАЛУЙСТА, НЕКОТОРЫЕ СВЕДЕНИЯ О СЕБЕ:

| | | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|---|-----------------|----|
| 254. Ваш пол: | Женский | 1 | Мужской | 2 |
| 255. Ваше образование: | Ниже начального (1-3 класса) | | | 1 |
| | Начальное (4 класса) | | | 2 |
| | Неполное среднее (5-9 классов) | | | 3 |
| | Среднее общее | | | 4 |
| | Профессионально-техническое | | | 5 |
| | Среднее специальное | | | 6 |
| | Незаконченное высшее | | | 7 |
| | Высшее | | | 8 |
| | Кандидат наук | | | 9 |
| | Доктор наук | | | 10 |
| 256. Ваш возраст: | 15-19 лет | 1 | 45-49 лет | 7 |
| | 20-24 года | 2 | 50-54 года | 8 |
| | 25-29 лет | 3 | 55-59 лет | 9 |
| | 30-34 года | 4 | 60-64 года | 10 |
| | 35-39 лет | 5 | 65-69 лет | 11 |
| | 40-44 года | 6 | 70 лет и старше | 12 |
| 257. Национальность: | Латыш(-ка) | 1 | Поляк(-ка) | 5 |
| | Русский(-ая) | 2 | Еврей(-ка) | 6 |
| | Украинец(-ка) | 3 | Другая _____ | 7 |
| | Белорус(-ка) | 4 | (напишите) | |

КАКОЙ НАЦИОНАЛЬНОСТИ ВАШИ РОДИТЕЛИ?

| | | | | |
|------------|-----------|---|--------------|---|
| 258. Мать: | Латышка | 1 | Полька | 5 |
| | Русская | 2 | Еврейка | 6 |
| | Украинка | 3 | Другая _____ | 7 |
| | Белоруска | 4 | (напишите) | |
| 259. Отец: | Латыш | 1 | Поляк | 5 |
| | Русский | 2 | Еврей | 6 |
| | Украинец | 3 | Другая _____ | 7 |
| | Белорус | 4 | (напишите) | |

| | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|---|
| 260. Национальность Вашей жены (мужа): | Латыш(-ка) | 1 | Поляк(-ка) | 5 |
| | Русский(-ая) | 2 | Еврей(-ка) | 6 |
| | Украинец(-ка) | 3 | Другая _____ | 7 |
| | Белорус(-ка) | 4 | (напишите) | |
| 261. Ваше семейное положение: | Состоите в браке | | | 1 |
| | Никогда не состояли в браке | | | 2 |
| | Вдовец, вдова | | | 3 |
| | Разведен, разведена | | | 4 |
| 262. Укажите число детей в вашей семье: | Детей нет | 1 | 4-5 детей | 4 |
| | 1 ребенок | 2 | Более 5 детей | 5 |
| | 2-3 ребенка | 3 | | |
| 263. Ваше веро- исповедание: | Православный | | | 1 |
| | Старообрядец | | | 2 |
| | Другое вероисповедание _____ | | | 3 |
| | | | (напишите) | |
| 264. Как часто посе- щаете церковь? | Неверующий | | | 4 |
| | Чаше 1 раза в неделю | | | 1 |
| | 1 раз в неделю | | | 2 |
| | 2-3 раза в месяц | | | 3 |
| | 1 раз в месяц | | | 4 |
| | Несколько раз в год | | | 5 |
| | Реже 1 раза в год | | | 6 |
| | Совсем не посещаю | | | 7 |
| 265. Вы работаете | | | | |
| В промышленности | 1 | В сфере управления, в | | |
| В строительстве | 2 | правоохранительных | | |
| На транспорте | 3 | органах, на оплачиваемых | | |
| В сельском, или лесном | 4 | должностях партийных и | | |
| хозяйстве | 5 | общественных организаций | 11 | |
| В сфере торговли | 6 | На частном предприятии, | | |
| В сфере общественного | | в ООО | 12 | |
| питания | 7 | Пенсионер | 13 | |
| В сфере бытового | | Учащийся | 14 | |
| обслуживания | 8 | Студент | 15 | |
| В сфере коммунального | | В другой сфере | | |
| хозяйства | 9 | | 16 | |
| В сфере образования, | | (где?) | | |
| культуры, науки, здраво- | 10 | | | |
| охранения | | | | |

266. Вы являетесь:

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---------------------------|---|
| Рабочим | 1 | Руководителем: | |
| Специалистом (ИТР) | 2 | - структурного подраз- | |
| Служащим | 3 | деления (начальник | |
| Крестьянином | 4 | цеха, отдела, лаборатории | |
| Колхозником, рабочим | | и т.п.) | 7 |
| совхоза | 5 | - бригады, участка, | |
| Руководителем: | | группы и т.п. | 8 |
| -основного трудового | | | |
| коллектива (директор, | | | |
| главные специалисты, | | | |
| их заместители) | 6 | | |

267. Уровень Вашей квалификации:

| | Для рабочих | Для водителей | Для специалистов |
|------------|---------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Код ответа | Тарифно-квалификационный разряд | Классность | Категория |
| 1 | 7-8 | 1 класс | Ведущий специалист |
| 2 | 5-6 | 2 класс | 1 категория |
| 3 | 3-4 | 3 класс | 2 категория |
| 4 | 1-2 | | 3 категория |
| 5 | Без разряда | | Без категории |

БЛАГОДАРИМ ЗА СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВО!

