



SOCIAL SECURITY

Inclusion-Exclusion Dilemma.

A portrait of the Russian-speaking community in Latvia





Editor Žaneta Ozoliņa

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Edited by Žaneta Ozoliņa

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Introduction

ŽANETA OZOLINA¹

Every book project has its historical background. The book *Societal Security: Inclusion–Exclusion Dilemma. A portrait of the Russian-speaking community² in Latvia* is also the result of long-lasting studies and discussions. Security was one of the dominating research themes from the early 1990s, for obvious reasons — the restoration of Latvia's independence and efforts to maintain this constitutes the core of the nation's identity. Therefore, national security became the most important focus of scholars, while societal and individual levels of analysis were not applied sufficiently. In the late 1990s, the focus of researchers in the country turned to other aspects of security. In 2002/2003, a group of scholars drafted the Human Development Report on Human Security in Latvia³, thus widening and deepening the interpretation of security. During the financial and economic crisis in 2009–2010, the government commissioned the next series of studies on human security, inviting researchers to look at individual and societal reactions to challenges caused by the crisis and assist in

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² In the book we use different terms as synonyms — Russian-speakers, Russian-speaking community, Russian-speaking minority. These are terms which are used in order to describe a group of people with different ethnic backgrounds (Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Latvians, and others) who use Russian language as their communication language in their families.

³ *Human Development Report 2002/2003. Human Security*. (2003). (Riga: UNDP). Available at http://www.lu.lv/fileadmin/user_upload/lu_portal/projekti/citi_projekti/undp2003_ful_en.pdf, accessed 2 February 2016.

providing evidence to decisions taken by policy makers. While analysing the risks to human security, the team of researchers decided to focus their attention on strategies being advanced by individuals in Latvia towards building their individual security capabilities, which would allow them to adapt to various challenges.⁴ In order to describe pro-active individual responses to risks and challenges, the Latvian researchers introduced the term ‘securitability’, which is now known more as a notion of ‘resilience’. However, there is one substantial difference between the two terms — resilience assumes response to hardships that can reduce the consequences. While in our case, we consider the need to utilise individual and societal capital proactively, not only to respond, but more importantly, to take actions based on personal choices and on behalf of the needs of others. The study on human security from the perspective of securitability/resilience led to another research project on gender and human security⁵. The aim of that study was not so much focused on the threats, vulnerabilities, and risks that women in the Baltic Sea Region face, but on the sources of their empowerment. The international environment, states, regions, civil society, and local communities accumulate a wide spectrum of resources that can be utilised for enhancing resilience capabilities. While putting together a catalogue of resources for the empowerment of women, researchers arrived at the conclusion that a similar approach could be applied when investigating the security of other social groups. The efforts to continue research on different communities coincided with the invitation to join the EU FP7 project MIME (Mobility and Inclusion in Multilingual Europe), which served as a catalyst for initiating a study on the Russian-speaking community in Latvia, applying the

⁴ Ozoliņa, Ž. (ed). (2014). *Cilvēkdrošība Latvijā un pasaule: no idejas līdz praksei.* (Riga: Zinātne); Practical guidelines for the implementation of the human security concept at the community level, including non-governmental organisations. (2014). Supported by European Economic Zone (EEZ) financial instrument and Social Integration Fund (SIF). Available at http://lapas.lv/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Cilvēkdrošības-vadlīnijas_LV-1.pdf, accessed 2 February 2016.

⁵ Ozoliņa, Ž. (ed). (2015). *Gender and Human Security: A View from the Baltic Sea Region.* (Riga: Zinātne).

concept of societal security with particular emphasis on the inclusion and exclusion dilemma.

The crisis in Ukraine, the occupation of Crimea, Russia's "soft" justification to introduce "hard" actions in Eastern Ukraine, and the militarisation of Russia reanimated the security debate in Latvia. Societal security has become a part of the political, military, and economic security agenda. Securitisation added to the existing tensions in society, in almost all sectors of daily life, when Latvians, Russians, Ukrainians, and other ethnic groups in the country felt threatened. One of the ideas prevalent in all studies on societal security is related to coherence of society. The capability of any country to protect itself from external provocations and domestic instability greatly depends on the coherence of its society and on its ability to decrease potential risks and vulnerabilities hidden in societal structures. Therefore, the research project presented in the book was aimed at exploring the potential risks and vulnerabilities perceived by the Russian-speaking community in Latvia and how these insecurities can potentially contribute to the destabilisation of the security environment in the country.

During the last decade, many surveys on the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia have been conducted by several institutions, thus offering substantial quantitative data providing answers on the question of what the Russian population thinks. However, there are not enough surveys or studies offering explanations to the question "why?". Why does the Russian-speaking community sympathise with policies pursued by Russia? Why is the community immune to the Latvian information space? Why has the community been resistant to the integration policies implemented in the country since the early 1990s? Why do the younger generations of Russian speakers, born in the EU, enjoying all the privileges of democratic values, and being fluent in the Latvian language, seem inclined to sympathise with the Stalinist regime? Why do they tend towards self-exclusion strategies instead of inclusion? How does the community relate itself to Latvia and Latvians?

In order to seek answers and arguments to help understand and evaluate the above mentioned "whys", the following sectors of

societal security will be approached: economic and political dimensions of inclusion, participation of the community in the non-governmental sector, use of social networks, language as a societal security foundation and tool, education, Russian speakers as a part of the Latvian diaspora, and culture and entertainment. The study will rely on the societal security concept and the inclusion–exclusion dilemma, thus contesting the simplified understanding of integration. The Russian-speaking community's attitudes in all the sectors mentioned above will be analysed, factoring in the age, gender, regional and educational variations. The main research methods employed include: focus group discussions, interviews, and collections of secondary sources. The task of the researchers was to listen and collect the different views dominating in the reference groups. The results presented in the book provide a portrait created by the Russian-speaking community itself, leaving the researchers in a minor role, as observers and reporters.

The research and publication of the book is financially supported by the European Union Seventh Framework Programme (FP7-SSH-2007-2013) under the grant agreement no. 613344, MIME, the State Education Development Agency, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, and the Latvian Political Science Association. Assistance was provided by the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Latvia.



Societal Security: Conceptual Framework

ŽANETA OZOLINA¹

Abstract

The aim of the chapter is to present the most often used definitions of societal security and adapt them to the study of the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia. The concept of societal security relates to such issues as identity, societal coherence, inclusion, exclusion, and security dilemma. After more than twenty five years since the restoration of independence in Latvia, there are still ongoing discussions about relations between minorities and the state, minorities and society, the dominating Russian minority and other minorities, the Russian minority, and kin state Russia. These issues were brought to the top of the country's security agenda after the occupation of Crimea and war in Eastern Ukraine. The chapter, which elaborates on the main theoretical constructions, will set out the background for the empirical study in other chapters on societal security in Latvia.

Keywords: societal security, threats and risks to societal security, security dilemma, societal security dilemma, society, minorities.

Introduction

The academic community cannot complain about a lack of studies on different security-related topics. The scholarly debate on challenges to the international community, nations and individuals provides enough space for a wide spectrum of schools, approaches and theories presenting their views and interpretations to the state of affairs of the security/insecurity domain. Drafting another study on security, in our case societal security in Latvia, begins with a question: what could give added value to the existing collection of numerous

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articles and books, as well as to the ongoing debate. The aim of this chapter is not to present one more alternative view on security or to challenge well-established concepts. Quite the opposite: the aim is to utilise the existing notions and approaches for drafting the definitions and analytical tools for the empirical study to be presented later in the book. The chapter starts with an overview of existing definitions of societal security and their application in Latvia's context. The second section will dwell upon the most typical threats, risks and challenges to societal security. The final part of the chapter will focus on the societal security dilemma and its interpretation in different societies.

Defining societal security

The study presented in the book rests on the concept of societal security which has been elaborated by different schools of theory of international relations. There is a common agreement that the first author to put forward the need to incorporate societal aspects into the security notion was Barry Buzan. He explores diverse types of relations which are formed by the state with other actors in the security domain. The departure point in his analysis is the state as a main actor in security policy, and its correlation with individuals, groups, societies, other states and the international system at large. Therefore, he questions to what extent threats to societal security come from *within* or *outside* the state. Buzan writes:

If societal security is about the sustainability, within acceptable conditions for evolution, of traditional patterns of language, culture and religious and ethnic identity and custom, then threats to these values come much more frequently from within the state than outside it.²

At the same time it does not exclude possible threats from outside, since "...matters of language, religion and local cultural

² Buzan, B. (1991). *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era* (2nd ed.). (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf), p. 123.

tradition all play their part in the idea of the state, and may need to be defended or protected against seductive or overbearing cultural imports".³

If the core of societal security consists of "traditional patterns of language, culture and religious and ethnic identity and custom", then threats from outside are looked at through the lenses of identity. Possible tendencies, processes, and actions undermining the traditional organisation of society in that case fall into the category of threats. However, the question about actions from outside, namely, any other country which can exploit one group of society against another, has not been addressed in Buzan's study. In that case, threats cannot be divided into *within or outside* the state categories but constitute *within and outside* the state correlation.

The introduction of a societal sector in the security concept was welcomed by other scholars, as one of the attempts to widen the borders of the security notion, but at the same time the essence of the societal aspects of security were not elaborated sufficiently. Expansion of the concept was offered by a group of scholars from the Copenhagen school in the breakthrough study, *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe*.⁴ They offered similar definition to Buzan's, arguing that societal security should be considered as "sustainability within acceptable conditions for evolution, of traditional patterns of language, culture and religious and national identity and customs".⁵ The novelty of this study can be found in attempts to elaborate on the potential cleavages in the structure of the international system after the end of the Cold War and their impact on the European security landscape. During the Cold War period, societal security was fully taken over by national security, thus security of society was fully dependent on interstate relations. After the end of the Cold War, research on societal

³ Buzan, B. (1991). *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era* (2nd ed.). (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf), p. 123.

⁴ Waever, O., Buzan, B., Kelstrup, M., Lemaitre, P. (1993). *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe*. (London: Pinter).

⁵ Ibid, p. 43.

security reflected ongoing transformations in world affairs — a growing number of new nation-states and new types of relations between different ethnic, religious and linguistic groups, as a result of which, the identity issues and respect for human rights, including minority rights, became the core of academic deliberations. As Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde described it, "...in Europe, societal security is mainly about nations and nation-like ethnic groups — minorities, regions, and Europe sometimes is conceived in nation-building terms."⁶

Thus, interplay between society and the state was considered as a gap in security studies that had to be overarched. As a result, societal security was desecuritised in order to allow society and social groups to take control over their identity with non-military means. Societal security consequently, for a long time, was desecuritised as a consequence of the widening process of the security concept, leaving a state out of the scope or leaving it exclusively in the role of a security provider.

In recent years, under the pressure of changing international order, societal security has become more closely linked to national security again. Today, securitisation of societal security takes place as a reaction to new-generation warfare (Ukraine, Syria), increased flows of migration and consequences of regional and sub-regional conflicts. The assumption that desecuritisation will lead to a decrease of threats and risks to society became dysfunctional in understanding the diversity of relations between and within the states, society and other relevant groups. In return — society is being more exposed to a wide spectrum of challenges.

However, the definition of societal security can become operational after the agreement on the term 'society' and its application. There are two dominating approaches in security studies which should both be considered as analytical tools, rather than providing the answers to all existing challenges. One approach treats soci-

⁶ Buzan, B., Waever, O., de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: a New Framework for Analysis*. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner), p. 132.

ety and nation as almost identical units, where borders of the state and society coincide. This approach can serve as an analytical tool in cases where the state and society operate in a hostile environment, and survival of society depends on the actions taken by states. Besides, societies in that case can become autonomous players:

For security analysis, societies are different from social groups. Societies have a reality of their own, they can operate as units in the international system, and they are invariably seen as having the right to survive.⁷

The other approach allows applying the society concept in a more flexible way. Paul Roe argues that security is targeted at maintenance of significant ethnic and religious groups, and the borders of those groups can and cannot coincide with the state's borders.⁸ His path is followed by Markus Thiel who also emphasises relations between groups and the state as relevant:

Societal security as one of the expanded notions of security refers to the security of collective groups in relation to other communities or the institutions of the state in which they reside.⁹

The above mentioned interpretations of society and societal security prompt at least several substantial questions from the perspective of our study, namely, the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia. Firstly, the definition of societal security as a manifestation of traditional values, such as language, culture and religion, is not applicable because the Russian-speaking minority is diverse (the traditional values of Russian Orthodox Old-believers will be different from those who arrived in Latvia after the Second World War, or those born in the European Union Member State), identity is not fixed but transforming. Latvia has undergone substantial transformation from a totalitarian regime to a democracy, with all the

⁷ Roe, P. (2007). Societal Security. In: Collins, A. (Ed.) *Contemporary Security Studies*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 169.

⁸ Ibid, p. 46.

⁹ Thiel, M. (2007). Identity, societal security and regional integration in Europe. *Jean Monnet/Robert Schuman Paper Series*, Vol. 7, No. 6, April 2007. Available at: http://aei.pitt.edu/8175/1/Thiel_IDsocietSec_long07_edi.pdf (accessed 3 January 2016).

complexities of transition and all minorities together with the host nation enhancing their identities.

Secondly, if society is treated as a coherent actor, namely, borders of the state and society coincide, then the understanding of societal security in Latvia can be misleading. We will relay in our study P. Roe's approach, based on treating society as consisting of relevant groups which can at the same time be referent objects of security, as well as active participants of the security building process. Relevant groups are defined by Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde as referent objects of societal security, "that can create a socially powerful argument that this "we" is threatened".¹⁰ Indeed, if society is perceived as fractured into too many social groups, then the relevance of security can be lost, and there will always be the question who speaks for each group. The authors also warn:

Accepting other voices speaking for society will always involve a de-legitimisation of the state that 'should' be the protector of society. It then becomes a problem that anyone can try to speak on behalf of society.¹¹

Thirdly, the social group approach allows identifying the most relevant tendencies and characteristics which constitutes the essence of a particular society. In Latvia's case, we are not talking about just one minority (26% of the population identify themselves as Russians, the second largest minority is Belarusians — 3.3%) but a dominating minority, which includes other minorities on a linguistic basis — thus 37.6% of all those living in Latvia use Russian as the main language in the family. There are two regions in Latvia where Russian is the dominating language. In Latgale, 60.3% and in Riga 55.8% of the population use Russian as their communication language.¹²

¹⁰ Buzan, B., Waever, O., de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: a New Framework for Analysis*. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner), p. 132.

¹¹ Waever, O., Buzan, B., Kelstrup, M., Lemaitre, P. (1993). *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe*. (London: Pinter), pp. 188–189.

¹² 2011. gada tautas skaitīšanas rezultāti i sumā (Results of Census 2011 in brief). CSB (2012). Available at: http://www.csb.gov.lv/sites/default/files/publikacijas/nr_13_2011gada_tautas_skaitisanas_rezultati_isuma_12_00_lv.pdf (accessed 3 January 2016).

Fourthly, the definition of societal security offered by Buzan emphasises that threats can be expected more from within rather from outside the country, as far as the identity of society is concerned.¹³ However, the concept and meaning of “outside”, and threats to identity should be re-considered. Russia's aggression in Georgia in 2008, the occupation of Crimea and support (military and non-military) to Eastern Ukraine, implementation of information warfare, as well as the policy of compatriots, provide enough grounds not to question the role of outside threats. The threat from outside to societal security is not related to identity but to survival of the state and the nation. If there are potential threats from outside, then one of the most crucial questions is related to coherence of society, whether in the case of provocations and tensions imposed from outside the most relevant groups will act as a unit, or existing groups with competing perceptions of potential risks and challenges will contribute to instability. If so, then national security can be undermined by existing perceptions and misperceptions within the heterogeneous society.

Bearing in mind the complex societal fabric in Latvia, we tend to dwell upon the perceptions and attitudes of the Russian-speaking minority with regard to societal security. The quantitative data collected by several public survey companies is very rich and there is no lack of “percentages” in respect of any of the questions. But what is missing in previous studies are arguments about *what* are the main attitudes and *why* they differ in many fields from the opinions of Latvians. Besides, we do not aim to delve into the topics of the state-society relationship, but our interests fall into the category of societal structures and relationships which define the logic of societal security. Identity is an important component of societal security, but it will not be the core of the study, however, the transforming identities and their adapted new/old “we”, will be part of the presented analysis. Since the group of scholars is interested in

¹³ Buzan, B. (1991). *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era* (2nd ed.). (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf), p. 123.

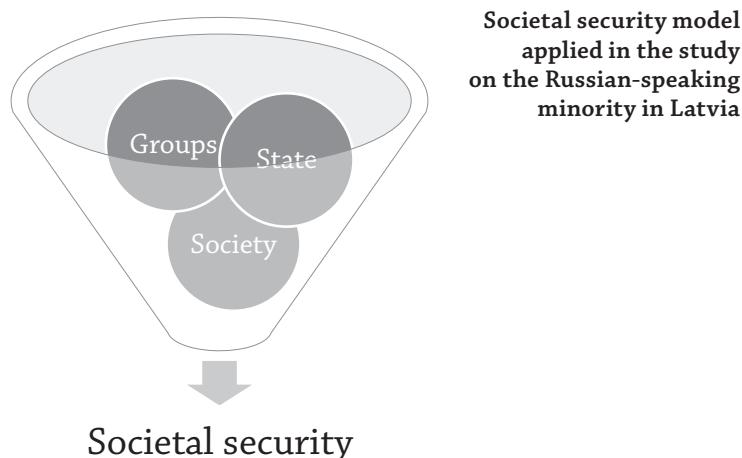
inter-group relations, the focus of the study will not be on threats or risks to the Russian-speaking minority, rather on the ability to utilise central human capital as potential for securitability of groups and society at large. The central human capability adds to identity history, language, and culture/traditions.

We intend to use Martha C. Nussbaum's concept of central human capabilities¹⁴, which allows an understanding of what constitutes the "we" of the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia. Nussbaum presents a list of capabilities, at the same time underlying that those characteristics can overlap and do not constitute a fixed prioritisation of them. Since they have been incorporated in the human development index and in many studies on human security, the same list can serve as a framework for the study of the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia. She singles out such capabilities as: life, which should be understood as being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length; bodily health, as a sign of good health and adequate health care; bodily integrity as the ability to move freely from place to place, and to be secure against violence; senses, imagination, thought – "being able to use the senses, to imagine, think, and reason — and to do these things in a 'truly human' way, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education. Being able to use one's mind in ways protected by guarantees of freedom of expression, with respect to both political and artistic speech, and freedom of religious exercise"; emotions, as a form of attachment to things and people, and the ability to experience the whole spectrum of emotions, including a critical assessment of what is good and to build plans for life; affiliations — "being able to live with and toward others, to recognise and show concern for other humans, to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation of another"; other species — attitude towards animals, plants, and the world of nature; play — ability to enjoy recreational activities, leisure, entertainment; control over one's environment

¹⁴ Nussbaum, M. C. (2003). Capabilities as Fundamental Entitlements: Sen and Social Justice. *Feminist Economics*, Vol. 9, Nos. 2–3, pp. 33–59.

in political and material terms — in political terms it means the ability to participate in political life, in terms of material life, it is the ability to have property and property rights on an equal basis with others, as well as being able to perform economic activity on the same basis as other members of society.¹⁵ Since some of the central human capabilities are more relevant for societal security than others, our study will focus only on a few: 1) senses, imagination, thought; 2) emotions; 3) practical reason; 4) affiliations; 5) play; 6) control over one's environment.

In the study on the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia, the authors will take Buzan's definition of societal security as, "sustainability, within acceptable conditions for evolution" and will treat it as interaction among groups, state, and society. Therefore, in the empirical study, researchers will elaborate on the interpretation by Russians of what they treat as "acceptable solutions", what are their views on "sustainability" and transformation of their identity, how resilient the Russian-speaking minority is, and what are their expectations with regard to evolution.



¹⁵ Nussbaum, M. C. (2003). Capabilities as Fundamental Entitlements: Sen and Social Justice. *Feminist Economics*, Vol. 9, Nos. 2–3, pp. 33–59.

Threats to societal security

One of the central questions related to societal security is the ability to identify and define potential risks and threats to different groups and society at large. Since societal security is based on identity, as Buzan Barry, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde argue: “the societal sector is identity”¹⁶; “society is about identity...”¹⁷ “the concept [societal security — Ž.O.] can also be understood as ‘identity security’”¹⁸. At the same time, other scholars of security studies rightly emphasise that since identity is not a given entity, it transforms and adapts to changes taking place in geopolitical, social, economic, and other realms and it would be a misleading argument to consider changes as a threat. McSweeney writes that “societies, by definition, evolve and individual identities change with them, and this simple process doesn’t mean a challenge to identity problematic or to societal cohesion.”¹⁹ At the same time, we can ask, within the existing identities, what has been inherited, what shapes the old identity and what forms the essence of transformed or obtained identity. This issue becomes relevant when dealing with social groups which had one identity within the previous political, economic, and ideological structures, and after the political transformation found themselves in a completely new environment. This is one of the research questions of this study: part of the Russian-speaking population was born in Latvia after the 1990s, but still considers themselves to be part of the post-Soviet space, rather than members of the EU.

What threats to societal security can be distinguished? Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde propose three categories of threats that allow the construction of a comprehensive landscape of challenges, according to specific characteristics of one or another social group. They start with migration, stating that this is a

¹⁶ Buzan, B., Waever, O., de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: a New Framework for Analysis*. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner), p. 119.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 119.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 120.

¹⁹ McSweeney, B. (1996). Identity and Security: Buzan and the Copenhagen School. *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 88–93.

situation when “X people are being overrun or diluted by influxes of Y people; the X community will not be what it used to be, because others will make up the population; X identity is being changed by a shift in the composition of the population...”²⁰ Russian migration into Estonia is one of the examples presented by the authors. The same also refers to Latvia. However, the most recent data reveals a new tendency — under the pressure of the migration crisis in the European Union in 2015, both the biggest linguistic communities in Latvia — Latvians and Russians, perceive migration as a threat. According to the SKDS public opinion poll, in answer to the question, “People leave their countries for different reasons. Please tell us what your attitude is toward hosting (admitting) such people in Latvia, who left their countries because of war” — 74% of Latvians and 64% of Russians fully or partly support this statement. The same pattern repeats when asked about the attitude towards those who are escaping from political or religious persecution — 40% of Latvians and 32% of Russians fully or partly support this position. When asked about economic migrants, the answers were distributed as follows — 25% of Latvians and 28% of Russians fully or partly support this group of people.²¹

Another threat is framed as horizontal competition, which describes the situation when “X people are living here, they will change their ways because of the overriding cultural and linguistic influences from neighbouring culture Y...”²² More precisely, authors refer in this case to such situations as Canadian fears of being Americanised. In Latvia’s case, Russification took place during the period of Soviet occupation, while today’s concern is different. Within the horizontal competition, the Russian-speaking population has been influenced by its neighbouring country, not as a cultural or linguistic entity, but as a group which could be open

²⁰ Buzan, B., Waever, O., de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: a New Framework for Analysis*. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner), p. 121.

²¹ SKDS Report, 2015 December.

²² Buzan, B., Waever, O., de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: a New Framework for Analysis*. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner), p. 121.

to ideological and political interests. The third group is described as vertical competition — “people will stop seeing themselves as X, because there is either an integrating project (e.g. Yugoslavia, the EU) or a secessionist — “regionalist” project (e.g. Quebec, Catalonia, Kurdistan), that pulls them towards either wider or narrower identities”.²³

Authors address the fourth aspect, namely, depopulation, which they associate either with different catastrophes or policies of extermination, and reject them as not being part of the threat to societal identity.²⁴ Although, in some cases this can be treated as a societal threat to identity, when it comes to a drastic decrease in population due to free movement of labour and for demographical reasons (the population of Latvia has also decreased from 2.6 million to 1.9 million, and among them including Russian-speaking minorities). In that case, the number of identity “holders” is decreasing and the long-term existence of society is questioned, which creates a sense of insecurity in society.

One of the concepts which is facilitating enrichment of the societal security notion and potential threats to groups and societies, is societal security dilemma, which will be addressed in the next section of the chapter.

Societal security dilemma

Security dilemma is a well-established concept in the international relations theory, stemming from studies by Herbert Butterfield²⁵ and John Herz²⁶, from the early 1950s. They both argue that the security dilemma rests on misperception. Actor A perceives the strengthening of the security of Actor B as offensive action, which

²³ Buzan, B., Waever, O., de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: a New Framework for Analysis*. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner), p. 121.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Butterfield, H. (1951). *History and Human Relations*. (London: Collins).

²⁶ Herz, J. H. (1950). Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma. *World Politics*, Vol. 2, pp. 157–180.

in turn motivates Actor A to respond with a similar action. As a consequence, a competitive spiral of security–insecurity is triggered.

A societal security dilemma grows out of the classical security dilemma concept, which explains the societal security concept framed by Lamaitre, Buzan, and Waever, who state that “some ethnic conflicts come to acquire a dynamic of their own”. Objective factors such as language or location might be involved in the idea of national identity, but it nevertheless remains a political and personal choice to identify with some community by emphasising some trait in contrast to other available historical or contemporary ties. Threats to identity are thus always a question of the construction of something that threatens the “we”, and often thereby actually contribute to the construction or reproduction of “us”²⁷, which was selected by Paul Roe who elaborated and analysed different cases (relations between Serbs and Croats, Romanians, and Hungarians, as well as the security dilemma in Transylvania), in his book *Ethnic Violence and the Societal Security Dilemma*. He argues that societal security dilemmas occur when the actions those groups take to secure their identity cause reactions in others, which, in the end, leave all parties less secure. Societies may try to strengthen group identity through cultural- and/or ethnic-nationalist projects.²⁸

Roe’s argument explaining the introduction of the societal security dilemma rests on the intention to expand the security notion as such, escaping from state-dominated interpretation. The aim is to enrich security studies with non-military dynamics. He also argues that even despite the fact that the term, ‘societal security dilemma’, has been used by several authors, there are not enough studies exploring the theoretical and empirical diversity of the concept. In order to fill the gap, Roe proposes three types of societal security dilemma. The first is a tight societal dilemma, where “both sides are security-seekers, but the nature of the situation compels

²⁷ Buzan, B., Waever, O., de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: a New Framework for Analysis*. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner), p. 120.

²⁸ Roe, P. (2005). *Ethnic Violence and the Societal Security Dilemma*. (Abingdon: Routledge), pp. 72–73.

them to act as if the other were revisionist".²⁹ Misperception plays a substantial role in constructing the intentions of each group. If the tight societal security dilemma dominates in society, the way out of the dilemma starts with acknowledgement by both sides that there are some problems with mutual perception, which is followed by an acquisition of information, knowledge, and attitudes and only after those steps, can policies targeted at cohesion be introduced. The simplistic conclusion here rests on the assumption that mutual information would help to solve the issue, but it is not the case in all situations. As Davis A. Lake and Donald Rotchild argue, on the one hand, information can be costly to acquire, and in the end it is not clear whether the other security-seeking group was searching for that particular information:

Groups compensate for their information limitations by acting on the basis of prior beliefs about the likely preference of others... Nonetheless, information is always incomplete and groups are forever uncertain about each other's purposes.³⁰

The second is the regular societal security dilemma, where groups are security-seekers and have incompatible security requirements, "where the maintenance of group identity is predicated on the insecurity of others: others enter as part of self-identification in such a way that their very presence is seen as a danger to the autonomy and coherence of the self."³¹ The third is a loose societal security dilemma, with the existence of a power-seeker searching for expansion and domination, which is described as, "the identity of others is attacked for motives other than security".³²

These three types of societal security dilemma are not fixed and closed analytical tools. In the case of Latvia, it is possible to observe all three. After the declaration of independence in the early 1990s,

²⁹ Roe, P. (2005). *Ethnic Violence and the Societal Security Dilemma*. (Abingdon: Routledge), p. 73.

³⁰ Lake Davis A., Rotchild, D. Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict. *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 2, Fall 1996, p. 51.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 74.

when Latvians were searching for their renewed identity, which rested on European values, members of the Russian community perceived these endeavours as a threat to their identity. Therefore, the regular societal security dilemma was dominant. After accession to the EU and NATO, which was perceived by the Latvian community as the irreversibility of sovereignty of the state and sustainability of the nation, on the side of the Russian-speaking community it caused diverse reactions, including perception as a threat to traditional identity linked to Russia. As a consequence, the tight societal security dilemma was, and still is, prevalent. Since the tight security dilemma is closely linked with perceptions and misperceptions, as well as information about security-seekers, the empirical study in the book tries to obtain the views of the Russian-speaking minority and mitigate existing stereotypes.

Conclusions

In the realm of political science, a great many concepts have their glory days and their decay. The concept of societal security is most probably only now experiencing its triumph for several reasons. There is political and academic demand for concepts which could assist in explaining the complexities of the present day and decades to come. It became evident that threats to states and societies by essence are societal. Explanations are either needed for migration, terrorism, international conflicts, populism, and many others, or feasible policies proposed on community, national, European, and international level; it is almost impossible to provide an analysis ignoring the societal aspects. Societies are increasingly becoming more and more heterogeneous and represent “multiple identity units”.³³

Societies, on the one hand, have their own unique identity, but on the other hand, there are networks of different types of

³³ Roe, P. (2007). Societal Security. In: Collins, A. (ed.). *Contemporary Security Studies*. (Oxford; Oxford University Press) p. 167.

relationships that have impact on groups, society, and the state as such. The societal security concept, without any doubt, needs its expansion in order to address, analyse, and explain the above mentioned complexities. Such decisive components of societal security as sustainability, resilience, and securitability (building individual and group security strategies based on central human capabilities), can minimise the effects caused by the societal security dilemma. At the same time, societal security dilemma can be constrained by solving the complexities of the inclusion/exclusion problem, which will be addressed in the next chapter.

Inclusion in the 21st Century: an Exploration of Policy Opportunities and Challenges

CHRISTOPHER HOUTKAMP¹

Abstract

Inclusion/exclusion dilemmas are high on the policy agendas of many states. Many countries struggle to formulate a diversity policy which can both satisfy their minorities and preserve their own national identity. In this chapter, it will be argued that the framework of 'inclusion' is an effective way to manage diversity. The conceptual history of 'inclusion' and related concepts such as 'assimilation' and 'integration' will be discussed. Furthermore, some of the dilemmas surrounding inclusion policy are discussed and possible solutions are presented. It will be emphasised that, even though the chapter argues in favour of an 'inclusion based' policy framework, a 'one-size-fits-all' approach is unwise. Considering the socio-political context is of the utmost importance when formulating an effective policy strategy.

Keywords: diversity, inclusion, integration, assimilation, multiculturalism, transnationalism, immigrants, autochthonous minorities

Introduction

The drawing of borders always creates inclusion/exclusion dilemmas. Historically, coping with these dilemmas has proved to be complex and attracted the attention of many scholars over the decades. In general, finding the balance between allowing cultural diversity and protecting one's own cultural heritage, proves to be a daunting task for every state, especially the smaller and less powerful ones. Different states use differing policy options to 'manage' diversity in their countries, ranging from demanding full assimilation to

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leaving a considerable amount of freedom for minorities to express their own cultural identity. This paper will discuss one of these policy options, namely a policy based on ‘inclusion’. It will not discuss specific cases in great detail, but will instead attempt to present a more general understanding of inclusion as a concept, inclusion-inspired policy and its potential problems. Gaining this understanding may be helpful for researchers and policy-makers who reflect upon specific minority cases.

The chapter is broadly structured into two sections. In the first section we will study the ‘old’ concepts of ‘assimilation’ and ‘integration’, and contrast them against our understanding of ‘inclusion’. It will be argued that ‘inclusion’ will help us analyse and provide answers for present-day minority problems. In the second section, three important issues when designing an inclusion-inspired policy are discussed. It will become apparent that even if one makes the decision to forsake integration/assimilation and formulate a policy based on inclusion, it still takes careful policy planning to avoid counter-productive effects.

Inclusion, integration and assimilation

When trying to define inclusion, it is impossible not to first briefly discuss the origins of its conceptual ‘peer’, integration, and by consequence also assimilation². These concepts are mainly drawn from migration literature, but they can also apply to situations of autochthonous minorities on a theoretical level. It depends on the specific socio-political context as to how these concepts are implemented in concrete policy.

Integration and assimilation were not distinguished in post-war literature on cultural adaptation: most social scientists only spoke of ‘assimilation’ when describing the cultural adaptation process of

² A more elaborate discussion on these three concepts can be found in: Houtkamp, C. (2015). Beyond assimilation and integration: the shift to ‘national’ and ‘transnational’ inclusion. *European Regional Studies* (forthcoming).

minorities. In the 1960s, the sociologist Milton Gordon published his famous work, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins*,³ wherein he analyses the acculturation process of immigrants in the United States. He concludes that it is inevitable that newcomers go through several stages of assimilation, starting with the initial contact of the immigrant with the host society's culture and ending with the so-called 'civic assimilation', by which he refers to a complete adaptation of the immigrant to his/her new culture, in almost any way possible. In the 1980s, social-psychologist John W. Berry disputed this 'natural' order that Gordon had outlined a few decades previously. Berry assumes that immigrants have, to a certain degree, agency to pick their own 'acculturation strategy'. Acculturation refers to "the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members".⁴ Berry outlined four different strategies migrants can follow: separation, marginalisation, integration, and assimilation.⁵ In a later piece, he also outlined four strategies for policy-makers in the nation-state: multiculturalism (society values and fosters diversity), melting pot (society enforces assimilation), segregation (society forces separation), and exclusion (society imposes marginalisation).⁶ Although this chapter will mostly focus on just two of the concepts of Berry's framework, namely assimilation and integration, we will briefly cover all the model's concepts. Assimilation generally still has the same meaning as in Gordon's work: complete adaptation of the minority to the majority culture. Minorities opting for this strategy have a preference for the majority culture and actively wish to engage with other groups. Separation means that individuals

³ Gordon, M. (1964). *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins*. (New York: Oxford University Press).

⁴ Berry, J. (2005). Acculturation: living in two successful cultures. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Vol. 29, No. 6, p. 698.

⁵ Berry, J. (1980). Acculturation as Varieties of Adaptation. In: Padilla, A. (Ed.) (1980). *Acculturation: Theory Models and Findings*. (Boulder: Westview).

⁶ Berry, J. (2001). A Psychology of Immigration. *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 53, No. 7, pp. 615–637.

wish to exclusively orient themselves towards their heritage culture, having little desire to come into frequent contact with other groups. Marginalisation occurs when new arrivals deny both their heritage culture and other cultural groups in society, resulting in a solitary cultural existence. Concerning integration, this strategy is preferred among those who both value their own cultural heritage but also wish to make contact with other groups.

With Berry, we thus see that assimilation and integration are being disentangled and actually have two very different meanings: integration explicitly means that minorities can feel at home in *two* cultures, whilst assimilation implies that the minority only expresses a desire to belong to *one* culture, namely, the dominant one of the state they live in. In practice, for example, when analysing contemporary politics, the strict distinction Berry made between integration and assimilation has not always found its way into the public debate. Integration⁷ and assimilation are often considered synonyms. Similarly, in some scientific papers, it becomes apparent that this distinction is not made either.⁸ In other words, the practical use of these concepts is blurred and may even cause opposite effects to those intended.

Moving on to inclusion, we see that this concept has a rich and diverse history and has also had many different meanings. Obviously, it is often used as a polar opposite to ‘social exclusion’. It can also be related to affirmative action policies, such as making the work place accessible for people with disabilities or allowing homosexual and

⁷ Within the scope of this paper, it is not possible to discuss other (sub)-definitions of integration. For more information on other understandings of ‘integration’ (i.e. ‘structural integration’ and ‘cultural integration’) I would gladly refer to: Tolksma, J., Lubbers, M., Gijsberts, M. (2012). Education and Cultural Integration among Ethnic Minorities and Natives in the Netherlands: A Test of the Integration Paradox. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 5, pp. 793–813; and Maliepaard, M., Alba, R. (2015). Cultural Integration in the Muslim Second Generation in the Netherlands: The Case of Gender Ideology. *International Migration Review*, Fall 2015, pp. 1–25.

⁸ See Ersallini, E., Koopmans, R. (2011). Do Immigrant Integration Policies Matter? A Three-Country Comparison among Turkish Immigrants. *West European Politics*, Vol. 34, No. 2, pp. 208–234.

black people to enter the national army.⁹ In these cases a majority, or a more powerful group, actively adapts so that a minority, or a less powerful group, can fit in. When we talk about inclusion policies in the sense of this paper, however, i.e. the policies towards minorities at state level, in order to promote social cohesion, it is unlikely that this principle of the majority adapting to the minority can be sustained. Our definition of 'inclusion' assumes that adaptation comes from both the majority and the minority groups, where it depends on the particular circumstances to what degree both sides have to adapt to each other. The practical application of inclusion policy can differ depending upon specific political circumstances: it is unlikely that a 'one-size fits all' approach would garner much success. 'Inclusion' comes very close to Berry's original definition of 'integration'. To briefly recapitulate the most important concepts: 'assimilation' entails a complete adaptation of the minority to the majority culture. 'Berryan integration' refers to the cultivation of two cultural identities for minorities. They have the option to both connect with the majority culture but still maintain their own cultural heritage. Lastly, the definition of 'inclusion' is similar to that of 'Berryan integration'. There is, however, another issue that needs to be discussed, which will be the topic of the next paragraph: an explicit transnational focus. The rise of transnationalism in the 21st century, and subsequently, the stronger formation of transnational identities among minorities should influence the way we analyse and respond to diversity issues. This topic will be discussed below.

