University of Glasgow

Christie, Paula (2022) *Who belongs? An exploration of Latvian citizenship through the eyes of lived experience.* PhD thesis.

https://theses.gla.ac.uk/83189/

Copyright and moral rights for this work are retained by the author

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge

This work cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission from the author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

Enlighten: Theses
https://theses.gla.ac.uk/
research-enlighten@glasgow.ac.uk

Paula Christie, MSc/MRes

Who belongs? An exploration of Latvian citizenship through the eyes of lived experience.

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

College of Social Sciences | School of Social & Political Sciences
University of Glasgow

May 2022

[intentionally left blank]

Abstract

The challenges experienced by Latvia relating to nation building and the fostering of a stable democracy have been a central feature of discussion within the work of scholars in the immediate period following the full restoration and recognition of Latvian independence in 1991. The citizenship debate has focused on the disproportionate levels of inequality faced by the Russian speaking community in the years immediately following the restoration of independence resulting from Latvia's creation of a 'non-citizen' policy and stringent language laws. Those classified as non-citizens of Latvia have rights and protections, however there are differences in the rights and protections afforded when contrasted with those who hold full citizenship status.

Despite these difficulties, Latvia went on to acquire EU membership, cementing a position as a globally recognized polity and simultaneously shaking off the unwelcome ties of Soviet annexation. However, the assumption that it's 'mission accomplished' for Latvia is somewhat naive, particularly in relation to the contested area of citizenship. The thesis explores whether a more contemporary and nuanced concept of citizenship is emerging in Latvia with the central question being posed: '**What does Latvian citizenship look like today?'**. The thesis considers the supplementary question 'How has structural political change impacted on citizenship and on the formation of a wider community of Latvia?' and examines the way in which structural change has influenced the trajectory of Latvia's domestic policy and the journey 'West' following accession to the European Union. The thesis was researched and produced between August 2016 and May 2022.

To determine what citizenship looks like today, citizenship is explored through the lens of lived experience, with an emphasis being placed on how citizenship is reflected at the point of intersection between vertical and horizontal perspectives. In answering the supplementary research question 'In what ways do horizontal and vertical perspectives enhance our understandings of what it means to be a citizen of Latvia today?' it will be shown that normative approaches to citizenship, which tend to focus on macro level policy

and practice, are insufficient in capturing the nuances emerging from daily lived interactions. By incorporating horizontal perspectives, emerging from these grass roots realities, a much-needed additional dimension is added to the citizenship debate.

To provide a 'real time' representation of the relationship between individuals and the state, insightful new primary data has been collected from respondents who resided in Latvia during this transitional period. Testimony is also provided from respondents who took advantage of the new freedoms of movement afforded by EU membership and moved to the UK from Latvia. By drawing on the experiences of participants, purposefully chosen as being aged under 45, and by incorporating data collection from a range of locations across Latvia and the UK, a more sharply focused account of contemporary citizenship in a post independent, EU affiliated Latvia is offered. Data was collected within the UK between August 2016 and February 2017, with further data collection being conducted in Latvia between March and April 2017. The responses provided were framed against recent tensions with Russia and the annexation of Crimea and prior to the invasion of Ukraine on February 24th2022. This subsequent event occurred as this thesis was presented for formal examination and defence.

It is argued that in attempting to bolster an imagined 'national' community of Latvia at a macro level, subsequent actions and outcomes have actually led to a divergence in the understanding of 'who belongs' to the Latvian community of today, from a grass roots perspective. Dissatisfaction with politicians and political policies, socio-economic challenges and an evolving socio-civic sphere form the basis for a commonality of experience and a reshaping of belonging and community. This raises the question 'Do we see the emergence of a broader 'Latvian community' whereby individuals see themselves as 'belonging' not only to Latvia, but to each other, beyond divisions of ethnicity and formal citizenship?'. Whilst the ruling elite may have felt that they have succeeded in their goal to create a successful re-emergent nation state, an examination of the ways in which marginalisation manifests beyond ethnicity and impacts upon practices of citizenship across different spheres, will show horizontal divergence from the vertical construction of an 'imagined' community of Latvia today.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Acknowledgements

I very much view the process of producing a doctoral thesis as a team effort, despite common claims that to embark on a PhD is to embark upon a lonely journey. I know, in all sincerity, that the completion of this thesis is due, in no small part, to a wonderful group of friends, family, peers and colleagues who have been with me on every step of this drama filled way. They have wiped away my many tears and given me reason to keep going, even when the prospect of completion seemed inconceivable. These acknowledgements and this note of thanks would extend beyond the wordcount permitted of entire thesis itself, but fortunately, or unfortunately, depending on your perspective, I am obliged to be as brief as I possibly can.

My thanks go to the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Scottish Graduate School of Social Science (SGSSS) for awarding me a 2+3 scholarship which allowed me to complete the degree of Master of Research (MRes), as well as a postgraduate Diploma in Russian and Latvia language. Special thanks to both Linda Thompson of the Grad School and Rebekah Derrett at the University of Glasgow for continued practical and admin support in helping me navigate the many twists and turns thrown up as part of my 'non-traditional' journey in the world of postgrad study. Their compassionate understanding of my many traumas, as well as their expertise in all things bureaucratic, saved the day on so many occasions. I am indebted to them.

It is impossible not to think of the indescribably wonderful group of people within the Department of Central & East European Studies (CEES) when reflecting on my time as a student at the University of Glasgow. It's fair to say I became 'a well kent face' at Lilybank Gardens over the years and I've been beyond blessed to have studied under and worked with so many distinguished and well-respected academics. Now retired, Maggie Baister was the bedrock of all things CEES, and I express my thanks for her many kindnesses, much needed support and warmth. At times my journey resembled a poor remake of '*Educating Rita*' and

my rather irreverent and untraditional approach to esteemed superiors raised more than a few eyebrows, I'm sure. Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Swain will no doubt recall some rather unorthodox pronouncements and expressions of joy dating back to the early days of my undergraduate study, and the recurring theme of unorthodox pronouncements continued as we took part in uproarious Latvian language classes with the wonderful Dace Praulins. It's been a delight and a privilege to be able to consider Geoff and his wife Di as friends. I'm also grateful for Professor Swain's introduction to Professor Irēna Saleniece from the Centre for Oral History at Daugavpils University. She is one of the nicest people anyone could meet in academia, this opinion in no way influenced by our shared love of all things chocolate and our visits in Latvia to numerous coffee shops for cake and sweet treats. Her knowledge of the history of Daugavpils is vast and was most valuable to this research. Dace Praulins, not only a language teacher extraordinaire, is also a much-valued friend and a recipient of my thanks, and I look forward to revisiting many happy memories with her over a coffee and cake soon. My thanks extend also to Dr Shamil Khairov and to Dr Larisa Stizhko for their extreme patience and incredible support as I stumbled my way through Russian language classes. Again, their care and compassion, as I battled the most difficult of personal circumstances, the terminal illness and loss of my dear sister Gemma, was humbling.

I can't even begin where to think to start in expressing my deep admiration, respect and gratitude to my supervisory team of Professor David Smith and Dr Ammon Cheskin. Looking back to some hazy and 'lost' days across fabulous fieldtrips and academic conferences, now enshrined in CEES legend, it's perhaps best not to try to recall every glorious moment of my time spent journeying through the Baltic States and Sweden with them. The high regard and deepest affection in which I and my PhD peers hold Professor Smith is testament to his significant and substantial professional reputation, as well as to his staunch championing of fledgling academics in the field of Baltic Studies. He has, despite his modesty, given wings to allow so many of us to fly. My life, and that of my family, has changed beyond all recognition due to his unwavering support and continued belief in me. Opportunities and experiences have come my way that I could never have imagined. I am forever grateful to him and I sincerely hope we continue to remain friends in many a laughter filled year to come. It's been emotional Boss! Dr Ammon Cheskin, not only an incredible academic, is another formidable

champion, himself a CEES alumnus. I'd like to thank him for not only his highly valued professional input but his much higher valued friendship. Thanks for being my pal Ammon!

The CEES department has fostered so many academic careers and I'd like to thank all those from CEES who have gone on to pastures new but have continued to be a huge part of my support network. Special mention goes to the CEES 'old team' of Dr Paul Jordan, Dr Eleanor Bindman and Dr Graham Donnelly, as well as to the most fantastic honorary member, Dr Vytautas Petronis, for all their support. They have literally kept me upright at some spirited CEES social events, as well as in the more serious activities of academic endeavour. I'll take the liberty of rebranding the 'old team' to the 'dream team'. The bonds developed within the department go beyond that of typical peer friendship and are again testament to the role of Professor David Smith in nurturing such a positive and professional environment for students.

My sincere gratitude goes to those people who generously gave their time to help with the fieldwork in Latvia. Without the help of the self-named '*Crazy Cat Ladies*', Lāsma Kokina, Rasma Kreica and Karīna Orlava, this research would not have been possible, and the valuable stories, emanating from the voices of the participants, would not have been heard. A huge debt of gratitude goes to Lāsma Kokina for initiating contact and liaising with Karīna Orlava and Rasma Kreica to ensure that the fieldwork could be supported. The incredible efforts of Karīna Orlava secured a number of high-profile interviews and facilitated many more. A huge thank you to my incredible travelling translator Rasma Kreica, who was fantastic company and who also introduced me to many interesting people and places along the way. Despite some hair-raising moments in a Liepāja bunker and a bout of food poisoning, I hope you too enjoyed the experience of the fieldwork. I was moved by the many stories of day-to-day survival as well as by the inspiration stories of success and solidarity that were shared by participants. Thanks to all of those who gave up their time to take part in interviews. It was a privilege and a pleasure to chat to you all.

Last, but in no way least, I'd like to thank my family and friends. Sincerest thanks go to my husband, Craig Christie, for his support, encouragement and belief in me and for keeping the

home fires burning as I battled through this project. We've had to fight so many fires and overcome so many challenges, not least in the last few years, but somehow, we've got there over the course of our lives together. I hope we have a less onerous onward journey than was experienced during the production of these thesis chapters, and I look forward to the metaphorical 'next chapter' of our adventures. Thanks to Vaila Angus, the 'bestie', who kindly agreed to be my travel companion on planes, trains, automobiles, and everything else in between, during fieldwork. Her emergency parcels, numerous lunches and cakes and unswerving support have always been beyond appreciated. In so many ways Kathleen Balfour has also supported me in this 'mission to Mars' and I'm eternally grateful to have these two phenomenal women in my life. Speaking of phenomenal women, it's impossible not to mention Dr Gintare Venzlauskaitė, one of my fellow PhD-ers at CEES. Watch this space as she's definitely going places and her recently completed thesis makes a substantial contribution to the world of historical memory. I'd like to thank Gintare for her wise counsel, unfaltering support and unbreakable friendship. I look forward to more adventures in Lithuania soon. Thanks to Dr Kirsty Kay, as without her friendship and inspirational Friday Work Club, I'm not sure I'd have made it over the line. To my wonderful friends Lorraine and Christina for keep me sane and yet 'raving' as we bounced along to our 90s favourites, and to all of my many friends, near and far, you know who you are…thank you for your messages and gestures of support. Let's hope we get to have a cocktail or two together soon. Bring on the sparkle!

Finally thank you to my family; to my sons for their understanding, resilience and support as I worked my way through this project and to my mum, siblings and extended family, whom I hope will be proud of this achievement. Final submission of this thesis is for Gemma, who took on every difficulty and challenge with courage and commitment. She was taken far too soon, and we miss her so very deeply every day. It was one of her final requests to me that I see this project through and I have felt her presence walking beside me. I hope that finally having a finished product makes her smile.

For Gemma, who never wavered.
Always with us.

Still. I rise.
(Maya Angelou)

Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signed: Paula Christie

Signature:

Chapter 1. Introduction

In popular discourse and contemporary political rhetoric, the idea of what constitutes the fabric of national communities has gained increased attention as part of a wider debate on citizenship and 'belonging'. Current discourse reflects the impact of a resurgence of nationalist movements, the pressures of multicultural society, voter apathy and a resentment of wealth distribution and welfare provision within the wider citizenship debate (Kymlicka and Norman in Bellamy et al. 2010 pp.43-44). Latvia, like many states, has not been immune to the impact of these forces, and across Europe, the rise of nationalist populism has placed the spotlight firmly back on the citizenship debate. This research seeks to provide a timely evaluation of an inexperienced and newly established democracy exposed to these internal and external forces, and to ascertain what citizenship looks like there today.

This thesis will draw upon the concept of lived experience as a measure of the stability of concepts such as democracy and citizenship in Latvia by looking at a number of social, political and economic indicators as experienced by those who live, or have lived there. Latvia has been adopted as a case study through which to explore concepts of belonging, inclusion and exclusion as part of a wider debate on citizenship. As Latvia has had a history of annexation, and has been recognised as a sovereign state in relatively recently terms, it is a location which provides an interesting context through which to explore citizenship, particularly as the concept of 'citizenship' within Latvia evokes much political and social debate.

Much of this citizenship debate has centred on top-down analyses with scholars grappling with the very public and political evolution of Latvia, applying this transformation as a means to reflect upon the cohesion of Latvia as a modern democratic state. However, this approach only serves to overlook the impact of the private daily interactions which intersect the political axis, and it is these interactions, this thesis will argue, that are a fundamental aspect of understanding the impact of change within Latvia today. That said, any fresh examination of citizenship in Latvia today is not possible without considering the impact of the historical

Soviet legacy of annexation, alongside the more recent and seismic political shift towards democracy.

Following the collapse of Soviet rule and the restoration of independence, Latvia has been used as an example of a nation state which has predominantly dealt with citizenship from a political perspective, and as a state which has adopted stringent ethnic parameters in respect of granting citizenship. Whilst taking into account the historical legacy Latvia continues to wrestle with, this thesis intends to take a fresher and more nuanced approach by applying a grass roots approach to our understanding of how citizenship is reflected in both theory and practice. Rather than placing ethnicity and marginalisation at the centre of the citizenship debate in Latvia, this thesis instead explores whether ethnicity itself can be marginalised within Latvia's citizenship debate, some thirty years on from the restoration of independence, and within a second decade as an EU member state.

1.1 Background and Context

Within this section, the history of Latvia across the last 100 years will be discussed as a means of contextualizing Latvia's political approach to citizenship today. Declared as an independent republic in 1918, Latvia emerged from the rubble of the First World War and the ruins of German and Russian imperialism. The first Republic of Latvia existed until 1940, when again, expansionism and conflict resulted in occupation. As stated by Misiunas and Taagepera, Latvia and her Baltic neighbours were unlike most occupied nations of the Second World War facing "not only one but two occupying powers" with an initial occupation by Soviet Union in 1940 for a brief period prior to a subsequent three-year occupation by Nazi Germany in 1941 (Misiunas and Taagepera 1993 p.70). Following the end of World War II, and with Europe's borders once again redefined, Latvia found herself again incorporated into the Soviet Union where as noted by Pabriks and Purs (2001), the aggressive Sovietisation of Latvia began to affect all aspects of political and social, rural and urban life.

For many commentators, of particular significance during the period of Soviet rule, was "a comprehensive planned assault on independent Latvian cultural life" (Pabriks and Purs 2001

pp.31-33). The need to consolidate and publicly express a strong Latvian cultural identity became a feature of the newly independent Latvia in the early 1990s. This was important as not only was the communist period synonymous with a new Soviet identity, a programme of industrialisation and modernisation saw around “400,000 Russians and 100,00 people of other nationalities” migrate to Latvia in the period 1945-1959 (Misiunas and Taagepera 1993 p.112). Lieven (1994) describes Riga as having always been a “multinational city, neither purely Latvian nor purely anything else”, however the impact of inward migration upon the ethnic Latvian population is clear, with Latvians making up only 36.5 percent of Riga’s population in the immediate post-Soviet period, and with towns and cities including Jelgava and Daugavpils registering an ethnic Latvian population of between 49 per cent and 13 per cent respectively (Lieven 1994 pp.174-185). It is from this wave of Soviet migration that Latvia’s fractious relationship with concepts of citizenship and belonging, which we continue to see played out politically today, arise.

As the annexation of Latvia and the neighbouring Baltic States had never been completely internationally recognized, Latvia, alongside her Baltic neighbours of Estonia and Lithuania experienced large scale national protests calling for the restoration of national sovereignty following the publication of the secret protocols contained within the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (Misiunas and Taagepera 1993); (Smith et al 2002). Following a number of gains for pro-independence parties in the latter Soviet period of the 1980s, the “Supreme Soviet of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic passed a declaration on renewing the independence of the Republic of Latvia” in May 1990 (Misiunas and Taagepera 1993 pp.330-335). It is at this point that Latvia began to forge her path as an independent sovereign state and pushed forwards to create a clear distance between the Soviet past and a more promising West-facing future.

One of the first steps in moving towards this new future as a newly restored state was to create a legal framework for the granting of citizenship. From the point of restored independence, citizenship status and ‘who belongs’ to Latvia has been politically determined. The question of ‘who belongs’ has also been normatively considered from a political perspective within much of the existing literature. It is here that this thesis intersects with

those perspectives by looking not only at the political, but by also taking into account the lived experience of those impacted by Latvia's political decisions. Within the early period of restored independence, attention was focused on increasing ethnic tensions as Latvia began the difficult process of democratisation following post-Soviet rule. Interestingly however, many within the Russian speaking communities of the Baltic States, who had come to 'belong' in Latvia following the inward migration of the Stalinist industrialisation period, had supported the independence movements during the late Soviet period, with nationalist organisations emphasising the benefits of cooperation and communication not only for titular groups, but for ethnic minority groups, as noted by Lieven (1999). Nationalist demands were presented as a "struggle for popular rule, economic prosperity and social justice for all nationalities" (Lieven 1999 p.302), a tone quite different to the politics of post-independence in Latvia. Despite the initial hopes of some Russian speakers for a cohesive society of mixed ethnicity, Latvian ethnicity began to dominate the citizenship debate as Latvia sought to conserve and protect the integrity of its newly found independent status by introducing criteria for citizenship along ethnic lines, a political decision which is accepted as having created social tension (Purs 2012 p.94).

Rejecting the so called 'zero option' which would grant citizenship to anyone who had resided in the republic at the point of independence, a more 'exclusionist' approach was adopted towards the granting of citizenship (Purs 2012 p.94). President Ulmanis supported the idea that only "pre-1940 citizens and their descendants should determine the nature of the new Latvian citizenship law" (Morris 2006 p.544). Smith notes that there were stringent residence requirements for those seeking naturalisation, with a quotas system adopted and the creation of priority lists whereby "ethnic Latvians without citizenship would be given priority, followed by spouses of citizens and those who contributed actively to Latvian independence" (Smith 1994 pp.185-186). Clearly this left a high percentage of Russian speakers who had remained within Latvia's borders during the early 1990s without legally recognized citizenship, and so formally excluded from 'belonging' to a vertically imagined community of Latvia. Although non-citizens have been afforded some protections and rights, these differ to those granted full Latvian citizens. As detailed by Kuczyńska-Zonik (2017), "non-citizens of Latvia are not stateless persons. They enjoy protection under the law both in

Latvia and while living or travelling abroad. They can have permanent residence in a foreign country while retaining all rights and privileges, to travel freely and to return back to Latvia at any time" (Kuczyńska-Zonik, 2017 p.7). Non-citizens also have the right to visa free travel within the EU (Kuczyńska-Zonik, 2017 p.7). The key differences between citizens and non-citizens relates to voting rights and public service employment rights. Non-citizens may be members of political parties, however as noted by Cianetti (2014) "the Latvian constitution reserves the right to vote and stand for election in the local government to Latvian citizens only" (Cianetti 2014 p.96). Non-citizens do not have "the right to vote and to work in the civil service or occupy posts not only directly related to national security" (Kuczyńska-Zonik, 2017 p.7). Non-citizens may also not be employed as "state officials, diplomatic and consular corps, judges, lawyers, notaries, policemen and soldiers" (Kuczyńska-Zonik, 2017 p.7) and although these restrictions do not apply to those non-citizens who have become naturalised, levels of discrimination mean that may naturalised Russian speakers experience challenges in gaining access to the civil service or public professions (Kuczyńska-Zonik 2017).

The citizenship policy was met with condemnation by neighbouring Russia, with this condemnation still resonant in political discourse today. Drawing on this legacy, this thesis will explore the outcome of political decision making based on the lived experiences of those descendants of Soviet immigration as well as those of Latvian descent, incorporating the thoughts of what are traditionally seen to be distinct Latvian and Russian speaking communities today.

Although lived experience will be a key tool in examining any evolution of Latvian citizenship, it is important to consider the ways in which political perspectives and the political arena have continued to dominate Latvia's approach to citizenship. The direction and outcomes of political policy cannot be ignored when determining the wider questions of 'who belongs to Latvia?' and 'what constitutes a Latvian community?'. Latvia, as a state, has also had to defer to external political actors, with pressure having been exerted on Latvia from the EU and the OSCE, who warned of political isolation without amendment of Latvia's citizenship and language laws (Morozov in Lehti and Smith 2003 p.225). As noted by Morozov, in Lehti and Smith (2003), Latvia had little choice but to comply with amendments, which begs the

question of whether a forced political intervention has made any discernible longer-term impact on 'who belongs' to Latvia.

Within Latvia's citizenship debate, it has been argued that enforced changes to the Citizenship Law, implemented in 1998, brought only marginal improvements for the large Russian speaking minority (Morozov in Lehti and Smith 2003 p.225). Movement on minority rights continued to dominate political discourse in the years beyond the restoration of independence and continued to be a critical factor in the negotiating process, as Latvia sought membership of the EU in a bid to consolidate a West-facing political, economic and social trajectory. Latvia's tough stance on ethnicity and ethnic minorities was a stumbling block within this process, particularly as part of the Copenhagen Criteria of 1993 laid out that countries seeking membership "specified the stability of democratic institutions, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities" (Pridham 2009 p.469). It is suggested in certain quarters that Latvia made a mere nod towards concessions, whilst others point to great strides in Latvia's political development. Cianetti (2018) and others provide a valuable discussion around this topic and claim a certain amount of 'hollowness' around these concessions. This thesis will consider how any political movement made by Latvia in order to secure EU membership has impacted at a grass roots level, and ascertain the impact structural and societal change has had upon constructions and deconstructions of citizenship today.

1.2 Rationale for Research

Recently, and certainly within the last decade or so, the idea of what constitutes the fabric of citizenship and belonging has gained increased attention. Issues such as Brexit and the rise of nationalist populism across Europe have placed the spotlight firmly back on the citizenship debate. The legitimacy of liberal democratic institutions, both domestic and international, is currently under attack and the cohesion and stability of the state-based political community is a highly salient issue, and is a cause for concern across Europe. Themes of democracy, citizenship, integration and participation are commonplace in both academic literature and within popular media discourse. Current concerns over terms such as 'ethnic tensions',

'migration' in addition to 'resurgences in nationalism' reverberate within the media and have continued to fuel academic debate on the potential for political destabilisation as a result.

Against this backdrop, the political rhetoric of ethnic tension within Latvia continues to dominate Latvian media and has gained more momentum, particularly due to recent controversial developments in Russian foreign policy. Despite having attained membership of both the European Union and NATO, the relatively young, restored independence of Latvia is frequently presented as being insufficiently consolidated to withstand the fear of external threat from neighbouring Russia (Somer 2011 p.18). The annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014, unpopular Russian policy relating to Syria and increased Russian and NATO military presence within the border region have also impacted upon ethnic rhetoric and discourse (Somer 2011 p.18). An afterword in Chapter 9 notes further recent developments in this area at the time of the submission of this thesis.

This context of tension provides an opportunity for this thesis to question whether increased political rhetoric of ethnic disharmony and discord around geopolitical events is evident within the daily interactions and lived experiences of individuals on a day-to-day level. On one hand, it could be perceived that it is individuals who are coming together and gathering momentum to voice discontent and effect change across the wider global arena. However, there are also counterclaims that the state remains the key driver in mobilising discontent, particularly around nationalist lines to determine political policy. This inherent tension is a key feature emerging in more contemporary scholarly conversations around citizenship with authors such as Bacchi and Beasley (2002) noting the problematic dichotomy of seeing citizenship constituted in two very distinct ways. Their study highlights that citizenship is "constituted largely as a public activity concerned with establishing and monitoring boundaries between people and between groups of people" and therefore seen as 'public', contrasting with seeing citizenship more "generally constituted in singular terms and as quintessentially private" (Bacchi and Beasley 2002 p. 328). This thesis draws heavily upon an examination of the intersection of state policy and individual experience as being key in understanding how citizenship is represented today, with Latvia providing an interesting

context for conducting such a case study, given the state driven nationalist policies adopted in the post-independence era.

Increased calls to consider new perspectives in relation to Latvian citizenship, as evidenced in the work of Winters (2017), Ekmanis (2019) and Jašina-Schäfer and Cheskin (2020), have influenced this thesis. As emphasised by authors Linz and Stepan (2010), there is an exigent need for new thinking on the ways in which polities, either claiming to be or aiming to be, democracies "can accommodate great sociocultural and even multicultural diversity within one state" (Linz and Stepan 2010 p.50). As the issue of ethnicity remains dominant in Latvia's political and public discourse, adopting a wider approach which goes beyond the confines of ethnicity to understand how citizenship manifests in reality within Latvia today is of real value. The argument constructed by Linz and Stepan (2010), alongside esteemed authors on citizenship, Habermas (1992) and Kymlicka (2011), indicates the importance of re-evaluating the citizenship debate within wider contexts of democratic norms and behaviours. This thesis will attempt to bring new thinking to this problem by focusing on 'who belongs' as an applicable measure of cohesion within the chosen polity of Latvia.

This thesis also adds to recent research studies which seek to bring a fresher approach to assessing concepts and understandings of citizenship within the post-Soviet sphere by addressing these from a grassroots perspective. Traditionally, understandings of citizenship have been problematic due to a focus on harnessing the construct of citizenship within particular territories and nationalities (Delanty 1998 p 33). As the world becomes more global and freedom of movement and migration becomes commonplace, locating citizenship firmly within a specific boundary may no longer be a reliable indicator of the relationship of the individual to a state. This thesis therefore extends the discussion to take into account the perspectives of those who left Latvia and those who remained.

Another issue with more traditional thinking within the majority of nationalism studies, is that the role of ethnicity and identity is central to the question of whether democratisation can occur, and to what extent this could be consolidated. Within post-communist states, the legacy of the Soviet past has been discussed at length, as has the marginalisation of ethnic

minority groups. Much emphasis has been placed on the examination of institutional political structures and processes, with assessments having been made on the extent to which both ethnic majority and minority groups have been able to participate within, or engage with these structures. Assessments are often made from a top-down or vertical perspective and fail to take into account the realities of those living within these post-Soviet polities. In attempting to solve this problem Delanty (1998) places emphasis on the importance of examining vertically constructed communities from a new horizontal perspective to make clear the importance of understanding the ways in which "community actually operates in the sense of real and lived communities" (Delanty 1998 p. 43). Indeed, it is believed that the intersection between the vertical and horizontal perspectives is where a more accurate observation on citizenship can be made. Therefore, by expanding the discussion of citizenship beyond the political sphere and into the social and often private sphere via lived experience, the thesis argues that we can draw a more representative picture of the ways in which individuals negotiate their own perceptions of what it means to be a citizen in Latvia today. Exploring the lived experience of individuals opens up a new space to revise understandings of citizenship beyond the constraints of territorial boundaries and ethnicity, and incorporates the impact of political decisions upon individual notions of what it means to be a citizen today.

1.3 Aims, Objectives and Research Questions

It is clear that the dichotomy of what constitutes citizenship forms a central narrative within existing literature on Latvia's political, social and economic development. This study does not seek to reinvent a concept of citizenship, but aims to explore elements contained within various definitions and models of citizenship to tease out the ways in which citizenship is reflected within Latvia today. By viewing citizenship through the lens of lived experience it is then possible to draw conclusions relating on what shapes the community of Latvia today, when contrasted against a backdrop of socioeconomic factors and outward migration.

1.3.1 Main Aim

The central aim of this study is to move the debate around citizenship in Latvia beyond the confines of territory and beyond the discourse of ethnicity and ethnicised marginalisation. In the simplest form, this study seeks to provide an answer to the central research question 'what does Latvian citizenship look like today?'. This study, by applying a grassroots perspective to constructs of citizenship and reflecting on the nuances of lived behaviours, will seek to inform the position of citizenship at this current juncture of Latvia's political development and democratic consolidation.

1.3.2 Objectives and Research Questions

To meet the main aim of the research, the central research question of '**What does Latvian citizenship look like today?'** was devised. Although three decades have passed following Latvia's re-emergence as a recognised independent sovereign polity, the citizenship debate has remained mired within the confines of politicized ethnicity. The aim of this thesis is to bring a more contemporary approach by recentring the citizenship debate among those with real experience of living in Latvia, and by placing them at heart of any construction or understanding of citizenship in Latvia today.

To help answer the central question a series of research objectives and supplementary research questions have been designed. These supplementary questions and corresponding rationale are outlined below:

In what ways do horizontal and vertical perspectives enhance our understanding of what it means to be a citizen of Latvia today?

This distinction between vertical and horizontal perspectives of citizenship will be a key factor in understanding the ways in which individuals themselves position and negotiate their relationship with Latvia. An exploration of the concept of the term 'citizen' will be conducted and will be viewed from both top-down and bottom-up perspectives to ascertain what is understood to be Latvian citizenship. It will be shown that a vertical focus on citizenship, revolving around the rights and protections given by a state to a predetermined group of individuals linked to a territorial state, is, for a number of reasons, problematic, particularly

within the Latvian case. This thesis will argue that citizenship, not only in Latvia, but more widely, can be better understood by examining the intersection of both vertical and horizontal perspectives and by drawing upon 'lived citizenship' as an approach to open up space for individuals to express their own experiences and negotiations of citizenship.

How has structural political change impacted on citizenship and on the formation of a wider community of Latvia?

This research question acknowledges that Latvia today has undergone enormous political, social and economic change since gaining independence more than 30 years ago and through the acquisition of EU membership in 2004. This fresh evaluation will look at a number of political, economic and social indicators, which take into account both macro and micro level perspectives during this period. A central theme of the post-Soviet Latvian citizenship debate has been the ethnicisation of formal citizenship. With successive Latvian governments adopting a nationalist approach in the post-independence years, 'what' determines and 'who' can be determined as a Latvian citizen has centred predominantly on ethnicity from the vertical perspective. It is impossible to ignore ethnicity as a factor within the citizenship debate in Latvia, however this work was developed not to look at citizenship as existing within an ethnicised silo based upon vertically constructed and assigned labels. Instead, this research aims to consider how individuals view themselves and considers any self-attributed label as a form of negotiation around concepts such as identity, belonging and community, set against a backdrop of social and economic change.

Do we see the emergence of a broader 'Latvian community' whereby individuals see themselves as 'belonging' not only to Latvia, but to each other, beyond divisions of ethnicity and formal citizenship?

Some scholars point to the possibility of a post-national society whose collective identity is defined by the normative principles of constitution, rather than by reference to a cultural tradition, territory or loyalty to the state (Delanty 1998 p.43). This study considers not only the impact structural change has had on Latvia politically and socio-economically from a

domestic perspective, but also incorporates the voices of recent emigrants from Latvia to the UK. This is a timely addition to existing research on the wider debates surrounding European migration played out against a backdrop of political and economic crisis. Whilst taking into account the historic ethnic divisions that have shaped Latvia, this thesis raises the key question of whether ethnicity itself can be marginalised within Latvia's citizenship debate. The research does not intend to detract from the significant numbers of non-citizens remaining within Latvia and their well-documented ongoing challenges but instead, focuses on questioning whether, with the passing of time and as a result of EU membership, the community of Latvia and the criteria for membership of this community is changing. Rather than placing levels of ethnic marginalisation as the central indicator of citizenship within Latvia, lived experience and the intersections of daily life and political policy will be used to determine the shape Latvian citizenship takes today.

1.4 Thesis Structure and Chapter Overview

Chapter 2 - This chapter will explore the conceptual and theoretical frameworks which underpin this research, drawing upon existing discussion around the construct of citizenship within existing literature and highlighting any limitations contained therein. Reflecting the realities of individuals who have been directly impacted by seismic political and social change, the experiences of 'lived citizenship' drives much of this thesis and will be used as a theoretical tool through which to explore manifestations of Latvian citizenship today. An exploration of the benefits of this approach will be discussed. The chapter will outline the appropriateness of applying lived citizenship as a means of highlighting the nuances emerging at the point of intersection of both vertical and horizontal perspectives. From this, the central research question of 'what does Latvian citizenship look like today?' can be addressed. The chapter will also draw upon the wider development of citizenship across the Baltic States as presented within existing studies, and outline where lived citizenship can help to better understand broader concepts of 'belonging' and 'community'. This, in turn addresses the question of 'who belongs' to Latvia and to consider whether Latvian citizenship can extend beyond formal and ethnicised constraints.

Chapter 3 - As Chapter 2 focuses primarily on secondary data, Chapter 3 will focus on the methodology utilised in the collection of primary data, with participants being the central source of understanding any nuanced aspects of multidimensional citizenship via their lived experiences. The chapter will discuss the research design associated with this project as well as highlighting the techniques employed in data collection. Discussion then moves onto the experience of fieldwork, noting the ethical considerations, and details the limitations or challenges associated with this research. The chapter also incorporates a discussion around the challenges of being a non-traditional researcher within the research process.

The above three chapters form the structure and framework for this research. The following chapters move onto empirical discussions on a range of themes associated with Marshall's (1950) construct of citizenship, namely political, socio -economic and social/civic, before arriving at a summary of findings and conclusions. The empirical chapters each consider an associated element of citizenship, and where chapters are paired, these pairings are structured to chart developments chronologically. The first in any pairing begins with the initial developments of the post-independence years, and the second of the pairing moves forwards in time to provide more contemporary insights.

Chapter 4 – This chapter is the first of two chapters which focus on the political elements associated with the construct of citizenship. The chapter will contextualise Latvia's political direction following the restoration of independence and reflect on the political behaviours of elites, contrasting vertical and horizontal perspectives. The chapter will also consider the political messaging and direction around language and explore how this has shaped relations and identities.

Chapter 5 – Chapter 5 is the second of the empirical chapters to focus on the political elements of citizenship and contextualises traditional constructs of community, contrasting these with Latvia's vertically imagined community of belonging. The chapter also considers how structural change, namely EU membership, has impacted upon vertical and horizontal perspectives of citizenship, in addition to exploring Latvia's political relationship with Russia.

The chapter concludes by considering new political opportunities for shaping and reshaping Latvia's political community of belonging.

Chapter 6 – Chapter 6 is the first of two empirical chapters which focus on the socio-economic elements linked to Marshall's (1950) construct of citizenship. The chapter begins by contextualising the incorporation of socio-economic perspectives and experiences within the broader citizenship debate and progresses onto reflecting upon the impact of financial shock and economic crisis during the post- independence period. The economic impact of structural change and EU membership upon perceptions of citizenship and belonging to a wider community of Latvia is explored, and the chapter considers the economic benefits of EU membership via inward investment as a vehicle for redefining perspectives on citizenship and the individual's relationship with the state.

Chapter 7 - This chapter contrasts traditional vertical perspectives of citizenship with contemporary everyday socio-economic realities. The chapter looks at the ways in which government and individuals have responded to financial crisis and the push factors towards outward migration. The chapter then moves on to reflect on the current demographic landscape in Latvia and addresses membership of a broader Latvian community by looking at the perspectives of those who opted to remain, taking note of any associated re-positioning of community and identity therein. The chapter concludes by considering the potential future development of Latvia's community of belonging and the possibilities for vertical and horizontal reshaping of priorities and perspectives.

Chapter 8 – This chapter explores citizenship through examples of civic practice and community interactions as reflected in the lived experiences of participants. Discursive practices of citizenship as expressed via everyday encounters are detailed, as is a discussion on socio-civic practices and spaces. The ways in which these elements shape the communities and societies in which they occur, beyond the confines of ethnicity, will be considered. The chapter also explores occurrences of non-ethnicised marginalisation where the relationship between state and individual is seen to disconnect, impacting upon a sense of membership and upon any vertical construction of a community of Latvia.

Chapter 9 - This chapter will highlight the key findings from this research and present some final conclusions. The chapter will detail the contribution this thesis makes to broader research, whilst noting any limitations and suggestions for future research. An afterword is also provided noting relevant developments in Russian foreign policy around the time of submission of the thesis.

Chapter 2. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

To answer the central research question of 'What does Latvian citizenship look like today?', this chapter will explore the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of citizenship as well as examine the discussion surrounding the broader citizenship debate. The chapter will position the thesis within the body of existing literature pertaining to classical and traditional constructs of citizenship. It will be shown that there are limitations to traditional constructs of citizenship and in particular, a requirement to encapsulate a more multi-dimensional approach to add to existing understandings (Wood 2014 pp.216-217). As such, the chapter draws upon the theoretical benefits of applying 'lived citizenship' as a tool to allow greater scope for the exploration of top down or vertical perspectives of citizenship and to determine if and where these intersect with horizontal or grass roots perspectives. It will be argued that this intersection is key in fully understanding how citizenship is seen to manifest in Latvia today.

The chapter begins by discussing the evolution and construction of theories of citizenship. To understand contemporary citizenship and its benefit as a theoretical tool for 'who belongs' to the community of Latvia, an examination of the origins, evolution and application of the concept of citizenship is efficacious. It is acknowledged that "although there is a considerable tradition of thinking behind the idea of citizenship, it would be a mistake to suggest that, as yet, we possess a complete or elaborate theory" (Turner 1993 p viii preface). It will be shown that there are a number of problematical issues surrounding traditional constructs of citizenship as top-down perspectives tend to dominate the narrative around the way in which we view individuals and their relationship to the state. Furthermore, within the broader context of the citizenship debate within Latvia, these less nuanced representations of the relationship between the state and individuals are limited in scope and often fail to incorporate daily interactions between individuals which would contribute

to a more detailed picture. In effect we only hear one side of the story, or view citizenship along one particular axis.

Therefore, to help address the supplementary research question 'In what ways do horizontal and vertical perspectives enhance our understanding of what it means to be a citizen of Latvia today?', section 2.3 of the chapter will incorporate a discussion around the theoretical advantages of drawing upon lived citizenship as a basis for exploring a more multi-dimensional approach. By drawing on the work of scholars who view lived citizenship as a valuable tool, this thesis will position individuals within a wider environment of daily 'lived' interactions, incorporating points of intersection between vertical and horizontal perspectives. This approach, in turn, creates space for the supplementary questions of 'How has structural political change impacted on citizenship and on the formation of a wider community of Latvia?' and 'Do we see the emergence of a broader 'Latvian community' whereby individuals see themselves as 'belonging' not only to Latvia, but to each other, beyond divisions of ethnicity and formal citizenship?' to be answered, drawing from the testimony of lived experiences, as explored within the empirical chapters.

In applying a 'lived citizenship' approach, it is then possible to consider the ways in which individuals negotiate their relationships and experiences with the state and each other, and subsequently construct their 'imagined' community. Section 2.4 moves onto a theoretical discussion on concepts such as 'community', 'identity' and 'belonging' and positions concepts of citizenship therein. Against a narrative of the ethnicisation of legal and formal citizenship in Latvia, applying the theoretical lens of 'lived citizenship' also allows for grass roots experiences and horizontal perspectives to be incorporated into the wider citizenship debate in Latvia, adding a new dimension to supplement existing top-down assessments. This thesis therefore brings a fresh approach to the debate around what constitutes Latvian citizenship whilst simultaneously contributing to broader themes of citizenship, belonging, identity and community.

2.2 Citizenship as a Theoretical Framework

Applying a theoretical framework based upon constructs of citizenship is often cited as "a useful concept for exploring the problems of belonging, identity and personality in the modern world" (Turner 1993 ix). It has been observed that "whatever the problem- be it a decline in voting, increased teenage pregnancies or climate change – someone has canvassed the revitalization of citizenship as part of the solution" (Bellamy and Palumbo 2010 p.xi). Therefore, to consider the question 'What does Latvian citizenship look like today?', it is efficacious to delve into the many theoretical conceptualisations of citizenship, and to draw out the ways in which citizenship lends itself as a valuable framework from which to conduct empirical investigation.

It is widely accepted that the concept of citizenship has existed since classical times, and for many authors the origins of citizenship can be traced back to early Greek and Roman political culture. As argued by Turner, "Athens provided a normative model' and this followed through into the Roman era" (Turner 1993 p.1). Within classical models of citizenship, celebrated philosopher Aristotle advocated the idea that "participation in public life was crucial to the full and proper development of the human personality" (Heater 2004 p.3). Man, whom he identified as being a political animal due to his capacity for speech and for the ability to perceive moral concepts such as good and evil, was bound by nature to engage in matters of state (Aristotle translated by Sinclair ed 1992 p.60). This construct developed through the Roman era and a 'citizen' came to mean someone "free to act by law, free to ask and expect the law's protection, a citizen of such and such a legal community of such and such a legal standing in that community" (Pocock in Beiner, 1995 pp.34-36). Pocock (1995) espouses that this shift "brought about some equation of the 'citizen' with the 'subject' in defining him as the member of a community of law" (Pocock in Beiner 1995 p.38) in line with the thinking of Roman jurist Gaius. By legitimising citizenship within the constructs of a legal framework, both the individual and the state could benefit. A citizen could "claim protection and privilege as well as offering allegiance and obedience" within an early model of the social contract (Pocock in Beiner 1995 p.36). This Gain formula, as suggested by Pocock (1995) formed the basis of liberal politics and a liberal ideal of citizenship during the early and modern historical periods (Pocock in Beiner 1995 p.43).

However, this unfinished argument between Aristotelian and Gain models is not without its problems and, as Walzer (1996) argues, this classical argument leads to "two different understandings of what it means to be a citizen" (Walzer in Dauenhauer 1996 p.6). These two contrasting aspects form a central feature of this research, as elements contained therein continue to resonate within Latvia's own debate on citizenship. The first aspect emerging from the classical debate describes citizenship as "an office, a responsibility, a burden proudly assumed, whilst the second aspect denotes citizenship as a status, an entitlement, a right or a set of rights passively enjoyed" (Walzer in Dauenhauer 1996 p.6). Certainly, within Latvia, it has become clear that both rights and responsibilities, and the notion of affiliation towards a package of responsibilities, has been entrenched in the wider context of ethnicity, due to the granting of legal citizenship, primarily focused on the heritage of the individual. Despite Man being deemed a political animal in the classical model and the participation of the individual in political life being seen as beneficial, the reality of formal exclusion and legal disenfranchisement has continued into modern times and remains a reality for many in Latvia today. Central to this research, therefore, is the question of whether a sense of citizenship and civic responsibility emerge where an individual has no historical and ethnic affiliation to the State. Conversely, it also makes sense to question whether possession of a set of legally granted rights and assumed responsibilities based on ethnic lineage consolidates any form of affiliation to a political community.

To consider the ways in which citizenship has traditionally been used as a theoretical measurement of enquiry, it is valuable to consider the evolution of the theoretical structure of citizenship from classical times. One of the most notable dichotomies that can be traced from the classical period to modern times in relation to citizenship is the separation of what can be defined as 'public' and 'private' modes. As noted by Burchill (1995), rival models of citizenship tend to be "organised by a series of oppositions: between active and passive citizenship, between a citizenship focused on the public sphere and one focused on the private, between liberal-individualist and communitarian impulses, between an emphasis on duties and one on rights, and so on" (Burchell 1995 p.541). Within the literature, active citizenship is seen as a practice of citizenship, more in line with the Gain legislative model, whilst passive citizenship is distinctly primordial and viewed less of a duty and more as a type

of status (Burchell 1995 p.544). By drawing from the testimony of lived experience, this research will ascertain whether identification of, and engagement with, the concept of citizenship leads to specific patterns that can be described as 'public and active' or 'private or passive'.

Modern conceptualisations of citizenship outline the expectations of what the state will provide for the citizenry and what the citizenry can expect from the state, and draws heavily on the work of Thomas H Marshall (1950). Marshall (1950) describes citizenship as a status which is bestowed on those who are full members of a community, with those who possess this status being equal in terms of the rights afforded and the responsibilities expected to be shouldered (Marshall 1950 p.18). This conceptional relationship is perhaps best defined by Turner (1993) who notes:

> '*From the perspective of political philosophy and constitutional law, citizenship is normally defined as a bundle of rights and duties relating to an individual as a member of a political community. These rights and duties in practice typically refer to a passport holding or tax paying member of the state. More precisely still, within the dominant paradigm of Western social democracies, a citizen is an economically employed member of the society who is able to discharge duties to a household in return for which he (or less frequently she) is the recipient of social rights to welfare state benefits, unemployment payments and service supplements*' (Turner 1993 pp x-xi preface).

This paradigm of citizenship has particular resonance within the Latvian debate as ethnicity has traditionally been seen as the key determinant of the political community and legal citizenship. This has, in turn, fed into a broader subtext of identity and belonging and of inclusion and exclusion. Linz and Stepan (2010) note that understandings of citizenship are closely linked to identifications with a state and that "the territorial boundaries of a state must coincide with the perceived cultural boundaries of a nation" (Linz and Stepan 2010 p.50). This tension around what constitutes a citizen plays out in the wider context of state and nation building. Citizenship, within the context of state and nation building studies, is

broadly broken down into two distinct forms, namely 'ethnic citizenship' and 'civic citizenship'. As outlined by Kohn (1944), ethnic citizenship, is linked to the development of a nation state, and asserts that ethnic status or ancestry determine who is accepted as a full member of the community of citizens (Kohn 1944 ed. Reeskens Hooghe 2010). The ethnic form of citizenship, as adopted by post-Soviet Latvia, espouses that "the inherent development of a national identification contributes to the legitimisation of authority in a modern state by providing an emotionally compelling answer to the question of who constitutes the 'people'" (Cronin 2003 p. 3). Latvia, as a nationalising state, has pursued the ethnic citizenship route, rejecting the so called 'zero option' which would grant citizenship to anyone who had resided in the republic at the point of independence, and adopting a more 'exclusionist' approach towards the granting of formal citizenship (Purs 2012 p. 94). This contrasts sharply with the civic model wherein it is stated that "civic citizenship is considered as more open and inherently political with the main criterion adopted to distinguish citizens from non-citizens being the adherence to legal norms" (Kohn 1944, ed. Reeskens Hooghe 2010).

However contentious it may be, post-Soviet Latvia's initial model of legalised ethnic citizenship aligns with traditional thinking, which situates and positions definitions of citizenship within the territorial confines of states themselves. Authors such as Brubaker (1992) suggest that traditional approaches to citizenship see the concept as an international filing system, a mechanism for allocating persons to states. Whether concerned with ethnic or civic models, the state determines the nature and construct of its citizenry, regardless of whichever form of citizenship it chooses to adopt. It is becoming clear, however, that locating a citizenry within the narrow confines of a defined territory has become increasingly problematic on a number of levels. By focusing on citizenship as predominantly linked to a territorial place, in most cases assumed to be the state, traditional approaches to citizenship can overlook the impact that modernity and globalisation has had upon recognised state borders, with transnational commerce and supranational politics redefining our world, and in turn affecting traditional constructs of citizenship. Laitin (2005) draws our attention to changes within the field of social science, which demonstrate "that ethnic and national identities can shift dramatically from one generation to the other, all the more so when

political boundaries are in flux" (Laitin in Budryte 2005 p. 26). A supplementary research question then arises, namely 'How has structural political change impacted on citizenship and on the formation of a wider community of Latvia?' Some authors point to concepts such as 'earned citizenship' for those migrants who have secured access to the labour market and can then subsequently lay claim to the rights of their host country (Le Feuvre and Roseneil 2014 p.536). Traditional constructs of citizenship therefore are not always entirely helpful in taking into account more recent structural changes. For Latvia, structural change such as EU membership has led to large scale outward migration, the result of which does have a significant bearing upon Latvia's present and will extend into Latvia's future. Kallio et al. (2020) note that "while territorial notions of citizenship remain significant in shaping the contexts in which people relate to one another in the everyday" a new approach is needed which "enriches and deepens our understandings of citizenship as experienced beyond the nation-state or territorial boundaries" (Kallio et al 2020 p.74).

At the beginning of the 21st century, definitions of citizenship become more complex, incorporating elements that apply both concurrently and independently to individuals and groups. There are numerous definitions of citizenship and these "proliferate continuously, from dual and transnational citizenship, to corporate citizenship and global citizenship" (Bellamy and Palumbo 2010 p. xi). Emerging from feminist literature, there have also been calls to look more broadly and inclusively at citizenship, with authors such as Lister (2007) advocating that contemporary approaches should meet the "theoretical challenge to work with an ethos of pluralization" (Lister 2007 p.52). This includes taking into account issues of gender, sexuality, poverty and disability, for example, to construct a wider and more nuanced understanding of citizenship which incorporates more marginalised realities (Lister 2007). It is also helpful here to consider some more contemporary approaches to citizenship which link the construct of citizenship, not only to rights and responsibilities, but to identity formation. Authors such as Joppke (2007), advocate that we should see "citizenship as identity, which refers to the behavioural aspects of individuals acting and conceiving of themselves as members of a collectivity" (Joppke, 2007 cited Kock and Villadsen 2017). Bacchi and Beasley (2002), link the importance of social policy making decisions to the physical representation of self, namely the body, and note that the macro level policy does

not always meet the micro level need of the individual (Bacchi and Beasley, 2002 p. 328). Incorporating what is needed to practice citizenship, discursive conceptualisation lends itself to Lister's advocated framework of 'multi-tiered' analysis which expands into "the terrain of citizenship to embrace also the intimate and domestic, the local, the urban, the regional and the global" (Lister 2007 p. 55). Within this 'lived citizenship' framework, analysis is conducted by including the perspective and needs of the individual alongside existing narratives and is the central approach adopted within this research. This approach will be further discussed in section 2.3, and it is argued that it is from the inclusion of more discursive elements of citizenship that a more nuanced picture emerges.

To help look at possible ways in which citizenship exhibits nuanced characteristics beyond territorial boundaries and ethnicity, this research will utilise three core elements identified by Marshall (1950) which intersect within the wider conceptualisation of citizenship, these being a political element, an economic or socio-economic element and the civic or social element. Although Marshall's (1950) work has been heavily criticised, primarily due to the way in which it fails to take account of the flexibility of social membership (Jašina-Schäfer and Cheskin 2020 p. 95), and secondly due to the anglo-centric nature of its modelling (Mann in Bellamy and Palumbo 2010 p. 27), applying the three-dimensional aspect of political, economic and civic of citizenship, is seen as valuable within this work's theoretical framework. These three aspects cut across both top-down and bottom-up horizontal perspectives and allow for analysis within the empirical research. As such, interview questions were designed to incorporate examination of how Marshall's three core aspects of citizenship are reflected across lived daily experiences and whether these experiences subsequently contrast with traditional constructs of citizenship. Whilst some scholars have critiqued "the burgeoning trans-disciplinary literatures that have drawn on the tripartite conceptualization of civil, political, and social citizenship" proposed by Marshall (1950), the lack of direct references to less explored constructs of citizenship, identified in more recent work (Le Feuvre and Roseneil 2014 p. 535) will be incorporated within the methodological approach to data collection. This approach also responds to Lister's (2007) call to examine nuances across more marginalised themes and groups.

As part of the conceptual framework and to further highlight any nuances emerging, theoretical consideration has also been given to the work of Beiner (1995) as this work, in critiquing traditional approaches to questions of nationalism and liberalism attempts to move the citizenship debate forward. Within Beiner's (1995) work, addressing a crisis of citizenship as the Cold War ended, he identifies three distinct pillars or models of a political community. The 'Communitarian' pillar is closely linked to ethnicised perspectives of Latvia's citizenship debate, emphasising solidarity within the cultural or ethnic group through shared history or tradition and the capacity of this group to confer aspects of this identity upon 'outsiders' (Beiner 1995 p.13). The 'Liberal' pillar emphasises the individual's capacity to transcend group or collective identity and moves firmly away from constructs of fixed identity, allowing space for the individual to define and redefine their own identity (Beiner 1995 p.13). Beiner (1995) expresses shortcomings in these two pillars noting that "liberalism is correct in its diagnosis of what's wrong with nationalism, and nationalism is therefore correct in its diagnosis of what's wrong with liberalism" (Beiner 1995 p.16). He also states that:

> '*both of the above competing perspectives jeopardise the idea of a political community that is reducible neither to an aggregation of individuals nor to a conjunction of identity-constituting groups. That is, both liberal and communitarian theories pose threats to the idea of citizenship as I understand it*' (Beiner 1995 p. 14).

In attempting to answer the question as to whether there is an alternative third option which is applicable and practical, Beiner (1995) then moves onto to outline his 'Republican' pillar which emphasises 'civic' bonds (Beiner 1995 p. 14). This republican model of citizenship provides a useful tool for analysis when considering the question 'Do we see the emergence of a broader 'Latvian community' whereby individuals see themselves as 'belonging' not only to Latvia, but to each other, beyond divisions of ethnicity and formal citizenship?'.

Central to this study is an exploration of non-ethicised perspectives, whilst simultaneously acknowledging the historical legacy which must be taken into consideration within the

Latvian case. When posing the question 'What does Latvian citizenship look like today?', a caveat should be issued, as not all residents of Latvia are afforded a legal citizenship status. However, this study, rather than focus on the complexity of this anomaly, seeks to consider whether, in spite of this anomaly, a form of common citizenship can emerge which transcends ethnicity, at least on a pragmatic civic everyday basis. In drawing upon Beiner's (1995) Republican model, there is scope to acknowledge that there may not be an equal balance of rights in Latvia, as is advocated with a more liberal model of citizenship; however, there is scope to evaluate any variance and to consider the ability of the individual to pursue these rights. Beiner's (1995) Republican model, alongside the concept of discursive citizenship (Kock and Villadsen 2017) is also helpful when measuring citizenship beyond a state-centric definition of citizenship and is commonly advocated when looking at the multiplicity of citizenship constructs, notably within global and transnational spheres (Miller 2000 p. 82).

The constant evolution of defining and redefining of citizenship is an important aspect of our understanding of our social world, with Dauenhauer (1996) observing that "the capacity for citizenship can never become a definitive attainment. No individual or small group can guarantee a sufficiently inclusive shared will to make citizenship possible" (Dauenhauer 1996 p. 4). As such, and as highlighted by contemporary scholars, citizenship is "a concept that therefore lends itself to both empirical investigation and normative evaluation and critique" (Le Feuvre and Roseneil 2014 p. 530). Exploring distinctions between ethnic and civic and also public and private aspects of citizenship, as well as between incorporating a broader scope of more marginalised themes, provides a useful framework for developing more nuanced understandings of Latvian citizenship today. The application of a lived citizenship approach is helpful here and will be discussed in the following section 2.3.

2.3 Multidimensional Realities Through a Lived Citizenship Approach

Despite continued interest in the concept of citizenship and the field of citizenship studies, there is currently a need to pause and reflect upon traditional, state-centric constructs of citizenship, and to ask whether these are effective in drawing an accurate picture of

citizenship when measured against everyday experiences and realities. As shown in section 2.2, the core problem is addressing any definition of citizenship is that understandings vary widely and encompass a broad range of behaviours, practices and definitions. Citizenship manifests in a multidimensional context, incorporating economic, social and emotional dimensions, as well as factoring in additional facets such as gender, sexuality and broader concepts of identity and belonging (Wood 2014, Kallio et al. 2020). Furthermore, many behaviours, practices and definitions associated with citizenship operate in different ways within different spaces, namely within the public and private spheres (Knop 2008). It is advocated that when examining citizenship as a theoretical concept, we need to take into account different perspectives and include examination of different contexts and spheres. Practices and behaviours associated with citizenship are not restricted to the top-heavy narratives of those in power but exist in the everyday. Kock and Villadsen (2017) highlight that understanding these practices as 'lived citizenship' must not be limited to:

> '*elite actors such as politicians, journalists, etc., but also by 'lay' citizens whose participation can range from actively communicating to a greater public to more 'passive', critical participation in public debate in the form of reception and assessment of the rhetoric they are presented with*' (Kock and Villadsen 2017 p. 571).

The case is made that we must seek to understand citizenship not only by applying vertical top-down perspectives, but by also applying a more horizontal and grassroots approach to further our understanding of how individuals view their relationships with cultural, political and economic ties to the state as part of their identity formation. Lived citizenship and the inclusion of the discursive, that is the fabric of how individuals talk about citizenship, is called for (Kock and Villadsen 2017 p. 572). As profound societal changes continue to occur within both newly established and long-standing polities, then the need to draw a more nuanced picture becomes increasingly important. A continued dominance of state-centric, top-down narratives within the citizenship debate narrows and obscures a more inclusive and multidimensional view of citizenship. It is therefore valuable to explore citizenship from a micro level perspective and to draw from the experiences of the day-to-day, and in doing so

acknowledging the potential for flexibility in social membership as moulded by lived experiences.