The selected regions were coded as follows (the first seven are cities, the last eight are rural districts, *rajoni*):

| | | | | | |
|------------|---|-----------------|----|---------------|----|
| Riga | 1 | Rezekne | 6 | Valka raj. | 11 |
| Daugavpils | 2 | Ventspils | 7 | Kraslava raj. | 12 |
| Liepaja | 3 | Daugavpils raj. | 8 | Talsi raj. | 13 |
| Jelgava | 4 | Ventspils raj. | 9 | | |
| Jurmala | 5 | Riga raj. | 10 | | |

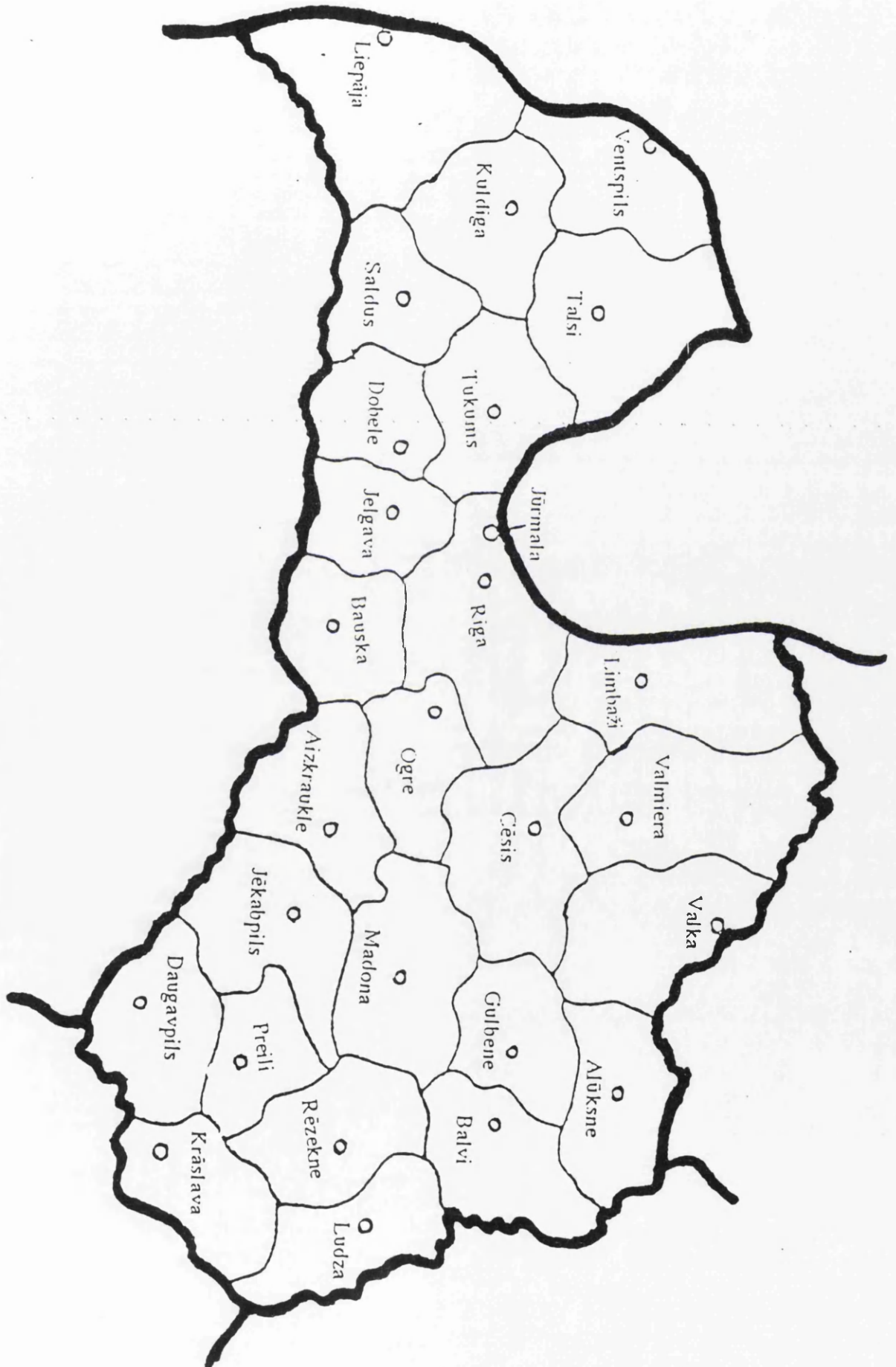
Map 2: The Period of the Russian Empire (1914)



The Baltic Provinces of the Russian Empire in 1914

Source: Lieven (1993), p. 56.

Map 3: Administrative Division of Latvia



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A few notes about the bibliography: Most of the books listed have been referred to in the notes after each chapter. When chapters in edited books have been used as sources, they are referred to under the name of the author of the chapter, but the book itself is usually listed if there are also other parts of the book that are of relevance for our topic. Newspaper articles are usually not listed in the bibliography, except for a few key articles that have been extensively used in my work. Books in cyrillic are transcribed (see introduction), but when the authors have familiar Latvian names, these names have been written using the Latvian alphabet.

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