Inclusion and transnationalism

In order for an assimilation-inspired policy to succeed, minorities need to practically forsake their cultural identity. This has always been a complicated process, but the level of complexity has

⁹ See Potash, D. (1973). Mandatory Inclusion of Racial Minorities on Jury Panels. *Black LJ*, Vol. 3, pp. 80–95; Burk, J. (1995). Citizenship status and military service: The quest for inclusion by minorities and conscientious objectors. *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 21, No. 4, pp. 503–529.

increased even more in recent times. Due to advances in communication, transport, and media technology, it is much easier and more common than a few decades ago to maintain long-distance contact with friends and relatives in the country of origin and/or with other immigrant communities in Western societies.¹⁰ This development is commonly understood as ‘transnationalism’. Transnationalism or “the process by which migrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement”¹¹ is an important development to consider when analysing minority adaptation processes. Steven Vertovec¹² points out that due to the connectivity of individuals through increased physical mobility, but also via the Internet, telecommunications, and satellite TV, notions of ‘place’ and ‘locality’ are reconstructed: current communication technology allows individuals to form their own transnational ‘fora’ to communicate and express their identity. Minorities¹³ can easily read newspapers in their native language on the Internet, contact their relatives in their country of origin (or their ‘heritage’ country in the case of some autochthonous minorities)

¹⁰ Manuel Castells (2011) has described this development in his work *The rise of the network society*.

¹¹ Basch, L., Glick Schiller, N., Szanton Blanc, C. (2008). Transnational Projects: a New Perspective and Theoretical Premises. In: Khagram, S., Levitt, P. (Eds.) (2008). *The Transnational Studies Reader: Intersections & Innovations*. (New York, Routledge), p. 263.

¹² Vertovec, S. (1999). Conceiving and researching transnationalism. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 2, pp. 447–462.

¹³ It is important to consider the difference between ‘old’ and ‘new’ minorities. Old, or ‘autochthonous’, minorities live in their countries/region for a significant amount of time, sometimes spanning many centuries. These minorities are legally protected by, for instance, the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. New minorities are immigrants that usually only live in their countries for one, two, or three generations. They do not benefit from the same legal protection as old minorities. There is thus a clear difference between ‘old’ and ‘new’ in terms of legal protection. The question is, however, if, when seen from a perspective of transnationalism, there is a functional difference between the two groups. Both types of minorities partly form their identities based on transnational activities, and, in some cases, both can even experience the involvement of a kin-state (For instance: the involvements of the Turkish government with Turkish people in the EU and the Russian government with Russians in Eastern Europe), even though the intensity of this involvement may differ.

via Skype, and travel for economic fares as well, a process which is called 'virtual mobility' by John Urry¹⁴. In this respect, national boundaries are steadily losing part of their relevance. This evolution has consequences for the inclusion/exclusion dilemma. Due to transnationalism, striving for a near complete adaptation of minority communities has become almost unrealistic.

Our concept of inclusion should account for these transnational developments. In an earlier paper, I proposed to introduce the concept of 'transnational inclusion'. A definition could be: the possibilities of cultural minorities to express their heritage culture across the borders of the nation state.¹⁵ Policies promoting national and transnational inclusion could in practice overlap (e.g. when designing language policies towards minorities), but the distinction between these two concepts emphasises that we make the shift from a mostly nationally-oriented inclusion policy towards one that accounts for the transnational aspects.

Looking at the currently outlined concepts, the most obvious conclusion is that an 'inclusion friendly' policy, respecting both national and transnational inclusion, leaves a significant amount of room for minorities to express their heritage culture, without neglecting their connection to the host society culture. For instance, when reflecting upon language policies, an inclusionary policy would be favourable towards the adoption of minority language education in the official school curricula, alongside host society language acquisition. In official government institutions, minorities could be addressed in their language of heritage, should they opt for it. However, such policies may not necessarily have exclusively positive consequences in all cases and time periods. For instance, if a minority is backed up by a powerful, potentially aggressive kin state, designing the 'best' inclusion policy can become even more complex. In the rest of the paper, we will reflect upon several issues that may arise when pursuing a policy of inclusion. In the past, several states have implemented

¹⁴ Urry, J. (2002). Mobility and Proximity. *Sociology*, Vol. 36, No. 2, pp. 255–274.

¹⁵ Houtkamp, C. (2015). Beyond assimilation and integration: the shift to 'national' and 'transnational' inclusion. *European Regional Studies* (forthcoming).

policies that contain some elements of an inclusion-friendly policy, such as those that are inspired by a multicultural ideology. These policy elements have come under empirical scrutiny, as will become apparent in the next paragraphs. The remainder of this chapter will draw upon these existing empirical studies to outline several potential problems diversity policies may cause. This list of problems is not exhaustive, however, it should give a general understanding of the type of issues that may arise.

Issue 1: Empirical confusion on the effects of multicultural and assimilationist policies

As already mentioned, multicultural policies contain some elements of our definition of inclusion policy: they allow for cultural diversity and specifically give minorities the opportunity to express multiple cultural identities. In this section, we will briefly discuss research on the effects of these kinds of policies and their assimilationist counterparts, taking inspiration from multiple scientific disciplines. The research covers, among other topics, the effects of ethnic community building, statistical material on the connection between diversity policy and labour market outcomes, and the influence of policy on the psychological disposition of minorities. Starting with the latter, socio-psychological research on the effects of assimilation policies on the mental health of minorities shows that forced assimilation generates a considerable amount of ‘acculturative stress’, sometimes leading to mental health problems.¹⁶ Furthermore, it has been found that there is

¹⁶ See Sirin, S., Ryce, P., Gupta, T., Rogers-Sirin, L. (2013). The Role of Acculturative Stress on Mental Health Symptoms for Immigrant Adolescents: A Longitudinal Investigation. *Developmental Psychology*, Vol. 49, No. 4, pp. 736–748; Goforth, A., Oka, E., Leong, F., Denis, D. (2014). Acculturation, Acculturative Stress, Religiosity and Psychological Adjustment among Muslim Arab American Adolescents. *Journal of Muslim Mental Health*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 3–19; Yoon, E., Chang, C., Kim, S., Clawson, A., Cleary, S., Hansen, M., Bruner, J. P., Chan, T. K., Gomes, A. M. (2013). A meta-analysis of acculturation/enculturation and mental health. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, Vol. 60, No. 1, pp. 15–30.

no connection between assimilation and feelings of belonging to the host society.¹⁷ In addition, some minority groups, especially recent immigrants, can benefit from the presence of a strong community of co-ethnics in the host society. This is often called 'ethnic bonding' in minority studies' literature¹⁸: newcomers in society use their ethnic niche to ease their access into society. Their ethnic community can provide them with all sorts of assistance, such as finding work or a home. Subsequently, once minorities have settled in, the next step of 'ethnic bridging' commences. Minorities then proceed to build up contacts with members of the majority population. This sequence of events proved to be successful, e.g. regarding Polish immigrants in the U.K.¹⁹ However, other research highlights the possible negative effects of multicultural policies on the adaptation of minorities. Ruud Koopmans concludes for example:

The results suggest that multicultural policies, which grant immigrants easy access to equal rights and do not provide strong incentives for host country language acquisition and interethnic contacts, when combined with a generous welfare state, have produced low levels of labour market participation, high levels of segregation, and a strong overrepresentation of immigrants among those convicted for criminal behaviour.²⁰

He specifically mentions Sweden, the Netherlands, and Belgium as countries that either have or have had a policy tradition of multiculturalism, but at the same time score very low when it comes to labour market participation of immigrants. By contrast, he finds

¹⁷ See Wright, M., Bloemraad, I. (2012). Is there a trade-off between multiculturalism and socio-political integration? Policy regimes and immigrant incorporation in comparative perspective. *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 10, No. 01, pp. 77–95.

¹⁸ Putnam, R. (2007). *E pluribus Unum: diversity and community in the twenty-first century*. *Scandinavian Political Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2, pp. 137–174.

¹⁹ Ryan, L., Sales, R., Tilki, M., Siara, B. (2008). Social networks, social support and social capital: The experiences of recent Polish migrants in London. *Sociology*, Vol. 42, No. 4, pp. 672–690.

²⁰ Koopmans, R. (2010). Trade-Offs between Equality and Difference: Immigrant Integration, Multiculturalism and the Welfare State in Cross-National Perspective. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. Vol. 36, No. 1, p. 3.

that countries with a policy leaning towards assimilation, such as France, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, have considerably more success integrating their migrants into the labour market. This strand of research would thus suggest that promoting diversity is in fact detrimental to the position of minorities, and that it would be in their best interests to assimilate into the culture of the host society. As this overview of existing research shows, empirical results do not paint a clear picture. This makes it difficult to draw a general conclusion on the practical effects of multicultural and assimilationist policies.

Issue 2: The integration and inclusion paradox

Whilst the first issue focuses on the actual empirical observable effects of multiculturalism and assimilation, the second issue is concerned how majority and minority groups envisage the ‘ideal’ acculturation strategies of minorities. Research has shown that these preferences can differ greatly. In many cases majority members wish for minority members to assimilate²¹, whilst minorities often opt for the strategy of integration in the sense of Berry.²² These opposing preferences have at least two possible consequences: one empirically proven and another one that is a likely hypothesis.

²¹ See Horenczyk, G. (1996). Migrating Selves in Conflict. In: Breakwell, G., Lyons, E. (Eds.) (1996). *Changing European Identities*. (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann); Van Oudenhoven, J., Prins, K., Buunk, B. (1998). Attitudes of minority and majority members towards adaptation of immigrants. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 28, pp. 995–1013; Arends-Tóth, J., Van De Vijver, F. (2003). Multiculturalism and acculturation: views of Dutch and Turkish-Dutch. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 33, No. 2, pp. 249–266.

²² See Arends-Tóth, J., Van De Vijver, F. (2003). Multiculturalism and acculturation: views of Dutch and Turkish-Dutch. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 33, no. 2, pp. 249–266; Hehman, E., Gaertner, S., Dovidio, J., Mania, E., Guerra, R., Wilson, D., Friel, B. (2012). Group status drives majority and minority integration preferences. *Psychological Science*, Vol. 23, No. 1, pp. 46–52; Rojas, A., Navas, M., Sayans-Jiménez, P., Cuadrado, I. (2014). Acculturation preference profiles of Spaniards and Romanian immigrants: the role of prejudice and public and private acculturation areas. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 154, No. 4, pp. 339–354.

The empirically proven consequence is what is referred to in minority literature as the ‘integration paradox’.²³ This concept maintains that those minorities who are trying their best to integrate (sometimes even to a large extent assimilate) in the majority society are also the ones who have a relatively (compared to co-ethnics) strong perception of discrimination and suffer most from the mental health problems mentioned in the previous section. The efforts of this particular group are, according to themselves, not rewarded by the members of the majority. For instance, when CVs between two candidates for a job are comparable, employers will often not hire someone with the ‘wrong’ surname.²⁴ Research in the Netherlands shows that Afghan women who have obtained all the highest Dutch language acquisition certificates, still have problems entering the employment market, as they still have the wrong accent.²⁵ Majority members sometimes ask for an extreme degree of assimilation, to the point where there is no perceivable difference between majorities and minorities. This is a demand that many minorities do not wish to, or in some cases simply cannot, meet. Thus, we can speak of an ‘integration paradox’: more successful integration can lead to frustration and feelings of rejection. Minorities may be disillusioned with the majority society, which may be a hindrance to achieving social cohesion.

The other consequence of the opposing preferences among majorities and minorities is likely, albeit empirically unproven. Let us imagine a situation where a policy of inclusion is implemented.

²³ See Buijs, F. J., Demant, F., Hamdy, A. (2006). *Strijders van eigen bodem, radicale en democratische moslims in Nederland*. (Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press); Van Doorn, M., Scheepers, P., Dagevos, J. (2012). Explaining the Integration Paradox Among Small Immigrant Groups in the Netherlands. *Journal of Migration and Integration*, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 381–400; Ten Tije, I., Coenders, M., Verkuyten, M. (2013). The Paradox of Integration: Immigrants and Their Attitude Toward the Native Population. *Social Psychology*, Vol. 44, pp. 278–288.

²⁴ Dolfing, M., Van Tubergen, F. (2005). Bensaïdi of Veenstra?: Een experimenteel onderzoek naar discriminatie van Marokkanen in Nederland. *Sociologie*, Vol. 1, pp. 407–422.

²⁵ Ghorashi, H., Tilburg, M. van (2006). “When is my Dutch good enough?” Experiences of refugee women with Dutch labor organisations. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 51–70.

Minority languages are fully supported. Education in the mother tongue is included in the official education curriculum and government institutions also communication in all the ‘bigger’ minority languages. Minorities will have full opportunities to ‘integrate’ in the Berryan sense: adaptation to the host society whilst also maintaining their own cultural identity. Such a policy would naturally be the best way to achieve social cohesion, since it leaves enough room for all members of society to celebrate their own cultural identities. In such a scenario, at least one major question needs to be asked: would such a policy indeed lead to social cohesion, given the fact that majority members usually strongly prefer minorities to assimilate? Majority members might actively oppose this inclusion-friendly policy. Their perception of minorities may deteriorate instead of improve. In the most common situation where the majority not only holds the numerical, but also the political and economic advantage, such a policy could weaken the position of minorities. In other words: a policy of inclusion will then be a detriment to social cohesion. This possible contradiction between inclusionary intentions and segregation, inducing the consequences, is what we could call the ‘inclusion policy paradox’.

Issue 3: (Relatively) powerful minorities

The third and last issue discussed in this chapter concerns different types of minorities. When reflecting upon what a ‘minority’ is, most would first look at population figures. Minorities are always at a numerical disadvantage. However, the question is whether a numerical disadvantage necessarily implies a political or economic disadvantage. This firstly depends on the actual size of the minority: it can be expected that a minority of 30% would in general be in a stronger position than one of 5%.

Secondly, the political and historical context is of great importance. In some countries, Middle Eastern states come to mind, ethnic minorities hold, or have held, positions of political and economic

power for decades. A third consideration is whether the given minority has a powerful kin state that is actively involved in the well-being of its co-ethnics across the border. Some scholars analyse the dynamics of minority relationships vis-à-vis their nation state using the framework of the ‘quadratic nexus’.²⁶ In this framework, it is argued that there are four important actors to consider: the minority group, the nation state, the kin state (sometimes also referred to as the ‘external homeland’), and an emerging ‘Euro-Atlantic space’ that mostly consists of supranational organisations such as the EU and NGOs. The interplay between these four actors would influence the position and attitude of minorities within their nation state: actions taken by one of them can also shuffle the relationships between the other actors. For instance: assuming the nation state implements assimilationist policies to promote social cohesion, this might provoke a reaction from the external homeland(s) of the targeted minorities. These minorities, aware of the support of their kin state, would feel empowered to actively resist the policies of the nation state. In other words: taking into account the complex interplay of many different actors is of crucial importance when reflecting upon the ‘ideal’ minority policy. The goal of inclusion policy is usually to promote the social cohesion within their borders. It is apparent that the actions of a kin state can co-determine whether this goal can be achieved.

Fourthly, smaller nation-states hosting sizeable minorities may fear that their own language and culture is under threat, were there no policy to actively preserve their own heritage at the expense of minority cultures. In general, globalisation increasingly reduces the economic relevance of smaller languages in favour of the global ones. This would be the case especially when a minority group’s mother tongue is a more economically relevant language than the

²⁶ See Smith, D. (2002). Framing the National Question in Central and Eastern Europe: A Quadratic Nexus? *Global Review of Ethnopolitics*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 3–16; Marácz, L. (2014). The Politics of Multilingual Communication: Case Studies and Research Agendas. In: Craze, S., Lempp, F. (Eds.) (2014). *Communication Conflict: A Multidisciplinary Perspective*. (Oxford: Inter-disciplinary Press), pp. 45–61.

national language. Market forces may then encourage many individuals to focus on learning the more substantial language instead.

Conclusion

This chapter attempted to discuss some dilemmas regarding inclusionary policies. It became apparent that the concepts of integration and assimilation, which are quite often used as synonyms, are problematic in our current time. The rapid development of communication and transport technologies greatly hinder the processes of assimilation. Transnational identities, being in direct conflict with the goals of assimilation, are easy to maintain for virtually all minorities, due to low-cost access to the Internet and social-media. In order to break away from the conceptual confusion between integration and assimilation, this paper opted to use 'inclusion' instead, which accounts for the new transnational reality and offers minorities the opportunity to feel at home in two cultures.

However, designing and implementing an inclusion-friendly policy is not a straightforward endeavour. We have outlined three of the major dilemmas that might arise. Namely: the mixed results of research on multicultural policies, the gap between the majority population that usually opts for assimilation and the minorities that often prefer inclusion (or 'integration in the sense of Berry') and the resulting integration and inclusion paradoxes, and lastly, the issue when minorities are relatively powerful, be it numerically, politically, or in economic terms. There is at least one straightforward conclusion we can draw when looking at these three issues: namely, that it is complex, if not impossible, to design one general inclusion-friendly policy framework which can be implemented in all cases. It is important to understand the relationship between majorities and minorities. Consideration of the specific political-economic, historical, and cultural context of a nation state, and the relationship of the minorities with said nation state, is essential when formulating an inclusion-policy framework. An inconsiderate policy can lead to

the inclusion paradox, a severe disturbance of the minority/nation state relationship or can, in extreme cases, even be detrimental to the preservation of the nation state's own cultural tradition.

In our present era of globalisation, when comparing an inclusion-inspired with an assimilation-inspired general policy framework, the attainability of the latter option is coming increasingly under pressure, despite its growing public support. Minorities often use the Internet to maintain their transnational identities, by, for example 'Skyping' frequently with their relatives and friends in their country of origin, or by closely following the news in their mother tongue. Unless drastic measures are on the table, such as restricting free Internet access, assimilation in its classical meaning (i.e. virtually forsaking the heritage identity and completely adopting the majority culture) is nearly unattainable. Thus, even if we steer clear from normative discussions on the value of diversity, or the right of all individuals to express their own cultural identity, assimilation is on practical grounds not a viable solution. Future research could further develop the concept of inclusion and its policy implications. As stated previously, the list of possible issues presented in this chapter is not exhaustive: it may also be fruitful to explore additional dilemmas. Furthermore, in the case of policy-oriented research, it is important to disentangle specific minority cases and consider how an inclusion policy might be designed in the most effective way, minimising potential negative side effects. Hopefully, further empirical research can shed some light onto the design of tailored inclusion policies: they will be needed in our era of globalisation.

Societal Resilience: The Case of the Russian-speaking Community in Latvia

RIHARDS BAMBALS¹

Abstract

The main objective of this chapter is to analyse the societal resilience of Latvia's Russian-speaking minority, to explore whether it might be susceptible to potential hybrid threats, as it has often been speculated in the context of the Ukraine crisis. Firstly, the concepts of societal resilience and hybrid threats are examined, which both have gained significant attention in academic literature in recent years. For purposes of further analysis, a theoretical dynamic vectoral model of societal resilience is proposed. Secondly, state resilience is analysed, examining how many requirements for a hybrid campaign to succeed are present in Latvia's case. Thirdly, the chapter analyses the societal resilience of Latvia's Russian-speaking community, particularly focusing on its perception of threat, the main elements influencing development of social capital, and the link to Latvia's statehood. Lastly, the main conclusions and recommendations for further analysis and strengthening of societal resilience are proposed.

Keywords: resilience, societal resilience, hybrid threats, security, social capital

Introduction

Over the last decades, both the number and scope of security challenges have grown well beyond the military domain and state-centrism, exposing different communities and individuals to danger, stemming from international, state, and community level. Russia's aggression against Ukraine and lightning fast, yet successful, occupation and annexation of the Crimean peninsula, in March 2014, has initiated widespread debates among policy-makers, academia, media,

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and the general public on the emergence of new (or rather, old but long forgotten) terms, such as ‘hybrid war’ (or warfare), ‘hybrid campaigns’ or ‘hybrid threats’. They have been used extensively², including by NATO³, the EU⁴ and their respective research structures⁵, to characterise an orchestrated deployment of a mixture of non-military tools, tailored to the target’s potential vulnerabilities and backed by a military deterrent, in order to achieve strategic political goals (including geopolitical), while falling short of a threshold of classical military confrontation, therefore delaying a counter-response from the target nation or international community.

Against the backdrop of the Ukraine crisis, researchers have often pointed to transformations in Russia’s military thinking, while some have speculated whether the sizeable Russian-speaking minority in the Baltic States could be used for similar purposes, as in Crimea or Eastern Ukraine. The question has been raised whether dissatisfaction with livelihood or security concerns of the Russian-speaking minority could be used as *jus ad bellum* for Russia to confront its neighbours. The role of this chapter, however, does

² Racz, A. (2015). *Russia’s Hybrid War in Ukraine. Breaking the Enemy’s Ability to Resist* (FIIA Report 42). (Helsinki: FIIA); Roberts, J. Q. (2015). *Maskirovka 2.0: Hybrid Threat, Hybrid Response*. (MacDill AFB: Joint Special Operations University Press); Cedergren, A., Eronen, P. (2015). *How Can Societies Be Defended Against Hybrid Threats?* (Geneva: Geneva Centre for Security Policy); Kofman, M., Rojansky, M. (2015). *A Closer Look at Russia’s “Hybrid War”*. (Washington D.C.: The Kennan Institute, The Wilson Centre); Hoffman, F. G. (2009). Hybrid Warfare and Challenges. *Joint Force Quarterly*, No. 52, 1st Quarter.

³ *Wales Summit Declaration*, 5 September 2014. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm (accessed 2 January 2016).

⁴ *Council conclusions on CSDP* (8971/15), 18 May 2015. Available at: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/05/18-council-conclusions-csdp/> (accessed 2 January 2016).

⁵ Lasconjarias, G., Larsen, J. A. (Eds.) (2015). *NATO’s Response to Hybrid Threats*. (Rome: NATO Defence College); Calha, J. M. (2015) *Hybrid Warfare: NATO’s New Strategic Challenge (General Report)*. NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Defence and Security Committee, 10 October 2015. Available at: <http://www.nato-pa.int/Default.asp?SHORTCUT=4018> (accessed 2 January 2016); Popescu, N. (28 October 2015). *Hybrid Tactics: Russia and the West (Alert No.46)*. EU ISS; Andersson, J. J., Tardy, T. (28 October 2015). *Hybrid: What’s in a Name? (Brief No. 32)*. EU ISS; Andersson, J. J. (28 October 2015). *Hybrid Operations: Lessons from the Past (Brief No. 33)*. EU ISS; Gaub, F. (28 October 2015). *Hybrid Tactics: ISIL & Co (Alert No. 47)*. EU ISS.

not try to guess the Kremlin's future foreign policy. In particular, the chapter has a twofold objective. Firstly, the concept of 'societal resilience' is examined in the context of hybrid threats, as they are often perceived as two opposite sides of the same coin. Secondly, the chapter moves towards answering whether the risks encapsulated by the concept of 'hybrid war' are applicable to Latvia's case, and whether a potential third state or non-state actor would find "fertile soil" among the Russian-speaking minority for organising potential uprisings or hybrid conflict scenarios. To achieve this, the perception of threat, elements of social capital, and link to the state among Latvia's Russian-speaking minority are explored. Lastly, the main international developments in fostering resilience to hybrid threats are explored, and conclusions and recommendations provided.

Societal resilience: an antidote to hybrid threats?

From the outset, debates on 'societal resilience' and 'hybrid threats' within academic circles and elsewhere should be seen in the wider context of developments within international security studies over the last decades, in the literature characterised as *widening* and *deepening*⁶. Since the late 1980s, the security concept has experienced four main trends of movement: (1) referent object of security widened from state to sub-state levels, including communities and individuals; (2) scope of security widened beyond the military, including dimensions of political, economic, societal, and ecological

⁶ Krause, K., Williams, M. C. (1996). Broadening the Agenda of Security Studies: Politics and Methods. *Mershon International Studies Review*, Vol. 40, No. 2, pp. 229–254; McSweeney, B. (1999) Broadening the Concept of Security. In: McSweeney, B. (Ed.) *Security, Identity and Interests: A Sociology of International Relations*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 45–67; Buzan, B., Waever, O., de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: A New Framework For Analysis*. (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers), pp. 1–5; Saleh, A. (2010). Broadening the Concept of Security: Identity and Societal Security. *Geopolitics Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 4, pp. 228–241; Buzan, B., Hansen, L. (2009). *The Evolution of International Security Studies*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 187–225; Ozoliņa, Ž. (2010). Re-considering the Concept of Security. In: Ozoliņa, Ž. (Ed.) *Rethinking Security*. (Riga: Zinātne), pp. 19–26.

security; (3) multiplication in number and diversity of security threats; (4) changed conduct of conflicts with blurred lines between conventional and asymmetric tactics and military and civilian tools applied. Hence, the ‘hybridity’ often applied to ‘hybrid threats’ encapsulates the complexity and fusion characterised by these trends.

Although there is no single ultimately agreed perception of what is (or is not) ‘hybrid war’ and ‘hybrid threats’, several general common characteristic parameters in definitions provided by researchers and policy-makers can be observed in the literature:

- Attacker simultaneously uses a combination of a wide range of non-military tools (trade, diplomacy, coercion, informational and psychological campaigns, cyber-attacks, and others), backed by military force for special operations, intimidation and deterrence;
- Attacker’s goal is to achieve strategic political objectives;
- Campaigns are centrally planned and coordinated;
- Intensity of warfare is scalable from high to low (and in reverse) according to necessity;
- Warfare is conducted below the threshold of a military conflict;
- Blurred perception of peace times with war, as a campaign starts without implying military force and direct confrontation;
- Attacker employs target country’s vulnerabilities, mostly within its own population;
- Use of psychological and informational campaigns and other means to break target population’s willpower to resist the attacker, and succumb to its power⁷.

⁷ Hoffman, F. G. (2009). Hybrid Warfare and Challenges. *Joint Force Quarterly* (JFQ), No. 52, 1st Quarter, pp. 3, 6; Racz, A. (2015). Russia’s “Hybrid War”: Geographic and Operational Limitations. In: Sprūds, A., Bukovskis, K. (Eds.). *Riga Conference Papers 2015: Towards Reassurance and Solidarity in the Euro-Atlantic Community*. (Riga: LIIA), pp. 111–119; Lasconjarias, G., Larsen, J. A. (Eds.) (2015). *NATO’s Response to Hybrid Threats*. (Rome: NATO Defence College), p. 3; Cederberg, A., Eronen, P. (2015). *How Can Societies Be Defended Against Hybrid Threats?* (Geneva: Geneva Centre for Security Policy), p. 4; Praks, H. (2015). *Hybrid or Not: Deterring and Defeating Russia’s Ways of Warfare in the Baltics — the Case of Estonia (Research Paper No. 124)*. (Rome: NATO Defense College), p. 2.

However, despite the growing popularity of the concept, Andras Racz has argued that hybrid war is neither an ultimate weapon nor threat. According to Racz, several strategic and operational requirements have to be fulfilled in the target nation for hybrid tactics to succeed: (1) military superiority – the attacker has to be militarily superior to the target nation for the deterrence factor to successfully support the hybrid elements; (2) the presence of a weak, underpaid, and/or corrupt central power, armed and law enforcement forces in the target nation; (3) ongoing, regionally concentrated dissatisfaction with the central government, which preferably should have an ethnic, language- or separatism related element; (4) massive presence of a Russian-speaking minority; (5) strong Russian media presence; (6) target nation's proximity to Russia's border or its military base.⁸

Similarly, Henrik Praks has analysed both the hybrid war requirements and vulnerabilities in the case of Estonia, both at state and societal level. Firstly, the potential influence of political, economic, and military pressures on the target nation (i.e. the country's political course; trade dependency; military force vis-à-vis the attacker, etc.) has been studied. Secondly, societal-level vulnerabilities are disentangled and explored in such parameters as: (a) use of local Russian-speaking minority (possibility of an inspired rebellion in less integrated regions; trust in local government; trust in the politics of the attacker compared to that of the residence country); (b) availability of organised (criminal) groups; (c) economic and social welfare in the target nation compared to the attacker's; (d) cohesion of the media space; (e) possible use of Russian tourists as "locals" for a rebellion; (f) state control over its territory; (g) morale in the police and armed forces; (h) exposure to cyber-attacks.⁹

⁸ Racz, A. (2015). *Russia's Hybrid War in Ukraine. Breaking the Enemy's Ability to Resist.* (Helsinki: FIIA), pp. 73–76; Racz, A. (2015). *Russia's "Hybrid War": Geographic and Operational Limitations.* In: Sprūds, A., Bukovskis, K. (Eds.). *Riga Conference Papers 2015: Towards Reassurance and Solidarity in the Euro-Atlantic Community.* (Riga: LIIA), pp. 111–119.

⁹ Praks, H. (2015). *Hybrid or Not: Deterring and Defeating Russia's Ways of Warfare in the Baltics — the Case of Estonia.* (Rome: NATO Defense College).

This chapter, in further sections, focuses on the hypothetical employment of the target nation's population and potential vulnerabilities within its societal security, which may be used as a part of hybrid war in relative peace times to achieve political goals. In particular, societal resilience to hybrid threats of the Russian-speaking minority within the wider context of Latvia's statehood is analysed by applying, to a large extent, the methodology practised by both Racz and Praks.

As an antonym and antidote to hybrid threats, policy-makers and academia have often proposed the concept of 'resilience'¹⁰. Similarly to 'hybrid war', 'resilience' is not a new concept, neither has it been developed within the security studies. It originated in the discipline of ecology, where, according to Brad Evans and Julian Reid, since the 1970s it has been used to describe "the capacities of non-human living systems to adapt to dangers, which otherwise would threaten their catastrophic failure"¹¹.

Fikret Berkes and Helen Ross distinguish two main strands of literature devoted to 'community resilience'. The first one comes from ecology and focuses on the resilience of ecosystems or integrated socio-ecological systems. The second one originates in the psychology of personal development and mental health, focuses on individual level, and is associated with development and community self-organisation¹². The first strand has defined resilience as "the capacity of the system to continually change and adapt and yet remain within critical thresholds", while the second strand, as "the ability of an individual to recover from adversity"¹³. Today, 'resilience' is used in a wide range of disciplines, such as psychology, physical infrastructure management, economy, organisational management,

¹⁰ For example, see: Jermalavicius, T. (2015). *Societal Resilience as a Deterrent in 'Hybrid War'*. In: Sprūds, A., Bukovskis, K. (Eds.). *Riga Conference Papers 2015: Towards Reassurance and Solidarity in the Euro-Atlantic Community*. (Riga: LIIA), pp. 157–166.

¹¹ Evans, B., Reid, J. (2013). Dangerously exposed: the life and death of the resilient subject. *Resilience*, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 84.

¹² Berkes, F., Ross, H. (2012). Community Resilience: Toward an Integrated Approach. *Society & Natural Resources*, Vol. 26, No. 1, p. 6.

¹³ Ibid., p. 6.

community studies, evolutionary biology, cultural studies, and computer studies. Yet, in direct context of security, it is most often used in disaster studies, therefore, the main definitions and concepts for this chapter are borrowed to a large extent from this discipline (although as noted by some authors, popularity is gained also in such areas as anti-terrorism, cyber-security, and critical infrastructure protection)¹⁴.

Regarding the variety of ‘resilience’ definitions, within the United Nations’ framework and context of disaster management, UNISDIR has defined it as “the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards, to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structure and functions”¹⁵. From a different perspective, Evans and Reid argue that resilience “describes the ways in which life learns from catastrophes so that it can become more responsive to further catastrophes on the horizon. It promotes adaptability so that life may go on despite the fact that elements of it may be destroyed”¹⁶. In their construction, a ‘resilient subject’ is one that “can conceive of changing the world, its structure and conditions of possibility. (...) [It] accepts the dangerousness of the world it lives in as a condition for partaking of that world and which accepts the necessity of the injunction to change itself in correspondence with threats now presupposed as endemic”¹⁷. However, Karen Sudmeier-Rieux, after comprehensive analysis of ‘resilience’ literature, has concluded that the concept, which today is mostly defined as “bouncing back to normal”, risks ignoring the root causes of vulnerability. Therefore,

¹⁴ Gallopin, G. C. (2006). Linkages between vulnerability, resilience and adaptive capacity. *Global Environmental Change*, No. 16, pp. 293; Jermalavicius, T. (2015). *Societal Resilience as a Deterrent in ‘Hybrid War’*. p. 158.

¹⁵ International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. (Geneva: ISDIR). 2009, p. 24, http://www.preventionweb.net/files/7817_UNISDRTerminologyEnglish.pdf (accessed 12 January 2016).

¹⁶ Evans, B., Reid, J. (2013). Dangerously exposed: the life and death of the resilient subject, *Resilience*, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 84.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 85.

in future studies it should be regarded as the “bounce forward” concept and “the ability of a system, organisation, community, household or individual level to change in a positive manner, when faced with diversity”¹⁸.

However, regarding ‘social, societal (society)’ or ‘community resilience’, which are more applicable to the inclusion/exclusion model of societal security in respect of this book, the definitions have slightly different connotations. For example, Neil Adger has defined ‘social resilience’ as the ability of groups or communities to cope with external stresses and disturbances as a result of social, political, and environmental change.¹⁹ Following a similar path, Barbara Lucini, representing the Italian approach of disaster studies, has defined ‘societal resilience’ as “the capacity of people in a group (formal and informal) to face up to disaster during the emergency and reconstruction time, starting from collective and individual resources made available for all people involved having needs to be satisfied through altruistic behaviour and shared social relationships”²⁰.

From a slightly different angle, Berkes and Ross define ‘community resilience’ as:

Communities do not control all of their conditions that affect them, but they have the ability to change many of the conditions that can increase their resilience. They can build resilience through their responses to shocks and stresses, and actively develop resilience through capacity building and social learning.²¹

These definitions of resilience, despite coming from different contexts and disciplines, share several similarities, which can be characterised as: (a) focus on societal security (rather than state-level);

¹⁸ Sudmeier-Rieux, K. I. (2014). Resilience — an emerging paradigm of danger or of hope? *Disaster Prevention and Management*, Vol. 23, No. 1, p. 75.

¹⁹ Adger, N. W. (2000). Social and ecological resilience: are they related? *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 347–364.

²⁰ Lucini, B. (2013). Social capital and sociological resilience in megacities context, *International Journal of Disaster Resilience in the Built Environment*, Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 62.

²¹ Berkes, F., Ross, H. (2012). Community Resilience: Toward an Integrated Approach. *Society & Natural Resources*, Vol. 26, No. 1, p. 13.

(b) focus on ability to cope with or overcome adversity; (c) focus on knowledge, abilities, skills developed on an individual basis or as shared knowledge at the community level; (d) it is exercised through social interaction in a networked society.

However, more important than proposing a new definition and widening the current basis of knowledge, for the purposes of this chapter and book volume, is to outline the main components stored at societal and individual levels, which constitute societal resilience. In doing so, one can better understand the main elements of further empirical analysis, as well as being able to decide better on which areas to focus the main research and political resources in the future, for more successful strengthening of societal resilience.

As outlined by Fran Norris et al. (as cited by Tomas Jermalavičius), societal resilience is dependent on four inter-related resources: (1) *economic development* (social groups exposed to more and better economic resources, health care, housing, schools, and other resources suffer less from stressors than those with lower socio-economic levels); (2) *social capital* (network of social formal and informal relational ties, sense of community); (3) *community competence* (society's knowledge, skills, and abilities to solve problems and work together); (4) *information and communication* ("trusted sources of accurate information, effective transmission mechanisms and collective narrative")²². Of all four elements, Barbara Lucini considers social capital as the main one, both for definition and improving of societal resilience, and decreasing potential vulnerabilities.²³ It is based on the assumption that "social capital is not a resource that could be enhanced only in emergency, response or reconstruction stages; instead it is based on the identification of facilitators to better understand vulnerable groups, collective mental maps of spaces and environments, knowledge of services and best practices to respond to an emergency or disaster

²² Jermalavicius, T. (2015). *Societal Resilience as a Deterrent in 'Hybrid War'*. pp. 160–161.

²³ Lucini, B. (2013). Social capital and sociological resilience in megacities context. *International Journal of Disaster Resilience in the Built Environment*, Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 65.

and, in the end, survive it”²⁴. Berkes and Ross stress that although factors influencing the development of resilience vary from one community to another, the overlapping and most common factors include: people-place connections; values and beliefs; knowledge, skills and learning; social networks; engaged governance (involving collaborative institutions); a diverse and innovative economy; community infrastructure; leadership; and a positive outlook, including readiness to accept change²⁵.

This chapter adopts *a model of societal resilience* composed of three main building blocks (see Figure 1). Firstly, objective security threats and risks exist, that are growing in numbers and unpredictability. The second block includes all dimensions involved in the formation and further development of societal resilience. They include: (1) social capital — mainly dependent on the quantity and quality of inner (family, relatives) and outer circles of social networks, and their reliability; (2) skills, knowledge and abilities — both with long-term applicability (e.g. knowledge of languages) and short-term, very specific ones applicable for crisis management or particular problem-solving; (3) economic status within society, and quantity and quality of available material resources; (4) societal security as identity-based self-determination and belonging to a particular type of community; (5) threat and risk perception at individual and societal level; (6) tool-box developed before, during or after a crisis at community — or state-level for effective management of adverse situations. Language, in this regard, as an important part of societal security, can be perceived as “glue”, linking the elements of all these dimensions. It can also be seen as a skill, widening the potential range of social networks and social capital. Moreover, it may be seen as a lens through which different threats can be observed. The third, and final, element within the model is resilience. It can be perceived as a filter or external shell to society and community,

²⁴ Lucini, B. (2013). Social capital and sociological resilience in megacities context. *International Journal of Disaster Resilience in the Built Environment*, Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 67.

²⁵ Berkes, F., Ross, H. (2012). Community Resilience: Toward an Integrated Approach. *Society & Natural Resources*, Vol. 26, No. 1, pp. 13–14.

which stands between its core with relatively defined boundaries and order (where all previously mentioned elements are stored), and the chaotic world on the outside full of risks and threats. Resilience is constantly developed between two pressure channels of force vectors: risks pushing from the outside, and parameters reinforcing and forming the societal resilience from the outside (inside?). It is worth noting that resilience is strengthened, if: (1) every single dimension of it is strengthened; (2) the weight of different dimensions forming the overall resilience is equally well balanced, thus through diversity averting over-reliance and dependence on one or a few of them.