Lived citizenship is a useful approach to apply when considering empirical grass roots or micro level research. Lived citizenship reflects a "desire to expose the ordinary and the everyday, to demonstrate the ways in which the state is enmeshed into these spheres and to highlight the political possibility of such spaces" (Staeheli in Kallio et al 2020 p. 715). There is also a need to incorporate more marginalised voices and contexts. Lived citizenship, as outlined by authors such as Kallio and Lister (2007) incorporates the politics of difference and "it provides a bridge between generic phenomenological studies and the more political focus" (Kallio et al 2020 p. 715). This is particularly helpful given the rhetoric of ethnic difference and political marginalisation in Latvia and the intention of this research is to look beyond the rhetoric towards reality. What is problematic in the traditional approach to Latvian citizenship, as reflected in the wider literature, is that the focus remains on contextualising citizenship into two clearly defined groups or categories based on ethnicity. Outlined by Youkhana (2015), "taking pre-defined cultural, political, or social groups as obvious 'units of analysis' is an established paradigm that emanates from the assumption that the same regularities exist in the social world as in the natural world" (Youkhana 2015 p. 11). However, this approach does not allow for the increased likelihood of the complexity and idiosyncrasy of the social world relative to the natural world. It also does not take into account the element of individual agency or the complexities of identity formation and the context in which this occurs.

Derived from and adopted by a wide range of academic disciplines, and additionally including a number of critical positions such as 'feminist, queer, Marxist, post-colonial, anti-racist, cultural studies and other critical theories', the focus of lived citizenship is to explore the everyday realities of ordinary people within their natural contexts (Kallio et al 2020 p. 715). Furthermore, emerging from the field of lived citizenship, we see an emphasis on four core values of 'justice, recognition, self-determination and solidarity' allowing for a more inclusive view and a move away from more traditional and vertically attributed group classifications (Lister 2007 pp.50-51). The benefit of adopting the theoretical approach of lived citizenship is highlighted by Le Feuvre and Roseneil (2014) who note:

> '*scholars have embraced the concept for its potential to offer a lens on a wide-ranging set of practices and processes of inclusion and exclusion, recognition and misrecognition, participation, freedom and oppression, in relation to civil society and everyday life*' (Le Feuvre and Roseneil 2013 pp. 529-530).

Therefore, in attempting to answer the research questions posed within this thesis, and to ascertain whether, as laid out by Beiner (1995), there is a hybrid and multifaceted option when developing a construct of citizenship, the of lens of lived experience and the application of lived citizenship as a theoretical tool will be applied as a measure of analysis to explore opposing and often "artificially" imposed labels.

To understand the ways in which any labels manifest across both public and private spheres, the question 'in what ways do horizontal and vertical perspectives enhance our understandings of what it means to be a citizen of Latvia today?' has been posed within this research. Certainly, in theoretical terms, citizenship operates both vertically and horizontally (Mayo et al. 2013). Vertical perspectives take account of the legal framework of rights, evolving from the classical models of citizenship discussed in section 2.2. This framework of rights benefits citizens and is provided by the state in tandem with the assumed responsibilities and duties placed on citizens in relation to laying claim to those rights. Furthermore, as outlined by Bernstein (1999), a vertical discourse is hierarchical in nature, as the key agent is the state, and vertical perspectives therefore take "the form of a coherent, explicit, and systematically principled structure" and as such can often involve specialised outputs of evaluation contained within the work of the social sciences (Bernstein 1999 p. 159). The state approach is often focused on issues of legitimacy, and in Latvia's case, maintaining sovereignty as a newly restored polity has been a central focus of a citizenship debate which has manifested along ethnic lines. However, explorations of citizenship, which have tended to focus on the vertical axis, that is to say, looking at this relationship between state and the individual from a primarily 'top down' perspective, are problematic as they are all too often criticised for a perspective which fails to take into account individual agency and obscures the reality of lived experience within a democratic polity. The role of the individual

and any self-attributed labelling therefore also needs to be taken into account in evaluating what Latvian citizenship looks like today.

The horizontal approach can be seen to move away from the state as the key narrator of discourse and proceeds to reposition the narrative in a more localised context, drawing upon interactions and relationships of individuals within their own realm of experience (Bernstein 1999 p.159). Horizontal approaches concern themselves with how citizens see themselves in relation to a wider global community and are useful for overcoming some of the shortcomings of traditional vertical approaches (Mayo et al .2013); Bernstein (1999), contrasting the formation of vertical and horizontal discourse, notes that horizontal discourse is "contextually specific and 'context dependent', embedded in on-going practices…directed towards specific, immediate goals, highly relevant to the acquirer in the context of his/her life" (Bernstein 1999 p. 161). Increasingly within the social sciences, and more widely within the debate around citizenship, it is becoming more accepted that the horizontal perspective is of as much value and importance as traditional vertical approaches (Mayo et al 2013).

The context and content of a discourse, when viewed from a horizontal perspective, tends to be less specified, reflects common everyday practices and relates directly to a lived citizenship approach. Lister (2003) draws attention to the fact that through a lived citizenship approach we can delve deeper into understanding "less normative conceptions of citizenship and view the individual's relationship to the politics of identity in more pluralistic ways" (Kallio et al 2020 p. 716). Politics and the relationship to the political world operate within informal and domestic spaces as well as within a more formal context, and lived citizenship lends itself to answering more private and intimate questions relating to the impact of structural change (Kallio et al. 2020). From the early period of restored independence in the 1990s until now, Latvia has arguably dealt with ethnic identity on a political level via a nationalist political approach, with President Ulmanis campaigning for "the preservation of the Latvian nation to be a priority" (Morris 2004 p. 544). Yet for many in Latvia, it will be shown that outside the political rhetoric, self-preservation is arguably more important for many people, and that broader other issues, such as socio-economic policy, impact on how individuals perceive their relationship to the state and to each other. When considering the

question ‘How has structural political change impacted on citizenship and on the formation of a wider community of Latvia?’, for example, this research will examine whether individuals, when viewed beyond the social stratification of ethnicity in Latvia, and beyond other vertically imposed constructs, share similar day to day concerns, including financial and household economic worries, disillusionment with domestic politics, and wider social fears. This will be done by considering the points of intersection between both vertical and horizontal perspectives and by looking at how such themes are represented or manifest within both public and private spheres.

Within this research, the application of a lived citizenship approach, also provides scope to draw empirically upon the horizontal perspectives of members from both major ethnic communities in Latvia in order to move away from ideas of ‘group’ experience and bring the discussion back to the individual. Emphasised by Bellamy and Palumbo (2010), “over time the nature of the democratic political community and the qualities needed to be a citizen has changed” (Bellamy and Palumbo 2010 p. xi) and a more nuanced exploration of citizenship allows this to be evaluated. In Latvia, where the term ‘citizen’ is, in itself, particularly problematic due to the polarising ethnic debate, it is therefore pertinent to address concepts of citizenship and belonging in a different and a deeper manner than has previously been adopted within vertical approaches. To analyse any nuanced change, this thesis, by employing a lived citizenship approach, looks for the meaning that concepts such as citizenship have in people’s lives and considers how a range of different contexts; political, social and cultural, shapes realities (Lister 2003; Kallio et al. 2020).

Calls for the need to be able to evaluate citizenship by applying both vertical and horizontal perspectives, continues to gain momentum within the sphere of social sciences and the application of grassroots research as an approach is becoming more prevalent within the area of Baltic Studies (Cheskin 2013; Birka 2016; Ekmanis 2019). The requirement to broaden out from the traditional approaches to citizenship, which has been addressed by Jašina-Schäfer and Cheskin (2020), forms part of a growing body of work around new approaches to incorporating horizontal perspectives. They assert that “despite the broad range of foci, the meaning of citizenship has never been thoroughly deconstructed, decolonised or viewed

beyond the vertical, state-people relationship" (Jašina-Schäfer and Cheskin 2020 p. 96). Within academic publications and public discourse in relation to concepts of citizenship, community and belonging, perspectives tend to reflect the state agenda as the primary agent in determining the direction of any discussion around citizenship. Work conducted by Patrick (2012) highlights that this construct cuts across a range of contexts within the broader sphere of belonging and identity within the social sciences. Given examples include the workplace, where she observes "mainstream political discourses reinforce and sustain divisions between workers and non-workers in ways that exclude and stigmatise those not behaving as the Government would like" (Patrick 2012 p. 9). Furthermore, this top-down approach has a long history of making "distinctions between deserving and undeserving populations" (Patrick 2012 p. 9). In considering the case of citizenship in Latvia, Yuval-Davis (2011) highlights that "the nation state is the political project of nationalism and this is where the allocation of citizenship and citizenship rights meets imaginations of national belonging and a 'feeling of loyalty' within national boundaries" (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 81). This has led to citizenship being seen as bipartite when viewed vertically, with themes of legalised inclusion versus legalised exclusion being at the centre of any debate. Exclusion, from this perspective and within this context, further extends to exclude the possibility of a hybrid or multifaceted identity within the Latvian debate.

Critics of traditional citizenship would argue that the concept is often romanticised or idealised, with claims that political philosophy is "generally concerned with the figure of citizenship rather than with the concrete personae of citizens themselves" (Burchell 1995 p. 543). The work of Lulle and Jurkane-Hobein (2017) draws attention to the fluidity of identity, particularly within the context of place. Those within Latvia, who find that they have been attributed the label 'Russian speakers' by a political or social hierarchy of Latvia may not individually identify with this wider categorisation, perhaps seeing it as too broad, unrepresentative, or less likely to lead to integration and access to resources. However, as a result of the migratory experience these same individuals may be drawn to self-identification with the notion of 'Russian speakers from Latvia' (*Latvyici*) when outside the confines of the physical territory of Latvia where different political and societal structures exist (Lulle and Jurkane-Hobein 2017 p. 609). Furthermore, membership of the EU has brought a new

dimension to the citizenship debate beyond the narrow ethnic confines seen in Latvia. As highlighted by Faist "on the European level there are no rules such as the blood principle (*jus sanguinis*) and the territory principle (*jus soli*)" (Faist 2001 p. 39). The lived citizenship approach is one way in which we can consider how those bound or tied to a particular state view themselves within particular frames of citizenship whether within or outside the territory of a given state. There is space to consider whether there are gaps in political belonging and scope to "encompass the feelings, experiences, practices and actions of people outside the realm of formal politics" (Kallio et al 202 p. 714).

By placing emphasis on context, via a lived citizenship approach, citizenship extends beyond borders, on a spectrum from the local through to the global (Kallio et al 2020 p. 716). Authors such as Yuval-Davis (2006) notes that "social locations, however, even in their most stable format, are virtually never constructed along one power axis of difference, although official statistics as well as identity politics often tend to construct them in this way" (Yuval- Davis 2006 p. 200). When considering the question 'Do we see the emergence of a broader Latvian community whereby individuals see themselves as 'belonging' not only to Latvia, but to each other, beyond divisions of ethnicity and formal citizenship?', authors such as Agarin (2010) point out that "the bottom-up approach to democratisation identifies the role played by individuals and groups who, by their actions, legitimise democratic state polity" (Agarin 2010 p. 20). This argument for a restructured approach is evidenced within Winter's (2017) discussion of contemporary migration and policy making in which he expresses some frustration around the "blinkering factor" in the continued nation building discourse, which he finds ignores the aspect of human agency (Winter ed. Castles 2017 pp. 26-28). Within the sphere of identity, belonging and community within the social sciences, there are calls for a "conceptual shift from analytical categories with inherent spatiality, territoriality, and boundary marking to concepts based on movement and flow" (Youkhana 2005 p. 10). There is therefore clearly a need to relocate the discussion of citizenship in Latvia away from primarily statist and territorial perspectives and redress the imbalance of top-heavy narratives. In acknowledging the shortcomings of traditional thinking around conceptualisations of citizenship, the next section moves on to reposition the debate within the frames and communities of identity as constructed by individuals themselves.

2.4 Citizenship and 'Imagined' Communities

The theoretical rationale for engaging with the construct of community will be laid out within an exploration of existing works which have sought to define what constitutes a community and position the individual within that community, as viewed from both vertical and horizontal perspectives. This research considers the links between community theory and citizenship, drawing from a lived citizenship approach to explore concepts of belonging and identity, representation and inclusion. The following diagram has been constructed to represent the ways in which these concepts are related and highlights the points of intersection:

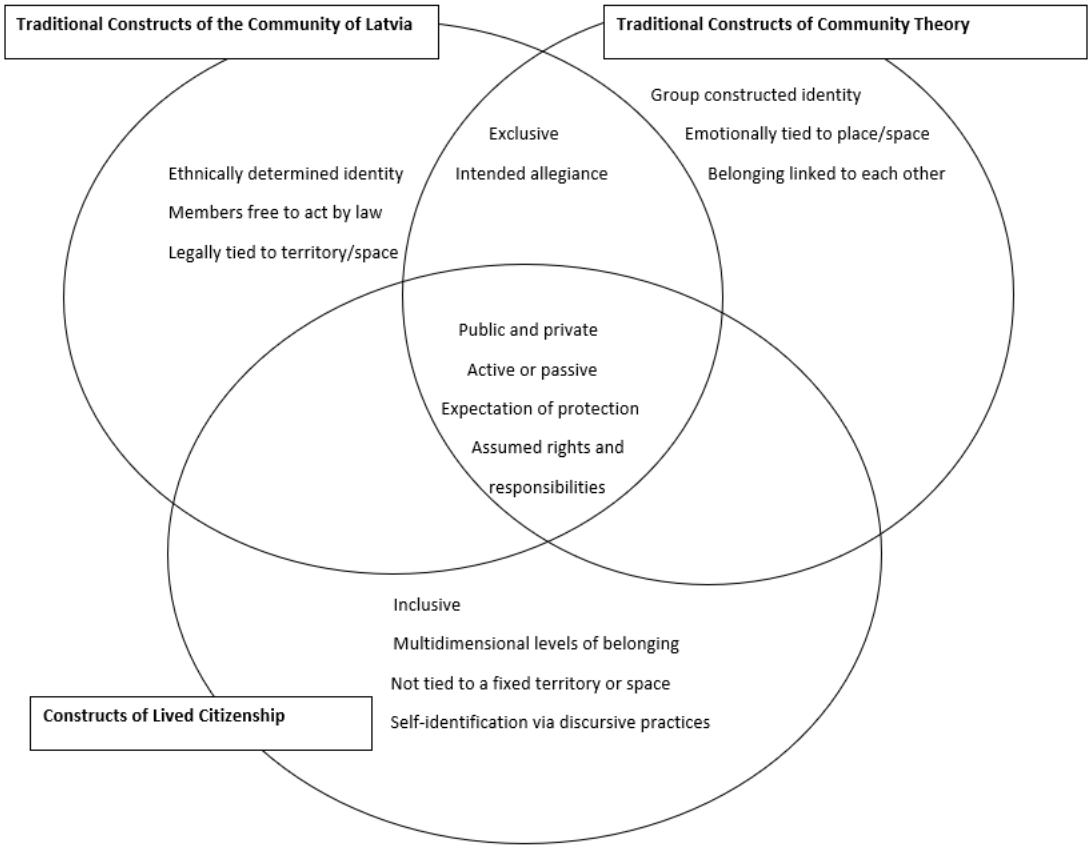


Figure 2.4.1 Relationships between community theory and citizenship concepts

The central question being asked in this research is 'What does Latvian citizenship look like today?', and this relates directly to those themes of identity, belonging and community. The links between theories and constructs of citizenship and community are clear as "citizenship is valued precisely because it denotes membership of a community and there will always be some who are excluded from that community" (Lister, 2003 in Patrick 2012 p. 6). Others draw our attention to the assumption that "citizenship connotes the institutionalization of generalized reciprocity and diffuse solidarity of members in a political community" (Faist 2001 p. 40). However, the problematic aspect of centering this discussion around a vertically constructed status or political formed community membership is that insufficient emphasis is placed on the horizontal feelings of 'belonging' to that community. Citizenship, when linked to community, tends "to focus on the aspect of status and to ignore the aspect of ties" (Faist 2001 p. 41). The context of Latvia provides fertile ground from which to explore concepts of ties, belonging and community, as viewed from both vertical and lesser researched horizontal perspectives.

Within the Latvia citizenship debate, the linkage between community and citizenship is clear. Here, the citizenship debate is synonymous with the vertical construction of a community along ethnic lines. The criteria for 'belonging' to the community of Latvia have been denoted by macro level political policies, with these policies formally including those with Latvian ethnicity, whilst formally excluding, from any wider political acceptance, those who cannot claim the same. From a vertical perspective, there is little space for any nuanced sense of membership of the community of Latvia, with citizens of Latvia having an assumed and formally recognised membership of the community of Latvia by default of their ethnicity. This position excludes any ambiguity in identifying as a citizen for those with, and also without, Latvian ethnicity, and also excludes more nuanced feelings of belonging for those who fall both within and outside this vertically constructed community of Latvia. It is therefore the aim of this thesis to uncouple the vertically constructed and formally recognised Latvian community from the horizontally constructed and discursively expressed community of Latvia. It will be shown, that an exploration of lived citizenship, which

considers the ways in which individuals imagine their own community of Latvia and construct any membership of that community, challenges a more normative representation of Latvian citizenship and brings a fresh approach to the Latvian citizenship debate.

Any contemporary study related to concepts of national identity or national community, is impossible to conclude without drawing upon both the original works and subsequent critiques of Anderson's (2006) 'imagined communities' or Brubaker's (2004) reflections on nationalism and patriotism. Simply defined, a community, imagined or otherwise is widely constructed as a group with a shared and inherent sense of belonging (Anderson 2006). As has been reflected upon in section 2.2, constructs of citizenship and recognised membership of a political community date back to classical times and tend to be viewed from the top down. Patrick (2012) notes, "how citizenship is framed and understood determines who is included and excluded from the citizenship community" (Patrick 2012 p. 6). Classical thinkers, such as Aristotle, wrestled with the categorization of 'true citizens' noting that "there were a number of exceptions to those who cannot justify claiming the title of citizen" (Heater 2004 p.4). Historically, schisms in relation to the notions of 'who belongs' were 'further exacerbated by the growth of literacy within the citizenry' with a lack of language skills and culture acting as exclusionary criteria from the ruling group (Held 2006). Elements of this classical conceptualisation of citizenship persist today, however this is problematic as this often leads to an ever-widening cleavage of those who belong and those who do not, most notably along the vertical axis.

The inherent tension of inclusion and exclusion relating to recognised legal citizenship and membership of a wider political community has not yet been fully resolved today for many and, within the scope of this research, it is clear that the historical conceptualisation of exclusionary citizenship based on language and culture rumbles on as part of the Latvian citizenship debate. In applying a lived citizenship approach however, this work will add significant new empirical data to help respond to the question 'What does Latvian citizenship look like today?' by incorporating grassroots or horizontal perspectives to sit alongside traditional thinking.

The debate around what constitutes the components parts of the political community of Latvia has centred around claims of ethnic exclusion, yet little detail of what constitutes a broader sense of inclusion beyond the confines of ethnicity within Latvia is evident in the literature. Community theory, in relation to inclusion, points to membership being "a feeling that one has invested part of oneself to become a member and therefore has a right to belong" (McMillan and Chavis 1986 p. 9). Exclusionary practices are also evident in community theory. Membership and belonging are based on parameters which subdivide individuals into groups or categories or, as expressed by McMillan and Chavis (1986), membership "itself includes boundaries that delimit "us" from "them," creates emotional safety, a sense of confidence and identification" (McMillan and Chavis 1986 p. 9). Youkhana (2015), in her work on conceptual shifts in politics, points to scholars such as Antonsich (2010) and Yuval-Davis (2010) who argue that traditionally within the social sciences, belonging is "viewed as a self-explanatory term that subdivides societies into categories such as nations, cultures, classes, ethnicities, and sexualities" (Youkhana 2015 p. 11). Clearly the exclusionary practices associated with subdivisions of this type, which in Latvia's case is the primary subdivision of ethnicity, becomes problematic. McMillan and Chavis (1986) assert that influence as represented by having a sense that your voice matters and counts, contributes to a sense of belonging (McMillan and Chavis 1986 p. 12). This suggests that where individuals have a say in deciding the fate of the group and feel that they have a degree of influence in the decision-making process, belonging is stronger than when contrasted with those without a say, or with those who are experiencing ostracization within the political sphere. Within the Latvian citizenship debate, many Russian speaking residents have found themselves ostracized from the dominant ethnic group on the grounds of language and culture.

There is some tension within the wider debate around community theory surrounding inclusionary and exclusionary or group classifications or identification. By creating group labels, this form of socially constructed division exists as a boundary to membership and can negatively impact upon assumptions of equality. Others suggest that this element of constructed division is important to provide recognition for marginalised groups. Yuval-Davis (2006) states that "social divisions are crucial and rendering them visible needs to be an

important political project" in order to create emancipation of marginalised groups (Yuval-Davis 2006 p. 201). The approach of categorising groups based on ethnicity has been an important tool for highlighting marginalisation and inequality in Latvia, yet this has traditionally been approached from a vertical perspective.

Whatever the position on applying labels, it is accepted that constructs of community form around the explicit or tacit understanding "that members' needs will be met by the resources received through their membership in the group" (McMillan and Chavis 1986 p. 9). Conversely, those without membership are excluded from having their needs met or having access to resources. The citizenship debate in Latvia centres around these themes of exclusion from a political and arguably socio-economic community, with non-citizens denied voting rights alongside experiencing difficulties in accessing employment and resources due to linguistic and ethnic barriers, as was discussed in Chapter 1. Brubaker (2004) argues that such examples of "ethnic classification depersonalises individuals by transforming them from unique persons to exemplars of named groups" (Brubaker 2004 p.74). The construction of community within the context of the Latvian citizenship debate, framed around vertical constructs of ethnic classification, does just that and subsequently does little to give us a picture of individual realities.

The lived citizenship approach presents an opportunity to test the strength of group and self-identification, alongside themes of inclusion or marginalisation, evident in community theory, as applied, for example, in the work of Birka (2016) when testing feelings of emotional attachment to Russia and Latvia. The debate around what constitutes the component parts of the political community of Latvia has centred around claims of exclusion, as well as embodying the practices of inclusion for those recognised as part of that community. By deconstructing top-down conceptualisations of what constitutes the Latvian community, this research will seek to look beyond the demarcation of ethnicity as an indicator of belonging and will instead look to lived realities as a more reflective indicator. The research aims to tease out the nuances of how individuals themselves define belonging and their communities of belonging, despite the labels of legal status or national identity hitherto attached to them. In the specific case of Latvia, constructs of identity and common

representations of ethicised groups have proved problematic, with new approach advocates such as Ekmanis (2019) highlighting that groupings and terms such as "'Russian speaker', not only ignore aspects of mixed heritage or multilingualism, but further ignores the 'multi-ethnic reality of most of Latvia's residents, including 'ethnic Latvians' themselves" (Ekmanis 2019 p. 73). The aim of this research is to consider how individuals view themselves and to identify self-attributed groups and labels. This thesis is keen not to position individuals within particular groups or to assign pre-determined labels, but as is clear from any reading of the literature around citizenship in Latvia, it is impossible to ignore ethnicity as a factor within civic and social development. It is acknowledged that the dominance of state-centric vertical perspectives will have a bearing on any negotiation an individual will need to undertake when constructing their own perspectives around citizenship, group identification, community membership and belonging. As put forward by Brubaker (2004), identification is required to be conducted by 'identifiers' as agents themselves, whether by persons or institutions, (Brubaker 2004 p. 43) and as such, drawing on lived citizenship affords an opportunity for this to be enacted. By drawing out individual negotiations and perceptions of identity rather than placing participants within particular categories, the gathering of horizontal perspectives through the framework of lived citizenship provides space for more individual agency in regard to self-identification and adds to understanding how new communities of belonging may be being constructed.

As part of the exploration of self-identification and themes such as emotional connectedness, rootedness and belonging, this thesis asks, 'Do we see the emergence of a broader 'Latvian community' whereby individuals see themselves as 'belonging' not only to Latvia, but to each other, beyond divisions of ethnicity and formal citizenship?'. Despite individuals being bound to binary ethnic stratification from a top-down perspective, there is a sense of growing non-ethnicised disconnect from politics and from broader political rhetoric. Agarin (2011) directs us to the idea "that ethnic cleavages within Latvian society are a major reason for dwindling political participation and decreasing satisfaction with the state of Latvia's democracy among both Latvians and Russian speakers alike" (Agarin 2011 p. 570), and this is an area of interest for this research. This disconnect would appear to be an anomaly of the development of the Latvian political community when viewed from a vertical perspective; however, this example

does serve to highlight that lived experience, when measured against Beiner's (1995) three pillars of citizenship, is not as clear cut as theoretical social stratifications would have us believe. Where traditional thinking may lead to seeing citizenship or membership of a given community and associated loyalty and affiliation as being a fixed status, lived citizenship allows scholars to account for a "blurring or softening of lines by relating context to the content" (Kallio et al 2020 p. 716). Lived citizenship also creates space for any variance in degrees of membership to be explored and plurality of membership to be expressed (Kallio et al 2020 p. 716). The changing structures of the social world experienced in the late twentieth century and the ongoing evolution towards a globalised world are further driving calls for a new way of looking at the traditionally constructed communities and concepts of belonging.

Simply defined, 'community' is borne of a sense of emotional attachment to a particular location or area (McMillan and Chavis 1986 pp.8-14). It is within a given context that practices and activities of community take place, and traditional thinking locates this context within geographical boundaries. Community theory tends to outline "a range of mutually reinforcing factors, which contribute to the development of human bonds within a defined territory (place) resulting in feelings of belonging" (Birka 2016 pp. 222-223). It is from the outcome of these mutually reinforcing factors that 'community' is understood. In this vein, Youkhana (2015) explores the construct of place through the work of Antonsich (2012) and Yuval-Davis (2006), noting that place can be, a symbolic space offering familiarity, comfort and security, as well as a space to come back to. Place can also quite simply be a space which is known as 'home'. These more recent conceptualisations align with key works on defining concepts and frameworks of 'community' such as that by McMillan and Chavis (1986). They state that here are core elements which build into any definition of community, with a central aspect aligning individuals or groups to a territorial or geographical sense of community, that is to say that the community "exists" and relates belonging to a place. A less tangible aspect of community theory is an emotional aspect, which relates to human relationships and interactions, contributing to a sense of belonging, which individuals experience within the realm of 'place' (McMillan and Chavis 1986 pp. 8-14). It is within this context that lived citizenship can expand knowledge by tapping into individual experience.

There is some crossover between community theory and traditional constructs of citizenship which emphasise the significance of territorial space in terms of relating to concepts of legitimising belonging and membership. Positioning 'community' within a 'place' relates to broader theoretical concepts of identity. Identity, as pointed out within the literature, is a highly contested term creating much discussion as to the effectiveness of its use within particular analytical frameworks (Yuval-Davis 2010 p. 261-262). It has been highlighted that a central difficulty around the theoretical concept of identity within frameworks of belonging and community, is that 'naturalised concepts of belonging' remain the dominant descriptor within the social sciences in terms of expressing identity (Youkhana 2015 p. 10). Traditional approaches towards 'identity', linked to formal citizenship and 'naturalised belonging' therefore become particularly problematic when looking at Latvia, given the challenging nature of Latvia's most recent history, and the ethnicisation of legal citizenship contextualised in Chapter 1. The continued narrative around constructs of identity within Latvia remains focused on the defining of individuals respective to the territory 'where' they have originated from, and perceptions of identity remain overwhelmingly informed by looking at the past.

Contrasting variances in the context of 'place' and the individual's sense of belonging to, and identifying with those 'places' whether geographically, emotionally, or both, is at the heart of this research. Aligning community to 'place', comes with challenges when that place is bound by territorial borders and a broader and more nuanced understanding of 'place' is required. This territorial aspect of community and belonging to that community can be impacted or challenged by external factors, such as outward migration, as has been experienced quite dramatically within Latvia since attaining EU membership. This fundamental change has had a significant bearing upon Latvia's present and will extend beyond into Latvia's future. Inward migration, a central thread of Latvia's troubled historical relationship with constructions of citizenship, is predominantly discussed in the literature in relation to the Soviet period. However, smaller pockets of inward migration, such as refugee resettlement obligations, have also arisen from EU membership, challenging existing understanding of how individuals might view themselves and others in relation to 'place'. The question 'How has

structural political change impacted on citizenship and on the formation of a wider community of Latvia?' is therefore framed against these contextual problems. As advocated by Kymlicka and Norman (2010), there is "the need to revise the current definition of citizenship to accommodate the increasing social and pluralism of modern societies" (Kymlicka and Norman in Bellamy et al 2010 p. 46).

Of particular interest within this research is the work of scholars who emphasise that emotional connections and spiritual links to a place can emerge and "resonate in the identification of a community, and its territory, as homeland or fatherland even if the ethnic roots of the individual are somewhere else" (Birka 2016 pp. 222-223). Whilst the construct of national citizenship remains highly dependent on the perspectives of the nation state, this perception can lead to the fracturing of what the community is in reality, as the national perspectives do not take account of renegotiated constructs of citizenship at the grassroots level (Mayo et al 2013). Drawing on Schattle (2008) it is emphasized that 'like it or not, individuals all over the world are choosing to think of themselves as global citizens and shape their lives as members and participants in communities reaching out to all humanities" (Mayo et al 2013). Top-down narratives may be seen to be slowly evolving to take into account community membership based on 'situation' or 'residential' status, however, top-down perspectives are reluctant to extend to including former residents of Latvia, now residing elsewhere, as part of a wider membership criteria applied to the community of Latvia. The application of lived citizenship and the inclusion of grass roots experiences will be effective tools to employ when examining the extent to which an individual's relationship to a territorial place may be impacted or challenged by positive or negative experiences within the sphere of 'place' arising from structural change.

New thinking dictates that whilst space and place remain important, "the key determinant of whether or not an action constitutes citizenship should be what a person does and with what public consequences, rather than where they do it" (Lister 2007 p. 57). In order to develop a cohesive community, it is suggested that individuals require "a personal investment and willingness to engage in contact" (McMillan and Chavis 1986 p. 9). Kymlica and Norman (2010) suggest that the "health and stability of a modern democracy depends not only upon

the justice of its basic structure, but on the qualities and attitudes of its citizens and the ways in which they view their position and attitudes towards competing pressures, challenges and identities" (Kymlicka and Norman in Bellamy et al 2010 pp. 43-44). However, little mention of interaction or positive relations between the vertically presented disparate ethnic communities of Latvia is made with the existing literature. With scholars advocating that community functions successfully where levels of personal investment are frequent, positive and based on interactions which seek to build an emotional connection and a spiritual bond between members (McMillan and Chavis 1986 p. 14) it is felt that a more nuanced and representative picture of everyday interactions can be achieved through a grass roots approach and can relay a more positive picture of Latvian community development and community affiliation. It is helpful to draw on interactions which take place privately versus publicly, contrasting trends to ascertain if there is any change in the fabric of who feels they 'belong' to Latvia and to ascertain whether ethnicity, place and political rhetoric is becoming less of a factor within this relationship, at least at the horizontal level.

2.5 Chapter Conclusions

This thesis addresses the need for an approach to understand what citizenship means today in Latvia which takes into account not only existing theoretical positions around membership of a community, but which also engages these models within the practices of membership for a more rounded and inclusive understanding. The theoretical approach centres around contrasting aspects of Latvia's political, socio-economic and civic and social development as outlined within Marshall's (1950) wider theory of citizenship, with the model of communitarian citizenship outlined by Beiner (1995). There is, of course, an interplay between all three of these three elements of citizenship highlighted by Marshall (1950) and they do not sit independently aloof from each other within the realm of 'lived citizenship'. In reality, each aspect informs another. However, the pulling apart of these three distinct aspects and examining a set of themes within each, through the lens of lived citizenship allows for a depth of introspection into how each has impacted on the daily lives of individuals and fed into a wider construct of contemporary citizenship.

In order to answer the research question 'What does Latvian citizenship look like today?', applying a lived citizenship approach creates a broader scope from which to explore the multiplicity of citizenship and incorporate themes of identity, belonging and community across both public and private spheres. Although much of the existing literature and evaluation of Latvian citizenship has centred on a discourse of ethnic exclusion and marginalisation, citizenship manifests in many different ways and its inclusionary and exclusionary practices are only one piece of the 'belonging' jigsaw within today's transnational, supranational and global world. Exploring the ways in which the concept of citizenship continues to evolve in relation to traditional constructs via top down (vertical) or bottom up (horizontal) perspectives is a useful framework for considering the multifaceted nature of citizenship and drawing a more inclusive picture.

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The initial two chapters of this thesis detail the context and the theoretical concepts applied in this research, drawing from an analysis of secondary data. Essential as secondary data is for any researcher in helping to develop a theoretical construct and framework around which to further develop ideas, the main focus of this research was the lived experience and current reflections on what is means to be 'Latvian' as expressed by those currently negotiating and renegotiating this understanding. In this chapter I will focus on the methodology utilized in the collection of primary data which was the key source of these lived experiences.

In addition to teasing out an understanding of the nuances and complexities of 'who belongs' to the contemporary Latvian community, the chapter will also reflect some of the nuances within my own journey in trying to navigate to a place of 'belonging' within the academic and research community, a community which itself faces its own questions around inclusion, exclusion, equality and diversity. As a 'non-traditional' researcher, that is to say, as a female adult returner to education with primary care responsibilities within a family who have complex needs, the challenge of balancing multiple, and largely conflicting roles, added an additional layer of complexity around the practicalities of research design and primary data collection. Juggling the responsibilities of employee, international researcher, mum, wife, mental health support provider and carer (listed in no particular order and each at times infinitely more demanding and important than another), in practice impacted the decisions made around fieldwork and created a smaller window of opportunity from which to collect primary data, as well as having a significant impact on the period of writing up and completion of the final thesis. These reflections are in no way added to mitigate the limitations of this research, or to excuse the finished product, but are included with the aim of adding to a growing body of work such as that of Moyer et al (1999), Maher et al (2004) and the increasing number of voices which reflect the labyrinth of lived experiences and the seemingly unending challenges faced by many other non-traditional students, and in

particular women, in a similar position within the field of doctoral study and academia. They concur that females typically bear more of the responsibility for home and childcare and are likely therefore to be impacted to a greater extent than their male counterparts. This is an increasingly important factor as the number of non-traditional age women (i.e., aged over age 35) undertaking university study has increased in recent times (Maher et al. 2014 p. 388). Despite the practical challenges faced a total of 57 in depth interviews were conducted across Latvia and the UK.

3.2 Research Design

In this section the theoretical approaches applied to the research design will be discussed. This section will consider the employment of the case study as a component of the research design as well as addressing the positionality of the researcher within the wider research process.

3.2.1 Theoretical Approach

The key focus of this research was to explore whether understandings of citizenship, aligned to a wider sense of belonging to a 'contemporary Latvian community' were becoming more nuanced in the decades following restored Latvian independence and EU accession. It was felt that a deeper exploration of the respondents' lived experiences would shed light on nuances in the ways in which belonging was expressed and understood across vertical and horizontal aspects of citizenship. Therefore, working from a constructivist/interpretivist position allowed social identities to be viewed as "constructed, contested, open to change and often ambivalent" (Della Porta 2008 p. 109). The constructivist/interpretivist approach further implies that social phenomena are not only produced through social interaction but are in a constant state of revision (Bryman 2015). Closely linked to this approach is a phenomenological perspective which is tied to a broad range of theoretical frameworks and schools of thought in the social sciences (Taylor et al 2019 p. 21). Within this tradition, the experiences and perspectives of respondents shape their reality. The researcher plays close

attention, not only to what respondents say, but also to how they react to the stimulus of conceptual ideas and themes, observing the respondent as they construct and navigate pathways towards fresh understandings. Within this research design, participants' realities are viewed as being constructed based on their experience and interaction with a range of political, socio economic and social factors as well as personal interactions. In examining these factors from the position of the respondent, a more representative and nuanced picture of contemporary Latvian citizenship emerges.

Applying an interpretive epistemology dictated the methodology used within the research design, and a qualitative approach was therefore adopted in line with the project's aims and objectives. Qualitative research is concerned with rich data pertaining to questions of *what*, *why* and *how* and places emphasis on the words of the individuals taking part in the research to create a picture of the wider social world (Ruane 2008 p. 29). In contrast to quantitative research, which places emphasis on numerical and statistical data, the rich textual data collected by qualitative research methods adds depth and layers not always immediately obvious from quantitatively gathered facts and figures. Qualitative research was therefore an appropriate choice for this research project which pertains to the nuances of "bottom up" conceptualisations of identity and belonging. Qualitative research relies 'on talk or direct observation as important tools for documenting reality' and therefore tends to rely on a smaller sample size than would be employed in quantitative research (Ruane 2008 p. 34). This was an additional consideration when assessing the time available for data collection and analysis. Despite the smaller number of participants required for validity in qualitative research compared to quantitative research, more time is required to be spent on detailed examinations of transcripts, with results less often predictable due to the spontaneous and complex nature of individual responses. Based on the availability of time and scope for data collection, in this instance, qualitative research also made practical as well as theoretical sense.

A case study model was adopted as highlighted by Starman, "the interpretative paradigm, phenomenological approach, and constructivism as a paradigmatic basis of qualitative research are closely linked to the definition and characteristics of case studies" (Starman

2013 p. 30). It is to be noted that a case study should not be seen as a method "in and of itself" (Starman 2013 p. 32) but as a useful approach, in the same way as adopting a particular perspective adds to the theoretical model. By providing an in-depth examination of a particular issue or phenomenon, the case study allows us to view these issues via a range of perspectives and apply findings to a wider context, with the relevance of research findings usually extending beyond the scope of the original case. Bryman (2015) quantifies this by stating that "a case may be chosen because it exemplifies a broader category of which it is a member. The notion of exemplification implies that cases are often chosen not because they are extreme or unusual in some way but because either they epitomize a broader category of cases or they will provide a suitable context for certain research questions to be answered" (Bryman 2015 p. 62). Latvia was therefore adopted as a suitable contextual case study for exploring nuanced concepts of citizenship, community, and belonging.

3.2.2 Positionality of the Researcher

In any interpretivist research, the position of the researcher in relation to the subject and the participants experiences being explored will have some bearing on the setting and the outcome of the data gathered (Bryman 2015 p. 28). This can relate to the characteristics of the researcher themselves, from gender to political beliefs, it can also relate to the research setting as well as to the participants themselves and to their unique characteristics. Bryman (2015) refers to what is known as 'the social desirability effect' which suggests that respondents may often provide answers to questions which are related to their perception of the social desirability of those answers (Bryman 2015 p. 216). This is of particular concern when collating responses which seek to reflect a truly horizontal perspective and was a challenge within this research as, positioned as an 'outsider' I elicited not only curiosity from the participants as to the motivation for this research, but also raised some suspicion which at times led to an over emphasis of vertical perspectives. As an 'outsider' I could not expect to automatically benefit from levels of trust, openness and acceptance, often afforded to 'insider' researchers who can already claim membership of the group (Dwyer and Buckle 2009 p. 58). From the perspective of the participant, "an answer that is perceived to be socially desirable is more likely to be endorsed than one that is not" (Bryman 2015 p. 216), particularly in relation to insider and outsider positioning.

The position of the researcher can also influence the interpretation of results against the pre-determined research question, with Bryman (2015) noting that an interpretivist approach includes the notion that researchers' own accounts of the social world are constructions. In other words, "the researcher always presents a specific version of social reality, rather than one that can be regarded as definitive" (Bryman 2015 p. 29). As highlighted by Charmaz (2014), one criticism levelled at qualitative researchers by quantitative studies is that the validity and reliability of the data is "based on a lone, possibly biased observer's idiosyncratic recording of immediate interactions and impressions" (Charmaz 2014 p. 321). It is therefore important to consider such things as power relationships and the ways in which participants view the position of the researcher, as well as how the researcher themselves navigates and negotiates a position for themselves within the data collection setting and this was taken into account during the process of data collection.

As pointed out by Schwartz-Shea et al. (2011), "interpretive research designs need to anticipate the ways in which potential power relationships might affect the generation of evidence and one's decisions to write about these encounters" as well as anticipating the emotional challenges of navigating data collection settings and research relationships which may be "neutral, friendly, professional, or possibly even hostile'"(Schwartz -Shea et al. 2011 p. 55). Based on my previous research experience within the post-Soviet sphere, a legacy of mistrust of strangers and levels of suspicion over gathering data has some resonance today with darker periods in recent history. Evidence of similar experience is given in an example in the work of Allino-Pisano (2009) where it was found that "extensive silence in observations or during interviews in Ukraine reminded participants of secret police surveillance in earlier times" (Schwartz -Shea et al. 2011 p. 65). Although this research was focused on working with participants who would, in all likelihood, have no experience of such an environment due to the determinant age range in participant selection, it was important to take into account the possibility that stories, and traumatic memories of Soviet times may form a family or cultural narrative, and so continue to influence the research environment in Latvia today. Agreeing with Dwyer and Buckle (2009), my approach tries to exemplify the premise that it is important not hide behind the mask of rapport or the wall of professional distancing

and to “be fully authentic in our interactions with our participants” (Dwyer and Buckle 2009 p. 60). As an ‘outsider’ within the research environment, the environment and any interactions with participants must be carefully and delicately navigated.

3.3 Data Collection Techniques

In this section the techniques employed in the practical elements of sourcing and recruiting participants, the methods of data gathering, and the process of data analysis will be discussed. Participants were viewed as “data sources in the sense that they are repositories of knowledge, evidence and experience” (Mason 1996 p. 35), aligning with the interpretive assumption of the research design that understanding the actor’s viewpoint creates greater understanding of the environment which actors inhabit.

3.3.1 Participants and Recruitment Strategies

An initial target of interviewing 50-55 participants was set, with the aim of interviewing around two thirds of the total participants from the category of ‘currently resident in Latvia’. Approximately one third of the interviews was targeted as being with those categorised as ‘former residents of Latvia now living in the UK. This percentage split was reflective of the focus of the research using Latvia, the territory, as a case study, whilst incorporating and reflecting the high number of Latvian emigrants who had moved to the UK across the last few decades. As discussed in Chapter 2, viewing citizenship within clearly defined state borders is problematic and it was important to gather the views of both current and former residents of Latvia to widen out the exploration of what constitutes the community of Latvia. 38 interviews were conducted in Latvia. 14 interviews were conducted in Scotland and 5 interviews were conducted in England, bringing the total number of UK interviews to 19. The total number of in-depth qualitative interviews conducted within the project was 57.

As this study was concerned with concepts of community reflecting a ‘ground up’ representation of society, it was important to gain insights from participants who were reflective of everyday life in both Latvia and the UK. It was hoped by selecting participants

from a diverse range of locales, any nuances in environment would feed into a broader picture of constructed identity. Upon determining the numbers of participants required and the desire to reflect a wide range of participants from different social backgrounds, it became important to consider the chosen locales in which to find participants. Through the data collection process, I was keen to gather perspectives from those in both urban and rural locations. Currently 32% of those residing in Latvia are still considered to be within rural areas with 68% living in areas considered urban (https://urbact.eu/latvia). Latvia has also experienced internal rural to urban migration, most notably from outlying regions to Riga following the collapse of the Soviet Union. It was therefore important to include participants who had both remained in their home areas as well as including those who had relocated to Riga to determine what impact political changes had on their decision on where to reside and on their sense of identity, citizenship and community belonging. To ensure a wide range of lived experiences could be incorporated with the project, participants were selected from the capital city of Riga, and from the industrial city of Liepāja, as well as gathering data from those in rural areas such as Sigulda and from outlying regions such as Latgale and the city of Daugavpils.

When considering locations in the UK, it was also viewed as important to include both rural and urban locations for data collection to mirror the data collection undertaken in Latvia and so compare lived experiences. Latvians have culturally strong ties to the environment and the countryside and patterns of outward migration have seen Latvians not only move to cities and larger urban centres, but also to more rural or outlying areas such as agricultural and coastal areas where work can be found in food processing or harvesting within the UK. In line with the work of Flynn and Kay (2017), engaging with participants who have migrated to rural locations within the UK provided the opportunity to gain insights into broader lived experience, the emotional aspects of settlement and insight into longer term patterns of settlement (Flynn and Kay 2017 p. 57), an area of migration studies which is highly valuable, and which would benefit from further research. As part of the strategy to recruit participants, consideration was also given to the different narratives around inward Eastern European migration within the UK. Scotland is widely portrayed as offering a welcoming environment for individuals of all backgrounds and nationalities, and generally speaking, values inward

migration, as highlighted Krenin's (2018) doctoral research on Estonians in Scotland (Krenin 2018 p. 54). Media commentary and public discourse would suggest that those moving from Eastern Europe to England may encounter a more positive experience of welcome than those from other non-European nations, however, also suggests to a less open environment than is perhaps experienced by those moving to Scotland. For this reason, it was also deemed valuable to conduct interviews with former residents of Latvia, now residing in England, to compare the migrant experience within different areas of the UK and to ascertain whether any negative comparison or challenging experience for migrants impacts on the construction of attitudes to migrants more generally within the participants interviewed. The idea was not to focus on any positive or negative experience specifically as an experience, but rather to incorporate the experience of being received as a migrant in the UK, either positively or negatively, within the wider context of the themes of inclusion and exclusion and 'belonging' under examination in this research. In practice however, the bulk of interviews conducted in the UK centred were predominantly in Scotland for two main reasons. Primarily, convenience for the researcher was a core consideration and it was both practical and time efficient to seek participants in Scotland, being the home base of the researcher. Scotland offered the opportunity to speak with participants both in large urban centres such as Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen as well as including rural, coastal, and agricultural areas (Inverness-shire, Moray and Fife), which required less onerous travel commitments. Secondly, analysis of initial interviews conducted in England showed little difference in terms of those responses gathered in Scotland when viewing the individual's relationship to a sense of Latvian citizenship. To ensure that the project remained focused on the core research question of what Latvian citizenship looks like today and did not become derailed by narratives around migration to Scotland versus migration to England, which was beyond the scope of this thesis, and with more limited networks in place to secure further interviews, the decision was taken to focus primarily on the interviews conducted in Scotland.

Another intention, and indeed a significant challenge, when recruiting participants for this study, was to build into the process an inductive approach to determining what constitutes the community of Latvia today without overtly recruiting for specific quotas of ethnicity or nationality. It was intended that participants should not see themselves as having been

selected on the basis of any presupposed ethnicity related to the politicized Latvian citizenship narrative. Instead, it was important that participants accepted that this project was interested in exploring how their own sense of identification of citizenship as an individual within a broader Latvian community was determined. It was anticipated that some participants may 'less formally' identify themselves as being of Latvian descent or historical Russian descent and that other participants may prefer to identify with the more formal 'citizen' or 'non-citizen' labelling. To partially combat the assumption that a presumed ethnicity had been attached to participant selection, participants were advised that interviews could be conducted in a language of their choice, with options for both Latvian and Russian translation as well as for the opportunity for interviews to be conducted in English if so desired. The choice of English was included as it is seen as the lingua franca of the EU and had interesting connotations for the project should anyone opt to converse in this language. Furthermore, a Latvian speaker could take the opportunity to converse at any time in English or Russian and a Russian speaker could opt to use English or Latvian. This approach avoided the need to directly ask participants to state their ethnic identification early on in the interview process and instead gave participants fluidity and flexibility in determining their own attributed ethnic identity through questions related to citizenship and community. Some initial insight was gained into ethnic self-identification via the language adopted by the participant whilst allowing scope for subsequent nuances of self-identification to emerge as the interview progressed. Interview participants were categorised as Latvian or Russian speakers based upon their stated ethnicity where this arose during the interview sessions or via their preferred choice of language. In total 45 participants identified themselves as being Latvia speakers and 12 identified as being Russian speakers from the 57 interviews conducted. What was interesting, as will be shown within the empirical chapters, is that this arbitrary mode of ethnic categorisation was often more ambiguous in reality for participants.

A purposive recruitment approach was adopted when recruiting participants to ensure the involvement of participants from all strata of life. Participants taking part ranged from those who were unemployed, employed and self-employed as well as highly skilled and low skilled workers and students. Some participants also had contacts to cultural groups, political organisations, NGOs and community initiatives. In total 21 participants were male, and 36

participants were female. All participants taking part were required to be aged 45 or under, and to have shared significant experience of long-term residence in Latvia in the most recent post-independence era. Individuals aged over 45 were purposefully excluded from the participant group, due to the likelihood of contrasting lived experiences within both Soviet and post-Soviet Latvia which could have the potential to detract from a more sharply focused account of contemporary citizenship in a post independent, EU affiliated Latvia. Participation was however open to both current and former residents of Latvia to allow inclusion of participants residing in the UK and Latvia. A more detailed breakdown of the gender, age, stated ethnicity, occupation and location of participants is provided in Appendix I.

As has been stated, there were constraints on the time available for data collection with convenience and practicality being key to successfully gathering sufficient data from participants. A form of non-probability recruitment which relies on the individuals being selected by nature of their 'being close at hand' is convenience sampling (Ruane 2008). As the approach is criticised for perhaps undermining the representation of the wider population due to its almost 'accidental nature', an element of purposive convenience recruitment was simultaneously employed as a strategy. This allowed for a more targeted approach, with locations being pre-selected for their opportunity to access a representation of a wider demographic based upon the existing knowledge of the researcher. As pointed out within existing social research literature, "the reasons for adopting a purposive strategy are based on the assumption that, given the aims and objectives of the study, specific kinds of people may hold different and important views about the ideas and issues at question and therefore need to be included" (Campbell et al 2020), as was certainly the case within this research. Having had previous experience of successfully employing similar strategies whilst conducting research in Latvia around topics of identity, public protest and politics, it was felt that drawing upon local contacts with a prerequisite understanding of the project fulfilled some of the aspects related to the processes associated with the more formal strategy of employing a gatekeeper. The researchers' own knowledge of and experience in specific demographical environments, such as the city of Daugavpils, which for example, has a high concentration of Russian speakers in relation to those of Latvian descent, would suggest that a higher number of Russian speakers would be able to be recruited when applying a

purposive aspect to a convenience sampling technique. Likewise, recruiting from Latvia's international business community was more likely to be successful drawing upon local business contacts in the area who could function as an informal conduit between the researcher and those potential participants meeting the desired recruitment criteria. Where employed, local contacts were furnished with an outline of the project, guidelines on the desired criteria of potential participants, and on the timescale and availability of the researcher. To ensure that research was not hindered or limited by local contacts "having not internalised the concepts or by lacking investment in the research themselves", an issue referred to by Seidman (2013 p. 50), contacts had links to the Department of Central and East European Studies at the University of Glasgow and were known to be keen to further research and knowledge of contemporary citizenship in Latvia.

3.3.2 Asking Questions

As this research was focused on asking questions which reflected both horizontal and vertical perspectives of contemporary Latvian citizenship, it was important to develop a research strategy for asking questions which would encapsulate these aims. The approach adopted worked with the assumption that "conversations are of greater value than straight question and answer sessions, as they provide rich detailed data that can be used alongside other materials" (Burgess 1984 p. 102). It was also felt that "asking questions is widely accepted as a cost efficient (and sometimes the only way) of gathering information about past behaviours and experiences, private actions and motives, and beliefs and attitudes" (Foddy 1993 p. 1). The first step was to create a vehicle for data collection, and the technique of employing in-depth semi- structured interviews was adopted. These interviews would be carried out face to face to allow for nuances within the conversation to be observed and contextualized as part of the wider exploration of the horizontal negotiation of citizenship. Bryman (2015) discusses the benefits of a face-to-face questioning technique and asserts that "the balance of evidence tends to show that face-to-face focus groups yield data of superior quality compared to online ones" (Bryman 2015 p. 519). Conducting interviews face to face also allows for any barriers associated with asynchronous interviewing techniques to be limited, such as the difficulties surrounding the development of rapport (Bryman 2015 p. 519).

Establishing rapport and a sense of trust was considered a vital part of the interview process to ensure that respondents felt safe and secure enough to deal with questions pertaining to complex issues such as belonging and exclusion, as well as discussing highly personal areas such as political motivation and affiliation and any reflection of socio-economic position. Building rapport within the context of the researcher as an outsider, particularly in a post-Soviet context, as described in section 3.2.2, was also a consideration for conducting interviews within the physical locale of Latvia rather than arranging for interviews to be conducted online.

Semi structured interviews were chosen as the initial technique for data collection, as they offer the researcher some control in dictating the general direction of the questioning, whilst allowing sufficient space for the respondent to incorporate deeper meaning and associations. It was deemed important to allow the participants to have an informal forum in which to "express their opinions in a manner and format of their choosing" (May 2001 p. 125). Semi structured interviews offer flexibility as outlined by Mazmanian et al. (2013) in Bryman (2015). It is noted that "the interview would often take its lead from participants in their 'elaborations and digressions'"…and that the interview evolved as the research progressed: the researchers included 'interesting themes' that emerged in early interviews into later interviews" (Mazmanian et al. in Bryman 2015 p. 469).

That said and recognising that "qualitative researchers can find themselves with an avalanche of data which may lead to issues of processing, of interpretation and of analysis" (Flick 1998 p. 47), an interview guide was prepared with a list of relevant questions. The use of the interview guide within the field allowed for responses to deviate within boundaries from the initial question, however still retain a relevant bearing to the wider context of the interview. Questions were modified as the interview period progressed, with some notable change to the questions asked in the UK compared to Latvia due to the contextual setting and interview focus. The strategy of employing an open-ended questioning technique allow complex motivational influences and frames of reference to be identified and explored in depth (Foddy 1993 p. 132).

3.3.3 Data Analysis

One of the most important processes for the qualitative researcher is working to analyse and make connections from the wealth of rich data qualitative studies lend themselves too. In relation to the evaluation of data, the ontological assumptions of this project dictated the methods of analysis. Sufficient time needs to be factored into any qualitative study to allow for repeated reviewing of and reflecting upon the voices of the respondents contained within the recordings, notes and transcripts of interviews and observations. As observations were not a focus of this research, detailed ethnographical notes were not collected. In line with an interpretivist approach, interview transcriptions were conducted with notes on pauses as well as any observations of tension and humour within the interview dialogue. I employed a 'Cornell' style approach where handwritten interview notes were taken. The Cornell system of note taking allows for initial notes to be made, with space for prompts, cues or keywords in the margins which can be expanded after the interview (www.medium.goodnotes.com). In some instances, I created a short voice recording of my own reflections on interviews immediately after the interview recording itself. With Sullivan (2001) describing qualitative research as "high preparation, high risk, high gain and involving high analysis operations" (Sullivan 2001 p. 5), the process did prove challenging and not all interviews were fully transcribed. Where an interview was not fully transcribed, key extracts were noted and laid out for subsequent coding.

Qualitative research lends itself to a variety of coding techniques which can be completed manually or with the assistance of dedicated software packages such as NVivo. In data analysis, my own need to continually 'hear' my participants, not least in the literal sense, draws my preference towards tried and tested data analysis methods, such as repeated playback and coding. A point, well made by Dwyer and Buckle (2009), is that "the stories of participants are immediate and real to us; individual voices are not lost in a pool of numbers. We carry these individuals with us as we work with the transcripts" (Dwyer and Buckle 2009 p. 61). As such, I personally feel that I lose touch with aspects of the phenomenology perspective in using software packages and prefer to work in a more "old-fashioned" hands-on way, although I acknowledge that colleagues and peers increasingly prefer more time efficient digital methods of coding. Themes based on the research questions were initially

identified and then colour coded. These colour coded blocks were then placed in thematic grids, although due to the nature of the research, not all responses necessarily fitted only theme or grid. Where duplicate or multiple themes related to a particular element of the participant's response, then this was further coded with symbols.

3.4 Fieldwork in Action

3.4.1 Overview

Field work was conducted across multiple locations within the UK and Latvia. When considering recruitment options to obtain participants for interviews, a number of practical considerations in relation to the fieldwork locale and the time available must be applied in addition to the theoretical considerations. Ideally, the researcher would like to have benefited from longer time *in situ* however, due to my personal circumstances and family commitments, it was not feasible to conduct fieldwork around long spells away from home. For this reason, fieldwork was carried out in short concentrated intervals, within carefully structured and timetabled blocks. Having previously conducted fieldwork around similar constraints, the planning and scheduling of fieldwork this time around was even more critical as the sample was significantly larger than in prior projects and involved data collection from multiple locations in both Latvia and the UK. Consents for data collection were obtained in advance from the project supervisors and via the College of Social Sciences Ethics Committee at the University of Glasgow. An initial period of three months was dedicated to the scheduling of data collection within the UK, with data being collected in Scotland across the months of August and September 2016 and data collection moving to locations in England in February 2017. Fieldwork then moved to Latvia and involved two dedicated data collection trips in March 2017 and April 2017.

3.4.2 Fieldwork (UK)

Initial interviews were conducted across a two-month period at various locations in Scotland, incorporating both urban and rural locales, as well as municipal and more peripheral areas to

try to capture a wide range of participant experience from those who had relocated from Latvia.

The locations selected were Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness, Aberdeen, Moray and Fife, the latter two locations being more rural and peripheral than the larger urban city regions. A day or two days of data collection time was allocated to each location, dependant on the distance from home and the number of contacts and potential known participants. Approximately 2 – 4 pre-scheduled interviews were conducted in and around each location specified.

It was always interesting talking to doctoral studies peers about their data collection experiences which seemed to allow for so much more time and introspection than was, in reality, available to me. I could very much relate to Prof Carol Mershon, Professor in the Department of Politics at the University of Virginia, speaking in 2016 who said, 'as women we struggle to master the time, energy and effort to devote to our academic research as we start from the inequalities often faced at home and move to the challenges we face at work'. The challenge was to find a strategy which met the needs of family life and the needs of the research itself, and this required an additional layer of consideration within the research design and data collection planning for me as a non-traditional doctoral student. In an ideal world, perhaps I, as the researcher and the process of data collection may have benefitted from more time to observe, reflect and refine across a more sedately paced timetable of data collection. Time was however built into the interview schedule, allowing for reflection on the series of interviews conducted within each region and to amend the interview technique and questions, if and where appropriate, before traveling onto a new location. This strategy was effective in allowing for rich and valuable data to be collected within a short timescale. Overall, the process of primary data collection was successful in terms of the quality of the interviews, due largely to the adopted technique of purposive sampling discussed in section 3.2.1, and data was obtained with as minimal disruption to family commitments and caring responsibilities as possible.

Despite the difficulties of balancing family commitments and data collection timetabling being overcome via the adoption of an intensive interview timetabling strategy, some difficulties were encountered around initial participant recruitment. Within Scotland one such challenge was the absence of a significant formalised Latvian community, with many of those opting to move to Scotland settling across a diverse and disparate area, with no particular pattern of large-scale resettling of Eastern Europeans around a specific city or town as has occurred in places within England. Where Latvian 'communities' were established, such as in Inverness, these consisted of three or four individuals who had come together, united by a desire to encourage Latvian language skills for their school aged children. A small Latvian Saturday school was being run by Latvian speaking parents in the Inverness area for a few hours each week to provide space for Latvian language and culture be taught and experienced by the children. This community formation and coming together of former residents of Latvia however, was not widely representative of the experience of those involved in the study. Another participant from Fife highlighted the lack of any larger scale community within Scotland and told me:

> *'I was looking for any kind of connection when I first came to Scotland…I thought maybe there were some Latvians locally, but so far, I haven't come across any Latvians'*
>
> Int8: (F), 29, Care Worker, Fife, UK (rural) – Latvian speaker

She had joined the Facebook group *Latvians in Scotland* in the hope of connecting and looking for any posts on job or socialising opportunities, but found posts were sporadic. It was from this group that an initial call was put out for participants, and from this, seven initial responses elicited email or messenger contact and interviews subsequently booked.

Not only was finding initial contacts challenging, in making initial contact with a group identifying as *Latvians in Scotland*, it was important to acknowledge that this may be problematic in terms of attracting a wider demographic should Russian speaking emigrants from Latvia perhaps not associate themselves as "Latvians in Scotland". However, what was both interesting and encouraging was that two Russian speaking participants, including notably a participant from a non-citizen Russian speaking family, came forwards from this

Facebook group and volunteered to take part in the study, suggestive, initially, that identification as 'Latvian' was at least something being adopted within the UK for some Russian speakers. This was encouraging as, prior to any interview data being collected, there were already some reflections to be drawn in relation to the wider context of nuanced identity, the central theme being explored through the research. More details on this nuanced belonging are discussed throughout the thesis.

To ensure more Russian speaking voices were included a call for participants was also put out via Facebook to the Glasgow University Russian-Speaking Society (GURSS), a group which encompasses Russian speakers, native and non-native, from a wide spectrum of countries, including Latvia. A further two participants were recruited from this group. A total of 14 interviews were conducted in Scotland and participants worked in a range of environments including Royal Mail, healthcare, administration, customer services, retail, and within the Scottish Parliament as an assistant to an MSP. The participant group also included students, self-employed and home makers. The idea of collecting as diverse a range of participants as possible was to examine in depth their negotiation of citizenship and community within Latvia and to consider any renegotiation of their identity within as broad a base as possible.

As applied to the primary data collection conducted in Scotland, several locations were chosen in England for interviews to be conducted and data gathered. These locations included Bradford, Nottingham and Peterborough as being representative of northern, central and more southern locations within England. The purposive recruitment approach allowed for some prior knowledge of these locations being provided by existing contacts linked to the Department of Central and East European Studies at the University of Glasgow, who were kind enough to assist in suggesting suitable locations and some initial contacts for interview. A call was also put out on the *Latvieši Anglijā Forum* page on Facebook, although this generated a low level of response, with only one participant coming forwards. Given the challenges of successful recruitment from the *Latvieši Anglijā Forum* page on Facebook, it was also hoped to make contact with potential participants at the Latvian Club in Bradford, a long-established social club which puts on a range of activities and cultural events. Although many of the members of this club had come to Latvia some years ago, or were descendants

of interwar *émigrés*, it was hoped that more recently settled potential participants might be affiliated to the club. On the first visit, the club was closed, however a return visit led to an interview with a young member of staff, who had moved to the UK from Latvia post 2004. Interviews in England were conducted across a week in February 2017 due to the limited window for absence from home life available at this time. Following the data collection model employed in Scotland, a predetermined schedule for travel between each location was drawn up, beginning in Bradford then moving southwards towards Nottingham and Peterborough. The interviews in Nottingham arose from the Facebook request for assistance, from an existing contact and as a 'snowball' interview from an interview conducted earlier in Scotland. The technique of 'snowballing' draws upon "recommendations and introductions by initial participants for subsequent and relevant potential participants" (Bryman 2015 p. 415). Less time was available for this intensive, multi-locational trip than was afforded to data collection in Scotland, and the cancellation at short notice of several pre-arranged interviews reduced the intended sample size. To make up for the cancelled interviews, 'ad hoc' purposive sampling was attempted in both Nottingham and Peterborough, with visits to local Eastern European shops and restaurants being made in an attempt to develop some introductions and the potential for *in situ* interviews. Due to the limited time available, only one such interview was arranged, with this being conducted within a small Latvian restaurant in Peterborough. What was interesting to note when conducting the interview, was that although the restaurant advertised itself as 'Latvian' and the interviewee identified herself as 'Latvian speaking', the music being played was Russian pop music and Russian was clearly being spoken by the majority of the clientele. This was an interesting juxtaposition, synonymous with the nuanced construction of identity which this research was keen to explore. In total 5 interviews were conducted in England, 3 of which were in Nottingham, 1 in Bradford and 1 in Peterborough, bringing the total number of UK interviews to 19.

3.4.3 Fieldwork (Latvia)

As the key focus of the research related to the construct of the contemporary Latvian community, spending time in different locations, informally observing and chatting to people and conducting in-depth interviews was a key component of the primary data gathering design. Data collection moved onto Latvia in Spring 2017, and again the challenges of

balancing family commitments and research needs required careful consideration. At the time of developing my data collection strategy, my peers, working on their doctoral studies alongside me in the area of Baltic Studies at the University of Glasgow, had arranged for substantial blocks of fieldwork in Lithuania and Estonia, spending long periods of time in the region. Here they hoped to immerse themselves in the locations inhabited by their prospective participants, however a comparable long-term absence from home was, again, an option which had to be rejected as part of my own research design due to practicality issues. I was already experienced in conducting fieldwork within Latvia and the wider Baltic area, having worked on two previous research projects. I also have friends and connections across the Baltic States and have visited Latvia for holidays in addition to work related trips. I was therefore comfortable and confident in devising a practical and workable schedule for in-depth and intensive data collection, despite my time constraints.

To compensate for the limited window available for fieldwork, two week-long trips were scheduled in Latvia, with direct flights from Scotland to Riga. The aim was to conduct a full and intensive schedule of interviews, many of which would be pre-arranged in advance, and to incorporate some 'ad-hoc' interviews where possible by travelling to predetermined locations, again drawing on existing knowledge of Latvia and the nuanced demographics of particular areas, such as Daugavpils. The first scheduled trip took place in late March 2017 and was a 7-day trip which concentrated on data collection primarily in Riga as well as incorporating travel to Sigulda. The second trip took place a few weeks later in mid-late April 2017. On this second trip, the focus of data collection was in the Daugavpils and Liepāja areas as well as conducting some final interviews in Riga.

I have some knowledge of both the Latvian and Russian languages, however, as the interviews would be highly detailed in content, intensive and conducted over a short period time, I opted to travel on both trips with a translator. The translator was an existing contact of my wider network in the area and was recommended by a fellow researcher in the Department of Central and East European Studies at the University of Glasgow. The translator was well known in Latvia in both the Latvian and Russian speaking communities due to her involvement in national motor and rally events and was fluent in English, Latvian

and Russian. In addition, being a connection of friends and colleagues also researching in the disciplines of history and identity politics, she had a detailed understanding of the project aims and was further able to assist in arranging trips to a wide range of locations, thus allowing for greater access to a broad base of participants. I owe her a huge debt of gratitude for not only helping to secure and facilitate interviews as we travelled to and from various locations, but for also keeping me company, sane and grounded during what were a very intensive two weeks of fieldwork. Despite contracting food poisoning on the trip and requiring hospital treatment, she stoically battled on to ensure the fieldwork schedule was maintained.

3.4.3.1 Riga

Figure 3.4.1 Riga. Photo credit: https://en.wikivoyage.org/wiki/Riga_region

Riga was chosen as the primary location for fieldwork on the first of the scheduled trip as it is Latvia's capital, a beautiful, bustling and increasingly cosmopolitical city, which sees many tourists visit the historical Old Town; locals and tourists alike also congregate in the local indoor markets, shops, parks, cafes and restaurants. You never feel that you're far away from a fascinating, if troubled and contrasting history in Riga, whether it's taking in the dominating sights of the skyline; The Freedom Monument to the Stalinist structure of The Academy of Sciences Building, the medieval spire of Riga Cathedral (*Rīgas Doms*) or the Nativity of Christ Orthodox Cathedral, to making an interesting and sobering visit to the newly constructed Museum of the Occupation of Latvia, the Riga Ghetto and Holocaust Museum or the KGB Museum - or perhaps having a coffee in one of the popular new cafes in the refurbished warehouse area in the *Maskavas forštate (Moscow District).* Indeed, many of Latvia's

historic sites can be seen from the popular Skyline Bar which sits on the top of the vast *Radisson Blu Latvija* complex, a monumental hotel structure, built in 1979 and more recently renovated to reflect more contemporary times. Each time I visit Riga, I'm always startled by the changes I see around me, from renovations to new builds, and it has seemed only natural to reflect on whether the rapid pace of change post 1991, seen in the changing physical environment, has impacted on the 'community' of Latvia also.

Nominating Riga as a key fieldwork location afforded the opportunity for me to meet with a wide range of people from across different socio- economic backgrounds, from successfully self-employed individuals and professionals to those working in lower-level service and retail roles. Riga also has a mixed demographic of both Latvian and Russian speakers as well as providing access to the business community and to those involved in the workings of government. A key individual who assisted greatly with the fieldwork in Latvia was a close friend of the translator and of my researcher colleague in Glasgow. A Russian speaker, identifying herself as having a more nuanced approach to identity, she was the perfect person to help with the fieldwork in Riga. As my contact works professionally and holds a well-respected position within Riga's booming business sector, she had access to fellow business contacts as well as individuals working with the field of EU funding distribution. In addition, she and my translator could provide access to both Latvian speaking and Russian speaking political activists in the Riga area. My contact, in advance of travel, contacted a number of potential interviewees based on the project requirements in the Riga area from across her personal and professional sphere. Her initial approaches to contacts actually led to some snowballing of participants, with some individuals, on hearing about the research project and my scheduled visits from peers and colleagues, indicating their own desire to take part in the process. My incredible contact drew up an intensive schedule of 14 interviews across three days in Riga which incorporated the voices and opinions of business people, journalists, a doctor, filmmaker and some grass roots friends and family. She was also integral to booking interview space in local business premises and hotels as well as in the homes of friends and family in order to facilitate the data collection. In addition, my contact ensured that all participants were reminded of their timeslots and checked that participants would be available on the day for interview. Interviews were conducted in English, Latvian

and Russian and represented a wide cross section of political views and lived experiences. I remain indebted to my contact for her incredible efforts and support with this project. Without her work on securing participants, access to many of the higher-level interviews representing the business and political sphere would simply not have been possible to schedule within the small timeframe available. Interviews were also arranged in advance of the trip through existing contacts as well as with contacts known to the translator. Several *ad hoc* interviews also were arranged during the period of fieldwork by making approaches to individuals in cafes, hotels, shops and restaurants to try to gather as broad a sample base as possible. I was also privileged to visit a warehouse and meet with service users of a volunteer-led charity which distributes clothing, toys and baby equipment to struggling families. A total of 22 in-depth interviews were conducted in Riga with both Latvian and Russian speakers.

3.4.3.2 Sigulda

Figure 3.4.2 Sigulda. Photo credit: https://vocal.media/wander/the-beauty-of-sigulda

Sigulda is a beautiful forested region, situated an hour away from Riga and around 60 kilometres northeast of the capital. As it's a popular location for tourists and there are a range of hospitality and recreation businesses around Sigulda, it was chosen to represent a more rural environment, catering for a national and international clientele and as an area outside the capital Riga which has also benefitted from inward EU investment. Funding has been granted in relation to local restoration projects of castles and monuments as well as to tourism, enterprise and local project funding. At the time of my visit, the ski season had just

drawn to a close, and as Easter approached, there was a buzz of a steady stream of tourists just beginning to venture for forest walks and outdoor activities as the days warmed and the snow thawed. I heard a variety of languages being spoken as we took a climb to Turaida Castle (pictured above) and noted the EU's funding on the restoration project there in 2011. Hotels and restaurants in the area, although catering for a largely domestic market, did show evidence of attempting to draw a wider European market with menus and process available in English, German and Finnish as well as in Latvian and Russian, which was again interesting to note as the study was concerned with changing dimensions within Latvia's community in the EU membership era.

One such hospitality location had been identified prior to the trip as a suitable source of interviews. This was a popular high-end tourist hotel and restaurant and a previous visit made by my translator had indicated that there would be staff of both Russian speaking and Latvian speaking backgrounds who may be happy to assist with the research. I was delighted to secure 2 interviews in this location. I then moved again to 'ad hoc' recruitment by engaging with shop staff, and by introducing myself in a local café. Two interviews were secured via this strategy, one with a local self-employed retailer and another with a local authority court administrator who had chatted with informally with me in a café and was happy to be more formally interviewed later in the day. I also stopped to talk to a man selling home produced birch water by the side of the road. He was from an agricultural background and was hoping to earn some money by selling cold drinks and some homegrown produce from a small table set up behind his van. After chatting a little, he agreed to give me an interview by the roadside. This contrast between interviews in high-end tourist restaurants and an interview being conducted with someone- simply struggling to get by selling produce at the roadside, had real resonance with some of the themes being explored in this research, including that of socio-economic exclusion within a constructed contemporary community of Latvia. A total of 5 in-depth interviews were conducted in Sigulda across a 2-day period.

3.4.3.3 Liepāja

Figure 3.4.3 Liepāja. Photo Credit: https://spoki.lv/foto-izlases/Liepaja-no-putna-lidojuma/608475

Liepāja was chosen as it has witnessed some significant changes since 1991, namely that of mass outward migration, with some inhabitants returning to Russia, having been resident there due to Soviet naval and military links. Located in the west of Latvia, on the Baltic Sea, Liepāja is still regarded as a port city, and has previously experienced a period as a 'closed city' which involved it being shut off to outsiders during Soviet times. During this time, permits were required to enter and exit the area, even for locals living just outside. It was formerly home to the Soviet Baltic fleet and still retains a strong naval presence today. Liepāja has not only witnessed outward migration to Russia, but has seen a wider population decline, attributed to outward migration to EU countries. The city, on visiting feels quiet, the streets are not full, and traffic is not a noticeable issue. The population has decreased by almost a third since the early 1990s (*www.pmlp.gov.lv.)* and there is evidence of the depletion of heavy industry such as the *Liepājas Metalurgs* (Liepāja Metalworks), which had again closed down at the time of my visit.

I opted to stay at the Promenade Hotel, considered Liepāja's best hotel, in an attempt to source staff and business clientele there as potential participants. I secured two interviews with members of staff, one who was a student, working to support her studies. As there were no pre-scheduled interviews, I returned to the strategy of *ad hoc* recruitment and asked various stall holders at the local market if they'd be interested in talking to me. One unemployment participant, a Russian speaker, who was helping his mother on a fairly

rudimentary stall selling a small amount of homegrown produce agreed to talk to me over a coffee in a nearby café. A known contact of my translator, who was also officially unemployed, but made a living by refurbishing old prams and selling them on to help support her children, was telephoned and agreed to an interview, so long as her youngest children could accompany her. I also secured an interview with a bus driver as he took his scheduled break at the local bus terminus. In the final hours of the trip, we stopped by 'Karosta', a former military prison and now a rather unconventional hotel and tourist attraction, which unfortunately was closed. As we toured the grounds around the fence in the hope of getting some photographs, we attracted the attention of a security guard. Initially unhappy at our presence and following some skilful negotiation with my translator, he agreed to a rather unorthodox interview involving a tour of the old military areas as well as some more 'off road' locations such as forest bunkers. It was a memorable, if at times hair raising, interview process. A total of 6 interviews were conducted in Liepāja.

3.4.3.4 Daugavpils

Figure 3.4.4 Daugavpils

Daugavpils was chosen, not only as it is Latvia's second largest city, but for its nickname of 'Little Russia' as approximately eighty percent of the population are Russian speakers of Russian descent (Ekmanis 2020). Situated in the southeast of Latvia, close to both Latvia's borders with Belarus and Lithuania, Daugavpils is an interesting place to visit. Its famous hill of 4 churches (pictured above) has deep resonance with the themes of identity and belonging under examination within this thesis. Daugavpils was also a key railway hub in

Soviet times and was the base for much heavy industry (now in decline) related to the railway. It remains an important transport link between Latvia, Belarus and Russia today. One goods train which passed by me, took a whole six and half minutes to roll by due to the extraordinary amount of freight carriages it was transporting onwards to Minsk. I've visited Daugavpils before, and always enjoy the pleasure of the company of a very dear friend to the Glasgow's Department of Central and East European Studies, who works within the Oral History Unit at Daugavpils University. I'm delighted to report that we enjoyed catching up, to my eternal delight, at *Šokoladņa*, a café whose *raison d'être* is the direct translation of its name - 'chocolate'. Daugavpils' status as "Little Russia" is suggested among some to have resulted in lower level of investment in infrastructure from national government. Indeed, the roads, as you approach the city, seem to have an extraordinary amount of running repairs and prodigious potholes. Evidence of former heavy industry and Soviet bloc housing is all around.

One interview had been pre-arranged with a Russian speaker who was supported by a local church outreach group. Members of the group were known to an existing contact in Glasgow and had kindly asked their service users about taking part in the study. The *ad hoc* strategy for sourcing additional participants was again adopted and it was also suggested to me by the outreach group members that I visit the local Jobcentre to source interviewees. This was an invaluable "tip off" and four interviews were conducted with young people, all of whom were Russian speakers, and who were all engaged to varying degrees in a sponsored programme to encourage more people to engage with the Jobcentre. A final interview was conducted with a barista in a local café, a Latvian speaker, who had lived all her life in Daugavpils. In total 6 interviews were conducted in the area.

3.4.4 Some Final Fieldwork Reflections

In some final reflections on the exhausting, but hugely productive and enjoyable periods of fieldwork in Latvia, having my translator alongside was a real asset particularly in overcoming any language barriers and opening up space and opportunities for interviews on an *ad hoc* basis. We found that, armed with a smile, most people we approached were happy to chat, even if only informally. Many of those I approached were curious as to why someone from

the UK would be interested in researching in Latvia, with some even a little cautious about a "foreigner" appearing in their café or shop, looking to chat about how Latvia had changed and about how they saw their place within a wider community of Latvia. Unfortunately, and as was to be expected, the short duration of the fieldwork trips to Latvia meant that I wasn't always able to take advantage of offers for interviews which required further travel to new locations, or for interviews which could only be facilitated at a later date. Access to digital forms of interviewing, such as Zoom and Teams were not readily available to utilise at that time and participants were often reluctant to engage with Skype as an alternative, seeming somewhat suspicious of conducting an interview which could be captured and recorded using online means. Trust and rapport were much easier to build *in situ*, and despite the intensity of the short periods available for data collection, I was delighted to secure a total of 38 interviews across the 2-week period in Latvia. This brought the total number of in-depth qualitative interviews within the project to 58, which exceeded the initial target of 50- 55.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

As well as devising a theoretical and practical framework to support the research process, there are a number of ethical considerations which must be taken into account, particularly around the process of data collection. The need to have an ethical code of conduct is highlighted in any social research methods textbook (Matthews and Ross 2014; Bryman 2015; Ruane 2016) and emerges from a historical context in which social research and related experiments were not always sufficiently regulated and designed to ensure that those taking part in the research, whether researcher or participant, or indeed the research institution itself were not subject to harm. Harm can manifest in a number of ways within the research process and careful consideration must be applied to ensure that no physical, psychological, financial or reputational harm is caused as a result of the research activities.

Prior to the commencement of data collection activities, prior approval for primary research was obtained via an application to College of Social Sciences Ethics Committee at the University of Glasgow. A detailed outline of the research aims and focus as well as the intended participant sample were highlighted within the application. Details were also

provided on the use and storage of data as well as the practical safety procedures which would be in place to prevent harm to both the researcher and the participant. It was further highlighted within the Ethical application that no participant under the age of 18 or considered to be a member of a vulnerable group would be taking part in the research, therefore additional PVG checks were not required as part of the data collection process. The interviews were not designed to recall any traumatic events or deemed to be particularly sensitive in nature, therefore reducing the risk of any psychological harm. Some interviews were emotionally charged, as individuals expressed challenging socio-economic difficulties, and despite often intensive interview scheduling, time was factored in to look back, reflect and recharge at the end of each day of interviewing for the benefit of the researcher.

Obtaining consent and ensuring that the individuals have sufficient context and knowledge in which to make a decision on whether to participate or not in the research is a crucial ethical consideration which can serve to reduce or eliminate the risk of harm for participants. There are a number of options available to the researcher to allow for the process to be enacted (Bryman 2015 pp. 129-133).

As laid out in the Ethical Approval application, the project employed the creation and issuing of a Plain Language Statement (PLS) to potential participants prior to them agreeing to take part in the research. Within the PLS, an outline of the project, the commitment required to the research, expected finish date of the project and procedure for complaints was detailed. Contact details of the Researcher and the Project Supervisors were also provided with the PLS and the English language document is provided (see Appendix II). The translator facilitated the translation of this document in situ and translated documents were also made available in both Latvian and English.

On ensuring the participant fully understood the information contained within the PLS, a written Consent Form (see Appendix) was required to be signed and dated by both the researcher and the participant. As highlighted by Bryman (2015) “the advantage of such forms is that they give respondents the opportunity to be fully informed of the nature of the research and the implications of their participation at the outset. Further, the researcher has

a signed record of consent if any concerns are subsequently raised by participants or others" (Bryman 2015 p. 130). Participants had the opportunity to register their agreement to the taking part in the study, to note that they would be referred to by a pseudonym and to note that their participation was voluntary and could be withdrawn at any time. Participants were also required to indicate their consent relating to the recording of the interviews within the Consent Form. As previously discussed in section 3.3.4.5, participants were often curious about my motivation for conducting the research, and this led to some discussion around the process of gaining Informed Consent within the interview settings. As mentioned, for some participants, formal recordings were initially seen as concerning, and time was taken to go through the PLS and reiterate the ways in which any data or recording would be handled as part of the research process. In most cases, participants were reassured by the formalisation of this agreement, facilitated via the signing of the Consent Form, although special care had to be taken, particularly in Latvia, to ensure that participants had fully understood the information in the PLS. On numerous occasions, participants would wave away the PLS document and just ask to sign the Consent Form, however, myself and my translator ensured that the key components of the PLS were verbally communicated where the participant had not fully read the form.

To reduce any risk of physical harm to the participant and to the researcher, the suitability of the interview locations had to consider safety and confidentiality. Interview locations had to provide sufficient space for interviews to be carried out and, where applicable, for pre-scheduled interviews the participants or contacts acting as facilitators were asked to suggest suitable locales. The supervisory team were advised of the time and location of any fieldwork involving lone working. Where possible interviews were conducted in open public venues such as cafes, hotel lobbies or restaurants and late-night interviewing was not permitted. Where interviews were carried out in the homes of participants, as was often the case within the UK data collection process, safety procedures were put in pace to protect the researcher, including setting up a contact system with my spouse which would indicate the expected location and duration of interviews. A phone call would be made to my spouse prior to and following an interview, and if this call was not received then a set of safety protocols, devised as a follow-up, would be initiated. In Latvia, interviews were conducted on an accompanied

basis, as my translator was present during the data collection period. Travel was facilitated by my translator and we drove from location to location. Where an extended stay was required or anticipated, local hotels were booked in advance. As alluded to in section 3.3.4, during one hotel stay, my translator contracted food poisoning from the hotel restaurant. However, immediate medical assistance was sought, and after a brief period of hospital 'in patient' treatment and a further day's rest, I was assured that it was safe for her to resume data collection activities. No other major safety issues were experienced.

3.6 Limitations and Challenges

There are acknowledged limitations of this research project, and a major limitation, returning to my initial discussion around the challenges of being a non-traditional student, was time. Time is a precious commodity in any research project and time creates predetermined parameters within which the scope of the project can exist. The thematic scope of the project had to be carefully considered so as to be achievable within the time period afforded for both primary and secondary data collection as well as taking into account the needs of the data analysis process. With more time available, additional strands and themes of citizenship could have been explored, and future research may wish to build upon evolving nuances and continuing renegotiations of citizenship within Latvia and other regions or states.

The time available for fieldwork, in relation to other conflicting commitments and demands has been documented in section 3.3 and was a significant limitation within this project. It is acknowledged that with an expanded timescale, further interviews in additional locations not covered by this project could have been conducted in order to give further credence to the findings. Although multiple locations were visited as part of the fieldwork and data collection, this could have been extended to encapsulate a wider range of locations within both Latvia and the UK. Data collection within England, particularly around areas which are home to larger concentrations of Eastern European communities, such as London and the South East coastal areas, could have provided further nuanced discussion around belonging for those who had moved from Latvia to the UK. More locations within Latvia could also have been

included as part of the fieldwork exercise had more time been available. It was also felt that observation of daily interactions would have added an additional level of insight into the lived experiences of individuals negotiating their position with the wider community of Latvia, and this is an area which could be explored in subsequent research.

Time was allowed for the opportunity to spend periods within the field collecting data, reflecting on the interviews and data collected and refining and reconfiguring strategies and processes. I had set myself a target of securing 50-55 in-depth qualitative interviews based on the amount of time I felt would be realistic for data collection, and although I successfully exceeded this target, the intensive nature of the data collection schedule was physically and emotionally draining. As detailed in section 3.3, within the fieldwork conducted in the UK, specifically in Scotland, there was some space, albeit limited, to reflect on the data collected and on the experience of that specific element of participant interaction, between each interview. As fieldwork moved to Latvia, the process of data collection became almost "conveyor belt" in nature and offered less space for the intertwining of engagement and reflection in relation to each interview. The process of always "being on" and ensuring participants felt comfortable and at ease in order to extract rich qualitative data did take a physical and emotional toll. Although detailed notes on my thoughts about the respective data gathering events were taken and recorded each day spent within the field, in the immediate weeks and months following intensive data gathering, time had to be taken to physically and mentally recover, and this was further complicated by the multiple demands on my time that daily life involves. As a result, I am sure that some deeper reflection based on the fieldwork may have been lost in the mêlée of everyday life.

Language was an additional barrier faced by this project, with interviews most often being conducted in Latvian or Russian using the services of my multilingual translator. Some participants were keen to conduct interviews in English, although it should be noted that English was not the first language of any participants taking part in this study. The process of translation has the potential to create issues in relation to the conveyance of meaning, particularly when dealing with complex issues and threads of citizenship, identity and belonging. Where ambiguity or uncertainty occurred in the participants' narrative or within

the translation, contextual analysis was used to make the most relevant inference of meaning.

Finally, I would like to comment on the specific challenging personal circumstances which impacted on this research project. As highlighted earlier, this comment is not presented in mitigation of any shortcomings of this research, but rather adds to the conversation around the idiosyncrasy of the non-traditional, and in particular, non-traditional female student. Such students often have the additional responsibilities of balancing caring and childcare needs, perhaps coping with tight financial constraints and merging the return to study as an adult learner into the wider context of daily family life. During the timescale of this project, my own family life was affected by periods of ill health as well as being more dramatically and significantly impacted by the onset of mental health issues and a series of mental health crises experienced by my eldest son. Thankfully, these situations are now much improved, however the practical and emotional complexities of working through these issues within a family and home setting did restrict the 'headspace' needed to work through the research process. There was a time lag between data collection and the process of writing up as I took a year out to manage the emotional impact of traumatic family events, whilst ensuring that a support system was in place for my son. This experience, I am sure, is likely to become increasingly more common as mental health issues continue to rise in wider society.

On returning to my studies, and indeed in the years preceding my timeout, there were numerous occasions in which I truly believed, and had indeed decided, that giving up and not completing this project was the only viable option. Often with a wry smile, I would try to respond positively to the well-intentioned assertions of others, that holiday periods would mean more time for reading, writing or for fieldwork, when in fact the absence of the school routine and the increased traffic in and out of my physical workspace at home resulted in quite the opposite. I also envied peers who could take themselves off to spend long periods in the field, immersing themselves in their research *in situ*, or those heading to weekend or week-long writing retreats or even to their parents to be fed, watered and provided with fresh laundry. The final writing up period, which coincided with the Covid-19 crisis and

subsequent periods of lockdown, only served to further add to the time limitations, external pressures and anxiety of meeting deadlines.

That said, the personal challenges which had to be navigated and as far as possible overcome, brought about a real development and consolidation of project management skills and resilience building- qualities to be valued in any researcher, regardless of their circumstances. As noted within the literature, the level of support and the establishment of a positive relationship with supervisors and academic mentors is key to successful completion of studies for non-traditional students (Mayer et al 2014). I am forever indebted to my infinitely patient and supportive supervisors for their much-valued guidance, time, professionalism and friendship. With the ongoing support of family, friends and my afore mentioned supervisory team, the majority of tasks were completed within pre-agreed, yet flexible timescales, and the project management skills and resilience developed were all advantageous in eventually reaching the finishing line of submission. I hope that this perhaps "unorthodox" testimony serves to illustrate and widen awareness of the realities of non-traditional students, researchers and academics, and aids the fostering of supportive and productive research environments and communities.

Chapter 4. Politics and Perspectives of Citizenship (Part 1)

4.1 Introduction and Rationale

This empirical chapter and the following chapter will focus on the relationship between individuals and the state in Latvia from both horizontal and vertical perspectives in order to consider how this relationship has been impacted by Latvia's political decision making and development. To feed into the broader research question 'What does Latvian citizenship look like today?', the supplementary research question 'How has structural political change impacted on citizenship and on the formation of a wider community of Latvia?' is posed.

The rationale for selecting the relevance of the political trajectory of Latvia within a wider exploration of citizenship is based upon work by Duvold (2006), in which he states that it is "the elites, not the citizens who shape and continue to re-shape the citizenship agenda all along" (Duvold 2006, p. 167). The ways in which elites in Latvia have responded to two significant geopolitical shifts which have occurred during this period, namely the restoration of independence and the integration into the wider European sphere as a new EU member state, have been a key focus of studies based on traditional approaches to citizenship as outlined in the theoretical chapter of this thesis. However, as noted in Chapter 2, there has been less discussion of the effect and impact on citizenship as viewed from below. Therefore, by looking at the intersection of vertical and horizontal perspectives through an exploration of traditional thinking, and contrasting this with the testimony of lived experience, a more nuanced picture emerges.

A partnering of two empirical chapters will focus on the structural aspects of Latvia's political development. This initial empirical chapter will track back to the historical legacy of the Soviet period and the effect it had on the initial political direction taken by Latvian elites in the period immediately after the restoration of independence. The chapter will also reflect on the subsequent attainment of EU membership and explore whether this development has in any way reconfigured political direction and behaviours. The corresponding impact of political direction and associated political behaviours upon individuals and the ways in which

this has shaped perceptions and negotiations of citizenship is provided via the testimony of lived experience. This allows space for more nuanced and discursive constructs of citizenship to emerge. By applying Marshall's (1950) theorised 'political' element of citizenship and contextualizing this alongside Beiner's (1995) ideal of communitarianism, conclusions can be drawn on the development of citizenship and the political community in Latvia today from the analysis of intersecting vertical and horizontal perspectives.

Chapter 5 will continue to consider Marshall's (1950) political element of citizenship and will move chronologically forward in time by exploring the ways in which political community is forming and reforming in Latvia today. Drawing upon the foundation of Latvia's political development discussed within this chapter, the second 'political' chapter will subsequently look at more recent developments in policy, and political engagement to ascertain whether or not we can ever truly see a non-ethnicised approach to the formation of a formal political community of Latvia.

4.2 Contextualizing Latvia's Post-Independence Political Direction

To address the question 'How has structural political change impacted on citizenship and on the formation of a wider community of Latvia?', it is important to provide some context around Latvia's political development in recent decades. During the Soviet period democratic norms were not part of Latvia's story and well-placed political elites led from a narrow centre of power, little influenced by the citizenry. Many of the former 'Eastern bloc' countries are described as having had a 'triple transition' involving creating a form of consolidated democracy through shaking off the communist system and structures, the transition to a market economy and the creation of new political and socio-economic systems (Galbreath 2005 pp.27-41). In addition, for Latvia, there has also been the challenge of not only consolidating a democracy, but consolidating a nation, a task made eminently more difficult as a result of having a significantly sized Russian speaking ethnic minority resulting from inward migration during the Soviet period. These transitions, experienced in the region, are widely cited as "an important litmus test for many theories of democratisation, regime transition, ethnicity and nationalism and international relations" (Galbreath 2014 p. 27).

A number of options were available to the Latvian government in respect of the large Russian speaking ethnic minority and other smaller minority groups. Despite initial hopes for a more cohesive society, Latvia began instead to seek to conserve and protect the integrity of its new-found independent status along ethnic lines (Purs 2012 p. 94). Rejecting the so-called 'zero option' which would grant citizenship to anyone who had resided in the republics at the point of independence, a more 'exclusionist' approach was adopted towards the granting of citizenship (Purs 2012 p. 94). President Ulmanis supported the idea that only "pre-1940 citizens and their descendants should determine the nature of the new Latvian citizenship law" (Morris 2006 p. 544). Smith (1994) notes that the controversial creation of Latvian citizenship in the immediate post-Soviet era saw "stringent residence requirements for those seeking naturalisation", with a quota system adopted and the creation of priority lists whereby "ethnic Latvians without citizenship would be given priority, followed by spouses of citizens and those who contributed actively to Latvian independence" (Smith 1994 pp. 185-186). "Latvians without citizenship would be given priority, followed by spouses of citizens and those who contributed actively to Latvian independence" (Smith 1994 pp.185-186). This resulted in 29% percent or approximately 730,000 people, mostly those from the Russian speaking community, facing non-citizen status in 1995 (http://www.mfa.gov.lv).

This top-down dictat immediately placed a large percentage of the population outside the vertically 'imagined' community of Latvia, which was being built around a shared Latvian culture, language and ethnicity, at least on a formal or legal footing. These changes were met with condemnation by neighbouring Russia, as well as by the large proportion of Russian speakers who remained within Latvia's borders during the early 1990s. Official narratives left little space for any horizontal perspectives to be put forward in relation to more nuanced representations of citizenship and this concentring of the narrative has remained the focus of academic literature, focusing on classical constructs of citizenship, and further fueling an ongoing discourse of polarisation.

There is no doubt that ethnic tension and a troubled and contested history has deeply affected Latvia's relationship with democratic norms and impacted upon policies of diversity, inclusion and participation, at least within the public sphere. Of interest to this research, and in line with calls of authors to broaden the context of enquiry (Kallio and Lister 2007); (Le Feuvre and Roseneil 2014); (Kock and Villadsen 2017) is an exploration of whether this nationalist rhetoric and discourse plays out within the private sphere or within less politicised spaces. On a political level at least, the issue of ethnicised formal and legal citizenship has continued to fuel rhetoric from both Latvia and Russia to this day. One study, conducted within the Baltic States in 2003, found Latvia to be at a particularly high risk of succumbing to ethnic tensions, including Loftsson et al (2003) who noted that "empirical data confirms that Latvian society is deeply split on the integration and harmony issue between Latvians and Russians" (Loftsson et al.2003 p. 85). However, as a new generation has emerged in post-Soviet Latvia, having grown up with little or no experience of Soviet times, and some 20 years on from earlier scholarly assessments of the community of Latvia, it is timely to ask, 'What does Latvian citizenship look like today?'.

Through the 1990s and into the 2000s, and no longer isolated from the West following the collapse of Soviet rule, Latvia moved to build relationships as a sovereign state with external actors, including a successful application for membership of the EU. Movement on minority rights continued to dominate political discourse at this time and was a central focus of debate as Latvia negotiated the path towards membership of the EU. As part of the accession process, the nationalist government has had to reflect on the stance taken on citizenship to meet the *acquis communautaire*, or 'obligations of membership', an important layer of the Copenhagen Criteria of 1993, agreed by the EU for accession countries. These criteria, laid out by the EU, "specified the stability of democratic institutions, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities" (Pridham 2009 p. 469). Pressure was placed on Latvia from the EU and from the OSCE, who warned of political isolation without amendment of Latvia's restrictive citizenship and language laws (Morozov in Lehti and Smith 2003 p. 225). As noted by Morozov (2003), Latvia had little choice but to comply with amendments although changes implemented in 1998 to the Citizenship Law brought only marginal improvements for the large Russian speaking minority (Morozov 2003 p. 225). This is blamed

upon many of the EU's conditions being viewed as abstract in nature, leaving room for interpretation, at a minimalist or maximalist level, with little clear or unified definition on what constitutes terms such as 'democracy' and related terminology (Grabbe ed. White et al. 2007 pp. 114-115).

The challenges experienced by Latvia around nation building and outwardly being seen to foster a stable democracy has been much covered in the work of scholars since the early 1990s. Having been recognized as a sovereign state and later accepted into the EU, despite constructing a community of citizens largely on the basis of Latvian ethnicity, in some respects, the winning cards had been played in relation to state building for the newly independent, nationalist led Latvia. However, it cannot be assumed that these issues are resolved and that the development of a 'community of Latvia' can be considered a completed process some thirty years later. Scholars such as Kymlicka and Norman (1994) espouse that a healthy and stable modern democracy "depends not only the basic structure, but on the ways in which individuals view their position and attitudes, and of particular relevance in the Latvian case, their challenges and identities" (Kymlicka and Norman 1994 p. 352). Dauenhauer (1996) also notes that a stable and healthy democracy depends on "cooperation and tolerance within different societal groups, responsibility and restraint around wealth and health and a thoughtful participation in the political life of society" (Dauenhauer 1996 p. 1). Allegations of corruption levelled at officials as well as ongoing issues of division around minority rights remained a focus of traditional assessments of Latvia produced during the 1990s and 2000s. Yet little is published on the resulting impact from below. There is also a lack of emphasis on space for, and the practices of, cross ethnic cooperation and non ethnicised political participation from a grass roots level. From a vertical perspective Grabbe (ed. 2007) and Pridham (2009) both strongly contend that the impact of structural change, namely that of EU membership, has resulted in limited long-term change at an elite level. This thesis will argue that Latvia, to a degree, played by the rules to gain entry to the EU club, and assuming that membership wouldn't be suspended, returned, in part, to pre-accession patterns.

Against this backdrop, it is the aim of this chapter to consider whether the political behaviours of elites in the initial post-independence period, bolstered by the success of repositioning Latvia on a West facing trajectory, have, at the same time, been counterproductive in creating an 'imagined community' of Latvian citizens, of the type outlined by Anderson (2006). It will be shown that there has been a diversion in the concept of 'who belongs' from a grass roots perspective due to disconnect between elites and those experiencing the impact of their decision making and direction upon their everyday lives. It is argued that in focusing on a series of actions designed to bolster the position of the political elites, within a 'national' community of Latvia, not only have minorities been left feeling disenfranchised, but there has also been a negative knock-on effect in terms of the relationship of those of Latvian descent towards the state. The outcome of national and ethnic self-preservation by ruling elites, was, from the primary data gathered, found to have served only those elites themselves, opening up a chasm between individuals and the state. It is from this fracture that there has been some semblance of movement on horizontal perspectives of 'who belongs' to the community of Latvia, with the nationalising political strategy and the behaviours of governing elites beginning to loosen the binds of ethnic loyalty.

4.3 Latvia – Same Old, Brand New You?

When considering Marshall's (1950) political aspect of citizenship through the lens of horizontal perspective, the relationship between individuals and the state, as well as levels of trust and satisfaction in the political process is central to any assessment. Politicians are elected as citizens' representatives and 'trust' in the political process, has been said to represent "a judgement that, even in the absence of ongoing scrutiny or enforcement by citizens, a political actor or institution will act in a way that is broadly consistent with those citizens' interests" (Syed 2015 p. 74). The restoration of independence and a shift from an occupying government, misaligned to the idea of a fully democratic Latvia, brought fresh opportunities for newly elected politicians and elites to shape a new direction for Latvia. However, allegations of corruption have been levelled against Latvian politicians and against elites since the restoration of independence and risks upending the finely balanced

relationship between individual and state. Reference to official corruption in Latvia, as well as more broadly across Eastern Europe, is widely acknowledged in scholarly discussions centering around the transfer of power and assets during the immediate post-Soviet period (McManus 2004; White 2007; Pridham 2009). This section will explore whether the development of a wider community of Latvia, as imagined by nationalist politicians in the early 1990s, has been impacted by these allegations. If we assume that corruption is 'the abuse of public power for private gain' a recognized definition referred to as 'the public office' definition (Walton 2015), then the propensity for trust to be eroded must surely be high where political actors act not in the interests of citizens, but instead act in the interests of themselves. Answering the question: 'Do we see the emergence of a broader 'Latvian community' whereby individuals see themselves as 'belonging' not only to Latvia, but to each other, beyond divisions of ethnicity and formal citizenship?', it will be shown that the behaviours of elites, within this early period of Latvia's political development, destabilised trust and created space for non ethnicised solidarity to develop, with themes of exclusion, alienation and disenfranchisement commonly emerging, increasingly so, irrespective of ethnicity and formal citizenship status.

Authors such as McManus et al. (2004) point to the concerns the EU expressed over levels of continuing corruption in former communist states seeking EU membership during the early 2000s. Drawing on Poland as an example, McManus et al. (2004) found that during the pre-accession period "perceptions of high-level corruption in Poland are indeed pervasive' with around 93 percent of respondents stating that 'corruption, such as bribe taking, amongst politicians' is at least 'quite widespread' and 56 percent that it is 'very widespread'"(McManus et al. 2004 p. 109). It was also found that 'similar numbers agreed that politicians are concerned mainly with their own interests' and that "successful election of an MP depends much more on having political connections and friends than on the competence and skills of the candidate" (McManus et al. 2004 p. 109). Corruption, it seems, transcended ideology, with studies concluding that "being in power, or proximity to those in power, therefore had its pecuniary advantages, helping to explain, for example, why some shady businessmen and left-leaning politicians made such happy bedfellows" (White et al 2007 p. 67).

Whilst corruption might have transcended ideology, perceptions of corruption did not always initially appear to transcend ethnicity with Pridham (2009) observing that there was a clear differential between Russian speaking individuals and those of Latvian descent in their perceptions of corruption levels and resultant levels of dissatisfaction at the time of EU accession. In relation to satisfaction with the development of democracy, Pridham (2009) references data which show that 40.3% of Latvians were very or quite satisfied and 53.9% of Latvians stating that they were rather or very dissatisfied. For Russians the figures were markedly different showing only 18.6% to be very or quite satisfied and an extremely high 75.4% rather or very dissatisfied. Pridham (2009) also notes that "further evidence of such high levels of dissatisfaction was regularly documented by Eurobarometer findings" (Pridham 2009a pp. 63-64). With this level of divergence in satisfaction and dissatisfaction levels, it is clear that, at least at the time of EU accession, Latvia was ethnically divided in terms of how the government was perceived, despite the continuing reports of elite level corruption. These ethnic differences could perhaps be attributed to ongoing support, at least by a percentage of the titular population, for the newly restored national government, rather than for the system and actions of elected representatives.

Such an assumption could explain why the nationalist led government and politicians continued to be associated with flawed practices as they journeyed along the route 'West' with Latvia as an EU member state. In a somewhat depressing analysis of the literature around the EU's newest members in the post EU enlargement period of 2004, there is little to suggest that corruption was reduced at a structural level. It is suggested within the literature that "accession to the EU and the flow of EU funds not only provided opportunities to assist in economic and regional development, they have also opened up another source of potential income for corrupt officials" (White et al. 2007 pp. 66-67). One participant, identifying as a Latvian speaker, made reference to allegations of corruption and the misappropriation of EU funds in the following interview extract. Not alone in expressing similar sentiment around EU funds, he stated:

'Money does come to Liepāja from the EU but not to the pockets where it is supposed to. The money always goes somewhere unknown.'

Int51: (M), 44, Security Guard, Liepāja, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker)

Pridham (2009) further concluded that in the case of Latvia, EU accession has resulted in little behavioural change within ruling national elites during the first five years of EU membership (Pridham 2009 b p. 481). Based upon a conversation with a well-placed journalist in one of Latvia's largest newspapers, he goes onto surmise that "there have been signs in the years since EU entry that the political class has been less bound by considerations of Brussels in its behaviour on some of the political standards" with politicians expressing that they could act as they pleased once the accession conditions were seen to have been met (Pridham 2009b p. 481). This clearly opens up a division between the individual and the elected representative as the behaviours of the corrupt officials are self-serving and less likely to foster a sense of belonging for those outside the perimeter fence of power. Following initial evidence of ethnicised support for politicians (Pridham 2009a), in subsequent years we see evidence of non-ethnicised dissatisfaction grow. At the intersection of vertical and horizontal perspectives, there is a growing contradiction of the successful fostering of a wider Latvian community, as nationalist political representatives act in a manner which does little to serve those outside the narrow confines of the elite community of Latvia. Indeed "by autumn 2013, according to Eurobarometer data, the government is only trusted by 21%, the Parliament – 17% and political parties – 6% of citizens" (Vorslava et al. 2014 p. 42). These figures, although not broken down in terms of ethnicity do show a convergence in falling approval ratings amongst a wide cross section of the citizenship, a citizenship which included more Russian speakers as the percentage of non-citizens begins to fall.

Year beginning:	Total number of non-citizens	% of population of Latvia
2011	296,619	14.3
2012	275,604	13.5
2013	267,559	13.2
2014	253,640	12.7
2015	242,259	12.2
2016	232,143	11.8
2017	222,847	11.4
2018	214,206	11.1
2019	205,565	10.7
2020	197,888	10.4
2021	190,522	10.1

Table 4.3.1 Part of non-speakers in Latvia's population. Source: Official Statistic of Latvia.

These falling approval levels lead to a deeper questioning of the relationship between individuals and the state. It is helpful to draw on these trends as they contribute to a broader change in the fabric of who feels they 'belong' to Latvia, and highlight that ethnicity is becoming less of a factor within this relationship, at least on the horizontal axis. An interesting example which highlights that it is not ethnicity, but perhaps socio-economics, which contributed to ongoing elite level corruption relates the 2006 court case involving the Ventspils mayor, Aivars Lembergs. Standing accused of "bribery, money laundering and abuse of office on the very same day that the Greens and Farmers Union nominated him as the party's possible candidate for Prime Minister (White et al 2007 p. 66), Lembergs, a Latvian nationalist and a fierce opponent of more ethnically progressive parties has been continually cited within the international press as being linked to large scale corruption. However, a review of literature relating to corruption and scandal, conducted by Ares and Hernández (2017), found that the "electoral performance of politicians involved in corruption scandals have only identified a modest, or even null, effect of corruption on the electoral fortunes of these politicians. Voters seem to forgive corrupt politicians since they are usually re-elected" (Ares and Hernández 2017 p. 2). Such politicians appear to retain their position

and standing within the elite and local community and from testimony gathered it is perhaps possible to suggest that Lembergs' position within the local community was not entirely based on his ethnicity. Rather, it is suggested, that ongoing support resulted from his ability to draw upon his acquired wealth and status in a way which was perceived as impacting positively on the 'lived experience' of the local people. Whilst acknowledging the allegations of corruption around him, what was of more importance to one Latvian speaking participant than his nationalist stance was the perception of acts of goodwill towards locals and in particular pensioners. She stated:

> *'Lembergs, he has a window factory and he earns the money, but he also puts windows into poor people's houses for free. It is a good thing. He still has money and money goes back to him but in Ventspils he gives all the pensioners some money 30 euros each as a present, so it's a small amount but something*.'
>
> Int46: (F), 35, Mum of 6, restores prams, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

Despite this positive testimony relating to clear examples of corruption from a Latvian speaker, it was mostly found that participants felt a disconnect from their elected representatives. Quotes, expressing negative views towards governing elites, were often voiced by participants who expressed a strong Latvian identity during their interviews. An example of this non-ethnicised disillusionment was found in Daugavpils, a city inhabited predominately by Russian speakers. A participant of Latvian descent, who was keen to emphasise her identify as Latvian throughout her interview, reiterated the view that politics in Latvia was problematic due to the major political transformation brought about by independence and a lack of political experience. Despite her support for the nationalist agenda, she was less impressed with the progress made since independence. She explains:

> *'I think the problems remain from the 90s, from when everything fell apart. It is not really to do with Europe. Latvia is still struggling to lift up from then.'*
>
> Int57: (F), 37, Barista, Daugavpils, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

She then goes on to talk about her belief that marginalisation arises from the actions of those elected to help her. Reflecting on her understanding that, on a structural level at least, she is

aware that the EU has provided funding for Latvia. However, this contrasts sharply with her own lived experience. Any benefits received from the EU she feels, do not come directly where needed to enhance the lives of residents, but instead are directed towards elites. She explains:

> *'So many people change in local government, but things still change very slowly. There is a lot of information that Europe has given so much money. But where is that money? We can't see it. Around Daugavpils I can't see it. It must have gone in someone's pockets*.'
>
> Int57: (F), 37, Barista, Daugavpils, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

Another participant, identifying as a Russian speaker, expressed the same opinion. He further explained that his own hopes for better political outcomes had diminished to a point where he had become completely disengaged with politics. He stated:

> *'I'm just tired reading all of these promises. They are only on paper and they never come true. You never see any of that. I'm fed up of promises. I completely see and completely understand that these new politicians have put Latvia into a different level of corruption. I don't trust them. They take care of themselves, like every single politician does.'*
>
> Int53: (M), 18, Job Centre Worker, Daugavpils, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

The data gathered from these randomly selected interview participants from Daugavpils reiterate that issues of distrust and dissatisfaction are not specifically drawn along ethnic lines, even where one ethnicity is more prevalent than another in a given community. Disillusionment and disenchantment were found to be equally evident from individuals of both Latvian and Russian descent, and areas of cross agreement around politics becomes more apparent where government and elected representatives are felt to be working against communities and individuals. Indeed, drawing on constructs of discursive citizenship (Kock and Villadsen 2017), the examples of disconnect articulated here from members of both Latvian and Russian speaking communities align, and the commonality of dissatisfaction is clear and non ethnicised. Individual pursuits of power and allegations of corruption fragment

notions of a vertically imagined national community based around ethnicity and shared culture and do not correspond with experiences and perceptions at the grassroots level.

Corruption is one aspect of the discourse of political disconnect in Latvia, with another being increasing political apathy. That recurring allegations of corruption have dominated Latvia's political landscape, and politicians such as Lembergs have been able to maintain a position of political power, extending from the Communist era until almost three decades later, is perhaps remarkable in a country looking to move on from the Soviet past and drive democracy forwards. In an attempt to explain this anomaly, studies conducted in longer established democracies such as Germany, Spain and Italy, suggesting that the hypothesis that high levels of corruption or public political scandal will impact negatively on politicians, does not appear to hold up (Ares and Hernández 2017). Instead, it results in a prevailing sense of apathy and an absence of any feeling of the ability of the individual to bring about change (Ares and Hernández 2017). This apathy is important as it relates directly to how we view and can challenge existing constructs of democratic citizenship. An interesting paper published by Gray (2015) on 'silent citizenship' challenges the more traditional view which would suggest that apathy is a form of 'passive' dissatisfaction, and instead links the decision to withdraw voice from the political process as an 'active' and deliberate act. Indeed, Gray (2015) argues that "the closer citizens' motives for silence come to reflecting active decisions about politics, the more politically engaged these silences are likely to be" (Gray 2015 p. 475). This theory was certainly evidenced by one Russian speaking participant who told me:

> *'I was really interested in politics before, but in the last 15 years I stopped.'*
>
> Int53: (M), 18, Job Centre Worker, Daugavpils, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

His interest in politics has not reduced, as he demonstrated a good knowledge of the political landscape of Latvia at the time of interview, and was engaged in an EU funded programme, aimed at encouraging unemployed individuals to gain higher qualifications for improved work opportunities. The decision to withdraw his voice from the ballot box was an active response to a feeling of dis-empowerment with the institutional structure of government,

however, the practice of being involved in a transnational politically funded project suggest that he has not passively withdrawn from a wider political sphere.

From the data gathered, high levels of voter apathy were prevalent across Latvia regardless of the ethnicity of those interviewed. It was expressed that voters perceived the pool of candidates open for election to political office to be limited and there persisted a common belief that corruption was widespread and deeply ingrained within the political culture. This led to narratives of 'them and us', dividing elites from those living ordinary daily lives, which has implications for a vertically constructed and nationally affiliated political community of Latvia. The statements of two participants below were reflective of the general mood of those interviewed:

> *'Who to vote for? They are all corrupt. People who want to win elections in Daugavpils are all getting dirty. They just want to win. There is nobody to vote for.'*
>
> Int57: (F), 37, Barista, Daugavpils, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

> *'Yeah, I vote, although for the last 12 and a half years the faces haven't changed no matter what I vote for. I feel that those people are not interested in improving things for the country's citizens, for us to live well. They work for themselves, for their own well-being*.'
>
> Int39: (M), 27, Highly Skilled Craftsman, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

Of concern for those looking to see evidence of democratic development was the suggestion that a pervasive and egoistical culture among politicians was negatively impacting on newly elected candidates, even where change was promised. Within traditional constructs of citizenship "individuals can be included and equally empowered as citizens to exercise control over the collective decisions that impact their lives" (Gray 2015 p. 477). Yet, as told through the lived experience of participants, this is being eroded due to the repeated patterns of self-serving behaviour of those in power. It was felt that norms were continually re-enforced by those already in power, leading to little change or opportunity to change the political landscape by voters, and the status quo being maintained by longest serving elites. One Latvian speaking participant tells:

> ‘W*ell, starting from 1992, the politicians are just the same. The 15% of new politicians are the same after 2 years as the old ones. Nothing changes a lot.’*
>
> Int24: (M), 33, Business Manager, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

The suggestion was also made that continued corruption continues to bolster those in power as many may not wish to associate themselves with politics on the basis that they themselves may be seen as tarnished by others. One participant, a keen activist and political lobbyist highlighted his frustration around this theme. He stated:

> *‘It’s difficult to participate in politics because there is this psychological barrier that says politics is dirty and no one should go there. There is a very big gap. The emotional barrier is huge*.’
>
> Int29: (M), 31, Civil Society Consultant and Activist, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

Whilst Gray (2015) notes space for active political dissent to be evident within patterns of voter apathy, a recent publication by Haugsgjerd and Kumlin (2020) suggests that “dissatisfied citizens may become sceptical towards politicians and democratic institutions in general, rather than to hold specific parties and governments to account” (Haugsgjerd and Kumlin, 2020 p. 972). Their article, entitled ‘Downbound spiral? Economic grievances, perceived social protection and political distrust’, puts forth the argument that:

> *‘poor performance sets in motion a broader and more long-lived process than implied by past research: performance hurts trust, which in turn makes future performance evaluations more negative.’*
> (Haugsgjerd and Kumlin, 2020 p. 975).

This then leads to an ongoing downward spiral of negative associations and practices. Of concern for the democratic development of an engaged and enfranchised community of voters in Latvia is their argument that a vicious circle of continued disillusionment and disengagement would be more likely in European states less affluent and less socially democratic than states such as Norway, where their initial research was carried out

(Haugsgjerd and Kumlin, 2020 pp. 984-985). There is certainly some evidence from the data collected within this study that this may be the case in Latvia and that positive behavioural changes on both the vertical and horizontal axis will take some time.