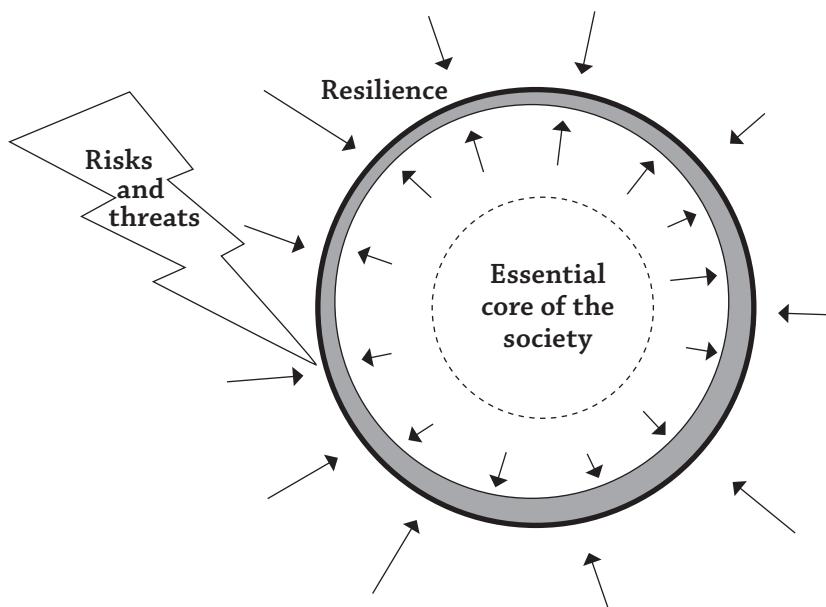


Figure 1
Dynamic vectoral model of societal resilience
Source: Author's own material

The societal resilience model is further used in this chapter for analysing resilience of: (a) Latvia's overall state and societal resilience; and (b) the Russian-speaking minority as being an important part of the “essential core”.

Russian-speaking minority and societal resilience in Latvia

The final section of this chapter is divided into three parts. The first part examines state and societal resilience in the context of verifying whether operational and strategic preconditions are present for the use of a hybrid warfare campaign in the case of Latvia. It is focused mainly on resilience to possible external shocks (or externally inspired). Fully recognising that some aspects of threat perception and identity formation are analysed in several other chapters of this book, the second part examines major dimensions of societal resilience to possible internal shocks within Latvia's Russian-speaking society. In particular, three questions are raised: (1) What are the majority of Russian speakers afraid of, and do they see identity as a major security issue? (2) What main elements constitute the social capital of the Russian-speaking minority? (3) How strong (or weak) is the link between the Russian-speaking minority and the Latvian state? The third part examines major international developments towards fostering resilience against hybrid threats and campaigns.

PRECONDITIONS FOR RUSSIA'S HYBRID WARFARE TO SUCCEED IN LATVIA

This chapter, firstly, uses Racz's model of strategic and operational requirements to analyse whether the right preconditions exist in Latvia for hybrid warfare to succeed, hence measuring state-level resilience. Regarding the first requirement — *military superiority* — Latvia, individually compared to Russia, has considerably less military resources, including a lack of any strategic nuclear deterrents. However, Latvia is part of the collective defence mechanism so, therefore, is as militarily powerful as each of the twenty-eight Allied States together with a combined defence expenditure exceeding Russia's share more than ten times (in 2014)²⁶, which means

²⁶ SIPRI Military Expenditure Data Base. Available at: http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/milex_database (accessed 12 January 2016).

that the first requirement is not fulfilled. However, in the context of hybrid warfare, societal resilience and trust in NATO may play a role in order to overrun any potential opponent's psychological deterrence. It is worth noting that in 2014, over 62 per cent of Latvia's population perceived collective security as the core NATO task, yet only 45.8 per cent personally associated themselves with it. More importantly, there was a gap between Latvian (55.6 per cent) and Russian-speaking respondents (31.3 per cent) who answered in the affirmative, while for 31.5 per cent of Russian speakers it was "hard to respond".²⁷ In future, therefore, it might be useful to consider raising awareness of the Alliance's policies throughout all layers of Latvia's society, to fully eradicate this precondition for hybrid war.

The second requirement — *bad governance and high corruption* — is also not fulfilled in Latvia's case, as the country ranked 43rd out of 175 countries in the "Corruption Perception Index 2014,"²⁸ with a relatively low level of corruption. However, it must not be forgotten that in 2013, the majority of the population (51 per cent), indicated that corruption is a serious problem in Latvia, according to the Global Corruption Barometer. Furthermore, the majority of respondents felt that bodies such as political parties (68 per cent), parliament (56 per cent), public officials and civil servants (63 per cent) are "corrupt or extremely corrupt", while police (47 per cent), medical and health services (48 per cent), business (46 per cent), and media (31 per cent) were perceived as relatively corrupt.²⁹

The third requirement — *continuous, regionally concentrated, dissatisfaction with the central government* — also falls short, as there have been no visible indications of social unrest. Likewise, the overall statistical tendency of annually registered acts of crime has been

²⁷ SKDS (November 2014). *Latvijas iedzīvotāju viedoklis par valsts aizsardzības jautājumiem*. (Riga: SKDS), 41. lpp.

²⁸ Transparency International (2014). *Corruption Perceptions Index 2014: Results*. Available at: <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2014/results#myAnchor2> (accessed 12 January 2016).

²⁹ Transparency International (2013). *Global corruption barometer 2013*. Available at: <http://www.transparency.org/gcb2013/country?country=latvia> (accessed 12 January 2016).

stable,³⁰ and confidence in the police (54 per cent), and especially the armed forces (57 per cent) — relatively high³¹. However, trust ratings of the government (25 per cent) and parliament (17 per cent)³² may serve as a red flag and substance for reflection in the future.

The fourth, fifth, and sixth requirements for applicability of hybrid war — *a large presence of a Russian-speaking minority; influence and presence of Russian media; and proximity to Russian borders*, respectively, however, are all fulfilled. Latvia is Russia's neighbour with a shared border 276 kilometres³³ in length, and has the largest Russian-speaking minority among the Baltic States, constituting 25.8 per cent of ethnic Russians (as of 2015)³⁴ and 33.8 per cent of the population who use the Russian language everyday at home (as of 2011)³⁵. Likewise, there is a diverse variety and presence of Russian-language media. Its influence and popularity, however, is disputable. In 2013, *MK Latvija* was the second most read weekly press. Several Russian language TV channels³⁶ had a daily percentage reach

³⁰ 49 905 total registered crimes in 2012; 47 561 in 2013; and 48 477 in 2014. Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (9 November 2015). *Number of recorded crimes*. Available at: <http://www.csb.gov.lv/en/statistikas-temas/crime-and-justice-key-indicators-30683.html> (accessed 12 January 2016).

³¹ EU Commission (May 2015). *EU Barometer Results*. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/cf/showchart_column.cfm?keyID=2198&nationID=20,&startdate=2015.05&enddate=2015.05 (accessed 12 January 2016).

³² Ibid.

³³ Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (2015). *GZG01: Latvijas Republikas ģeogrāfiskais stāvoklis* [Geographical conditions of the Republic of Latvia]. Available at: http://data.csb.gov.lv/pxweb/lv/visp/visp_ikgad_geogr/GZG010.px/table/tableViewLayout1/?rxid=a79839fe-11ba-4ecd-8cc3-4035692c5fc8 (accessed 12 January 2016).

³⁴ Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (2015). *Pastāvīgo iedzīvotāju etniskais sastāvs gada sākumā (ISG07)*. http://data.csb.gov.lv/pxweb/lv/Sociala/Sociala_ikgad_iедz_iedzskaitis/IS0070.px/table/tableViewLayout1/?rxid=992a0682-2c7d-4148-b242-7b48ff9fe0c2 (accessed 12 January 2016).

³⁵ Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (14 October 2014). *Pastāvīgie iedzīvotāji pa statistiskajiem reģioniem, republikas pilsētām un novadiem pēc mājās pārsvarā lietotās valodas un dzimuma 2011. gada 1. martā (2011. gada tautas skaitīšanas rezultāti)*. <http://www.csb.gov.lv/statistikas-temas/2011gada-tautas-skaitisana-datubaze-33609.html> (accessed 12 January 2016).

³⁶ *PBK* — 24.8%; *REN Baltija* — 18.3%; *NTV Mir Latvija* — 19.2%; *RTR Planeta Baltija* — 20.2%.

ranging from one fifth to one quarter of the entire audience, while the most popular Latvian channels (*TV3*, *LNT* and *LTV1*) had only a slight lead in the margins from 26.6 per cent (*LTV1*) to 31.5 per cent (*TV3*). Radio consumption, similarly, in its popularity is dominated by Latvian language stations (*Latvijas Radio 2*, *Radio Skonto* and *Latvijas Radio 1*, ranking as the Top3 most popular), while the most popular Russian station *Hiti Rossii/ Russkoje Radio* ranks only in eighth position, with a negligible 8.0 per cent reach³⁷. Although Russian language media is diversely present in Latvia, it is not consumed by the majority of the country's population, which either prefers media with Latvian content or other sources of information and entertainment in another language, for example, the Internet.

It can be concluded that in Latvia's case, three out of six prerequisites for a hybrid warfare campaign to succeed are present. Two of them — *proximity to the Russian border, and a large presence of a Russian-speaking minority* — are non-alterable variables. However, they should not be seen *per se* as security risks or vulnerabilities. Similarly, indicators that currently are not fulfilled can be either subject to change in future or one may have to focus on differences between their objective conditions and perception of their quality on society. For example, corruption levels may be low; separatism tendencies not present; while the country's military and economic security and state resilience are guaranteed by NATO and EU membership. Yet, confidence in the national state and regional institutions and structures, as well as international organisations is key, and an irreplaceable variable for synergies between state and societal resilience.

Lastly, it is unimaginable that Latvia will change its geopolitical course in the foreseeable future, as all previous and existing political parties represented in the government have continuously supported foreign policy through the prism of NATO and the EU. Moreover, in comparison to the case of Ukraine, Latvia is not as dependent

³⁷ TNS (2014). *TNS Latvijas mediju pētījumu gadagrāmata 2013/2014*. Available at: http://www.tns.lv/wwwtnslv_resources/images/Mediju_petijumu_gadagramata/TNS_Latvia_mediju_petijumu_gadagramata_2013-2014.pdf (accessed 12 January 2016).

economically on Russia. Although dependency on Russia's energy resources (especially natural gas) will be present for the foreseeable future, the trade dependency is relatively small and manageable, as Russia constitutes only 8.73 percent of Latvia's overall trade balance (in the first 9 months of 2015)³⁸. Also, other factors of analysis included in Praks' model (i.e. availability of organised criminal groups; coherence of the media space; state control over territory; morale in the police and armed forces, exposure to cyber-attacks) are all either irrelevant to Latvia's case in general or exceed the margins of this book, hence, state resilience is not further analysed. It leads to a natural focus on the societal security and analysis of possible vulnerabilities within the Russian-speaking minority in the context of its exposure to hybrid threats.

RUSSIAN-SPEAKING MINORITY: THREAT PERCEPTION, SOCIAL CAPITAL, AND LINK TO THE STATE

Cases from history prove that protection of a minority with a shared language can be used as *jus ad bellum* (a just cause to start war) for an open confrontation. A minority can also be used as a channel through which to conduct clandestine (or hybrid) campaigns. However, the minority as such does not become a threat to either the majority population or state resilience. The real risk is potential manipulation with the minority, as a third party may pretend to be willing to foster fulfilment of its needs and provision of a better state of welfare or security, in a way that is not necessarily based on an inclusion model. In such a context, this sub-section examines whether "fertile soil" is present in Latvia, particularly among members of the Russian-speaking community, to channel through it third state or non-state protectionist influences. Firstly, it answers the questions: What are Russian speakers in Latvia afraid of? Are identity or ethnicity based concerns present, and to what

³⁸ Latvijas Republikas un Krievijas Federācijas divpusējās attiecības. Available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.lv/arpolitika/divpusejas-attiecibas/latvijas-un-krievijas-attiecibas> (accessed 12 January 2016).

degree among them (if any)? Secondly, the main elements forming the social capital — the fundament of societal resilience — for the Russian-speaking minority are illustratively explored. Lastly, building on the previous section, the link between Russian speakers and Latvian statehood is analysed.

(i) Threat and risk perception

In 2012, a nation-wide survey concluded that the average member of Latvia's society (including the Russian-speaking minority) is not generally concerned about any form of military, identity, or ethnicity-based security threats. Instead, such issues as health care, welfare, and threats to personal security, which can be labelled within the concept of human security, ranked in the top 10 positions out of 32 possible fears³⁹. Similarly, in November 2014, a different survey illustrated that the majority of people listed the economic crisis (68.4 per cent) as the main threat to state security, while other risks⁴⁰ were perceived as significantly minor. Moreover, one year on in November 2015, people listed refugees (32 per cent), illnesses (24 per cent), illegal immigrants (22 per cent), as well as stress and fatigue (19 per cent), unemployment (19 per cent) and crime (18 per cent) as the main concerns to Latvia's internal and external security, mentioning other risks less often.⁴¹ Although neither survey allows comparison between the majority (Latvians) and minority (Russian-speaking), some conclusions over tendencies within the general perception of Latvia's societal threats, however, can be drawn. Firstly, concerns over well-being, in terms of health and financial security, have a tendency to remain over time, despite a changed

³⁹ Ozoliņa, Ž., Sīmane, M. (2012). *Latvijas iedzīvotāju subjektīvais skatījums uz cilvēkdrošību*. No: Ozoliņa, Ž. (red.) *Cilvēkdrošība Latvijā un pasaule: no idejas līdz praksei*. (Rīga: Zinātne), 63.–64. lpp.

⁴⁰ Military risks — 36.9 %; drug addiction — 36.1 %; crime — 35.0 %; conflicts between different ethnicities — 26.2%; natural and man-made hazards — 21.2%; energy security threats — 20.9%; terrorism — 11.4%; cyber-attacks — 9.1%; other risks — 6.0%.

⁴¹ DNB (December 2015). *DNB Latvijas barometrs Nr. 86 (Gada kopsavilkums un prognozes)*. (Rīga: DNB), 20. lpp.

geopolitical context. Secondly, individual issues with the potential of affecting the whole of society, such as immigrants and the refugee crisis in Europe, can break into the perception of threats and rank among the top concerns. However, only time and further research will prove whether it is an exception, or whether to some degree international affairs may have an influential factor to play in the overall societal threat perception.

In a different survey, conducted in 2011–2012, researchers concluded that Latvian and Russian speakers mainly perceive the same security concerns. However, in some areas, such as health, social welfare, physical and emotional personal security, respondents with a Russian language background showed a relatively higher degree of threat perception than their Latvian peers (although insignificant statistically)⁴². Using in depth partially structured focus groups to interview both Latvian and Russian speakers in Riga and regional cities (Daugavpils, Liepāja) and explain possible differences, researchers came to several conclusions relevant for the analysis of societal resilience in Latvia. Firstly, the Russian-speaking minority blame Latvia's political elite (and its decisions) more often than their Latvian peers. Secondly, although both Latvian and Russian speakers mostly share the same concerns, differences mainly exist between different generations. Older people more often fear health- and social care related issues, while younger generations are more often concerned about their personal professional development and global competitiveness. Likewise, only the older generation of Russian speakers associate "the Soviet period" with stability, order, and sentiment. Thirdly, the ethnic dimension is marginal or unimportant within the list of perceived threats among both Russian- and Latvian-speaking respondents. Lastly, and most importantly, due

⁴² It was observed in answers to the following survey questions: "Will not be able to pay for treatment in case of illness"; "Will not receive qualitative treatment in case of illness"; "Will become homeless"; "Will suffer from organized crime"; "Will suffer in terror-act"; "Will be left without allowance"; "Will suffer from emotional violence from state officials". Ījabs, I., Ozoliņa, Ž., Reinholde, I. (2012). *Cilvēkdrošība Latvijā: krievu kopienas skatījums*. No: Ozoliņa, Ž. (red.) *Cilvēkdrošība Latvijā un pasaule: no idejas līdz praksei*. (Riga: Zinātne), 334.–335. lpp.

to the global economic crisis and its after-effects, both Latvian and Russian speakers are more concerned about the security of their children than their own.⁴³ This can be explained by an “inventory-examining approach” regarding resources within people’s circle of family and friends, which has grown in importance since the global economic recession. In this context, widening and deepening people’s social networks has also become more important for the development of social capital, and therefore also societal resilience. More diverse opinions regarding security concerns among Russian speakers can be found in other chapters of the book.

(ii) Social capital, language and resilience building

A social survey of the Russian-speaking minority (May–June 2014) proves that the main factor influencing development of social capital and identity of the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia, is family. From various possible parameters, an absolute majority of Russian speakers (84.9 per cent) have indicated their families, while 6.9 per cent regard it to be the second most important thing in life.⁴⁴ All other factors, such as city (or town) of residence, nationality, being an inhabitant of Latvia, the language spoken at home, professional or religious groups, were perceived as minor issues, as only 1–4 per cent of respondents associated with them.⁴⁵ Some aspects concerning family life in general have been analysed in other chapters. However, it remains a scientifically valuable area for future research on societal resilience in Latvia.

Regarding knowledge of languages as having the potential capacity to empower community members in the context of resilience; over two-thirds of all Russian speakers in Latvia have self-evaluated their Latvian language skills as satisfactory. Twenty one per cent

⁴³ Ozoliņa, Ž. (red.) *Cilvēkdrošība Latvijā un pasaule: no idejas līdz praksei*. (Riga: Zinātne), 331.–356. lpp.

⁴⁴ Respondents had to provide an answer to a survey question: “Which of these do you regard as the most important defining who you are?”

⁴⁵ SKDS (August 2014). *Piederības sajūta Latvijai. Mazākumtautību Latvijas iedzīvotāju aptauja*. (Riga: SKDS), 14. lpp.

of them master Latvian “excellently”, 28.0 per cent — “very well”, while another 28.0 per cent — “sufficiently”⁴⁶. Latvian language in Latvia, similarly to French in France or English in Britain, may be an invaluable capacity to any member of society in terms of resilience to external or internal shocks. It is the official state language (while Russian is not), which is used in daily correspondence and communication by all governmental and municipal institutions, as well as by the largest media, educational and other state-financed institutions. They all constitute the general common space, where the main information and knowledge flows circulate throughout Latvia’s society. However, the question whether the majority of Russian speakers practise Latvian on a daily basis is rather dubious. Moreover, mastering a language does not necessarily lead to its use on daily basis, including to strengthening one’s resilience.

For example, in 2003–2004, some large-scale demonstrations were organised in Latvia, composed of students and teachers representing the Russian-speaking minority, as a protest against the end of the transition process of the Education Law (adopted in 1998). Among other issues, it envisaged an increased amount of the curriculum to be taught in the Latvian language in state-financed schools. At the time, protesters used the argument that this would decrease the quality of education for the Russian-speaking minority, therefore influencing negatively their chances to pass exams and enter universities or job market vis-à-vis their Latvian peers. From the viewpoint of this chapter, it was presented as an act to decrease their resilience. From another viewpoint, it could be seen as part of a hybrid campaign financed and led by Russia to undermine Latvia’s accession to NATO and the EU in the same year. Ten years on, however, the statistics of annual centralised exams (taken during the last year of high-school) prove that it was a politically motivated rather than evidence-based rhetoric. In 2013, the Ministry of Education published statistics on the comparison between different edu-

⁴⁶ SKDS (August 2014). *Piederības sajūta Latvijai. Mazākumtautību Latvijas iedzīvotāju aptauja*. (Riga: SKDS), 25. lpp.

cational models practised in Latvia.⁴⁷ It was concluded that ethnic minority students who started studies in their own language, but transferred to Latvian at a later point (i.e. high-school), had significantly higher marks at their final exams, especially in Biology, Physics, Chemistry and Maths, than their peers studying only in one (i.e. minority) language for all their school years (years 1–12).⁴⁸

A similar conclusion can be drawn from the referendum organised in 2012, which tried to change Latvia's constitution and recognise Russian as the second official language. The results showed that the majority of voters, 74.8 per cent or 821 700 (53.2 per cent of all registered citizens with voting rights), voted against such an initiative. At the time, a mere 24.9 per cent (17.7 per cent of all registered citizens with voting rights) voted in favour of constitutional changes.⁴⁹ This figure is obviously smaller than the overall Russian-speaking minority, potentially proving that for a large part of society Russian language is not part of their identity (or security). Also, it proved a relatively high degree of Latvia's societal inclusion.

As has been discussed previously, a constant choice exists between using the Russian or Latvian language to acquire information, new knowledge, and capacities on a daily basis, which may strengthen one's level of resilience. Some might call it a choice between two different informational and knowledge spaces, which in the context of hybrid threats has ever increasing importance. Julian Lindley French has argued that today wars are fought in eight domains: air, land, sea, cyber, space, information, knowledge,

⁴⁷ There existed three models at the time: (1) ethnic minority students that started studies in their own language, but in high-school continued in Latvian; (2) ethnic minority students studying all the time in their own language; (3) students studying all the time (from the first to the last grade) in Latvian.

⁴⁸ National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia (2013). *Centralizēto eksāmenu rezultāti saistībā ar mācībvalodas jautājumiem*. Available at: http://visc.gov.lv/vispizglitiba/eksameni/ce_saist_macibval.shtml (accessed 14 January 2016).

⁴⁹ 2012. gada 18. februāra tautas nobalsošana par likumprojekta "Grozījumi Latvijas Republikas Satversmē" pieņemšanu rezultāti. Central Elections Commission of Latvia. Available at: <http://www.tn2012.cvk.lv/> (accessed 14 January 2016).

and law.⁵⁰ In this regard, the Russian-speaking minority, more than their Latvian peers, might be exposed to the influence of Kremlin propaganda, which might try to exploit Latvia's *de facto* bilingual informational space. It is also alarming, in the context of societal resilience to hybrid threats, taking into account that among Russian speakers, the most watched television channels are *PBK* (48 per cent) and *TV5* (43 per cent); the most used press is *MK-Latvija* (23 per cent) and *Vesti Segodnya* (15 per cent); while the most used Internet news sites include *rus.delfi.lv* (25 per cent), *rus.tvnet* (10 per cent), and *rus.apollo.lv* (8 per cent).⁵¹ However, this chapter does not proceed with detailed content analysis of the main narratives produced by these media, as it has already been done before. However, in future, attention should be paid to how divisions between different interpretations of the same facts and events in Russian and Latvian language media might influence the overall state and societal resilience.

(iii) Loyalty and link to Latvia's statehood

Answering potential speculations over the minority's loyalty to Latvia, a nation-wide survey with focus on minorities in the aftermath of the Crimea annexation revealed that 63.8 per cent of the Russian-speaking minority consider themselves to be Latvia's patriots, while 58 per cent are proud to be citizens of Latvia (or inhabitants).⁵² Moreover, as often argued by Jānis Kažociņš, former director of Latvia's National Security Agency, unofficial statistics have proven that around one-third of all registered marriages in Latvia are between Latvians and non-Latvians, while nearly ninety per cent of babies born in non-citizen families have become citizens at their first registration.⁵³ These are a few, but important, examples

⁵⁰ French, J. L. (7 November 2015). *Responding to 'New Generation' Warfare*. The Riga Conference 2015, Latvian National Library, Riga.

⁵¹ SKDS (August 2014). *Piederības sajūta Latvijai. Mazākumtautību Latvijas iedzīvotāju aptauja*. (Riga: SKDS), 35. lpp.

⁵² Ibid., 14. lpp.

⁵³ Kažociņš, J. (2015). Will Latvia be Putin's Next Victim in 2015? In: Sprūds, A., Potjomkina, D. (Eds). *Latvian Foreign and Security Policy Yearbook 2015*. (Riga: LIIA), p. 77.

and arguments proving a high level of inclusion, which might be considered as a very important element of societal resilience.

However, a wider picture of the Russian-speaking minority is not as optimistic. When affiliation to Latvia is confronted with potential loyalty to another either specific or abstract state and economic benefits, the results may differ. For example, if leaving Latvia means reaching a better level of wellbeing and economic benefits, Russian speakers are split in half, as 44.0 per cent of them are ready to relocate, while 45.0 per cent are not. Although the majority of survey respondents deny the allegation that “the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia is more loyal to Russia than Latvia”, it is still rather alarming that 38 per cent could agree. Also, 53 per cent of Russian speakers deny that they will do everything possible to make their children live and stay in Latvia, although in several surveys and focus groups, the majority of them have evaluated the security and well-being of their families, especially children, as more important than their own.⁵⁴ Likewise, it is noticeable that only 27.2 per cent of the Russian-speaking minority would be ready to defend Latvia with arms in case of such necessity, compared to 47.4 per cent of Latvian respondents⁵⁵.

From these general trends, one can make several conclusions. In a declarative manner, the majority of the Russian-speaking minority is proud of the country they are living in, even seeing themselves as patriots. However, when different comparative perspectives are offered, such as “Latvia vs. Russia” or “Latvia vs. country ‘X’ with a higher welfare level”, perceptions among Russian speakers are divided. The potential economic benefits may be seen as equal or even higher in their importance than affiliation to a particular homeland. Moreover, the majority of Russian speakers would neither stand up for their children staying in Latvia despite possible economic difficulties, nor they would be ready to defend the state

⁵⁴ SKDS (August 2014). *Piederības sajūta Latvijai. Mazākumtautību Latvijas iedzīvotāju aptauja*. (Riga: SKDS), 8. lpp.

⁵⁵ SKDS (November 2014). *Latvijas iedzīvotāju viedoklis par valsts aizsardzības jautājumiem*. (Riga: SKDS), 37. lpp.

independence with arms. Previously, Kažociņš has outlined that there is no evidence of possible separatism within the Russian-speaking minority, either in Latvia or Estonia.⁵⁶ In Latvia's case, it may be explained by the inertness and lack of traditions to organise protests. However, the same lack of participation (political and military), may translate into a source of both societal and state vulnerability. Therefore, such trends should be paid attention to in future policies oriented toward increasing levels of societal inclusion and resilience.

TOP-DOWN OR BOTTOM-UP APPROACH TO SOCIETAL AND STATE RESILIENCE?

Finally, it is noticeable that since the Ukraine crisis, both NATO and the EU have started developing their response mechanisms, tools and policies for fostering state resilience to hybrid warfare practised by both Russia and such terrorist organisations as Daesh/ISIL. In this regard, NATO, at the Wales Summit, declared an ambition to ensure that it "possesses the necessary tools and procedures required to deter and respond effectively to hybrid warfare threats and the capabilities to reinforce national forces"⁵⁷. By the end of 2015, the Alliance had already developed its own strategy for countering hybrid warfare, while aiming for closer synergies with the EU in the future⁵⁸. Moreover, territorial defence and state resilience towards military threats is ensured by NATO and the USA, which

⁵⁶ Kažociņš, J. (2015). Baltic Security in the Shadow of Ukraine's War. In: Pabriks, A., Kudors, A. (Eds). *The War in Ukraine: Lessons for Europe*. (Riga: The Centre for East European Policy Studies, University of Latvia Press), pp. 59–61.

⁵⁷ *Wales Summit Declaration*, 5 September 2014. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm (accessed 2 January 2016).

⁵⁸ *Press conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg following the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Foreign Ministers Session*, 1 December 2015. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_125362.htm (accessed 2 January 2016); *Ārlietu ministrs pauž gandarijumu par NATO Hibridās karadarbibas stratēģijas apstiprināšanu*. Latvia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1 December 2015. Available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.lv/aktualitates/zinas/48959-arlietu-ministrs-pauz-gandarijumu-par-nato-hibridas-karadarbibas-strategijas-apstiprinasanu> (accessed 2 January 2016).

has declared that “the defence of Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius is just as important as the defence of Berlin, Paris and London”⁵⁹. Similarly, the EU has followed suit, as the EU High Representative has been tasked to develop “a joint framework with actionable proposals to help counter hybrid threats and foster the resilience of the EU and its Member States, as well as partners”⁶⁰. In light of these developments, Latvia finds itself more under different circumstances and exposure to hybrid threats than states not covered by the military and economic protection of the Euro-Atlantic structures.

However, these international developments can be seen as a top-down approach, mainly fostering resilience to external shocks, while possible internal undulations affecting resilience risk being left out of their scope. Hence, several issues can be raised. Firstly, what actions should be pursued to strengthen internal security, especially regarding societal security and cohesion between groups of different ethnic and language backgrounds? In EU states such as Spain, Belgium, or Britain,⁶¹ one might observe groupings of communities in different territorial clusters based on different languages. The immigrant and refugee crisis may even further expose potential problems and policy implications in this regard, in the wider European context. Secondly, does Latvia risk relying too much on international structures to solve security issues? Does reliance on a top-down approach influence the national responsibility and further bottom-up efforts in building resilience to external and internal impacts, in this regard? If this is the case, one must consider that the country might increase its exposure to other vul-

⁵⁹ *Remarks by President Obama to the People of Estonia*. Nordea Concert Hall, Tallinn, Estonia, 3 September 2014. Available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/03/remarks-president-obama-people-estonia> (accessed 2 January 2016).

⁶⁰ *Council conclusions on CSDP (8971/15)*, 18 May 2015. Available at: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/05/18-council-conclusions-csdp/> (accessed 2 January 2016).

⁶¹ In Spain and Britain: Catalan and Scottish efforts toward greater regional autonomy; in Belgium: a division between Valonia and Flandria based on French and Dutch languages.

nerabilities beyond hybrid threats. An issue for further consideration is to strike the right balance between both approaches — NATO and EU level recommendations and mechanisms, on the one hand, and national solutions with a bottom-up approach, thus involving the whole of society, on the other.

Conclusions and further recommendations

The concept of ‘resilience’ and ‘societal resilience’, often mentioned as an antidote, an antonym, or even as a deterrent to hybrid threats, is the ability of a society or community to deflect, withstand, and cope with adverse situations, including internal and external impacts, by using its own qualities, abilities, knowledge, and resources that are accumulated and exercised in a networked and mutually reinforcing strategy, continuously developed at an individual and community level across society. This chapter distinguishes between state resilience and societal resilience as separate, yet mutually dependent, variables. Both are examined in the case of the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia, in the context of discussions on potential manipulations and misuse of it as a channel through which to exercise hybrid threats.

Regarding state resilience, in Latvia’s case, three out of six main preconditions for a hybrid threat campaign to succeed are met, namely: *proximity to Russia’s borders; a large presence of a Russian-speaking minority; a large presence of Russian media*. The first two are unalterable variables, leading to two potential approaches towards state resilience. In the first, Latvia may be seen as a state, which is at constant risk, as its security may never be guaranteed to the fullest, despite its NATO and EU membership, because Russia or the Russian-speaking minority are to be continuously perceived as threats. The second is an approach towards resilience, as an ability that can be constantly upgraded. It sees all variables as an opportunity rather than a risk, whereas a diversity of people, where an inclusion strategy is pursued, leads to larger social networks and greater accu-

mulation of knowledge, capacities, and social capital. This chapter to a large extent has followed the second approach.

In contrary to speculations regarding Latvia's regions with a large presence of a Russian-speaking community being potential targets for a hybrid attack, analysis of the main tendencies point to a different scenario. In particular, Russian speakers do not express severe fears regarding their identity, ethnicity, or other language-based concerns. Instead, similarly to their Latvian peers, the Russian-speaking community is more concerned over welfare, health security and personal security, rather than its identity. Moreover, the majority of them see family, and not language, as the main variable forming their identity. Likewise, Russian speakers see the security of their children as more important than their own security, while the majority of them, according to social surveys, would not strongly object to their children leaving Latvia for another country, in search of higher levels of welfare or wellbeing. A similar contradiction is observable regarding the link between the Russian-speaking community and Latvian statehood. Although most Russian speakers consider themselves to be Latvia's patriots, a significantly minor part of them associate themselves as part of NATO's collective defence, or would be ready to defend the country with arms. Although Russian language media is widely represented in Latvia, it is neither the most popular at state level nor among the Russian-speaking community, although the risk of a relatively high share of society being affected by potential informational or propaganda campaigns, diminishing the state resilience, is not excluded. However, such analysis is beyond the scope of this chapter.

Resilience, similarly to hybrid threats, is not a new concept. Its current position in literature can be described as, 'in transition' or 'pivotal'. A similar description can be attributed to the societal resilience of the Russian-speaking community in Latvia. Meanwhile, some conclusions and recommendations can be given for understanding and strengthening resilience.

In this regard, the first step is to define hybrid threats, on the one hand, and measures for strengthening resilience, on the other.

It includes marking a clear threshold above which different external or internal pressure channels transform themselves into an organised campaign threatening both the societal security and state integrity. The best option would be to anchor it in national and, if possible, international legislature (i.e. EU directive, UN convention, etc.). If resilience at state and societal level is to be developed or increased, it is essential to understand what risks or shocks should be avoided or deflected. Only then can specific areas within governmental and societal structures be strengthened. Another option is to fortify everything by applying a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, whereas every state body and member of community is aware and ready to cope with a wide range of security challenges. For obvious reasons, however, it is a solution exhausting more resources. Both options do not exclude each other, yet by choosing neither of them one can hardly strengthen resilience.

Secondly, education and awareness of potential security risks are important elements of resilience building. It may be suggested to develop resilience strategies at an individual level from childhood in order to better deal with potential risks. While some members of society (army, police, health services, people with a driver's licence, etc.) have some degree of knowledge and capacities to cope with adversity or assist others in case of emergency, it is not the same case for the majority of general society, to whom basic civil defence and crisis management training might be an asset increasing individual and communal resilience.

Thirdly, it is essential to increase trust in national, governmental, and international organisations, especially among the Russian-speaking community. Even if NATO and the EU guarantee Latvia's external security and defence, in the context of resilience and internal security, trust in them is vital. Diminishing the distance between the state's policy, on the one hand, and public perception, on the other, in this regard, is key. A similar conclusion can be drawn regarding levels of corruption, strength, and competence of different state-provided services, and state politics at large.

Fourthly, one should consider raising societal inclusion through a multi-language approach. In a globalised and interconnected world, knowledge of multiple languages is an asset, widening one's potential social capital and social network of potential responders in case of emergency. Outside any further debates on multiple *de iure* state languages, one should encourage both the Latvian and Russian-speaking community to learn and practice *de facto* a bi- or multi-lingual model. Such practice might also help to unify the informational space, as both Latvian and Russian communities would have greater awareness, inclusion, and control over it.

Fifthly, constant monitoring of societal resilience is essential. The best way to achieve it is via the establishment of measurable tools based on solid methodology. Prior and Hagmann have outlined five main points, explaining their reasoning for development of a proper methodology and metrics for measurements of resilience, as it would help: (1) to characterise resilience; (2) to raise awareness; (3) to allocate resources to resilience; (4) to build resilience; and (5) to monitor policy performance.⁶²

Sixthly, to raise inclusion and societal resilience, isolationism should be overcome to generate greater civic participation. Moreover, isolationism should be avoided both between the Latvian and Russian-speaking communities, as well as within each of them. Not only could over-reliance on family and one's own resources be alarming regarding people's link to their state, but it may also significantly diminish the circle of potential signal receivers, responders or helpers in case of crisis management.

Seventhly, currently no institution is responsible for both internal and external state and societal resilience building. In terms of inclusion, members of the Russian-speaking community might be as confused as his or her Latvian peer regarding protection and fostering one's resilience. Whom should one call to address his concerns over societal security or a willingness to improve resilience?

⁶² Prior, T., Hagmann, J. (2014). Measuring resilience: methodological and political challenges of a trend security concept. *Journal of Risk Research*, Vol. 17, No. 3, pp. 284–285.

The attribution and responsibility issue, therefore, should be cleared to generate greater civic participation and avoid misconduct.

Lastly, the issue of resourcing should be properly addressed. Similarly to the national and NATO-level commitment towards increasing the state defence budget, in order to reach a particular threshold, one should consider similar steps regarding societal resilience. Finally, greater synergies between national, EU, and NATO efforts should be pursued to avoid duplication or loopholes, and have a clear division of responsibility.

Economic Threats and the Russian-speaking Community

GUNĀRS VALDMANIS¹

Abstract:

Economic welfare and societal security are among the most important factors determining the feeling of belonging of ethnic groups to a particular society and state. In Latvia, the structure of the economy, and especially, the economic development policy of the Soviet Union, has historically played a crucial role in the formation of the Russian-speaking minority and it continues to be an important factor behind the societal security of the Russian ethnic group today.

Such factors as a particularly high proportion of ethnic Russian employees in several economic sectors (especially sectors highly dependent on relations with politically and economically volatile countries), differences in the culture of entrepreneurship and consumer behaviour, pose additional risks for the Russian-speaking minority. Simultaneously, certain cultural differences and a prevalence of Russian speakers in some of the economic sectors also secure the group with several economic benefits.

Keywords: economy, Russian-speaking minority, economic threats, industry, employment, shadow economy, consumer rights, transport and transit

Introduction: Economic risks as part of societal security

When describing the concept of ‘societal security’, most authors tend to distinguish societal security as a security sector that stands apart from the economic sector. Economic risks or threats are difficult to determine due to the nature of economics itself, as a market economy by nature involves significant uncertainty, elements of risk and

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competition², and as such economic risks usually apply to all groups and societies within a given state. Thus, from a theoretical perspective, authors view societal security as traditionally more deeply connected with political security and, in many cases, also military security, but not as much with economic security. However, Barry Buzan mentions a clear example where economic decisions in fact can have a clear impact on the societal group — for example, a debate on which economic sectors or regions should be supported by the government in case of an economic crisis.³ Thus, one might say, if the particular ethnic group is strongly represented in particular sectors of the economy or the Russian-speaking minority represents the majority of the population in a region, economically driven by a particular sector of economy, then the decisions or developments in the respective sector can lead to specific challenges for the society in question and can be viewed through the prism of the societal security sector — especially if one considers that economic conditions and traditional fields of employment for a particular society can also influence their identity.