One area of commonality, within the political environment of Latvia, cutting across both vertical and horizontal perspectives, is a sense of resistance or reluctance to actively effect change. The following quote sums up the feeling of this Latvian speaking participant, who alluded to such difficulties. He stated:

> *'It's hard to vote for something new. You have the idea to push away because we don't think we need any changes.'*
>
> Int31: (M), 41, Business Consultant, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

His reason for this way of thinking is not due to the fact that he, and others like him, do not want to see change. Instead, he blames Latvians and the Latvian political agenda for being unable to stop looking backwards to a troubled history. Here, the vertically constructed nationalist narrative works to conserve the status quo and, at least within the public sphere, we see historical rhetoric dominate behaviour and practice. Having experience of working within a new industry, very much linked to Europe and more forward-thinking ideas, the respondent explains that, despite some confluence around dissatisfaction with elite level politics within the different communities of Latvia, history and ethnicity continues to colour the political thinking at both macro and micro levels:

> *'I think it is true that Latvians are more against something rather than actually taking something apart. It is the same with the flags. We are always putting black ribbons everywhere. We have a lot of memory days, we have memories of people going to Siberia, remembering Jews and so on. We are all the time concentrating on this aspect. This history is affecting us.'*
>
> Int31: (M), 41, Business Consultant, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

Perhaps it could be argued that the governing elites are banking on little changing. Where political enthusiasm has manifested, this has tended to be around issues that would be detrimental to Latvia as an ethnic state, rather than to Latvia as a civic state. Based upon the testimony of typical everyday type conversations relating to politics, it was often alluded to that Latvians vote not to better their own personal circumstances and oust poorly performing elites, but instead to consolidate the power of these elites by voting to stop change, usually spurred on by nationalist Latvian rhetoric. Rather than looking to a more positive future and changing the direction of politics, many interviewees who took part in this research continued to look to the past and return to well-worn voting patterns. This position was perfectly summed up by the following participant, a single mum, struggling to meet her basic living costs but fiercely patriotic. She stated:

> *'When you need to vote in a referendum you are patriotic. When you need to vote in an election for the Saeima* [Latvian Parliament], *then you wonder why you have to do this. They change nothing.'*
>
> Int43: (F), 31, Charity Volunteer and P/T forecourt attendant, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

Despite often feeling let down by the politicians in relation to her own challenging circumstances, the interviewee draws attention to the role of ethnicity and nationalist rhetoric manifesting in emotive political decision making at the micro level. Relationships between individuals from both Latvian and Russian speaking communities are said to be, generally speaking, peaceful as there are "relatively few socioeconomic differences between the two groups and a high level of mixed marriages" (Ījabs 2016 p. 286). However, this peace, found in day-to-day level lived experiences is easily disturbed by the politics and rhetoric of ethnic nationalism and continues to shape behaviour and opinion within more the formal political space.

4.4 Latvia And the Politics of Language: Past Perfect, Future Tense?

It is impossible to reflect on themes of community, belonging and identity within Latvia without considering the aspect of language. Noting that group classifications themselves are

often pre-existent, as is the case for Latvia, Fuller (2007) notes that "an individual's memberships are socially constructed through their own (and others') language and social behaviour" (Fuller 2007 p. 106). Within the Latvian citizenship debate, a key fault line, widely discussed, is language. With the restoration of independence, the decision was taken to "eliminate the linguistic dominance of Russian and to make Latvian the sole state language" (Lublin 2013 p. 386). As highlighted by Budrytė (2005) and Lublin (2013), at the macro level, the decision was taken to adopt Latvian as the language of state bureaucracy and associated public administration. This sent a clear message from above, that community of Latvia, viewed through a political lens, was 'imagined' as linguistically Latvian. Scholars point to Latvian becoming "the visible face of the country as Latvia mandated the replacement of Russian signs and enshrined Latvian as the language of public administration" (Lublin 2013 p.386). This clearly leads to concerns of exclusion for non-Latvian speakers as has been raised within many existing publications. Contentious as Latvia's political position on language remains, there is emerging evidence that tensions around language are generally more nuanced, particularly in daily life. Despite the language of state bureaucracy being Latvian, authors such as Schmid (2008) and Druviete and Ozolins (2016) suggest that in daily practice, a less intractable position is often adopted. Examples cited are of the Russian language being "often used in communication with municipalities and other institutions" including the availability and use of translators in the Latvian courts (Druviete and Ozolins 2016 p. 129). More recently Ekmanis (2019) suggests that "while significant issues with the top-down implementation of integration policies certainly remain, there is little doubt that successful integration of Russian speakers in Latvia is the intended goal" (Ekmanis 2019 p. 75).

The perceived 'rights and wrongs' of Latvia's language policy are well documented in contrasting arguments put forward by many including Budrytė (2005), Agarin (2010), Ījabs (2016) and again highlighted by Druviete and Ozolins (2016). The intention of examining language in relation to understandings of citizenship within this research is to look beyond a rejection or defence of the policy, and to look instead at the impact language policy has had on how individuals perceive their position in the 'community' of Latvia. The contentious nature of ethnicity, and in particular language, is at times arguably 'weaponised', with vertically constructed political policy making seemingly at odds with the relative stability of

relations in daily life. Given the non-ethnicised dissatisfaction with the actions of elites arising from claims of corruption and entrenchment, as discussed in section 4.3, the utilisation of ethnic tension can serve to draw attention away from the more disreputable aspects of Latvian politics. One participant expressed his strong belief that tensions play out due to political actions rather than through lived experience. He stated:

> *'All of this stuff is just political bull* $#!t. *Every once in a while, somebody jabs a stick at it because it is a sore point with everybody. The government and the powers that be don't take care of it. Everyone pokes this stick and people get upset, but when push comes to shove, I really don't think there is a problem. You would have to be stupid to believe all of this.'*
>
> Int28: (M), age not given, Artisan Jewellery Maker, Riga, Latvia (urban) – English/Latvian speaker

The idea that ethnic tension in Latvia is widely problematic may be prevalent within the political rhetoric, but it contrasts sharply with the experiences of those on the ground, with the exacerbation of division being seen as diversionary. Another participant, formerly of Latvia but now living in the UK agrees with this idea. Her perspective was interesting given that she had the benefit of viewing what was going on in Latvia from an external viewpoint. Not only was she physically distanced from any politically implied tension, she also distanced herself grammatically, with the recurring use of '*they*', denoting distant politicians as the source of ethnic tension in the following response:

> *'I think that is the politicians. They think this is the thing to do in Latvia. They are all the time creating a barrier between Latvians and Russian there because there are a lot of Russians. They are all the time making this barrier between them so that they fight with each other and don't look at what they (politicians) are doing. It's always been like that for me*.'
>
> Int3: (F), 34, Self-employed, Moray, UK (rural) – Latvian speaker

Although the vast majority of participants in this study felt that tensions were politically motivated rather than experienced as a tangible feature in daily life, public protests have however been witnessed on the ground in Latvia. The political sanctioning of prescribed levels of Latvian or Russian language within education is one example of where the

proliferation of unrest occurs. An education programme was ratified in 2004 by the Latvian Saeima which stipulated that 60% of the secondary school program should be taught in Latvian and 40% in the minority language (Schmid 2008 p. 11). Although Latvian speakers tended to see the education reform of 2004 as a positive strategy, around 70% of Latvia's Russian speakers are cited as viewing the reforms negatively resulting in protests (Schmid 2008 p. 14). More recently further protests occurred as the Latvian parliament passed further amendments to the Education Law and the Law on General Education in 2018, meaning that schools of ethnic minorities would have to start the transition to Latvian-only secondary education from the academic session 2019/2020 (https://www.baltictimes.com 2018). Such protests are often attributed to organized Russian interest groups and described as sporadic rather than having been sustained in the long term (Schmid 2008 p. 5). The suggestion therein is that although there are underlying ethnic tensions, these tend not to manifest without some sort of formal organisation. This organisational aspect is often facilitated by small activist groups rather than by the coming together of disenchanted individuals.

These protests, by manner of their sporadic nature and means of organisation, appear to be utilised for higher political purposes, rather than evolving from a wider groundswell of public anger hinting at more fractured day to day relations. Evidence of this emerges around another incident where language was again at the centre of public and media discourse. In 2012 citizens of Latvia went to the polls in a referendum on officially adopting Russian as a second language, however as was reported at the time, "the Russians who spearheaded the referendum admitted they had no chance at winning"; instead they hoped to open a dialogue between the Latvian government and Russian speaking minority groups (www.theguardian.com 2019). Having been in Riga at the time of the referendum, there was little evidence of mass scale protests, only small-scale propaganda mongering by student groups and small activist groups on both sides. Indeed, it was from a Latvian student group that the sticker (pictured below) was given to me.

Figure 4.4.1 Slogan 'arlatvijusirdī' [Translation: With Latvian in the heart]

A casual observer, reflecting on media sources and publications around the issue of language in Latvia, could easily conclude that language remains a bone of contention which affects everyday interactions along predetermined ethnic lines. However, in daily lived reality, there is perhaps less Russian speaking antagonism than is often reflected in political and media discourse and much of any unrest arising from a response towards Latvian nationalist political antagonism rather than from individual differences on the ground. There are contrasting interpretations surrounding the referendum. The claim put forward that the requirement for such a referendum could be "seen as a sign of the disintegration of Latvian society that might jeopardize the very existence of independent, democratic Latvia" (Ījabs 2016 p. 286), has not materialised and larger scale sustained periods of unrest have not followed. Some insightful studies focus specifically on the issue of discrimination and exclusion which have been experienced by the Russian speaking population of Latvia (Aasland & Fløtten 2001; Pisarenko 2006; Agarin 2010). Valuable as these studies are in highlighting these issues, there is a propensity to position Russian speakers within a uniformly 'imagined' 'Russian speaking community'. As highlighted in Chapter 2.3, not all who find that they have been attributed the label 'Russian speakers' by a political or social hierarchy of Latvia individually identify with this wider group categorisation and may, depending on context, be more or less likely to be drawn to self-identification of *Latvyici'* (Lulle and Jurkane-Hobein 2017 p. 609). The grouping together of 'Russian speakers' may not always be truly reflective of nuances between individuals and the experience of daily life, but instead may feed into a continued narrative of division, exclusive of other manifestations of citizenship.

Within this study, the aim is to not to construct or predefine a community, or in any way deny the issues around exclusion as often happens in vertical constructs. The aim is to allow participants themselves to define the contemporary community of Latvia based on the outcomes of external influence and their own individual lived experience. By adopting a lived citizenship approach meant that respondents were given the opportunity to express their opinions on the ways in which the language debate and associated political reform of education has impacted on their relationships and around them in everyday life.

The questions were loosely framed around existing discourse and were geared towards obtaining responses reflective of the attitudes towards Russian speakers and the Russian language within Latvia as viewed from the perspective of individuals, rather than assume the more fractious vertical perspective. Scholars note that when relating language to themes of identity and community, "within this framework is the idea that individuals may adopt multiple positions, and that these different aspects of identity may be salient in different interactions, or even concurrently" (Fuller 2007 p. 106). From the responses generated it was clear that advances had been made in widening knowledge of the Latvian language and evidence of the language becoming a less contentious issue for the post-independence generation of Russian speakers.

> *'I studied Latvian at school and I studied at Technical College so I don't have any problems with being integrated. All of my Russian friends… I think they know the Latvian language. If you talk about the difference from '91 to now, there is a difference.'*
>
> Int39: (M), 27, Highly Skilled Craftsman, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

Schmidt (2008) alluded to a belief within the Russian speaking population "that it is important to have a good command of Latvian" (2008 p. 16). What is being explored within this section, are shifting attitudes to both Latvian and Russian language, and to consider whether any related shifts in identity or belonging are a result of political language policy or a more nuanced evolution of language knowledge and use. Schmidt's (2008) observation that

Russian speakers are seeing the knowledge of Latvian as important could be attributed to the controversial political implantation of education reforms. However, from the data collected, there was also the sense of an emerging attitudinal shift and a more integrated rather than assimilated tone around Latvian language learning at the point of intersection of vertical and horizontal perspectives. This was evidenced by the following participant for whom the benefit of Latvian language learning was multifaceted. For her, fluency in the Latvian language went deeper than simply adopting a pragmatic approach to viewing Latvian as helpful in daily life tasks or as a result of more vertical political initiatives. For her, having a good knowledge of Latvian was tied into a more nuanced and hybrid form of identity. She explains:

> *'My Latvian is good because my mum works in schools and needed to learn and speak Latvian, so I didn't really have a choice. I had to learn Latvian. I am Russian, I feel I am somewhere Russian, I love Putin…but I do understand that I need to follow the rules in the country I live in, and that's Latvia. So, it's not like I am looking to be here with my own language and my own rules. I accept that I need to speak Latvian and accept Latvian rules*.'
>
> Int56: (F), 21, Unemployed – on Job Programme, Daugavpils, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

This statement directly contrasts with the political rhetoric around Russian speakers, particularly those who have some empathy for Russia and retain a degree of identification with Russia. Birka (2016) notes that concern surrounds the sense of 'national' belonging amongst Russian speakers, with around 33% of young people surveyed indicating a strong attachment to Russia (Birka 2016 p. 224-225). Yet, the participant in this instance had a more multifaceted relationship to belonging and identity. She clearly felt an attachment to Latvia and accepted the need to display affiliation and loyalty within the public sphere. A more nuanced and fluid identity, based on discursive citizenship, allows her to express this whilst still retaining a sense of pride in Russia and being Russian (see section 2.3). A vertically constructed narrative, based predominantly on assumptive groupings of individuals based on ethnicity, removes space for multi-dimensional belonging and negates the changes emerging in everyday society. In this regard, describing a statistic of 72% of those surveyed expressing a 'strong' or 'very strong' sense of belonging to Latvia as 'weak' (Birka 2016), is also viewed as unhelpful. It is within these examples that we can see it is important to go beyond

statistics and traditional constructs of citizenship to avoid perpetuating overinflated top-down narratives of differentiation rather than promoting instances of integration.

Latvian speakers are also unhelpfully cast as a homogenous group, despite an evolving sense of acceptance and integration in lived experiences with Russian speakers. Despite ongoing political rhetoric and policy aimed at limiting the use of the Russian language within the public sphere, in business, it certainly benefits trading opportunities to be open to 'bi' or 'multi' linguistic approach. This discussion is explored in more depth in Chapter 5 as the thesis moves chronologically forward to consider the future development and any associated outcomes of revising political policy and practice in Latvia. However, when considering the impact of initial approaches to language policy and political rhetoric adopted in the immediate post-Soviet period, as is the scope of this chapter, it was helpful to gain an understanding of how themes of community and identity have been shaped around language.

Drawing on the testimony of lived experience, there was evidence of Latvian speakers switching to the Russian language to facilitate daily interactions within business and commerce. This was expressed in less pragmatic terms than might be expected, based on traditional understandings of vertical narratives, but instead was reflected in a tone more suggestive of acceptance and inclusivity. One small business owner running a busy garage on the outskirts of Riga gave an account of his position:

> *'There is no difference. People are people. People who are good can speak English or Russian or Latvian. If I feel someone is good, then I will talk to them in whatever language with no problem. It's not for me like 'no way will I not talk in Russian' …it's no problem for me. In my business it is actually better that I talk and understand English and Russian and not just Latvian. If they speak to me in Russian, then they are my clients and I will answer them in Russian.'*
>
> Int41: (M), 31, Garage Owner and Mechanic, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

Another Latvian speaker, working in a local coffee shop in Daugavpils had this to say:

'Every day here I live and work and speak with Russians. I sometimes actually need to think if I want to speak in Latvian a bit more.'

Int57: (F), 37, Barista, Daugavpils, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

Generally, it was found that a less exclusionary tone was adopted by those identifying as ethnic Latvian speakers within the interviews, particularly around Russian speaking peers of a similar age. However, the following extract does still hint at some level of othering in the use of 'our' and 'us', either consciously or unconsciously. For this politically active Latvian speaker, acceptance was there, but was still very much based on Russian speakers playing by set 'ethnicised' rules:

*'I think that **our** attitude is that if a Russian person learns Latvian and is at least not openly negative towards **us**, then no one really has a problem with that.'*

Int33: (M), 37, State Pension Administrator and political Candidate, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

The language of politics, although more 'right-wing' in the case of this participant, still reflects the divisive language of the past, however, what is clear from the data collected is that more discursive approaches to understanding the attitude to language create an opportunity for broader expressions of integration to be voiced.

Contrasting the politically imposed changes in language policy within education, it was again found that of the Latvian speakers interviewed, many adopted a more nuanced position in relation to Russian language. This impact has been attributed to some concessions around the Russian language as adopted by the Latvian government. Ekmanis (2019) draws our attention to some "legislative concessions to preserve and develop minority language and culture leading to a nominal multicultural perspective" (Ekmanis 2019 p. 74). That said, the outcome of a policy which actively legislated for the use of the Latvian language in schools has led to more familiarity of Latvian within those communities deemed 'Russian speaking' and perhaps illustrates a change in how younger members of this community are received. From the Latvian speakers' perspective, it was also found that most of their peers of Russian

ethnicity had a good command of the Latvian language. Evidence of this was reflected in the words of one participant. She said:

> *'I don't really have any problems with the Russians. I think young people are really mixed. 99% of them speak fluent Latvian, so there is no problem for those born here and raised here.'*
>
> Int49: (F), 23, Student Information Technology, *Liepāja, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker*

Despite expressing fierce patriotism in her interview, this Latvian participant adopted a more tolerant tone and refers to normalised, non ethnicised interactions between different groups on a day-to-day level. Within existing studies, authors such as Pavlenko (2011) allude to continuing tension arising between both groups around Latvian language ability. This was found to be the case in relation to 'asymmetric bilingualism', a problem attributed, by and large, to an older generation who had moved to Latvia in the Soviet period. Ten years on from her study, it was still perceived by some Latvian respondents that language difficulties for older people arose from a deliberate and historically influenced decision not to improve their knowledge; a more political than practical issue. One participant told me:

> *'The problem is with the older people because they remember when it was the Soviet Union and they can't get over that.'*
>
> Int49: (F), 23, Student Information Technology, *Liepāja, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker*

Not only do we see a fracturing of the vertical construction of an ethnic Latvian community, we also see a fracturing of what has traditionally been assumed to be the 'Russian speaking' community'. From the testimonies collected, it was found that conversations are now taking place between different generations of Russian speakers, with younger people questioning the lack of motivation of their parents and grandparents to learn Latvian. The following extract relays elements of those conversations:

> *'My parents don't speak Latvian. I have spoken to them about this and I said 'why have you never learned Latvian? You are living in Latvia'. My father says "We were living in Russian Latvia. Everybody, everything was in Russian...all the signs and everything was in Russian. We never really needed Latvian" But that was the way. Everyone like them spoke Russian and everyone learned Russian. When the*

time came to speak Latvian, these people were just too old already. People like them are 68 and 70 years old and they can't learn a word and you can't do anything about that.'

Int21: (F), 26, Business Consultant, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

Surprisingly, for the respondent, whilst displaying sympathy for the language struggles of the older generation, she was less empathetic towards anyone opting to send their children to Russian language schools in Latvia today. She goes on to say:

'What I don't like is when Russian couples have children and they don't send them to Latvian school. Why they would do that I cannot imagine. I would do that because they should be learning in the schools. This language and everything is much easier for them. But they send them specially to Russian schools and I think, ok they maybe want to have some Russian ...like background...or folklore and things like that, but you can do that after school. You don't have to do all that in schools. You must learn to speak Latvian. It is wrong. I think it is wrong.'

Int21: (F), 26, Business Consultant, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

It would appear from her testimony, and from others expressing similar views, that Latvia is approaching a new juncture in relations around language. Social interactions among Latvian and Russian speakers occur as a matter of course within both the public and private spheres, and younger people are fluently using Latvian. The fault line of language could be argued to have shifted somewhat, and rather than being related to ethnicity per se, has more intergenerational resonance, as implied within the following statement:

'I don't feel there is a problem myself. I have Russian friends. I have felt that there are old people who refuse to speak in Latvian and they feel that they don't need to. I work sometimes in the local petrol station. There were some people who didn't want to speak in Latvian. They have lived since birth in Latvia. They say 'I won't speak in Latvian…I don't need it'. But there are people who are my age and they have started to speak Latvian.'

Int39: (F), 34, Court Registrar/Administrator, Sigulda, Latvia (rural) - Latvian speaker

At this crossroads, the importance of these newly emerging relationships with language and any associated daily interactions taking place around language are helpful in understanding how themes of belonging and integration are organically forming and reforming.

Linking back to the question 'Do we see the emergence of a broader 'Latvian community' whereby individuals see themselves as 'belonging' not only to Latvia, but to each other, beyond divisions of ethnicity and formal citizenship?' it is clear that political rhetoric still has a major role to play in the construction of such a community, particularly where language is involved. Ethnicity, and the tension around language, remains a weapon capable of inflicting wounds, and is often wielded at key political moments. Furthermore, there is also evidence to suggest that, from a horizontal perspective, that there is some way to go on reducing the toxicity of the debate around language. In 2011, Pavlenko concluded that "bilingual Latvians no longer wanted to accommodate predominantly monolingual Russians" and this sentiment was clearly tangible in the following extract given by this young participant:

> *'If you would like to speak only Russian then please go there. There are Russian people who have lived here for many, many years, and they haven't bothered to learn the language, our language, and they live among us. So why would we need to learn and speak to them in Russian. They should have this respect for us. For example, they say "we don't speak Latvian, we don't speak a dog's language". So, there is a lot of disrespect between Russians and Latvians about the language.'*
>
> Int49: (F), 23, Student Information Technology, *Liepāja, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker*

Structural change, such as membership of the EU may, in time, deliver new perspectives around language. Latvia will experience new challenges as globalisation and migration, both outward and inward, impact not only upon the usage of the Latvian language - as highlighted in the following statement by one participant reflecting on how he and his girlfriend currently engage with the Latvian language having migrated to the UK:

'We don't use Latvian in public because it just doesn't feel right for me. I know how I feel, if for example, someone is talking in their Indian or Pakistani language, and I feel that they are talking about me. So, we always use English in public or with friends. The only place we use Latvian is on the bus when we are going home.'

Int11: (M), 28, Retail Stock Control Manager, Edinburgh, UK (urban) – Latvian speaker

Membership of the EU may lead to increased calls for the knowledge and use of languages such as Russian, English or other widely spoken languages, however, the domestic political narrative remains a vital component of shaping attitudes to language. It is clear that whilst there is a softening of attitudes and increasing opportunities for multi lingual engagement at the horizontal level, there is also evidence of vertical and horizontal synchronicity around the inability of some Latvian residents to speak Latvian within Latvia as highlighted in these final quotes:

'Some immigrants come to Latvia and speak Latvian fluently after 1 year, and yet there are some Russians who have lived here for 50 years who don't know any Latvian. Of course, for me, I can accept that some immigrant comes here and can't speak Latvian...ok...but some old Russian who doesn't know anything or knows but refuses to speak Latvian, then that is a big problem still.'

Int24: (M), 33, Business Manager, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

Also:

'I just think that I would feel embarrassed to speak in a different language in my own country. If I am going to the shop and they ask me stupid questions in Russian, then I answer in Latvian. They can't even understand me. I mean come on. A huge nation and they can't learn.'

Int11: (M), 28, Retail Stock Control Manager, Edinburgh, UK (urban) – Latvian speaker

On the practice of speaking Latvian within Latvia to encourage integration and meaningful citizenship, both vertical and horizontal perspectives commonly align.

4.5 Chapter Conclusions

As this chapter looked to reflect on what citizenship looks like today, an exploration of the impact of structural change, namely the restoration of independence and membership of the EU, highlights that there is a growing gulf of what constitutes a citizen and what benefits the citizenry when viewed from different perspectives. In attempting to move Latvia forwards and construct a 'national' community, based on ethnicity, Latvian politicians and elites have simultaneously been accused of behaving backwardly, with allegations and instances of corruption leading to a disconnect between the state and the individual. Traditional constructs of community view community as a space where there is a sense of inclusion and an expectation of having access to resources and of having rights and responsibilities met. However, we see the emergence of non-ethnicised marginalisation, and the creation of a new 'them and us' narrative, emerging from the testimony of Latvia's residents resulting from political decisions and behaviours. Irrespective of ethnicity, feelings of disempowerment relating to the ability to exercise control over the political decision-making process and continuing allegations of misappropriated EU funds create space for the commonality of disconnect to develop.

Despite, pressure and influence from the EU and other external actors, the issue of language, at the political level remains contentious in Latvia, and the rhetoric of division along linguistic lines is a political tool wielded at key moments to bolster political support. However, when applying a discursive approach to identity construction, there is evidence of a change in the fabric of what constitutes a member of the community of Latvia, with Latvia at a new juncture as more nuanced patterns of linguistic use and fluid linguistic self-identification labels and practices emerge.

Chapter 5. Politics and Perspectives of Citizenship (Part 2)

5.1 Introduction and Rationale

This empirical chapter is the second of a partnering of two empirical chapters which focus on Latvia's political development as context to address the question 'What does Latvian citizenship look like today?'. Chapter 4 explored the historical legacy of the Soviet period and looked at the initial political direction taken by Latvian elites in the period immediately after the restoration of independence. The chapter then reflected upon the corresponding impact of the political direction taken and the ways in which political behaviours have impacted upon the development of a community of Latvia. This chapter continues to examine the ways in which structural political change has impacted on citizenship and on the formation of a wider community of Latvia.

Having addressed, in Chapter 4, the initial impact of structural change within Latvia from the period immediately following the restoration of independence, this chapter moves chronologically forward and focuses on the ways in which current and former residents of Latvia relate to the concept of community, and a broader community of Latvia today. This is achieved by drawing upon lived experience and the discursive practices related to citizenship formation and self-identification, and these practices will be contrasted with Latvia's political approach to building a 'community of Latvia'. An examination of both of these aspects of community and identity formation helps to address the question 'Do we see the emergence of a broader 'Latvian community' whereby individuals see themselves as 'belonging' not only to Latvia, but to each other, beyond divisions of ethnicity and formal citizenship?'.

The question, relating to the possibility of building a non ethnicised political community, is broken down into 4 key sections. Section 5.2 draws upon the concept of community and looks at the ways in which it is been both shaped and viewed from vertical and horizontal perspectives in Latvia. This discussion is expanded in section 5.3 to include the impact of EU membership and outward migration and to take into account any renegotiation on the formation of identity and belonging to a broader Latvian community. The chapter then

moves on, in section 5.4, with a particular focus on Latvia's current political relationship with and policy towards neighbouring Russia, as this has been a core component of the citizenship debate. Finally, section 5.5 explores at developments in political parties and political engagement. Examining these aspects helps to ascertain whether or not we can ever truly see a non-ethnicised approach to the formation of a formal political community of Latvia.

5.2 Who Belongs? Contextualising the Construction of a Community.

When considering the development of any community, a key consideration to reflect upon is to ask 'who and what' constitutes that community. As discussed in Chapter 2.3, when relating politics with concepts of national identity or national community, it is commonplace to reflect upon both the original works and subsequent critiques of Anderson's 'imagined communities' (2006) or upon Brubaker's reflections on nationalism and patriotism (2004). Most simply defined, a community, imagined or otherwise, is widely constructed as a group with a shared and inherent sense of belonging (Anderson 1991). Membership, and belonging to a community, as explored in Chapter 2, is built on the tacit understanding that members will have some degree of influence by way of having their voice recognised and heard (McMillan and Chavis 1986). In addition, members of a community would expect to have their needs met and be able to access shared resources (McMillan and Chavis 1986).

From the outset of Latvia's restored independence, there has been a drive to create a stable political state with internationally accepted institutions, procedures and norms, however, this has clearly been impacted by restorative nationalistic ethnic policies aimed at preserving the integrity of the titular group and creating an 'ethnic community' of Latvia. For Safran (1991 and 1997), there is an argument which suggests there is a functional aspect to this heavily criticised form of 'community' development along ethnic lines, as national majority communities can be considered to have some stabilizing features (Safran 1997 p. 315). In their overview of the national identity debate, Miller and Ali (2014) challenge the claim that a shared identity leads to a generalised sense of trust which then binds or glues together society creating stability (Miller and Ali 2014 pp. 237-238). They argue that this is an oversimplification as the emotional element of national identification can be overridden by

more pragmatic issues of self-interest, socioeconomic position and perceived performance of the state as viewed from a micro level position (Miller and Ali 2014 pp. 239-247). A state heavy narrative which drives forward the formation of a vertically imagined community, by adopting a supposed sense of belonging or exclusion on some predetermined variable, also has the potential to be renegotiated on the horizontal axis of citizenship. Individuals, through their own lived daily interactions with the state, and through interactions with each other, can also create their own particular negotiation of citizenship around aspects of belonging or exclusion, despite predetermined politically imposed criteria. What is clear from the literature that adopts a more traditional approach to Latvia's citizenship debate, is that such nuances and subtleties have been found to be secondary, if present at all. Instead, most studies focus on macro level, nationalising political norms which focus heavily on the discourse of division.

Within much of the existing literature on Latvia, and indeed across all three of the newly restored Baltic polities post 1991, constructs of citizenship have largely been tied to a state centric debate. This debate has been largely concerned with the political decision taken in relation to the 'ethnic versus civic nationalism' and 'primordial versus constructivist' approaches to state and nation building (Budrytė 2017). According to Agarin (2010), "the shifts in the ethnic composition of the states during the Soviet time were framed as an acute hindrance for nations returning to the community of European democratic states" (Agarin 2010 p. 107), and, as a result, the focus remained state centric. As discussed in Chapter 4, upon the restoration of independence, the political reconstruction of the community of Latvia along primarily ethnic lines began, resulting in a disenfranchisement of individuals subsequently deemed to be non – citizens.

Not only did this result in exclusion in a legal and political sense, exclusion for a significant proportion of individuals was also felt economically and socially. Noted by Budrytė (2016) calls from Russia, echoed by some Western politicians, to review practices, particularly in relation to the minority rights of Russian speakers, raised deep concerns amongst Latvia's politicians and governing elites, perturbed over any wider implication such demands would have in relation to Latvian sovereignty (Budrytė 2016 p. 111). Moving towards EU

membership, it remained “difficult for the Latvian political elites to find a balance between the majority’s fears and the minority’s rights” (Budrytė 2016 p. 9). Despite international condemnation and a prolonged period of monitoring by the Council of Europe and the OSCE “opposition to the international recommendations to protect minority rights had become a habit for Latvian politicians” (Budrytė 2016 p. 104). At a macro level, the prevalence and rhetoric of a ‘them’ and ‘us’ construct of ‘community’ persisted, and it is this position which is challenged by the lived approach to citizenship and community adopted by this thesis.

This arbitrary and oversimplified binary approach to citizenship, identity and community continues to filter through scholarly constructs of community and often misrepresents individuals in their day-to-day environments and interactions. Recent publications such as Ekmanis (2019) highlight that “research on societal integration in the Baltic states has been plagued by the following in particular: the conflated usage of “minority” and “Russian”; an assumption that ethnicity and language are the primary indicators of identity (and, sometimes, loyalty); and an overt focus on elite-led and media discourse on ethnic discord” (Ekmanis 2019 p. 75) and draws focus from the banal every day to the more extreme singular events such as specific annual commemoration days. Whilst the recognition of distinct ethnic groups has been important to highlight the existence of and inequality and disadvantage faced by Latvia’s ‘non-citizens’ and large ethnic Russian/Russian speaking groups, particularly within the early days of restored independence, these rigid demarcation lines allow little space for shades of grey and for the evolution of these groups.

From this deduction it can be assumed that there is space for a more nuanced horizontal construct of citizenship and community to be employed and emerge in Latvia. Structurally, changes to the vertically constructed community of Latvia, such as the shift in the demographic composition, have led to more nuanced aspects of ‘who belongs’. Having moved forwards in time from the exclusionary citizenship practices adopted in the early 1990s, the number of non-citizens is continuing to fall. Estimates suggest that in 2015 that 99% of the children born in Latvia in 2015 were granted Latvian citizenship, irrespective of their ethnicity (http://www.mfa.gov.lv). Despite a continued political focus on the rhetoric of division and of exclusionary practices there is evidence of a broader pragmatic and

demographic societal shift in relation to how a community of Latvia could look in the future. With instances of intermarriage between Russian and Latvian speaking communities not uncommon in the past (Aasland and Flotten 2001; Lieven 1993), this could be expected to continue, due to the relatively small geographical territory. One respondent agreed with this, stating:

> *'People change all the time. This is a small country. There are not so many people. You can't guarantee that your grandchildren will marry someone with the same nationality. You can't guarantee this for the next generation. The people have calmed down. There is some propaganda but people are not reacting to this in the same way. It is more calm.'*
>
> Int52: (M), 39, Unemployed, Daugavpils, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

What is interesting here is the clear distinction between vertical and horizontal perspectives and there is a clear schism between lived reality and political rhetoric. He notes that more widely, in everyday life, 'the people have calmed down'. He tells us that 'the people are not reacting' to what he sees as clear political and ethnic propaganda. This participant, himself the son of Russian speaking parents, had spent some time living in Lithuania as a young child. His family are an archetypal example of those Soviet migrants who were able to find work across what was a broader Soviet Union work. He relates:

> *'I don't have any Latvian connection in my background. All my family came during the Soviet Union time and I have felt that the Latvians look at me as though I shouldn't be here, as though I am not a Latvian. They see me as Russian.'*
>
> Int52: (M), 39, Unemployed, Daugavpils, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

Despite his own assertion that things have calmed down, he does allude to feelings of exclusion at an everyday level. His response draws attention to the more common discourse around Russian speaking migrants and their place in a broader community of Latvia. His understanding of how he is perceived, of not being fully accepted, is indicative of how 'exclusion' is viewed along traditionally constructed models and is directly influenced by the political narrative. This theoretical form of belonging, as defined by McMillan and Chavis (1986), places emphasis on a less tangible form of community theory, relating belonging to

emotional ties and human connections. On this basis, it would be assumed, that on some level we could define the participant to be 'excluded' from the community of Latvia. However, a wider definition, influenced by lived citizenship approaches and calls for more horizontal perspectives, is offered by Youkhana (2015), who notes that belonging can also relate to a symbolic space offering familiarity, comfort, security, and also a space to come back to. Against this second measure, we have a lesser sense of marginalisation. Another Russian speaking participant, through discursive citizenship, explains his own sense of 'rootedness'. He goes on to detail how he sees his belonging framed against self-constructed identity, explaining:

> *'It is very important to keep a national identity. Anywhere you go you still have to stay a part of the country. This (Latvia) is the country where I was born so it is my country. It's hard to talk to my parents about my own national identity because my dad is from Ukraine and my mum is Russian. My grandparents are Belarusian. But I feel more Slavic I think…. It is more general.'*
>
> Int53: (M), 18, Job Centre Worker, Daugavpils, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

From the perspective of a Latvian speaker, there was also evidence of a change in attitude and perception, as the lines of identity become more blurred when taken away from the context of political rhetoric and traditional ethnic constructs. She says:

> *'I have thought about the question of citizenship a lot because it is a very interesting question. I have friends who can't define who they are or who they consider themselves to be. This is not in nationality or where they come from because they come very mixed families from several countries.'*
>
> Int20: (F), 33, Manager of a Business Incubator, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

This fluidity of identity and scope for a broader identity directly challenges the political narrative and traditional constructs of citizenship and is a model we could expect to see become more prevalent. Younger residents of Latvia have little or no direct experience of Latvia's history of imperialist annexation and have only known Latvia as an independent EU nation, with this structural change impacting upon a more traditional view of Latvian citizenship. As highlighted within studies of post national citizenship:

> '*the rights associated with citizenship are no longer regulated or guaranteed exclusively by the institutions of nation-states but have, in addition, an increasingly significant European dimension*' (Meehan 1997 in Tambini 2001, p. 201)

Not only have less tangible forms of citizenship allowed a different view, we also see that formal politically granted citizenship has changed, as EU membership has allowed individuals to simultaneously be classed as both Latvian and EU citizens. EU membership has additionally brought new prospects for those in the Russian speaking community, as highlighted in this extract from a briefing paper, produced for the 'EU Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs'. It states:

> '*In relation to the special category of Latvian residents called "non-citizens", Latvia again underlined that those people belonged to the State of Latvia, they enjoyed full protection of the country, the same freedoms of movement across the European Union, all social rights and most of the political rights, except the rights to vote at the local and national elections*' (Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Latvia (14 April 2016), UN Doc A/HRC/32/15)

Whilst there remains controversy and debate around the extent to which non-citizens find themselves on a 'level playing field' within Latvia, a debate that this thesis does not overlook, but rather seeks to look beyond, what is clear is that membership of the EU has afforded citizens and non-citizens alike the principle of 'freedom of movement' across the EU and Schengen areas. One Latvian speaking interviewee, when asked whether EU membership had brought about positive changes for the Russian speaking community remarked:

> *'Maybe EU citizenship helps. The non-citizenship status gives someone a position where they can both be a part of the EU and also Russia, so this is quite unique*.'
>
> Int29: (M), 31, Civil Society Consultant and Activist, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

The passing of time and related shifting demographics will also have a part to play in what constitutes a community of Latvia beyond vertical assumptions and ethno-nationalist political policy. As observed by one Russian speaking participant, who had previously talked about his own sense of belonging as being consolidated, when it came to constructing his identity, he reflects the potential for change in future generations. He says:

> *'I'm Latvian with Russian family. Inside I am Russian, in my characteristics, but outside I am Latvian. For my children….? Time will tell.'*
>
> Int39: (M), 27, Highly Skilled Craftsman, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

Whilst the strength and salience of a European identity can be questioned, so too can a vertically constructed ethnic Latvian identity and community. Structural change, as brought about by EU membership, results in an additional transnational aspect which opens up a new space for renegotiation of belonging and identity for Latvian and Russian speakers alike.

5.3 EU Membership and a New Community of Belonging?

The impact of EU membership provides some further context in which to seek a new approach to citizenship and to associated themes of identity and belonging, in addition to providing an alternative framework from which to address the question 'Do we see the emergence of a broader "Latvian community" whereby individuals see themselves as "belonging" not only to Latvia, but to each other, beyond divisions of ethnicity and formal citizenship'. The approach adopted in this thesis takes into account the possibility of changes having occurred in the ways individuals related to each other within Latvia as a direct result of newfound mobility within the EU. It is noted that those authors considering a broader approach to constructs of citizenship, "take different approaches to citizenship as a category, but all of them point to an expansive notion of citizenship, as about political belonging beyond just legal status and rights" (Lazar and Nuijten 2013 p. 4). Included within more contemporary approaches are a wider range of practices and processes of citizenship which, in addition to seeing citizenship as more than a set of rights and responsibilities, also moves citizenship away from being bound to a particular territory or geopolitical space. As explored

in Chapter 2, there are calls to deepen understandings of citizenship as experienced beyond the nation-state and to accommodate the increasing pluralism of modern societies and communities (Kymlicka and Norman in Bellamy et al. 2010) (Kallio et al 2020).

Historically, many migrants from the Baltic state region have been viewed through the diaspora lens (Rex 1996), with Hanauer (2008) further arguing that migrants inhabit a physical space which fosters the national identity of their home nation based on language, social norms, religion and culture (Hanauer 2008 p. 204). Belonging in this model is based on a commonality of experience, of shared memories of a homeland and similar treatment within a new space. As migrants become more integrated, or at the very least have more lived experience within the host country, authors, such as Rabikowska argue that "a new version of normality emerges which challenges the old routines, beliefs, values and identities of migrants, but the host culture and even the home culture become affected" (Rabikowska 2010 pp. 292-293). The context of outward migration, as a result of the political decision of the nationalising state of Latvia to adopt EU membership, provides an interesting backdrop, not only to explore new self-constructed forms of citizenship, but to contrast these with vertical perspectives and political discourse.

Contrary to the politicised ethnic narrative of the disassociation of Russian speakers from the Latvian state, came some interesting and unexpected responses to the question of whether EU membership made outward migration more likely, based on ethnicity. Recent work by Ivlevs (2013) and Aptekar (2009), highlighted in Lulle and Jurkane-Hobein (2017), found that Russian-speaking emigrants from Latvia were more likely to take the decision to move based on socio-economic factors compared to Russian speaking emigrants from Estonia, who still cited the acute feeling of being 'other' as a core contributing factor in the decision to move abroad (Lulle and Jurkane-Hobein 2017 p. 598). Rhetoric around the issue of ethnicity in Latvia could lead one to believe that the likeliest outcome of EU membership would be that disaffected Russian speakers would not hesitate to 'vote with their feet' and emigrate, particularly those who, due to their non-citizen status, can't claim legal membership of a vertically imagined Latvian community. However, this was not always the case as presented by participants within this study. Despite a tough set of personal economic circumstances,

one Russian speaker, a young single mother from Daugavpils, was indicative of the change being seen in attitudes towards the Latvian state from those Russian speakers. Traditionally, it could be assumed that, from top-down assessments, Russian speakers exhibit a low level of identification with, or allegiance to, Latvia, particularly those from areas out with Riga and with a high percentage of Russian speaking residents. This young participant had been previously unemployed for a long period of time, however, had subsequently found work within a project at the local job centre, funded by one of the National Reform Programme schemes. She was employed to hand out flyers and to engage with and encourage unemployed individuals to seek guidance on finding new employment. In Russian, her language of choice, she stated:

> *'I can't blame people for leaving because of having no money. But I won't leave. I am very patriotic now. I can provide for myself and this is my country, so I don't want to leave.'*
>
> Int54: (F), 23, Student and P/T Advertising Assistant, Daugavpils, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

This idea of Latvian patriotism within the community of Russian speakers, particularly those with low socio-economic standing is striking, particularly when such sentiment is expressed in Russian. The comment and the passion with which this participant spoke is completely at odds with the populist Latvian political discourse, yet this was not a lone voice. Another Russian speaking respondent again exhibited that she has a more complex relationship with the concept of citizenship than is often vertically assumed. A non-citizen and a Putin supporter, she chatted about how she enjoyed Latvian song and enjoyed wider Latvian culture. On the subject of her non-citizenship status, for her, the EU offered the prospect of a new life abroad in Cyprus, where she had hopes of finding work. From her response, it was apparent that she had developed a more nuanced sense of citizenship, which could be expressed via discursive practices. This approach to citizenship provided space to develop a hybrid self-identification, identifying as a Latvian on the basis of her place of birth, yet acknowledging ethnicity within character traits. Talking about non-citizenship and her lack of formal membership to the political community of Latvia she stated:

> *'No…it's not important, because I am without a nation. I don't think Latvia gives me anything to keep me here. Well…maybe, the way the Latvians are, they maybe*

accept things but because I have this Russian side, I can stand up for myself. It is important to keep that character in this big world.'

Interviewer: *'So, when you move to Cyprus…how would you describe yourself, your character to others?'*

'I would say I am Latvian. I would tell people I am from Latvia. I was born here.'

Int56: (F), 21, Unemployed – on Job Programme, Daugavpils, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

There is a sense of attachment to both Latvia as a geopolitical entity and to Russia as a more cultural entity, yet here the sense of being a Latvian was clear. The inclusion of a Russian side to her character, was a part of a broader Latvian identity. Another Russian speaker from Daugavpils also drew attention to the inconsequential nature of ethnicity for him, and for others like him, in considering a move abroad. He alludes to the challenges of being seen as an 'outsider' overseas and being treated with less rights and opportunities than a native employee. In doing so, he draws parallels with the experience often attributed to Russian speakers within Latvia, his statement is, again, a paradox of a scenario ascribed to existing discourse. He also opted to use Russian when chatting in the interview and stated:

'You have to get help to go abroad. You are not going to be sitting in an office… you will have hard jobs. You will get less than what you should be paid. You can never get away from that situation and you won't get the same jobs that local people will have. I don't think that my English is so good. I think it is as difficult for a Russian speaking person or a Latvian speaking person or even a Turkish speaking person to move abroad. It would be exactly the same.'

Int52: (M), 39, Unemployed, Daugavpils, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

From the primary data collected it is clear that a sense of belonging to Latvia and a sense of belonging to Russia are not mutually exclusive, and that the respondents could feel a sense of attachment to both. When viewing the concept of citizenship from a horizontal perspective, feelings of belonging to Russia do not necessarily hinder a sense of belonging to Latvia. Empirical analysis established that feelings of belonging to Russia did not demonstrate any noteworthy correlations with the respondents' cognitive perception of Latvia as homeland. These findings validate Tsuda's (2003) definition of a transnational identity, as an

identity based on simultaneous affiliations and belongings, and substantiate Cheskin's (2013) observations of a distinct, concurrent Latvian-Russian identity. Findings from a study conducted by Lulle and Jurkane-Hobein (2017 p. 606), take this further and show that there is further scope for self-identification for Russian speaking migrants, when outside the confines of the physical territory and political rhetoric of Latvia (Lulle and Jorkane-Hobein 2017 p. 609). They argue that 'being away from Latvia yet seeing Latvian as a country of birth and a country of citizenship, strengthens the self-identification with the notion of "Russian speakers from Latvia" or *Latvyici*' (Lulle and Jurkane-Hobein 2017 p. 609)

The freedom of movement afforded by EU membership also impacts upon the fabric of 'who belongs' and who subscribes to the imagined community of Latvia from the perspective of Latvian speakers. It was clear from the primary data that changes had occurred in the ways individuals related to each other, and in their perceptions of each other as a direct result of the newfound mobility within the EU. One Latvian speaking business owner told me:

> *'I have thought about migration a little bit. I think people are people, not Russian or Latvian, everybody has the same rights. We are in the European Union and this means we can't say you are Latvian, or you are German. We are really one big family and all people have the same rights. The same for me, the same for Russians*.'
>
> Int41: (M), 31, Garage Owner and Mechanic, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

This is a dilution of traditionally constructed citizenship, resulting from structural changes and globalisation. The outcome of structural change presents scope for more fluidity and a redefinition of an imagined community. From the evidence of lived testimony and through scholarly debate it is clear that "elements of citizenship are becoming disarticulated from one another, and re-articulated" (Haggis et al 2010 p. 365), with the emphasis on ethnically confined definitions of citizenship proving unhelpful.

There are not only changes in the ways in which Latvian speakers view Russian speakers within a re-imagined community, but also changes in the ways in which Latvian speakers position themselves within their own ethnic group. Significant change, such as outward migration, can lead to a sense of disconnect between migrants and those remaining behind

in the home country, with authors such as Clifford (1994) and Bhabha (2007) highlighting findings which point to a "double consciousness of migrants living between 'there', which was left behind, and 'here', where a new home has to be created" (Rabikowska 2010 p. 293). Rabikowska (2010) highlights that mobility and freedom of movement brings about an inherent paradox which lies in empowering migrants and estranging them at the same time (Rabikowska, 2010 pp.293). For this Latvian speaking respondent, his relationship with fellow Latvian speakers had shifted based on his experience of migration. He tells of the ways in which his relationship with his friends at home had changed, arising from their perceptions of his new status abroad. When he returned to visit Latvia, a space which within traditional constructs of community theory could be classed as 'home', he felt that his interactions had changed, and that he was treated differently. The disconnect with 'home' or community ties were loosening. He often felt used. When asked in what ways he was treated differently he explains:

> *'From friends?... like a wallet. Definitely like a wallet. I miss my friends and they are always going to the pubs, in Riga, in the city ...to get money... or me.'*
>
> Int11: (M), 28, Retail Stock Control Manager, Edinburgh, UK (urban) – Latvian speaker

Studies also suggest that as migrants become more integrated, or at the very least have more lived experience within the host country, "a new version of normality emerges which challenges the old routines, beliefs, values and identities of migrants, but the host culture and even the home culture become affected" (Rabikowska 2010 pp. 292-293). In essence, not only can social relationships and social interactions change, but attitudes and opinions to a range of scenarios are also affected, leading to a further distancing from 'home'. This reconfiguration has the potential to place migrants 'out of step' with those who have remained in the home country and challenges the notion of a homogenous national community based on ethnicity. The disconnect between those remaining in Latvia and those who have moved is evident from some of the lived testimony provided and is summed up in this quote from one participant when reflecting on returning to Latvia after some time away. She says:

'The first year back was quite challenging. It was like reverse culture shock which was quite unexpected for me. I thought I knew everything, that my friends and family were there and that it would not be as challenging moving back, but it was actually as challenging as moving to London. I had changed, people around me had changed and four and a half years is a long time.'

Int20: (F), 33, Manager of a Business Incubator, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

On the topic of often politicised social themes, such as sexuality, race and gender, it was found that some of those had had moved from Latvia had gained a new perspective. This Latvian speaker, continuing on her own sense of feeling 'out of step' was quite disheartened on the lack of change of social opinion when she goes back to visit family and friends in Latvia. She stated:

'Latvia is a bit behind on the more social concepts like equality. One of the most depressing things when I go to Latvia is people's views on gay marriage or even just on gay people. I have a number of friends here who are gay, and my perception has completely changed because I have come out of that bubble and have more experience with foreigners. Also, Latvians are a bit racist and a little bit xenophobic and these things you can't change unless you engage with people who are from abroad.'

Int4: (F), 26, Parliamentary Assistant, Edinburgh, UK (urban) – Latvian speaker

Another Latvian speaking interviewee also placed her perspectives aside from a more collective 'Latvian' political or ethnic group position. On the topic of non-ethnicised marginalized groups she said:

'In Latvia you don't see disabled people, they are sitting at home. You don't see a gay person unless it's Pride which is just once a year, and maybe you only see 10 people, and you don't see different race. Latvians don't know anything.'

Int12: (F), 27, Cleaner, Edinburgh, UK (urban) – Latvian speaker

What is interesting is that participants would often refer to Latvians, a group they may otherwise be assumed to belong to, in the third person, creating a sense of distance, and a

sense of 'them' and 'us'. This is similar to the grammatical approach to distancing which was found when participants expressed feeling marginalized from the political elites explored in Chapter 4. By expressing their views in this way, there is a clear sense of disconnect and feeling 'out of step' from what is often 'imagined' to be their community, if it is to be assumed that membership of a Latvian community is formed on ethnic grounds. Such feelings and perspectives, if detached from an arbitrary ethnic group label, were true, not only for Latvian speakers, but was also noted in responses from Russian speakers. This Russian speaking participant highlights this:

> *'My family is very pro-Russian and so they disagree with most of the policies, and the social policies that the European Union comes up with. For example, they see the policies and they see the European lifestyle as degrading...for example same sex marriages and same sex relationships. It's a very VERY controversial topic in Latvia. Obviously, the Russian state is quite against it, I wouldn't say actively, but I would say passively. Also, they see the European lifestyle as being too relaxed, too open. The fact that I have a variety of opinions scares them.'*
>
> Int13: (F), 21, Student, Glasgow, UK (urban) – Russian speaker

What emerges, when looking at 'who belongs' from a horizontal perspective, is that a discursive form of 'othering' emerges which distances individuals from a politically constructed national community of Latvia and opens up the possibility of an evolving community membership, beyond the confines of ethnicity. Changes in lifestyle and new experiences opened up new practices, often unrelated to social norms others adhered to in Latvia. Evidence of this change is related to less contentious and perhaps more banal encounters in everyday life and was reflected within the interviews. This Latvian speaking participant said:

> *'I was in Latvia last Easter. I have a kid in Latvia. When I got here (UK), I coloured my hair, I got tattoos, I got piercings. When I got onto a tram back home (Latvia) with my kid everyone was looking at me, like I don't look like a parent at all. I look like a rebellious teenager. I really don't like this Latvian negative thinking, that if you have a piercing, you can't be a normal parent.'*
>
> Int12: (F), 27, Cleaner, Edinburgh, UK (urban) – Latvian speaker

It was mentioned by another participant that appearance and dress style made those returning to visit from the UK look visibly different, furthering this sense of distance and opening up a nuanced change in community and belonging. She says:

> *'I was back a few weeks ago, and it was funny because I am not the same as them anymore. It's little things, for example, it was Saturday night and we were going out. I had a nice dress on (like you do here) and they my friends were like "what are you doing?". Even the way I speak, I speak differently now, and I think differently.'*
>
> Int18: (F), 27, Self-employed Beautician, Nottingham, UK (urban) – Latvian speaker

Another everyday interaction, in this instance passing someone in the street, was also commented upon by another respondent, highlighting a shift in how the vertically imagined community of Latvia was being challenged, in the most mundane of occurrences, with a new 'them and us' mentality:

> *'I like that everyone smiles here. A stranger walking towards you in the street will just say hello and this is so nice. In my country everyone looks depressed.'*
>
> Int16: (F), 38, Waitress, Peterborough, UK (urban) – Latvian speaker

There were also expressions of changing attitudes in relation to the ethnically centered 'them and us' state constructed rhetoric, with some evidence of a shift in attitudes towards the Russian speaking community based on the realities of Latvian speakers becoming migrants themselves. For one respondent, her views on Russians as migrants within Latvia had changed. She explains:

> *'Yeah, definitely my dad was going on about...well he works in a small town in a fish factory...and he was talking about all these people coming from Russia coming to work and they take our jobs and things like that. You have to accept people to come and do that job, or you can go back and do that job in that factory. I don't want to work in a factory, I have to be honest, and so there are just some people coming to work and they will work and probably go home. Or they will build a life and you have to accept this.'*
>
> Int10: (F), 39, Healthcare Team Leader, Livingstone, UK (urban) – Latvian speaker

This position had put her out of step with both her family's thinking, which they attributed to her time spent in the UK, in additional to the wider political narrative. She says:

> *'My family say, 'you are completely different', your views are different. It's because living here you do start to see both sides.'*
>
> Int10: (F), 39, Healthcare Team Leader, Livingstone, UK (urban) – Latvian speaker

As part of an interview with a young Latvian speaking student, there was a realisation that broader vertical discourse around migrants related not only to Russian speakers within Latvia or to so called 'economic' migrants but could also be applied in her own case. She reflected:

> *'I actually only realised that I am a migrant just a few years ago. I had thought that I had just come here to study, and I wasn't really feeling that I was a migrant. Maybe I am just realising that I am.'*
>
> Int13: (F), 21, Student, Glasgow, UK (urban) – Russian speaker

These testimonies highlight the formation of new perspectives, and can be seen to create further distance, on an ideological level, between the individual and their relationship with members of an ethnically constructed community as well as with the narratives of state, whether that be the Latvian state or the Russian state. What is also interesting in the given responses is a shift in perspective, often to a more liberal and cosmopolitan 'European' way of thinking. Values, more likely to be adopted as 'European' community values, are encapsulated in the position of the respondents, despite the fact that the respondents would normally be categorised as being from Latvian and Russian speaking communities respectively. There is a non-ethnicised commonality and confluence in the responses given, and a more nuanced process of self-identification.

In attempting to turn Latvia politically Westwards and gain EU membership as a way of consolidating this position, it could be argued that these internal shifts in self-identification, however marginal, have the potential to detrimentally impact the state version of a constructed or imagined ethnic community of Latvia. Returning to the theoretical discussion

of Chapter 2 (p. 32), there is a dichotomy between the construct of national citizenship, which is dependent of the perspectives of the nation state, and the renegotiated constructs of citizenship at the grass roots level, with individuals opting to think of themselves as more global citizens (Mayo et al 2013). This was explored with the participants of this study, although approached in a more tacit way, than has perhaps been conducted before. Rather than attribute labels or group identification, participants were drawn indirectly on their experiences of having moved away, with a view to measuring, via discursive practices, how they related to more pluralist constructs of citizenship, belonging and community.