The importance of economic factors behind the societal security of the Russian-speaking minority is strongly supported by the history of the formation of the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia. Historically, the Russian-speaking minority has been strongly connected with the economic development of Latvia, but especially so during the period of Soviet occupation of Latvia, as the Soviet economic development policy envisaged rapid industrial growth of the country as one of its priorities, supported by high mobility of workforce, which was strongly promoted by social policy measures by the Soviet state. For example, some of the economic initiatives of the Soviet Union were aimed at creating new or reinforcing existing economic sectors, and as such made the import of workforce a necessity,

² Buzan, B. (1991). *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era* (2nd ed.). (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf), p. 124.

³ Stone, M. (2009). *Security According to Buzan: A Comprehensive Security Analysis*. (New York: Columbia University Press), p. 8. Available at: http://www.geest.msh-paris.fr/IMG/pdf/Security_for_Buzan.mp3.pdf (accessed 6 January 2016).

and, as a result, the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia increased.⁴ The building and operation of sizeable industrial enterprises within the territory of Latvia created a need for a large number of builders, who were not readily available locally, and in some cases, also required specific professional expertise and education from employees. One could also argue that the economic factors have already proven their significance behind the societal security of the Russian-speaking minority in the transitional development period of Latvia after the collapse of the Soviet Union, when Latvia transformed from a heavily industrialised country with a planned economy to a free-market economy, and experienced a strong economic decline and decrease in industrial production and employment in manufacturing industry.⁵ For example, between 1991 and 2000, the production of passenger cars in Latvia ceased, while production of household electronic appliances declined to negligible levels, and, as the overall proportion of the Russian-speaking minority was high in many of the declining industries, it resulted in an overall higher level of unemployment and risk of social exclusion among the Russian-speaking minority, than among ethnic Latvians in the first ten years after the collapse of the Soviet Union.⁶

This chapter of the book will identify and analyse the actual and theoretical economic risks and challenges specific to the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia and already experienced by them, or which may arise in future under certain changes in the economic environment at national, regional, or even international level. Thus, to evaluate the potential risks, this chapter will evaluate the opinions of experts and available statistics on the following aspects of the economic situation of the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia:

⁴ Prikulis, J. (1997). Migration and Repatriation Issues in PostSoviet Countries: the Latvian Case, p. 4 Available at: <http://www.otan.nato.int/acad/fellow/95-97/priku-lis.pdf> (accessed 6 January 2016).

⁵ Krūmiņš, G. (2012). *Tautsaimniecība un naudas politika Latvijā (1945–1991)*. (Riga: Latvijas Banka), 128. lpp. Available at: <https://www.bank.lv/images/stories/pieli-kumi/publikacijas/citaspublikacijas/Krumins-45-91.pdf> (accessed 6 January 2016).

⁶ Pabriks, A. (2002). *Etniskās proporcijas, nodarbinātība un diskriminācija Latvijā*. (Riga: Nordik), 46. lpp.

overall economic activity; prevalence in different fields of economy from a historic and current perspective; overall business culture of the Russian speakers; and their behaviour as consumers.

Russian-speaking minority as part of the economic structure

Despite the fact that the overall structure of the Latvian economy has significantly changed, and most of the distortions in the economy, connected to the centralised planning of development during the Soviet Union era, have disappeared, several researchers and experts underline that many of the economic threats to the societal security of the Russian-speaking minority remain prominent even today, and partly this can be attributed to the fact that the presence of Russian-speaking groups in several fields of economy remains disproportionately high to this day, and, under certain circumstances, if the specific sector of economy experiences rapid decline, it may pose additional risks of unemployment and economic disadvantages to members of the Russian-speaking minority, which constitutes approximately 27% of the entire employed population in Latvia. The overall economic activity of the Russian-speaking minority also appears to be somewhat lower than the economic activity of the native Latvian population. According to statistics from the Ministry of Economy, the share of the economically active population aged between 15 and 74 years among Russians, in 2014, was 63.7%, significantly below the average number of the entire population of Latvia — 66.3%; and the respective number for the Latvian ethnic group was 68.1%. However, the overall economic activity of the Russian community appears to be slightly higher than for other minority ethnic groups — for example, the proportion of economically active individuals in the Polish community was 63.2%, in the Belarusian community — 62.5%, while in the Ukrainian community — 61.7%.

Economic activity of the population by nationality in 2014

	Number of economically active population (in thousands)	Proportion of economically active population, %
Total	992.3	66.3
Among them:		
• Latvians	636.7	68.1
• Russian	256.3	63.7
• Belarusians	31.2	62.5
• Ukrainians	21.1	61.7
• Poles	19.7	63.2

Source: The Ministry of Economy

Industries with highest proportion of Russian-speaking minority (2011)

	Number of employees in industry	Latvian	Russian	Belarusian	Ukrainian	Polish	Lithuanian	Other
Production of electrical tools and equipment	2347	29.1	52.2	6.9	4.2	4.4	1.0	2.2
Water transport	7044	28.2	53.4	5.6	7.4	1.3	1.1	3.1
Air transport	1934	49.5	31.3	2.9	3.5	1.4	2.1	9.3
Storage, handling of cargos and other related activities	23 316	38.2	44.0	6.2	5.0	2.8	1.1	2.6
Production of other transport	1763	18.3	51.8	10.3	8.9	7.4	0.9	2.4
Production of other technical equipment and tools	3089	35.3	46.3	5.8	3.6	5.7	1.0	2.3
Production of cars, trailers and semi-trailers	1225	50.6	37.3	4.2	3.1	1.6	1.1	2.0
Production of oil products and coke	42	40.5	50.0	2.4	0.0	2.4	0.0	4.8
Production of textiles	2547	39.9	43.0	6.8	4.4	2.2	1.9	1.7
Manufacturing of clothing	11 923	35.3	47.0	7.1	3.9	3.3	1.5	1.9
Manufacturing of leather and leather products	402	46.3	41.5	4.7	1.7	3.5	1.2	1.0

Source: The Central Statistical Bureau; Ministry of Economy

According to statistics, a high proportion of Russian-speaking minority currently remains prominent in all sub-sectors of transport and manufacturing, especially in the manufacturing of tools, equipment, and machinery, as well as manufacturing of chemicals — economic sectors, which were actively developed during the Soviet Union era. In sectors with the most prominent proportion of employees from the Russian ethnic group, the number is as high as over 50 per cent. In most of these sectors there is also a high proportion of other ethnic minorities, especially Ukrainians and Belarusians.

Dana Reizniece-Ozola, Minister of Economic Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, admits that several sectors of the economy retain a significantly higher proportion of employees representing Latvia's ethnic minorities. "There are still sectors, in which the proportion of workers of other ethnic origin remain higher than that of workers of Latvian origin, for example, the transport and transit industry to this day remains heavily dominated by the Russian-speaking community. Despite the fact that during the last decade, the ethnic composition of different sectors of the economy is no longer analysed, it is no secret that employment of workers of different ethnic origins strongly varies in different sectors. The food industry and agricultural sectors historically have been, and remain, dominated by employees and entrepreneurs of Latvian ethnic origin, while such industries as heavy industry, and industries related to engineering, remain dominated by employees and entrepreneurs of different ethnic origin," underlines the minister⁷. For example, in 2001, the proportion of employees of Russian origin in the Latvian national railway company exceeded 70 per cent of all employees in the company⁸, and geographically the transit and transport industries operate in Latvian cities with a high proportion of Russian-speaking minorities. For example, Daugavpils, with a Russian-speaking

⁷ Author's interview with Dana Reizniece-Ozola, Minister of Economic Affairs, 4 January 2016.

⁸ Pabriks, A. (2002). *Etniskās proporcijas, nodarbinātība un diskriminācija Latvijā*. (Riga: Nordik), 46. lpp.

population of almost 80%, serves as a highly important railway hub and regional facility for repair of railway rolling stock; the capital city of Riga with a proportion of ethnic minorities around 50%, is both a highly important railway hub and the busiest seaport in Latvia, while in the busy sea port of Ventspils, the proportion of Russian-speaking population is 36%.⁹ Currently, the transport sector, especially the railway, and related sectors, such as marine ports and warehouses, is one of the largest employers of the Russian-speaking minority with approximately 27 600 employees in 2011 — only below the retail trade sector with approximately 29 000 employees.

Significant differences may even appear within the sub-industries of a larger industry. For example, in the energy industry, the natural gas sector, the heat supply sector and construction within the energy sector, traditionally have a high proportion of employees from the Russian-speaking minority, while the electricity transmission and distribution sector historically has a high proportion of employees of Latvian origin, says Āris Žīgurs, president of the Latvian energy company, Latvenergo¹⁰. According to him, this situation was connected to peculiarities of the education system during the Soviet occupation and the fact that development of several technologies across the former Soviet Union was uneven, and acquisition of such technologies locally required a skilled workforce to be imported. Because the energy industry did not experience significant economic downturn, even after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the ethnic composition within the industry also remained relatively unchanged, thus any changes within the sector can probably be attributed to natural processes, such as ageing of former employees and a change in the popularity of engineering sciences

⁹ Publiskās lietošanas dzelzceļa infrastruktūras pārskats 2015/2016; Latvijas Dzelzceļš (2015). Available at: http://www.ldz.lv/sites/default/files/Tikla_parskats_2015-2016.pdf (accessed 8 January 2016); Tautas skaitīšana. Centrāla Statistikas pārvalde, 2011. Available at: http://www.csb.gov.lv/sites/default/files/dati/predef_tables_ts2011_fin2_lv.xlsx (accessed 8 January 2016).

¹⁰ Author's interview with Āris Žīgurs, CEO of JSC Latvenergo, 7 July 2015.

within society as a whole. Currently, the industry, which historically played a significant part in the migration of the Russian-speaking minority due to a significant number of skilled workers being brought in to build Latvia's hydro power plants during the Soviet Union period, retains balanced proportions of employees of different nationalities.¹¹ The proportion of the Russian-speaking minority in the energy sector currently stands at 23%.¹²

Experts do concede that the high proportion of the Russian-speaking minority in some economic sectors, under certain circumstances, can indeed become a significant risk for the wellbeing and societal security of minorities in Latvia. Dana Reizniece-Ozola explains that this is a particularly important problem for the transport sector and seaports.¹³ This is probably attributed to the fact that daily operation of the transport and transit industry is closely connected to the respective industries in the neighbouring Russian countries, and almost 80 per cent of cargo on the railways currently originate from Russia.¹⁴ Due to the worsening of relationships between Russia and the West, experts do not exclude the possibility that, in the coming years, Russia may decrease the amount of transit cargos to Latvian ports. All in all, currently the transport and transit sector, according to estimates of the Ministry of Transport, currently generates around 12 per cent of the Latvian GDP and engages approximately 30 to 50 000 employees¹⁵, and the negative effects of possible Russian sanctions against Latvia cannot be rapidly replaced or compensated with orders from other customers. Meanwhile, other exporting production and service industries, according to the Minister, suffer no similar economic and political risks, as their

¹¹ Author's interview with Āris Žigurs, CEO of JSC Latvenergo, 7 July 2015.

¹² 2011. gada tautas skaitīšanas dati; Nodarbinātie iedzīvotāji pēc saimnieciskās darbības veida (nozares) un tautības; The Ministry of Economy. 2016.

¹³ Author's interview with Dana Reizniece-Ozola, Minister of Economic Affairs, 4 January 2016.

¹⁴ Rokīs, K. (2014). Dzelzceļam nav ātru alternatīvu Krievijas kravām. April 20. Available at: <http://www.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/ekonomika/zinas/dzelzceljam-nav-atru-alternatiivu-krievijas-kravam.a83371/> (accessed 6 January 2016).

¹⁵ Ibid.

exposure to the politically and economically unstable markets in the former Soviet Union is significantly smaller, and are able to adapt to rapid changes in the international economic environment more easily than the transport industry. Their impact and significance for the overall wellbeing of the Russian-speaking minority cannot also be compared to the significance of the transport sector, due to the overall number of employees in all other industries with a significantly high proportion of Russian-speakers being much smaller than in the transport sector. For example, despite the proportion of Russian minority employees in the production of electronic equipment reaching 52% and exceeding the number of Latvian employees by almost double, the overall number of employees in this particular sector is rather small — only around 2300 employees. The other sector with the highest proportion of the Russian-speaking minority among its employees, the manufacturing of vehicles (excluding cars), has an even smaller overall number of employees — only 1700, with approximately 51% being of Russian ethnic origin.¹⁶

However, statistics clearly indicate that the overall situation connected to the high proportion of Russian-speaking minorities since the dissolution of the Soviet Union has dramatically improved, and apart from the transit and transport sector, there are no other sectors in which the total number of employed Russian speakers is high enough to pose a risk of a widespread socio-economic crisis in case the specific industry declines. The consensus of most experts is that the overall diversification in the structure of Latvia's foreign trade, the increasingly high role of the European Union countries as the main trade partners of Latvia, and the decrease in the proportion of exports from Latvian producers to Russia and other former Soviet Union countries, have significantly reduced the possibility of a dramatic decline in most of the export-orientated industries. It is also important to underline that the relatively higher prevalence of Russian-speaking employees in the private sector¹⁷ generally secures

¹⁶ 2011. gada tautas skaitīšanas dati; Nodarbinātie iedzivotāji pēc saimnieciskās darbības veida (nozares) un tautības; The Ministry of Economy. 2016.

¹⁷ Ibid.

the group with a higher average monthly income¹⁸. Thus, despite the fact that the overall employment structure of the Russian-speaking minority is less favourable from the point of view of potential unemployment risks, at the same time it generally also secures a higher standard of living in a shorter term.

Russian-speaking minority and entrepreneurship

Studies by authors such as Michael H. Morris and Pamela S. Lewis, indicate that there is a close relationship between the activities of entrepreneurship and quality of life of society¹⁹, and in general the involvement of individuals is seen as a factor, which positively contributes to quality of life and empowers individuals and groups, and mitigates their economic vulnerability. Despite the fact that there is no reliable data on the involvement of different ethnic groups in entrepreneurship and the proportion of persons of different nationalities among such groups, as owners of the companies, company founders or managers, the overall consensus among many experts and researchers is that the Russian community is a significant contributor to business activities in Latvia. “The overall willingness of the Russian-speaking minority to take risks, with regard to starting their own business seems to be somewhat higher than that of Latvians. If one analyses the data about the most popular professions among Latvians and Russians, it is rather obvious that there is a significantly higher proportion of Latvians in the public sector, and I believe that the overall assumption that Latvians are more likely to seek stability and a predictable career, while Russians are ready to take more risks, is mostly true,” says the Minister of

¹⁸ Profesiju grupu vidējās stundas tarifa likmes valsti. Valssts ieņēmušu dienests. (November 2015). Available at: <https://www.vid.gov.lv/dokumenti/noderigi/publisko%20iepirkumu%20likuma%20normu%20piemerosana/informacija%20par%20videjam%20stundas%20tarifa%20likmem%202015.g.februaris-oktobris.xlsx> (accessed 6 January 2016).

¹⁹ Morris, M. H., Lewis, P. S. (1995). The determinants of entrepreneurial activity: Implications for marketing. *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 29, No. 7, pp. 31–48.

Economic Affairs, Dana Reizniece Ozola²⁰. Mostly, the overall attitude of the Russian-speaking community towards business activities and entrepreneurship indeed differs from that of Latvians, and as such must be seen as “an important asset and advantage to the Latvian economy”, adds Renāte Strazdiņa, the Executive Director of Advisory Services of Ernst & Young in Latvia²¹.

An earlier study, carried out in 2004, by researchers Raita Karnīte and Brigitā Zepa, reaffirms the assumption about overall differences between Russian and Latvian speakers towards entrepreneurship.²² According to experts, entrepreneurs of Russian ethnic origin overall seem to be more “daring, reckless, self-confident and seek more adrenaline”, while Latvian entrepreneurs are more “prudent, cautious and consider each step very carefully”.²³ In the opinion of researchers, the overall differences in approaches to business and to business culture also determine the most popular business activity spheres for entrepreneurs of different ethnic origin — for example, the Russian-speaking minority is more likely to take part in such business activities as retail trade, services, health care, and pharmaceuticals, while at the same time, businessmen of Russian origin were almost absent from such industries as food production or the timber processing industry.

As such, the overall attitudes of the Russian-speaking minority towards entrepreneurship and traditions regarding business activities are seen as a factor which has a positive contribution to the overall economic security of the group. However, some recent studies suggest that the overall business culture of the

²⁰ Author's interview with Dana Reizniece Ozola, Minister of Economic Affairs, 4 January 2016.

²¹ Author's interview with Renāte Strazdiņa, Executive Director of Advisory Services of Ernst & Young in Latvia, 7 January 2016.

²² Sabiedrības integrācija un uzņēmējdarbība: etniskais aspekts. (2004). Baltijas Sociālo zinātņu institūts; Latvijas Zinātņu akadēmijas Ekonomikas institūts. (Riga). Available at: http://www.biss.soc.lv/downloads/resources/ekonIntegr/Ekon_integr_LV.pdf (accessed 10 January 2016).

²³ Buda, A. (2005). Etniskie priekšstati Latvijas biznesā. *Kabinets*. Aprīlis. Available at: http://biss.soc.lv/downloads/publications/Publik_Zepa-Karnite.pdf (accessed 10 January 2016).

Russian-speaking minority also bears a few traits, which, under specific circumstances, may negatively affect the economic security and resilience of the group. One such peculiarity is the significantly higher participation of the Russian-speaking population in the so-called “shadow economy”, which includes such practices as running unregistered and unlicensed companies, tax evasion, and failure to report full taxable income in companies, the so-called “envelope wages” (partial unreported and illegal payment of salaries to workers in cash, without paying applicable taxes) and participation in value-added tax fraudulent schemes. Annual research, carried out by Arnis Sauka, researcher from the Stockholm School of Economics (SSE) in Riga, indicates that the current proportion of the so-called “shadow economy” in Latvia is around 23.5% of the gross domestic product²⁴, and it is also obvious that the level of participation of the Russian-speaking community is higher than that of the Latvian-speaking community.²⁵ “I cannot give specific figures, because differences among ethnic groups are not the focus of our research. However, during the research we offered entrepreneurs to participate in polls in both Russian and Latvian languages, and the frequency of answers indicating possible involvement in the shadow economy was much higher in the latter polls,” explains the economist²⁶. According to him, this data is not sufficient to characterise the full extent of the problem, but it clearly indicates the presence of the problem.

“It is quite likely that at least some of the Russian-speaking entrepreneurs have filled in the questionnaire in Latvian, but unlikely that entrepreneurs of Latvian origin used the questionnaire in Russian, and thus, presumably, statistics from the questionnaires in Russian must be viewed as more trustworthy from this point of view,” says

²⁴ Ēnu ekonomikas indekss Baltijas valstis 2009.–2014. (2015). (SSE Riga). Available at: <https://www.vid.gov.lv/dokumenti/aktualitates/informacija%20presei/2015/maijs/prezentacija.pdf> (accessed 10 January 2016).

²⁵ Pētījums: ēnu ekonomikas ipatsvars Latvija pērn – 23,5% no IKP. (13.05.2015). Available at: <http://www.la.lv/petijums-enu-ekonomikas-ipatsvars-latvija-pern-235-no-ikp/> (accessed 10 January 2016).

²⁶ Author's interview with Arnis Sauka, researcher at SSE Riga, 22 December 2015.

Arnis Sauka, who points towards at least one more possible piece of evidence of the existing problem — the respective proportion of the shadow economy in neighbouring countries Estonia and Lithuania is significantly lower than in Latvia, and coincides with the lower proportion of Russian-speakers in these countries.²⁷ However, the economist strongly underlines that these statistics should not be used to judge the Russian community. “It would not be fair to judge and blame the Russian-speaking minority for this situation, because it is obvious that at least partially the problem is related to the very low level of satisfaction and lack of trust in state institutions and politicians among citizens. There are also obvious failures in the integration policy, which have strongly alienated many members of the Russian-speaking community from the state, state institutions and from the Latvian-speaking majority,” says the researcher²⁸.

Despite the fact that the fight against the shadow economy is currently seen as one of the most important political priorities in Latvia, the Russian-speaking community is not always fully aware of these priorities, because one of the most important and obvious channels for transferring information, the Russian language media, is experiencing a rapid decline both financially and in terms of content, and is gradually being replaced with media content made in Russia. Thus, the Russian population is often not fully aware about the extent and consequences of the shadow economy, explains the SSE researcher. In his opinion, the higher participation of the Russian-speaking community in the shadow economy and insufficient access to information about the state services and regulations, is a significant disadvantage to the economic resilience of the Russian-speaking minority as a societal group. While characterising the possible risks, related to the higher involvement of a societal group in the shadow economy, experts point at several possible negative consequences or socio-economic risks, such as insufficient social protection of employees, lower availability of commercial loans, lack of access to financial support for

²⁷ Author's interview with Arnis Sauka, researcher at SSE Riga, 22 December 2015.

²⁸ Ibid.

development from the state budget or European Union funds, limited possibilities to participate and compete in public procurements, and the obvious risk of potential legal sanctions from the authorities.

Russian-speaking minority as consumers

Apart from socio-economic differences, already analysed in this chapter, experts such as Dana Reizniece-Ozola and Arnis Sauka in interviews also point at differences between the Russian-speaking minority and the Latvian-speaking majority with regard to their behaviour as consumers. Usually, consumer behaviour is seen as a set of choices made by a consumer regarding his spending, and influenced by such factors as earnings, demographics, social and cultural factors, as well as the external economic and political environment. Despite the fact that consumer behaviour is not a traditional subject of analysis under research of societal security, it is important to mention that certain aspects of consumer behaviour can have an impact on the economic wellbeing and security of an individual and, thus, consumer behaviour traits, which are characteristic to a significant societal group, can be useful to evaluate possible economic security risks for the particular group. The overall availability of relevant information for consumers is also an important factor, which can potentially influence decisions of the individual and, thus, leave an impact on his or her wellbeing and economic vulnerability in the future.

The Chair of the Consumer Rights Protection Centre, Baiba Vitoliņa, admits that, according to polls, although the majority of the population in Latvia says that their awareness about their consumer rights is unsatisfactory, all in all, Russian-speaking consumers consider their awareness even less satisfactory than that of ethnic Latvians.²⁹ One obvious explanation to this situation is availability of information in the Russian language — despite the fact that the

²⁹ Patērētāju informētība un spēja izmantot savas tiesības. Vitoliņa, B. (2011). Available at: http://www.esmaja.lv/sites/default/files/pateretaju_informetibas_petijums.pdf (accessed 10 January 2016).

majority of Russian speakers are able to read in the Latvian language, obtaining information in the non-native language requires more effort. Meanwhile, the availability of information on consumer issues in Russian is often significantly lower than in Latvian, both in public institutions and private organisations. One significant example, is a campaign launched by the Consumer Rights Protection Centre, together with the Financial and Capital Market Commission and in cooperation with the industry associations, aimed at improving the so-called financial literacy in Latvia. The aim of this initiative was to mitigate the effects of the previous economical and financial crisis on Latvian consumers, and to prevent the irresponsible financial behaviour of households and individuals. However, the actual availability of educational material and information in Russian and Latvian languages is very different — for example, the web page of the Latvian Association of Commercial Banks contains only educational material in Latvian, while the web page of the Financial and Capital Market Commission contains a significantly smaller amount of educational material in Russian. It is important to mention that the behaviour of consumers, and particularly proportionally high lending by households, is seen as a decisive factor behind the development of the severe economic and financial crisis in Latvia in 2009, by many experts, politicians, and financial institutions.

The lower availability of information in their native language and limited possibilities also affect the economic behaviour and consumer decisions of the Russian-speaking minority in other economic spheres. “Generally we do not observe a strong distinction among Russian-speaking consumers and Latvian-speaking consumers in our daily operations. However, the situation is very different with the Russian-speaking community in certain age groups, specifically — retired people and people of near-retirement age,” emphasises Mārcis Mazurs, head of the municipal communal service provider “Olaines Ūdens un Siltums”³⁰. According to him, individuals of

³⁰ Author’s interview with Mārcis Mazurs, the CEO of joint stock company “Olaines Ūdens un Siltums”, 10 January 2016.

the particular ethnic and age group are often unable to fully understand and evaluate the available technical information regarding communal services, and often misinterpret explanations or facts provided. “In the long run, unfortunately these factors can facilitate situations, in which consumers make decisions with negative consequences on their financial wellbeing and economic securities. One of the prime examples would be public consultations regarding renovation and insulation of multi-apartment buildings – it must be noted that the decision to undertake such a project can only be made with the majority vote of the occupants of such a house, and due to their inability to fully understand all provided information, Russian speakers tend to oppose such projects more often,” Mazurs admits³¹. According to his observations, the behaviour of Russian speakers among the older age groups is also partly down to historical reasons. “Many of these people started their economically active lives in a period, when the public institutions took full responsibility for communal services, and such services as heating and water supply were provided at heavily subsidised prices, and such practices as saving water or heat energy were not considered important. Due to the differences in availability of information and different content of media in Latvian and Russian languages, changes in consumer behaviour among older Russian speakers take much longer than among Latvian speakers,” explains Mazurs.³²

Identified differences in the consumer behaviour of the Russian-speaking minority, indeed, indicate certain economic risks, which under specific circumstances may potentially undermine the economic security and welfare of the group. However, it is important to note that none of the identified risks have the potential to materialise rapidly — on the contrary, the risks, related with access to consumer information, should be reduced, if the proper steps of political and social integration of the Russian-speaking minority, such as language learning programmes, are continued by state authorities.

³¹ Author's interview with Mārcis Mazurs, the CEO of joint stock company “Olaines Īdents un Siltums”, 10 January 2016.

³² Ibid.

Several risks, for example, issues related with the financial literacy of the Russian-speaking minority, will be also mitigated with the adoption of more stringent consumer protection regulations.

Conclusions and recommendations

While all experts admit that the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia experiences certain economic risks, related with both their economic behaviour and their position in the economic structure of Latvia, and most of them also emphasise that there is a lack of reliable and comprehensive data to evaluate the full extent of potential risks fully, their opinions on the necessity of further research are divided. Many experts also doubt whether there is a need to carry out any specific actions to mitigate the potential economic risks.

“At company level, we do not gather any statistics on the nationality of our employees, and we would not want to do so. It would be hard to justify such steps as our corporate strategy strongly supports equal treatment of employees of any nationality, and we believe that the best way to help with integration of ethnic minorities is to provide them with high-quality education, and socially and economically competitive and secure employment,” says Āris Žīgurs, president of the largest Latvian company, Latvenergo.³³ A similar opinion was expressed by several other entrepreneurs and company managers, who doubt the need for taking any specific steps related with solving ethnic issues at company or industry level, and also openly admitted that in most cases they would abstain from participation in research related to specific ethnic groups. Most entrepreneurs see high quality of education and promotion of highly skilled professions among young people as one of the most important measures to reduce the theoretical economic risks for the Russian-speaking minority.

“As a ministry, currently we do not carry out specific measures or programmes to mitigate the economic risks or problems of

³³ Author’s interview with Āris Žīgurs, CEO of JSC Latvenergo, 7 July 2015

ethnic minorities, however, I also think that such an approach in many ways is correct, because such measures can be interpreted differently, and we would not want to signal to the Russian community that they are treated differently; our goal is to facilitate their integration and make them feel an equal part of society," says the Minister of Economy.³⁴ However, the minister believes that at the same time the identified economic risks for the Russian community point at the necessity for continued efforts to improve overall Latvian language skills among the Russian-speaking minority. "With sufficient language skills, the economic security of Russian speakers will definitely improve and mostly should not be different from that of ethnic Latvians," says Dana Reizniece-Ozola.³⁵

Meanwhile Arnis Sauka sees the development of Russian language media in Latvia as one of the key issues in mitigating the economic risks connected with the Russian-speaking minorities. "Unfortunately, the current development trends in the Russian language media sector are not encouraging, and both the number of qualified journalists and relevant media channels becomes smaller. Thus, development of a strong Russian language public media channel would be important, not only from a political perspective, but also from an economic perspective," says the economist.³⁶

Mārcis Mazurs expressed a similar opinion that the most appropriate way to mitigate the economic risks of the Russian-speaking community would be by improving the availability of economically important information to Russian speakers. "Despite the fact that availability of information in Russian, in state and municipal institutions, and in public companies is often treated as a politically sensitive issue and sometimes discouraged, I believe that it is not possible to fully meet the economic and social needs of Russian-speaking consumers without flexible approach towards the use of Russian language, especially in municipalities with a high proportion of

³⁴ Author's interview with Dana Reizniece-Ozola, Minister of Economic Affairs, 4 January 2016.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Author's interview with Arnis Sauka, researcher at SSE Riga, 22 December 2015.

Russian speakers. It is obvious that the situation will gradually change and naturally improve, but we still need transition time," says the representative of a municipal service provider³⁷.

Generally, the analyses of the available data and opinions of the experts indicate that, despite the remaining issues regarding the economic security of the Russian-speaking minority of Latvia, the overall integration of the Russian-speaking minority in the sphere of economy, unlike in many other spheres, is high. The economic development trends, which have generally improved the openness and competitiveness of the Latvian economy, have also significantly reduced many of the historic economic risks for the Russian-speaking minority. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the ethnic factor played an important role in both employment and operation practices, however, ten years later we can no longer speak about two worlds in the economy, and the professionalism and market powers have become the decisive factor in both business and employment practices, concludes sociologist Brigita Zepa.³⁸

The high level of economic integration among the Latvian and Russian-speaking community also means that several of the economic risks, related with the Russian-speaking minority, can be addressed with non-specific measures and as part of broader political initiatives. For example, despite the fact that the participation of Russian-speaking entrepreneurs is higher, entrepreneurial organisations such as the Trade and Commerce Chamber of Latvia, and the Confederation of Employers, strongly insist that the key solution for tackling the shadow economy would be overall improvements of the taxation system and budget policy. Improvements could be achieved, for example, by reducing the tax burden on labour and increasing taxes on consumption, avoiding frequent changes in the taxation system, and improving the overall accountability of state

³⁷ Author's interview with Mārcis Mazurs, the CEO of joint stock company "Olaines Ūdens un Siltums", 10 January 2016.

³⁸ Buda, A. (2005). Etniskie priekšstati Latvijas biznesā. *Kabinets*, Aprilis, 4. lpp. Available at: http://biss.soc.lv/downloads/publications/Publik_Zepa-Karnite.pdf (accessed 10 January 2016).

and municipal institutions about spending of public funds, emphasise the entrepreneurs. Meanwhile, economic risks related with a high level of employment of Russian-speaking minorities in certain economic fields, potentially vulnerable to geopolitical tensions or rapid changes in global markets (for example, railway and transit), can at least be partially addressed with such policy planning measures as overall improvement of competitiveness in the sector, active diversification of the client base and development of alternative transportation routes and respective services.

At the same time, a lack of available statistics and research indicates that some economic risks for the Russian-speaking minority may yet be unidentified. One of the potential examples could be the much debated rapid growth in the popularity of the so-called payday loans or short-term loans, provided by non-banking financial institutions with relatively high interest rates. According to many financial experts, during the last few years, the reckless lending policy of most service providers has increased the risk of financial insolvency and poverty for a significant number of households in Latvia. The supervisory institutions and service providers have never published any statistics of the industry, which could characterise ethnic proportions among clients of payday loans, and among clients of the service, experiencing financial difficulties. However, in relation to less information on financial literacy in the Russian language, Russian-speaking consumers can be seen as potentially more vulnerable to risks, related to reckless short-term lending. Such assumption can be supported with the fact that performing a search on the Internet of the keyword ('payday loan') in the Russian language generates only advertising material or web-pages of financial lenders, and the search results do not contain any link to articles or information in the Russian language media in Latvia, which could educate the consumer on the possible risks related to payday loan services.

Also worth considering would be further research on the economic risks, specific to the most vulnerable groups of the Russian-speaking community, such as people from older age groups, people with a lower level of education and language skills, and people

residing in rural areas or smaller municipalities. The most important task of such research would be to identify the shortcomings in the availability of information and services, related with rights and obligations in the labour market, awareness about consumer rights, and access to lifelong education and requalification programmes.

Non-governmental Organisations: Source for Inclusion or Exclusion?

SIGITA STRUBERGA¹

Abstract

The chapter aims to contribute to the discussion about the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which, as it is being argued here, are engaged in representation and defence of the Russian-speaking citizens' rights and interests in Latvia.² So far, various sociological surveys and studies have been conducted on the selected themes. However, given the domestic political and international situation and the dynamics of developments in these areas, it is important to clarify as precisely as possible the mood of the opinion leaders, as well as the structural changes taking place within the sector itself. The chapter deals with the available quantitative and qualitative indicators that characterise the activities of the NGOs. Based on our analysis, it is being argued that, contrary to the traditionally dominating views in the Western world that the non-governmental sector of a certain society generally contributes to creating a feeling of belonging to one's country and promotion of active citizenship, in the case of the Russian-speaking NGOs in Latvia, this kind of phenomena could not be identified. The NGOs here do not serve as the enhancers of the capacity of the Russian-speaking population to take up civil action. Neither can they be considered as a force that might contribute to the goals of national consolidation in general. On the contrary — one should rather discuss the role of the Russian-speaking sector in Latvia in promoting the development of the social exclusion phenomena in the Latvian society.

Keywords: civil society, non-governmental organisations, opinion leaders, participation, Russian-speaking non-governmental organisations, self-exclusion

Introduction

As rightly pointed out by Žaneta Ozoliņa in the introduction to this book, today national security can be attributed to a set of external

¹ PhD student, University of Latvia.

² Further in the text referred to as the Russian-speaking public organizations or the Russian-speaking non-governmental sector.

and internal circumstances. And, in the case of Latvia, where the Russian-speaking non-governmental sector can be seen not only as an attempt of self-expression of the most vocal representatives of this community, but also as a political instrument in the hands of an external enemy, it can qualify as an interesting object of analysis. Importantly, the above mentioned expressions are closely related to such matters as the use of language and education, freedom of expression, association and religion, as well as participation in decision-making.³ As such, it is not surprising that ethnicity, values, and history move into the forefront while the Russian-speaking NGO sector tends to define them as the most current items on their agenda.

Russian-speaking community organisations in Latvia is a specific area of the non-governmental sector, which has been studied a great deal. Among other things, attention has rightly been paid to the possible threats their activities might pose to the stability of social development and state sovereignty. Several researchers have turned to the research of the structure of the organisational network, the focus of the main activities and other related matters. However, taking into account the domestic political and international situation and the dynamics of developments in these areas, it is important to clarify as precisely as possible the mood of the opinion leaders, as well as the structural changes taking place within the sector itself. As such, the goal of this chapter is to contribute to the discussion about the functioning of the public organisations, which have declared as a focus of their activities the representation and protection of the rights of the Russian-speaking population in Latvia — this can also be done from the perspective of social inclusion or social exclusion.

The chapter consists of several sections, of which the first one outlines the factors that contribute to the formation of the identity of the Russian-speaking public organisations in Latvia. The second section is the analysis of the relationship the described

³ Thiel, M. (2007). Identity, societal security and regional integration in Europe. *Jean Monnet/Robert Schuman Paper Series*, Vol. 7, No. 6 (April), p. 5. Available at: http://aei.pitt.edu/8175/1/Thiel_IDsocietSec_long07_edi.pdf (accessed 3 January 2016).

non-governmental sector has with the Russian Federation. The third section concentrates on the attitudes demonstrated by the Russian-speaking community in Latvia towards the public organisations as forms of civic participation. This is followed by a summary of the study results and the main conclusions.

The analytical basis of the chapter has been created, based on the collected quantitative and qualitative data obtained during the study. The following data obtaining techniques have been used: in-depth interviews, focus group surveys, as well as secondary data analysis. The leaders of public organisations have been questioned in interviews, and the Russian-speaking residents in Latvia have been included in the focus groups. In order to take into account the regional specifics as much as possible, the study was conducted not only in Riga, but also in two major cities — Daugavpils and Liepāja, as well as Jēkabpils and Kalnciems rural areas. The study included the public organisations whose official objectives are related to the protection and representation of the interests and rights of the Russian-speaking population in Latvia. Among them there are also some cultural groups, which in addition to their main line of activity, have also participated in the above mentioned activities. This research did not include specific ethnic or religious organisations, folklore groups, informal self-help initiatives, and other population groups, whose objectives and activities are not related to the research goals.

In order to increase the validity of the study, the views expressed both in interviews and focus groups are anonymous. However, it must be conceded that, despite the assurances of anonymity, the respondents, when replying to politically sensitive issues, tried to avoid giving precise answers or simply avoided providing answers altogether. Most notably this was felt when the focus groups were asked about the foreign policy realised by the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, especially in relation to the Crimean annexation. Other NGO representatives were not very keen on describing the finances, providing the real numbers of their members, and did not want to describe their relationships with other NGOs.

Identity of the Russian-speaking organisations in Latvia

When we focus on identity, the main accent is placed on finding out how the group of individuals defines themselves, how they separate themselves from the others, or determine the similarities and differences between themselves and significant others. Therefore, this chapter will deal with a number of important facets of self-identification of the Russian-speaking NGOs, analyse the peculiarities of their organisational network, discuss the main objectives of their activities, while attempting to identify the suggested discourses.