For many of those interviewed, there remained an identification with Latvia, bound by family ties or a sense of connection to the place, as is described in the theoretical works of McMillan and Chavis (1986) and Yuval-Davis (2006). This participant links her belonging to Latvia in relation to cultural events and activities, however her attachment to 'home' is twofold. She says:

> *'This (Scotland) is my home but that (Latvia) is my 'home' home as I call it. I would still like that we remember who we are. That we are part of the UK but that we are Latvians. This is why it was important for me to make this tiny school where I can show the traditions to the children, and who we are, what traditions we have, the songs, the games…everything.'*
>
> Int7: (F), 31, HNC student and mum, Inverness-shire, UK (rural) – Latvian speaker

She goes on to relate her desire to link to her family ties with her son, and to build common experiences into their relationship within the context of a new 'home' locale in Scotland. Here, we see that the context of location around 'home' is less important than the emotional tie to 'home'. She explains:

> *'So, we have Christmas parties and everything in the school, we have huge celebrations and there is a concert for the parents where you show everything you have learned. I want my son to have a similar childhood to what I had, so that's why I try to show him how I lived and what I did*.'
>
> Int7: (F), 31, HNC student and mum, Inverness-shire, UK (rural) – Latvian speaker

Examples of cultural ties to home were common. However, there was also evidence that new formations of 'belonging' within this discursive process contradicted traditional models binding themes of citizenship, identity and belonging securely together around a specified or given territory. A good example of this was found when speaking to a respondent who was heavily involved in an informal Latvian community group, aimed at encouraging Latvian culture among the children of Latvian emigrants. Her sense of belonging to the physical territory of Latvia had begun to dissipate. She says:

> *'Although I am still Latvian, in my country and in my culture, and we try to do that here too, like celebrate everything Latvian... but yeah... yeah... I do belong here, I think. When I first came here, I was dying to go back to my country, but now it is just nice to go on holiday, but I couldn't move there with my daughter. I think her future is here*.'
>
> Int6: (F), 31, Admin Assistant, Inverness, UK (urban) – Latvian speaker

Such statements challenge widely recognised ethnic discourse which would position such an individual as being unbreakably bound to the territory and geopolitical state of Latvia. Yet there are subtle changes in how she sees her membership of a broader Latvian community, which relates more to cultural ties. It is clear, that on some levels, her sense of belonging is becoming more pragmatically or even arguably deliberately tied to her new country of residence. Another Latvian speaking respondent expressed a deep sense of rootedness in her new life in Scotland. She also can't relate belonging and her future life within the physical borders of Latvia and says:

> *'We just returned a few weeks ago, and just before that I was thinking about this. When I was in Latvia, I was even more sure about this. I really love Scotland. I want to go nowhere else. No one will get me out from here. At the same time, I was thinking about how I felt in Latvia. I never felt patriotic or anything. I don't know why. I feel that my home is here. Here is my place. There…. I never felt like that.'*
>
> Int3: (F), 34, Self-employed, Moray, UK (rural) – Latvian speaker

Themes and associations of 'citizenship' are intertwined with constructs of 'belonging' and 'community', and, as has been discussed in Chapter 2.4, these constructs are often linked or tied to a homeland or specific space. Contrasting with this primordial view of citizenship, a position regularly applied to Latvian speakers and Russian speakers alike within the Latvian citizenship debate, were the sentiments expressed in the interviews conducted with emigrants from Latvia. Reflecting Mayo et al. (2013), for this following Russian speaker, a construct of citizenship which was territorially, or state bound, was unhelpful. As an emigrant, no longer living in Latvia and with Russian heritage, she struggled to find an identity or belonging along vertically constructed lines. She says:

> *'I couldn't say that I feel really Latvian. I don't feel like I am identified as Latvian. If people ask me where I am from, then I would say that I am Latvian. But to be honest, I am Russian. I am Russian Latvian…if you know what I mean. Maybe I am a bit lost because in Latvia, I'm not Latvian, but staying in Scotland I don't feel a belonging to Scotland and neither to Latvia.'*
>
> Int9: (F), 30, Customer Services Officer, Kirkcaldy, UK (urban) – Russian speaker

When probed deeper on this and asked how she would explain to someone who she was and where she was from, it was interesting to find that on another level she found it helpful to disassociate herself with any Russian expression of identity. This, however, was not driven by feelings of alienation from Latvia, resulting from Latvia's ethno-centric rhetoric, but instead related to wider narratives of Europeanism, as well as perceived negative stereotyping around ideas of what constitutes an image of 'Russian girls'. When asked how she would describe herself she states:

> *'I would just say I'm Latvian. I would say that because when I start speaking about Russia, people would react badly for some reason. They would make comments which are not nice about Russian girls, Russian women, and I prefer to say I am Latvian. I don't even mention to them that I am Russian, even though I feel like it. I feel like what I said in the… I'm more European rather than Latvian or Russian. I feel more like a European Union person.'*
>
> Int9: (F), 30, Customer Services Officer, Kirkcaldy, UK (urban) – Russian speaker

Alongside informal reconstructions of citizenship, some respondents also related their sense of belonging, or intention to create new communities of belonging, along more formal lines. The traditional construct of citizenship as a status bestowed, explored in Chapter 2, was also touched upon. For these two participants, gaining formal and legal UK citizenship was seen as a way of cementing their rootedness in their new country. This participant noted that the only hurdle or barrier to her gaining legal UK citizenship was affordability and remarked:

> *'As I said nobody gets me out of Scotland. I would try for citizenship here... if I could do that I would do it right away. I would also add my son right away. I know that I would pass, that I would learn a little bit and I would pass. I passed my driving test here...but I can't afford to spend this money right now. It costs around £1,000 per person. If it would be a little bit cheaper, I would do this right away.'*
>
> Int3: (F), 34, Self-employed, Moray, UK (rural) – Latvian speaker

For this next participant the hurdle was again not related to any emotional loyalty to Latvia as 'home' but related instead to the language barrier in the UK. She says:

> *'I have thought about residency here, to become a British citizen. I know I need better language for that, but yes, maybe for the future.'*
>
> Int16: (F), 38, Waitress, Peterborough, UK (urban) – Latvian speaker

It was also shown that a sense of European identity was emerging when participants were asked to consider what citizenship meant to them. As has been stated, the methodological approach did not attribute any pre-supposed ethnic label to participants within the interviews, but instead asked respondents to describe their own self-identification. The politically motivated decision to apply for and adopt EU membership may have been seen as a way of consolidating Latvia as a nation state, however there have been nuanced shifts in the way individuals view their relationship to citizenship. For this young professional there had been a significant shift in her identity and sense of citizenship She remarked:

> *'Moving away changed my perspective on it. Now I consider myself more as an EU citizen or not even that, just a European citizen rather than just pure Latvian. This had definitely changed because before I moved, I was Latvian and that was it. I*

thought that I would never be with or marry a foreign guy, but it's not like that anymore. I'm still Latvian, and that's a nationality that's not going to change, but citizenship wise, yeah, I consider myself more European.'

Int20: (F), 33, Manager of a Business Incubator, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

For this following respondent, although the opportunity to travel had broadened her horizons, Latvia remained the place where she felt a sense of belonging. She says:

'I was living in England, in Germany and in Cyprus, but every time I came home because this is home. I would never change this for some other country.'

Int42: (F), 25, Pet Shop Assistant and P/T Student, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

What is interesting in her reflection is that she is actually of mixed parentage, yet despite political rhetoric and EU mobility, the identification with home actually related to the territory of Latvia, contrasting with many participants of solely Latvian heritage, who were open in their admissions of feeling adrift from Latvia and the community there. She does however, go on to explain that she has a broader sense of being a global citizen, and draws attention to the difference between a granted legal citizenship as in the case of being a passport holder, and towards a more pluralistic perspective beyond this. She explains:

'I never had a national identity. My father is Latvian, and my mother is Russian. In my family we always spoke 2 languages and for us it was normal. In my passport it says I am Latvian because my father is Latvian. I think I am more a person of the world.'

Int42: (F), 25, Pet Shop Assistant and P/T Student, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

For another respondent, her sense of Europeanism was not fully cemented, however she did acknowledge future generations, as has happened with her own children, would go on to form broader, non-ethnic perspectives of citizenship and identity. She says:

'Maybe I see myself as a European citizen, but I think that this would mean more for my children. I am a very patriotic person, but I don't feel this way about being a European citizen. My children feel European.'

Int37: (F), 41, Florist, Sigulda, Latvia (rural) – Latvian speaker

Within this new context of EU membership, mobility and outward migration, there is clearly scope for identities and expressions of belonging to be reshaped and realigned, beyond the confines of ethnicity and place. Of note, for those pushing an ethnic and state centric narrative relating to citizenship, are the emerging nuances impacting on top-down constructs. The importance of self-identification and the evolving plurality of horizontal perspectives within the citizenship debate requires further consideration, as residents and non-residents alike continue to redefine who and what defines a community of Latvia.

5.4 The Influence of Russia on Latvia's Community of Belonging

It is clear that there is the potential for new negotiation of citizenship and identity to emerge as a result of Latvia's political decision to adopt EU membership, when citizenship is removed from the confines of state. The reality is, however, that state politics and state relations with geopolitical neighbours remains a core part of nation and state building and trickles down into any grassroots formation of community and self-identification. Authors such as Frie (2011), explore the relevance of situational experience and note that:

> *'concepts of subject and society, or self and context, are not simply interacting, but fundamentally interdependent. The point is that neither agent nor structure can be understood or conceptualized without the other; they are mutually dependent*' (Frie 2011 p. 344)

Lived experience, and any agency emerging from this experience, cannot be separated from the context where it exists. It is therefore important to understand and explore the context in which Latvia, on a geopolitical level, inhabits and consider the impact that this has on the discourse of citizenship. By considering where and how Latvia has positioned itself within the sphere of the international community in recent years, further insight can be gained on where political ideology and daily realities intersect. Within this thesis, the scope has been limited to an exploration of relations with Latvia's immediate, and arguably most relevant geopolitical neighbours, namely Russia and the EU. The impact of repositioning Latvia as an

EU member country upon connotations of citizenship and community has been discussed in section 5.3. This section will consider the ways in which political relations and rhetoric in relation to Latvia's eastern neighbour, Russia, are influencing the imagining of a broader community of Latvia within the wider citizenship debate.

The relatively recent bearing of Latvia's recognition as a sovereign state following a period of 'annexation' by the USSR has led to suggestions that Latvia is 'insufficiently consolidated' to withstand the fear of external threat from neighbouring Russia (Somer 2011 p. 18). The rhetoric of ethnic tension within Latvia continues to dominate within the media and current political discourse, particularly in light of recent controversial developments in Russian foreign policy. Politically motivated actions by Russia, such as the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014, controversial intervention in the Syrian war, and increased Russian and NATO military presence within Latvia's border region, have all led to heightened tensions and rhetoric (Somer 2011 p. 18). Despite Latvia attaining membership of and 'belonging' to both the European Union and NATO, rhetoric around Russia has an implication for the concept of 'who belongs' to Latvia based upon perceived levels of association and loyalty to the state. Ethnicity, some thirty years on from the restoration of independence, remains closely bound to a wider debate on citizenship within Latvia, with 'belonging' as defined by a passport or legal status, often alluded to as secondary to more valued shared heritage and cultural links within popular discourse. With ethnicity viewed as a fundamental element of the citizenship debate in Latvia, this section considers whether Latvia's relationship with Russia continues to impact on the way in which residents of Latvia view their relationship to the state and their relationship to each other.

Budrytė (2016) asserts that "the creation of tolerant political communities requires the ability to evaluate the past" (Budrytė 2016 p. 11), however, the creation of a tolerant and more inclusive community of Latvia remains increasingly difficult from an elite level due to a reluctance to move beyond the historical difficulties of the past. At the time of data collection tensions were still reported as running high between Latvia and Russia. The events leading up to Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 had sparked much media attention, with the threat of 'little green men' crossing the Russian border into neighbouring sovereign territories providing comment and debate in the subsequent period. This context evokes the

image of the construct of a 'frontier region' as described by Pridham (2018). Pridham (2018) explains in some details the complexities of 'frontier' regions, that is to say, due to their specific physical locale, they not only exist in the physical sense within particular geopolitical borderlands but that they may also border regions of contrasting ideology (Pridham 2018 p.3-4). Although Pridham (2018) focuses primarily on regions within countries, the analogy of the frontier region or area could be similarly applied to Latvia in a wider geopolitical context. The frontier area model also concerns itself with the likelihood of the expropriation of authority within the frontier region, by an external actor, based on subversive actions by internal agents (Pridham 2018 p. 4). In Latvia's case, the existence of a large speaking Russian minority is often presented as a threat to the stability of the state from a political perspective. The inference, from the top down, is that any civically created Latvian identity risks being usurped by the manifestation of a primordial national Russian identity, with 'Russians being Russian', irrespective of however 'Latvian' they may themselves feel. This study builds on such work by examining more widely the position of Latvian speakers as well as Russian speakers, with perspectives taken from participants residing in various areas of Latvia as well as in the UK.

The position of the state's relationship to Russia can be traced directly to the challenging historical legacy of annexation and loss of sovereignty across the twentieth century, with most notable across this period, the forcible incorporation of Latvia into the Soviet Union. Discussed in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, this legacy has impacted heavily upon the development of modern-day Latvia and has shaped the citizenship debate. As Latvia's independence was re-established, a nationalist centric political strategy was adopted by political elites to ensure that Latvia's future cultural and territorial integrity could be sustained, and the community of Latvia was subsequently cemented along titular ethnic lines. In order to examine whether these events continue to shape the development of a community of Latvia, and to ascertain whether the political macro level relationship with Russia impacts on micro level relationships, respondents were questioned on their own perceptions. Asked to sum up their overview of the political relationship, this Latvian participant succinctly said:

'Latvia hates Russia. That's the fact. They hate Russians. They will do everything just to say something bad about Russia.'

Int3: (F), 34, Self-employed, Moray, UK (rural) – Latvian speaker

A sweeping generalisation as this comment may be interpreted to be, it is representative of wider public discourse emanating from Latvia's troubled and traumatic recent history and its insecurity over territorial integrity due to geographical position. It is also interesting in terms of this research as again, there is a clear distinction between a political ('they') stance and an individual ('me') position. The participant, when asked to explain in more detail her thoughts on the relationship between Latvia and Russia, went on to add:

'For me they (Latvia) are even making up stories...like Russia wants to occupy Latvia again. I don't think that Russia is so stupid. Nowadays it is not that time. It is completely different. If they (Russia) start something, Europe and America will protect Latvia. I don't think they (Russia) are so stupid that they (Russia) will do anything. I don't think... they can't be that stupid... they can't be.'

Int3: (F), 34, Self-employed, Moray, UK (rural) – Latvian speaker

What was interesting to note during the data collection and the data analysis was the internal struggle experienced by participants in disentangling their own personal understanding of this relationship from more widely traversed political rhetoric. Respondents frequently described the relationship by way of adopting a 'third person narrative', therein positioning themselves outside of any vertical construction. In the following quote we do see some identification with vertical citizenship in terms of 'our' government, and 'we' being referred to. The horizontal citizenship narrative is however absent.

'Russia is one of the biggest countries in the world and it is very powerful. Latvia doesn't want to understand it. People in our government think that Russia is some evil empire and we have to do everything that does not give anything to Russia.'

Int42: (F), 25, Pet Shop Assistant and P/T Student, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

It was more difficult to extract a more reflective response drawing on personal opinion without providing more supplementary questioning to participants. The challenge in extracting an immediate and introspective view was partially explained by the response of this respondent from Daugavpils in his assertion that there was is sense of negation from the state on the right of individuals to own an opinion. He drew attention to the inherent conflict between top-down representations and bottom-up realities within the relationship, and suggested that individual constructs were politically invalidated within wider debate, noting:

> *'The relationship is fine with Russia if we just talk about the relationship, but in the political way it is not very good. It is not just up to us.'*
>
> Int52: (M), 39, Unemployed, Daugavpils, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

The backdrop of growing tensions was a valuable lens through which to gauge any concessions from a horizontal perspective in relation to issues of national sovereignty. In her work on young Russian speakers in Latvia, Birka (2016) commented that "the Ukraine crisis of 2014 and the escalation in Latvian and Russian mutually critical and assertive political rhetoric, both domestically and abroad, are further serving to divide public perception and estrange Russian speakers in Latvia" (Birka 2016 p. 234). What though of the Latvian speakers and their perceptions of the increase in political tensions? In a clear divergence from political level discourse around the threat of Russia, there was again evidence of a more nuanced evaluation of the potential for political crisis from individuals. The following participant perfectly summed up the differences between national Latvian political rhetoric and the expression of grass roots Latvian public opinion:

> *'No one is terrified that Russia is coming. Normal people are not terrified. They understand that nothing terrible will happen. Russian will not occupy Latvia because they just don't need it. People who think differently about this are the politicians of Latvia. Normal people like me, like my clients, like my parents like my friends, we just think "yeah… ok our government says this -let them talk".'*
>
> Int42: (F), 25, Pet Shop Assistant and P/T Student, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

Another participant commented on the size of Russia and referred to the historical rational for political concerns over any future threat to Latvia as a result. Improving the relationship at a political level, he saw this as challenging due to an unwillingness to look beyond the past, however, again, he stressed that any perception of immediate physical threat was externally constructed and not representative of his personal opinion. He says:

> *'Russia is very big, but due to the period of occupation we have no desire to make any changes to the relationship. I don't believe that Russia is coming for us tomorrow. Maybe old people think like this, but young people, well we don't think about it. I haven't felt it myself and I think all will be ok.'*
>
> Int41: (M), 31, Garage Owner and Mechanic, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

From these responses we can see that there are different understandings of the threat Russia poses. However, these differences of opinion were not necessarily based on ethnicity but were instead considered to be generational differences of opinion.

The representation of Russia as a threat to a vertically constructed community of Latvia is played out in the media, and this representation has a wider implication for development of community relations and self-formed expressions of citizenship and identity. Furthermore, in considering the cohesion of a wider community of Latvia, as vertically imagined, media, as explored in insightful work by Berzina (2018) has a significant role in how individuals fashion trust in politics and the political narrative. The concept of 'political trust' Berzina (2018) highlights, is difficult to define, however covers areas including support for political ideas or individuals, confidence in institutions and can also lead individuals to form opinions on how politics shapes their lives and is representative of shared ideas or ideals (Berzina 2018 p. 4). Mieriņa (2014) concurs that people create their political beliefs based on personal experiences and interpretation (Mieriņa 2014 p. 619) and it is this intersection between discourse and lived experience which draws a clearer and more accurate picture of how perspectives and relationships are evolving. For this participant, political claims about the danger Russia posed were unrealistic based on his assessment of the outcome of any Russian military agitation or any claim to Latvian sovereignty. He states:

'If we had a war with Russia, then this war would last around 20 hours maybe. So, I'm not scared. It would be over quickly. The press would have you be scared all the time. This is why I don't watch TV.'

Int39: (M), 27, Highly Skilled Craftsman, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

Although a Russian speaker, his views were less shaped by any form of ethnic patriotism but were instead shaped by pragmatism. He goes on to add:

'I think this war of words doesn't help. When we learn, we have intelligent thinking, it doesn't matter. This political problem is based on thinking that isn't intelligent. People watch TV and they believe all this propaganda information. The relationship between Russian people and Latvians hasn't changed in this way.'

Int39: (M), 27, Highly Skilled Craftsman, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

In attempting to portray Latvia as a stable nation state, political rhetoric continues to have destabilising consequences - however these consequences may not be as intended and can in fact play out in more unexpected and unintended ways. For some commentators, it is accepted that "uncivil political discourse has detrimental effects on political trust" (Mutz and Reeves 2005 p. 13) and could in fact undermine broader trust in the machinery and message of the state. Rather than perpetuate ethnic discord at a political level, it could be considered logical and strategically advantageous for the state to ensure that political media output consolidates 'belonging' by being seen as representative of shared 'community' ideals and values. However, as was established from the responses collected in this research, a continuing narrative of threat remains the political strategy to strengthen solidarity within an imagined community of Latvia. For this participant, this messaging and the geopolitical and ethnic generalisations made within state influenced media output contrasted sharply with her own lived interactions experienced on a daily basis. She says:

'I don't know really about our relationship with Russia. It depends on what side you look for. I think it is a normal relationship. There are no problems, but in the media, there is other information and they are telling us the Russia is bringing armies to the border and all things like that. So, I think the issue is more from the media. Overall, I think we have normal relations.'

Int39: (F), 34, Court Registrar/Administrator, Sigulda, Latvia (rural) - Latvian speaker

Participants also generally believed that the media was in no way independent and conveyed political messages which only reaffirmed the messages of the incumbent governing elites. As discussed in Chapter 4, trust levels in politicians are low as a result of allegations of corruption and self-interest, and any ethnic bias was another vehicle for eroding trust and highlighting conflicting values between politicians and inhabitants of Latvia. This fiercely nationalist Latvian speaking respondent provided his opinion on the impartiality of media output in Latvia, noting:

> *'The information people get from the media is at least 75% sponsored by private parties behind the scenes. Maybe more. At least those big channels. They are all sponsored sites. Much more of the news that circulates in Latvia is sponsored.'*
>
> Int33: (M), 37, State Pension Administrator and political Candidate, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

Based on normative approaches to Latvian citizenship, it could be assumed that those with strong nationalist tendencies might be less likely to criticise governing nationalist elites, however this was not the case. Criticism on media reporting was widely related to a disassociation with politics and political messaging. In the following extract, another Latvian speaking respondent delivers his opinion on the relationship between Russia and Latvia but does so by critiquing media reports. He tells us that he does not 'buy in' to what he sees as an exaggerated ethnicised threat, and instead bases his assessment of threat on a more independently informed basis and states:

> *'The press and news affect things. There are not many independent news makers. Most of them they work for someone. They manipulate some facts to make people feel some threat. They influence people's opinion. I don't feel any threat…no no…. I don't believe that Russia will come tomorrow or the day after or whenever. I don't feel that. What would be their point? For what? We're not Afghanistan or somewhere with plenty of oil. I don't see Russia starting a physical war with NATO*.'
>
> Int40: (M), 30, Software Engineer, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

It is evident that his trust in the political message he experiences through media sources is eroding his trust in politics more widely. Furthermore, within his remarks, we see another facet of community and citizenship developing.

There is a tangible awareness of an additional layer of protection offered to Latvia's residents by means of Latvia's membership of the wider communities of the EU and NATO and we see a nuanced departure from a sole reliance on Latvian politicians as defenders of a national identity. What was evident from the following responses is that individuals are becoming aware that Latvian sovereignty no longer remains entirely bound to the national government. Latvia's political decision to adopt membership of the EU and NATO, whilst offering protection, is also seen as being more complex and potentially threatening. Some respondents would correlate increasing tensions in the region, in part, to NATO and EU membership. As one Latvian speaking participant explains:

> *'The American army and the EU army that came in…. I think that this is negative. Why are they here? We don't need them here. It just creates bad feeling. Why do we need Americans coming in and staying here? It is a worry. I follow politics in Russia and I see what is happening so this makes me worried. I don't want a war. I want peace. This army coming in gives the impression that something could happen.'*
>
> Int57: (F), 37, Barista, Daugavpils, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

For another participant, the drive politically Westward risks the opportunity to develop a stronger and more neighbourly political relationship with Russia.

> *'Relationships with Russia? I don't know. It's all about politics. It might change. I can't see we have a good relationship as we do have these multiple layers of relationship. I believe people do have a good relationship with Russia, but our politics and our national policies, they are made to face the EU, to turn our back on Russia.'*
>
> Int40: (M), 30, Software Engineer, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

The focus on protecting Latvian sovereignty on ethnic lines and a desire to move away from any historical legacy of the Soviet period was, for some of those interviewed, seen to risk securing longer term political security and stability.

A sense of protection is important in fostering a stable community as detailed within the literature of community theory and protecting the nation state of Latvia has driven the political decisions of governing elites. However, protection and a feeling of being 'safe' manifests in many ways, particularly at a grass roots level. McMillan and Chavis (1986) suggest that a stable community needs to offer positive interactions to create deeper investment and bonding (McMillan and Chavis 1986 pp. 13-14). They state that members of a community require "positive ways to interact, important events to share and ways to resolve them positively" (McMillan and Chavis 1986 p. 14). It is therefore argued that a continuation of viewing the political community along the lines of national identity and ethnicity will lead to a longer term disconnect between citizens and state. Lived experience suggests that perceptions and interactions with 'others', positioned outside a vertically imagined community, differs in horizontal reality, particularly where these interactions with 'others' are positive. The disconnect between individual experience and state rhetoric was repeatedly emphasized throughout the interviews with respondents, particularly in relation to representations of Russia and Russian speakers. Of those interviewed, it was common to note that more positive reinforcement of a stable multi ethnic community was absent from the top level and that ethnic tensions were beneficial in maintaining a political status quo. This participant pointed out the consequences for any formation of community when highly charged political rhetoric is employed for political gain. She says:

> *'That is what I am saying about our government. They made Latvians against Russians and Russians then become like a bull...you know...and they say, "ok if you treat me like that, then I will do what I want"*.'
>
> Int3: (F), 34, Self-employed, Moray, UK (rural) – Latvian speaker

The continuation of a divisive narrative was positioned as having the potential for levels of political trust, if reliant solely on the discourse of ethnic division, to become eroded by the realities of more positive daily interactions. Individuals were seen to begin to pull away from

state narratives and more organically define citizenship and a Latvian community along less politicised lines, with one participant observing:

> *'I think that normal people who just live can connect to each other at any time and they get on very well. Russian people can come and have friends and even family who are Latvian and Latvian people can have friends who are Russian. For normal people it is not a problem. This is a problem on a government level. The government are trying to give us their politics. For us it is not right. Normal people will never think like the politicians.'*
>
> Int42: (F), 25, Pet Shop Assistant and P/T Student, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

The growing chasm between rhetoric and day-to-day lived experiences is clear for this participant, formerly a resident in Canada and having returned to live in Latvia after the restoration of independence. He reflects:

> *'Looking at the Russian issue, the thing is that half the population has Russian ancestry. Of that half, 30% are patriots, 20% are wishy washy, and the rest are here for other reasons. Travelling to the Eastern part of Latvia, I have spoken to people who have lived together as Latvian and Russians for centuries. They don't want Russia here. Most Russians if you ask them don't want Russia to come and take over, because they realise how good they have it here.'*
>
> Int28: (M), age not given, Artisan Jewellery Maker, Riga, Latvia (urban) – English/Latvian speaker

Emerging from the data collected was that political messaging is at odds with much of the reality of daily life experienced by Latvia's inhabitants and could therefore be seen to be politically destabilising. Generally, when drawing upon lived experience, it was found that the disconnect in Latvia was seen to be increasing between the political sphere and the individual, rather than between individuals of differing ethnic communities. The perpetuation of a nationalising political strategy shows evidence of creating a disconnect in Latvia between the macro and micro spheres, and it is argued that Latvian elites are prioritising national sovereignty at the expense of consolidating a stable Latvian community. This strategy may well cause more destabilization and posed a threat to a vertically constructed community of Latvia, as individuals continue to redefine themselves in relation to political messaging and everyday encounters, reconstructing what it means to be 'Latvian'.

5.5 Towards Political 'Harmony'?

As Latvia moves forward politically it is perhaps worth reflecting on the assertions made by Kymlicka (2011) that citizenship in a modern and Western context should be less concerned with 'resolving disputes over legitimacy' and instead focus on managing "contested character and building democratic forums for continuing that conversation" (Kymlicka 2011 pp. 288-289). Within the wider literature on citizenship within Latvia, it has been pointed out that ethnic cleavages within Latvian society are a major reason for dwindling political participation and decreasing satisfaction with the state of Latvia's democracy among both Latvian and Russian speakers alike (Agarin 2011 p. 570). Suggestions made by Mansbridge, a prominent scholar of democracy and democratic theory, emphasise the need to eliminate adversity politics, based around conflicts, and to move to a more unitarian style of politics which benefits the community at large (Mansbridge 1990, 2009). In her 2009 work, she describes two scenarios relating to conflict and commonality which are said to always be at work in democratic relations between the constituent and their elected representatives (Mansbridge 2009 p. 370). The first of these models is the 'sanctions model' whereby the constituents have an active role in monitoring their representatives and punishing them via the sanction of withdrawing support for future elections where they fail to deliver for constituents (Mansbridge 2009 p. 369). The second model is the 'selection model' where objectives are commonly aligned between the representative and the constituents, requiring less active monitoring of representatives as "normatively, the closer representatives come to having common interests with their constituents, the less the constituents need to protect themselves against the greater power of the representatives" (Mansbridge 2009 p. 380). In Latvia, it would appear that neither model is mitigating the relationship between elected representatives and the electorate, which raises questions of the 'normality' of this vertical form of citizenship. As has been explored previously, despite often feeling let down by politicians, respondents drew attention to the ability of politicians to utilise and weaponise ethnicity as a means to create emotive and less measured political decision making at the micro level.

This emotive way of approaching politics is witnessed in many communities where ethnic, religious or social division is evident. Discussing ethnic tension in India and its impact in political outcomes, Chandra (2005) observed that "voters seem to adjust their own policy preferences towards what their preferred party or political elite has said, rather than themselves picking a party depending on their fixed policy preferences" (Chandra 2005 p. 200). Amidst similarly repeated patterns of ethnically influenced electoral outcomes in Latvia, there have been increasing calls for a more progressive and less antagonistic approach to politics and around political messaging. Support for 'progressive' politics, in the sense that 'progressive' relates to a less ethnicised approach being adopted, has seen support for parties such as *Saskaņas Centrs* (Harmony Centre) to grow, with the party fielding Russian speaking candidates as well as those of Latvian descent. Drawing upon data from the Central Election Commission of Latvia 2014 and Auers (2013) it was noted that by 2010, Harmony Centre enjoyed considerable popularity and succeeded in receiving 26% of the popular vote in the Latvian Saeima elections. In addressing the question 'What does Latvian citizenship look like today?' participants were questioned on the formal political element of citizenship, which in traditional constructs would place a responsibility upon individuals to engage as active members of their political community. Participants of all backgrounds were also asked to reflect upon the possibility of political change and to consider whether they have witnessed a change in their own political behaviours.

Agarin (2011) points towards a fall in political participation amongst both Latvian and Russian speakers, and it is against this backdrop that questions were set. For the following participant, himself engaged in encouraging civic activism, he often felt dejected by a general lack of appetite from the citizenry to affect change and become invested, psychologically as well as financially, in politics. Based on his direct experience as a civic campaigner he tells us more about the political landscape, noting:

> *'500 people donated to political parties altogether, ok, maybe not just one or two euros, but still, 500 out of 2.5 million people is really low. The parties who are in the parliament don't have the trust of the average citizen. We see only a tiny amount of people donating and influencing the decision makers.'*
>
> Int29: (M), 31, Civil Society Consultant and Activist, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

The political backdrop, in general terms, was seen as uninspiring and at times confusing and individuals often aired their perception of an inability to make any significant change within the political sphere. For this respondent, ethnicity did not come into his feelings of apathy around politics, it was the political environment itself and the challenges of building a cohesive coalition which he found off-putting. He explains:

> *'We have too many parties and the Parliament is in too many groups. The coalition consists of 5 parties and they can't make a good and prudent decision. They fight and then the decision which comes from this is not so good anymore.'*
>
> Int24: (M), 33, Business Manager, Riga, Latvia (urban) -Latvian speaker

Another respondent noted her disillusionment with the current system and stated:

> *'We don't have a motivation to believe here. People are very disappointed here. People have no motivation to be interested in politics. So, no I don't vote.'*
>
> Int57: (F), 37, Barista, Daugavpils, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

An interesting perspective on electoral and political engagement, which this study has been able to provide, is a comparison of levels of engagement of those who have moved from Latvia, looking at their practices and behaviours within Latvia and in the UK. One Latvian speaking participant, who was keen to promote her attachment to Latvia via cultural ties and activities in the UK, was less keen on the political aspects of 'home'. When asked if she voted in Latvia she said:

> *'No. No. They are just the same people, just in different political parties. There is no change in people or in the parliament. It's still the same. Still the same mistakes under a new name.'*
>
> Int7: (F), 31, HNC student and mum, Inverness-shire, UK (rural) – Latvian speaker

Yet when asked whether she voted in the UK she goes on to say:

'Yeah, I vote. How I vote…well I ask my closest Scottish friends and that's what I vote for. I don't really make up my own mind. For example, if there are 6 people and 4 say one thing, then I will go with that.'

Int7: (F), 31, HNC student and mum, Inverness-shire, UK (rural) – Latvian speaker

Another Latvian speaker who had moved to Scotland reflected on her engagement with politics in Latvia, and although she engaged in voting in her native country, her interest and levels of participation had increased as she settled into her new life abroad. She says:

'(Vote), yeah I did, but I do this a bit more regularly when I came here.'

Int2: (F), 36, Postal Worker, Aberdeen, UK (urban) – Latvian speaker

Her reason for disengagement was again related to a dissatisfaction with politicians, alluded to by Agarin (2011). She felt let down and a deep sense of distrust. She goes on to explain why she didn't vote in Latvia and says:

'In Latvia it doesn't matter. They just steal money off of people. My grandmother is in hospital. She has been waiting 15 years on a council flat and nobody will help. We have politicians, but they do not work.'

Int2: (F), 36, Postal Worker, Aberdeen, UK (urban) – Latvian speaker

One participant who took part in the interviews was a Latvian speaker employed as a Parliamentary Assistant at the Scottish Parliament. Her insight, given her new role within the political environment of Scotland, was interesting and echoed much of what had been said by those with less political experience. She says:

'I think there are a lot of issues with the Latvian political system. A lot of people are still around who were around in the 90s and 80s. It is still the Soviet fools who are still there. I think that they don't encourage cohesion and this is why the younger generation is really getting anywhere with politics. I think there's too much disengagement for people to even try.'

Int4: (F), 26, Parliamentary Assistant, Edinburgh, UK (urban) – Latvian speaker

Despite such a negative picture being painted, the emergence of political parties such as 'Harmony' provides an alternative to voters and is perhaps more reflective of the changing

construct of Latvia's political community. As mentioned in section 5.2, there is a demographical change with an increased enfranchisement of Russian speakers who are eligible for full citizenship and political rights from birth. Of concern to governing elites is that their status quo position is now open to challenge with political voice being afforded to Russian speakers. Despite Harmony's surge in popularity and electoral success in 2010, it was excluded from the government coalition, being regarded as a threat by Latvian politicians, particularly in relation to its support for having a referendum on Russian as a second language (Ījabs 2016 p. 298). Ījabs (2016) remarks that "support for the referendum was seen as a clear sign of the party's disloyalty to the Latvian state, and reinforced the ethnic cleavage" (Ījabs 2016 p. 298). This exclusion of Harmony from the government coalition and ongoing negative elite-level rhetoric around increased representation of so called 'Russian' parties, including Harmony, has led academics to suggest that ethnic cleavages continue to have salience in politics and that the "ethnic divide has become a normal part of Latvian political discourse" (Auers 2013 p. 101). Indeed, authors such as Nikai (2018) and Linz (2009) conclude that it is only logical for political elites to manipulate ethnic rhetoric and national pride for personal political gain, rather than for any wider and altruistic grassroots community benefit (Nikai 2018 p. 200). It is also suggested by Druviete and Ozolins (2016) that nationalist initiatives aimed at bolstering support, such as that of education and language reform, were a direct response to "the increase in Russian political representation, as witnessed by the success of the Russian-oriented Harmony Centre" (Druviete and Ozolins 2016 p. 133).

Deliberate 'electoral mobilization by governing parties enhances politically immature individuals' national pride' (Nikai 2018 p. 215) and this premise was explored within the interviews. One participant, describing herself as not particularly interested in politics but fiercely patriotic, makes clear the issue of 'top down' sustained ethnicised influence upon patterns of voting. She stated:

> *'When the Russian party gets elected in elections then you can feel it, it comes out, all this anger.'*
>
> Int46: (F), 35, Mum of 6, restores prams, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

However, despite the seemingly 'immature' approach to politics, the nationalist narrative was less important for her within non-politicised lived interactions.

> *'Quite often when I need to get on a bus with a pushchair it will be a Russian person helping me to get the pushchair onto the bus. A Latvian just stands and do nothing. If a person is born here, then that's fine. You have been born in this country so no problem. But you always feel that Russians have an anger inside about Latvians*.'
>
> Int46: (F), 35, Mum of 6, restores prams, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

In her statement, we see that repeated political behaviours for the participant are what Chandra (2005) describes as 'fixity'. The political action or engagement is not "an intrinsic quality of ethnic identities but a product of the institutional context in which ethnic groups are politicised" (Chandra 2005 p. 245). Authors such as Nakai (2018) note the employment of ethnic division is a commonplace tactic within elections but conclude "that electoral competitions have a universal effect on both majority and minority groups in terms of increasing the level of national pride, but such enhanced national pride dissipates quickly in minority groups" (Nakai 2018 p. 206). At this intersection of vertical and horizontal perspectives we see a more nuanced picture in which ethnicity is a useful political tool yet is less salient in everyday life.

Recent studies point to a more diverse political future for Latvia and more opportunity for engagement. Ekmanis (2019) paints a more positive outlook for the future of both political and societal interaction in Latvia, stating that "the current existence of multi-ethnic political parties, quotidian acceptance of multiple linguistic traditions and support for ethnic minority education are indicative of a multicultural social reality" (Ekmanis 2019 p. 74). The existence of more representative political parties can be seen to challenge the discourse of political apathy and may move Latvia's political community beyond the confines of ethnicity. A note of optimism was sounded in the following testimony of one Latvian speaking voter, considering voting for Harmony, despite the party being presented by the governing political elites as a 'Russian party'. He says:

'I am interested in politics and I always vote. I am interested in politics because this can change our future. I am interested in the tools that could change things. I don't want to be just a regular citizen who is all the time complaining about the situation but who does nothing. I don't know if an individual vote can help, but if like the media says that this new party (Harmony) has the chance to win then maybe I will vote for this.'

Int24: (M), 33, Business Manager, Riga, Latvia (urban) -Latvian speaker

Another male professional from Riga reflected on the outcomes of having a 'Harmony' political representative elected as the city mayor and also sees room for optimism in the possibility of a less ethnicised political sphere. He says:

We have some new Russian party (Harmony) and I guess they have some very good things. They now rule the Riga municipality. Ok, we have some strange ideas and things on Russian language and schools and stuff, but in general for me I think there is improvement. If we look at 15 years ago, we had Latvian or Russian parties. But this Harmony they have nearly all the Russian voters, but now the Latvians they start to switch, and not just to these right-wing parties just for nationality. So, in politics there are many good things and improvements.

Int29: (M), 31, Civil Society Consultant and Activist, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

However, although progressive changes were evident with the advent of elected Russian speaking politicians and elected officials, tacit admissions that the system was resistant to significant political change were expressed. This respondent, who had earlier indicated his enthusiasm for new ideas and new political directions, explained why his support for Harmony as a party of choice may not materialise in elections. His electoral preference could be swayed if he felt a vote for Harmony was a wasted voted and says of the process and voting for them:

'But if I know that this new party won't win and there is a bigger picture then…maybe not.'

Int24: (M), 33, Business Manager, Riga, Latvia (urban) -Latvian speaker

The political party Harmony may be gaining ground and there is increasing evidence of social harmony within everyday interactions, however as Latvian elites continue to pursue and

consolidate power, the role and application of divisory political language and practices continue to inform what constitutes the community of Latvia today.

5.6 Chapter conclusions

Patterns of sustained ethnicised political rhetoric and limited political representation, whilst not necessarily resulting in deepening ethnic division at the grass roots level, are ultimately detrimental to creating a cohesive Latvian community when viewed in terms of the individuals' perception of and relation to the state. Structural change, such as EU membership, has created an opportunity for individuals to redefine their relation to the physical territory of Latvia and to each other. There is also scope for the realignment of self-identification with a more pluralist form of citizenship when adopting discursive practices. The political sphere is an environment in which an 'imagined' Latvian community can be made more inclusive via more diverse political representation, however, ethnicity is often wielded as a political weapon to main the status quo of elites. Top-down narratives remain heavily fixated on the historical legacy of annexation. By not acknowledging the nuances emerging from everyday interactions and overlooking the renegotiation of identity, belonging and citizenship, Latvia risks a new chasm opening between the individual and the state, irrespective of ethnic heritage.

Chapter 6. Socio-economics and Latvian Citizenship (Part 1)

6.1 Introduction and Rationale

This empirical chapter is the first in a pairing of two empirical chapters which focuses on Latvia's socio-economic development as context to address the question 'What does Latvian citizenship look like today?'. This, and the following chapter, will focus on the relationship between individuals and the state in Latvia from both horizontal and vertical perspectives to consider how this relationship has been impacted by macro level economic decisions and subsequent socio-economic outcomes. Given the significant structural changes experienced as a result an initial shift towards a market economy and, more recently, towards a common market economy as an EU member state, the question central to both socio-economic chapters is 'How has structural political change impacted on citizenship and on the formation of a wider community of Latvia?' .

The rationale for selecting an exploration of economic factors relates not only to Marshall's (1950) three pillar conceptualization of citizenship, which incorporates an economic element alongside political and civic elements but is also related to calls to broaden our understanding of what citizenship means today as defined by those adopting or practising citizenship. For Bernstein (1999), as discussed in Chapter 2, horizontal perspectives are embedded in context and are related to goals relevant to the aspiring citizen (Bernstein 1999 p. 161). These goals are often only achieved by access to resources, and in understanding the ways in which resource provision has been shaped by external events or actors; insight is provided into the development and perception of citizenship. Much of Latvia's citizenship debate has been focused on exclusionary practices which exclude individuals from access to resources and rights based on ethnic classification. However, in attempting to answer the question 'Do we see the emergence of a broader "Latvian community" whereby individuals see themselves as "belonging" not only to Latvia, but to each other, beyond divisions of ethnicity and formal citizenship?', lived experience will be shown to highlight areas of non-ethnicised economic exclusion which reframes the community of Latvia.

This initial socio-economic empirical chapter will track back initially to the period of post-independence and then incorporate the later inclusion of Latvia as an EU member state. During this period, Latvia witnessed dramatic macro level economic change which in turn impacted on the socio- economic position of its residents. Section 6.2 contextualizes the validity of incorporating socio economic perspectives and experiences within the broader citizenship debate. Section 6.3 reflects on the impact of financial shock and economic crisis during the post- independence period as well as drawing on the immediate economic impact of EU membership as a platform from which to consider the ways structural change impacted upon perceptions of citizenship and belonging to a wider community of Latvia. In section 6.4, the chapter then moves on to consider the economic benefits of EU membership via inward investment and to explore whether these benefits have been felt at a grassroots level and have in any way redefined citizenship and the individual's relationship to the state. Throughout the discussion, analysis of the outcome of structural economic change in relation to citizenship is drawn out through the testimony of lived experience and incorporates discursive practices alongside traditional theoretical constructs.

Chapter 7 will continue to consider the economic element of citizenship as defined by Marshall (1950) and will move chronologically forward in time by exploring the ways in which community is forming and reforming in Latvia today around themes of socio-economics. Drawing upon the recent history and experiences of initial financial shock, this second chapter will look at outward migration as a response to socio-economic challenges and will reflect on the impact this has had upon those who left and those who remained in Latvia. The chapter will then consider the vertical discourse around Latvia's socio-economics and reflect on whether the imagined community of Latvia is reflected differently within horizontal and vertical perspectives.

6.2 Contextualising socio economics within Latvia's citizenship debate.

The first step in addressing the research questions outlined in section 6.1, is to make clear the link between horizontal citizenship and socio-economics. Marshall's (1950) work on citizenship, although widely criticized by scholars in the intervening years, still has some

resonance within more recent incarnations of citizenship, as it considers the need to balance macro-economics and the individual. In line with Marshall's (1950) theory, Kymlicka and Norman (1994) highlight that a core responsibility of any given polity is to offer a series of rights to its citizens, not least the right to ensure that citizens feel socially and economically secure via the provision of welfare and access to basic resources. For Marshall (1950), as identified by Kymlicka and Norman (1994), the "full expression of citizenship requires a liberal-democratic welfare state. By guaranteeing civil, political and social rights to all, the welfare state ensures that every member of society feels like a full member of society, able to participate and enjoy the common life of society'"(Kymlicka and Norman, 1994 p. 354). There are also authors such as Dwyer (2004), commenting on meaningful citizenship, and Pfsiter (2012) who note that "citizenship formation is not only about inclusion, participation and rights, but also about exclusion and unequal access to its benefits" (Pfister cited in Jensen 2019 p. 175). For Lister (2007) "meaningful citizenship cannot exist without dignity", with a lack of dignity being linked to the socio-economic sphere and themes of poverty and deprivation (Lister 2007 p. 53).

The issue for many modern theorists of citizenship is the juxtaposition of rights, linked to citizenship as a status, and the nature and subsequent divisive socio-economic outcomes often associated with a market driven capitalist society, linked to practices of citizenship. There is a growing body of research, highlighted by Navickė and Lazutka (2018), which argues that high levels of economic disparity undermine the development of a country and can decrease the country's further socio-economic development creating 'collective problems stretching beyond the economic sphere. These include "diminishing social cohesion, increasing crime, violence, lower life expectancy, health problems and fewer resources for solving those issues" (Navickė and Lazutka 2018 p. 188). Such issues impact on the broader community imagined by the state and individuals, and are of relevance to Latvia, due to the structural changes experienced and the impact of financial crisis in the post-independence era. The area of socio-economics is one in which traditional constructs of citizenship, although detailing the importance of the provision of rights, do not go far enough in understanding the impact of the inability to practice citizenship due to challenges in accessing resources. Against this backdrop, there are calls to rethink citizenship and to

include a broader range of perspectives. It is here that lived citizenship and an examination of the practice of social citizenship as reflected in everyday life consider the intersection between macro level processes and grass roots experiences, simultaneously incorporating voices not normally represented within vertically focused debate.

It will be shown that constructs of citizenship are impacted when applying a socio-economic lens and this will be highlighted by reflecting upon the legacy of significant economic restructuring within post-Soviet Latvia. Latvia, along with her Baltic neighbours, has been keen to be seen as a modern state, forging a path of legitimacy based upon political and territorial recognition, history and culture, and economic stability. In addition to casting off the shadow of Soviet annexation, Latvia further sought to consolidate its geopolitical position by becoming a member of the European Union. This adoption of EU membership was not only important for political development, but as noted by Druzhinin and Prokopyev (2018), Latvia's road to EU accession impacted more widely in structural terms and "involved harmonization of legislation and other regulations with the EU standards" (Druzhinin and Prokopyev 2018 p. 6). A major aspect of this macro level restructuring was within the economic sphere. Whilst the ruling elite may have felt that they have succeeded in their goal to create a successful re-emergent sovereign state, the implications of major structural and economic changes reverberated within Latvian society. Despite success in securing inward investment as a result of EU membership and a growing confidence in Latvia's economic position post-independence period, it has been shown that inequality remained a stumbling block to a sense of inclusion and belonging. Examining these socioeconomic tensions and how they continue to impact within the Latvian citizenship debate is central to developing a more nuanced and reflective picture of community formation and self-identification with constructs of citizenship.

The focus of tension within Latvia's much debated political direction has surrounded the existence of a large minority group of non-citizens, primarily consisting of those from a Russian speaking background. Commonly found within the citizenship debate as a key measure of inclusionary and exclusionary practices is this politically driven ethnic polarisation. Traditional approaches to the citizenship debate and associated publications

have focused on the disproportionate levels of political and economic inequality faced by the Russian speaking community in the years immediately following the restoration of independence. When looking at themes of disadvantage and disconnect between the individual and the state, the creation of the 'non-citizen' status of a large proportion of "Russian-speaking minority groups who had settled there mainly during the Soviet period soon challenged the idea of inclusive democracy" and subsequently impacted upon access to resources (Bjork, ed. Smith 2017 p. 177). Clearly, the exclusion of any social group, based purely on the grounds of ethnicity, will result in tensions. However, the day-to-day struggle to survive and to have some kind of economic security is a distinct characteristic of everyday life in Latvia which transcends issues of nationality and ethnicity for those individuals who took part in this research. This was encapsulated by one Russian speaking participant, employed as a skilled craftsman in Riga. Rather than focus on the ethnicity angle as a reason for his sense of disconnect he explained that it was his concern over his own economic position which affects his view of citizenship. He says:

> *'I want to feel in my country that I am citizen. Here, I don't feel that myself and my family are looked after…but this is not about Russia or America or Europe. I don't feel safe today for the next day. I need to think about what I need to buy or worry next month if I need to buy a fridge or something. I need to plan all of my money. If I have some problems with my health, I need to take out a loan to see a doctor or pay a lot of money for an operation. I feel that the country should look after the citizens, but they don't and that's why I don't think this word citizen means anything bigger*.'
>
> Int39: (M), 27, Highly Skilled Craftsman, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

What is evident is, that despite his position as a member of the political community of Latvia, entitled to work and vote, and with theoretical access to resources, his perception of membership and belonging to Latvia as a community is meaningless on a practical level. Aligning with more contemporary theorists who critique established views on citizenship, we can see that citizenship as a status is devalued when the ability to participate fully within a community is diminished due to financial restraints and concerns. Social citizenship, an ideal for many Western countries, is seen as being a more inclusive form of citizenship and touches upon these aspects. Within understandings of social citizenship, the core principle is that "citizenship is not just about 'having' (e.g. receiving welfare benefits), but about 'doing',

that is, about participating in social life" (Leisering and Barrientos 2013 p. S52). However, Latvia was seen to be some way away from achieving this universalist form of citizenship which "unites and integrates the members of a state into a collectivity" (Joppke 2008 p. 20). The participant went on to touch upon the expectations he has of the state, in line with traditional constructs of citizenship, and highlighted that in this regard he felt let down. He states:

> *'I feel that the country should look after its citizens, but they don't, and that's why I don't feel safe. Being a citizen should mean safety, of all kinds. I am always tense here. I feel physically stressed.'*
>
> Int39: (M), 27, Highly Skilled Craftsman, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

Although this participant was of ethnic Russian descent, contrasting with established thinking on exclusion, his sense of marginalization was not specifically related to his ethnicity. Instead, he felt excluded due to more general socio-economic conditions, driven by Latvia's political direction. Ethnicity remains a central feature at the forefront of discussion around citizenship in Latvia, as vertical constructs denote access to the scarce resources of society, with Brubaker (1992) noting "this allocative function is the basis of 'profound conflict' particularly around citizenship membership criteria" (Brubaker 1992). However, within this research, it is argued that a fresh look at 'who belongs', that is, looking beyond ethnicity as a sole measure of exclusion, and as part of a more contemporary understanding of disenfranchisement, is needed.

The argument put forward in this thesis is that the inequality experienced in Latvia goes beyond the boundary of ethnicity, and thus informs a wider discussion around who feels that they do and don't belong to the 'community of Latvia'. By considering socio economic inequality and incorporating the lived experiences of individuals from both predominant ethnic groups in Latvia, a wider space for discussion is opened up around who feels legitimized, valued and accepted in relation to the state and who does not. Recent publications, including that of Ekmanis (2019), highlight "that research on societal integration in the Baltic states has been plagued by the following in particular: the conflated usage of

'minority' and 'Russian'; an assumption that ethnicity and language are the primary indicators of identity (and, sometimes, loyalty)" (Ekmanis 2019 p. 75). Understanding the correlation between access to resources and citizenship should not exclude ethnicity, nor dismiss the non-citizen issue, but rather widen the debate beyond it, seeing such boundaries as somewhat restrictive and at times, unhelpful. To hone in on the assumption that ethnicity is the sole driver of inequality and disenfranchisement in Latvia detracts focus and attention from other possible root causes. It is argued here that socio-economic inequality impacts across all strata of Latvian society and has resulted in the emergence of a more nuanced sense of citizenship extending beyond the demarcation of Latvian and Russian ethnicity.

6.3 EU Membership and Economic Structural Change

As highlighted within the existing literature, the economies of the Baltic countries changed markedly in the period 1995—2015. Initially in the years post 1991, Latvia's transition to a market economy saw the implementation of economic 'shock therapy' involving the liberalisation of prices, the development of financial mechanisms and financial institutions alongside privatisation and new fiscal policies (Marangos 2002 p. 42). This resulted in rising unemployment, reduced living standards and financial hardship for many, however, was seen as necessary and essential in securing both long term democratic and economic consolidation (Marangos 2002 p. 45). Despite this transitional shock being anticipated to have resulted in years of financial adjustment, there was some evidence of growth in the first decade following the restoration of independence. Remeikienė et al. (2015), found that "until 2004, all three Baltic States remained competitive in the industries producing goods from raw materials and exporting them to foreign markets" (Remeikienė et al. 2015 p. 92). Keen to position Latvia socially, politically and economically 'Westwards', Latvia sought and was subsequently granted EU membership in 2004 as part of a wider programme of EU expansion. Established to rebuild European relations following the two great wars of the 20th century and to encourage greater social and political stability, early incarnations of what is now known as the European Union, namely the European Economic Community, focused on the promotion of economic development and the improvement of the living and working standards of Europeans (McCormick, 2008 p. 165).

The wealth of many longer serving Western European member states, contrasts greatly with the newer cohort of East European states, including Latvia, which were part of the large 2004-2007 expansion. Despite the admirable intentions of the EU to promote macro structures of economic development and improve the socio-economic positions of individuals within states, there remains a disparity in the economic positions of many member states and communities within the EU (McCormick, 2008 pp. 166-167). Many new members were found to have significant differences in their GDP compared to the wealthier economies of The Netherlands, Germany, Denmark and the UK to name but a few. According to Eurostat figures of 2007, GDP per capita ranged from around £20,000-30,000 in these wealthier, longer established member states, compared to around £5,000 GDP per capita in Latvia, which was fairing marginally better than the weakest EU economies of Romania and Bulgaria (McCormick, 2008 pp. 166-167). Yet despite these bleak statistics, commentators on Latvia's economic position have been generally more positive about the impact of EU membership. It is also stated that without EU membership Latvia may have resembled a "tax-haven, off-shore economy, probably with weak democratic institutions. EU accession has saved Latvia, and most importantly ordinary people in Latvia, from a fate of this kind" (Kott and Smith 2017 p. 247). What is not immediately clear, however, is the impact this structural change has had upon individual perceptions of citizenship, as traditional approaches focus primarily on the macro level economic changes, and on the discourse of ethnic division in relation to socio-economic challenges.

A period of financial instability was felt in Latvia, and indeed across the world, in 2008 as a result of a global economic crisis. The years immediately following the financial crash were synonymous with an intense period of austerity measures in Latvia. Eihmanis (2018), drawing upon the earlier studies conducted by Aslund and Dombrovskis (2011), Blyth (2013), Lagarde (2012) and Austers (2014) highlights the range of measures employed by Latvian political elites. These included a virtual blanket ban on spending, widespread cuts to public salaries, (by as much as 26%), and the closure of government agencies (Eihmanis 2018 pp. 235-236). It is stated that "although Latvian crisis management became a "success story" in macroeconomic terms, the social costs were immense. In the first two years of the recession,

the Latvian economy shrank by approximately a quarter. In 2010, unemployment rose to 20.7 per cent" (Eihmanis 2018 pp. 235-236). This chapter picks up on these economic highs and lows and explores the consequences, as experienced by individuals, analysing their implications within the wider context of citizenship.

Recent work, including that of Navickė and Lazutka (2018) argues that it is insufficient to view the economic position of a country and its citizens based solely upon GDP, however, this state centric focus on GDP features heavily within of the literature surrounding Latvia's initial economic progress as EU member state. What is missing from the discussion are the implications for citizenship and perceptions of citizenship as viewed from below, and of interest to this research, any non-ethnicised positions adopted by individuals. It is the position of this thesis that economic decisions taken in Latvia at a macro level have had an irrefutable and direct impact on the establishment of contemporary citizenship as experienced at the micro level. It is noted that here this research makes a new and significant contribution to the citizenship debate, as the outcome of these economic strategies and their subsequent impact on the wider population of Latvia has been under researched. Eglitis and Lāce (2009) note that discussions of marginality "have been largely disconnected in the public discourse from rigorous structural or relational explanations" (Eglitis and Lāce 2009 p. 331). To address this, the primary data collected as part of this study focused on the impact of economic transition, drawing from lived experience to provide a more detailed and representative picture beyond the boundaries of GDP statistics.

Whilst statistics do point to the uncomfortable truth that "Latvia is more unequal and has more poor people than most other EU countries, including its Baltic neighbours" (Kott and Smith 2017 p. 255), this study was keen to explore the correlation of this hardship with constructs of citizenship. That correlations between economic uncertainty and underpinnings of citizenship in Latvia are less often referred to in the wider literature is surprising, as economic insecurity and a citizen's sense of disconnect is becoming an ever more notable feature of the citizenship debate playing out across many EU member states at this time. Latvia was found, alongside Lithuania, to have the highest average gaps in incomes at macro and micro level across EU member states (Navickė and Lazutka 2018 p. 189) and the rhetoric

of economic insecurity and citizen's sense of disconnect is argued, within this thesis, as a factor in the horizontal construction of contemporary Latvian citizenship.

Although Latvia and her Baltic neighbours remained competitive in the production and export of goods from raw materials, notably in industries of food, drinks, tobacco, and minerals, as well as other manufactured goods, structural changes to the economy saw the share of other areas of manufacturing decreased, impacting significantly upon GDP (Remeikienė et al. 2015 p. 92). Having successfully integrated into the global market following independence and EU membership, the effects of global financial collapse saw Latvia suffer the heaviest decline in the rate of GDP in 2009 from all those in the new cohort of EU member states who joined in 2004 (Druzhinin, Prokopyev 2018 pp. 8-9). Alongside the financial crisis, several areas of the economy had been continuing to wrestle with earlier structural changes directly resulting from EU membership. Latvia had experienced the closure of larger scale food production plants, many of which were key local employers. It is also highlighted within the secondary data that smaller scale artisan businesses and grassroots producers were also negatively affected by EU reforms. As highlighted by Aistara (2015), those producing food and bakery products in the home often fell foul of EU safety and hygiene regulations, leaving many small-scale local producers to feel criminalized. She states that "the implementation of EU hygiene standards has created a new barrier for home producers to sell their products due both to the required paperwork and the associated expenses of implementation" (Aistara 2015 p. 288). This structural change not only has economic repercussions but can also impact on the sense of belonging to this wider economic and political EU community, a nuance missing in statistical economic evaluations. Many of the respondents across the period of primary data collection made direct reference to these structural changes, in particular to the decline of the sugar production industry, a metaphoric representation of the wider issues changes made by the EU had caused. One participant notes:

> *'Well, for example, in my city we had a sugar factory. There were certain criteria imposed by the EU and one of these was that we had to stop the production of sugar...because it mainly came from Denmark I think. That was the major state producing sugar. And there were many people working at that factory and at the time when they closed that factory, unemployment was high, and so they couldn't*

find a job. The impact was mainly on the agricultural sector because Latvian...well agriculture is mainly what we Latvians have. We don't have oil. It was mainly agriculture.'

Int13: (F), 21, Student, Glasgow, UK (urban) – Russian speaker

The sense of a loss of collective identity is palpable within this quote, particularly around the phrasing 'what we Latvians have'. High numbers of people were made unemployed, and the fabric of what was perceived to have held their community together, whether that be a factory setting or a common endeavour of agricultural production, had been removed. This construct of marginalisation is noted by those who argue "in the post-industrial context of the New Europe, those previously utilized in the Soviet chain of production are no longer of value and are not part of the evolution of 'economic progress'" (Eglitis and Lāce 2009 p. 336). The sense of identity is closely linked to a sense of purpose and to the natural resources and environment of the physical space. Similar sentiment, and a dilution of what it meant to be Latvian, was also reflected in the following quote from one young Latvian speaker who had since emigrated to the UK. Highlighting a of loss of local identity which had been related to a more consolidated national identity constructed around collective value he says:

'When the European Union came, they closed everything in Latvia. Now we are buying the Danish, Dutch sugar instead of making ours. We had really large factories, sugar, steel, and now everything is closed due to European Union regulations. We are just getting less and less and less.'

Int11: (M), 28, Retail Stock Control Manager, Edinburgh, UK (urban) – Latvian speaker

Traditional constructs of citizenship and community relate to a sense of belonging, and membership, commonly linked to a particular territory. In these examples, the ties that bind individuals to a particular place and community at a local level have been affected by EU membership. The workplace communities of Soviet Latvia fostered places of belonging, with large towns growing solely from the location of an industrial plant or from the geographical position of a collective agricultural industry. Similar communities were, of course, found widely across Western Europe, whether in the coal mining towns and villages of Scotland and Wales or in the steel producing town and cities in northern England. The point being made

here, is that the demise of these industries results in a fundamental change to an individual's place and sense of belonging to a community due to macro level structural changes. This has forced many to consider moving away as indicated, which for this participant was:

> *'Kind of sad, because if you drive through the country, you can see those empty fields.'*
>
> Int13: (F), 21, Student, Glasgow, UK (urban) – Russian speaker

EU membership was not just impacting on the relationship between individual and place within the countryside but was also noted in urban areas. Much of the focus of inward investment has touched upon high level projects and structural improvements, as will be discussed in section 6.4, however, at a grass roots level the space where community exists had been seen to have changed, in this example due to tourism in Riga, Latvia's capital city. This Latvian participant who had also moved away and is now living in the UK says:

> *'I don't think the EU has been good for Latvia. No. First of all the Euro has a smaller value. Plus, there are more tourists, lots of tourists, even on our Freedom Monument making trouble, and as I remember, when we were just Latvia it was much better.'*
>
> Int12: (F), 27, Cleaner, Edinburgh, UK (urban) – Latvian speaker

What is interesting here, is that on one level, EU membership has been positive for this participant as it has afforded new opportunities for mobility and the ability to improve her socio-economic position as a result. However, it has been EU membership, which she feels has negatively impacted upon her position and forced her to move away from Latvia, with blame being laid at increased prices resulting from structural change. She explains the challenges presented before and after EU expansion and tells:

> *'We didn't have money, but we could live like normal people and now we are nothing. Many people regret that we are in the EU, I know from my family, but everyone was so happy in that time. They thought 'Yay…yeah...' but not now. Even though I could move, that's not positive either. The more people are moving*

out, the less people work there, less productivity, less taxes. The European Union is really killing everything.'

Int12: (F), 27, Cleaner, Edinburgh, UK (urban) – Latvian speaker

Despite this participant emphatically blaming EU membership for a direct and negative impact on her socio-economic circumstances within Latvia, this position was widely rejected by the majority of the participants taking part in this research. What is surprising about the rejection of belief that the EU is to blame for a challenging personal socio-economic environment is that it contradicts much of the anti-EU discourse being expressed in other parts of Europe. Much of this discourse and rhetoric has been driven by populist political parties and right-wing sentiment, however, a degree of anti-EU sentiment has taken hold in the mainstream across European nations. It is becoming clear that there is an increasing disconnect between the individual and the state and a growing sense of disenfranchisement resulting from increasing levels of economic insecurity. Across cities, towns and households, individuals are becoming more vocal on their perception of being 'left behind' in marginalized communities. The escalation in a sense of disconnect and marginalization, attributed to financial instability, has taken hold within many homes, communities and regions. In response to the 2016 Brexit referendum in the UK for example, there was found to be a coming together of social groups united by a general sense of insecurity, pessimism and marginalisation, who do not feel as though elites, "whether in Brussels or Westminster, share their values, represent their interests and genuinely empathise with their intense angst about rapid social, economic and cultural change" (Goodwin and Heath 2016 p. 331). This aligns with Turner's model of citizenship where "the notable competing pressures in any society or community is access to resources" (Turner 1997 p. 6). Where pressure for resources and in particular, economic resources such as government investment, access to employment and access to social security increases, it would appear that tensions between the state and the citizen also increase (Turner 1997 p. 6). Latvia was found to be no exception and Turner's (1997) assumption was upheld and evident in those who took part in this research, with a fracturing of community as imagined on the vertical axis.

Consistently, from the primary data collected, it was found that the challenging micro economic position for those living in Latvia was largely blamed upon the domestic government rather than the EU, perhaps opening the door for a more nuanced sense of EU citizenship, at least on a pragmatic horizontal level. This was illustrated in a poignant interview by one unemployed participant, in the former industrial city of Liepāja. Male, in his late 30s and with no immediate prospect of employment due to limited educational qualifications and a lack of wider work-related skills, he was relying on a small state welfare payment alongside any monies made at the market in an attempt to survive financially. He had previously been employed within *Liepājas Metalurgs*, once the Baltic region's largest metal works. At the time of interview, he was back living with his mother as he could no longer afford his own accommodation, and both were trying to carve out some additional income by selling a small amount of home produce at the market. The decline in heavy industry, such as the metal works where he once worked, has, alongside the closure of the sugar production industry, been cited both within the data collected and within the literature as recognised casualties of EU membership as expressed in the following quote:

> *'It's hard to find a job, especially in Liepāja. You have to find someone you know to help you get a job, you can't just apply. Maybe things have changed a little bit. The area at the river, the hall (concert hall) has been built with European money. You can travel now, the borders are open, but of course you need money to travel. You can go somewhere and work somewhere. 10 years ago, the situation was better for work, it was easier to find jobs. It's much harder now...I don't know why. I think maybe this is because of European rules. There was a big metal works corporation here in Liepāja and it went bust because of European rules. A lot of people lost their jobs.'*
>
> Int48: (M) 36, Unemployed. Ad hoc selling at market, *Liepāja, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker*

In addition to feeling estranged from the construct of meaningful citizenship, discussed in section 6.2, where meaningful citizenship is linked to dignity and participation based on access to resources (Dwyer 2004; Lister 2007; Pfsiter 2012), there was also an estrangement from the political sphere for this participant. He could no longer be considered to engage in practices of active citizenship in relation to taking part in elections and seeking to effect

change. Instead, he had withdrawn from political activity completely and when asked about his thoughts on government, he angrily retorted:

> *'I don't even want to talk about the Latvian government. They only think about themselves. They only think about money. They are never going to think about the people. I hate the government. I absolutely hate the government. I did vote, but now I won't vote because I can't see the point. You are voting and hoping that it will be better, but they don't keep their promises, so I am not going to go and vote anymore.'*
>
> Int48: (M) 36, Unemployed. Ad hoc selling at market, *Liepāja, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker*

He was far from alone in his condemnation of the Latvian state and in laying the blame with the state for lived experiences of deprivation and socio-economic inequality. One issue creating a negative opinion of how Latvia manages its economic structures has been identified by Eihmanis (2018) who argues that the governing elites in Latvia 'cherry pick' EU policy and targets (Eihmanis 2018 p. 244). His research found that, in areas of social policy, Latvia fell far short on achieving the benchmarks set by the EU, a conclusion echoed in the testimony of those interviewed as part of this study. Eihmanis (2018) reflects on the EU Commission's finding that "little progress had been made on a number of big-ticket 'quality-of-life improving' reforms to tackle high social inequality and poverty" (European Commission 2014, 2015a). Vanags (2011) also draws attention to the gaps in social and welfare protection offered by the Latvian state. Not only have industries been dismantled to meet EU regulations, but Latvia and other Baltic countries have found that "the breakdown of the enterprise-based communist social safety mechanisms have left a void that governments have found difficult and been unwilling to fill" (Vanags, 2011 p. 97). Compared to their Scandinavian neighbours "figures published by Eurostat indicate that Denmark has social protection expenditures at 29% of GDP, Sweden (30.7%) and Finland (26.2%) the Baltic countries of Estonia (12.4%), Latvia (12.2%) and Lithuania (13.2%) have the least generous" (Vanags 2011 p. 97). Vanags (2011) further refers to "great differences in terms of willingness to provide a social safety net for the unemployed" (Vanags 2011 p. 97). For example, "the data on EU labour market policies expenditures show that in all of the rich BSR countries expenditures on LMPs as a percentage of GDP were above the EU average of 2.1%: Denmark spent 4.1% of GDP, Finland 2.75% and Sweden 2.48%. All the poor countries of the region

had expenditures well below average: Latvia had 0.54% of GDP, Lithuania 0.34% and Estonia was bottom of the league with 0.19%" (Vanags 2011 p. 97). Despite this rather bleak finding, Eihmanis (2018) points to the EU's influence as being positive, noting that "social policy in Latvia has become increasingly progressive since the economic crisis – to a large extent because of the Commission's pressure" (Eihmanis 2018 p. 244).

Despite increased pressure for social reform emanating from the European Union, there was certainly an acknowledgement within the data collected that EU membership and subsequent structural economic changes did not always improve the day-to-day life of the individual. However, the vast majority of those interviewed held the domestic government responsible for their circumstances rather than blame the EU, a position which threatens any vertically constructed imagined community of Latvia. Examples of the sentiments expressed included:

> *'I think that the European Union is who people may like to blame but it is not them. The prices going up are more likely due to the government and to our system. It is nothing to do with the EU really. There are some things that are more expensive in Latvia than other places, for example, electricity is much higher, so we must make our prices higher*.'
>
> Int43: (F), 31, Charity Volunteer and P/T forecourt attendant, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

and:

> *'If you look at other countries and then at Latvia and compare how people are living there is a big difference. I think this is not a European fault, it is our government's fault. It is about them and what they are thinking, what they are doing and their plan. It is that*.'
>
> Int39: (F), 34, Court Registrar/Administrator, Sigulda, Latvia (rural) - Latvian speaker

Of note in this second testimony given, and as has been evident previously, expressions of disconnect are often repeatedly expressed by participants via the use of pronouns. The participant denotes their membership of a community by noting the government as 'our' government, but simultaneously creates a discursive distance by referring to the government in the third person and highlighting it is about 'them', what 'they' are thinking, 'what they are doing'. An interesting example, again drawing on the use of this process of analysis, could be

argued to attribute blame more broadly, and incorporates a more general sense of ownership and responsibility for the negative socio-economic outcomes experienced:

> *'Everything is not always perfect, but maybe it's not always the EU who is guilty, maybe we are guilty.'*
>
> Int45: (F), 26, Management Student, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

The question of what and who constitutes 'we', in relation to community and collective identity, has been at the core of this thesis and it should be noted that the three previous responses, highlighting a disconnect from state and blaming domestic government for the loss of any meaningful citizenship, were taken from Latvian speaking respondents from three separate areas in Latvia. A supplementary question posed within this thesis is 'Do we see the emergence of a broader "Latvian community" whereby individuals see themselves as "belonging" not only to Latvia, but to each other, beyond divisions of ethnicity and formal citizenship?*',* and in this regard it was important to include the opinions of Russian speakers and those from communities with a lower prevalence of Latvian speakers. In Daugavpils, a city with a high percentage of ethnic Russians (see Chapter 3), it was perhaps surprisingly found that blame for the European Union among those interviewed was also low. The finding was unexpected given the likely exposure to the anti-EU rhetoric of Russian language media outlets and again highlights the disconnect between political rhetoric and the individual or between vertical and horizontal perspectives, irrespective of whether the political message originated from Latvia or Russia. This young unemployed Russian speaker said:

> *'I don't really blame the EU or blame anybody really. It's more like I blame ourselves. Politicians come, we get someone elected and they promise and we still like idiots believe it. They get their chance and still nothing changes and that's us still in a negative position. We really have to blame ourselves for not choosing the right people to run the country and to run things here in Daugavpils.'*
>
> Int56: (F), 21, Unemployed – on Job Programme, Daugavpils, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

As before, denoted in her quote is an expression of belonging and membership to Latvia, or to a form of Latvian community, if we again draw from the analysis of her grammatical choice

contained within the response. She positions herself within the electorate and the enfranchised and accepts that it is political decisions taken within Latvia which impact negatively. Politicians rather than issues of ethnicity were held accountable for poor socio-economic conditions, with another Russian speaking participant stating:

> *'I don't really blame the European Union because there are so many structural funds that will help people look for work and get back to work or into education. The main problem is politics. This is the case in the whole of Latvia but especially in Daugavpils. I can't see politicians getting Daugavpils to a better place.'*
>
> Int54: (F), 23, Student and P/T Advertising Assistant, Daugavpils, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

There was however, evidence of some ethnicised issues with one participant highlighting a lack of employment for Russian speakers within state related institutions. Interestingly, he relayed that, more generally, in seeking employment, his position could only be improved not by what he knows, but by who he knows. Networks and existing relationships remain key in creating opportunities. The narrative he provided was again more nuanced than would be expected from more commonly portrayed ethnicised discourse and he expressed a lack of networks and contacts to be an issue irrespective of ethnicity. He explains:

> *'In government organisations, jobs in the first hand will go to Latvian speaking people. In Daugavpils you can get jobs mainly through someone you know. There is no point to apply for jobs if you don't know anybody in that company. It doesn't matter if you are Latvian or if you are Russian*.'
>
> Int52: (M), 39, Unemployed, Daugavpils, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

There is clearly a commonality of economic hardship and inequality as expressed by Latvia's current and former residents which transcends issues of ethnicity. However, there appears to be little in the way of ongoing public outcry or continued visible signs of collective action against the political status quo. Pridham (2017), having extensively reviewed the political and social changes in Latvia prior to and since EU accession, describes "occasional flashes of public discontent notably in the 'umbrella revolution' of protests outside the *Saeima* in December 2007 leading directly to the resignation of the Kalvītis government and then the riots of January 2009 over economic distress and dissatisfaction with politicians" (Pridham

ed. Smith, 2017 p. 197). Beyond these relatively isolated events, there is little evidence of active citizenship which could affect socio-economic change. Instead, it will be argued in Chapter 7 that dissatisfaction has manifested in a more profound way, with many opting to improve their socio-economic position by utilising their new-found rights to 'freedom of movement', a direct benefit of Latvia's EU membership. The shifting demographics of Latvia, which shall also be discussed in the following chapter, could be viewed as a less than subtle form protest, challenging the fabric of what is 'imagined' as being the community of Latvia. What is clear is that there is a more nuanced sense of exclusion when looking at Latvia through a socio-economic lens. It is argued within this thesis that in continuing to place political emphasis and focus on the discourse of ethnic division, the discourse of marginalisation is overlooked, as highlighted by Eglitis and Lāce (2009) and this oversight itself challenges the fabric of who belongs.

6.4 New EU Member State, New Socio-economic Opportunities?

As has been outlined earlier in the chapter, issues of socio-economic inequality and a resultant political disconnect have been, and continue to be, experienced in independent Latvia, in part, due to the boom and bust of the Baltic Tiger era. It should however be noted that economic disparity does not result solely from this cycle and is felt not only in Latvia but also across many EU member states. With EU membership come the structural mechanisms and development policies designed to combat economic inequality in line with the EU's core principals. One such instrument has been the EU Cohesion Policy, designed to promote prosperity and equality across member states, and ultimately benefit its citizens. The Cohesion Policy and the significance for individuals and communities is discussed in some detail by Capella (2018) where it is noted that the EU Cohesion Policy impacts upon citizenship through a circular process of top-down interventions and policies as well as bottom-up 'enabling' factors, which leads to the improvement of the life of the individual and their sense of community and solidarity (Capello 2018 pp. 498-497). Of relevance to this thesis is the way in which such top-down processes and policies affect horizontal behaviours and perceptions, as much of the existing literature concentrates on the nature of process rather than the outcomes as observed. The domestic challenges for Latvia's government

identified by the EU have already touched upon within this chapter and are highlighted below:

> *'Latvia falling under the Convergence objective of 2007–13 Cohesion Policy, faces significant challenges of spatial heterogeneity and divergence in terms of both economic and demographic development. The continuous depopulation of rural areas and border regions, the growing influence of the capital city in internal migration and settlement processes and other region-specific demographic issues comprise the long list of the regional population development problems that the Latvian authorities have to address on a daily basis.'* (Dahs in Berkowitz et al. 2016 p. 101)

In addition to the investment offered via the EU Cohesion Policy, Latvia has also been able to access a range of European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), an instrument which grew from the Cohesion Policy. Capella's (2018) view is that these funds, if spent in an appropriate way can influence the view of the individual on their place within a wider European community (Capella 2018). He considers that cohesion policies can be a means whereby the EU becomes a reality in the everyday lives of citizens, reinforcing their sense of being part of a European community (Capella, 2018 p. 496). The role of EU cohesion policy in promoting European identity is mostly an uncharted academic terrain and this research aims to provide some insight into the ways in which European funded initiatives impact a sense of membership to a wider transnational community, as well as impacting on the domestic construction of a community of Latvia.

Most theories of community locate citizenship within a particular territory or place. Riga, Latvia's capital, is a bustling city, and notable changes in recent decades have been visible, such as the opening of contemporary new businesses, new retail and hospitality outlets and a general sense of confidence. When asked about these visual signs of EU membership various respondents noted:

'In the 10 years from being in the EU, yeah, I have seen changes. Some houses have been restored, roads have been fixed and there are 2 new bridges.'

Int39: (M), 27, Highly Skilled Craftsman, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

'Positive...oh God yeah! Just seeing the amount of money that's been pouring into the country...well there's a trade-off between what Latvia pays in and gets back...but certainly from driving around and seeing all the EU projects, all the infrastructure in the little Eastern towns, new pavements, crossings, enriching everything...because nothing was done her for 50 or 70 years. Nothing would ever have been done otherwise. You see a tremendous amount being done.'

Int28: (M), age not given, Artisan Jewellery Maker, Riga, Latvia (urban) – English/Latvian speaker

Also:

'Latvia is better since being in the EU. Many tourists come, and you see more.'

Int45: (F), 26, Management Student, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

Despite the positive tone expressed in relation to regeneration and investment in Riga, this tone did not always extend to outlying areas and to the countryside. One participant noted:

'I think that there are improvements everywhere, in Riga and outside. We can see the amount of money, but of course Riga is bigger and receives more. They have a bigger budget, so you can't always see what is from the EU and what is simply from the budget. It is harder in the countryside. A lot of people are leaving the countryside, so who will live there to receive these monies, to build projects?'

Int49: (F), 23, Student Information Technology, *Liepāja, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker*

Similar observations were echoed throughout the interviews, and in particular, for those who had moved to the capital, but had originally grown up in more rural areas: This participant said:

'The changes that I see aren't there as much in Jēkabpils as in Riga. Apart from jobs I see that Riga has changed in terms of environment, better parks, new roads and stuff.'

Int40: (M), 30, Software Engineer, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

There was evidence of some regeneration and improvement in outlying areas in the above statement, although this was clearly witnessed to a lesser degree than had been in Riga. The following participant, originally from more rural Latgale and active on the political right, noted some opportunities in terms of new methods of farming and in environmental projects for outlying areas and said:

> *'We have to say thank you to Europe for the money, for the projects. Even small people, this helps them to survive. You have people who try to survive in rural areas and they survive on European grants...and not even grants for projects, but they know that you can get some cash from the European Union if you keep your territory used. There's biodiversity and things like that. It's not a big amount of money by British or German standards but for people in Latgale for example, it really helps people to survive. I think in that context Europe has been good for us.'*
>
> Int33: (M), 37, State Pension Administrator and political Candidate, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

Here, the challenges faced in outlying areas are noted although there is perhaps disproportionate spending in urban areas, with the caveat that a financial assessment is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is clear that there have been visible signs of regeneration and improvements across Latvia as a result of EU funding.

Less tangible than the clear evidence of improved infrastructure and building improvements, is the way in which this sense of renewal makes individuals think and feel about the space they inhabit. Authors such as Rosa (2018) link urban renewal and redevelopment to constructs of social citizenship, whereby members of a community share in a sense of wellbeing, linked to space and place. The backdrop of renewal and regeneration is an interesting context from which to view perspectives of citizenship, identity and belonging. Respondents were therefore asked to comment on whether the EU had brought benefits to Latvia and whether they felt they had experienced positive outcomes with Latvia now an EU member state. As well as opportunities for increased mobility, respondents noted a greater sense of security, politically and economically, as well as on a personal and practical day to day level. This young student had taken advantage of travel abroad and stated:

'Yes, I have seen changes. I have had the opportunity to go on Erasmus studies, travelling is much easier, and I enjoy that a lot. Also, European funds and other funding coming to Latvia, the place where I work now, we have received millions for several development projects, and we couldn't even do that without this kind of funding. We can see more of other countries as well, and I feel more safety because we are in the EU.'

Int45: (F), 26, Management Student, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

Her optimism for the future was clear and she could note distinct changes that EU membership had brought both to her, and to members of her peer group; she goes on to say:

'Even now I can compare from when I was a student in high school there are even more opportunities. I have a lot of friends, a lot of Latvians living abroad and working there or studying. I think it is a huge impact. Latvia is changing and more open to new cultures, new directions. I think it is going to be better.'

Int45: (F), 26, Management Student, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

For another participant, for whom the early years of structural economic shift had been challenging, she felt part of a transnational economic community where she could buy, sell and exchange, providing a degree of additional financial security previously not experienced. On initial economic shock following EU transition she says:

'Ever since we got the Euro everything has become more expensive, baby food, clothes, all the stuff for the children. There is a bigger choice, but obviously you can buy less. It has got more expensive.'

Int46: (F), 35, Mum of 6, restores prams, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

However, this was offset with the benefits of the open market economy and the freedom of travel. She goes on to say:

'The thing is that you can travel, if you have money, without a problem. We can import things, so I can get things from the UK. I import old prams from the UK and sell them here. I sew and restore old pushchairs. I even restore really old prams, maybe 100 years old, and I have a lot of orders coming from Estonia and other places. If we weren't in Europe, then I couldn't do this or have this work. My situation, yes, has improved since joining the EU. Everything has got more

expensive but at that same time there are more opportunities to earn more money.'

Int46: (F), 35, Mum of 6, restores prams, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

Many of the participants associated the adoption of EU membership in 2004, not only with the political implications for operating within the single market, but also with the practice of operating as citizens, whereby they work with that unit of currency as part of a wider market community. Some 10 years after EU accession, Latvia adopted the euro (€) in 2014, with this financial transition consolidating Latvian's macro level European credentials. For authors such as Théret (1999), currency links into broader constructs of citizenship than are traditionally considered and crosses both private and public spheres. He highlights "currency is a lot more than a simple economic instrument. It has irreducible political and social dimensions" (Théret, 1999 p. 53). This is an interesting and relatable concept to consider, as the euro is not synonymous with any distinct national identity, in the way the *lat* was tied to Latvia, and could be claimed by nationalist discourses. The transnational nature of the euro transcends vertical labelling at a national level and homogenises and de-ethnicises the agency of transaction (Théret 1999). At a grassroots level, the economic transition was seen as an unavoidable move and a final step to EU integration, despite the price adjustments of the time. Linked to an alternative way of looking at citizenship, via consumer as well as social citizenship, many respondents relayed their ability to operate more freely and participate without restriction as European citizens due to the removal of the need for currency conversion. Comments included:

'Money wise it's much easier. You don't need to exchange. Its more open. Open market. For jobs too.'

Int1: (F), 40, Care Worker, Aberdeenshire, UK (rural)- Latvian speaker

'And of course, the Euro...it is easier when we have the same currency. Yesterday I was booking my hotel for London and the booking was quite complicated because the price was in pounds and I had to change to Euros. It was aargghh. So yeah, in Euros it is easier.'

Int45: (F), 26, Management Student, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

Banal as these everyday occurrences may seem for many westerners, within Latvia the economic transition meant that a European identity was not only cemented at the macro level but had implications for ordinary citizens too and how they viewed their position within a community of Europe.

During fieldwork conducted in Latvia, several of the interviews were conducted with respondents working in the business sector and with those involved directly in the distribution of EU funds. From a business perspective, EU membership and economic transition has come a brought greater sense of stability and improvement. It was noted:

> *'EU membership of course has been positive, all the funding, all the grants and the opening of borders. We are going in a Western direction and not being as East as we used to be which has helped our confidence.'*
>
> Int20: (F), 33, Manager of a Business Incubator, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

From this, we see both vertical perspectives and horizontal perspectives align. In the determination to shake off the legacy of the Soviet period, it is clear that financial transition reaffirms a more European identity for Latvia, with the intended vision and outcomes of macro level policy being affirmed at the grassroots level. Another participant linked economic transition with political transition and linked this new environment to feelings of opportunity as well as socio economic safety and security. He positively says:

> *'The European Union gives a lot of projects to Latvia. Gives money to Latvia. Also, the Euro has come which is more stable and more secure than the Latvian Lat. There are more economical principles. There is no one party ruling everything anymore. Things are more improved*.'
>
> Int31: (M), 41, Business Consultant, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

As EU funding is aimed at working to improve cohesion, it is hoped that Russian speaking entrepreneurs will grow from the EU Structural Funds. This is an interesting, yet under researched area and one worthy of further study, as it forms another aspect of the coming together of individuals on a horizontal level whilst working with vertical economic policies

and structures. Arguably, a space has been opened by the EU within the Latvian business community to invite a fresher and more nuanced sense of belonging. This concept has been picked up by Aidis et al. (2011) who provided an interesting examination of whether there was increasing evidence of the decreasing importance of ethnicity within the business sphere. In their 2011 publication, they posed question 'Does Ethnicity Matter?' in relation to small and medium sized enterprises and found that "new businesses started by Russian nationals in Latvia experience an advantage in terms of profit dynamics vis-a`-vis older businesses owned by Russian nationals" (Aldius et al 2011 pp. 372-373). In relationship to the issue of citizenship, noting that "a sizeable portion of Russian nationals living in Latvia do not have Latvian citizenship' they tested whether the lack of Latvian citizenship had any effect and perhaps encouragingly found that where 'ethnicity and citizenship were introduced jointly, citizenship turned out to be highly insignificant regardless of the model" (Aidus et al 2011 P.373).

Despite some positive movement in the direction of the narrative around Russians within the business community, it was suggested in the primary data that entrenched stratification of two distinct communities could impact upon access to resources for those within the Russian speaking community and their sense of belonging. Despite efforts to encourage more Russian entrepreneurs into the Latvian business sphere via EU funding one interviewee, engaged in the encouraged of new business start-up and the distribution of EU funds, tells:

> *'Most of the entrepreneurs coming through the door here in this business incubator are Latvian, and I somehow want to reach the Russian entrepreneurs, as I am sure they have brilliant ideas, but how do I get to them? That's my big question right now, and I'm talking with my Russian, or Latvian-Russian friends and this is what we are working on*.'
>
> Int20: (F), 33, Manager of a Business Incubator, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

It is evident that more has to be done to encourage integration within this sphere. What is however positive and encouraging from this interview excerpt, is not that is the business community is attempting to reach out, but that the stratification of two distinct communities is somewhat artificial on a day-to-day level, as the participant identifies as having 'Latvian friends' and makes mention of individuals as holding a hybrid 'Latvia-Russian' identity. This

moves away from the ongoing rhetoric of Latvia as a segregated society, a rhetoric very much employed for the benefit of those holding political power, but less evident on a horizontal level. One participant, a business consultant who has built a successful company as a direct result of Latvia's EU membership, also felt that within the sphere of business, at least, the question of nationality and ethnicity could be viewed less emotively and thus more inclusively. In a very poignant quote, one which is indicative of the rapid pace of economic and social change in Latvia he told me:

> *'Nationality is just a brand name. I believe that the goal of nationality should be to treat it as a brand, something to develop for the benefit of everyone. No one is born a patriot*.'
>
> Int26: (M), 34, Entrepreneur and Business Consultant, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

Having researched the work on ethnicity and integration in Latvia extensively, I have yet to come across this sentiment within the literature, yet, even anecdotally as expressed within this research, the sentiment clearly exists. This also brings into question whether there is a space to perhaps not challenge, but at least change the direction of the narrative of disadvantage among young ethnic Russians, with insightful work already being undertaken by researchers including Birka (2016) and Ekmanis (2019). Findings emerging from this thesis suggest that there are opportunities for young people from Russian speaking backgrounds to integrate more successfully into a wider successful socio-economic society based on their ethnicity and language skills. Rather than hinder integration, many employers view multilinguistic skills to be advantageous. From a business and employment perspective two business consultants, each working for different international companies, respectively stated that:

> *'It's been a political mistake to stop the Russian language and to ban the Russian language. I was in the last year who at school had the Russian language from the first grade. The next generation don't speak Russian and that's a mistake. You have to look at it from a competitive perspective. Ok, so you're Latvian, or Russian…so what? The more languages you speak the better your chances are*.'
>
> Int26: (M), 34, Entrepreneur and Business Consultant, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

'There is a big problem in business. Right now, for my generation 30 and older, some 30% speak Russian fluently. If I look at 2 generations from me aged 20-23, then they don't speak Russian well and those under 20 almost don't speak any Russian. For now, if the company does business on the eastern side, then this new generation doesn't know any Russian and yes, this is a problem. As you look at Latvia as a geographical location, then still, the business is towards the eastern side.'

Int24: (M), 33, Business Manager, Riga, Latvia (urban) -Latvian speaker

From these extracts, it is clear that the macro level strategy for Latvian language and the rejection of the Russian language conflicts with horizontal realities. This was addressed by one participant who explains:

'People didn't have further thinking. It was very nationalistic at one point, and they were saying you're not going to learn Russian because you really don't need that. And then it turns out that the market says you do.'

Int8: (F), 29, Care Worker, Fife, UK (rural) – Latvian speaker

Thinking of the future of her children and highlighting the difference in the more pragmatic horizontal approach to language learning, another participant stated:

'At school I learned Russian. My sister didn't learn Russian. My son learns English and next year he can choose German or Russian. We're going to choose Russian. It is good for a job, for business to have Russian and English. I think this is what you need.'

Int39: (F), 34, Court Registrar/Administrator, Sigulda, Latvia (rural) - Latvian speaker

These examples are indicative of wider sentiment echoed across the business sector from the primary data collected. It's an interesting perspective in relation to the position of language within the sphere of belonging and citizenship. As business moves forward and seeks to break down barriers by widening opportunities to those with multi-lingual skills, the Latvian state could be accused of hindering the prospects of young employees belonging to a pool of desirable employees as a direct result of strict language laws. The language referendum of 2012 is still widely discussed by those looking at citizenship and integration, with some opting to take a protectionist view, endorsing the right of the Latvian State to protect the

survival of the language. Others look at the legal position of monolingualism as a tool of exclusion, further hindering integration, relations and opportunities. A good discussion on the interpretation of language policy has been covered by Druviete and Ozolins (2016) which looks at both the detractors and supporters of the monolingual position of language in Latvia. As this thesis is looking for new understandings and nuances of citizenship, it was interesting to extract from the primary data that, irrespective of the positions for and against or Latvia as a monolingual state, the business and economic sphere is one which can view the position from a lived perspective more pragmatically, and certainly more neutrally. Often supported by EU funding, contemporary and international business in Latvia concerns itself more with the practical impact of monolingual versus bilingual, rather than focusing on the historical and political aspects of ethnicity and language. This opens up a new space for discussion and future research.

Where economic opportunity does not exist, disconnect between elites and individuals can perpetuate. Many of those who were resident in Latvia at the time of EU membership, and indeed beyond, have opted to move elsewhere within Europe for better opportunities, as will be covered in Chapter 7. For this chapter section, which is looking at the impact of vertical perspectives on language policy and contrasting this with horizontal practices and perspectives, it was interesting to note that young Latvian employees were also keen to extend their knowledge of Russian on a practical level. The sentiments expressed during interviews conducted were in direct contrast to state rhetoric and language referendum results and were a notable absence from existing studies. From the data collected, ethnic Latvian interviewees stated:

> *'There is now a problem that is becoming more and more. It's growing. The young Latvians don't speak Russian but it's very important if they want certain jobs in the service industry, you have to speak Russian to be a valuable colleague.'*
>
> Int34: (F), 27, Restaurant Manager, Sigulda, Latvia (rural) - Latvian speaker

> *'The younger generation, young Latvians don't know Russian and yes probably this is a disadvantage. Russia is our neighbour, and it is good to understand some Russian at least. In Jēkabpils everyone can speak both Russian and Latvian*.'
>
> Int40: (M), 30, Software Engineer, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

This has resulted in an interesting juxtaposition around how marginalisation has been traditionally represented with the debate on Latvian citizenship, as it was Latvian speakers themselves expressing distinct disadvantage when seeking employment. It was stated:

> *'In Riga and in Ventspils, we have a really big port and a lot of Russian companies have built the biggest warehouse in Europe. This company needs workers, but they say you have to speak Russian. So, you need to speak not just your native language, whatever that is, you have to speak both Latvian and Russian and also maybe English or German. If you can do this, you will be ok.'*
>
> Int42: (F), 25, Pet Shop Assistant and P/T Student, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

> *'I think that since the Latvian language was introduced as a mandatory language in schools a lot of people, even those from Russian families, they speak fluent Latvian. Sometimes I even think that they have a better advantage in the job market because they can speak Latvian and Russian.'*
>
> Int8: (F), 29, Care Worker, Fife, UK (rural) – Latvian speaker

Not all participants felt as positive about learning Russian, however this position was always expressed in terms of the well traversed and highly political discourse around language in Latvia. Having previously noted the disadvantage they felt within the job market due to a lack of Russian language knowledge, Latvian speaking participants encompassed the reticence of many families concerning this issue and respectively said:

> *'Years back it was different, my parents grew up learning and speaking Russian, but now, some parents even choose not to let their children learn Russian because of the past. The young people don't realise this going to school, and don't realise that they will need to speak Russian.'*
>
> Int34: (F), 27, Restaurant Manager, Sigulda, Latvia (rural) - Latvian speaker

> *'Latvian families have tended to go away from Russian and say, ok English is the required second language, but the market is still there. You need to have Russian to get a good job.'*
>
> Int8: (F), 29, Care Worker, Fife, UK (rural) – Latvian speaker

There was also some evidence of some vertical and horizontal synthesis, from young respondents which highlights that ethnicised tensions are still present within the language debate. This young student, currently studying IT, an area of employment in which it might be expected that a more pragmatic bilingualism would be advantageous, could see that it would be helpful to learn Russian on a pragmatic level, however on a more emotional level she was against this. In the following very frank quote she says:

> *'It would be good to know both languages and learning Russian would be good if it is taught in school. But it is more of a principle. In Latvia we have our freedom and I think that the Latvian language should be the only language.'*
>
> Int49: (F), 23, Student Information Technology, *Liepāja, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker*

Whilst there is some advantage for business and future employees of Latvia to move away from a primordial and highly charged ethnicised debate around language, EU membership has done little to affect the macro level position.

6.5 Chapter Conclusions

The impact of Latvia's economic transformation and transition has been seismic and has been driven by a political desire to position Latvia politically, socially and economically Westwards. However, by placing continuing emphasis on constructing a vertically imagined community and adopting market driven economic policies, politicians may overlook that, on a horizontal level, themes of marginalisation have become non ethnicised as many individuals have felt left behind, irrespective of ethnicity. Meaningful citizenship and constructs of social citizenship often seem at odds with political discourse, or even absent entirely from this discussion, thus challenging constructs of 'who belongs'. EU membership has not created opportunity for all, despite notable inward investment from programmes such as the EU Cohesion Policy. There have been winners and losers as Latvia has forged ahead, post-independence and post EU accession, and a divide has opened up between rural and urban areas. A loss of a valued and common Latvian identity has been experienced in

outlying areas where more informally collective forms of employment such as agriculture and food production have been disrupted by the wider EU market.

There are however areas where a common citizenship and community can be seen to emerge beyond the confines of ethnicity. Within the business sphere, issues of polarization around language are unhelpful and both Latvian and Russian languages are of value. Individuals can also, through consumer citizenship, engage in non ethnicised practices resulting from the adoption of the euro as a common currency. Access to mobility and the open market also helps in developing a broader European identity beyond the salience of ethnic division.

Chapter 7. Socio-economics and Citizenship (Part 2)

7.1 Introduction and Rationale

This empirical chapter is the second in a pairing of two empirical chapters which focus on Latvia's socio-economic development as context to address the question 'What does Latvian citizenship look like today?'. This empirical chapter, and the previous chapter provide context to the development of citizenship representations and practices in Latvia by applying a socio-economic lens to view the relationship between individuals and the State in Latvia from both horizontal and vertical perspectives.

Traditional constructs of citizenship are based on the social contract between the state and the individual, with a focus on the rights, benefits and security which members of a political community can expect. Aligning with Marshall's (1950) theory of citizenship, it is widely accepted that a core responsibility of any given polity is to offer a series of rights to its citizens, not least the right to ensure that citizens feel socially and economically secure via the provision of welfare and access to basic resources (Beiner 1995). As highlighted in Chapters 4.2 and 6.2, much of Latvia's citizenship debate, notably in the early years of transition and of EU membership, has been concerned with exclusionary practices which excluded Russian speaking individuals from gaining access to resources based on their ethnic classification. However, little is discussed of the broader implications for a horizontally imagined community of Latvia wherein access to resources is limited across all strata of society.

This chapter moves forward chronologically and picks up from the context provided in Chapter 6 to provide answers the question 'Do we see the emergence of a broader 'Latvian community' whereby individuals see themselves as "belonging" not only to Latvia, but to each other, beyond divisions of ethnicity and formal citizenship?'. Of key focus within this chapter is the concept of non-ethnicised marginalisation as a result of ongoing socio-economic issues experienced by individuals across the ethnic spectrum in Latvia. This will be explored by drawing upon recent lived experiences of outward migration in response to

economic crisis, a crisis factor which in itself challenges the very construct of a top-down national community of Latvia.

Contrasting more traditional vertical perspectives of citizenship with everyday socio-economic realities, section 7.2 will look at the ways in which individuals have responded to financial crisis and the push factors towards outward migration. It will be shown that a shortfall in the expectation of financial security from the state reconstructs citizenship at a grass roots level. Section 7.3 then reflects on the current demographic landscape in Latvia and addresses membership of a broader Latvian community by considering the impact of migration and how this experience has shaped the perspectives of those who opted to remain, taking note of any associated repositioning of community and identity therein. Finally, section 7.4 considers the potential future development of Latvia's community of belonging and the possibilities for vertical and horizontal reshaping of priorities and perspectives.

7.2 The New Normal of Socio-economic Insecurity

Theories of citizenship, such as that constructed by Marshall (1950) incorporate the "guaranteeing of civil, political and social rights to all by the state to ensure that every member of society feels like a full member of society, able to participate and enjoy the common life of society" (Kymlicka and Norman, 1994 p. 354). However, that security and sense of being a full and valued member of the citizenry has not been experienced by a vast number of those residing in Latvia and is reflected in the lived experience of both ethnic Latvians as well as Russian speakers.

Any assumption that Latvia has reached the end point of state building and development of a nation remains contested on the basis of the evidence collected and Latvia's typically low wage economy, which has seen many opt to travel further afield than even neighbouring Nordic countries to seek employment. An insightful article from Stasiulis (2004), draws from a number of global structural changes which have occurred in recent decades and considers how these relate to more fluid constructs of citizenship such as social citizenship, discussed

in previous chapters. The core point being made in evaluating constructs of citizenship today is that citizenship cannot be seen as a fixed entity, with a start and end point as it is constructed in more "relational terms—as an unstable set of social relations actively negotiated and contested between individuals, states, other political communities, territories, and between the realms of the private and public" (Stasiulis, 2004 p. 296).The question posed by Stasiulis (2004) asks 'how are the various facets of citizenship being transformed by complex and diversely spatialized practices?' in relation to an individual's' feelings of insecurity. This is central to this thesis and it is here that there is opportunity to look beyond the "confines of ethnic labelling" (Stasiulis, 2004 p. 296). In summing up the current gulf between citizen and state, one young Russian speaker, from Daugavpils, without mention of ethnic marginalization, alludes to more general socio-economic issues in Latvia and states:

> *'I don't feel like a citizen of Latvia because Latvia does not give me anything. The country doesn't give me opportunities or give me any help, so I look at other countries and think about going there*.'
>
> Int56: (F), 21, Unemployed – on Job Programme, Daugavpils, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

Evident in this short anecdote are the apparent shortcomings of Latvia in meeting the expectations of a baseline of socio-economic security, and against this context, new representations of citizenship can be defined.

If the notion of Locke's 'social contract', is accepted as a bedrock of contemporary citizenship, alongside models provided by Marshall (1950) and Beiner (1995), a sense of economic security is a core element. However, as has been touched upon in Chapter 6, financial crisis and economic transition have created a 'new normal', of insecurity and feelings of marginalisation, not only within Latvia, but across many nation states. Bhandar (2004), when addressing global political and neo liberal shifts, also raises the question of whether the political reactions to crisis and this adoption of a 'new normal' "leaves us at a place of anxious political disengagement, at a point of no recovery" (Bhandar, 2004 p. 263). Much research has been published on the high levels of outward migration from Latvia following membership of the EU in response to financial crisis, with initial statistics from

2004, the year of Latvia's accession, showing that "an estimated 200,000 people, mostly young and well educated, have left the country. This shift represents a significant migration rate for a country of just 2.24 million people" (Kohl et and Platzer 2004 p. 309). Having been heavily impacted by the global financial crisis "the annual rate of net migration during the crisis and the first two post-crisis years (2009–2012) was more than twice as high as during the post-accession wave" (Kaša and Mieriņa 2019 p. 64), with "the outflow of Latvia's nationals in 2009–2012 accounting for 5.3% of country's population at the beginning of 2000" (Kaša and Mieriņa 2019 p. 64). At this current point, it is estimated that "approximately one-third of Latvian nationals live in the UK, ten percent in Germany, eight percent in Ireland" with a further 13 percent in the USA, made up from those who emigrated across the Atlantic before 1991 (Mienina 2020). These statistics reflect a very pointed political disengagement with Latvia in the most physical sense.

In any contemporary conceptualizations of citizenship in Latvia it would be impossible not to consider the impact that 'Freedom of Movement', a core EU principal, has had upon vertically constructed discourses of citizenship and community. Community theory commonly links to a space and place, often local, and commonly relating to an understanding of 'home'. 'Home', in the most literal sense, can be understood to be an intimate and private space of shelter. However, this conceptualization can be challenged with arguments that in times of economic crisis, "the home has become a domain that not only offers serenity but also generates increased anxieties, based on the nature of material culture" (Stasiulis 2004 p. 300). From the statistics on outward migration, it is clear that individuals have opted to move not only from their most intimate place of security, their homestead, but also beyond their home territory of Latvia, to find security and opportunity elsewhere.

Hazans (2019) draws upon statistical data from Fries Tersch et al. (2017) on Latvian emigration, citing Latvia "as one of the worst-affected among EU/EFTA member states. This is true with respect to both post-crisis emigration rates of working-age nationals and the total (as of 2015) and mobility rates of working-age nationals" (Hazans 2019 p. 34). The reasons for this mass migration have been firmly placed at the door of the Latvian state with individuals participating in this study, indicating that they feel themselves devoid of worth

and detached from any meaningful sense of Latvian citizenship. A young single mum, identifying as ethnic Latvian, talks emotionally of her sense of disillusionment with Latvian citizenship. Here, a vertical construct of citizenship conflicts with a horizontally constructed citizenship; this horizontal construct influenced by lived experience and a particular socio-economic context. She says:

> *'Of course, I know that I am a citizen of Latvia, but I don't feel like one. Being a single mum, all of the welfare system for children is so small. It's like 10 euros per month. What can I give my son? I do think about moving away. A lot of families with children leave, a lot of young families. Latvia is not doing anything to help us stay. No help with work, or with homes or anything. I can't see any future for my child here, so I am considering leaving. It's mainly for my child. I know there's no future here for me, but I want to see a future for my child. Somewhere away.'*
>
> Int55: (F), 21, Hairdresser-maternity leave, Daugavpils, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

Another young Latvian speaking participant talks of the struggles ahead for young professionals. Currently studying management for a future career in business, she airs her deep concerns over the rising costs of housing, with shelter, one of the most basic of provisions of any social contract, being pushed beyond her financial reach.

> *'A lot of people left because of necessity. They couldn't find work and the salaries were low. The crisis hit us quite hard. A lot of people bought apartments in the boom before the crisis and the crisis really affected the market price. Now prices are going up in Riga and it's really crazy. If you want an apartment, you have to pay 3,000 Euros to get an apartment before you even apply for credit. The average salary is like 700 or 800 per month, so it's not easy to get this money.'*
>
> Int49: (F), 23, Student Information Technology, *Liepāja, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker*

She also touches on the low provision of Latvian pensions as being a push factor for some to move abroad:

> *'A lot of people aged 40 or something, they go for their pensions...to work for 10 years and to come back to Latvia. I read an article recently about a woman who went to the UK, and she says that she's not sure if she will come back because Latvia takes too much tax from the pension.'*
>
> Int49: (F), 23, Student Information Technology, *Liepāja, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker*

As the interview progressed it was clear that for her, government priorities in building a community of Latvia around nationalist principles were somewhat different to her own immediate priorities. She went on to say:

> *'There are a lot of things to think about, problems with the education system and the health system. Maybe if we would think about these kinds of things when we are doing our budgets. When the politicians are making the budgets, they do not think about our expenses. We are spending lots of money for the anniversary of Latvia. But if we have these kinds of problems, why are we spending this money on these celebrations?'*
>
> Int49: (F), 23, Student Information Technology, *Liepāja, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker*

This call for a more focused and practical approach to socio-economic issues from a member of the Latvian speaking community towards the government is absent in the wider academic discourse of citizenship in Latvia. In Chapter 6, many respondents talked about blaming the Latvian government for their challenging financial position, rather than blaming the EU, and this has resulted in many people opting to protest against their predicament, not on the streets or at the ballot box, but instead by voting with their feet to leave. The links between outward migration and a perceived failure of domestic government are widely and broadly discussed and form much of the discourse in Europe and beyond at this time. The modern view of migration suggests that it is closely linked to economic and social change. Castles (2008) states that "people emigrate because the social transformation of their countries of origin radically changes their conditions of life and work, while parallel transformations of destination create demand for labour" (Castles 2008 in Castles 2017 p. 201).

The Latvian government did acknowledge the impact of the financial crisis and in 2011, a package of measures aimed at alleviating economic hardship, was put in place in the form of the National Reform Programme. Eihmanis (2018) explores this in some details noting from data collated by the Ministry of Economics (2011) that the key features of the programme aimed to "reduce the personal income tax burden on the economically active population and the population at risk of poverty, to raise the personal income allowance for dependents, to introduce a differentiated personal income tax, to provide social protection for families with children, and to encourage participation in the labour market" (Eihmanis 2018 p. 241). These

measures were found to have been actively encouraged by the EU Commission and less driven by the Latvian State, arguably a factor in the blaming of Latvia from participants for their socio-economic predicament. Eihmanis (2018) further highlights that the government failed to achieve in practice many of the goals set out in the relevant time frame (Eihmanis 2018 p. 241). It is expressed in the literature, that despite some advances arising from the reform programme to help the unemployed, "the Commission was concerned that it was used as a substitute for social assistance and did not address the main barriers to employment and that overall, Latvia's progress in social policy reforms remained unsatisfactory"(Eihmanis 2018 p. 241). From these outcomes, it is clear that there is a structural issue in Latvia's macro level approach to socio-economics which is manifesting in disconnect and disenfranchisement at the horizontal level.

This thesis undertook research in the UK as well as across Latvia with the aim of capturing the motivations for leaving and any renegotiated perspectives of identity and belonging from those who had moved away. Now living in Scotland, some former residents of Latvia explain their reasons for leaving. Domestic socio-economic challenges were frequently cited as a central motivation. For the following participant the impact of the cuts, coupled with the bereavement of her spouse, resulted in a devasting change to her circumstances. In a particularly emotional interview, she explained:

> *'Why I came here? It's a really long story because the government cut 50% of my wage. I was a music teacher in a secondary school and I became a single mother. My son's dad, my husband died, so I got the offer to come over here. In 2 weeks, I packed my bags and left my child and I came over here to find a better life. In that moment I didn't really know what to do. When I got my first wage in Latvia after the cuts, I started to think about how I would keep the roof over my head, how will I have food for my son? So. I just decided to come over.'*
>
> Int7: (F), 31, HNC student and mum, Inverness-shire, UK (rural) – Latvian speaker

She goes on to detail the sense of socio-economic safety afforded to her in the UK in comparison to Latvia, embedding her financially within her new host community. Yet it was clear that on a more spiritual or emotional level she still felt tied to Latvia and a sense of 'home'. The connection to 'home', had however become further fractured as her immediate family had also made the decision to leave Latvia for primarily pragmatic financial reasons.

'I have more social help here than there is in Latvia. There I would just be a single mum and on the streets. Nobody really cares about what happens to me. If I were to go back there and have my life there, I would be just surviving and that's it. I keep hoping that one day I will have a chance to go back. All my family are there. But I know that it will not be as it was before. My sister built a house here in Latvia and to avoid giving it back to the bank her husband is going to Norway. My 2 brothers work in Norway. There's little left in Latvia.'

Int7: (F), 31, HNC student and mum, Inverness-shire, UK (rural) – Latvian speaker

The scale of outward migration, which affects and cuts across families and physical communities, is also fracturing the vertically imagined community as more and more individuals become financially insecure. In the following two extracts, although the financial decisions taken are described less emotionally and more pragmatically, the distress of struggling to survive beyond a basic existence in Latvia was evident. Explaining her decision to leave, this Latvian speaking participant stated:

'We thought "ok, let's try, let's see what will happen" because in Latvia, at that time, you could live ok, you have enough to pay your bills and you have enough to eat, but basically that's it. You couldn't have much, you know, like going out or something, because I didn't have any profession, my husband was this interior guy...well doing up interiors and that also, well that was just "black work" in Latvia actually, and so there wasn't huge wages, and so we thought ok, let's try, let's come and we will see what will happen.'

Int3: (F), 34, Self-employed, Moray, UK (rural) – Latvian speaker

Tied to her decision was real anger towards the politicians and the lack of support for families. She highlights the very real struggles on an everyday level in Latvia, even for those who are fortunate to have employment. Financial hardship was not always related to market related price adjustments as a result of economic transition but related to broader issues in government social policy. She further adds:

'In Latvia everyone says study is free, until the kids are in year 9. But WHERE?…..They are liars! We have to buy books, we have to buy pens, we have to buy everything. So, one kid… to send them to school on the first of September it costs two hundred pounds. And if your salary is three hundred pounds in a month, where can you get this money? I'm not scared of work. Every day I get up at 4

o'clock to go to work. I can work in Latvia. I had a good job. But for me to go back, my kids…this is a big problem because of school. I don't want them not to have shoes for school.'

Int3: (F), 34, Self-employed, Moray, UK (rural) – Latvian speaker

Another interview with a young student, now living in Glasgow, highlighted not only the fracturing of an imagined community in terms of the failing relationship between the state and the individual, but also noted the way in which socio-economic challenges were experienced disproportionally between municipal and rural areas. She begins by saying:

'They say in the news that our economic factors are improving, like the minimum wage. Well ok. The minimum wage is like 340 euros, but then you have the tax. You might have after that like 280 and most of the country lives on that minimum wage. Like in Riga...but I think Riga is like a separate state within a state. People there live different lifestyles.'

Int13: (F), 21, Student, Glasgow, UK (urban) – Russian speaker

She goes on to detail the differences in opportunities in earning potential between urban and rural areas and notes a massaging of statistics by government in relation to earnings. She explains:

'People there have higher salaries. People there have...well it is just different. They can afford so many more things than other people. I am not from Riga. I am from a small place called Liepāja on the western coast...and it's just ridiculous. Like when you go to the shops and you see for example a jumper which costs like 60 euros and you cannot justify the price of that. If you earn 280 euros per month after tax… how can you afford this? You have to pay for your bills, your food, your medicine. The way that they say that the average salary is improving is by the fact that it may be improving in the capital city, but not in the suburbs or smaller places. The salary is fixed in smaller cities or suburbs, but in Riga the salary is rising...so it looks like the average is rising.'

Int13: (F), 21, Student, Glasgow, UK (urban) – Russian speaker

It was also interesting to note the tone of 'othering' present in her responses and within the responses provided more broadly across the interviews. She finished up by reflecting:

'Sometimes it feels like they speak only for Riga and not for the other towns.'

Int13: (F), 21, Student, Glasgow, UK (urban) – Russian speaker

Respondents used the word 'they' repeatedly as a means of distancing their lived socio-economic experiences from that of an alternative reality experienced by others. It was also evident that there was a growing chasm between the lived experiences of those in more rural and outlying areas when compared to the capital city, Riga. As discussed within Chapter 6, new business investment is evident in Riga, while those in the countryside and outlying towns had seen the closure of sugar factories and the introduction of EU regulations impacting on their ability to produce cost effective artisan goods and agricultural products. As expressed by Hazans (2019) "high and persistent unemployment, a weak social security system, lost perspectives – these were the factors that converged to make emigration a real option in the minds of many Latvians, even those who had not considered such a possibility before" (Hazans 2019 p. 53). In addition to the despondency and disconnect felt due to poor socio-economic circumstances, an additional layer of inequality was experienced by those living in rural areas compared to those living in the capital. This respondent who had moved to Peterborough in England intimated that the lack of opportunity in her local rural community had been a push factor to move abroad. She said:

'Maybe if I lived in the capital city of Riga it might be different, but in a small place there is nothing. Of course, Latvia is very nice and green. I love Latvia of course, but here I feel safety. I know that if I lose work here I can go and find work in another place. My language might not be the best, but I can work, but in Latvia it's very hard. If you don't have work, you just won't eat. That's the problem.'

Int16: (F), 38, Waitress, Peterborough, UK (urban) – Latvian speaker

Even for those who have chosen to remain, the lack of state support made day to day life difficult and the disincentive to remain in Latvia as part of an imagined 'Latvian community', rural or urban, was clearly illustrated:

'All the time you need to think about money. You can't buy the things that you need. You are forced to take out credit. For the baby I have now I need to live on credit. I had bigger pay before I went on maternity leave, but this money was going to pay back credit I had taken before for my first baby. I couldn't buy clothes; I couldn't buy what I needed. All the time you are living to pay back one

creditor and then you have to take out more credit. If the TV breaks or the fridge breaks, then you can't afford to buy a new one straight away. This is the reason a lot of people are leaving.'

Int43: (F), 31, Charity Volunteer and P/T forecourt attendant, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

From the interviews conducted and the responses given to questions relating to migration and the domestic economic landscape, it is apparent that Latvia may face a new citizenship crisis. Rather than having consolidated a nation, bound together by a common history, national language and ethno-centric culture, for many, they are united by a common language of daily economic struggle, a culture of unfulfilled government promises and a non ethnicised experience of disaffection. Citizenship, and the very fabric of who 'belongs' in Latvia and indeed of who subscribes to 'being Latvian' is changing. As was suggested in the previous chapter, and reiterated here, any 'blame' for the questioning of Latvian citizenship has not been accredited to the European Union per se or to a fifth column of Russian speakers, bent on overthrowing the status quo. EU membership has boosted investment and encouraged social and economic reform whilst the focus of the national government has been to continue a narrative of discord. Meanwhile, large numbers of emigrants, Latvian speaking and Russian speaking, opt to seek out opportunities for a safer financial future within other EU member states.

7.3 The View from Inside – Perspectives on Those Migrants Who Left

What is also important to consider, when reflecting on outward migration is the narrative of those labelled 'left behind'. In traditional approaches to economic migration, attention frequently centres on the 'self-actualization of the migrants' (Somaiah et al 2020 p. 241). There are, however, increasing calls for scholarly consideration of the impact that 'exit' has on the communities which remain, moving away from solely looking at the perspective of the emigrant, and instead focusing additional attention on the renegotiated relationships, practices and identities associated with large scale outward migration (Kim 2006); (Ciborowski et al 2022). Ciborowski et al. (2022) stress that "scholarship often focuses on the economic necessity and sacrifice of those who have left home while much less is known

about the impacts of immigration on those living in communities of origin" (Ciborowski et al 2022). Kim (2006) has also criticised traditional approaches to community and belonging as being unhelpful in addressing the reconfiguration of emigration states. It is noted that the impact of "external citizenship does not fit within current citizenship discourse; it requires a broadened citizenship conception" (Kim 2006 p. 19). Traditional approaches also tend to narrowly suggest a passiveness in those who remain, which differs from the very real and active decision of many in Latvia to stay within the territorial borders of state. This section therefore considers the voices of those who remain and positions their experiences and perceptions within the wider citizenship debate.

The huge numbers of those leaving Latvia have left a palpable and visible gap, an observation touched upon by many of those interviewed. As noted by Hazans (2019), the experience of living through periods of financial crisis "triggered a strong shift from the temporary emigration of breadwinners towards the long-term or permanent emigration of entire families" (Hazans, 2019 p. 55). Out with the formal interview sessions, participants talked informally about how quiet many of the outlying towns and villages had become as a result of this trend. Whilst there remained a cosmopolitan buzz around Riga, with tourists and business travelers blending into the throng of workers and residents, it was striking to see how quiet Latvia's second largest city, Daugavpils, had become in comparison during the process of data collection. One participant who has witnessed the ongoing visible changes outward migration had brought to his home city of Liepaja was a bus driver, driving local routes. His own relatives were also among those who had left, and he relayed:

> *'There have been changes. Personally, the changes are that some of my relatives have gone to work in Europe. Liepaja is cleaner than before, nicer looking, not so dark. But there are less people.'*
>
> Int50: (M), 45, Bus Driver, *Liepāja, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker*

Another participant touched on not on the visible impact that outward migration had had on the community, but also on a sense of desolation amongst relatives who felt that their family structures would never be the same again. Reflecting on the choices made by her family in Sigulda she says:

'My brother is in London and not planning to come back. My uncle for many years he is working hard, and he hopes to build a pension. It's sad for my grandparents. They always cry when they leave, and we have experienced that the streets are getting more and more empty in the city.'