Vladislav Volkov suggests that there are four types of Russian-speaking public organisations in Latvia: organisations with culture- and education-related objectives, organisations providing legal and information-related assistance; organisations that have come into existence in relation to the increasing role of the Latvian language as the main language of instruction of minorities in educational institutions; and organisations with a more complex goal of supporting the social life of the Russian speakers in Latvia. This kind of schematic classification reveals the main lines of activities of the Russian-speaking NGO sector⁴, but in order to introduce some more precise nuances that this research topic entails, it is important to introduce some explanations and clarifications. Firstly, very often organisations with specific formal goals (mostly in the area of culture) are connected in a united network with other organisations promoting complex goals and putting the emphasis on political activities. As a result, a situation develops where organisations carry out their specific functions (the intensity in each specific case is different), but within their networks or in cooperation with certain political forces, they are assigned just a secondary role while the agenda of the network becomes a priority. For example, such a situation has been observed in *Veche Society of Russian*

⁴ Volkovs, V. (2007). Krievi Latvijā. No: Dribins, L. (red.). *Mazākumtautības Latvijā. Vēsture un tagadne*. (Riga: Latvijas Universitātes Filozofijas un socioloģijas institūts), 115.–116. lpp.

Culture in Jelgava, the *Society of Russian Culture* in Latvia, and other organisations.

This actually means that the Russian-speaking non-governmental sector as a whole can be characterised as a deeply politicised one. The close ties that these organisations' leaders have forged with the political power players, which position themselves as representing the interests of the Russian-speaking population in Latvia, also point to the politicisation of the sector itself. This is particularly evident in the case of the Latvian Russian Union; in fact, the backbone of this political party is formed by the leaders of the Russian-speaking public organisations.⁵ The members of the biggest Russian Party, *Harmony Centre*, do not include that many NGO representatives. However, it can be observed that here special material support mechanisms to the related public organisations are at play. This has also been confirmed by a number of NGO representatives during the interviews, when they explained how *Harmony Centre* makes use of all the benefits and privileges that have been secured to them, along with their status in Parliament and a number of local municipalities.

Interestingly, the focus group results have showed that the Russian-speaking population is unable to name either public or political leaders who have set as their mission the protection of their minority rights. The most recognisable were the head of Riga's municipality, Nil Ushakov⁶ and Tatiana Zhdanok. It should be noted, however, that the focus group results reveal that while Nil Ushakov owes his

⁵ For example, during the 2014 European Parliament elections, the candidates of the Latvia's Human Rights Committee are represented in the candidate lists of this party. The most active current and former members of the *Latvian Russians' Community*: Tatiana Zhdanok, Vladimir Buzayev, Aleksander Kuzmin, Miroslav Mitrofanov, Oleg Tolmachov, Aleksei Vasilyev, as well as another famous representatives of the public organizations (Tatiana Favorska, Victor Gushin, Jelena Osipova, Vladislav Rafalskii).

⁶ It has to be noted that according to the DNB *Latvijas Barometrs Nr. 72* polling survey, he is the only one from the popular Russians in the country, whom 7% of the population living in Latvia would be ready to reward in a public ceremony for his contribution to the Latvian state (in comparison to the famous Russian women like Tatiana Zhdanok and Uljana Semjonova, who were supported by 1%).

popularity to his position as the Chairman of Riga City Council, in Tatiana Zhdanok's case, the ability of many Russian speakers to recognise her is limited only to her second name, and they are generally unable to say whether she is a politician or an NGO representative.

It is possible to name several of the central themes that came out of the in-depth interviews and can be identified as currently topical to the Russian-speaking non-governmental organisations at least on a politically declarative level. They are linguistic and cultural self-preservation; preservation of historical memory, with particular emphasis on 9th May celebrations and maintenance of the network of Russian schools as guarantors of identity preservation. The Russian-speaking population as a whole, however, is not concerned about a potential loss of identity and does not perceive cultural self-annihilation possibilities as a threat in the foreseeable future. For example, according to the statistical data, only 12% of young Russians are afraid that they might forget their culture.⁷ In addition, the results obtained in the focus groups demonstrate the low level of belief among the Russian-speaking population that NGOs could serve as an effective tool for the preservation of their ethnic identity.⁸ The respondents named the family and the practiced traditions in a family setting as effective instruments of preserving ethnic identity.

Vitaly (70), a pensioner, Riga: No organisation from outside can preserve the Russian sense of belonging to their culture and traditions. It can be preserved only as much as you yourself are able to transfer these traditions in your own family through your children.

It is also interesting that the members of the questioned focus groups in schools, where the main language of instruction is

⁷ Koroļeva, I., Rungule, R., Sniķere, S., Aleksandrovs, A. (2009). Jauniešu identitāte un lidzdalība. *Latvijas jaunatnes portrets. Integrācija sabiedrībā un marginalizācijas riski.* (Riga: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds), 159. lpp.

⁸ It is interesting that also the respondents in the focus groups at Russian-speaking schools did not mention institutes promoting identity preservation as the first choices in their list.

Russian, did not select the preservation of national identity as a priority, despite the fact that they did not support the widely discussed idea about the expected change in Russian schools, which entails that by 2018, the language of instruction in the Russian-speaking schools will also be Latvian. In this regard, the Chair of the Board of the *Russian Society in Latvia*, Tatiana Favorska, has noted that if the Russians living in Latvia want their next generations to also remain Russian, their responsibility is to "channel all the remaining power and energy towards the main goal — preservation of an education that would be available in the Russian language."⁹ Similar thoughts have been expressed by all questioned representatives of the NGOs. Also, internal discussions within the organisational network involve active analysis related to developing an action plan for organising protest activities, while at the same time concerns have been voiced that the consolidation of masses that was possible in 2004, cannot be possibly repeated. Other issues that have been named as painful by the representatives of the NGOs, in relation to the Russian school reform, are the low support rendered to public activities that can be expected from the teachers, and refusal on the part of the Latvian education system to prepare teachers of the Russian language and literature. However, at the same time the answers provided during the interviews suggest that it is exactly the NGO sector which acts as a mediator in transferring the methodological teaching materials to the Russian speaking schools in Latvia. However, it is up to the individual approach chosen by the teachers themselves, how they decide to teach, especially with regard to the history lessons.¹⁰

However, the special status of the 9th May, Second World War

⁹ Фаворская, Т. (2014). Успех возможен только в единстве целей. Балтийский Мир, 03/2014, с. 35.

¹⁰ Statistical data points to this. Despite the united study content secured throughout the whole education system in general, the views about the USSR history events held by the students at the Russian-speaking schools differ from the views of the students in the Latvian schools. This is especially true with regard to the interpretation of significance of the 9th May Victory Day, the Latvian occupation fact, and the attitudes towards the repressions carried out by Josef Stalin.

Victory Day celebration, is a significant element of the collective myth for the Russian speakers in Latvia, which has become a part of their national identity, while this very special celebration has simultaneously become a natural form of demonstrating identity by the Russian speakers. As a result, any form of denial to the Russians in Latvia to the celebration of this event is associated with a threat and is very painfully perceived in the context of fear that can arise from the thought of losing this viable myth. In addition to this, the Russian-speaking NGOs in Latvia see this as a possibility to demonstrate consolidation of significant masses of Russian speakers in Latvia. During the interviews, several organisation representatives characterised a new form of participation, *Бессмертный полк* that was created on 9 May 2015, as a successful step towards the goal of unifying the Russian speakers in Latvia. Nevertheless, the research of the focus group results reveals that the Russian-speaking community participating in the aforementioned events does not associate the Victory Day celebration and other related events with their actual organisers — the Russian-speaking organisations in Latvia. As such, it can be concluded that the broad interest and participation in these events is achieved rather by the activities of the Russian-speaking media, and not as the result of the NGOs ability to generate this kind of participation.

The type of NGO that has not been included in the classification proposed by Vladimir Volkov, are the research centres which could be termed in the classical Western understanding as the organisations providing expertise. However, the specifics and the form of their activity significantly differs from their traditional counterparts in the West. The main difference is that the research performed by these organisations is directed towards discrediting the existing state order, and the results of the sociological polls do not correspond or completely contradict the information collected by the state-recognised research institutions. One of the most visible centres of this type is the European Research Institute, which has

published many research papers and reports.¹¹ Similar publications are extensively being produced by the *Human Rights Committee of Latvia*¹².

One of the goals of the Human Rights Committee of Latvia and the other selected NGOs, is the actualisation of the problems the non-citizens are allegedly facing in Latvia. However, these organisations have not been successful in gaining support either within the wider circles of the Latvian population, or the European Union, which seems to be one of the main strategic goals, according to the activities assumed and demonstrated by several important Russian-speaking public and political leaders.

No less important for a number of Russian-speaking NGOs is the issue of introducing the Russian language as the second state language in Latvia. In addition, the answers provided by the organisations' representatives during the interviews demonstrate that many of them still do not know the Latvian language. And this is not so much due to the limited opportunities to learn the language or the general ability to study, but more to the unwillingness to adopt the Latvian national language, culture and local traditions. This is also demonstrated by the Russian-speaking NGOs, as they show little interest in getting involved in projects aimed at learning mutual communication skills and getting acquainted with the common cultural heritage together with the public organisations that represent other nationalities in Latvia.¹³

Also, the views demonstrated by the Russian-speaking NGOs on the topic of communication problems between the Latvian and Russian-speaking community indicate the tendencies of self-exclusion. The surveyed representatives of these organisations do not see any problems at the individual level and maintain that they have rarely

¹¹ For example, *The Contemporary American Social Technologies and their Practical Application Possibilities in Russia, The Russian Community in Latvia in its Struggle for their Rights, the Referendum on the Russian Language and Its Consequences*.

¹² For example, *Legal and Social Situation of The Russian Speaking Minority in Latvia*.

¹³ In the interviews the NGO representatives admitted that in cases when the common projects were being developed, it was being done mostly in the regions and because of the possibility to attract additional funding.

experienced any kind of disagreements based on ethnic intolerance. However, when the same inquiry is extended to the group and collective levels, the position changes.

During the conducted interviews, as well as in the Russian-speaking public sector environment, the non-governmental activists often talk about an anti-Russian discourse that is being artificially constructed in the public arena, and in particular where the state affairs are concerned. The state in this context is always viewed as a source of threat and as a hostile stranger, whose activities are mainly focused on creating damage. But those individual organisations that have not joined the mainstream of Russian-speaking non-governmental discourse, and have found ways to work closely with the government institutions, automatically acquire the status of the Russian “pocket organisations”. In other cases, where the NGOs have held on to these mainstream ways of thinking, while simultaneously gaining support from the state and local government institutions, when providing answers to the interview questions, they tend to demonstrate more satisfaction with living and working conditions, while at the same time preserving the same contradictory *we – the others* discourse in respect to the Latvians and the state.

The significant stranger, which can also be identified when analysing the rhetoric of the representatives of the Russian-speaking public organisations, is the West, especially the United States, but the basic threat is provided by the values based in multiculturalism and tolerance. As a result, the defence of the traditional values is one of the missions that a large proportion of the non-governmental sector has defined as theirs.¹⁴

As a result, by trying to develop the collective fear, as well as by emphasising the contradictory *we – the others* in their discourse, these organisations, in fact, work towards achieving exclusion of the Russian speakers. These fears, the ideology and political objectives (which are often radically opposed to the country and its views

¹⁴ It is worth mentioning that during the conducted interviews, when speaking out about the traditional values, the respondents identified some common uniting elements characteristic to both the Russians and the Latvians.

about its development) are the reasons why the identity of the Russian-speaking non-governmental sector is such that its status today can be classified as that of an outsider. In addition, the Russian-speaking community organisations often use such outsider strategies as protests and other mainly unconventional forms of political participation, the main objective of which is to attract wide media attention abroad in order to encourage pressure on the Latvian state.

Particular emphasis should be made on the youth organisations, whose activities and declared views point towards a certain identity transformation process (that includes civil responsibility and sense of belonging to the state). For example, the responses received during the interviews show that the youth organisations consider as obsolete such issues as those of Russian as a second state language or the change of the status of non-citizens. This, as well as the small numbers of the young people involved, passive participation and small membership, little interest in cooperation with the other organisations, and clearly visible generational conflict are the issues that are currently being actively discussed within the Russian-speaking non-governmental sector.

Youth NGO representative, Riga: What separates us from the older generation are certain inconsistencies in our values. There exists a certain generational conflict. We hold a different world view and different beliefs about how to carry out certain activities.

It should be emphasised that the views of the youth organisations' representatives only partially coincide with those held by their older colleagues. Young people often point to the fact that they are not only dissatisfied with certain dominating political positions, but also with the allocation of the financial resources received from the Russian Federation, with organisation of events and redistribution mechanisms of other support instruments. They also admit that they are not interested in the events organised by their more experienced colleagues. For example, young people see it as a pointless use of money and time on organising conferences on such topics

as history and law protection, that are directed towards a very narrow audience.

Youth NGO representative, Riga: Books, newspapers, the rewriting of history — it is a huge and meaningless waste of money.

Youth NGO representative, from a region: Young people who want to see real action, generally do not attend any kind of conferences. They are not oriented towards promoting conflict, and it is different from many adult colleagues. They do not represent the ideology of their older colleagues. The young people are generally characterised by a pragmatic approach towards the activities implemented by the NGOs.

Youngsters also have a pragmatic attitude towards other activities:

Youth NGO representative, from a region: Unfortunately, it is sometimes difficult for the elderly to accept that young leaders are predominantly interested in career possibilities and only then will they care about realisation of certain ideas. This is normal and one should understand that.

Youth NGO representative, Riga: Activities that we carry out are aimed at training young people to implement their ideas through projects ... The results are evident. However, it is a fact that we face absurd vision as far as the meaning of the projects is concerned. This should serve to change the situation or solve problems in society. But, EU assistance has been damaging, it has not done anything good for young people, because they believe that a project means having a conference for the discussion of certain themes. And that's all. But that is simply a way of making money.

This example shows that despite the presence of several radically-oriented elements among the Russian-speaking youth NGOs in Latvia (for example, *ALU Baltics*, Stanislav Bukain), in general, it is not possible to speak of a breeding ground for the further spread of radical views within the non-governmental sector. This is especially true where the Russian-speaking young people in Latvia are concerned. At the same time, one should not overestimate the slight identity transformations recently taking place in youth organisations — there are still a range of issues on which the beliefs of the

new generation and the older generation of the non-governmental sector coincide.

But, the radical wing formed by more mature adults among the Russian-speaking organisations is larger and better recognised in the media environment. It also receives bigger support from the Russian Federation. Here, however, it should be noted that, although the so-called anti-fascist organisations and their leaders operate within the same framework of the Russian-speaking non-governmental sector, in the anonymous interviews held with the representatives of more moderately-minded organisations, they tend to show their disapproval of these radicals (for example, Hilarion Girss or Alexander Gaponenko are often attributed with a clown status).

Youth NGO representative, Riga: Yes, today the activities carried out by Gaponenko to some extent discredit all the Russian-speaking organisations. But what is more frightening is that such persons as Lindermanis attract more followers than us, who promote more cultural and loyal positions... More people choose to follow the radically inclined than those who focus on dialogue and the establishment of a more positive atmosphere.

This does not mean that these relatively moderately minded organisations, in certain circumstances, would not decide to cooperate with the radicals. They tend to view such a scenario as normal in situations when there is a common goal. For example, the current goal is to keep schools going with Russian as the language of instruction.

Another trend that has been observed during the research, is related to the special characteristics of how the Russian-speaking organisations tend to formulate their views. For example, the author observed a certain degree of coordination between the networks, when the agreement to participate in the interviews and schedule the appointments was achieved. But, during the interviews, it was possible to sense some kind of unified discipline when the responses to questions touching upon political issues were asked. After interpreting the results, it was noticeable that specific political lines,

when providing the answers to the interview questions, were observed.

Today, the dominant force in the Russian-speaking non-governmental sector is the *Coordination Council for National Minorities Public Organisations*, which formally unites more than 70 organisations. The Council is chaired by Victor Gushin. There are several reasons why his leadership, although a subject under question within the sector, could have been secured for such a long time. Firstly, this could be attributed to his personal characteristics, as well as a lack of strong enough competition. Secondly, his personal good contacts within the Russian Federation Embassy in Latvia and the Russian compatriot policy-related foreign policy institutes may have played their part.

Currently, Victor Gushin is one of the members of the *World Coordination Council of Russian Compatriots*. It is through him that the largest part of funding provided by Russia in support to the NGO activities arrives in Latvia.¹⁵ It is the head of the Coordination Council, who makes the decisions in the majority of cases on who will represent the Russian speakers in the events organised in the framework of the Russian Federation's compatriot policy programmes. Therefore, it can be concluded from the above, that this Council can be classified as one of the infrastructure organisations featuring the special characteristics of a so-called Russia's external impact organisation.¹⁶

The activities of Victor Grishin, as well as a number of other Russian-speaking public leaders, may be described as the so-called *professional compatriots phenomenon*, in the sense that they are the NGO representatives whose activities require a specific way of life. This includes continuous meetings, negotiations, conferences, and

¹⁵ Occasionally, certain NGOs have succeeded in attracting funding from the Russian Federation special funds without the approval of Victor Gushin. However, those are rare cases.

¹⁶ Traditionally it is assumed that infrastructure organisations perform several functions to secure effective operation of the sector, such as helping to acquire the organisational skills; provides information in the both directions — outward (for example, by providing information about the sector) and within (on legislation, cooperation possibilities and sources of funding).

travel for work purposes. However, the issue is not the overspending on expensive hotels or restaurants, but rather the involvement in permanent public activities and the need to ensure that they are permanently sought after. In this regard, the head of *Liepāja Russian Community*, Valery Kravtsov, has noted, "As soon as someone makes a profession out of their social activities, people no longer want to see him, because the truth cannot be trivialised as professionalism."¹⁷ But some experts have expressed the opinion that the roots of some compatriot activities can be traced back to the aftermath of the breakdown of the USSR, when certain Russian intellectuals could not actualise their positions in Latvian, at the level they were accustomed to operating at, while the lack of knowledge of the official language and other factors prevented them from adjusting to the new rules of the game.

Another activity of the so-called professional compatriots, involves the publication of books and magazines in small amounts, the cost of which is increased by expensive printing material, presentations, and other spending. But, as it was admitted during the interviews with several NGO representatives, this kind of literature generates little interest, not only in the Russian-speaking population, but also among the public activists themselves. As a result, this literature is being distributed for free to the conference participants and the attendees of other related events.

In summary, it can be concluded that at present a number of characteristics point towards the deep politicisation of the Russian-speaking NGOs' network, as well as the centralisation of decision-making regarding the direction of its future development and the most important discourses. In the meantime, the identity transformations that can be observed in young peoples' organisations, unfortunately, do not seem to be generating any change in the traditional discourse, as the consensus still prevails with regard to such basic positions as, for instance, the interpretation of history.

¹⁷ Турчанинова, А., Кравцов, В. (2011). Русский язык — это нефть Прибалтики. *Балтийский Мир*, № 2, с. 24.

Relations of the Russian-speaking NGOs in Latvia with the Russian Federation

The links between the Russian-speaking public organisations in Latvia with the national regulatory authorities of the Russian Federation (this discussion mostly involves the foreign policy sector), can be characterised as vague and blurred. It should be noted that such an assessment has been provided by observers from the sidelines and the representatives of the same organisations. During the interviews, the representatives of the NGOs admitted that they were not aware of the goals of the Russian Federation with regard to themselves as the most active *compatriot* representatives in Latvia. Similarly, one could point to a number of conflict situations that had developed because of dissatisfaction with the redistribution of funding provided by Russia for business trips and mandates for participation in international events organised within the framework of the compatriot programme. And this is not surprising, given the lack of transparency in decision-making about the use of support measures as well as their concentration in the hands of several persons. For example, at the end of 2015, a wide debate broke out within the Russian-speaking NGOs on why there was nobody from Latvia representing the youth NGOs at the Bulgarian youth conference.¹⁸

NGO representative, region: I do not know what is happening there... I do not know what forums or conferences are being held. I find out only afterwards from the Internet or at the meetings where we are told that meetings important for the community have been held thanks to the support provided by Russia.

Representatives of the organisations expressed dissatisfaction during the interviews with the fact that, in their opinion, Russia currently is not sufficiently supporting their compatriot efforts, pointing out that often this is not just a matter of funding.

¹⁸ The Russian-speaking socially active representatives from the medium and older generations, such as Victor Gushin and Alexander Sokolov, took part in the Conference.

Youth NGO representative: Russian programmes are not sufficiently developed. Why? Firstly, there is a lack of openness and there is excessive formality... Moreover, this involves mostly sightseeing, showing the historic monuments, but no form of mutual co-operation is promoted. ... And with that, unfortunately, we are losing Europe. We went to Moscow, looked at the Red Square many times. But it is not clear what to do next.

The question of the usefulness of the conferences is a problem that is also being discussed by the compatriot policy implementers. For example, the executive secretary of the *Belgian Federation of Russian-speaking Organisations*, Sergey Petrosov, has admitted that the main motivating factor for organising the compatriot conferences supported by the Russian Federation are the various benefits and privileges that can be sought. However, these discussions have not resulted in any reforms that would focus on introducing the spent funding control mechanisms or developing specific strategic planning documents. It is also unlikely that Russia is going to change the main directions of activity for the NGOs in the near future, which it is currently supporting the most. And, in essence, these activities are directed at promoting the processes of self-exclusion of the Russian speakers from their domestic communities — these activities are focused on generating a refusal to accept the home country's values and the development goals, among the Russian-speaking populations abroad, as well as on maintaining a strong sentiment towards the former USSR.

Changes in the implementation of Russia's compatriot policy, which currently constitutes a concern among the Russian-speaking NGO leaders in Latvia, are related to the opening of the agency's *Роскомрудничество* Regional Centre in Finland, as well as the incorporation of the Baltic States region in the Nordic and Baltic Sea block. This has raised the concern that such a move by Russia could mean equalising the compatriots living in the Baltic region with those residing in the Western countries.

NGO representative, Riga: We do not know why the department of the Foreign Ministry which deals with the compatriots abroad, has decided to stop organising the Baltic regional conferences ... The Baltic region is a special one ... A network of Russian schools has never been an issue in Scandinavia ... They are concerned with the Sunday schools or founding interest groups. But it is different in our case.

This kind of structural change does not alter Russia's attitude towards the NGOs abroad, which it views as an extension of its power institution. In the context of this research, one can mention the fact that the representatives of the Russian Federation's Embassy in Latvia are frequent guests and observers at the events (including the organisational meetings) organised by the Russian-speaking non-governmental organisations in Latvia. Furthermore, the NGOs are being used to attract youths and students to travel and attend the summer camps and other similar events that are organised in Russia, and are directed at the younger generations of the compatriots. There are also attempts to encourage the most talented secondary school students to take up studies at Russian universities.¹⁹

Apart from a new foreign policy doctrine, which "is based on a set of ideas about a special Russian civilization, the Russian world and the need to defend the fellow countrymen, if needed, by using force", in fact, refers to the concept of securing of the Russian world. As a result, under certain circumstances, it can provide the basis for justifying the use of various foreign policy instruments, including the Russian-speaking NGOs, in order to achieve impact.

The interview results obtained during this research point to the fact that many representatives of the NGOs are aware of Russia's relatively low interest in them as the messengers of the Russian world, while it sees them rather as the instruments for obtaining the foreign policy goals..

¹⁹ It has been acknowledged in the 2014 Security Police report that "the goal of these activities is to form Russia-supporting elites in other countries, so that they would help Russia in the future to secure its interests abroad".

NGO representative, region: You think we do not understand that Russia does not need us? We understand. We are seen as a useful tool. But we are trying to reap some benefits for ourselves as well.

Youth NGO representative, Riga: I would like to see Russia as the Russian cultural centre which provides support to our activities ... However, unfortunately, Russia today has become aggressive in certain aspects. And the cultural issues are being equalised with the political ideology issues ... Today, the structures and foundations operated by Russia, support culture or social activities as a means of promoting Russia's political interests.

At the moment, however, in spite of the massive injection of the financial resources by Russia in order to carry out the compatriot policy in Latvia, it is impossible to observe a significant increase in activities carried out by the non-governmental sector. The low efficiency in using the funding can be attributed to the failure on the part of the Russian-speaking NGOs to agree on a common strategy for action, as well as the fact that the projects that have been implemented by these NGOs have been created with the goal of attracting funding in the first place, rather than achieving the medium and long-term organisational strategic goals.²⁰ This does not mean, however, that the activities that are focused on *exclusion* and are being carried out by the public organisations in Latvia, should not be considered as destabilising where the internal political situation is concerned. For this reason, it is important to realise that Russia could use the Russian-speaking NGOs as a tool for carrying out more significant attempts to create instability, for example, such as initiating mass protests.

Based on the analysis of the conducted interviews, one can conclude that a united view does not exist regarding the potential of the Russian community in Latvia to instigate and carry out mass protests, demonstrations or other unconventional forms of participation. The most radical and populist wing refers to the start of

²⁰ Today an actual example is Alexander Gaponenko's interest in protection of the Russian children's rights, a problem currently popular in Russia while the projects that deal with this problem get generous financial support.

the open phase of an ethnic conflict, while the more moderately-minded conclude that the Russian speakers in Latvia are characterised by a low interest in getting engaged in any type of active forms of political participation. This is also confirmed by the statistical data that is covered in more detail in the next section. However, when analysing the situation in this context, one has to take into account another important factor related to the support rendered by the Russian-speaking population to the policies implemented by the President of the Russian Federation, as well as their deep sympathies towards him as a powerful national leader. For example, in April 2015, a survey carried out by the company SKDS showed that 60.2% of the Russian-speaking population in Latvia positively assessed the activities of Vladimir Putin. Also, the survey of the focus groups involved in this study confirm these results.

Jana, (19), a student, region: When Latvian politicians promise something, I laugh. When Putin says something, then I believe it. He does a lot. Everything is evolving there.

But, in situations when more detailed questions are being asked,²¹ almost 100% of respondents have difficulty answering. This indicates irrational sympathies towards strong leaders that are based on emotions and have arisen as a result of a massive propaganda flow generated by the mass media. In addition, it should be noted that, despite the weak sense of belonging to Russia today, in the centre of self-identification of the Russian-speaking community in Latvia, lies the reliance on the “historical experience of a great nation associated with a strong, heavy-handed statehood.”²²

It should be noted that the responses, provided by the NGO representatives during the interviews, confirm an unequivocal support to the policies of the Russian political elite and the selected

²¹ For example, exactly which of the reforms carried out by Vladimir Putin do you consider as successful?

²² Rozenvalds, J. (2013). Ilgspējīga nācija un sabiedrības integrācija. No: Bela, B. (red.). *Latvija. Pārskats par tautas attistību 2012/2013. Ilgspējīga nācija.* (Riga: LU Sociālo un politisko pētījumu institūts), 59. lpp.

tools for implementation of these policies, which is most likely due to the increased awareness and personal experience of the respondents when dealing with the authorities of this country. At the same time, also here the leadership style of Vladimir Putin is being recognised as relevant and as the most appropriate form of governance that corresponds to the specific character features of the Russian society. This vision demonstrated by the Russian speakers, that the President of Russia is a strong head of the state and a uniting element of the Russian world, as well as a guarantor of security, is a significant indicator when assessing the risks that could arise in case Vladimir Putin decided to invite the Russian-speaking population in Latvia to consolidate and perform specific activities. In such a case, publicly, the coordination functions would be delegated to hitherto little-known public political leaders in Latvia, thus greatly increasing the potential of their potential impact.

Civil society organisations as the civil society participatory tool

The level of activity of the civil society in Latvia is one of the lowest in Europe. According to the statistics, in 2013, 71.7% of the population maintained that they do not belong to any civil society organisations, and only 7.4% acknowledged that they have taken active part in the work of a NGO, trade union or professional organisation. Only 0.3% of the individuals who were questioned admitted that they were members of, or had participated in, the work of an organisation specifically dealing with minority issues.²³

Currently, there are 423 public organisations registered in Latvia and whose activities are directed towards the national minorities. 306 of those can be defined as societies uniting national minorities

²³ Bela, B. (red.) *Latvija. Pārskats par tautas attīstību 2012/2013. Ilgspējīga nācija.* (Riga: LU Sociālo un politisko pētījumu institūts), 106. lpp.

(70 of those specifically represent members of the Russian community), but 117 can be characterised as related societies.²⁴ The head of the National Minority Coordination Council, Victor Gushin, however, estimates that in reality one can talk about approximately 120 existing organisations, which have shown at least minimum activity in order to be considered as active in the area. According to other researchers, the number of organisations that can be considered as functional is half this amount. And, in most of the remaining cases, one can talk about actual non-existence or fictional status when the organisations have been founded with the sole objective of attracting financing for specific projects, or have come into existence as a result of the breakdown of some other larger organisational structures and, therefore, lack their own capacity for survival.

In Latvia, 698 757 people use mostly the Russian language every day.²⁵ 570 753 of these are ethnic Russians.²⁶ As such, one can argue that for every 8100 Russians in Latvia there is one NGO that has been created with a specific goal to respond to the needs and problems of the Russian ethnic minority. This situation can be better understood when one takes a look at the quantitative results showing the levels of interest and confidence one has in the NGO sector and its activities. According to the data in 2013, approximately one-third of the population of Latvia showed trust in the NGOs.²⁷ After

²⁴ Baltic Institute of Social Sciences (2015). *Mazākumtautību līdzdalība demokrātiskajos procesos Latvijā*. Available at: http://www.km.gov.lv/lv/nozares_info/integracija/mazakumtautibas.html (accessed 18 January 2016).

²⁵ Centrālā Statistikas pārvalde, *Tautas skaitīšanas dati 2011*. Available at: http://data.csb.gov.lv/pxweb/lv/tautassk_11/tautassk_11_tsk2011/TSG11-07.px/table/table/ViewLayout1/?rxid=a0cfe7a0-f371-4c40-9e80-b80d716398dc (accessed 18 January 2016).

²⁶ Pilsonības un migrācijas lietu pārvalde, iedzīvotāju reģistra statistika uz 01.07.2015. Iedzīvotāju skaits pēc nacionālā sastāva pašvaldībās. Available at: http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/assets/documents/Iedzivotaju%20re%C4%A3istrs/2015/ISPN_Pasvaldibas_pec_TTB.pdf (accessed 18 January 2016).

²⁷ Šimanska, I., Neilande, J., Bite, K., Pipīķe, R. (2013). *Pārskats par NVO sektoru Latvijā*, Latvijas pilsoniskā alianse. Available at: http://www.nvo.lv/site/attachments/03/11/2014/Petijums_Parskats_par_NVO_sektoru_LV_2013.pdf (accessed 18 January 2016).

evaluating the results, it is clear that a positive evaluation of the NGO sector among the national minority representatives in Latvia was only 0.17% according to a 5 point scale.²⁸ Also, the interviews that were conducted with the focus groups, as well as the obtained results, indicate the low level of trust the NGOs are experiencing among the Russian-speaking population in Latvia. The lack of trust is accompanied by low information levels regarding this particular matter, as well as no evident general interest in the social and political processes in the country, or in NGOs, including those which in fact claim that they deal with protection, representation, and support of the interests and rights of this specific ethnic and national minority. Those questioned have demonstrated low levels of knowledge about the existing NGOs and have been unable to recognise the leading and most active members of these civil society organisations.

Julia (38) works in Riga: Nobody knows these organisations or their leaders. Let's be honest — I have my own life. I do not know them.

Natalya (47), businesswoman in Riga: I don't know anything about it. My life is about something completely else. I don't care about these miracle leaders. Obviously, there are people who need some fame, self-realisation. They have not achieved it during their youth. And here suddenly — such an opportunity to be seized! There will be people who find fulfilment through having a dog, others — do it in this way. Yes, they pull on the shirt and shout — we are Russian! Like Zhirinovsky — this is the same story!

A lack of knowledge about the organisations supporting the Russian interests (abroad) among the Russian-speaking population has also been acknowledged in the research ordered by the Russian government. For instance, in 2014, it was acknowledged that such organisations like the *Latvian Human Rights Committee*, *Civil Organisations Coordination Council* or the *Foundation The Russian World* (Russkiy Mir Foundation) are little known or completely

²⁸ Latvijas fakti. (2013). *Sabiedrības viedoklis par NVO Sektoru Latvijā. Sabiedriskās domas aptauja*. Available at: http://nvo.lv/site/attachments/03/11/2014/Iedzivota_ja_aptauja.pdf (accessed 18 January 2016).

unknown to the Russian speakers (negative responses were received in 50–93% of cases).²⁹

The results obtained from the focus groups show that the low level of effectiveness of these NGOs can be attributed exactly to this lack of knowledge about their existence and domain of activity. This also causes a lack of belief among the Russian-speaking population about the ability of these organisations to make a contribution towards finding the solutions to the problems they are facing.

Anastasia (25), employed, region: If we knew them, we could discuss how effective they have been ... if we only knew these names ... We know only Ushakov (Riga Mayor). But he is very visible and noticeable on Facebook ...

Different focus groups also mirrored a view that the NGO representatives might have a real influence on the decision-making only if huge population masses could be consolidated to make a protest or form a movement. Simultaneously, those respondents did not express great personal readiness to take part in such unconventional forms of involvement that might be initiated by the non-governmental sector organisations.

However, the ageing and diminishing numbers of active members in the non-governmental sector are the problems the leaders of the Russian-speaking organisations are concerned about. In several interviews, the respondents emphasised the fact that the majority of those currently involved are middle-aged or older, as well as citing the low numbers of persons interested in taking part in the NGOs' daily activities.

NGO representative, Riga: Our organisations, with the exception of those veteran organisations, which unite the war pensioners, are very small. They unite in the best case five or ten people ... if there are twenty people, it is already a good result.

²⁹ Филей, А.В. (2014). Правовое положение российских соотечественников в постсоветских странах. Латвия. Сравнительный анализ правового положения соотечественников, проживающих в постсоветских странах. (Москва: Институт диаспоры и интеграции), с. 258.

If we treat the auditorium of the Russian youth separately, similarly as in the case of the adults, one has to point to the low levels of interest about politics and involvement in different forms of political participation. The difference between the adults and the youth can be observed when we analyse their motivation to join the work of the non-governmental organisations. According to the results obtained through public questioning, the youths see their participation in the NGOs as a means for attempting to reach their personal goals and not as an instrument for changing the prevailing situation in any of the areas of social concern. For example, one-third of the questioned Russian-speaking young people maintained that the main reasons why they would attempt to join the public organisations was the connections this kind of participation would provide, together with the eventual facilitation in the formation of a future career, while providing more possibilities, acquisition of new friends and getting acquainted with the people with the same interests.³⁰

When we analyse the reasons why the young people refused to join the NGOs, one can see that while the Latvian-speaking youths would cite a lack of time and information as the main reasons for non-involvement, the Russian youths mostly spoke about the lack of interest, the uselessness of this kind of activity and questioned the value and the whole point of getting involved in the NGOs' work.³¹ Similar results were obtained from the responses received from the questioned focus groups.

Roman (19), a student, Riga: I believe no one is really interested in us. All those activists do it for themselves and not in order to support the youth interests in general. I don't see a point to all that.

The adult members of the Russian-speaking segment of the NGOs explain their opinions about the lack of their popularity among the youth — primarily, as being due to the consequences of several trends in society: the passive attitudes of today's youth in general,

³⁰ Koroļeva, I., Rungule, R., Sniķere, S., Aleksandrovs, A. (2009). Jauniešu identitāte un lidzdalība. *Latvijas jaunatnes portrets. Integrācija sabiedrībā un marginalizācijas riski.* (Riga: LU Akadēmiskais Apgāds), 183.-184. lpp.

³¹ Ibid., 185. lpp.

the consequences of the so called “assimilation process”, as well as the fear of involvement.³² At the basis of this fear are concerns about the future and their future career possibilities.

NGO representative, Riga: Unfortunately, one has to consider obstacles in our work with young people whom we encounter daily. If someone maintains that they actively take part in an NGO supporting Russian interests, they will be automatically considered an enemy of the state and included in all the black lists, for instance, in the annual review of the State Security police. As a result, many young people tell us that they would be willing to be involved in some issues, but want it all to remain a secret — away from the public eye.

Another significant problem named by the representatives of Russian-speaking public organisations, was the inability to access pupils at schools, which they would need in order to promote the youngsters’ interest in participating in non-governmental sector activities, to maintain and preserve the Russian identity.

NGO representative, region: The schools are closed to us. The directors and teachers of the schools do not cooperate with us as they are afraid. We would like to bring our war veteran to a school on May 9, but it is not allowed. We do not have any opportunities to educate about our great war history.

When describing this situation, it is, however, important to take into consideration the fact that the level of involvement of the Russian-speaking young people in the non-governmental sector is not as low as is the case with the specific national public organisations. According to the statistics, the number of those who participate in the NGO activities through simple involvement, without becoming members or official volunteers, is not that small.

In summary, one has to conclude that the Russian-speaking people in Latvia are not very interested in taking active part in solving the actual matters that are important to them. They seldom choose to incorporate public participation methods in their individual

³² One of the most used interpretations of the integration process by Russian-speaking NGO leaders.

insurance strategies. They have a rather poor knowledge about the possibilities of the use of such methods of participation, and do not know much about what is going on in the Russian-speaking non-governmental sector in Latvia. As a result, it is no surprise that the public organisations are not being considered by this segment of society as a viable instrument for carrying out important social change.

Conclusions

The network of the Russian-speaking public organisations in Latvia has several distinct characteristics. The first is the sector's dependence on the Russian Federation's financial support, which is being centrally provided in accordance with the principle of the vertical of power, while requesting subordination and compliance with the rules dictated by the source of the funding. And that means inclusion of the political issues in the agenda of the NGOs in accordance with the positions taken by Russia, which in turn contradict the chosen direction of development selected by the Latvian state. Simultaneously, it is not possible to see the signs of Russia making a substantial effort to strengthen the general capacity of the Russian-speaking NGOs in Latvia. However, one should not forget that under certain circumstances if there would be a need, Russian propaganda and financial support could be increased, while the leaders of the public organisations supported by Russia could consolidate around them the Russian-speaking population in Latvia.³³

Secondly, the Russian-speaking community organisations in Latvia can be characterised by politicisation and similar ideological and political positions developed in the process of organised consolidation. In addition, this politicisation is further deepened by the close ties these organisations have forged with certain

³³ To some extent this has been confirmed by the protest activities carried out against the educational reform, which have been organised by the Russian-speaking NGO sector and widely supported by Russia.

Russian-dominated political parties. The central issues that top the agenda are: the preservation of the historical memory, preservation of the Russian schools, the spread of the Russian language, as well as the defence of the traditional values, as opposed to the world view offered by the West, which is based on multiculturalism and tolerance. These activities carried out by the NGO leaders are essential preconditions for preserving the identity of Latvia's Russian-speaking population. These basic discourses are actually directed towards achieving the self-isolation of the Russian-speaking population in Latvia and reluctance to fully integrate into the Latvian society through adoption of their home country's values and its vision for development. This actually means that the Russian-speaking community organisations do not contribute to the development of civil society consciousness of the Russian minority in Latvia, but rather that their activities are directed towards achieving the opposite — namely, the self-exclusion and dissociation of this part of society from their home country. Meanwhile, the positions and activities of the mentioned Russian-speaking public organisations are the reasons why the outsider status has become an integral part of their own identity.

Thirdly, the Russian-speaking non-governmental sector in Latvia is poorly developed and becoming a part of it as a form of civic participation is not popular among the members of the Russian-speaking community. The low interest and the poor knowledge of the NGOs among the Russian-speaking population in Latvia indicate that the selected strategies for reaching the hearts and minds of this ethnic minority, have proved to be unsuccessful. But the current mood within the community leads to the conclusion that, without strong external support, the Russian-speaking non-governmental sector in Latvia does not have the potential to consolidate a large number of supporters, and therefore, it cannot qualify as a threat to public safety in Latvia.

In addition, the ideas promoted by the non-governmental sector in Latvia do not always coincide with the views held by the Russian-speaking population in this country. These public organisations are

prone to depict the existing problems as considerably deeper than they actually are: this is related to the attempts to attract funding from Russia, maintain their public profile and secure other similar organisational survival-dictated activities. As a result, the ethnic stereotype promoted by the Russian-speaking NGOs in Latvia, which is greatly influenced by the imposed ideology and politicised ethnic conscience, is often in obvious contradiction to that ethnic stereotype which characterises the majority of the relatively apolitical Russian-speaking population in Latvia.



Societal Security Through the Lens of Social Networks

ARTŪRS KVESKO¹

Abstract

Social networks in many ways simulate society, processes within it and can be used to trace precursors and trends influencing and affecting societal security. Exploration of habits, motivations, and practices of certain social groups in social networks can lead to a better understanding of relations between them. This article aims to examine particular behavioural aspects, attitudes, and preferences of Russian speakers on social networks, in order to evaluate their potential impact on societal security in Latvia.

Keywords: social network, society, identity, security, internet, media

Introduction

Informatisation and modern technologies have significantly transformed the way individuals and societies function and behave. Availability of the Internet has substantial impact on our daily activities, which have gone online — we use it to communicate, socialise, look for information, express ourselves, support or protest against certain issues. Social networks in this context have become a notable environment for virtual activities and, to some degree, mirror particular groups and societies in the digital dimension.

Social networks are mostly associated with the Internet, however, the concept itself is multidisciplinary and used in different fields of science (anthropology, sociology, political and computer science etc.). British and Australian scientist, John Arundel Barnes, is credited for introducing the term ‘social network’,

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which helps to understand the behaviour of people in large and complex societies.² According to J. A. Barnes, the social network is composed of points (representing people or groups), “some of which are joined by lines” ... “which indicate which people interact with each other”.³ During field research, Barnes noticed “a complex sphere of informal interpersonal relations, which were not directly connected to official political and economic structures of territorial districts”.⁴ For Barnes, it was more important to look at the network of grassroot relationships, which were able to reveal “conflicts, aspirations for power and development of hierarchy”,⁵ and not formal institutions of society. Following this idea, social networks can be used as an analytical tool, which allows us to understand *what* happens in the “network” (transactions between actors) and *why* it happens (our expectations, which influence the occurrence of transactions).⁶ The distinct characteristic of a “network” is that it is made up of dyads or pairs and a linking relationship between them.⁷ In other words — in a network there are at least two actors, linked by simple, directed, symmetric or intermediary relationships. If it takes at least two for a social network to be built, then not all social media (such as Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn etc.) are social networks. For that reason, this article will explore only those social structures (social networks), where there are at least dyadic (a group of two, smallest possible social group) clear ties and relationships. According to a recent

² Mitchell, J. C. (1974). Social Networks. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 3, p. 279.

³ Barnes, J. A. (1990). *Class and Committees in a Norwegian Parish Island (1954a)*. Models and Interpretations: Selected Essays. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 72.

⁴ Sertakova, E. A. (2011). Poniatiye “set” Dzhona Barnsa kak analiticheskii podkhod v poznanii sistemy sotsial’nykh otnoshenii. *Molodezh’ i nauka: Sbornik materialov VI Vserossiiskoi nauchno-tehnicheskoi konferentsii studentov, aspirantov i molo-dykh uchenykh*. (Krasnoiarsk). Available at: <http://conf.sfu-kras.ru/sites/mn2010/pdf/7/887.pdf> (accessed 11 December 2015).

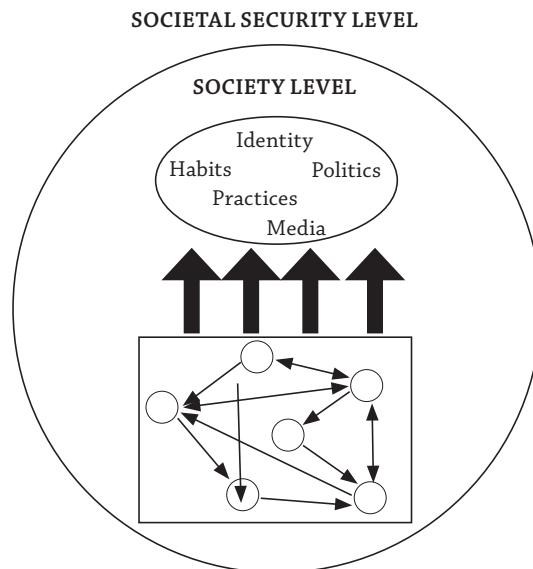
⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Fuhse, J. A. (2009). The Meaning Structure of Social Networks. *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 27, No. 1, p. 52.

⁷ Kadushin, C. (2012). *Understanding Social Networks: Theories, Concepts, And Findings*. (New York: Oxford University Press), p. 15.

survey, the most popular online social networks in Latvia are *Facebook*, *Draugiem.lv*, *Odnoklassniki* and *Vkontakte*.⁸

Figure 1
Social networks as a lens for analysis of different parts of society and impact on societal security



Exploring how particular social groups use social networks can unfold important information (such as, attitudes, beliefs, values, motivations) about inner processes within these groups. Offline relations between different groups can find expression on social networks, which become an invaluable source for measuring different aspects and trends of societal security and social cohesion.

Latvia is an interesting research case when speaking about societal security, because alongside Latvians there is a dominant and large Russian-speaking ethnic minority, consisting not only of

⁸ These social networks rank among TOP 20 most visited internet websites in Latvia in spring 2015. TNS research data. Available at: <http://www.tns.lv/?lang=lv&fullarticle=true&category=showuid&id=4797> (accessed 11 December 2015).

Russians⁹, but also representatives of other nations¹⁰. Considering the total number of Latvians¹¹, the proportion of Russian speakers raises essential questions regarding cohesion and inter-ethnic relations in Latvian society. If there are splits in Latvian society, between Latvians and the Russian-speaking minority, at least some of the repercussions should be found on social networks, as digital representatives of society as a whole. Social networks can provide hints regarding the insecurities and vulnerabilities of the Russian-speaking minority, their attitudes and positioning of themselves in Latvian society.

The objective of this article is to understand and analyse the activities and preferences of Russian speakers when using social networks. The article relies on already available quantitative data (statistics and surveys), and qualitative data (focus groups), which are combined to build a general portrait of social network users of Latvia, and compare them with Russian-speaking users. Therefore, this article will focus on examining: a) habits and practices of Russian speakers in using social networks; b) social networks as an information gathering platform for Russian speakers; c) the influence and impact of social networks on the identity of Russian speakers; d) the influence of social networks on political preferences and activity. This knowledge can be used to derive, at least partially, information to comprehend societal security in Latvia.

Social networks: analysis of the Russian-speaking minority

Understanding the daily activities of Russian speakers on social networks can help uncover their behaviour and thinking patterns,

⁹ According to the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, on 1 July 2015 there were 570 753 people of Russian nationality living in Latvia. *Latvijas iedzīvotāju sadalījums pēc nacionālā sastāva un valstiskās piederošbas*. PMLP. Available at: http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/assets/documents/ledzivotaju%20re%C4%A3istrs/ISVN_Latvija_pec_TTB_VPD.pdf (accessed 11 December 2015).

¹⁰ On 1 July 2015, 71 402 Belarusians and 51 468 Ukrainians were living in Latvia. Ibid.

¹¹ 1 287 917. Ibid.

social and political preferences. This chapter tries to accomplish the task of looking at common Internet and social network consumption customs in Latvia and applying this picture to Russian speakers, which should reveal the most visible similarities and differences. A deeper understanding of the behaviour of Russian speakers and their choices of social networks was achieved via focus group interviews, which took place in Daugavpils (with Russian-speaking students of Daugavpils University, age 21–25) and Riga (age 15–74, representing Russian speakers of all genders, education levels and occupations).

SOCIAL NETWORKS: HABITS AND PRACTICES

Consumption of social networks is inevitably tied to availability and access to the Internet. In 2014, the Internet was available to 73% of Latvian households and was used to read the news (86%), check e-mails (84%) and perform internet banking (75%).¹² 97% of the younger generation (age 16–24), use the Internet on a regular basis, and among the older generation (age 55–74), it is used by 42%.¹³ Research by TNS Latvia gives a more precise portrait of Latvian internet users — the predominant consumers of the Internet are age groups 15–19 (96%), 20–29 (95%), 30–39 (86%), and 40–49 (71%).¹⁴ This data also suggest that nationality is not significant — Latvians and representatives of other social groups (Russian speakers being an unrivaled majority) use the Internet evenly (70% and 66%). By occupation, the predominant Internet users in Latvia are employed people (80%) and students (90%).¹⁵ According to statistics, the aver-

¹² See, Computer and Internet usage habits of Latvian population will be found out. *Central Statistical Bureau*, 3 March 2015. Available at: <http://www.csb.gov.lv/en/notikumi/computer-and-internet-usage-habits-latvian-population-will-be-found-out-41843.html> (accessed 11 December 2015).

¹³ Ibid.

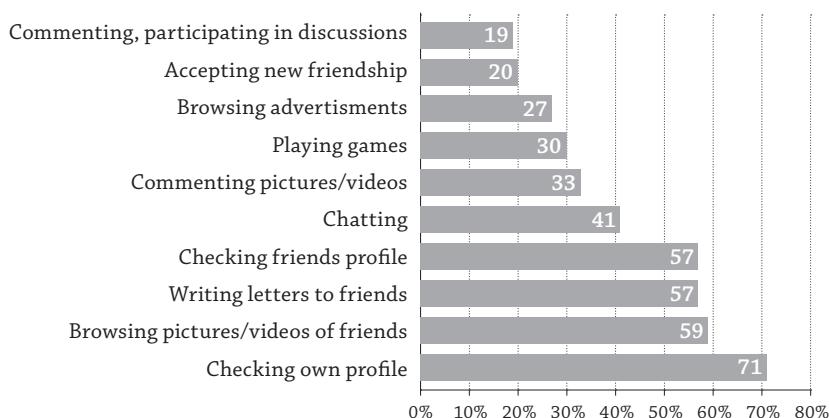
¹⁴ Research on consumption of internet by Latvian users. See, Regulāri internetu lietojau 68% Latvijas iedzīvotāju. *TNS Latvia*. Available at: <http://www.tns.lv/?lang=lv&fullarticle=true&category=showuid&id=4797> (accessed 12 December 2015).

¹⁵ Ibid.

age Latvian Internet user is young, lives both in Riga and other cities, represents different nationalities, and mostly works or studies.

The profile of the typical social network user is similar — young (age 15–39), working or studying, living in Riga, Vidzeme and Kurzeme regions, with Latvians prevailing over other nationalities.¹⁶ The absence of Latgale region and prevalence of Latvians may be explained by less availability and distribution of Internet in Latgale, a region significantly composed of Russian speakers. As consumption of the Internet will expand in rural areas of Latvia, a growth in the use of social networks in Latgale can be predicted. According to surveys, social networks in Latvia are mainly used to interact and communicate (71% — check their own profile, 59% — look at friends' pictures/videos, 41% — chat with friends).¹⁷

*Figure 2
Top 10 activities in social networks in Latvia, spring 2013 (%)*



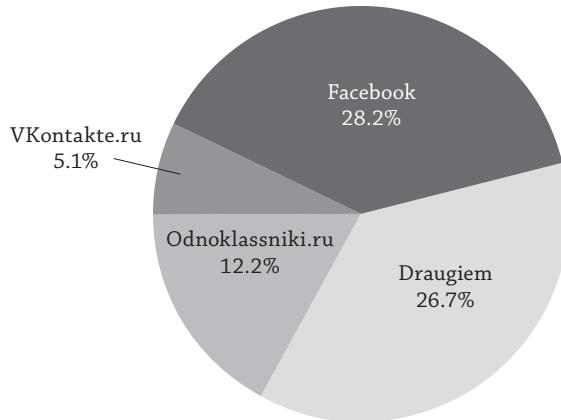
Source: Sociālo tiklu lietošanas paradumi. *TNS Latvia*. Available at: http://www.tns.lv/newsletters/2014/40/?category=tns40&id=mp_sociało_tiklu_lietosana (accessed 12 December 2015).

¹⁶ See, study Sociālo tiklu lietošanas paradumi. *TNS Latvia*. Available at: http://www.tns.lv/newsletters/2014/40/?category=tns40&id=mp_sociało_tiklu_lietosana (accessed 12 December 2015).

¹⁷ Sociālo tiklu lietošanas paradumi. *TNS Latvia*.

The most popular social networks in Latvia are *Facebook* (28.2%), *Draugiem.lv* (26.7%), *Odnoklassniki.ru* (12.2%) and *VKontakte.ru* (5.1%).¹⁸ According to a recent survey, while *Draugiem.lv* is more explicitly used by Latvians and *Odnoklassniki.ru* and *VKontakte.ru* by other nationalities, *Facebook* is used similarly by both social groups.¹⁹ Additionally, this survey indicates towards a gender split — women use social networks more than men.²⁰

Figure 3
Most daily visited social networks, all Latvian internet users, spring 2015 (%)



Source: Data derived from: Regulāri internetu lieto jau 68% Latvijas iedzīvotāju. *TNS Latvia*. Available at: <http://www.tns.lv/?lang=lv&fullarticle=true&category=showuid&id=4797> (accessed 12 December 2015).

The global dominance of *Facebook* is of vital importance to understand the Russian-speaking minority's usage of social networks. When representatives of ethnic minorities (the majority are Russian speakers) in Latvia were asked, which social networks they use to

¹⁸ Regulāri internetu lieto jau 68% Latvijas iedzīvotāju. *TNS Latvia*.

¹⁹ Sociālos tiklus vairāk lieto sievietes; “Twitter” un “Youtube” — virieši. *LETA*. Available at: <http://www.leta.lv/archive/search/?patern=Soci%C4%81los%20t%C4%ABklus%20vair%C4%81k%20lieto%20sievietes&item=27C0C031-1B02-44CF-B402-4341-A55D5A67&date=0,1451512800&mode=stem> (accessed 12 December 2015).

²⁰ Ibid.

obtain information about processes in Latvia, they named *Facebook* (21%), *Draugiem.lv* (14.5%), and only then *Odnoklassniki.ru* (10.9%)²¹. Number one social network in Russia — *VKontakte.com*²² — is the least used in Latvia (5.1% among all Internet users). This shows that Russian speakers are more likely to follow global trends, where *Facebook* is becoming an international social network platform attracting all kinds of sociodemographic group representatives.

Most of the previous findings are supported by conducted focus group interviews.²³ The majority of interviewed Russian speakers use social networks to communicate with friends, relatives, colleagues.

It's easy to communicate with people (*female, Daugavpils*).

Mainly contacting people outside Latvia (*male, Daugavpils*).

The secondary motivation was to read the news and learn about events, however this was mentioned in an entertainment context. Interviewed respondents indicated that social networks are used for relaxing in their free time. Women in general named more activities on social networks than men, who generally had a regular and conservative routine.

I check some articles, read messages from friends (*male, Riga*).

I can do almost everything on *Facebook* — check the news, events, weather forecast etc. (*female, Daugavpils*).

An age difference is present among Russian-speaking users of social networks — the most active of those interviewed are representatives of the younger generation (age 15–25), both in Riga and Daugavpils. With an age increase, the use and meaning of social networks becomes limited. Women in particular, age 31–39,

²¹ Piederibas sajūta Latvijai. Mazākumtautibu Latvijas iedzīvotāju aptauja. SKDS. Available at: http://www.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/editor/atskaite_piederiba_08_2014.pdf (accessed 14 December 2015).

²² Sotsial'nye seti v Rossii, vesna 2015. Tsifry, trendy, prochnozi, 6 June 2015. Brand Analytics. Available at: <http://br-analytics.ru/blog/socialnye-seti-v-rossii-vesna-2015-cifry-trendy-prochnozi/> (accessed 14 December 2015).

²³ Here and further mentioning of focus group interviews will refer to interviews conducted in Daugavpils among Russian-speaking students (age 21–25) and Riga among Russian-speakers (age 15–74).

highlighted family issues (birth of a child, would like more privacy), as a reason why they restricted or ended up using social networks. Another distinctive element emerging from focus group interviews is the particular choice of a social network. In the majority of cases, Russian speakers tend to use one social network and for the most part this is *Facebook*. If several social networks are used, one of them is *Facebook*.

Formerly I used *Draugiem.lv* and *Instagram*, but now — *Facebook* only (female, Daugavpils).

For the most part — *Facebook*, however I'm also in *VKontakte.ru* (male, Daugavpils).

Just *Facebook* — I don't bother myself with many social networks (female, Riga).

Exploration of general habits and practices of Russian speakers on social networks show that they match those of other social groups in Latvia. While this data does not speak about specific insecurities and detachments, it is unable to answer whether and to what degree Latvians and Russian speakers interact on social networks. To a large extent, it depends on existing social circles, because a similar one (relatives, friends, colleagues) is constructed in the digital space. Language could be a factor influencing the choice of social circles, as interviews indirectly indicated that persons with a less pronounced knowledge of the Latvian language were using more social networks based in Russia, and a Russian language interface (especially in Riga, less in Daugavpils).

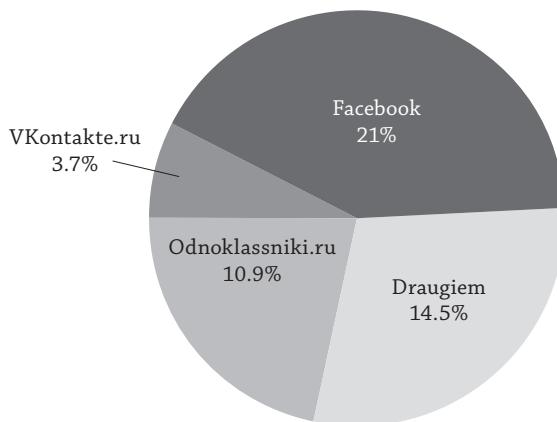
SOCIAL NETWORKS AND TRADITIONAL MEDIA

Available research suggests that traditional media no longer has sole power in shaping agendas and understanding of events and processes.²⁴ Social networks have paved the way for multi-way communication which allows anyone to create, share, and disseminate

²⁴ See, Meraz, S. (2011). The fight for “How to think”: Traditional Media, social networks, and issue of interpretation. *Journalism*, Vol. 12 (1), pp. 107–127.

news and information. This section tries to understand the ability of social networks to compete with traditional media in Latvia and what the choices are of Russian speakers.

Figure 4
Social networks mainly used by ethnic minorities to acquire information about social, political and economic processes in Latvia (%)



Source: Piederības sajūta Latvijai. Mazākumtautību Latvijas iedzīvotāju aptauja. SKDS. Available at: http://www.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/editor/atskaite_piederiba_08_2014.pdf (accessed 14 December 2015).

According to social surveys, the most popular news source in Latvia for representatives of ethnic minorities (Russian speakers are dominating among these groups) is television (PBK²⁵ — 48%, TV5 — 43%, LNT — 28% and TV3 — 22%).²⁶ When it comes to social networks, then 62% of ethnic minorities don't use it as an information source, and those who do — choose *Facebook* as number one (21%), then *Draugiem.lv* (15%) and *Odnoklassniki.ru* in the last place (11%). Russian social network leader *Vkontakte.ru* ranks one of the last among ethnic minorities (with 3.7%), when it comes to obtaining news about Latvia.²⁷

²⁵ Pervyi Baltiiskii Kanal.

²⁶ Piederības sajūta Latvijai. Mazākumtautību Latvijas iedzīvotāju aptauja. SKDS.

²⁷ Ibid.

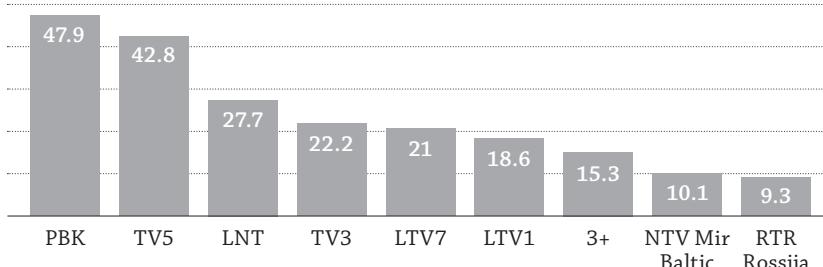
Comparing European preferences when choosing the main news source, many similarities appear. According to *Eurobarometer* data, Europeans prefer television over other media — 86% watch it every day or almost every day, and consumption of television increases with age and is more widespread among pensioners, housewives, unemployed people, and manual workers.²⁸ Although there is a notable increase in the consumption of the Internet (72%) and social networks (47%), only 36% of Internet consumers trust it and 21% trust social networks (compared with 54% who distrust it).²⁹ In Latvia particularly, 27% of social network users tend to trust them versus 39% who tend not to.³⁰ This very much corresponds with the data from the focus group interviews, where although people agreed they read the news on social networks, credibility and trust in them was low.

I trust TV and news agencies more, information on social networks doesn't convince me (*male, Daugavpils*).

News in social networks can be published by anyone, I can't verify that (*female, Riga*).

Figure 5

TV channels mainly used by ethnic minorities to acquire information about social, political, and economic processes in Latvia (%)



Source: Piederības sajūta Latvijai. Mazākumtautību Latvijas iedzīvotāju aptauja. SKDS. Available at: http://www.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/editor/atskaite_piederiba_08_2014.pdf (accessed 14 December 2015).

²⁸ See, report Media use in the European Union. Report Autumn 2014. *Eurobarometer*. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb82/eb82_media_en.pdf (accessed 14 December 2015).

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

When interested about Latvia, Russian speakers prefer local media, of which television takes precedence. However, the most watched TV channel in Latvia by Russian speakers is PBK, which airs Russian media content, its followers (*TV5, LNT, TV3, LTV7, LTV1*) are local TV channels with their own content. When it comes to Internet portals, local websites are also more prevalent among Russian speakers than Russian sources (*DELFI.lv* in Russian — 24.8%, *DELFI.lv* in Latvian — 24.2%, *TVNET.lv* in Latvian — 10.8% and Russian version — 9.7%).³¹

Information obtained during the focus group interviews in many ways supports the sociological data. Although the majority of persons interviewed do read the news on social networks, little attention is paid to it.

I read almost everything on *Facebook*, but don't analyse it, just read it once and that is all (*female, Daugavpils*).

Social networks partially limit me from watching the news at all (*male, Daugavpils*).

I watch TV and read news on the Internet, social networks can only lead me to specific topics (*male, Daugavpils*).

Among those who read the news online, internet portals were mostly mentioned.

I read news only on Internet portals, if I see news on *Facebook*, I don't even open it (*female, Daugavpils*).

I use Internet portals for reading the news, it's nicely categorised there for ease of reading (*male, Riga*).

Interesting answers were received when people were asked whether or not they trust information placed on social networks. None of them indicated that they have trust in information on social networks. The most explicit example: "... the Internet teaches, you can't believe in anything 100%, there are many fakes" (*male, Daugavpils*).

³¹ See, report Media use in the European Union. Report Autumn 2014. *Eurobarometer*. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb82/eb82_media_en.pdf (accessed 14 December 2015).

To summarise, it can be concluded that Russian speakers, similarly to Latvians, rely more on traditional information sources, and social networks are not able to substitute them yet. When trying to acquire information about Latvia, local media is mostly chosen (TV, radio, Internet portals), which could indicate that Russian speakers have a presence in the Latvian information environment and are not entirely separate from it. This can be considered as an inclusive element when looking at societal security in Latvia. The question, however, is: how well they are integrated into the Latvian information space and what their attitude is towards it. An abundance of information on social networks, judging from focus group interviews, is mostly perceived negatively. The surveys did not provide any data whether this negative perception of news on social networks is tied to a growing awareness of information manipulation and development of critical thinking, but if so, it has a rather positive impact on societal security. This, however, largely applies to the younger representatives of Russian speakers, who are able to simultaneously use various information channels (TV, Internet).

SOCIAL NETWORKS AND IDENTITY

Identity is what differentiates social groups, therefore specific choices and behaviour on social networks as relative mirrors of actual society could indicate towards at least some aspects of the Russian-speaking population's identity. Data about ethnic minorities in Latvia suggests that the identity of a critical majority of them (85%) is influenced by family. 7% mention family as the second most significant factor constructing identity.³² Being an inhabitant of Latvia and the place of residence (city or rural territory) were named as the next most important identity forming factors for ethnic minorities, nationality ranking only as the fourth most important factor.³³

³² See, report Media use in the European Union. Report Autumn 2014. *Eurobarometer*. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb82/eb82_media_en.pdf (accessed 14 December 2015).

³³ Ibid.

Several questions that can point to identity issues were asked during the focus group interviews. It was assumed, if there is an explicit affiliation to Russia, Russian speaking social network users would care about a social network's location and its main audience. The answers indicated that a social network's country of origin is of no importance.

It's not important, the main thing is that it's easy for me to use. I quit using *VKontakte.ru* because *Facebook* is more convenient — all my friends are there (*female, Daugavpils*).

Not important, if I feel comfortable, I use only social functions on social networks (*male, Daugavpils*).

I use *Facebook*, because it's more functional (*female, Riga*).

Furthermore, it was important to understand, whether a Russian-speaking social network circle corresponds to the one maintained on a daily basis? Answers received affirmed this assumption: to a greater or lesser extent, the people they're communicating with on social networks are the same as in daily life.

People I communicate with on social networks represent my usual contacts (*female, Riga*).

When I began to study, our students created a group on a social network, as a group we feel more united (*female, Daugavpils*).

These findings are supported by existing sociological data, which suggests that 75% of ethnic minority representatives in Latvia are in touch with Latvians daily or almost every day.³⁴

Language and culture are considered to be sensitive topics for Russian speakers in Latvia. Therefore, respondents were asked, whether social networks can be helpful in maintaining Russian language, culture, values? The majority agreed they do not use social networks for this task, but answers varied, whether or not social networks can be used to preserve identity elements.

³⁴ See, research Piederibas sajūta Latvijai. Mazākumtautību Latvijas iedzīvotāju aptauja. SKDS.

Social networks are a good, convenient and effective tool to spread messages, unite to certain groups, however I don't use it for such purpose (*male, Daugavpils*).

No, I don't think social networks provide an opportunity to maintain the Russian language and culture (*female, Riga*).

This corresponds with data about top priorities for ethnic minorities in Latvia — only 13.3% of them name citizenship and national issues as a top priority, paying much more attention to social protection, social policy (38%), unemployment (34.4%), and raising standards of living (26.5%).³⁵

Understanding the identity of Russian speakers via social networks is not an easy task, especially when social networks are primarily used for communication and entertainment. Nevertheless, some general findings do emerge. Russian speakers do not seem to isolate themselves on social networks, adapting their contact circle to the one they have in daily life. Although Russian speakers (primarily younger) concede the potential of social networks for maintaining identity, it is not generally used for this. Location and origin of social networks is also of no importance for Russian speakers, choosing the most functional communication platforms with the largest social base. In this context, not to deny their existence, national and ethnic issues seem to be of less importance for Russian speakers than everyday issues (friends, family, place of residence, social, economic and physical well-being).

SOCIAL NETWORKS AND POLITICS

Revolutions and protests, involving social media as communication channels, led to discussions about the increasing role of social networks and social media in political activism. Are politics relevant to Russian-speaking users of social networks in Latvia and can social networks mobilise for social and political activities?

³⁵ See, research Piederibas sajūta Latvijai. Mazākumtautību Latvijas iedzīvotāju aptauja. SKDS.

A survey, conducted among representatives of ethnic minorities, reveals the most common form of political participation — discussing politics with friends (52.7%) and having an interest about it in general (50.6%). Only 3% have participated in rallies, pickets, demonstrations, or any kind of non-governmental organisations or unions/associations.³⁶ Ethnic minorities in general have little interest in politics. Therefore, the same patterns should be found among Russian speaking users of social networks.

Most participants of the focus group interviews had no interest in politics on social networks and do not follow politicians there.

I don't follow politics at all, just accidentally, if I see something. I have no special interest about politics (*female, Daugavpils*).

I have no specific interest in politics, only if I see some news, then I check who shared it, consider it, and then read it, but mostly I skip everything about politics (*male, Daugavpils*).

For participants of the focus group interviews, social networks created no associations with politics:

For me *Facebook* does not associate with politics, I use it as a communication instrument (*male, Daugavpils*).

Reasons for not following politicians on social networks varied from "Social networks are for communication means only" (female, Riga) to "I would follow them, if they were among my friends or if I was myself a member of a political party" (male, Daugavpils). Data acquired from the interviews reveal that previous experience or a link with politics is required in order to have an interest about it on social networks. Accordingly, political manifestation on social networks is tied to existing involvement in political or social activities. Therefore, the level of expressions of political activism on social networks can be used to measure the state of or factors influencing societal security.

The ability of social networks to mobilise Russian speakers for direct political action is also under question, based on the conducted focus group interviews.

³⁶ Piederības sajūta Latvijai. Mazākumtautību Latvijas iedzīvotāju aptauja. SKDS.

I wouldn't sign for any appeals, I decide for myself what to do (*female, Daugavpils*).

The Internet cannot motivate me. Protest is not my action, but I could sign an online petition.

However, again it was admitted that if a political appeal was direct or from a known person, it could stimulate action.

It depends on relations with the people asking. If contact is good, it's manageable (*male, Daugavpils*).

Someone must address me in person to involve me in political action (*female, Riga*).

In contrast, interviewed Russian speakers were willing to participate in humanitarian, charitable actions on social networks (donating, spreading information about missing persons, animals etc.).

I'm ready to donate money, respond to a good cause and not aggression (*female, Daugavpils*).

On social networks one can do a lot of good stuff — help people, animals (*male, Daugavpils*).

The social aspect of involvement via social networks to some degree corresponds to the most current problems and challenges mentioned by representatives of Latvian ethnic minorities — social and health security, unemployment, raising standards of living, economic development.³⁷ These answers highlight social and economic issues as dominant topics able to trigger fluctuations in societal security, since people are ready to be engaged in the resolution of challenges emerging in these fields.

The case of Russian speakers in Latvia shows that social networks have little meaning when it comes to political activism. Whether this is more related to general political passivity in Latvian society or limited instrumental perception of social networks as a communication tool, this article cannot provide the answer. However, data received shows an interest among Russian speakers towards social and humanitarian issues, which are also ranked among the top

³⁷ Piederības sajūta Latvijai. Mazākumtautību Latvijas iedzīvotāju aptauja. SKDS.

current societal problems in Latvia. In this sense, social networks have the qualities to display the most acute and current topics and tensions in society. Therefore, social networks can have their use as a thermometer to measure future patterns and socio-political trends, which can have an impact on societal security.

Conclusions

Social networks, to a certain degree, do replicate our existing everyday circle of contacts and social links. In this capacity, they can be treated as an abstract micromodel of society to analyse and inspect its different components. By looking at how Russian speakers use social networks and their behaviour, it is possible to obtain better knowledge about their senses, affiliations, preferences, and readiness to react in certain situations. This fragmented data, available on social networks, can be used to evaluate and create a composite picture of societal security.

The results of this research suggest that Russian-speaking users of the Internet and social networks in Latvia represent a general profile of Internet users — young, educated or employed and living in the capital or any of the regions. Communication and entertainment are their driving forces for using social networks, which is also typical for the average user in Latvia. Despite the presence of serious Russian social network players (*Odnoklassniki.ru*, *VKontakte.ru*) in Latvia, Russian speakers prefer *Facebook* and *Draugiem.lv*. This does not directly speak in favour of social coherence, however shows that platforms where both Latvians and Russian speakers develop and maintain online social links, do overlap. The data obtained isn't able to confirm that Latvians and Russian speakers necessarily meet on social networks, but it could be claimed that Russian speakers do not socially detach or exclude themselves by switching to alternative social networking platforms.

Scepticism and low trust in social networks as information sources, present among Latvians, is also echoed among Russian

speakers. The majority of persons interviewed considered social networks to be unreliable news providers and they do not replace traditional media, which still has its place. Learning the attitudes of Russian speakers on social networks towards the news shows that they are well aware of information threats (disinformation, so called “fakes” etc.), however, that this mostly applies to the younger generation, familiar with opportunities for manipulating information in the digital space. This speaks in favour of the need to increase media literacy among all age groups of Russian speakers, that can increase immunity and a filtering capacity against unreliable information flow.

The data obtained reveals that Russian speakers in general admit that social networks can be used for maintaining their identity, but they find no interest in social networks to preserve the Russian language and culture. In most cases, identified social networks are used to communicate and maintain ties with an already existing social basis (friends, relatives), which corresponds with sociological data that shows Russian speakers in Latvia identify themselves with family and their place of residence. It can be assumed that if Russian speakers felt their language and culture is seriously challenged, they should find expression on social networks in the form of dedicated groups and discussions. The focus group interviews demonstrated that social and humanitarian issues are more topical for Russian speakers, which corresponds with available data about the top problems for ethnic minorities in Latvia — different types of social insecurity (social policy, unemployment, standard of living). This revelation can be regarded as a signal that social and economic issues have a great proportion among different factors able to influence the dynamics of societal security.

Politics on social networks do not strike a chord for Russian speakers and support the general assumption about limited political activism in Latvia. Social networks do not prove to be an effective arena for political activities with regard to Russian speakers. During the focus group interviews it was established that interest about politics on social networks in most cases is a continuation of already

existing political participation or involvement in political processes. Also, it seems that social networks have little impact on political and social mobilisation. The focus group respondents admitted that most likely they wouldn't respond to appeals on social networks and if so, only if it was from someone they already knew. It does not, however, mean that social networks cannot play a role in political activism and mobilise Russian speakers into action, but the grounds for that would probably be prepared in advance.

Education as Part of the Societal Security Dilemma

ALEKSANDRA VONDA¹

Abstract

The structure of the Latvian education system represents the legacy left after the years of Soviet occupation with schools split separately offering education in either the Latvian or Russian language. This issue has been analysed from both the linguistic and policy perspectives. The aim of this chapter is to examine how societal security issues are reflected in the educational field. Based on in-depth interviews held in the regions of Latgale, Zemgale, Kurzeme, and Riga, the chapter will provide insights into the views of Russian-speaking high school students on the Latvian education system and on bilingual education.

Keywords: bilingual education, reform of educational system, self-identification, socialisation, societal security dilemma in education, threat perception

Introduction

The societal security concept explains how society and state can be protected from potential risks and threats.² Since education is an integral part of societal security, because it plays an important role not only in shaping the adolescent notion of what is good and what is bad, but also plays a significant role in the inclusion of pupils (students) and the sense of belonging to the state and society as a whole, which is particularly important in countries with one “dominant” minority. In high school, on the basis of educational foundations, young people build their own views of the world and society they are going to belong to.

¹ PhD student, University of Latvia.

² Noyanzina, O. (2014). Concept Human Security in Study of Social Security. *Философия, социология и культурология*, № 60, с. 523.

One of the dominating themes of the public debate related to education and societal security, is connected to the role and future of schools with Russian as the language of instruction. These debates form the core of the societal security dilemma in Latvia. On the one hand, there is still a large number of schools where education is provided in Russian, thus ensuring the conditions for preserving the identity of a large part of society. However, part of the Latvian society perceives this phenomenon as an obstacle to societal integration, because interaction between two communities is not taking place on the same principles and values. Thus, the common identity on the basis of the Latvian language is not happening.

The aim of this chapter is to analyse how societal security issues are reflected in the area of education in Latvia. The following research questions are raised: 1. How do the Russian-speaking community students position themselves in Latvian society? Do they feel excluded and threatened? 2. What are the Russian-speaking students' views on the current geopolitical situation? 3. What is the portrait of the Russian-speaking community students in the Latvian education system? To answer the research questions, in the course of the study, the author intends to use the mixed methodological tradition that provides quantitative (results of existing surveys) and qualitative methods, such as, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

The first part of the chapter will analyse the situation in the education system after the reform of the minorities' schools. The second part of the chapter will present the views of Russian-speaking community representatives on the outcomes of bilingual education.