Int34: (F), 27, Restaurant Manager, Sigulda, Latvia (rural) - Latvian speaker

Those who took part in the interviews shared mixed feelings over the departure of friends and family from Latvia, and this context is an interesting space in which to consider whether there is evidence of fissures opening within the internal grouping or construct of an ethnic Latvian community. For some there was a pragmatic acknowledgement and a matter-of-fact tone adopted towards those who had left, with a number of respondents accepting that, for many, migration and the physical withdrawal from Latvia was the most attractive financial option. It was stated that:

'For them it is good, they are learning at university and they have work. Of course, they miss friends and relatives. Our government doesn't do enough for our citizens. Maybe you couldn't have, or your parents couldn't give you a good education then you don't have a choice. Here in Latvia, if you are working in a coffee shop or just in a shop, you don't have a lot of money and it is not enough to live on. In England and in Germany it is different. People there understand that work is work and that you have to be paid a certain amount of money. Here it is not like this. You would have no chance to take an apartment or pay for food for your children and you could not go on holiday if you worked in a shop.'

Int42: (F), 25, Pet Shop Assistant and P/T Student, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

It was also said that the impact on friendships and interpersonal relations was difficult and by consequence, any 'imagined' Latvian community is ultimately affected by those who left with only sporadic return visits 'home'. This participant summed this up saying:

'I feel terrible that so many people are leaving. My best friend has left to live in England with his girlfriend and they have been there for a few years. They only come for holidays and it's really hard because we don't see each other. But thank God for the internet and What'sApp. We can talk each day, but it is hard.'

Int42: (F), 25, Pet Shop Assistant and P/T Student, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

Within this testimony we also see evidence of what Kim (2006) refers to as the benefits of communication technologies which "allow emigrants to remain actively engaged with events, people, and institutions in their countries of origin, and enhance emigration states' capacity to reach citizens abroad" (Kim 2006 p. 15). Despite this, Ciborowski et al (2022), argue that the fabric of the community which remains is affected despite transnational communication and interaction, noting that "social structures at home are changing, they are building new familial and network structures" (Ciborowski et al 2022 p. 2). In addition to the advent of new ways of social interaction and evidence of continuing relations between those who had left and those who had remained, there was also evidence of disconnect and distance.

As has been noted throughout the analysis of testimonies provided, there was again an underlying tone of non-ethnicised 'othering', with disapproval voiced towards emigrants from some of the participants who took part in the interview sessions. Those who had left were frequently referred to as 'these people'. There was an inference in the subtlety of the deliberate grammar used, whether respondents conversed in Latvian, Russian or English. Previously having referred to friends who had left more positively, when grouping emigrants collectively there was a distinct tone. The young pet shop worker who had felt bad about her friends leaving, hinted at her own socio-economic dilemma and ultimate decision to stay, but was moved to speak about emigrants as separate to her, not **my** people or **our** people, but instead 'these people'. She says:

> *'We have nothing to offer these people. They would still have the same struggles... finding jobs, or low paid jobs. I was also thinking myself of moving away because I feel more open to the ideas and cultures of different countries. But in bigger countries like France and Germany and the UK I worry about terrorism and I feel safe here. If you are not just saying everything is bad and you are willing to work and even take on additional jobs, then you can make it work here.'*
>
> Int49: (F), 23, Student Information Technology, *Liepāja, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker*

The deliberate choice of phrasing implies a more significant shift in the way individuals view each other within the confines of vertically 'imagined' community. It is argued that changes

in tone and in inference, expressed discursively and no matter how subtle, open up a new facet to the discourse of 'who belongs in Latvia' or 'who belongs to Latvia'.

In addressing the question 'Do we see the emergence of a broader "Latvian community" whereby individuals see themselves as "belonging" not only to Latvia, but to each other, beyond divisions of ethnicity and formal citizenship?', there is evidence of commonality and coming together around socio-economic challenges. This discussion shows that nuanced changes are occurring resulting from the socio-economic push to leave, rather than from any ethnicised point of origin. Political inertia in addressing social issues at the macro level has resulted in a major demographic shift, and this has implications for a culturally and ethnically imagined community. One participant notes an acute fracturing of relations between the state and the individual, framed around socio-economics:

> *'We used to be around 2.3 million people and I think now we are only 1.8 million. This is a huge problem because these people could pay taxes here in Latvia.'*
>
> Int49: (F), 23, Student Information Technology, *Liepāja, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker*

The quote above, which mentions the loss of tax revenue, could be seen to point to a larger obligatory financial burden being placed on those who have chosen to remain. The mass migration from Latvia has not only resulted from socio economic crisis, but also has implications for the longer-term financial position of Latvia and the future ability of the state to reinforce a consolidated sense of citizenship through social protections. As identified by, Tersch (2017) and Hazans (2019), the vast majority of those who have moved have been of working and tax paying age. For some participants there was real anger and a sense that those who had had left had 'sold out' on Latvia and on those remaining behind. Their right to claim themselves as 'Latvians' in the patriotic sense was called into question.

> *'I feel sorry from one side because they probably have children and no food to put on the table. If they have no money or no food, then they have no choice. On the other side I feel angry because they left everything on our shoulders. Those who left just return for holidays or to go to the dentist and we pay for it all. They come to drive on the roads that we fixed for ourselves, our taxpayers' money, and they haven't paid into that. So, it's mixed emotions. I could never leave, this is my home, my country*.'
>
> Int46: (F), 35, Mum of 6, restores prams, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

This respondent was clearly aware of the socio-economic challenges that pushed individuals to make a new life. However, their new lives were inferred to make them outsiders. She refers to 'roads that we fixed *ourselves*' and to '*our* taxpayers' money', thus placing those emigrants outside the community who invest in Latvia. Emigrants who return are almost seen as tourists, rather than as fellow Latvians. '*They* come', '*they* have left everything on *our* shoulders' are powerful sentiment which clearly detracts from any primordial and ethnicised notion of citizenship as vertically expressed in Latvia's citizenship debate. A palpable and honourable sense of staying and battling to survive, to remain firm and support Latvia, was evident. One respondent refers to staying as being a fight, with the inference that moving away is a form of surrender, saying:

> *'People who move are looking for a better life, for security...economical security...so it is every person's choice. Whether to leave here or to fight for everything.'*
>
> Int49: (F), 23, Student Information Technology, *Liepāja, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker*

The same sentiment is expressed by another Latvian speaking participant from Liepaja who says:

> *'But someone has to stay. You can live here but you just have to know how. You have to make your way. To go away is the easiest option, but there are people with no other choice to make.'*
>
> Int51: (M), 44, Security Guard, *Liepāja, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker*

This young participant, working in hospitality and who has knowledge of several languages, was aware that her skills would be valued abroad but she had made the conscious decision to stay. She felt that it required a collective effort to work to improve things, and intimated that the grass isn't always greener on the other side, drawing attention to the potential for opportunity within Latvia. She states:

> *'Of course, they are leaving because the situation here is hard. Yes, it is hard, but I still believe that you can do things here and achieve things here. You are always looking at rich countries and complaining 'why are things not like Germany or the*

United States?' But on my travels, I have realised that we should appreciate what we have. I have seen that nowhere is the promised land. We could have it here if we changed the mindset a little bit.'

Int34: (F), 27, Restaurant Manager, Sigulda, Latvia (rural) - Latvian speaker

There was an also an awareness of this resentment from those who had remained towards those who had moved abroad within the responses of Latvia's emigrants. They too felt a disconnect with those who remained, but on another level. Within the interviews it was clear that some participants felt that their decision to move, and the upheaval and struggle experienced in starting a new life, was being demeaned or devalued in some way. Several interviews touched on this; however, the following response was one which most neatly encapsulated the sentiment:

'But I think some people are jealous. Yeah. They know that you have so much better life. Well, some of them I think that they think you earn all that money here. But they don't know that you still have to pay a huge amount for your rent and the living is not so cheap. They are jealous, and they think 'you have moved and I'm still here'. But I think nobody is stopping you, you know.'

(Participant UK6 Female aged 31, Admin Assistant, Inverness)

Despite improving her socio-economic position by finding employment in the UK, this respondent also emphasised the high emotional costs of moving away and said:

'Last year my grandmother died in Latvia and that's hard, because you are 2000km from Latvia. You can't always just fly back if you have work here and that's painful.'

Int6: (F), 31, Admin Assistant, Inverness, UK (urban) – Latvian speaker

Against a backdrop of high costs of living due to a low wage economy and a perceived lack of social support, the sense of meaningful citizenship is being devalued within horizontal perspectives and realities. There is a high emotional cost for those who leave and those who remain behind, and ultimately a cost to any vertically imagined ethnically constructed community of Latvia.

7.4 Exploring the Future of Latvia's Community of Belonging

The final aspect to be considered within this chapter exploring the construct of citizenship in Latvia, when framed within the current socio-economic context, is the future potential for creating a community of belonging in which members feel that they are safe secure and valued (McMillan and Chavis 1986). It is here that answers to the respective research questions 'How has structural political change impacted on citizenship and on the formation of a wider community of Latvia?' and 'Do we see the emergence of a broader "Latvian community" whereby individuals see themselves as "belonging" not only to Latvia, but to each other, beyond divisions of ethnicity and formal citizenship?', are helpful in formulating the possibilities and challenges ahead.

Economic transition and socio-economic structural change, as explored in Chapter 6, has left a legacy and a challenge for the future of nation building and citizenship in Latvia, when viewed along the vertical axis. The push factors towards migration are often attributed to a government or state which cannot meet the needs of its citizens, not only within Latvia, but also in many parts of the world where this deficit between state and individual is socio-economically evident. For many a 'hollow' citizenship is perceived, wherein, despite having a legal or formally recognised citizenship status, the everyday reality of economic hardship and poverty renders this status redundant. Germane (2015), focusing on minority coalition building, observes this practice, noting that when "previously inward-looking groups start to focus on broader domestic issues, such as inequality, they cross ethnic boundaries, setting aside the importance of their own cultural identity" (Germane 2015 pp. 56-57). Within Latvia's case, whether holding a formal status or not, within wider society, socio-economic disadvantage is creating an increasing and non-ethnicised distance between the state, which is changing the citizenship narrative.

As has been shown in this chapter, the emotional and social impact of outward migration also impacts on the community remaining. A study looking at outward migration in areas of Central America, infers that irretrievable damage is inflicted on families and communities, with many emigrants reluctant to return due to little belief in the prospect of financial

security within their country of origin (Ciborowski et al. 2022). Former residents of Latvia participating in this study were asked to relate their plans for the future, and to consider whether they could envisage a return to their country of origin. For most participants, the decision to remain abroad was seen as irreversible, as children had begun to settle into a new educational system. One respondent, who had always maintained a strong cultural sense of belonging to Latvia throughout her interview said:

> *'I think it is harder to consider going back as the children are settled in school here. I would be open, I would like to do that as I have friends and family there. I like the weather, the food, I love the culture. But at the moment we are happy with the arrangement that we have, that we go there and spend a set number of weeks each year there.'*
>
> Int17: (F), 36, Teaching Assistant, Nottingham, UK (urban) – Latvian speaker

Another respondent echoed this saying:

> *'I wouldn't risk that now. Not because of the situation, but because of the children. Our children are going to school here. My son never went to school in Latvia. If he were to come back, he has no grammar at all. They would put him in the first class. I would never do that to my child.'*
>
> Int17: (F), 36, Teaching Assistant, Nottingham, UK (urban) – Latvian speaker

The disconnect between those who had decided to leave and those who remained was also touched on again as UK based participants reflected on their decision to stay in their new country. Within their responses it could be argued that claiming emigrants as part of a wider community of Latvia was challenging for some remaining within Latvia, and from a remainer's perspective, often 'who belongs' could only be attributed to those intended to return. Research conducted into older emigrants who had moved abroad was seen to subvert the conventional Latvian definition of what an older person should be doing, as highlighted by (Lulle and King 2016 p. 459). This convention of what a Latvian person should be doing was also seen to be applied for younger emigrants. This participant relays:

> *'Well, some of my friends think that it is wrong because I'm Latvian and I have to live in Latvia you know...? And they keep asking me when are you going to come*

back, you know? But...I'm like that's my choice. I see the life here and I do like it. It's so much better and my child is growing up here, so I don't see the point in going back. It's everyone's choice and I think some of them are not really happy, that you just don't want to live in Latvia. It is 'what are you doing there? Just come back home'....and I am like "my home is here".'

Int6: (F), 31, Admin Assistant, Inverness, UK (urban) – Latvian speaker

Also subversive, in relation to traditional approaches to the Latvian citizenship debate and the politicised ethnic construction of 'who belongs', was the response of one participant of mixed ethnic heritage. Russian is normally her language of choice, although she had previously identified as having a more fluid national identity. In relation to belonging and rootedness she stated:

'I was living in England, in Germany and in Cyprus, but every time I came home because this is home. I would never change this for some other country.'

Int42: (F), 25, Pet Shop Assistant and P/T Student, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

At the macro level, there is clearly an opportunity to broaden out the scope for who belongs as identities become more detached from the territory due to structural change and the freedom of movement, as well as in relation to 'who' themselves express their belonging to Latvia. As identified throughout this thesis, identities are in flux, and despite challenging socio-economic conditions, there are Russian speakers, homogeneously grouped together as being 'outsiders', who reiterate a sense of association with Latvia on a deeper level than traditionally represented. Cheskin (2012) points to discursive constructions of identities existing within the Russian speaking community such as that of *rossiiskie* and *rossiiskii* (Cheskin 2012), or for those Russian speakers from Latvia describing themselves as *Latviyci* in Lulle and King (2016). This fluidity and space in which belonging is discursively renegotiated has the potential to be acknowledged and developed further at a political level. What is missing from macro level concerns however, are the shifting perceptions and identities of members of the perceived 'Latvian speaking community', for whom a collective sense of national 'belonging' on a socio-economic level is diminishing. Continued socio -economic challenges with a lack of viable solutions is seen as a challenge in a population witnessing substantial demographic decline and the potential for further outward movement. There have been some political calls, and indeed adverts, to attract emigrants to 'return' to address

this downturn, although these have been viewed sceptically as they offer little of practical socio-economic value. This again highlights the chasm between vertical assumptions and horizontal realities. Commenting on these campaigns, it was clear they were ineffectual, with one politically engaged individual surprisingly apparently unaware of any such scheme. She says:

> *'To have people come back, they (the Latvian government), should run advice lines or at least have someone that you can talk to about coming back. It doesn't seem like anything like that is there.'*
>
> Int4: (F), 26, Parliamentary Assistant, Edinburgh, UK (urban) – Latvian speaker

Another participant was aware of the campaigns aimed at encouraging people to return to Latvia, but she was highly dismissive of any real incentive or intent in political messaging. She says:

> *'I don't see myself moving back to Latvia. If there were bigger salaries, then maybe, but that would be a miracle. It won't happen. They have an advert saying things are better, like an extra 10 euros on your salary… and they have these campaigns asking you to come from the UK to Latvia to open a coffee shop or something like that, but nobody does, because nobody has money to shop there.'*
>
> Int12: (F), 27, Cleaner, Edinburgh, UK (urban) – Latvian speaker

In addition to the possibilities for future citizenship by acknowledging the potential of engaging with a new generation of more Latvian affiliated and less homogenised members of the Russian speaking community, is the potential scope for macro political movement on economic relations with neighbouring Russia. This has been a topic of debate with some comment within the literature suggesting that Latvia and Latvia's Baltic neighbours would, in time, see a shift from historical memory driving the narrative of economic policy (Raik 2016 p. 240). However, as pointed out by Raik (2016), the 2014 annexation of Crimea led to a nationalist political vindication of the narrative of "'I told you so" on the side of the Baltic States and Poland" (Raik 2016 p. 238). Despite such discourse at a political level, there were some expressions of desire to build more constructive relations. One participant stated:

'Economically, of course we could improve the relationship. They are a big country and we could export some more produce and other things. They could also give us some things. In the economy, yes, we could have better relations. Politically, well I think yes…but it depends on people, it depends on who is working in politics and on what they want. The people at the top always decide what we need.'

Int39: (F), 34, Court Registrar/Administrator, Sigulda, Latvia (rural) - Latvian speaker

However, this was seen as a less desirable strategy for other participants, with caution urged due to the legacy of historical memory and Russian's current geopolitical aggression elsewhere. Broadly welcomed from those who remained in Latvia was further economic integration with Europe and a desire to bolster Latvia's geopolitical standing via improved trade links and visible presence in the global marketplace, as highlighted by this respondent:

'I think there are many powerful countries in Europe that Latvia could learn from, so yes, it would be good to work more closely with Europe. Probably yes, we could benefit from working with Russia, but in my opinion, Russia is not a country that anyone should be friendly to.'

Int49: (F), 23, Student Information Technology, *Liepāja, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker*

These two chapters explored the socio-economic connotations in relation to citizenship and highlight that the spectre of Latvia's contested history presents challenges for both elites and individuals. However, from the data collected, there appears to be little unilateral appetite for the continued discourse of ethnic division as a solution to these issues.

7.5 Chapter Conclusions

It has been shown that traditional constructs or assumptions related to citizenship are being disrupted by socio-economic challenges, considered to be perpetuated by a lack of focus by government around the issues which impact individuals on an everyday level. Citizenship, when viewed within the context of personal financial crisis, does not reflect the elements of security, stability via access to resources or social protection associated with membership of a community, and where commonality is found, it is in an aggrieved disconnect between vertical and horizontal perspectives.

The structural changes experienced within Latvia, have led to large scale outward migration, itself leading to a new discourse of 'othering' relating to migrants and non-migrants. There is evidence however, of this playing out in a non-ethnicised manner, with the 'them and us' perspective being reconstructed around those who stayed and those who remained. There is further evidence of urban and rural disconnect, with less tangible evidence of regeneration within outlying areas. Many of those who have left, whilst retaining emotional ties to Latvia are unlikely to return as family life embeds them in their new host country. This opens up an opportunity for new engagement at a political level with the more fluid and discursive constructs of citizenship expressed, however, this is as yet to be realised.

Chapter 8. Social and Civic Modes of Citizenship

8.1 Introduction and Rationale

This chapter explores citizenship through understandings and examples of civic and community interactions as reflected in the lived experiences of participants by way of answering the question 'What does Latvian citizenship look like today?'. With political discourse in Latvia heavily influenced by ethnicity and division, this chapter is also keen to draw on everyday realities in relation to the question 'Do we see the emergence of a broader "Latvian community" whereby individuals see themselves as "belonging" not only to Latvia, but to each other, beyond divisions of ethnicity and formal citizenship?'. This moves the Latvian citizenship debate into a space which is frequently overlooked in more normative assessments of cohesion and in studies of community, identity and belonging. The incorporation of lived experiences provides scope to draw empirically upon daily realities of members from both major ethnic communities in Latvia in order to move away from ideas of 'group' experience and bring the discussion back to the individual.

The rationale for considering civic and community interactions is related to Marshall (1950) and his core elements of citizenship. Marshall's (1950) theory links back to classical constructs, and although it is helpful to draw out core elements of citizenship, there is also a need to look beyond classical approaches and explore the practices associated with citizenship. As detailed in Chapter 2, it is advocated that we should see "citizenship as identity, which refers to the behavioural aspects of individuals acting and conceiving of themselves as members of a collectivity" (Joppke 2007 cited Kock and Villadsen 2017). Furthermore, in applying a discursive conceptualisation of citizenship, understandings can be expanded to "embrace also the intimate and domestic, the local, the urban, the regional and the global" (Lister 2007 p. 55). In doing so, we can then draw on conceptualisations such as Beiner's (1995) pillars of citizenship, one of which being a 'liberal' pillar which emphasizes the individual's capacity to transcend group or collective identity and moves firmly away from constructs of fixed identity, allowing space for the individual to define and redefine their own identity" (Beiner 1995 p. 13). Contrasting grass roots interactions with vertical

perspectives allows for conclusions to be drawn on whether the imagined community of Latvia is reflected differently within different spheres.

This chapter is broken into a several key sections. Section 8.2 shines a light on the often, mundane daily encounters which take place amongst individuals and shows that, beyond the public sphere, there are a number of non-ethnicised interactions which challenge the discourse of division. As socio-civic practices both benefit and shape the communities and societies in which they occur, section 8.3 considers community initiatives as spaces for non-ethnic engagement. In section 8.4 the socio-civic discussion is broadened out into little researched spaces, experiences and perspectives of non-ethnicised marginalisation, where state and individuals are seen to disconnect, impacting upon a sense of membership and the vertical construction of a community of Latvia.

8.2 Converging on an Everyday Level? Inter-ethnic Interactions

Particular focus in this study has been given to the construction of community and the self-identification with themes such as identity, membership and belonging. In Latvia, the dominant political discourse would suggest that there is little in the way of normative relations and cohesion, and that instead, society is divided and fractured along ethnic lines arising from Latvia's troubled historical past. It is increasingly accepted that frameworks of citizenship, whether adopting citizenship as a set of rights or responsibilities or as a set of behaviours or enactments, are not mutually exclusive and that there is an overlap and intersection which needs to be taken into account (Kenyon 2019 p. 48). This section draws on that intersectionality and explores the practices of citizenship within the space of local community interaction. Although citizenship, as has been argued in this thesis, can transcend space and place, citizenship also remains closely tied to constructs of community, and for Hall et al. (1999), citizenship has "a much more local and immediate meaning" (Hall et al. 1999 p. 502). This section therefore examines the lived experiences of individuals within the space of local cross community interactions, allowing citizenship, as a discursive practice, to "formulate language for describing how to live together in a local community" (Sturtevant

2017 p. 4). The research questions being posed drill down to ascertain whether ethnicity plays a different role within vertical and horizontal perspectives of citizenship. By looking at how individuals interact within their local environments the study gains a collective sense of whether distinct and identifiable divisive dimensions, highly visible in vertical discourse, are experienced in everyday relations and interactions between Latvian and Russian speakers.

The challenge was to navigate this question without merely encouraging political narratives and media rhetoric within horizontal responses. A solution and an opening of the discussion emerged during the interviews from the participants' own interest in this study. The question as to why a UK researcher would be interested in studying Latvia, was continually posed by participants. On many occasions I was also asked about what people in the UK knew or felt about Latvia. Frequently raised questions were 'Did people know where Latvia was? and 'What did people know and think of Latvian people?'. It was interesting to see the value placed on external perceptions of Latvia and what constitutes the 'Latvian' people. This curiosity enabled me to engage participants into thinking about the ways in which Latvia sees itself and is seen by others, and to question the extent to which Latvia exists as a community divided along ethnic lines. Participants were asked to articulate how they view themselves and their relations with other residents of Latvia on a day-to-day level.

It was found that the blurring of historically recognised classification lines and of lived group experience is becoming more evident on a 'day to day' level. Indeed, the data collected has shown that this blurring of lines and mixed interactions has been evident for some time, despite continuous discourse and rhetoric on the assumed long held alienation of Latvia's two largest ethnic communities. This Russian speaking participant, who might have been expected to respond pessimistically to inter-ethnic interactions given the ongoing scholarly and political references to marginalisation, instead highlights a continuity of good relations in his lifetime. He stated:

> *'I don't feel that much in Jēkabpils, has changed about the 2 communities. I have always had good relations with Latvian people. I was brought up in a Russian family. I mean Russian language, Russian traditions. As a boy, you always have problems with other boys, that's normal, but we didn't really focus that much on*

the difference of the nationality of people. I always had a good relationship with Latvians. It depends on the person.'

Int40: (M), 30, Software Engineer, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

Tension was normalised as being a characteristic of growing up and learning how to engage with others, rather than tensions of interaction being expressed in an ethnicised way. The normalisation of inter-ethnic interaction highlighted by the participant from Jēkabpils was echoed by another participant, a roadside vendor, whose occupation meant that he comes into contact with a broad cross section of his local community on an almost daily basis. For him, relations look very different from a horizontal perspective than when reflected in more normative top-down constructions. He tells us:

'My relationships with Russians are normal. But there is too much propaganda from Russia, especially in Latgale and in Daugavpils. The media is showing bad things, and this does not help us to communicate. I watch the TV programmes and there is a lot about Russians in Latvia and we only hear bad things. This makes Russians think that Latvians hate them and that it is bad for them to be in Latvia.'

Int36: (M), age not given, Street Vendor, selling birch water, Sigulda, Latvia (rural) - Latvian speaker

Here there was no talk of any new emergences of integration, as these inter-ethnic relations were again seen to be a normal feature of everyday life. Some evidence of social partition between ethnic groups within everyday inter-ethnic socializing was vocalised, however, this was not expressed as being overly problematic. Instead, any ethnic division across low-level social interactions was expressed in tone as being over exaggerated and manipulated by macro level discourse. This bus driver, who also comes into contact with a cross section of the population, noted no real issues. His personal preference was to socialise within his own ethnic group; however, he works professionally and pragmatically alongside Russian speaking colleagues. He says:

'The relationship has stayed much the same between Russian people and Latvians. I can't see a big difference. We were always separate and maybe not so friendly...but it is not a big deal. The politicians are partly to blame for the situation. I have Russian work colleagues and I have no problems with them at all.'

Int50: (M), 45, Bus Driver, *Liepāja, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker*

It is evident that on an everyday level, interactions occur regularly and peacefully beyond the political rhetoric and often scholarly discourse of division. Little data exists on the success of integration, although increasingly we see new approaches to citizenship which draw on expansions of community theory, such as that of Birka (2016) and Jašina-Schäfe and Cheskin (2020), who draw upon the marginalisation of Russian speakers as a basis for research. This thesis adopts a similar theoretical approach to both studies, however deviates somewhat by examining and incorporating the lived experiences of both communities in Latvia simultaneously. The criticism levelled at earlier normative assessments of Latvian citizenship and belonging within these two studies, is that there exists an all too easily assumed homogeneity within ethnic groups, commonly associated with traditional vertical approaches. In exploring horizontal perspectives, light is shone upon the nuances in interactions and in identities, which are often overlooked.

Not only is there evidence of existing and longstanding social engagement across and within the two largest ethnic communities in Latvia, there is also evidence of changing perceptions and of new relationships being constructed, as a result of social interactions happening elsewhere. For this Latvian speaking participant, her initial childhood dealings with Russian speakers aligned closely to the stereotypical representations of estranged ethnicised communities and was related to her native locale. She begins by explaining:

> *'Yes, my opinion has changed against Russians. I grew up in a super tiny town, a Latvian town, but we had some Russian children there. All the Russians would speak Latvian when we were out playing. I never studied Russian language, but I know it from cartoons or something. I have always been in this Latvian bubble and not really been involved with Russians. All the Russians I know speak Latvian. There used to be a time when I was really negative and anti-Russian I guess which is really bad.'*
>
> Int20: (F), 33, Manager of a Business Incubator, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

Some years later, having changed locale as a result of moving abroad, she was exposed to more social mixing and had been forced to step out of what she referred to several times as a 'bubble'. She goes on to say:

'But being in London where there is this multiculturalism, I have changed the way I see things and I'm now willing to get into that other bubble, but I don't know the way in. I have a few friends, colleagues who call themselves Latvian but with Russian roots, although they are from 100% Russian family which I find interesting, that they call themselves Latvian. This is great.'

Int20: (F), 33, Manager of a Business Incubator, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

The idea of a 'Latvian bubble' is interesting as it manifests both on the vertical and horizontal axis. As shown by the above participant's response, vertically or horizontally constructed stratifications or bubbles have been responsible for tension, working against communities and individuals rather than serving individuals and communities. Groupings or bubbles are valuable as, on one level, they seek to highlight difference to ensure that inequality is recognised, yet by doing so, there is the propensity for creating and subsequently imposing overarching 'umbrella' terms upon these groups, in turn proliferating stereotypes which is unhelpful (Young ed. Beiner 1995 pp. 196-197). Such stratifications can also ignore individual needs and experiences thus creating further disadvantage for particular groups and may lead to deeper division and potentially slow progress in positive relationship building. The following extract highlights the top-down influence in perpetuating stereotype and division, although, more positively, this Latvian speaking respondent expresses that this division is being overcome on a day-to-day level. She says:

'I think a little has changed. I remember when we were at school that we were fighting with Russians. But I think that those signals came from the government too. I think they encouraged us to do that, to tell us that we must hate each other. But now it is not so. Sometimes the Russians might make some signal, like this two languages thing, and we are like, no….no way. But before it was worse. I know that my kids will not feel like me.'

Int43: (F), 31, Charity Volunteer and P/T forecourt attendant, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

Positive as this is, it has been highlighted that grouping does not represent homogenous experiences of perceptions. It is still challenging to overcome ethnic stereotyping and not all members of any community will share the same views or

values. This is true with differences of opinion and experience occurring within family groups. Whilst the participant above, a member of what is deemed to be the 'Latvian speaking community', could recognise a change in her own attitudes and perceptions arising from experiences of everyday interactions, her stance was not mirrored by her brother. She tells us:

> *'My brother still hates Russians. He works with Russians and speaks with Russians, but really, he doesn't like them.'*
>
> Int43: (F), 31, Charity Volunteer and P/T forecourt attendant, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

To assume that one newly integrated Latvian speaker will hold the same opinion as another or to assert that one Russian speaker has much the same outlook as another would be to further add an impediment to creating a more cohesive community of Latvia. It is shown, from the data collected, that it is through small, low level individual engagements rather than any broader integration or assimilation policy, that these stereotypes are being broken down and stripped away and, in some cases, reconfigured beyond the nationalist narrative. One example of this comes from a proud Latvian national, who highlights how effective a small interaction, such as being assisted with taking a pushchair onto a bus, can be in breaking down stereotypes and diminishing the power of rhetoric. She also highlights how she, as a younger Latvian speaker, feels differently to the older generation of her grandparents. She explains:

> *'My grandmother was sent to Siberia and she felt that Russians have no place here. She said that we got sent away and they should not be here. Quite often when I need to get on a bus with a pushchair it will be a Russian person helping me to get the pushchair onto the bus. A Latvian just stands and does nothing. If a person is born here, then that's fine*.'
>
> Int46: (F), 35, Mum of 6, restores prams, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

In this case any negative stereotyping was being directed towards what, in more vertical approaches, would be considered her 'own' national group. Another participant also discusses the shortcomings in national stereotypes. She also reflects on political messaging, constructed around national stereotypes, commonly related to her

vertically attributed national homeland. She makes clear that labels, whether placed on individuals or on territories, are not truly reflected of lived reality and interactions and says:

> *'In every nation we have bad people and good people. The same thing is here. The government says that Russia is evil, everything bad is there. Not true. In Latvia we also have evil people… paedophiles, killers, burglars…so what…Latvia is also evil? I don't think so.'*
>
> Int42: (F), 25, Pet Shop Assistant and P/T Student, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

In concluding this section, which has examined the ways in which citizenship is expressed via local community interactions, one final testimony is presented which highlights that integration on the horizontal axis is occurring naturally, beyond the more exclusionary vertical discourse and direction. This participant emphasises the realities he sees reflected within his own neighbourhood and clearly draws a distinction between horizontal and vertical perspectives. He states:

> *'On an everyday basis, people are living behind each other or next to each other, we don't see this as a Russian part or a Latvian part. We are all integrated together. But it is this political part that tries to cut us in two. They put pressure from them, both the Latvian and the Russian side.'*
>
> Int51: (M), 44, Security Guard, *Liepāja, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker*

A fresh approach to citizenship, taking into account lived experiences and discursive practice, in contrast to more traditional evaluations or assessments of citizenship, opens up a new space and possibilities for the broader Latvian citizenship debate.

8.3 Community Initiatives as Spaces for Positive Non-ethnic Based Engagement

As has been evidenced, attitudes within and across groups appear to be changing, and new nuanced perspectives are emerging from daily lived interactions. Within this section, the question as to whether a broadly defined 'community of Latvia' can exist beyond the realms of nationality and ethnicity will be explored by considering the socio-civic spaces and practices in which this can occur. As was discussed in Chapter 2.3, belonging to a community

and having an active membership in that community, in many ways embodies practices of inclusivity. McMillan and Chavis (1986) espouse that "membership is a feeling that one has invested part of oneself to become a member and therefore has a right to belong" (McMillan and Chavis 1986 p. 9). In enacting practices of citizenship, such as charity work, volunteering or taking part in community activities which benefit all residents of a given locale, there is evidence that local community initiatives offer space for the barriers of division to be broken down.

Local community initiatives are growing as demands on state resources increase, and as in the case of Latvia, structural changes impact on the socio-economic situations of individuals, as explored in Chapters 6 and 7. Highlighted by Daley (2009), community engagement and initiatives lay the groundwork in opening up space and opportunity for members of different communities to interact with one another (Daley 2009 p. 168). It is argued that these interactions are currently in evidence in Latvia and that on a micro level, individuals create pragmatic non-ethnicised spaces and strategies in response to the impact of detrimental top-down policies.

One of the most poignant interviews of the fieldwork took place at a warehouse run by a small charity based in Riga. The charity had been set up in response to the acute needs of low income and deprived families in Latvia and very much served to illustrate how a horizonal approach to solving issues of extreme poverty and financial crisis within the community removed the stratification of ethnicity. As highlighted by Kay (2004), "one of the consequences of the disintegration of the former structures of the communist state has been the loss of systems of welfare provision and networks of state sponsored social organisations" (Kay 2006 p. 100). The collapse of welfare structures and the scarcity of welfare provision was seen to have impacted disproportionally along the lines of gender, with women being most adversely affected (Kay 2006). Although writing about disadvantaged and economically marginalized Russian women shortly after the collapse of the USSR, there are similarities to be drawn between low level community networks and organisations in Russia and community groups in today's Latvia. What is clear, as outlined by Kay in her study, is the way in which these kinds of organisations offer their members "above

all else' 'the opportunity to develop and benefit from collective survival strategies" (Kay 2006 p. 104). She argues that a space in which individuals can "provide for their families and preserve their own sense of dignity and moral integrity were made less daunting or seemed more likely to be successful when undertaken as part of a co-operative and mutually supportive group" (Kay 2006 p. 104). Furthermore, Young (1995) notes that the virtues of such participatory citizenship are "extolled by theorists and politicians as through these kinds of public acts transcend self-centred motivation and acknowledge a dependence on and a responsibility to others" (Young in Beiner ed. 1995 p. 190). In such socio-civic practices, citizenship is active and horizontally driven.

One volunteer at the warehouse, still struggling herself financially, became involved with the charity following a period of serious illness for her young son. State assistance was limited, and so to help her son, treatment was sought in Germany. She had herself, benefited from grass roots financial assistance raised within her neighbourhood. She emotionally explained:

> *'I take part in this volunteering because 9 years ago, my son almost died, and a lot of people helped me. I now can't help others by giving some money, but I can do this. This is why I want to do something. My baby lived because someone helped me. I was given only a little chance that he would live but we had to go to Germany. At that time, I didn't have any money and we couldn't have made it without other people giving us money. For me to do this now is something good. It is something I can do.'*
>
> Int43: (F), 31, Charity Volunteer and P/T forecourt attendant, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

In the case of the Latvian charity warehouse, the lived experience of interdependence for those donating and those receiving donations transcends the confines of vertically articulated constructs of ethnicity. Service users are grouped together around 'need' rather than round any ethnic labelling and marginalisation, as is normatively commonplace for both Latvian speakers and Russian speakers alike in broader political and scholarly discourse. The grammatically inclusive wording of a charity poster pictured below (Figure 8.3.1) further emphasizes the non ethnicised approach to providing informal support as shown:

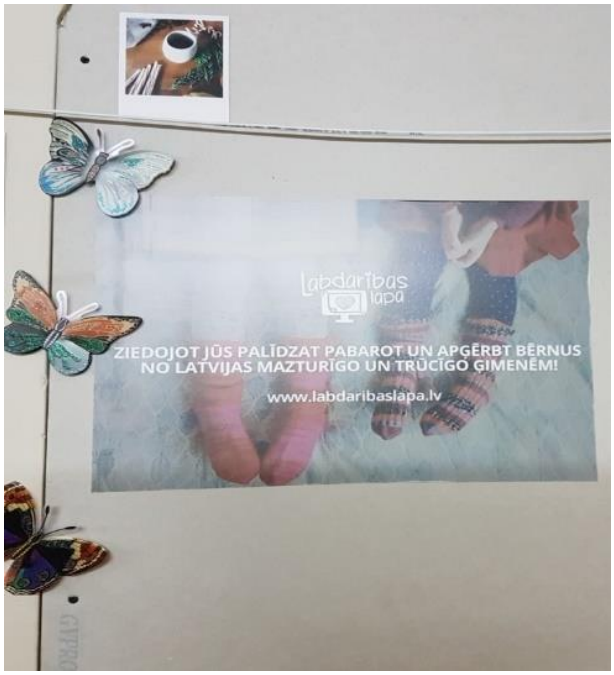


Figure 8.3.1 Charity poster

Being a *'Latvian'* in need is defined in the grammatically neutral genitive '*latvijas*' rather than adopting the more loaded and ethnically divisive adjective '*latviesu*'. The ability to access resources from this community is not ethnically or linguistically determined, rather resources are accessed by a community in which belonging is bound to financial hardship and exclusion from mainstream support (Figure 8.3.2 and Figure 8.3.3)

Figure 8.3.2 Donations received

Figure 8.3.3 Donations sorted and displayed

On a day-to-day level, within this specific example, the rather artificial and divisive groupings of ethnic Latvian/Latvian speaker and ethnic Russian/Russian speaker were of little consequence when individuals were faced with acute poverty and immediate need. When asked whether Russian families were welcomed and offered assistance, the participant who was volunteering there quite firmly confirmed that:

> *'No one coming here for help is asked about their nationality or about what language they speak. All are welcome*.'
>
> Int43: (F), 31, Charity Volunteer and P/T forecourt attendant, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

Indeed, the visible service user 'group' emerging from the evidence of this visit was that of 'socially disadvantaged mother', as the services users on my visit were entirely female. Creating groups and attributing labels as discussed in Chapter 2 is often problematic and this has some resonance in this situation. Should the warehouse, as could be viewed in discourse

or practice as a space solely for 'single mothers' or those in persistent socio-economic difficulty, exclusionary criterion is formed which would be unhelpful for those from the broader community, perhaps of a different gender or relationship status. The warehouse is keen to reduce any potential for exclusion as service users are welcomed based on their need at that point in time, regardless of their ethnicity, gender or any other socially attributed label. It's a valuable space which meets the needs of citizens and creates a wider, non-ethnicised community.

The charitable warehouse is one example of how relations appear more cooperative when viewed from the experience of those on the ground. Research has also found that grass roots charity or community initiatives are highly effective spaces for fostering membership and belonging. Studies, such as that conducted by Daley (2009) advocate that:

> '*community initiatives based on common goals or interests such as cleaning the streets or reducing crime were required, as well as opportunities for people to mix in safe, supported and shared spaces, to express issues and work together to address them.*' (Daley, 2009 p. 168)

It could be easy to dismiss Daley's findings, completed on behalf of the UK-based Joseph Rowntree Foundation, as having little relevance to Latvia. At first glance, critics could negate the importance of the Rowntree Foundations' research, as data was collected within a space and political environment very different to that of Latvia. Arguably, the UK is a state keen to openly assert more multinational credentials than Latvia and does not have the contested ethnic history associated with the Latvian citizenship debate. However, the ideas of low-level engagement and enhancement projects are often seen as a positive way of integrating the most marginalized minorities within their local communities and increasingly features in broader assessments and conceptualisations of citizenship. The parallels and possibilities for non-ethnicised engagement within such examples for Latvia are clear.

The following example of a community initiative helping to integrate a highly marginalised and politicised community is provided by way of highlighting the case in point. A study

conducted into the Roma population and their relationships with the socially deprived community of Govanhill in Glasgow highlights the valuable role of socio-civic involvement as a positive space for fostering non-ethnicised belonging (Clark 2014). Clark's (2014) study lays out a series of perceptions and negative stereotyping of the Roma in Govanhill which could arguably be interchanged with similar vertical and media-based representations of the Russian speaking community in Latvia. Discourse leads to phrases being commonly used to describe the Govanhill Roma in a negative light. Examples of these phrases include "'*They are probably all criminals*.' '*They are a nightmare for local residents.*' '*Violence and intimidation from the Roma is the norm… hanging about in gangs*.' '*Roma are making Govanhill a bad place to live... their rubbish is everywhere*'" (Clark 2014 p. 40). Similar phrases could just as easily be attributed to Russian speakers in their local communities based on commonly espoused rhetoric of politicians and media soundbites alike. Russian speakers and Roma alike find themselves labelled or placed into groupings which do not take account of individual personalities, traits, experiences or opinions. Clark's (2014) study of the *Romano Lav* (Roma Voice) 'clean green team' project highlights the way in which members of the marginalised Roma community can, to an extent 'rebrand' their group label. The location in which this project takes place is mixed, however, the Roma are often stereotyped as unwelcome neighbours, and discursively excluded from a wider community of belonging. By being positively and visibly involved in the cleaning of local streets and public spaces for the benefit of their own and their neighbours' immediate environment, this Glasgow initiative has been effective in actively challenging recurrent ethnicised stereotypes and in creating collaboration and building positive relationships at a local level (Clark 2014 pp. 43-44).

The reason for drawing upon this Glasgow project is that it sharply reminded me of a comparable event which takes place annually in Latvia. In Latvia *Lielā talka* (The Big Clean Up) is a huge movement which takes place annually and which actively promotes the cleaning of Latvia's streets, public spaces and woodland across villages, towns and cities by all residents of Latvia. This event was touched upon by many participants when the question of their own practices of community engagement was raised. It appeared that this was an activity where, in practice, ethnicity had little or no relevance, despite some attempts to link the event to a more national rhetoric. On the vertical level, *Lielā talka* (The Big Clean Up), is linked to 'good

works, country and well-being of community'(https://talkas.lv/en/the-big-clean-up), with strong associations to the restoration of independence and a broader nationalist political narrative. Another article positioned the outcomes of making neighbourhoods and wild spaces clean and green as a 'present to Latvia on her ninetieth birthday' (https://www.lvm.lv/en/news/archive/1193-the-idea-of-the-liela-talka-is-to-clean-up-all-of-latvia). Despite this clearly ethno-political rhetoric, Russian speakers were keen to be, and had been, actively involved. One unemployed Russian speaker from Daugavpils, an area associated with a large ethnic Russian community, could, from a vertical perspective, be expected to be quite distant and disengaged from such events of 'national' civic pride. However, he saw beyond the political messaging, and from a horizontal perspective, this event was one which had benefit to all. Although less inclined to be socio-civically active, this was one initiative he made a point of being involved with. He stated:

> *'I haven't really taken part in anything so far this year, but on Saturday they are clearing up local woodlands, so I will take part in that.'*
>
> Int52: (M), 39, Unemployed, Daugavpils, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

A Latvian business man from a more affluent part of Riga was also involved in the annual clean up highlighting the diversity of those involved. Within this community initiative, ethnicity and social status were irrelevant and the individual benefit of the event was stated as being of more importance than any deeper sense of national pride. He says:

> *'I make sure that the area around me is clean. I'm not picking up everybody's rubbish everywhere, but I make sure my area is clean.'*
>
> Int31: (M), 41, Business Consultant, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

Although, more generally associated with nationalist Latvian discourses, there is some evidence of the marketing of *Lielā talka* (The Big Clean Up) attempting to move away from themes of division and marginalisation. Each year the event is given a slogan to encourage participation with recent slogans including 2015- '*Those who change – survive!*'; 2018 '*We are changing Latvia, we are changing ourselves!*'; and more recently '*We plant our future: A Tree of Happiness for everyone!*' (https://talkas.lv/en/the-big-clean-up). There was also a suggestion within the data collected that despite strong cultural and historical ties to

particular community events, there is a desire for less ethnic engagement. One participant, keen to retain the importance of cultural history and who was keen on engaging with cultural events, also expressed a desire for less politicised community engagement. This was linked to Latvia's future and she says:

> *'Yes, I take part in my community. But it is different for everybody. I take part in the history because I don't want other people to forget the history. If we don't talk about it then we lose it. I also clean up the sea side with the schoolchildren. We try to do things that don't touch any political views...it has to be non-political things, try to be neutral.'*
>
> Int51: (M), 44, Security Guard, *Liepāja, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker*

When asked about socio-civic engagement or community events as spaces for more neutral interaction, there was further evidence of a range of varied non-ethnicised initiatives and events. One Latvian speaking participant noted the diminished importance of ethnicity where a common social purpose brought people together. He says:

> *'I take part in different events, car rallies and things. I like cars so...yeah. The community is stronger at big events or when something happens. In everyday you don't feel it that much. When we come together for events then we are a strong community here in Liepaja.'*
>
> Int52: (M), 39, Unemployed, Daugavpils, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

It is clear from the following response that Latvia politically and from a horizontal perspective, remains deeply committed to maintaining its cultural heritage and strengthening community links. The Latvian speaking respondent in the following testimony states:

> *'In Latvia we are very proud of who we are. That's something we try to communicate to the outside world. How we connect to nature, rituals, song festivals. Midsummer is something that everyone does, even the Russians, and I think we want to be recognised everywhere.'*
>
> Int20: (F), 33, Manager of a Business Incubator, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

What is clear is that, alongside a national pride there is a recognition, at least on a horizontal level, that events which relate to the nation state of Latvia are not the sole domain of Latvian speakers. However, this is not always communicated openly or positively at the political level.

8.4 Social exclusion beyond ethnicity: commonality of underrepresentation.

Themes of marginalisation are heavily represented within the literature and discourse of the Latvian citizenship debate, however, marginalisation in this context, as has been shown, is driven politically and manifests along ethnic lines. Citizenship continues to be measured as a status, with ethnicity the dimension most commonly discussed and researched. In arguing that understandings of citizenship need to increase the scope of investigation, this section looks at dimensions of marginalisation, overlooked in both the context of Latvian citizenship and within the broader citizenship debate. There are a number of dimensions in which marginalisation is non-ethnicised, and a commonality of exclusion emerges beyond ethnic confines.

Drawing on the work of Bacchi and Beasley (2002), Lister (2007), and Richardson (2017), it is clear that dimensions relating to the practices of 'self' or individual circumstances need further exploration and to be more centrally positioned when addressing the question of what citizenship looks like today. Bacchi and Beasley (2002), for example, highlight a "demarcation between full and lesser citizens which hinges precisely upon assumptions about bodies" (Bacchi, C. and Beasley 2002 p. 325). They link social policy making decisions to the 'institutional components' of membership, which impact on the way in which resources and political attention are focused, not always to the needs of those bodies requiring the support of these resources (Bacchi and Beasley, 2002 p. 328). Richardson draws a similar argument and notes that the approach to many studies on 'sexual citizenship', is to focus on the 'sexual' as a status, positioned within an intimate space, rather than considering 'sexual citizenship' as a practice (Richardson 2017). This reverts discussion back towards more classical and normative representations of scholarly citizenship evaluation linking status to a territorial space. Richardson (2017) argues that sexual citizenship as approached by "way of

theorising access to rights granted or denied to different social groups on the basis of sexuality', omits the impact of the individual's ability to practice citizenship or engage in forms of citizenship, less classically constructed, and does not consider the spaces in which these practices occur" (Richardson 2017 p. 211).

In considering 'who belongs' to the community of Latvia and considering themes of exclusion and marginalisation, there is one often glaring omission when discussing excluded social groups, namely that of the disabled. Highlighted by Lister (2007), "while a number of disability theorists have framed their analysis using the concept of citizenship, it is rare for citizenship theorists to incorporate disability in their work" (Lister2007 p. 53). It is here that the lived citizenship approach adopted within this thesis provides the opportunity to broaden discussions on belonging and marginalisation by including a section of society rarely visible within wider citizenship debate. Related, again, to the work of Bacchi and Beasley (2002), Lister's (2007) calls for more dedicated research, brings into sharp focus the responsibility of government "to house and feed those bodies", and consider the space in which disabled bodies operate (Bacchi and Beasley 2002 pp. 324-325).

When speaking to participants about areas of marginalisation where the government could be seen to do more, the non-ethnicised issue of disability was frequently raised within the interviews. For one Latvian speaking participant, the issues around disability and her inability to access appropriate services and help for her disabled son was a key reason for her leaving Latvia for a new life abroad. In an emotional interview she tells of her motivation for moving to the UK. She states:

> *'If I need some help for my son, I can get help here, but even though I can ask for help in Latvia, in my own tongue, nobody helps. He has epilepsy and we had to buy medicine in Latvia, but nobody helps with this. This is actually why I am still in England.'*
>
> Int16: (F), 38, Waitress, Peterborough, UK (urban) – Latvian speaker

It is striking to hear her despair at the lack of support from what she assumes to be membership of her national community, a community elevated and differentiated by the language spoken. Yet despite the ethnic rhetoric which positions Latvian speakers above

other groups and ethnicities, she is herself now both physically distanced from that membership having moved to the UK, and emotionally disconnected also. Another participant tells of the struggles within her own family and of the challenges in accessing help and support:

> *'I volunteer in a Children's Home, where children have disability. These children really need help. My brother is disabled. He doesn't have a left leg. And it is difficult to get information to get help for him. For example, there are no website where we can go and read all the information. We just have to speak with other people who are disabled and hope they will give us some information. You learn that Social Services should be doing things for you, but you have to find out and go and ask. Nobody will come to help you and you must be strong*.'
>
> Int42: (F), 25, Pet Shop Assistant and P/T Student, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Russian speaker

It is noted within the limited literature on disability as a form of non ethnicised marginalization that "disabled people in post-Soviet countries live in a context of weak safety nets, unstable politics and ambivalent civil society" (Rassell and Iarskaia-Smirnova 2014 p. 1). Where nation building policies focus on consolidating communities along ethnic lines, this is often to the detriment of wider societal issues. Lister (2007) argues that "disability thus represents an important terrain for the theoretical challenge of addressing the tension between citizenship's universalist promise and the recognition of difference" (Lister 2007 p. 54). This sentiment was expressed by several participants, with one right leaning Latvian political activist respondent noting:

> *'The attitude towards the disabled and elderly people here is dramatically sad. If we judge our society by looking at how we judge our weak, that criteria, if you use that then you must judge that we are at a low level of growth.'*
>
> Int33: (M), 37, State Pension Administrator and political Candidate, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

Another interviewee, identifying as a Latvian speaker, suggested that Latvia was more concerned with how it as a country looked to outsiders, particularly in respect of tourist areas and travel infrastructure. Again, clear differences emerge between both vertical and horizontal perspectives. Whilst a statist perspective could argue there is ongoing

infrastructural improvement, from a lived experience perspective improvements made are merely superficial and don't meet the practical needs of Latvia's residents. It was stated:

> *'Latvia is getting better, but it has not really improved that much. You don't even need to be disabled. Sometimes you might have a kid and you are walking with a stroller and that's really complicated because of no accessibility. If you go to the Old Town you can't walk around there with a stroller, never mind a wheelchair.'*
>
> Int20: (F), 33, Manager of a Business Incubator, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

Proud of Latvia's history and acknowledging the importance of the conservation of the historic area, the participant then went on to reflect on more modern infrastructure projects, which did little to improve access for a broad range of citizens, in effect, marginalizing the access to transport across all strata of society. She says:

> *'The Old Town is maybe unique because of the history, but generally people don't think about it that much. There is a train that comes from a nearby town to Riga and they refurbished the platform and the access in the station. But when the train comes it has 5 very steep steps and even if you are with someone, I don't know how you can get in and out. Even with a bike it is a challenge.'*
>
> Int20: (F), 33, Manager of a Business Incubator, Riga, Latvia (urban) – Latvian speaker

The nature of inclusive citizenship and meaningful citizenship is that all members of a community should have access to resources and be able to utilise those resources to enhance their daily experiences. In relation to healthcare and associated social provision, the state's focus on nationalizing priorities rather than addressing real life problems was seen as a shortcoming, fracturing what could be conceived to be the community of Latvia. A fissure between those experiencing the need for social care and those who do not is again opening up between grass roots membership of the community of Latvia. Drawing again on the participant who moved from Latvia due to her son's condition, she highlights contrasting attitudes towards those with a medical condition or disability in the UK and within her home country. Despite suggestions in some of the emerging literature within this field which suggest that professional services are improving, there are still attitudinal issues which are leading to marginalization. Rassell and Iarskaia-Smirnova (2014) note that "societal opinion

and media coverage are lagging behind professional reorientation" in regards to disabled members of the community (Rassell and Iarskaia-Smirnova 2014 pp. 12-13). The participant details her contrasts and concerns and tells us:

> *'There is a future here (UK) for my son, not in Latvia, which is very hard to say. He can work here and maybe think about a family. In Latvia, for his whole life he would live with me. He would just live, just exist. No work, no future for him.'*
>
> Int16: (F), 38, Waitress, Peterborough, UK (urban) – Latvian speaker

A wider discussion on marginalised groups, such as those who feel excluded from the Latvian community due to their age, gender, disability, sexuality, religious beliefs or other such reason is beyond the scope of this thesis but would form the basis of some interesting and valuable future research. Clearly, as is outlined within the study of marginalised groups in Latvia, as well as in other post-Soviet states, there is a need for more voices to be heard, particularly from a horizontal perspective. It is hoped that by opening up a conversation within this thesis, that this work can be advanced. It is, for now, argued that excluding such conversations from Latvia's citizenship debate impacts upon membership and belonging, and challenges the fabric of a vertically constructed community.

8.5 Chapter Conclusions

As has been shown, belonging to a community and having an active membership in that community, in many ways embodies practices of inclusivity. Despite divisive discourse, there is evidence of longstanding and continuing social interaction and engagement across and within the two largest ethnic communities in Latvia. For many respondents, ethnicity was becoming less of a determining factor within their day to day lives, although division still exists having been perpetuated from a top-down level. Community initiatives are seen as valuable spaces for non-ethnicised engagement and there is evidence of good inter-ethnic social links within Latvia. There does, however, remain a commonality of exclusion and marginalisation which results from poor infrastructure, limited social provision, and the discourse of difference around issues such as disability. As has been shown, ethnicity is not

always a key dimension of exclusion, and a lack of political focus on day-to-day social issues sees a departure from vertical constructs of what it means to be a citizen in Latvia today.

Chapter 9. Findings and Conclusions

9.1 Thesis Conclusions

The main focus of this thesis has been to answer the question 'What does Latvian citizenship look like today?'. As shown throughout the theoretical analysis and empirical data analysis, traditional and normative approaches to citizenship remain problematic as they fail to address everyday realities and detail how they contrast and intersect with macro political direction and perspectives. Citizenship approaches which retain a narrow focus on state centric narratives and locales are challenged by a more global context of freedom of movement, migration and subsequently renegotiated expressions of identity and belonging. Locating citizenship within the sphere of politics and of territorial boundaries, it has been argued, is no longer a reliable indicator of the relationship of the individual to a state, or indeed of individuals to each other. This thesis responds to the growing calls of scholars such as Lister (2007), Le Feuvre and Roseneil (2014) and Kallio et al. (2020) to highlight the varied and diverse ways in which citizenship manifests, with practices of inclusion and exclusion, extending beyond ethnicity in Latvia, and across the wider debate on citizenship more broadly. In applying a lived citizenship approach, the horizontal perspectives expressed through discursive practices and everyday interactions provide a more detailed and nuanced assessment of how citizenship manifests today.

Traditionally, community is theoretically constructed as a space offering membership via inclusion and an expectation of members to have access to resources and rights in acceptance of assumed responsibilities (McMillan and Chavis 1986). However, membership of a vertically constructed community of Latvia is being challenged. We see the emergence of non-ethnicised marginalisation, and the creation of a new 'them and us' narrative, emerging from the testimony of Latvia's residents and arising as a consequence of political decisions and behaviours. The views of Latvia's residents, regardless of ethnicity, indicated that Latvia's nationalist political direction, whilst attempting to shake off the legacy of the Soviet past, remains backwards looking, with little visible change in political or social policy or in the policy makers holding power themselves. Political behaviours were seen to work in favour of

governing elites with continued expressions of mistrust from individuals across both dominant ethnic communities in Latvia. Patterns of sustained ethnicised political rhetoric, limited potential for new parties or little in the way of evolving political representation, are seen as proving ultimately detrimental to the consolidation of a national community of Latvia and to constructs of meaningful citizenship. The practices associated with citizenship, such as engagement with politics through regular and considered voting remain underdeveloped, with much of the blame, from a grass roots perspective, being levelled at a media heavily influenced by national political rhetoric and with little in the way of concrete social change for individuals being offered by politicians. The growing gulf between elites and individuals shows that formal citizenship is somewhat 'hollow', as the resources and ability to effect change are limited and constrained. In continuing to pursue national and ethnic self-preservation, ruling elites have opened up a non-ethnicised chasm of disenchantment and disengagement between individuals and the state.