Background information: Schools with Russian as the language of instruction throughout reforms

Until the mid-1990s, in Latvia there were Latvian and Russian schools with two different education systems, whose origins were linked to the policy introduced during the Soviet occupation.

As researcher Daina Bleiere explains it, Sovietisation of the Latvian educational system was closely linked to Russification:

... the Russification of all the national minorities' schools (with the exception of Russian) and expansion of the schools using the Russian language took place. ... Russification was associated with Latvian and Russian language teaching in schools ... in theory, in the republic Latvian and Russian languages were equal ... but, in reality, this was not equality.³

After the restoration of independence in Latvia, the reform process of minority education commenced, which aimed to "preserve the cultural identity of minorities and integration providing (...) equal opportunities for both Latvian and minority schools' graduates on the labour and education market".⁴ The reforms were introduced gradually. In 1995–1996, the government decided that three subjects should be taught in the official language — Latvian. In 2004–2005, the second stage of reforms took place, which stated that 60% of the subjects should be taught in Latvian. Despite the fact that the reform was introduced gradually and left the freedom of action for pupils, the process was perceived as a threat to identity by the Russian-speaking community. Currently, Latvian state-funded secondary education is realised in "eight minority education programmes — Russian, Polish, Jewish, Ukrainian, Estonian, Lithuanian, Gypsies (Roma) and Belarusian".⁵ The training programme allows students to choose a minority language for studying language, traditions, and history.

Reforms were aimed at creating grounds for an inclusive society, but the Russian-speaking community perceived these steps as a threat to sustainability of their identity. Therefore, different groups organised protest actions, which led to the securitisation of language

³ Bleiere, D. (2013). Vispārējās izglītības sovetizācija Latvijā: Padomju cilvēka veidošana mācību procesā (1994–1964). *Journal of the Institute of Latvian History*, No. 86, pp. 103–137.

⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia. (2011). Minority education in Latvia. Available at: http://www.mfa.gov.lv/data/file/l/mazakumtautibu_izglitiba_latvia.pdf (accessed 10 February 2016).

⁵ Ibid.

and education, thus causing threats to societal security. For example, until the beginning of 2003, the political party “Equal Rights” manifesting itself as a representative of the Russian speakers and in 2003, the newly established Russian Schools’ Defence Headquarters Movement (*Штаб защиты русских школ*) actively cooperated with the political party “For Human Rights in United Latvia” (*За права человека в единой Латвии*).⁶ This movement was led by a number of strikes and rallies aimed at the Russian school education reform process. As a result, the Latvian public perceived it as a threat to sustainability of Latvian statehood and identity. Attempts to pursue inclusion of the Russian-speaking minority via the reform of the education system converted into self-exclusion as a tool of preserving identity.

According to statistics, both threatened groups demonstrated the misperception phenomenon, which is typical for the societal security dilemma. Although the number of pupils studying in Russian and the number of schools with Russian as the language of instruction decreased, the reasons were the negative demographic tendencies at the national level (for example, in 2014/2015, the number of pupils attending mainstream schools was almost 140 000, less than in the 1995/96 school year), and a decrease in the number of institutions, and mergers (during the period 2000–2014, 250 schools were closed)⁷. Overall, in 2013/2014, 58 854 pupils studied in minority education programmes, reaching 28% of the total number of pupils, which is by 8.5% less than in the 1995/96 school year⁸. The largest

⁶ The aim of both movements was also due to the political manifestations towards Latvian accession to the EU and NATO, demonstrating that the country is limited to the rights of minorities. In 2003, events were one of the illustrations that language and education can be used in public and even for national security destabilization.

⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia. (2011). Minority education in Latvia. Available at: http://www.mfa.gov.lv/data/file/l/mazakumtautibu_izglitiba_latvija.pdf (accessed 10 February 2016).

⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia. (2016). Minority education: statistics and trends. Available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.lv/arpolitika/sabiedrības-integrācija-latvija/mazakumtautibu-izglitiba-latvija/mazakumtautibu-izglitiba-statistika-un-tendencies> (accessed 10 February 2016). Central Statistical Bureau. (2016). Population and social conditions. Education. Available at: http://data.csb.gov.lv/pxweb/lv/Sociala/Sociala__ikgad__izgl/IZ0100.px/table/tableViewLayout1/?rxid=cdcb978c-22b0-416-a-aacc-aa650d3e2ce0 (accessed 10 February 2016).

numbers of students who are undergoing a training programme in the Russian language are in the regions of Latgale and Riga.⁹ However, Russian schools, despite the fact that the number of students has decreased, still rank highly among other schools, as evidenced by the “School rankings” data. For example, Daugavpils Russian Secondary School – Lyceum holds the second place in the top 100 independent schools.¹⁰

The introduction of bilingual education has delivered its first results creating equal opportunities for the Russian community youth in terms of accessibility to the labour and education market. For example, in accordance with the Latvian Ombudsman’s research on “Bilingual Education” (2014), a positive correlation is made between the bilingual education process and Russian-speaking pupils: “42% of respondents completely agree that Latvia should promote the preservation and strengthening of minority identity.”¹¹

Based on the survey data, “23% of respondents note that the main benefit (for a child) learning bilingually is improvement in Latvian language skills; 10% of respondents said that in parallel with learning the Latvian language, the mother tongue/culture was preserved and they could manage multiple languages.”¹² A positive trend is the feeling of belonging to the Latvian society, where “38% of respondents feel very close to the society of Latvia and 44% of respondents feel strongly close to the society of Latvia.”¹³ Based on these statements, it can be concluded that the bilingual education approach works as a factor towards inclusion of the Russian-speaking community into Latvian society.

⁹ Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia (2014). Minority education in Latvia. Available at: <http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/infografikas/IZMmazakumtautibasSmall.jpg> (accessed 10 February 2016).

¹⁰ School ratings in Latvia. (2015). Available at: http://www.skolureittings.lv/?page_id=276 (accessed 10 February 2016).

¹¹ Republic of Latvia Ombudsman. (2014). Bilingual education. Available at: http://www.tiesibsargs.lv/files/content/Petijumi/Bilingvala%20izglitiba_2014.pdf (accessed 8 February 2016).

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

More perspectives on the positions of Russian-speaking high school students is available from research carried out by the Baltic Institute of Social Sciences (BISS) in 2010, which surveyed Years 10 to 12 of minority students. With regard to the minority education reforms, the respondents' answers indicated opposing trends. On the one hand, compared with 2004, in 2010, 58% said they would like to study bilingually (compared to the previous figure of 41%). The number of students who said they would prefer to study only in the Russian language decreased from 50% to 34%.¹⁴

The opposing, more critical trend for evaluating bilingual education is presented in the research "Identity and Nationality of National Minorities' School Students" (2015). Most of the respondents argued that "bilingual education does not seem to be optimal, and the main objection was that it is difficult to learn, because two languages are being used unnecessarily, complicating the learning process".¹⁵ Compared with the previous research, these respondents negatively assessed the bilingual education approach, because they are not able to fully master the Latvian language and at the same time "pollute" the Russian language. In contrast, previous research respondents positively evaluated the bilingual education approach, emphasising its positive role in the acquisition of the Latvian language. The same study indicates a new tendency, which is also reflected in other chapters of this book: youth representatives of the Russian-speaking community consider that they are not Russians, but Latvian Russian speakers who belong to the state, their country, who are included in society. From a societal security perspective, these indicators point to a certain inclusionist trend affiliating themselves with Latvia rather than with Russia or Russians living

¹⁴ Baltic Institute of Social Sciences. (2010). Secondary school students civic and linguistic attitudes, acquiring minority education programs. Riga. Available at: <http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/statistika/petijumi/07.pdf> (accessed 10 February 2016).

¹⁵ Laizāne, M., Putniņa, A., Mileiko, I. (2015). *National minorities school student identity and nationality*. Riga. Available at: http://www.ascendum.lv/assets/upload/userfiles/files/P%C4%93t%C4%A8jums_Maz%C4%81kumtaut%C4%A8bu%20skolu%20skol%C4%93nu%20identit%C4%81te%20un%20pieder%C4%A8ba%20Latvijai.pdf (accessed 5 February 2016).

in Russia. In order to find arguments whether this trend is consistent and contributes to societal security in the long run, the next section of the chapter will present the results of interviews and focus group discussions.

Self-identification factors of the Russian-speaking community: educational perspective

To find out how the situation in schools with different language education systems is characterised, we invited Latvian and Russian-speaking students from four regions — Riga, Zemgale, Kurzeme, and Latgale — to participate in this research. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were carried out with 96 people aged 16–20 years.¹⁶

The first question that was asked was “With which community do you identify yourself (Latvians, Russians, Belarusians, Ukrainians)?” The majority of respondents identify themselves as “Latvian nationals (*латвиец*)”. The second most prevalent answer amongst the respondents, specifically in Riga, was “Russians”. As the primary reasons for self-identifying with the specific community, the Russians, the respondents listed “the language used in the family and on a daily basis, mentality, environment, and friends”. As mentioned, most of the respondents self-identified as “Latvian nationals (*латвиец*)” and listed “the place of birth and residence” as the primary reasons.

Otto, high school student, Russian-speaking, Kurzeme. With which group do I identify myself with? In my family, my mother is Belarusian, but my father is Latvian — so this would mean that I am a Belarusian–Latvian, however, there is no such option. That is why I identify myself as a Latvian national. Why? Because, in my

¹⁶ Everyone participating in the research signed a permission; in the cases of underage participants the permissions were signed by their parents. All of the participants during the research were guaranteed anonymity, which is why no specific schools are mentioned in the research — only the planning regions. The names of all of the respondents have been changed.

opinion, persons identify themselves with a specific group/nation whose traditions they represent. I represent Latvia, however, the fact that I speak Russian on a daily basis makes others [Latvians] think that I am Russian, however it is not so, because I have nothing in common with Russia.

Violeta, high school student, Russian-speaking, Zemgale. I have never thought about it. Is there a difference between Latvians and Russians? No, because we all live together in Latvia, and that means that all of us are Latvian nationals — “латвийцы”. I think that every person, first of all, identifies themselves with the country they live in, and not with their ethnicity [этническую принадлежность], because nowadays there are no “pureblood” Latvians or Russians.

Antons, high school student, Russian speaking, Kurzeme. I am — латвиец. [How does that manifest itself?] Well, I live and study in Latvia, so I am a Latvian national, however, I can't self-identify as Latvian, because the definition is too narrow. The division between “Latvians” and “Russians” is very old-fashioned, because nowadays a bigger role is played by your professional characteristics, not your ethnicity. Why don't I identify myself as Russian? Because the language I speak on a daily basis [Russian] is not the deciding factor. I believe that it would be correct to identify all of the Russians living in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia as “Balts” (Baltic people) (балтиец). In my opinion, that would unite all the Russians in these states and no one would be offended by the remark: Look, there goes a Russian, occupier!

After analysing the research results, one can conclude that in the regions, the students identify themselves as “Latvian nationals”, however, the combined answers in Riga show an opposite tendency — a strict separation regarding self-identification, which is substantiated with feelings of resentment amongst the Russian-speaking students. It means that the majority of respondents, 70%, have identified themselves as Russians, while the Latvian-speaking students identified themselves as “Latvians”. As a result, an attitude of “us” vs. “them” emerged, which was not prevalent in the answers provided by the respondents in the regions. Respondents who identify themselves as “Latvians” stressed that the state language

should be learned and respected, and that the values of one's culture should not be forced onto others, while respondents who identified themselves as "Russians" mostly mentioned the fact about the invasion and the comprehension of history. It must be noted that the respondents who evaluated their Latvian language skills as "intermediate" less often mentioned the fact about developing a strict "us" vs. "them" attitude.

Kristine, high school student, Russian-speaking, Riga. Well, I have good Latvian and Russian language skills, but I identify myself as Russian. Just because I live in Latvia does not mean that I'm going to be a "Latvian". Latvians themselves act very hatefully toward Russians, they call us "occupiers"... and if I am an occupier, then I am a Russian occupier.

Maija, high school student, Latvian, Riga. I am 100% Latvian. Latvia is my native land and my home. I think that everyone who lives and "thinks Latvian" is Latvian. [What does it mean to think Latvian?] To think Latvian — it is to be a patriot of the state, speak the state's language, and respect one another and not to force one's values upon others.

Arturs, high school student, Russian-speaking, Riga. I am Russian. Why? I speak Russian in my family, the Russian traditions and culture are closer to me, and of course, the comprehension of history which varies between Latvians and Russians. I will never be able to accept the fact that to them "we" are occupiers...

Positioning the Russian-speaking community in Latvian society

Summarising the answers to the question, "How does the Russian-speaking community position itself in society? Do you feel threatened/excluded/safe?" two contradicting tendencies were observed. On the one hand, in Riga and in the Latgale region, the Russian community representatives stated that they feel excluded from society and are being constantly "oppressed". In their answers, they mentioned that the Russian-speaking community in Latvia is second-rate and has its own sanctuary (in the Latgale region). As a

result, one can conclude that Russians who live in places with the biggest Russian communities feel most “excluded” from Latvian society. As their primary concerns of existence, the respondents listed: “*Latvianisation*” tendencies in everyday life (language of education, textbooks, etc.), the interpretation of historical facts (the question of the invasion), and the negative actions of politicians regarding the exclusion of the Russian-speaking community from society.

Marina, high school student, Russian-speaking, Riga. I represent the Russian-speaking community and believe that we are made to feel guilty in our homeland and as though we are guests. Russian speakers in Latvia are regarded as second-rate (*второсортные*). Latvians blame us for all the sins — the invasion, not knowing the language, discrimination, etc. We might want to integrate into society, but are prevented from doing so, because we are constantly reminded about the USSR, however, we are not at fault.

Dmitrijs, high school student, Russian-speaking, Latgale. The Russian-speaking community has a very interesting status in Latvia. On the one hand, we are the largest minority, on the other — we have no say, we are forced to learn in Latvian, to accept the Latvian view of history, and we are forced to forget about our cultural roots. Is that fair? Of course not! From my point of view, the Russian-speaking community for years has been excluded from the society of Latvia. It is easier to pretend that there is no problem than to solve it. The main threat is the *Latvianisation* of everything and everywhere (...) Fortunately, it isn't the case in Latgale and we can feel more relaxed there.

Deniss, high school student, Russian-speaking, Latgale. The whole region of Latgale is one big Russian-speaking community [*laughs*]. Living here we are not threatened, however, outside Latgale, as presented in the news, terrible things happen. In a way, Latgale is a sanctuary (*пещера*) for the Russian-speaking community. Here we can freely speak Russian, watch Russian TV and not be afraid of being called occupiers. Otherwise, it turns out that we are all occupiers here. I think that the politicians have done a lot to put the existence of the Russian-speaking community under threat, because we are being forced to forget our common past.

On the other hand, in the Zemgale and Kurzeme regions, respondents pointed out that the Russian-speaking community is a part of the Latvian society, and that it is actively included in the society. “The joint holiday celebration, the existence of a common past and mutual cooperation”, were most often listed as the inclusive factors.

Ināra, high school student, Russian-speaking, Zemgale. The Russian-speaking community is a part of Latvian society, can it be any different? We are one nation. (...) Security? Of course I feel safe living in Latvia. I have no problems interacting and being friends with Latvians. In general, I believe that the division “Latvians vs. Russians” has been artificially created so that our politicians have something to do. As someone who lives in Zemgale, I often travel outside the region and see no threat to the existence of one or the other community in Latvia. We have to be united.

Ruslans, high school student, Russian-speaking, Zemgale. I don't know, I have no experience of the Russian-speaking community distancing itself from society. On the contrary, Russians are open and ready to cooperate, because everyone understands that we have one country and there is nothing to divide. In school, I communicate with different people who represent various communities, and not one of them has ever expressed any concerns about their continued existence in Latvia. I think people are more concerned about other aspects, for example, the economic situation in the country, the crisis, and politics, not the security in Latvia. We all feel safe, even me, who represent the Russian-speaking community. I have never had any issues expressing my opinion.

Threats to the Russian-speaking community: perception of school students

Regarding the views on the threats to the Russian-speaking community, the interviews demonstrated similarities in answers across all regions. The main identified threat was the potential flow of immigrants both into Europe and Latvia. All of the respondents unanimously noted that the immigration question is very topical right

now and mobilises the whole of society — both Latvians and Russian speakers.

Kristina, high school student, Russian-speaking, Zemgale. I think we should stop dividing society into "Latvians" and "Russians". More precisely, the government should stop doing that. There is a more important question — immigrants. What are we going to do with them? They come from different countries, with different cultures. These are neither Latvians nor Russians, but immigrants from other lands. I think, if the immigrant question escalates, then we can face it together.

Jana, high school student, Latvian, Kurzeme. I think that all of us [Latvians and Russians] are a part of Latvia. Together, we form one society. However, as a resident of this country, I am more worried about the immigrant than the Russian-speaking neighbour, Ivan. We have no prejudice towards the Russian speakers. We do not know their [immigrants' – A.V.] culture, their traditions, and that makes me worry. I would not want a girl wearing a *hijab* sitting next to me in school.

Analysing the results of the interviews as far as threats to the Russian-speaking community are concerned, despite their linguistic affiliations — Latvian, Russians or any other minority — a common threat was identified: immigrants from the Middle Eastern and African countries. All Latvian respondents noted that they would rather live with Russian speakers than with immigrants from other countries. The Russian speakers also pointed out that the immigrants are the main threat to Latvian society in the current geopolitical situation, because, "they will come into a society with a different culture and different values, which are not close to the Slavic peoples with democratic values". As a result, when giving an evaluation of the Russian-speaking students' portrait, one can conclude that the Russian-speaking communities in the Zemgale and Kurzeme regions feel less threatened than the ones in Riga and the Latgale region. Thus, the Russian-speaking community in the regions of Zemgale and Kurzeme identify themselves as a part of the Latvian society, while in Riga and the region of Latgale, the Russian-speaking community feels excluded.

Evaluation of the bilingual education system by Russian-speaking students

Taking into account the aim of this chapter — to look at how the questions of security are reflected in the field of education — this section will portray the attitudes of the Russian-speaking students towards the bilingual education process, the diminishing number of Russian schools, the opportunity to acquire an education in one's native language, the opportunities for socialising with Latvian students, and the main stereotypes about the students of the Russian-speaking community.

When analysing answers to the question “What are your thoughts on the bilingual education approach? What would be your personal gains, if (general) education in Latvia were available only in Russian?”, the data show similar tendencies with how the Russian-speaking community positions itself in society in different regions of the country. Respondents from the Zemgale and Kurzeme regions evaluated the bilingual education more positively than respondents from Riga and the Latgale region. Students substantiated their negative evaluation with poor Latvian language proficiency, while positive attitude was expressed concerning the opportunities that the knowledge of the Latvian language and Latvian traditions offer. It must be noted that not a single respondent from Zemgale or Kurzeme regions expressed a desire to acquire general education only in Russian, while in the Latgale region 80% of the respondents admitted that acquiring education in Russian would be a personal gain and an opportunity for a career in Russia.

Olga, high school student, Russian-speaking, Latgale. In our school, the bilingual education exists only “on paper”. All of the lessons were in Russian and continue to be. It is easier for us that way. I think it would be very difficult to communicate in Latvian. The fact that teaching is in Russian is of great importance — I can read the literature of my ancestors in my native language, learn the grammar in depth, which might be of use to me since I plan to work outside Latvia. If I had to give our Ministers a mark on the

bilingual education approach, I would give them a 3. The implementation of this approach is not possible in Latvia. Those who want to, will learn in Russian.

Vlada, high school student, Russian-speaking, Latgale. I would never choose a Latvian school. I went to a Russian kindergarten, I speak Russian at home, and it is very difficult for me to communicate in Latvian. I think that it is more important to teach a person physics, chemistry, biology, etc., than to worry about language. Latvian language is a foreign language to me and that's why I evaluate the bilingual education approach negatively. It complicates the learning process of the Russian-speaking students, especially in the primary school classes where the homework is done together with parents who understand nothing in Latvian, making it very difficult.

In the Zemgale and Kurzeme regions, the respondents noted as follows:

Vitālijs, high school student, Russian-speaking, Kurzeme. I remember a story told by my brother about the rallies that took place in the year 2004, in order to support the Russian schools. I believe that the reform was necessary. If you live here, be so nice and learn in the state's language. In summary, I think that society also looks at this education reform positively, which is showed in their attitude, when Russian language was not granted the status of an official state language in the referendum. All this messing about with two languages, education, and nationalities only divides society. I think that if you are not a part of Latvia, you can go to Russia, but who will need you there...?

Anatolijs, high school student, Russian-speaking, Kurzeme. The education reform has had a positive effect. First of all, the Russian speakers themselves killed two birds with one stone, so to speak; you learn a language and broaden your view on the events in Latvia. I think that this poses no threat whatsoever to the Russian speakers' identity, because if you want to simultaneously learn something in your native language, you can do that, too. Nowadays, the youth is already cosmopolitan, they have various identities. In my opinion, in a global perspective, it would be quite difficult to name one specific identity of any Latvian resident.

Attitude towards the decreasing number of Russian schools

When analysing the data about the attitudes of the Russian-speaking community towards the decreasing number of Russian schools, it can be concluded that the respondents in all regions agree and consider the problem not through the lens of threats to the Russian-speaking community, but rather as a consequence of demographic splits taking place in the country. They note that the decreasing number of Russian schools is only logical, since the overall number of students is decreasing:

Violeta, high school student, Russian-speaking, Riga. The closing of Russian schools, in my opinion, is only logical since there is no one to learn there. Many schools (Latvian schools, too) are being closed because there are not enough students. I think it is a big problem in the periphery, in the city this issue is not so prominent.

Nikolajs, high school student, Russian-speaking, Zemgale. Schools are being closed everywhere. The number of schools decreases in every region, and no-one looks at what kind of school it is — Latvian or Russian. Everyone is away, abroad. In our school, there are only 6 people in grade 12.

Aleksandrs, high school student, Russian-speaking, Kurzeme. The decreasing number of schools worries every student, not only the Russian-speaking ones. For example, our school was merged with another school and we are all together now. I think that the decreasing number of Russian schools is a myth, because no school has it easy now.

Socialising opportunities of the Russian-speaking community

Regarding the opportunities of the Russian-speaking students to socialise with students from Latvian schools, and the most prevalent stereotypes, one can conclude that they [the stereotypes — A.V.] still play an important role in the relationships with Latvians. However, it must be noted that the socialising issues were listed

by those Russian-speaking students whose Latvian language skills are low. They stated that Latvians have a negative attitude towards Russian-speaking students, or more precisely, they projected their own stereotypical attitudes onto the Latvian students. For example, the Russian students most frequently mentioned that, "Latvian students see us as occupiers, *vatniks*, and supporters of Putin". The Latvian students, however, are less stereotypical in their way of thinking — 90% of the respondents noted that they have no stereotypes regarding Russian-speaking students, only that often they are louder and more fun than the Latvians:

Vita, high school student, Russian-speaking, Riga. I have heard a lot — Russians are pigs, *vatniks*, go back to Russia. I think, of course, that not all Latvians think so, but a large number certainly do, and that is why I choose to be friends with Russian speakers. We are on the same wave-length, we have different humour, different music.

Sergejs, high school student, Russian-speaking, Latgale. There are a lot of various stereotypes, certainly. For example, all Russian speakers think that Latvians are slow [*laughs*]. Latvians think that all the Russians, even the students, drink a lot. On an everyday basis we have no problems communicating with the Latvian students. Conflicts arise during competition, when all of us become harsher, however, I think that it perhaps depends on the mentality — Russians hate to lose.

Aleksandra, high school student, Russian-speaking, Zemgale. The socialising issues are not that prevalent, however, there is a distinct feeling of resentment towards one another. I don't like, for example, when I'm told "*chemodan, vokzal, Rossiia*" [suitcase, train station, Russia — A.V.]. I live in Latvia, it makes no difference what language I speak. After statements like that, the stereotypes of Latvians as a small and envious nation are formed.

In contrast, the Latvian students' views on Russian-speaking students are more positive and less hostile, for example:

Signe, high school student, Latvian, Riga. I don't know. In my school, there is no treating others disrespectfully, no. I can't say a bad word. I think that it comes down to the person themselves. I think it is more of an inner state. There are of course some opinions, yes.

Iveta, high school student, Latvian, Kurzeme. There are two differences between us — my Russian-speaking friends are louder and more fun; on the other hand, I myself am more down to earth. I don't know whether that is a stereotype, but I can't say anything bad. I have a lot of Russian-speaking friends.

Conclusions

The aim of this chapter is to outline how societal security issues are reflected in schools with Russian language instruction. The collected views and data prove that the Russian-speaking community in Latvia is very heterogeneous. Representatives of the Russian-speaking community from Zemgale and Kurzeme regions do not feel excluded from Latvian society, while in Riga and the Latgale region they feel excluded and threatened. Due to the wide spread of the Russian language in those regions and self-sufficiency because of schools, media, culture, and "public diplomacy" tools offered by Russia, as well as a lack of motivation to improve Latvian language skills, they prefer to choose a policy of self-exclusion, instead of making minor efforts to become an integral part of Latvian society. For example, in Zemgale and Kurzeme regions, the respondents are not prone to acquiring education in the Russian language, they more positively evaluated the bilingual educational approach, and were more geared to inclusion in society. However, in Riga and Latgale, the residents are more focused on acquisition of education in Russian and have a negative view of the bilingual education.

The relations between two linguistic communities characterised by Russian speakers as hostile from the Latvians' side, do not correspond to reality. While Russian students consider that Latvians would perceive them as aggressors, the interviews proved that Latvian pupils are less hostile than one might expect. One of the reasons behind the above mentioned misperception is a lack of permanent communication between the two communities, which hinders raising awareness about mutual intentions, attitudes, ideas,

and behaviour. Without communication, it is almost impossible to achieve a cohesive society contributing to societal security at large.

Latvian language proficiency is the most important tool for school students, serving the purpose of access to the labour market, to diverse structures of societal networks, and to inclusion in general. The language cannot be perceived as the only tool on the way to societal security, but it is one of the most important ones. The ability to communicate and to be a part of the different types of relationships existing in society could promote building a common future by all linguistic communities in Latvia. Inclusion is the precondition for a more homogeneous society and less subject to external threats.

Annex

Data on the general distribution of languages of instruction at schools (at the beginning of the school year, not including special schools and classes), in the period from 1990 (school year) to 2014/2015 (school year).¹⁷

	Year					
	1990/91	1998/99	2000/01	2004/05	2009/10	2014/15
Number of pupils	331 857	339 842	334 572	290 874	217 128	191 906
Schools with Latvian language of instruction	147 519	194 342	203 012	188 419	146 839	128 567
Schools with Russian language of instruction	129 609	103 953	93 799	72 582	49 149	45 197
Schools with Latvian and Russian languages of instruction	54 729	40 374	36 427	28 620	19 635	16 169
Schools with other language of instruction	-	1173	1334	1253	1505	1973

¹⁷ Central Statistical Bureau. (2016). Population and social conditions. Education. Available at: http://data.csb.gov.lv/pxweb/lv/Sociala/Sociala__ikgad__izgl/IZ0100.px/table/tableViewLayout1/?rxid=cdcb978c-22b0-416a-aacc-aa650d3e2ce0 (accessed 6 February 2016).

Culture, Religion, and Societal Security — The Case of the Pentecostal Russian-speaking Community in Latvia

VERONIKA ŠILKINA¹

Abstract

This chapter is devoted to culture and leisure as direct ways in which ethnic communities express their identity, which can be problematic in Latvia, due to the existence of two major cultures — Latvian and Russian. Firstly, the aim was to find out whether the cultural habits of Latvians and the Russian-speaking minority differ; secondly, what role does religion play in perceptions and attitudes towards culture and leisure among the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia? Does religion increase/decrease securitability and promote inclusion/exclusion? Particular attention was paid to the Pentecostal Russian-speaking community (PRS) in Latvia, since the cultural framework of Pentecostal Christianity (PC) “demands” that believers “reject their former cultural commitments and ways of living”, and has the potential to radically transform their ethnic identity². The available data indicates that the Russian-speaking minority has an increasing tendency to participate and consume less in all areas of culture, but there are more similarities than differences between the consumers and participants of Latvian and Russian-speaking minority cultural events, and, secondly, the results of focus group discussions indicate that the PC cultural framework positively affects securitability of the PRS believers in Latvia, offering them an alternative “Christian” culture, but from the perspective of inclusion/exclusion it works in both directions: promotes inclusion due to religious identity based on universalism, transnationalism, and strong resilience against ethnic conflicts, as well as exclusion from Latvian traditional culture due to antisyncretism and asceticism.

Keywords: culture and leisure, Pentecostal Christianity (PC), Pentecostal Russian-speaking community (PRS), societal security, ethno-religious identity, cultural inclusion/exclusion, asceticism

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² Robbins, J. (2014). An Introduction to Supplement 10: The Anthropology of Christianity: Unity, Diversity, New Directions. *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 55, No. 10.

Introduction

Cultural and leisure activities are a major domain where human beings are able to enjoy themselves, use their senses, imagination, and thoughts, and be able to choose their own experiences, and produce works and events. According to Martha Nussbaum³, if these capabilities were removed, human dignity would also diminish, thus, as a minimum, "just" societies must nurture and support these capabilities to ensure that people can count on them for the future.⁴ From the perspective of human security, these capabilities of play and sense as opportunities to consume, take part and enjoy culture and recreational activities, if strengthened, can subsequently enhance the personal and societal level of securitability, and thus reduce the societal insecurity that arises from perceived threats to the culture, and thus the identity of one community to another.

Every country has its own cultural, historical, economic, and political context that shapes the direction and development of its culture, and also attitudes, consumption, and active participation in culture by the members of its society.⁵ In the case of Latvia, its national culture is considered as one of the priorities of the future development of the state, as well as the basis for national identity and an important pre-condition of successful integration into Latvian society. As stated in the recently adopted preamble of the Constitution of Latvia:

The State of Latvia, proclaimed on 18 November 1918, has been established ... to guarantee the existence and development of the Latvian nation, its language and culture throughout the centuries... Since ancient times, the identity of Latvia in the European cultural space has been shaped by Latvian and Livonian traditions,

³ Nussbaum, M. (2001). *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

⁴ Wolff, J. & De-Shalit, A. (2011), cited in Nussbaum, M. (2011) *Creating Capabilities. The Human Development Approach*. (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press).

⁵ See Klasons, G., Tjarve, B. (2014). *Summary of the Study "Cultural Consumption and Participation of Latvian Population in Cultural Activities 2007–2014: Research Data and Statistics"*. (Riga: Culturelab).

Latvian folk wisdom, the Latvian language, universal human and Christian values.⁶

At the same time, there are two major ethnic groups — the Latvian majority and the Russian-speaking minority, and it is reasonable to say that both have their own cultures. It is still an open question as to what extent these cultures are inclusive/exclusive towards each other. Recent studies reveal that Latvian society has multiple, and changing, identities⁷, and this can serve as a breeding ground for societal insecurity as well as “common ground” for further integration. Since culture and recreational activities can serve as direct forms of how ethnic communities express their identity and self-definition, this chapter aims to find out: 1) whether cultural habits and available data on the cultural and leisure activities of Latvians and the Russian-speaking minority differ (how and why); 2) what role religion plays in perceptions and attitudes towards culture and leisure among Russian speakers in Latvia? Does religion increase/decrease the societal security of the religious Russian-speaking community in a domain of culture?

Particular attention is paid to the Pentecostal Russian-speaking community (PRS) in Latvia, for several reasons. Firstly, the anthropology of Christianity⁸ reveals that Pentecostal Christianity⁹ has its

⁶ The Constitution of the Republic of Latvia. Available at: <http://www.saeima.lv/en/legislation/constitution> (accessed 21 January 2016).

⁷ Rozenvalds, J. & Zobena, A. (eds). (2014). *Multiple and Changing Latvian Identities*. (Riga: University Press).

⁸ Here the reference point is an in-depth review of contemporary scholarship on global Pentecostalism (tendencies, elements, cultural framework, etc.) done by the leading scholar of this field Joel Robbins: Robbins, J. (2004). The Globalization of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 33.

⁹ Pentecostalism — “movement under the branch of Protestant denominations or independent churches that hold the teaching that all Christians should seek a post-conversion religious experience called the baptism of the Holy Spirit” (as well as receiving spiritual gifts as ability to prophesy, practice physical healing, speak in tongues). Pew Research Center. (2011) *Defining Christian Movements*. Available at: www.pewforum.org/2011/12/19/global-christianity-movements-and-denominations/#defining (accessed 21 January 2016). Pentecostalism is not homogenous, e.g., it may include some elements of other Christian movements (Evangelicals (Baptists, Methodists — be more traditional (doctrinal purity); and Charismatic Christian Movement (doctrine of spiritual warfare, moderate asceticism (following less strict moral code and etc.).

own very strong and compelling cultural framework that “demands” that believers “reject their former cultural commitments and ways of living”.¹⁰

Secondly, Pentecostal Christianity (PC) also turned out to be appealing in post-socialist countries.¹¹ In Latvia, during its first decade of independence, the number of Latvian PC churches grew from 7 to 56 (an 800% increase).¹² In the early 1990s, while regaining religious freedom and space, this movement became more vocal and more active, but also more diverse¹³ and partially split along linguistic lines and, as a result, formed separate Russian and Latvian Pentecostal unions. Nowadays, there is a widespread tendency to have more Latvian members in Russian-speaking churches and vice versa, to adapt services for the needs of both communities (translation of sermons in Latvian, multilingual worship and singing), and work hand-in-hand with Latvian churches to outreach to those that “need saving”, as well as in local community-building projects.¹⁴ Thus, the PRS community in Latvia is an interesting, yet poorly researched case, if at all, where religious and ethnic identities mix together. The research question is how and whether the cultural framework of Pentecostal Christianity transforms the (ethnic and cultural) identity of PRS believers and how it affects their societal security (exclusion or inclusion in Latvian society (in the fields of culture and leisure) and perceived threats, (defensive/offensive perception of Latvian culture)?

¹⁰ Robbins, J. (2014). An Introduction to Supplement 10: The Anthropology of Christianity: Unity, Diversity, New Directions. *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 55, No. 10, p. 168.

¹¹ Pelkmans, M. (ed.). (2009). *Conversion After Socialism: Disruptions, Modernism and Technologies of Faith in the Former Soviet Union*. (New York: Berhahn).

¹² Data from Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia. Number of registered religious churches by denominations (2015).

¹³ In Latvia, Pentecostal movement is splitted among five big groups: traditional Pentecostals (close to baptists and methodists in stressing doctrinal purity, asceticism), Russian Union of Pentecostal churches (includes both traditional Pentecostals as well as some elements of Charismatic movement), Latvian Union of Pentecostal churches (similar to the Russian Union), group of Pentecostals with doctrine of “footwashing”, and various independent churches that identify themselves as Pentecostals.

¹⁴ Personal communication with pastor of Pentecostal Church of Gardene, Dobeļe area (Latvia). 6 February 2016.

The first part of this chapter gives an overview of the “big picture” of culture and leisure in the Latvian society — what do the existing data on culture and leisure show, and are there differences between the Russian-speaking community and Latvians in general. The second part is devoted to the case study of the PRS community in Latvia, based on focus group discussions (qualitative approach), and presents the results of four focus group discussions on five major themes (see in detail the section, “Results of focus group discussions”). The conclusion summarises the main findings.

Major trends of cultural activity in Latvia¹⁵

According to a study, “Cultural Consumption and Participation of Latvian Population in Cultural Activities 2007–2014”, in the context of a population decrease by 8%, cultural activities in Latvia have experienced negative as well as positive changes — although all areas of culture were reduced, there is also a significant progress in the membership of the Latvian National Library, which increased by 315%, and the number of theatre visits increased by 16%, as well as growth in other areas. While being perceived by the Latvian public as not “competitive” with other areas (health, economy, social field, defence), nevertheless, 93% in Latvia attend some cultural events at least once a year, but only 5% do it on a regular basis. The majority of Latvians — 42%, and 45% non-Latvians (almost all are Russian speakers) point out that the major obstacle to being more culturally active is a lack of money,¹⁶ but overall it is actually a personal interest in culture that primarily affects a person’s cultural activism.¹⁷

¹⁵ All existing data and statistics (surveys, research studies) mainly divide Latvian society into Latvians and non-Latvians. In this case Russian-speaking minority comprises a majority — more than 90% of non-Latvians as a group.

¹⁶ Similar data is found also in the newest survey DNB Barometer No. 81. *Culture and Leisure* (2015). Available (in Latvian) at: www.dnb.lv/sites/default/files/dnb_latvian_barometer/documents/2015/dnb-latvijas-barometrs-petijums-nr81.pdf (accessed 10 February 2016).

¹⁷ Klasons, G., Tjarve, B. (2014). *Summary of the Study “Cultural Consumption and Participation of Latvian Population in Cultural Activities 2007–2014: Research Data and Statistics”*. (Riga: Culturelab), pp. 2–8.