The mentality of 'them and 'us' was continually reflected discursively and was not only expressed in relation to domestic socio-political relations but was also seen to be emerging from structural changes such as EU membership. The thesis considered the question 'How has structural political change impacted on citizenship and on the formation of a wider community of Latvia?' and findings show that again, there is an 'us and them' mentality arising from structural changes. The impact of closure and loss of localised industries and employment in outlying areas contrasts with more visible infrastructure improvements and regeneration being more visible in the capital Riga. The fracturing of a vertically imagined national community was also impacted by persistent socio-economic challenges, furthering the disconnect between elites and individuals. Political rhetoric around ethnicity was seen to offer little practical solutions for day-to-day issues and concerns, such as the low wage economy and limited social welfare provision. Unlike other areas of Europe, where levels of support for the EU are under pressure, support for the EU remained high, with positives being recorded as: inward investment, freedom of movement and low-level conveniences, such as the lack of necessity for currency conversion. EU membership also adds a dimension to the citizenship debate, with respondents having the scope to align new self-identification with a sense of being 'European'.

In relation to the question 'Do we see the emergence of a broader 'Latvian community' whereby individuals see themselves as 'belonging' not only to Latvia, but to each other, beyond divisions of ethnicity and formal citizenship?' it was found that national issues, such as language, remain effective in mobilising political engagement. However, for many respondents, ethnicity was becoming less of a determining factor within their day to day lives. The politicisation of language has led to a disadvantage for Latvian speakers within the business sphere, as employers with increasing transnational interactions look to hire candidates with a good knowledge of both Russian and Latvian language. Furthermore, Latvia was deemed to be at a new juncture as more nuanced patterns of linguistic use and fluid linguistic self-identification labels and practices emerge. Participants with the hitherto vertically assigned label 'Russian speaker' discursively and through practices of integration, defined themselves more fluidly, with a prevalence towards Latvian-Russian as an identifier, as opposed to Russian speaker from Latvia.

Structural change has also impacted on the construction of a broader Latvian community for Latvian speakers. As highlighted by Rabikowska (2010), new versions of normality, challenging old beliefs, old opinions and old ways of interacting, are becoming more commonplace due to the high level of outward migration experienced in Latvia post 2004. Latvian speaking respondents who had moved abroad frequently discussed a renegotiation of their identity and belonging, as the practice of integration within their new host countries placed them 'out of step', even on the most banal of interactions, with those who remained in Latvia. Changes in lifestyle and new experiences opened up new thinking on issues such as sexuality, gender and ethnicity, often unrelated to domestic political policies and social norms in Latvia. These fissures between 'old perspectives' and 'new thinking' were experienced by members of both ethnic communities and these new perspectives contrasted with state narratives of both Latvia and Russia. 'Othering' was also present within those who stayed and those who remained when framed within a socio-economic context. Whilst there was a pragmatic acceptance that socio-economic crisis had been a push factor in outward migration, there was also a sense of 'selling out' towards those who left from those who remained. Responses suggested resentment around the fiscal and financial burden of

continuing to develop Latvia, with the inference being made that this had increased for those who remained. 'Othering' was discursively emphasised in this respect, and for those who had emigrated the likelihood of return was neither financially desirable or practical for family reasons, even where cultural and emotional ties to Latvia remained strong.

As has been shown, belonging to a community and having an active membership in that community, in many ways embodies practices of inclusivity. Despite divisive discourse, there is evidence of longstanding and continuing social interaction and engagement across and within the two largest ethnic communities in Latvia, with many respondents noting 'normal' relationships with Russian speakers. These were found to be positive and pre-existing relations, challenging conventional political and scholarly positions.

Most notably from the findings, there is evidence of a commonality of exclusion and marginalisation resulting from limited social provision which further exacerbates challenging financial realities in everyday life. In this respect, ethnicity is secondary to the daily needs of individuals, and association and affiliation to membership of a national community of Latvia is being pushed further away from Latvian speakers on this basis. The fabric of 'who belongs' is being recalibrated by individuals themselves and has long term implications for any vertically constructed community of Latvia.

9.2 Thesis Contribution

The premise of this thesis 'Who belongs? An exploration of Latvian citizenship through the eyes of lived experience' has been to offer a fresh and innovate way in considering the ways which citizenship manifests today in Latvia, with a particular emphasis on grass roots perspectives and experiences. The approach has contrasted political direction with the lived experience of individuals, both in Latvia and in the UK, thereby opening up new spaces in which to consider how citizenship continues to be negotiated and renegotiated beyond the constraints of territorial boundaries and ethnicity within Latvia's citizenship debate. The research further contributes to existing work on post-Soviet transformation, identity and belonging.

A central contribution of this thesis has been to move the citizenship debate away from political and back to the individual by deconstructing and then reconstructing the concept of an 'imagined', as identified by Anderson (2006), Latvian community. On a political level, the community of Latvia has been constructed around formal citizenship. Authors, including Ekmanis (2019), note that by considering the community of Latvia from a purely political or vertical perspective, an assumed and inferred homogeneity around themes of identity and belonging becomes prevalent, which in turn misrepresents the lived realities of both Latvian and Russian speakers alike. This thesis has therefore incorporated both vertical and horizontal perspectives and provided valuable participant testimonies, thus contributing to the synchronisation of identity formation and constructs of citizenship across both major ethnic communities in Latvia. The inclusion of lived experience within this thesis also moves the citizenship debate beyond the polarizing representations of citizenship described by Burchill (1995) and Bacchi and Beasley (2002), where it is noted that citizenship is viewed contrastingly as public or private, active or passive. It has been shown that lived citizenship provides a more representative context from which to address the relationship between the state and the individual by incorporating less formal and more intimate insights (Lister 2003; Kallio et al. 2020). This thesis contributes by exploring and diffusing some of these tensions and looks, more holistically, at what it 'means' to be a citizen based upon everyday realities.

The thesis also deviates from normative approaches which tend to base conclusions on marginalisation by drawing from the experiences and opportunities of designated and hitherto conceptualised marginalised groups. As has been argued throughout, group labels, whilst helpful in identifying those often excluded from mainstream membership, only tell a fraction of the story. Often, as has been shown, the classification of broad group binds together a diverse range of individuals with distinct and particular experiences as a homogeneous group and fails to engage with a more personal narrative from which a more nuanced picture emerges. In adopting Latvia as a case study, this thesis provides an interesting context from which to explore citizenship and uncouples formal citizenship and community and instead relates community to broader expressions of identity and belonging. As highlighted by Birka (2013), the concept of belonging is centrally rooted within state

driven policy within Latvia however, as evidenced, there are clearly more nuanced expressions of belonging emerging from the testimony of both Latvian and Russian speakers. The emergence of a broader identification with the concept of citizenship has resonance, not only for Latvia and Latvian policy makers, but informs the citizenship debate beyond Latvia as part of a wider discussion around issues democratisation and legitimacy. Noted by Birka (2013), "the state shapes the framework within which democracy can operate, but democracy cannot function without people who feel a belonging to the particular state and feel a responsibility for it" (Birka 2013 p. 11). The findings from this case study highlight the importance of taking a more multidimensional approach to understanding citizenship, as states wrestle with issues of democracy and legitimacy in an increasingly globalised world.

The adoption of a lived citizenship approach provided an opportunity for this thesis to add to a growing body of literature calling for citizenship to be considered in ways which are more "temporally, spatially and relationally sensitive" (Wood 2017 p. 1178). As highlighted by Wood (2017), a shift towards a globalised world has destabilised thinking around citizenship, with fixed boundaries of state and territory no longer the sole perimeters within which the construct, and the practice, of citizenship exist (Wood 2017). This change, it has been shown, impacts significantly upon the characteristics of traditionally constructed membership of communities of belonging. By encapsulating new testimony and discursive practices of citizenship within both the context of 'home' and, in relation to outward migration 'host' countries, this thesis makes a significant contribution to the citizenship debate in Latvia and beyond. The thesis further reiterates calls to deviate from normative approaches to citizenship, which often overlook the importance of agency and the construction, at a horizontal level, of what it 'means' to be a citizen. Citizenship, it has been shown, is nuanced and fluid and exists within the "mundane spatio-temporalities of everyday life" (Dickinson et al. 2008. p. 102). This work has incorporated the testimony of lived experience of participants and through their discursive practice of citizenship, a deeper understanding and insight into political, economic and social aspect of citizenship emerges. By drawing from both vertical and horizontal perspectives, this thesis highlights the significance of spatiality and temporality at the intersection of these perspectives, as both space and time impact upon more nuanced constructs of citizenship. The thesis adds to work such as that of Wood

(2017), calling for “opportunities for new, non-territorial ways of thinking about citizenship, such as forms of cosmopolitan and multi-dimensional citizenship that operates simultaneously at local, regional, nation-state, and global levels” (Wood 2017 pp. 1180-1181) to be considered.

Additionally, this research adds to existing literature on the Baltic States and moves the discussion of post-Soviet development forwards from merely the point of restored independence and the acquisition of EU membership towards contemporary socio-economic and socio-civic issues impacting upon the individual’s relationship with the state today. The study also looks at the potential for future community engagement both from vertical and horizontal perspectives, this again being an area where more in depth research would be welcomed.

9.3 Research Limitations and Future Research

As discussed in Chapter 3, there are a number of limitations within this study, not least the scope of the study, time and resources available. A fuller discussion of the challenges of building, completing and submitting a PhD thesis as a ‘non-traditional student’ is detailed within the Methodology chapter and these limitations have had a substantial impact upon the project design and the final thesis. This is also noted as an area where greater understanding of the challenges faced, particularly by primary carers and women, could be expanded by further study. Ideally, a broader range of locations and participants could have been captured within data collection and a more ethnographical approach could have been applied, adding additional observations and insights into the practices of citizenship on an everyday basis. These are areas into which additional future research could be conducted.

Some of the most poignant interviews related to a real sense of disparity in opportunity for many who find themselves linked together by a commonality of disenfranchisement from the mainstream. Chapters 6 and 7 provided a particular focus on the general impact of socio-economic challenges, however, as discussed in Chapter 8, there are a number of areas, including that of disability, which continue to impact on the socio-economic position of

individuals and their families and carers, in additional to impacting more widely on the sense of being an included and valuable member of a broader community. As espoused by Lister (2007), the area of disability is one example of where there is tension within the citizenship debate, with lived experience of disability highlighting the gulf between citizenship's promise of delivering rights and protections and the reality of an everyday struggle to achieve recognition of difference (Lister 2007 p. 54). This area remains very much under researched, particularly in the sphere of the post-soviet literature which deals with state and societal development, political policy and identity and it is recommended that further research is conducted in this regard. This recommendation is pertinent for studies on these themes extending beyond the geopolitical sphere of Central and Eastern Europe.

This thesis is situated within a growing body work of work which views citizenship in a broader context than normative approaches and has included a range of practices associated with citizenship, in addition considering the ways in which citizenship in enacted. The practices of citizenship and the forms of citizenship explored within this thesis does not represent an exhaustive list and citizenship studies continue to evolve. Whilst an increasing number of publications and studies continue to consider age, gender, sexuality and religious beliefs within discussions pertaining to citizenship and identity, this thesis was limited in scope and a deeper exploration of these areas would form the basis of some interesting and valuable future research.

Insightful studies into research of migration and the impact of this on the country of original are also recommended, with some valuable work being beginning to be undertaken in this field. All too often, the literature continues to focus on normative practices, where groups and individuals, such as the elderly, are frequently disregarded, if indeed initially considered at all. It is in the work of studies such as that of Lulle and King, (2016), who challenge, for example, the normative assumption that migrants tend to be young or middle aged and look beyond this to examine and highlight the experiences of and attitudes towards older, and in particular, older female, migrants. A broader range of perspectives is to be welcomed. In relation to outward migration, this study has drawn some initial conclusions pertaining to the chasm of rural and urban experiences in Latvia, resulting from structural change. Again, as

part of broader work on migratory experiences, more emphasis could be devoted to exploring the impact on home communities in outlying and under researched locales.

9.4 Afterword

As this thesis was being prepared for final submission, significant geopolitical shifts were being experienced with the mass movement and accumulation of troops and artillery on Russia's border with Ukraine. On February 24th 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine and heavy bombardment began, deemed by Russia to be a 'special military operation' and deemed by the Ukraine and the Western world as an all-out act of war.

Chapter 5 of this thesis focuses on 'The influence of Russia on Latvia's community of Belonging' with many respondents noting caution in dealing with Russia, with many respondents also sceptical about Russia's intention to extend deeper into Western territory and risk further conflict with NATO and the EU. The sense of security afforded by NATO membership was seen as mitigating fears around Latvia's own territorial integrity and geopolitical security. The events of the Ukraine invasion have created deep political concern and security fears, not only in Latvia and neighbouring Baltic States, but across states such as Poland and Moldova, itself locked in frozen conflict with Russia in the area of Transnistria. As high numbers of refugees and displaced individuals cross West into Ukraine's neighbouring countries and military hardware from the EU and the US moves East, calls for a clear reiteration of NATO's guarantee to protect member states in the region intensifies.

It could be argued that, in this context, some of the arguments surrounding relations with Russia and the testimonies expressing confidence in Latvia's geopolitical security are therefore negated. However, reflecting on this, it seems to me that it is ever more important, if not vital, to ensure that voices of positivity and hope, given by ordinary people, and as provided within this thesis, are heard and continue to be heard. This war is continually referred to as 'Putin's war' within public and media discourse, a war which has been enacted on macro level policy, and completely at odds with the views, desires and perspectives of very many ordinary individuals across Russia and beyond. This thesis, in consistently

highlighting the tensions between vertical and horizontal perspectives, continues in this afterword to emphasise that the actions of elites are often far from representative of objectives and perspectives at a grassroots level. People, as is said, are people, and politics is often far removed from the sphere of everyday reality. Now, more than ever, this prevailing sentiment should be taken into account.

List of Appendices

Appendix I: List of Interviewees

Timescale for interviews: August 2016- April 2017

List of the research participants (interviewees)

	Location	Urban or Rural Locale	Gender	Age	Occupation	Primary Language Spoken	Self -attributed Ethnicity	Interview Recorded Y/N	Additional Notes
1	Aberdeenshire Scotland UK	Rural	Female	40	Former Home Economics Teacher, now stay at home mum	Latvian	Latvian	Y	Married to an Indian national, 3 children
2	Aberdeen Scotland UK	Urban	Female	36	Postal Worker	Latvian	Latvian	Y	Married, 2 children
3	Moray Scotland UK	Rural	Female	34	Self Employed	Latvian	Latvian	Y	Married to a Lithuanian
4	Edinburgh Scotland UK	Urban	Female	26	Parliamentary Assistant, Scottish Parliament	Latvian	Latvian	Y	Spent her teenage years in Ireland
5	Inverness Scotland UK	Urban	Female	28	Self-employed Physiotherapist	Latvian	Latvian	Y	
6	Inverness Scotland UK	Urban	Female	31	Admin Assistant	Latvian	Latvian	Y	Attends informal Latvian Saturday school

7	Inverness-shire Scotland UK	Rural	Female	31	HNC Student	Latvian	Latvian	Y	Founded informal Latvian school-young widow
8	Fife Scotland UK	Rural	Female	29	Care worker	Latvian	Latvian	Y	Worked in banking before moving to the UK
9	Kirkcaldy, Fife Scotland UK	Urban	Female	30	Customer Services Officer	Russian	Russian-Latvian	Y	Parents are Russian speaking non-citizens.
10	Livingston Scotland UK	Urban	Female	39	Healthcare Team Leader	Latvian	Latvian	Y	
11	Edinburgh Scotland UK	Urban	Male	28	Retail Stock Control Manager	Latvian	Latvian	Y	
12	Edinburgh Scotland UK	Urban	Female	27	Cleaner	Latvian	Latvian	Y	
13	Glasgow Scotland UK	Urban	Female	21	Student	Russian	Latvian from a Russian speaking family	Y	
14	Glasgow Scotland UK	Urban	Female	19	Student	Russian	Latvian Russian speaker	Y	“Being from Latvia shapes me more than being Russian”

15	Bradford England UK	Urban	Female	23	Bar worker	Latvian	Latvian	Y	Had found work in the local Latvian club.
16	Peterborough England UK	Urban	Female	38	Waitress	Latvian	Latvian	Y	Has a disabled son which prompted her move to the UK
17	Nottingham England UK	Urban	Female	36	Teaching Assistant	Latvian	Latvian	Y	Been in the UK since 2002.
18	Nottingham England UK	Urban	Female	27	Self-employed Beautician	Latvian	Latvian	Y	
19	Nottingham England UK	Urban	Male	34	Supervisor in a large car parts national supplier	Latvian	Latvian	Y	Returns 'home' rarely – too expensive.
20	Riga Latvia	Urban	Female	33	Manager of a business incubator	Latvian	Latvian	Y	
21	Riga Latvia	Urban	Female	26	Business Consultant	Russian	Latvian-Russian	Y	
22	Riga Latvia	Urban	Female	35	Creative Director	Latvian	Latvian	Y	
23	Riga Latvia	Urban	Male	34	Business Consultant	Latvian	Latvian	Y	
24	Riga Latvia	Urban	Male	33	Business Manger	Latvian	Latvian	Y	
25	Riga Latvia	Urban	Female	24	Post Production Assistant in Cinematics	Latvian	Latvian	Y	

26	Riga Latvia	Urban	Male	34	Entrepreneur and Business Consultant	Latvian	Latvian	Y	Was keen to use English as a more 'global' language.
27	Riga Latvia	Urban	Male	45	Pharmacist	Latvian		Y	
28	Riga Latvia	Urban	Male	Not given	Artisan jewellery maker	Latvian	Latvian Canadian expat	Y	Moved from Canada, his family expats from Latvia
29	Riga Latvia	Urban	Male	31	Civil society Consultant and activist	Latvian	Latvian	Y	
30	Riga Latvia	Urban	Female	32	Doctor	Latvian	Latvian	Y	
31	Riga Latvia	Urban	Male	41	Business Consultant	Latvian	Latvian	Y	
32	Riga Latvia	Urban	Male	29	Building Inspector	Russian	Latvian-Russian	Y	
33	Riga Latvia	Urban	Male	37	State Pension Administrator (and political candidate)	Latvian	Latvian	Y	Political candidate for a right wing Latvian party
34	Sigulda Latvia	Rural	Female	27	Restaurant Manager	Latvian	Latvian	Y	
35	Sigulda Latvia	Rural	Male	31	Hospitality Marketing Manager	Latvian	Latvian	Y	

36	Sigulda Latvia	Rural	Male	Not given	Street Vendor (selling home produced cooled birch water)	Latvian	Latvian		
37	Sigulda Latvia	Rural	Female	41	Florist	Latvian	Latvian	Y	
38	Sigulda Latvia	Rural	Female	34	Court Registrar/Administrator	Latvian	Latvian	Y	
39	Riga Latvia	Urban	Male	27	Highly Skilled Craftsman	Russian	Not Latvian or Russian-	Y	"I'm Latvian with Russian family"
40	Riga Latvia	Urban	Male	30	Software Engineer	Latvian	Latvian		Originally from Jēkabpils
41	Riga Latvia	Urban	Male	31	Garage Owner and mechanic	Latvian	Latvian	Y	
42	Riga Latvia	Urban	Female	25	Pet shop assistant and part time student	Russian or Latvian	Mixed heritage	Y	I have no national identity- I am a person of the world
43	Riga Latvia	Urban	Female	31	Charity volunteer, petrol garage attendant	Latvian	Latvian	Y	
44	Riga Latvia	Urban	Female	20	Cleaner	Latvian	Latvian	Y	
45	*Liepāja* Latvia	Urban	Female	26	Management student	Latvian	Mixed parentage Latvian-Russian	Y	

46	*Liepāja* Latvia	Urban	Female	35	Mum of 6, restores prams	Latvian	Latvian	Y	
47	*Liepāja* Latvia	Urban	Female	27	Head waitress	Latvian	Latvian	Y	
48	*Liepāja* Latvia	Urban (from rural village)	Male	36	Unemployed. Ad hoc selling of crafts and produce at market.	Latvian	Latvian	Y	This man was very poor and living/working with his mum.
49	*Liepāja* Latvia	Urban	Female	23	Student- Information technology	Latvian	Latvian	Y	Lived in the UK for a while and returned to Latvia.
50	*Liepāja* Latvia	Urban	Male	45	Bus driver	Latvian	Latvian	Y	
51	*Liepāja* Latvia	Urban	Male	44	Security Guard	Latvian	Latvian	Y	
52	Daugavpils Latvia	Urban	Male	39	Unemployed	Russian	Russian	Y	
53	Daugavpils Latvia	Urban	Male	18	Job Centre worker	Russian	Russian-Latvian, but more Slavic	Y	Varied mixed heritage
54	Daugavpils Latvia	Urban	Female	23	Student and part time Advertising assistant	Russian	Latvian from Latgale	Y	
55	Daugavpils Latvia	Urban	Female	21	Hairdresser, on maternity leave	Russian	Russian	Y	

56	Daugavpils Latvia	Urban	Female	21	Unemployed, but on a supported Job centre programme	Russian	Latvian with Russian character	Y	“I am Latvian. I was born here”
57	Daugavpils Latvia	Urban	Female	37	Barista	Latvian	Latvian	Y	

Appendix II Participant Information Sheet (page 1)

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Participant information Sheet

Research Title: Latvia as a civic state? Examining modes of identity and civic participation post EU accession.

Researcher Details: Paula Christie
Email: [redacted]
Telephone: [redacted]

Project Supervisor: Professor David Smith
Email: David.Smith@glasgow.ac.uk
Telephone 00 44 141 330 5254

Invitation to participate

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to examine understandings of citizenship and civic engagement in Latvia following EU accession. The study will consider political and civic behaviours as experienced by individuals. This project is expected to be completed by September 2018.

Appendix III Participant Information Sheet (page 2)

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to take part as a current or former resident of Latvia. A total of approximately 75 participants will be involved with this project.

Do I have to take part?

Taking part in the research is entirely voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you are entirely free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be required to attend an interview at a mutually convenient time and location. Interviews will last around one hour. Interviews will only be recorded where it is deemed necessary to assist the research, and with your signed consent.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information collected about you during the course of the research will be kept confidential and kept in secure storage at all times during this project. Personal data will be destroyed upon completion of the research project. Upon completion of the project research material may be retained in secure storage for future research. You will be identified by a pseudonym in the published research and any identifying details will be removed so that you cannot be recognised. Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of this study and any subsequently completed manuscript will be presented as a PhD thesis at the University of Glasgow. The results may also be used in future publications including journal publications, books and conference papers. A written summary of results will be made available on request.

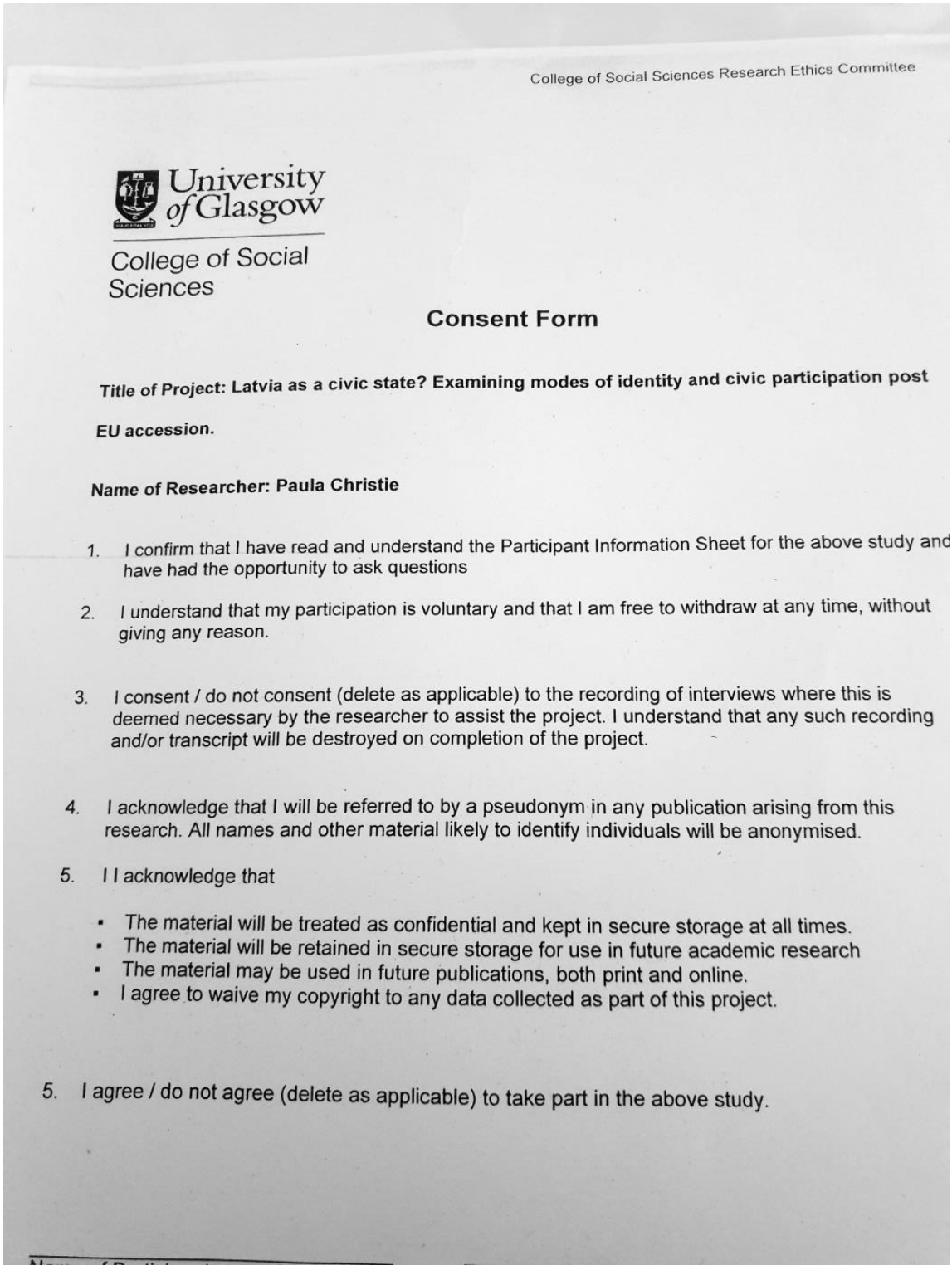
Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed by the College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

Contact for Further Information

Full details of the researcher and research supervisor are provided above. If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research project, you can contact the College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer Dr Muir Houston, email: Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk

Appendix IV Consent Form



College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Consent Form

Title of Project: Latvia as a civic state? Examining modes of identity and civic participation post EU accession.

Name of Researcher: Paula Christie

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the Participant Information Sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
3. I consent / do not consent (delete as applicable) to the recording of interviews where this is deemed necessary by the researcher to assist the project. I understand that any such recording and/or transcript will be destroyed on completion of the project.
4. I acknowledge that I will be referred to by a pseudonym in any publication arising from this research. All names and other material likely to identify individuals will be anonymised.
5. I I acknowledge that
   - The material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.
   - The material will be retained in secure storage for use in future academic research
   - The material may be used in future publications, both print and online.
   - I agree to waive my copyright to any data collected as part of this project.

5. I agree / do not agree (delete as applicable) to take part in the above study.

Bibliography

Aasland, Aadne & Fløtten, Tone (2001) 'Ethnicity and Social Exclusion in Estonia and Latvia', *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol 53:7 pp. 1023-1049.

Agarin, Timofey (2010) *A Cat's Lick: Democratisation and minority communities in the post-Soviet Baltic* Rodopi, Amsterdam.

Anderson, Benedict (2006) *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. Verso books.

Ruta, Aidis, Mickiewicz, Tomasz Marek & Sauka, Arnis (2011) 'Small- and Medium-Sized Businesses' Growth Expectations and Financial Performance in Latvia: Does Ethnicity Matter?', *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 42:3, pp. 359-378.

Aistara, Guntra A. (2015) 'Good, Clean, Fair … and Illegal: Paradoxes of Food Ethics in Post-Socialist Latvia', *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 46:3, pp. 283-298.

Ares, Macarena. and Hernández, Enrique. (2017) 'The corrosive effect of corruption on trust in politicians: Evidence from a natural experiment', *Research & Politics*, *4*(2).

Bacchi, C.L. and Beasley, C. (2002) 'Citizen bodies: Is embodied citizenship a contradiction in terms?', *Critical social policy*, *22*(2), pp. 324-352.

Barry, K., 2006. 'Home and away: The construction of citizenship in an emigration context'. *NYUL Rev.*, *81*, p. 11.

Beiner, Ronald., ed. (1995). *Theorizing Citizenship*. State University of New York Press, 352 pp.

Berkowitz, P., Hardy, S., Muravska, T. and Bachtler, J. (2016) *EU Cohesion Policy: reassessing performance and direction*. London, New York: Routledge.

Bernstein, Basil (1999) 'Vertical and horizontal discourse: An essay', *British journal of sociology of Education*, *20*(2), pp. 157-173.

Berzina, Ieva (2018) 'Political trust and Russian media in Latvia', *Journal on Baltic Security*, *4*(2), pp. 2-9.

Bessinger, Mark R. (2008) 'A New Look at Ethnicity and Democratization', *Journal of Democracy,* 19:3, pp. 85-97

Bhandar, D. (2004) 'Renormalizing citizenship and life in Fortress North America', *Citizenship studies*, *8*(3), pp. 261-278.

Birka, Ieva (2016) 'Expressed attachment to Russia and social integration: the case of young Russian speakers in Latvia, 2004–2010', *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 47(2), pp. 219-238

Bloemraad, I. and Sheares, A. (2017) 'Understanding membership in a world of global migration:(How) does citizenship matter?', *International Migration Review*, *51*(4), pp. 823-867.

Boswell, Christina, and Geddes, Andrew (2010) *Migration and mobility in the European Union*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Boulden, Jane and Kymlicka, Will, eds. (2015) *International Approaches to Governing Ethnic Diversity,* Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Brubaker, Rogers (1992) *Nationhood in France and Germany*. Cambridge.

Brubaker, Rogers (1996) *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the national question in the New Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Brubaker, Rogers (2004) *Ethnicity Without Groups*, Harvard University Press.

Brubaker, Rogers; Feischmidt, Margit; Fox, John; Grancea, Liana (2006) *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*. Princeton University Press, Oxfordshire.

Bryman, Allan (2015) *A Social Research Methods,* 5th ed*.,* Oxford University Press (e-book).

Budrytė, Dovilė (2005) *Taming Nationalism? Political Community Building in the Post-Soviet Baltic States.* Ashgate Aldershot.

Burrell, Kathy (2010) 'Staying, returning, working and living: Key themes in current academic research undertaken in the UK on migration movements from Eastern Europe', *Social Identities*, *16*(3), pp. 297-308.

Campbell, Steve; Greenwood, Melanie; Prior, Sarah; Shearer, T., Walkem, Kerrie; Young, Sarah; Bywaters, Danielle and Walker, Kim (2020) 'Purposive sampling: complex or simple? Research case examples', *Journal of Research in Nursing*, *25*(8), pp. 652-661.

Castles, Stephen (2010) 'Understanding global migration: A social transformation perspective', *Journal of ethnic and migration studies*, *36*(10), pp. 1565-1586.

Charmaz, Kathy (2014) *Constructing Grounded Theory 2nd Edition.* Sage, London

Chandra, Kanchan (2005) 'Ethnic parties and democratic stability', *Perspectives on politics*, pp.235-252.

Cheskin, Ammon (2013) 'Exploring Russian-Speaking Identity from Below: The Case of Latvia', *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 44(3), pp. 287-312.

Cianetti, Licia (2014) 'Granting Local Voting Rights to Non-Citizens in Estonia and Latvia: The Conundrum of Minority Representation in Two Divided Democracies', *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe,* 13(1), pp. 86-112.

Ciborowski, H.M., Hurst, S., Perez, R.L., Swanson, K., Leas, E., Brouwer, K.C. and Shakya, H.B. (2022) 'Through our own eyes and voices: The experiences of those "left-behind" in rural, Indigenous migrant-sending communities in western Guatemala', *Journal of Migration and Health*, pp. 1-15

Clark, Colin R. (2014) 'Glasgow's Ellis Island? The integration and stigmatisation of Govanhill's Roma population', *People, Place & Policy Online*, *8*(1), pp. 34-50.

Clarke, John; Coll, Kathleen; Dagnino, Eevelina and Neveu, Catherine (2017) *Disputing citizenship*. Policy Press.

Coffé, Hilde and Van der Lippe, Tanja (2010) 'Citizenship Norms in Eastern Europe', *Social Indicators Research*, 96(3), pp. 479-496.

Cohen, Jean L. (1999) *'*Changing Paradigms of *Citizenship* and the Exclusiveness of the Demos', *International Sociology* September 14(3), pp. 245-268.

Daley, Clare (2009) 'Exploring community connections: community cohesion and refugee integration at a local level', *Community Development Journal*, 44(2), pp. 158–171.

Delanty, Gerard (1998) 'Reinventing Community and Citizenship in the Global Era: A Critique of the Communitarian Concept of Community', in Christodoulidis, Emilios A. (ed.), *Communitarianism and Citizenship*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing, pp. 33–52

Delanty, Gerard; Wodak, Ruth and Jones, Paul, eds. (2008) *Identity, belonging and migration*. Oxford University Press. (paperback edition 2011).

Della, Porta D. and Keating, Michael (2008) *Approaches and Methodologies in The Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Demireva, Neli and Quassoli, Fabio (2019) 'The Lived Experiences of Migration: An Introduction', *Social Inclusion*, *7*(4), pp. 1-6.

Denters, Bas, Gabriel, Ooscar and Torcal, Mariono (2007) 'Norms of good citizenship', in (eds.) J. W. van Deth, José. Ramón. Montero, & Anders. Westholm *Citizenship and involvement in European democracies. A Comparative Analysis*, Routledge, pp. 88-108.

Duvold, Kjetil (2006) *Making Sense of Baltic Democracy, Public Support and Political representation in Nationalising States* (Doctoral Dissertation) Univesitetbibliotek, *Örebro*

Druzhinin, Pavel V., & Prokopyev, Egor A. (2018) 'An Assessment of the Economic Performance of the EU Baltic Region States', *Baltic Region* 10(1), pp. 4-18.

Druviete, Ina and Ozolins, Uldis (2016) 'The Latvian referendum on Russian as a second state language' *Language Problems and Language Planning*, *40*(2), pp. 121-145.

Dwyer, Sonya C. and Buckle, Jennifer L. (2009) 'The space between: On being an insider-outsider in qualitative research', *International journal of qualitative methods*, *8*(1), pp. 54-63.

Eglitis, D.S. and Lāce, T. (2009) 'Stratification and the poverty of progress in post-communist Latvian capitalism', *Acta Sociologica*, *52*(4), pp. 329-349.

Eglitis, Daina S. (2017) 'Paradoxes of Power: Gender, Work, and Family in the New Europe', in (eds.) Matthew Kott and David J. Smith *Latvia – A Work in Progress? 100 Years of State- and Nationbuilding,* Ibidem Verlag.

Eihmanis, Edgards (2018) 'Cherry-picking external constraints: Latvia and EU economic governance, 2008–2014'*, Journal of European Public Policy*, 25(2), pp. 231-249.

Ekmanis, Indra (2019) 'Diversity in Daugavpils: Unpacking Identity and Cultural Engagement among Minority School Youth in Eastern Latvia', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 71(1), pp. 71-96

Ekmanis, Indra (2020) 'Why Isn't Latvia the "Next" Crimea? Reconsidering Ethnic Integration' *Orbis*, *64*(3), pp. 489-500.

Faist, T. (2001) 'Social citizenship in the European Union: nested membership', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 39(1): 37–58.

Favell, Adrian (2008) 'The new face of East–West migration in Europe', *Journal of ethnic and migration studies*, *34*(5), pp. 701-716.

Frie, R. (2011) 'Situated experience: Psychological agency, meaning, and morality in worldly contexts', *International Journal of Psychoanalytic Self Psychology*, *6*(3), pp.340-351.

Flick, Uwe (1998) *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* Sage, London.

Flynn, M. and Kay, R. (2017) 'Migrants' experiences of material and emotional security in rural Scotland: Implications for longer-term settlement', *Journal of Rural Studies*, 52, pp. 56-65.

Foddy, William (1993) *Constructing Questions for Interviews and Questionnaires: Theory and Practice in Social Research Cambridge* University Press.

Formisano, Ronald P. (2001) 'The Concept of Political Culture', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 31(3), pp. 393-426.

Fuller, J.M. (2007) 'Language choice as a means of shaping identity', *Journal of linguistic anthropology*, *17*(1), pp. 105-129.

Galbreath, David J. (2005) *Nation-building and minority politics in post-socialist states: Interests, influence and identities in Estonia and Latvia* (Vol. 8). Columbia University Press.

Gebhardt, Dirk (2016) 'When the state takes over: civic integration programmes and the role of cities in immigrant integration', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 42(5), pp. 742-758.

Germane, Marina (2015) 'Minority Coalition-Building and Nation-States', *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe* 14(2), pp. 51-75

Goodwin, Matthew J. and Heath, Oliever (2016) 'The 2016 Referendum, Brexit and the Left Behind: An Aggregate-level Analysis of the Result', *The Political Quarterly*, 87(3), pp. 323-332.

Gray, S.W. (2015) 'Mapping silent citizenship: how democratic theory hears citizens' silence and why it matters', *Citizenship Studies*, *19*(5), pp. 474-491.

Habermas, J. (1992) 'Citizenship and national identity: some reflections on the future of Europe' *Praxis International*, 12(1), pp. 1-19.

Hall, T., Coffey, A. and Williamson, H. (1999) 'Self, space and place: youth identities and citizenship', *British journal of sociology of education*, *20*(4), pp. 501-513.

Haggis, J. and Schech, S. (2010) 'Refugees, settlement processes and citizenship making: An Australian case study', *National Identities*, *12*(4), pp. 365-379.

Hanauer, D.I. (2008) '10 Non-Place Identity: Britain's Response to Migration in the Age of Supermodernity', *Identity, belonging and migration*, 17, p. 198.

Hanovs, Denis (2016) 'Can postcolonial theory help explain Latvian politics of integration? Reflections on contemporary Latvia as a postcolonial society', *Journal of Baltic Studies* 47(1), pp. 133-153.

Haugsgjerd, Atle and Kumlin, Staffan (2020) 'Downbound spiral? Economic grievances, perceived social protection and political distrust', *West European Politics*, 43(4), pp. 969-990.

Hazans, Mihails (2019) 'Emigration from Latvia: A Brief History and Driving Forces in the Twenty-First Century', in: Kaša R., Mieriņa I. (eds) *The Emigrant Communities of Latvia*. IMISCOE Research Series. Springer, Cham, pp. 35-68.

Heater, Derek (2002) 'The history of citizenship education: A comparative outline', *Parliamentary Affairs*, *55*(3), pp. 457-474.

Ījabs, Ivarrs (2016) 'After the referendum: Militant democracy and nation-building in Latvia', *East European Politics and Societies*, *30*(02), pp. 288-314.

Inglis, Davig and Thorpe, Christopher (2012) *An Invitation to Social Theory*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

Jašina-Schäfer, Alina and Cheskin, Ammon (2020) 'Horizontal citizenship in Estonia: Russian speakers in the borderland city of Narva', *Citizenship Studies*, *24*(1), pp. 93-110.

Jensen, B. (2019) 'Perceived social citizenship: a comparative study between two different hukous', *Citizenship Studies*, *23*(2), pp. 172-188.

Joppke, C. (2008) 'Immigration and the identity of citizenship: the paradox of universalism', *Citizenship studies*, *12*(6), pp. 533-546.

Juviler, Peter and Stroschein, Sherrill (1999) 'Missing boundaries of comparison: The political community', *Political Science Quarterly*, *114*(3), pp. 435-453.

Kallio, K.P., Wood, B.E. and Häkli, J. (2020) 'Lived citizenship: Conceptualising an emerging field', *Citizenship Studies*, *24*(6), pp. 713-729.

Kangaspuro, Markku, ed. (2007) *Constructed Identities in Europe*, Aleksanteri Institute.

Karklins, Rasma (1994) *Ethnopolitics and Transition to Democracy; The Collapse of the USSR and Latvia* Woodrow Wilson Centre Press, Washington.

Kaša, Rita and Mieriņa, Inta, eds. (2019). *The Emigrant Communities of Latvia: National Identity, Transnational Belonging, and Diaspora Politics*. Springer.

Kay, Rebecca (2006) 'Surviving social change together?' in (ed.) Maja Mikula *Women, Activism and Social Change: Stretching Boundaries*, Routledge, pp. 99-116.

Kenyon, E. (2019) 'Troubled belonging: Lived experience and the responsibility of citizenship', *The Journal of Social Studies Research*, *43*(1), pp.47-56.

Knop, Karen (2008) 'Citizenship, public and private', *Law and Contemporary Problems* 71(3), pp. 309-341.

Kock, C. and Villadsen, L.S. (2017) 'Rhetorical citizenship: studying the discursive crafting and enactment of citizenship', *Citizenship Studies*, *21*(5), pp. 570-586.

Kohl, Heribert and Platzer, Hans Wolfgang , eds. (2004) 'Industrial Relations in Central and Eastern Europe: Transformation and Integration: A Comparison of the Eight New EU Member States', *Industrial Law Journal,* 41, Brussels: European Trade Union Institute, available: https://academic.oup.com/ilj/article/41/3/305/703255 [accessed: 8 December 2020].

Koinova, Maria (2013) *Ethnonationalist Conflict in Postcommunist States*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.

Kott, Matthew and Smith, David J. (2017) *Latvia - A Work in Progress?: 100 Years of State- and Nation building*, *ProQuest Ebook Central*, 335 pp. Available: https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/gla/detail.action?docID=5782789.

Kreinin, Lea (2018) *Estonians in Scotland. From isolation to transnational ways of living?* PhD thesis, University of Glasgow.

Kuczyńska-Zonik, A. (2017) 'Non-citizens in Latvia: Is it a real problem?', *Sprawy Narodowościowe*, (49).

Kymlicka, Will and Norman, Wayne (1994) 'Return of the Citizen: A Survey of Recent Work on Citizenship Theory', *Ethics*, 104(2), pp. 352-381.

Kymlicka, Will (2011) 'Multicultural citizenship within multination states', *Ethnicities*, 11(3), pp. 281-302

Lazar, S. and Nuijten, M. (2013) 'Citizenship, the self, and political agency', *Critique of Anthropology*, *33*(1), pp. 3-7.

Le Feuvre, N. and Roseneil, S. (2014) 'Entanglements of economic and intimate citizenship: individualization and gender (in)equality in a changing Europe', *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society* 21(4), pp. 529–561.

Lehti, Marko and Smith, David J., eds. (2003) *Post-Cold War Identity Politics: Northern and Baltic Experiences*, Frank Cass, London.

Leisering, L. and Barrientos, A. (2013) 'Social citizenship for the global poor? The worldwide spread of social assistance', *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 22, pp. S50-S67.

Lieven, Anatol (1994) *The Baltic Revolution: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Path to Independence*, Yale University Press.

Lister, R. (2007) 'Inclusive citizenship: Realizing the potential', *Citizenship studies*, *11*(1), pp. 49-61.

Lublin, David (2013) 'The 2012 Latvia language referendum', *Electoral Studies*, *63*(10), pp. 1853-1888.

Lulle, Aija and King, Russell (2016) 'Ageing well: The time–spaces of possibility for older female Latvian migrants in the UK', *Social & Cultural Geography*, *17*(3), pp. 444-462.

Lulle, Aija and Jurkane-Hobein, Iveta (2017) 'Strangers within? Russian-speakers' migration from Latvia to London: A study in power geometry and intersectionality', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *43*(4), pp. 596-612.

Maher, Michelle A., Ford, Martin E. and Thompson, Candace M. (2004) 'Degree progress of women doctoral students: Factors that constrain, facilitate, and differentiate', *The Review of Higher Education*, *27*(3), pp. 385-408.

Mansbridge, Jane (1990) 'Self-interest in political life', *Political Theory*, *18*(1), pp. 132-153.

Mansbridge, Jane (2009). 'A "selection model" of political representation', *Journal of Political Philosophy*, *17*(4), pp. 369-398.

Marangos, J. (2002) 'The political economy of shock therapy', *Journal of Economic Surveys*, *16*(1), pp. 41-76.

Marshall, T.H., (1950) *Citizenship and social class* (Vol. 11, pp. 28-29). New York, NY: Cambridge.

Massey, Douglas S.; Arango, Joaquin; Hugo, Graeme; Kouaouci, Ali; Pellegrino, Adela and Taylor, Edward J. (1993) 'Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal', *Population and Development Review* 19 (3), pp. 431–466.

May, Tim (2001) *Social Research: Issues, Methods and Process 2nd edition* Open University Press, Buckingham.

Mayo, M., Cassidy, R., Napier-Moore, R., Franco, J.C., Thekkudan, J., Waldman, L., Mehta, L., Saguier, M., Leach, M., Alonso, A. and Scoones, I. (2013) *Globalizing citizens: New dynamics of inclusion and exclusion*. Zed Books Ltd.

Mieriņa, Inta (2019) 'An Integrated Approach to Surveying Emigrants Worldwide', in (eds.) Kaša, R.; Mieriņa, I. *The Emigrant Communities of Latvia* (pp. 13-33). Springer, Cham., pp. 13-33.

Miller, David and Ali, Sundas (2014) 'Testing the national identity argument', *European Political Science Review*, *6*(2), pp. 237-259.

Moyer, Anne, Salovey, Peter and Casey-Cannon, Shannon (1999) 'Challenges facing female doctoral students and recent graduates', *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *23*(3), pp. 607-630.

McCollum, David, Apsite-Berina, Elina, Berzins, Maris & Krisjane, Zaiga (2017) 'Overcoming the crisis: The changing profile and trajectories of Latvian migrants'*, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 43(99), 1508–1525.

McCormick, John (2008) *Understanding the European Union* 4th Ed., Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

McDowell, Linga (2009) 'Old and new European economic migrants: Whiteness and managed migration policies', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *35*(1), pp.19-36.

McMillan, David W. and Chavis, David M. (1986) 'Sense of community: A definition and theory', *Journal of community psychology*, *14*(1), pp.6-23.

McManus-Czubińska, C., Miller, W.L., Markowski, R. and Wasilewski, J. (2004) 'Why is corruption in Poland a serious cause for concern''?', *Crime, Law and Social Change*, *41*(2), pp. 107-132.

Misiunas, Romuald and Taagepera, Rein (1993) *The Baltic States: Years of Dependence 1940-1990*, Hurst & Company, London.

Mouffe, Chantal (1992) 'Democratic citizenship and the political community', *Dimensions of radical democracy: Pluralism, citizenship, community*, pp. 225-239.

Nakai, Ryo (2014) 'The Influence of Party Competition on Minority Politics: A Comparison of Latvia and Estonia', *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*, 13(1), pp. 57-85.

Nakai, Ryo (2018) 'Does Electoral Proximity Enhance National Pride? Evidence from Monthly Surveys in a Multi-ethnic Society–Latvia', *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, *18*(3), pp. 198-220.

Navickė, Jekaterina and Lazutka, Rromas (2018) 'Distributional Implications of the Economic Development in the Baltics: Reconciling Micro and Macro Perspectives', *Social Indicators Research*, *138*(1), pp. 187-206.

Pabriks, Artis and Purs, Aldis (2001) *Latvia, The Challenges of Change*, Routledge. London.

Patrick, R. (2012) 'Work as the primary 'duty' of the responsible citizen: a critique of this work-centric approach', *People, Place and Policy* 6(1), pp. 5–15.

Pettai, Vello and Zielonka, Jan (2003) *The Road to the European Union: Volume 2,* Manchester University Press.

Piętka-Nykaza, Emilia and McGhee, Derek (2017) 'EU post-accession Polish migrants trajectories and their settlement practices in Scotland', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *43*(9), pp. 1417-1433.

Pridham, Geoffrey (2009a) 'Securing the Only Game in Town: The EU's Political Conditionality and Democratic Consolidation in Post-Soviet Latvia' *Europe-Asia Studies* 61(1), pp. 51-84.

Pridham, Geoffrey (2009b) 'Post-Soviet Latvia - A Consolidated Or Defective Democracy? The Interaction Between Domestic And European Trajectories', *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 40(4), pp. 465-494

Pridham, Geoffrey (2018) 'Latvia's eastern region: international tensions and political system loyalty.', *Journal of Baltic Studies*, *49*(1), pp. 3-20.

Rabikowska, Marte (2010) 'Negotiation of normality and identity among migrants from Eastern Europe to the United Kingdom after 2004', *Social identities*, *16*(3), pp. 285-296.

Raik, Kristi (2003) *Democratic Politics of the Implementation of Inevitabilities? Estonia's Democracy and Integration into the European Union*, Tartu University Press.

Raik, K. (2016) 'Liberalism and geopolitics in EU–Russia relations: rereading the "Baltic factor"', *European Security*, *25*(2), pp. 237-255.

Rainer, Kattel & Ringa, Raudla (2013) *The Baltic Republics and the Crisis of 2008–2011*, Europe-Asia Studies, 65(3), pp. 426-449.

Richardson, D. (2017) 'Rethinking sexual citizenship', *Sociology*, 51(2), pp. 208-224.

Remeikienė, Rita, Startienė, Gražinė & Dumčiuvienė, Daiva (2015) 'Assessment of the industry competitiveness of the Baltic States in the EU during the period of economic recession', *Technological and Economic Development of Economy*, 21(1), pp. 79-95.

Rosa, V. (2018) 'Social citizenship and urban revitalization in Canada', *Canadian Journal of Urban Research*, 27(2), pp. 25-36.

Ruane, Janet M. (2016) *Introducing social research methods: Essentials for getting the edge*. John Wiley & Sons.

Safran, William (1991) 'Diasporas in modern societies: Myths of homeland and return', *Diaspora: A journal of transnational studies*, *1*(1), pp. 83-99.

Safran, William (1997) 'Citizenship and nationality in democratic systems: approaches to defining and acquiring membership in the political community', *International Political Science Review*, *18*(3), pp. 313-335.

Schmid, Carol (2008) 'Ethnicity and language tensions in Latvia', *Language Policy*, *7*(1), pp. 3-19.

Schwartz-Shea, Peregrine and Yanow, Dvora (2013) *Interpretive research design: Concepts and processes*. Routledge.

Seyd, Ben (2015) 'How do citizens evaluate public officials? The role of performance and expectations on political trust', *Political Studies*, 63, pp. 73-90.

Shubin, Sergei, & Dickey, Heather (2013) 'Integration and mobility of Eastern European migrants in Scotland', *Environment and Planning*, 45(12), pp. 2959–2979.

Shulman, Stephen (2002) 'Challenging the Civic/Ethnic and West/East Dichotomies in the Study of Nationalism', *Comparative Political Studies*, 35(5), pp. 554-585, Sage Publications.

Smith, D.J. ed., (2005) *The Baltic States and their region: new Europe or old?* (Vol.3). Rodopi.

Smith, D.J. (2017). *Latvia-A Work in Progress?: 100 Years of State-and Nationbuilding*.

Smith, David J.; Pabriks, Artis; Purs, Aldis and Lane, Thomas (2002) *The Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania* Routledge, London.

Smith Graham; Law Vivien; Wilson, Andrew; Bohr, Annette and Allworth, Edward (1998) *Nation-building in the Post Soviet Borderlands: The Politics of National Identities*, Cambridge University Press.

Smith, Graham, ed. (1994) *The Baltic States: The National Self-Determination of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.* Palgrave.

Smith, Graham (1999) *The Post-Soviet States: Mapping the Politics of Transition*. Arnold, London.

Somaiah, B.C., Yeoh, B.S. and Arlini, S.M. (2020) 'Cukup for me to be successful in this country': 'staying' among left-behind young women in Indonesia's migrant-sending villages', *Global Networks*, *20*(2), pp. 237-255.

Starman, Adrijana B. (2013) 'The case study as a type of qualitative research', *Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies/Sodobna Pedagogika*, 64(1).

Stasiulis, D. (2004) 'Hybrid citizenship and what's left', *Citizenship Studies*, *8*(3), pp. 295-303.

Sturtevant, C. (2017) 'Claiming belonging, constructing social spaces: Citizenship practices in an Afro-Bolivian town', *Critique of Anthropology*, *37*(1), pp. 3-26.

Tilly, Charles and Tarrow, Sidney G. (2007) *Contentious Politics.* Paradigm Publishers, Colorado.

Tarrow, Sidney (2012) *Strangers At The Gates* Cambridge University Press.

Théret, B. (1999) 'The Socio-political Dimensions of the Currency: Implications for the Transition to the Euro', *Journal of Consumer Policy*, *22*(1), pp. 51-79.

Turner, Bryan S. (1997) 'Citizenship studies: A general theory', *Citizenship Studies*, 1(1), pp. 5-18.

Van Hear, Nicholas, Bakewell, Oliver and Long, Katy (2018) 'Push-pull plus: reconsidering the drivers of migration', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *44*(6), pp. 927-944.

Vanags, Alf (2011) 'Economic Integration and Cohesion in the Baltic Sea Region: A Critical Perspective From the Baltic States', *Journal of Baltic Studies* 42(1), pp. 91-102.

Vertovec, Steven & Cohen, Robin (1999) *Migration, diasporas and transnationalism*. Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd, Cheltenham.

Vorslava, Maija, Seimuškāne, Lilita and Pūkis, Māris (2014) 'Public trust and participation depending on ethnicity in Latvia', *European Integration Studies*, 8, pp. 39-47.

Waldinger, Roger (2012) 'Beyond transnationalism: An alternative perspective on immigrants' homeland connections', in M. R. Rosenblum & D. J. Tichenor (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of the politics of international migration* (pp. 74–98). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Walton, Grant W. (2015) 'Defining corruption where the state is weak: The case of Papua New Guinea', *The Journal of Development Studies*, *51*(1), pp. 15-31.

White, Stephen, Batt, Judy and Lewis, Paul G., eds. (2007) *Developments in Central and East European Politics 4 Palgrave Macmillan*, Basingstoke.

Wood, B.E. (2014) 'Researching the everyday: young people's experiences and expressions of citizenship', *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *27*(2), pp. 214-232.

Youkhana, Eva (2015) 'A conceptual shift in studies of belonging and the politics of belonging', *Social Inclusion*, *3*(4), pp. 10-24.

Yuval-Davis, Nira (2006) 'Belonging and the politics of belonging', *Patterns of prejudice*, *40*(3), pp. 197-214.

Yuval-Davis, Nira (2010) 'Theorizing identity: Beyond the 'us' and 'them' dichotomy', *Patterns of prejudice*, *44*(3), pp.261-280.

For Latvian Clean Up see:
https://talkas.lv/en/the-big-clean-up last accessed 03/06/2020

https://www.lvm.lv/en/news/archive/1193-the-idea-of-the-liela-talka-is-to-clean-up-all-of-latvia last accessed 03/06/2020

http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/policy/society-integration/citizenship-in-latvia/citizenship-policy-in-latvia/basic-facts-about-citizenship-and-language-policy-of-latvia-and-some-sensitive-history-related-issues last accessed 14/04/18

'Emigrant communities of Latvia', *Migration LV.* Available: https://migracija.lv/en/projects/emigrant-communities-of-latvia/

For Latvian statistics on outward migration:

'Latvia – Immigration, Emigration, Diaspora', *Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung.* Available: https://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/laenderprofile/northerneurope/308824/latvia Mienina (2020) [last accessed 11/01/2021]

'URBACT in Latvia'
https://urbact.eu/latvia
last accessed 30/05/21.

For the rights of non citizens in Latvia:

https://documents-ddsny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G16/077/58/PDF/G1607758.pdf?OpenElement [20]-[21], [52]. [last accessed 11/01/2021]

Latvia to sue EU over sugar reform." *Agra Europe*, no. 2215, 7 July 2006, p. EP/10+. *Gale Academic OneFileSelect*, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A148145517/EAIM?u=glasuni&sid=EAIM&xid=5189fcf . [Accessed 26 Oct. 2020]

Aivars Lembergs Corruption:

'Pro-Russia party wins most votes in Latvia elections', *BBC.* Available: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-14962617

'Lambergs and his family members banned form entry in US', *The Baltic Times.* Available: https://www.baltictimes.com/lembergs_and_his_family_members_banned_from_entry_in_us/

Gelzis, Gederts (2019) 'Latvian Oligarch hits back at corruption charges as U.S. clamps down', *Reuters.* Available: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-latvia-sanctions-usa-idUSKBN1YE16C

Language and Education:

'Several hundred people protest transition in Latvian language and Russian schools in Latvia' (2018), *The Baltic Times.* Available: https://www.baltictimes.com/several_hundred_people_protest_transition_to_latvian_language_at_russian_schools_in_latvia/

'Latvian reject Russian as official language', *The Guardian.* Avaialable: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/feb/19/latvians-reject-russian-official-language#

Women in academia:

'Challenges faced by women in research in higher eductaion', *Center for Global Health Equity'.* Available: https://globalhealth.virginia.edu/challenges-faced-women-research-higher-education

Coding:

'The Best Note-taking Methods for College students & serious note-takers', *Medium.* Available: https://medium.goodnotes.com/the-best-note-taking-methods-for-college-students-451f412e264e