If the Latvian population was divided into groups of cultural consumption habits, 33% would qualify as inactive cultural consumers, while the remainder are either visitors of local cultural events (19%), cultural "omnivores" (18%), visitors to family events (15%), or active participants of cultural activities. (Culturelab summary, p. 8)¹⁸ Russian speakers are more inactive cultural consumers and visitors to family events. What is striking is that in the big picture of cultural statistics, the Russian-speaking population is relatively less active in almost all aspects of cultural life in Latvia, and in the period between 2007–2014, there was a growing tendency to engage themselves less in different cultural activities and events.¹⁹

This should not be generalised, however. There should be a distinction between active and inactive participants and consumers of culture and leisure activities. Firstly, as is shown in Figure 1, inactive non-Latvians in comparison with inactive Latvians on average are relatively more passive in attendance and participation of cultural activities. For example, 81.2% of all Latvians and 76.7% of all non-Latvians have not attended ballet or opera performances during the last 12 months, theatre — 52.2% vs. 63.8%, and local festivities — 34.1% vs. 24.8%, respectively. In many other specific areas of culture and leisure, the difference was either statistically insignificant — 44.5% vs. 44.0%, respectively, did not travel around Latvia, or have not attended cinema or open-air cinema — 70.1% vs. 65.1%. In the case of active Russian speakers and Latvians, differences can

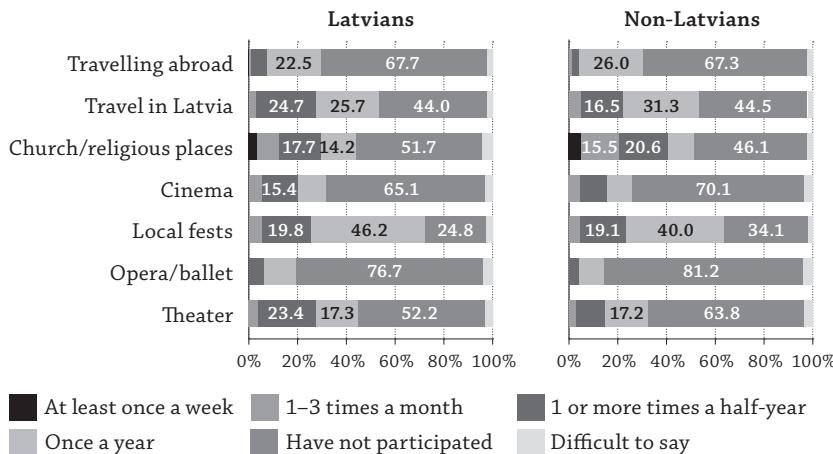
¹⁸ Five cultural consumption habits: 1) inactive cultural consumers that less frequently attend cultural events and participate in cultural activities, 2) active local cultural event participants (at one's place of residence, local balls, a library, a church), 3) the so called "omnivores" attend and are involved in very different activities (opera and ballet, pop music concerts, local balls, discotheques and nightclubs, museums, as well as zoos, etc.), 4) visitors of family events (zoos, activities for children, amusement parks, etc.); 5) active participants (discotheques, music festivals, sports competitions, hiking, foreign trips, popular music concerts, events in supermarkets, amusement parks, etc.) habit groups were introduced by (Klasons, G. & Tjarve, B. (2014), p. 9)

¹⁹ Klasons, G., Tjarve, B. (2014). *Summary of the Study "Cultural Consumption and Participation of Latvian Population in Cultural Activities 2007–2014: Research Data and Statistics".* (Riga: Culturelab), p. 5.

be seen in intensity of participation, e.g., the same number of both Latvians and non-Latvians visit the theatre once a year — 17%, but at the same time almost twice as many Latvians visited the same theatre once or more times per six months; in terms of attending church on a weekly and monthly basis, non-Latvians are more active, although there are more non-Latvians who attend church once a year.

Figure 1

**Intensity of participation among Latvians and non-Latvians
(Russian speakers) in selected cultural events/leisure activities
(during the last 12 months (2014, %)²⁰**

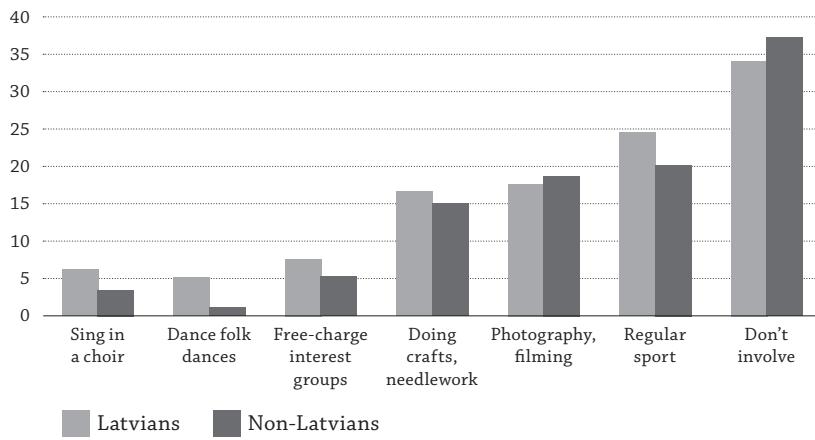


There are also similarities in perceptions connected with culture — both groups perceive it as relatively important (Latvians — 7.3, non-Latvians — 7.1), and overall they spend a similar amount on culture on a monthly basis (7–14 euros), and the figures are similar for those who do not spend money on culture at all (30.1% and 37.8%). Some difference is seen in the level of satisfaction with available cultural events (Latvians are more satisfied (by 8%), while

²⁰ Selected data from SKDS survey (2014) on Cultural Consumption from Klāsons, G., Tjarve, B. (2014).

non-Latvians are less satisfied (also by 8%), but, again, there are no striking differences.²¹

*Figure 2
Personal involvement and nationality
in selected cultural/leisure activities (2014, %)²²*



In the field of leisure (Figure 2), in general it can be said, that Latvians and non-Latvians spend their free time in a very similar way (this also applies to passive people). The latest surveys also show that in terms of priorities, both groups are very similar — mostly watch TV (74.4% vs. 78.6%), spend time in nature (65% and 66%), work in the garden (47.2% and 35.1%), read books (40% vs. 43.9%), etc.).²³ Thus, it can be concluded that the story is twofold — in the big picture non-Latvians are less active culturally, but, compared with Latvians in more detail, actually have many similarities in the ways in which they spend their leisure time, perceive culture, and spend or do not spend money on it.

²¹ DNB Barometer No. 81. *Culture and Leisure* (2015). Available at: www.dnb.lv/sites/default/files/dnb_latvian_barometer/documents/2015/dnb-latvijas-barometrs-pet-jums-nr81.pdf (accessed 10 February 2016).

²² Selected data from SKDS survey (2014) on Cultural Consumption (Klāsons, G., Tjarve, B. (2014).

²³ Selected data from the SKDS survey (DNB Barometer No. 81, 2015).

How does the PRS community fit into this picture? Although it was not possible to compare quantitatively this sub-group of Russian speakers with Latvians and non-Latvians (e.g. Russian-speaking minority) in Latvia, during the focus group discussions, the PRS respondents were asked similar questions regarding their leisure time as well as cultural activities during the last 12 months. Thus, some trends can be identified. When asked, “How do you spend your free time most often?” and “What cultural events have you visited/participated in during the last 12 months?” (questions from the *DNB Barometer 81* questionnaire), the PRS respondents, besides “reading the Bible” and “visiting church” twice a week (a striking difference from existing data about non-Latvians), were also eager to travel abroad, go on the Internet, and watch TV, spend time with their children and grandchildren, work in the garden, and engage in sports. They were less active in reading other books, visiting the opera, theatre, and listening to classical music. It was more widespread amongst respondents in Riga (students, women with more than one child under the age of 18, and men in leadership/management positions), and some of them were also representatives of cultural “omnivores” and active participants of cultural activities. Two leisure activities in particular — going to nightclubs, discos and drinking with family or friends — were almost absent. Out of a total of 40 respondents, only one marked “drinking with friends and family” as one of their leisure activities. Some PRS respondents even ridiculed it as something unimaginable in terms of Christian leisure.

Focus group discussions — theoretical framework, methodology and results

This section presents the main findings and results of the focus group discussions.²⁴ But, due to the specifics of the PRS as a respondent group, firstly, it is necessary to touch upon the cultural framework of Pentecostal Christianity that the author used to analyse the focus group discussions.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

As previously mentioned, Pentecostal Christianity has its own very strong and compelling cultural framework²⁵ that “demands” that its believers “reject their former cultural commitments and ways of living”²⁶, as well as having the potential to transform a person’s ethnic identity. The core elements of the PC cultural framework are egalitarianism, universalism, transnationalism, and asceticism, in parallel with experientialism and antisyncretism. Since this framework serves as a basis for the analysis of the focus group discussions, it is necessary to touch upon these elements in more detail.

Egalitarianism stems from PC doctrinal issues such as belief in “conversion”, e.g., salvation is a voluntary choice (rather than a “birthright” as it is in Orthodoxy), and that it is available also to the poor and marginalised people in society.²⁷ It also offers a new universal identity for believers to view themselves first of all through their faith “as children of God”, and not through their “class, race,

²⁴ The principles and criteria for choosing focus group participants were 1) affiliation with Christianity (e.g. membership or active participation in a registered Russian-speaking Pentecostal church), 2) Russian-speaking nationality or Russian as the main speaking language in family, 3) other socio-economic variables to ensure diversity of respondents.

²⁵ Robbins, J. (2004). The Globalization of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 33.

²⁶ Robbins, J. (2014). An Introduction to Supplement 10: The Anthropology of Christianity: Unity, Diversity, New Directions. *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 55, No. 10, p. 168.

²⁷ Robbins, J. (2004). The Globalization of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 33, pp. 124–125.

gender, or ethnicity".²⁸ For this reason, PC churches are usually multiethnic, both in terms of membership and staff/leadership and their uniform doctrinal messages, when dressed in "culturally appropriate terms", are able to overcome ethno-religious sensitivities and build a "world community of faith that transcends cultural and ethnic differences" (e.g., transnationalism).²⁹ As a result, PC believers can resist defining themselves in ethnic/national terms.³⁰

Another powerful element is asceticism — PC enjoins a radical break-off from the past and follows the ascetic "moral code" that prohibits most of the pleasures of a person's past life.³¹ At the same time, it introduces its own "world" with a Christian culture that can be entertaining and eventful.³² When introduced in various "local contexts", PC is consciously antisyncretic³³ towards local traditional culture, e.g., it attacks local cultural practices "profoundly altering the way they are understood" and frames them as an aspect of the "demonic world".³⁴ While living an ascetic life outside their religious activities, inside their "inner world" PC believers form a "free space" or "protective social capsules"³⁵ where they can "experiment with voluntaristic and egalitarian social relations and develop new

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Pelkmans, M. (ed). (2009). *Conversion After Socialism: Disruptions, Modernism and Technologies of Faith in the Former Soviet Union*. (New York: Berhahn), pp. 10–11.

³⁰ Robbins, J. (2004). The Globalization of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 33, p. 135.

³¹ E.g. "drinking, drug use, extramarital sexuality, fighting and aggressive displays, gambling, ostentatious dress, participation in secular entertainment such as cinema, and dancing" (Robbins, J. (2004). The Globalization of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 33, p. 129).

³² PC culture is built around post-conversion rituals (e.g. services, conferences, prayer meetings, etc.) that are "experientialist", e.g., the form and manner of worship is enthusiastic and deeply emotional services — spontaneous, which can be understood also as some form of leisure (Burdick, (1993) cited in Robbins, J. (2004), p. 125

³³ Dombrowski, K., Sider, G., M. (2001). *Against Culture: Development, Politics, and Religion in Indian Alaska*. (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press), p. 153, cited in Robbins, J. (2004), p. 223.

³⁴ Robbins, J. (2004). The Globalization of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 33, pp. 123, 130.

³⁵ Martin, D. (1990). *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell), cited in Robbins, J. (2004), p. 130

skills in leadership, literacy, public speaking, organisation, and self-help".³⁶ This also most often goes hand-in-hand with local community-building projects, such as health, job placements, and educational services.³⁷

METHODOLOGY

Altogether, there were four focus group discussions held in December 2015 in the major cities of Latvia, where the biggest PC churches are located: two in Riga, one in Daugavpils, and one in Liepāja.

This section presents the results of four focus group discussions on five major themes — the PRS perceptions of what is culture, the cultural differences between Russian speakers and Latvians, the ethno-religious identity of the PRS community, cultural inclusion/exclusion of the PRS community, as well as the theme of threats to their culture and identity.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION RESULTS

Theme 1: Meaning and importance of culture of PRS believers³⁸

Culture is a very broad term that encompasses many things and aspects of human life. One of the goals of the focus group discussions was to allow respondents to define the term "culture" themselves in order to see how the PRS constructs their perceptions about culture and what kind of culture is acceptable/not acceptable to them.

In response to the questions, "What is culture is for you? How important is culture personally for you?", the majority of respondents defined culture in a very broad sense: starting with traditional

³⁶ Burdick, J. (1993). *Looking for God in Brazil: The Progressive Catholic Church in Urban Brazil's Religious Arena*. (Berkeley: University of California Press), p. 87, cited in Robbins (2004), p. 131.

³⁷ In Baltic States, a vivid example is presented by Lankauskas who studied Pentecostal Word of Faith Church in Lithuania where it has established "tight networks of faith" as a "refuge from insecurity and destitution in the outside world". (Pelkmans, M. (Ed.). (2009). *Conversion After Socialism: Disruptions, Modernism and Technologies of Faith in the Former Soviet Union*. (New York: Berhahn), p. 9.

³⁸ In this chapter terms "believers" and "Christians" are referred to the same group.

notions of national and traditional culture like national anthem, music, national food, dances, costumes, festivities, and “cultural life” — visiting the theatre, opera, music concerts, cinema, and proceeding with more value-laden definitions — “nations’ thinking”, “moral ethical principles of society”, and, finally, defined culture as their own “inner”, “personal”, “Christian” culture stemming from “good upbringing” in a family, “moral values”, standards and “principles of the Bible” (hereinafter referred to as “Christian culture”).

In all four discussions, respondents consciously sustained a sharp distinction between “worldly” (“secular”, national, state) and “Christian” cultures. In many instances, re-evaluation of the term ‘culture’ followed, “after becoming a Christian”, for example the meaning of “a cultured person”, once measured in terms of an active cultural life, well-educated, was “redefined” as keeping high Christian moral standards — “loving thy neighbour”, “forgiveness, helpfulness, respectful acts, and (respectful) ways of talking”, “humbleness”, openness and acceptance of other nationalities, avoiding conflicts.

The majority of respondents both directly and indirectly juxtaposed these two distinct notions of cultures in various forms and ways. The Christian culture as “a daily life issue” was perceived to be as necessary as “having breakfast in the morning”. The Christian culture was coined with “cultured” behaviour in “public transport”, “in society”, in “relations with employers”, as positive and respectful “attitudes towards people”, a decent “upbringing of one’s own children”, polite and respectful conversations. In all four discussions, most importance and priority was given to the Christian culture, e.g., framing it in a positive light and juxtaposing it to “worldly” culture and in some cases — to “culture” as an “immoral” term *per se*: “I submit only to the culture of Christ, the ‘world’s’ culture does not exist to me”, “culture is a ‘worldly’ condition”. Such exclusively negative notions were few and mostly present in Daugavpils and Liepāja, among older retired men and older single women, non-citizens. Such exclusionism and asceticism also translated into a deep disinterest and exclusion from all possible cultural events and entertainment “of this world”: “I don’t want to entertain, to go to

the cinema, I don't want to watch anything on the Internet — for me only Christ is important"; "Believers somehow cannot go to the cinema ... this is not acceptable".

Others framed "worldly" culture as a less important or unnecessary aspect of Christian life: "For me the culture of upbringing is important, but speaking about national culture — any would fit"; "Culture is very important in a sense of having some moral values ... but the whole Latvian culture — no". Other negative connotations were more subtle and were expressed through constant contraposition of "good" and "bad" culture, e.g., "perverted", "degrading", "self-destroying" vs. "constructing", "unifying", "raising some morality", in society. At the same time, as mentioned above, the PRS respondents on average were very active and, in many cases, spent their leisure time similarly to Russian speakers and Latvians, except drinking and visiting clubs. Respondents in Riga and partially in Daugavpils perceived traditional notions of culture as something that "enables" and "beautifies" life, and more often perceived "worldly" activities as normal and acceptable, such as visiting exhibitions, going to the theatre, to the cinema, reading classics. This group of respondents was also usually more culturally active.

Theme 2: Ethno-religious identity of PRS believers

One of the aims was to find out how PRS believers identify themselves, construct their "we" towards "them" in ethnic and religious terms, to what extent and how their religious identity, cultural framework, affects their ethnic self-perception, as well as perceptions of Latvians and their culture; how do they perceive differences, as well as exclusion/inclusion)?

The most important conclusion is that PRS respondents constructed themselves both in ethnic and in religious terms, which is why it is reasonable to speak about a multilayered ethno-religious identity, where the ethnic "we" can be potentially transformed or at least consciously subordinated, due to elements of religious identity — universalism, transnationalism, egalitarianism, of

Pentecostalism. This is explained by the main findings on PRS ethnic self-perceptions and, consequently, the main results about their religious identity.

In answer to the question, “Are there any differences between local Russian and Latvian culture?”, the majority of respondents, especially the older ones, pointed to various differences between Latvians and Russian speakers in Latvia — the main differences in national temperaments were stressed more in Riga and Liepāja:

Russian speakers are ‘more friendly’, ‘more open’, and more ‘sincere’ in fellowship, e.g., having ‘Russian soul’ while Latvians are ‘cooler’, ‘less friendly’, ‘less sincere’, but also ‘hardworking’, more ‘organised’, more ‘disciplined’, and more helpful than Russians.

Other respondents paid no less attention to differences in traditional culture: “Russian festivities are ‘more colourful’, ‘more hospitable’, while ‘Latvian festivities are different’, they are a ‘singing’ and a very ‘musical nation’”. Predominantly in Daugavpils, the “beautiful” Latvian and “great” Russian language was also mentioned as an indivisible element of both cultures. All respondents also noted that the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia themselves are also “Baltic” and “European”. Emotionally “different than Russian speakers in Estonia and Lithuania” and less emotional, less sincere, with a different mentality than “Russians in Russia”. In most cases the differences, especially in temperament, were not perceived as an obstacle to “cope with” each other, to get married and altogether develop deeper relationships with Latvians.

The majority of young respondents, between 15–26 years, in all four discussion groups saw less, if any, differences between the Latvian and Russian-speaking community cultures or, on the contrary, stressed that there are “very big differences” between temperaments and language, where most “conflicts” and “misunderstandings” arise. The former had closer and mainly positive contacts with Latvians both outside and inside the “Christian world” (church), “because we are more communicative” and “we know the language”, thus, “we got so used to each other” that “we are one entity already”.

Personal positive contacts with Latvians, as well as the impact of “European culture”, a “knowledge of English” and the “opportunity to travel” and compare different cultures promoted an inclusive attitude towards Latvians and a more open culture in general. As a result, it can be argued that this constructed a very mixed ethnic identity. Some respondents, although marked as Latvian in their passport, identified themselves as Latvian–Russian. In some cases, these globalisation and integration processes deeply affect self-identification:

It's hard for me to relate myself to some distinct culture ... I am a hybrid ... and it is normal. But if I had to define my stance, for example, in the case of war ... as in Ukraine ... I don't know how I would react.

On the contrary, those who saw big differences between Latvians and Russian speakers, also experienced a hostile attitude from Latvians, for instance, a Latvian employer who thinks and calls Russians “occupants”, which may promote exclusion and distance from Latvians (even a desire to move to Russia, e.g., be closer to their “ethnic roots” and relatives). Thus, it can be concluded that ethnic identity or PRS is presently a rather mixed and complicated picture.

On the contrary, speaking of themselves as, for example, believers these very same differences (Russians vs. Latvians) were perceived to be of less importance. “All people, when they come to God — they change — Latvians as well as Russians ...” Even the painful issues of language were framed as, “not a question of language but of relations” because, “as Christians we are more reserved and more peaceful”. Some respondents construed themselves primarily along their religious identity: “... as a Russian man I wouldn't even bother [about ethnic problems] ... but as a Christian ... I am different”. For others, their religious identity was expressed in more subtle ways — when speaking about Russians and Latvians as ethnic groups, new categories were introduced — “unsaved” Latvians and Russians vs. those who are “brothers and sisters in Christ”. In relations with “unsaved” Latvians, even hostile ones, more than a half

of the respondents would rather choose to avoid ethnic conflicts and solve them peacefully, by using “Christian logic”: “when some national questions arise — it does not bother me — I understand that in front of me there is a person that is deprived of ... love, compassion, good attitude ...”; “people from church ... have a different attitude towards Latvians ... we are more loving and more accepting [of them]”.

At the same time, when speaking about “unsaved” Russians, this very same Christian logic worked in the opposite way — acceptance/rejection of Christian values was more important than ethnic/linguistic affiliation. For example, old Russians in Riga who are, “educated people, cultured, polite” were still considered to be “uncivil” because of “not knowing God” and exalting the Russian language as “the Great Russian language”. Negative religious experiences by one of the respondent’s rejection of the New Testament in local Russian-speaking schools in Riga, has caused deep dissatisfaction and social distancing from “unsaved” representatives of his own ethnicity; Russian children were accused of being “bad-mouths”, Russian parents — aggressive and rejectful, and the Russian school administration of “apparently lying” and not allowing the New Testament to be distributed among pupils. This in turn, caused a change of ethnic self-identification — the decision to change his nationality in his passport from Russian to Latvian.

This highlights that religious and ethnic identities are deeply intertwined in various and sometimes radical ways, although rarely. It was also concluded that such a radical reaction was possibly due to other circumstances; the respondent had close religious ties and friendships with Latvians, who were “brothers in Christ” (attending the same church). Overall, the tendency to frame themselves as a distinct subgroup of the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia was quite widespread, and, in some cases, respondents were “leaping over” their ethnic affiliations to find “relatives” among “saved” Latvians.

This leads to another aspect of PRS religious identity — they construct their own “inner Christian world” that is built upon a universal “faith identity”. Transnational and ethnic diversity is mutually

respected because “God created different nations”. Here, for the PRS respondents, the most important aspect was to respect and view each other “not through nationality, but just as a human being”, to have good relations with each other and the “unsaved” ones, e.g., “be friends with these people” and “not just their culture”. Respondents in all groups mentioned that ethnic relations in church are “good and friendly” and, “here in church it’s rare to hear a harsh statement about Latvians, even though there may have been plenty of reasons for such statement”, in respect of the “unsaved” Latvians”. Instead of arguing, “a believer will go and pray” in conflict situations. It does not automatically mean that PC believers abandon their ethnic identity and culture in order to “keep peace” with each other. Some respondents identified themselves as both patriotic and internationalist: “I am a patriot and internationalist. I have a Ukrainian mentality and am proud of it, and I believe in God.” This is an indication that at least for respondents the church (e.g., the “Christian inner world”) is “a home”, a common ground that unites believers with their “Latvian brothers”, and promotes bilingual conversations, “when a Russian can speak in Russian and he is answered in Latvian, and there is a mutual understanding and not separation”.

Theme 3: Inclusion/exclusion

Various respondents in all four groups expressed deep respect and close emotional ties with Latvia as a country and Latvian people in general: “I love Latvia”, “this is my second motherland,” “we love Latvian people”. Many respondents acknowledged that, being a minority, “it is important to ... adjust to other people” and to the “Latvian culture”. Adjustment was framed as a “necessity” to be inclusive, in terms of sufficient knowledge of the Latvian language and even a respect of the existing language hierarchy (speaking of the national referendum on the official state language in 2012).

I was personally against Russian as a second state language because the 1990s showed that it would not lead to anything good — another ethnic “war” will come ... Russians have to adjust to this culture and ... learn the language.

The Russian-speaking youths, in particular, “must initially accept the Latvian language, speak it fluently”. Thus, for many respondents in Liepāja and Riga, in particular the knowledge of Latvian language was perceived to be a successful inclusion strategy in Latvian society, but not in all cases — for some respondents, “in the world” Russians with a good knowledge of Latvian are perceived as a competitive labour force, citing a Latvian professor openly stating “that Russians learned our language well and now claim our work places”.

For other respondents, a “language barrier” automatically turned into an exclusion dilemma — those who did not know the Latvian language sufficiently, although having tried to learn it, perceived it as “their own problem” to “fully express themselves” as Russian speakers, but that it still divides Latvian society “into Russians and Latvians” (Liepāja). In these cases, respondents also noted that the church is a place where they can fully express themselves not only as Christians (believers) but also as Russians, e.g., freely speak in Russian: “Nobody restricts us here in the church. If we want, we can have a translation in Latvian, if we don’t, then we don’t translate.” Other respondents, especially the older ones residing in Daugavpils, saw that the problem was not actually a language barrier in the terms of Russians not knowing it, but rather due to the insistence of Latvians not to speak Russian in public places, and be openly prejudiced while working in the public sector, towards people who don’t speak with them in Latvian. They are described as “nationalistic”, “uncultured” Latvians, or people “in a bad mood”.

Another inclusion aspect was defined as “respect of the Latvian culture”, “their mentality” and also Latvian traditions. Here, the story is twofold. On the one hand, it was admitted that “we have to take into account that we live in Latvia”, which is “their territory” and “their motherland”, where Latvians are free to express their “patriotism” and “their traditions”, even their rights to defend “their own territory”. Others stressed that it was important not to impose Latvian traditions forcefully on others. Nevertheless, Latvian “over-protectiveness” of their own culture was criticised in parallel

with linguistic exclusionism of some Russian people: “I won’t go to Latvians and impose over them that I am Russian ... thus they speak with me in Russian only”, “and accept me as Russian”. These respondents were also eager to acknowledge that “we are not Russians” anymore and “we are not Latvians either”, e.g., this inclusion process deeply affected their ethnic identity. In other words, “I am a Russian soul, living in Latvia.”

On the other hand, there was cautious, but nevertheless apparent, anti-syncretism towards the Latvian pagan traditions in their celebration of Līgo³⁹. In response to the question, “To what extent should Russian speakers in Latvia adjust towards Latvian culture?”, Līgo turned out to be a red-line in all four groups. “It doesn’t matter whether I am Russian or Latvian ... we (Christians), don’t do ... Līgo.” It was stressed that it is not a lack of patriotism towards the Latvian country. “You can love your country ... and people, but not participate in all of this”. But such consciously defined and actively sustained cultural exclusionism was directed only against Latvian pagan traditions.

Theme 4: Threats to identity and culture

Analysis of the focus group discussions revealed that an apparently subtle, but in fact consistent, theme was the culture of Russian-speaking children. Of deep concern was the low level of culture in Russian-speaking schools. It was noted that in families the rise of individualism among children is a new tendency. There is a consistent pattern of spending their leisure time, visiting the theatre and participating in church events separately from their parents, and mostly with their schoolmates and friends. This indicates that children, to some extent, mirror the existing cultural problems of PRS and Russians as an ethnic group. Some respondents in Riga framed “culture” in terms of children being able to study in their “mother

³⁹ Līgo is the annual midsummer fest that celebrates the summer solstice and is rooted in Latvian pagan culture and traditions — for example, picking special herbs and decorating house, making flower and oak wreaths, singing Līgo or “Jāņi” songs (promoting fertility and preventing disasters), and organizing a “Jāņi” bonfire.

tongue” and were concerned that they do not know the Russian language culture sufficiently.

The issues of language also affect the perceptions of cultural inclusion/exclusion. To what extent should Russian culture be inclusive towards Latvian culture? Those respondents, mainly non-citizens of an older age, who struggle with the language barrier and have lost their jobs due to insufficient knowledge of language, or have been discriminated by Latvians in public institutions because of being Russian, directly stated that they are “not ready” and “don’t need” to adjust their “Russian culture” and be more inclusive towards the Latvian culture. These respondents also felt the “need to be protective”, and overall were more predisposed to think that Latvians themselves misconceive the situation and are overprotective: “when Latvians understand that nothing is threatening their culture”, they “will stop defending it so zealously from Russians, as they do now”.

In contrast, the majority of respondents who spoke fluent Latvian and had both close religious and emotional ties with Latvians, perceived threats to their culture and identity in rather different categories. Firstly, the threats were identified as a “worldly”, “immoral” culture that is perverted: a “EU culture” which allows “drug use, alcohol use” and “perverted sexuality” (e.g. homosexuality); with lower moral standards, nowadays, culture is what, “people in previous times were ashamed even to think about” and constantly changing, if today Europe affects us, “tomorrow it will be Islam”. Here respondents eagerly accepted asceticism as an exclusion strategy: “I don’t allow a perverted “worldly” culture to destroy me.”

Here, the challenge for some respondents was to define how far Christians should be ascetic towards public “secular” cultural life *per se*. “Because we Christians ... tend to close ourselves off...” but “we cannot fully separate ourselves from society. That’s wrong”. In this respect, an event that was described neither as “worldly”, neither as “Christian”, but rather as Russian “secular” culture, was the celebration of 9th May (the day of victory over Nazi Germany by the former Soviet Union), as well as New Year’s Eve, mainly because of

the firework display. These cultural events were seen as opportunities to “show up in society”, and “meet with acquaintances”, that was acceptable even for the most ascetic respondents in Daugavpils and Liepāja. “At least we get to see a firework display”, an ironic comment that neatly points out that there is an inner problem of the “Christian world” to define where and what exactly is “immoral” and “unacceptable” for the PRS as Christians, and to what extent there is a need to be exclusive. Another category of threats was framed in terms of Latvian traditions — respondents were more defensive against pagan Latvian traditions and preferred antisyncretism as another exclusion strategy.

Threats to the peaceful co-existence of Latvian and PRS cultures were also discussed through the prism of contemporary armed conflicts. Ukraine and “conflicts worldwide” (Syria) were named as potential triggers for raising nationalism and a willingness to “protect national identity”, that could be misused with the help of mass media to cause future cultural “wars”/“conflicts” between Latvians and Russians. Here, the source of a threat was framed in terms of “government”, “politicians”, and “the strong ones of this world”, such as Russia and the USA, for whom such conflicts could be beneficial. For one respondent with a Ukrainian nationality in Daugavpils, the conflict in Ukraine was also framed as a threat for her cultural and religious life in her homeland: “I don’t watch TV anymore” because of “propaganda” and “dirt, dirt, dirt”, as well as, “I don’t go to the churches in Ukraine anymore” because of “showdowns” between church pastors along ethnic lines⁴⁰.

⁴⁰ This case also helps to explain why some of the respondents perceived politics to be something immoral (“in which a normal person will not participate”) and “the spirit of nationalism” as well as ethnic division — unacceptable and dangerous for Christians. “Political quietism” (Robbins, 2004) of PC churches in particular in this sense helps to defend transnational and egalitarian attitudes of believers towards each other, and avoid ethnic divisions within their churches.

Conclusions

This chapter was devoted to the theme of culture and leisure that are direct channels for ethnic communities to express their identity. The chapter aimed, firstly, to find out whether cultural habits of Latvians and the Russian-speaking minority differ, why and to what extent. Available data shows that at state level, Russian speakers have an increasing tendency to participate and consume less cultural and leisure activities. At the same time, if we look in detail, there are more similarities than differences. The main difference is intensity of consumption of cultural events.

Secondly, taking into consideration that at state level the Latvian national culture is given priority that could provoke potential insecurities among the Russian-speaking community, this chapter chose to analyse it from the perspective of religion, e.g., what role does religion play in perceptions and attitudes towards culture and leisure among Russian speakers in Latvia? Does religion increase/decrease securitability of religious Russians and does it promote inclusion/exclusion from Latvian culture and Latvian society in general? The Pentecostal Russian-speaking community in Latvia, since its cultural framework “demands” that believers “reject their former cultural commitments and ways of living”⁴¹, has the potential to radically transform their ethnic identity.

The results from the focus group discussion analysis show that the PRS have different perceptions of what is culture — culture as visiting “secular” cultural events vs. culture as living according to Christian moral standards. There is also evidence that the PRS respondents had both moderate and radical transformation of cultural perceptions and their ethnic identity. On a moderate level, they framed themselves primarily as “Christians”, with a somewhat changed ethnicity: “Russian soul living in Latvia”, which promotes inclusion, e.g., “mutual respect” between Russian and Latvian cul-

⁴¹ Robbins, J. (2014). An Introduction to Supplement 10: The Anthropology of Christianity: Unity, Diversity, New Directions. *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 55, No. 10, p. 168.

tures and ethnicities — especially towards other Latvian believers. Acceptance of existing language hierarchy in Latvia and knowing the Latvian language was perceived as a successful inclusion strategy into Latvian society. Some radical transformation was also evident, e.g., a readiness to change the nationality in the passport due to being rejected as Christian among “unsaved” Russians and having close religious and friendship ties with Latvians in the “Christian world”. In the light of peaceful co-existence, it can be said that the PRS are highly resilient against ethnic conflicts. Many expressed deep emotional ties with Latvia as a country and Latvian people in general, highly valued a peaceful co-existence of the two ethnic communities and were against any form of nationalism from the Russian as well as the Latvian side.

However, another element of PC Christianity promoted exclusionism — asceticism and tendency to “close-off” into their inner Christian world in order to abstain from “immoral” cultural events and leisure activities of both Russian and Latvian cultures. In practice, radical asceticism only on rare occasions translated into a deep disinterest and almost total exclusion from a “secular” cultural life. Another more powerful aspect of exclusionism was conscious and cautious antisyncretism, e.g., full rejection to participate in the Latvian traditional Ligo festival. Asceticism and exclusionism are safe strategies for PRS believers to protect themselves from “outside” threats to their “Christian culture”.

Thus, it can be concluded that PC cultural logic actually works in both directions — inclusion and exclusion. Most evidently, it is expressed in a so-called language inclusion-exclusion dilemma: on the one hand, knowledge of Latvian language is a prerequisite of successful inclusion into Latvian society, on the other — there is deep concern that “our children don’t know their own language” and thus are losing their Russian culture. Considering that for many PRS who have a language barrier, the church is a safe place where they can speak Russian freely, including bilingual communication with Latvians, it is not clear whether it promotes or in fact hampers their knowledge of the Latvian language.

From the perspective of securitability in cultural terms, the “Christian inner world” can be characterised as a success story. It provides PRS believers with its own cultural alternatives that actually serve as opportunities to execute the capability of leisure, ability to enjoy recreational activities, use their senses, imagination and thought that by definition is a function of culture and leisure. In terms of money, Christian cultural and leisure activities are usually available to people of all social classes and very often are free of charge. Thus, without making a generalisation, in practice, PRS believers may be more culturally active than it is currently perceived.



Capability of Mobility — Diaspora of Russian Speakers from Latvia

AIJA LULLE¹

Abstract

The chapter concisely describes the contemporary Russian-speaking diaspora from Latvia, scattered throughout the world. The study provides the main geographical trajectories of Russian speakers who have left Latvia since the early 1990s, and up to 2015. Further, the theoretical notion of 'intrinsic capability of mobility' based on little existing migration research on this topic and the theoretical framework of the capability approach is developed. The data draws on the available literature review, data from the Central Statistical Bureau, as well as secondary data from wider migration research conducted in Latvia during the past decade. Furthermore, future scenarios of migration trajectories and diasporic relations are elaborated, concluding on the role and place of this specific diaspora community within the broader contexts of security and future of the nation state of Latvia.

Keywords: Latvia, Russian-speaking diaspora, capabilities, mobility

Introduction

Very little research exists on the topic of the Russian-speaking diaspora from Latvia, currently residing throughout the world with notably large recent communities in various destinations, across Europe, but also in other continents. Of course, there are also Russians who have immigrated to Russia, yet, there is a paucity of recent in-depth studies of such a group. At European Union level, ethnic minorities overall are scarcely researched,

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despite the fact that they make up at least 9% of the total population of the new EU Member States that joined the EU after 2004². Therefore, this review chapter on an emerging Russian-speaking diaspora from Latvia abroad, adds important empirical knowledge to this study.

Recent emigration of Russian speakers from the Baltics is still under-researched, with a few exceptions. Sofya Aptekar³ studied Baltic Russian speakers in Ireland and paid special attention to possible discrimination of Russian speakers in the Baltics and differences between these countries, especially Estonia, where self-perceived discrimination was more pronounced, and in Latvia, where economic inequalities became more important than possible linguistic and ethnic discrimination. The latter aspect was further nuanced by Artjoms Ivlevs⁴ study on the intentions of emigration among Russian speakers from Latvia. Ivlevs also added another important factor — dissatisfaction with the education system in state schools which are still providing Russian language teaching along with bilingual education in Latvian and Russian. Most recently, Iveta Jurkāne-Hobeine⁵ has analysed Russian-speaking families from Latvia, currently residing in the UK. Lulle and Jurkāne-Hobeine⁶ have also recently provided their analysis on the

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- ² Ivlevs, A. (2013). Minorities on the move? Assessing post-enlargement emigration intentions of Latvia's Russian-speaking minority. *The Annals of Regional Science: An International Journal of Urban, Regional and Environmental Research and Policy*, Vol. 51, No. 1, p. 43; Predan, M. (Ed.). (2004). *Minorities and the Central European Initiative: on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the CEI instrument for the protection of minority rights (1994–2004)*. (Central European Initiative, Executive Secretariat).
- ³ Aptekar, S. (2009). Contexts of exit in the migration of Russian-speakers from the Baltic countries to Ireland. *Ethnicities*, Vol. 9, No. 4, pp. 507–526.
- ⁴ Ivlevs, A. (2013). Minorities on the move? Assessing post-enlargement emigration intentions of Latvia's Russian speaking minority. *The Annals of Regional Science: An International Journal of Urban, Regional and Environmental Research and Policy*, Vol. 51, No. 1, pp. 33–52.
- ⁵ Jurkāne-Hobeine, I. (2015). Krievvalodigo emigrantu bērnu transnacionālās saites ar Latviju. No: Lulle, A., Klave, E. (red.). *Radot iespējas attīstībai: diasporas bērni un jaunieši*. (Riga: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds), 258.–272. lpp.
- ⁶ Lulle, A., Jurkane-Hobein, I. (n.d.) Strangers within? Russian-speakers' migration from Latvia to London: a study in power geometry and intersectionality. Unpublished manuscript.

changing power dimensions after Russian speakers from Latvia emigrated to the UK.

In this chapter, I ask how Russian speakers from Latvia use and further develop their capabilities of mobility, review, and re-theorise secondary data and empirical findings of recent research in light of the capabilities approach, and draw conclusions on the emerging Russian speakers' diaspora and its significance from a societal security point of view. The study presented in the chapter proposes to problematise the mobility of this specific and yet evolving diaspora through the capabilities approach, developed by Martha Nussbaum⁷, Amartya Sen⁸, and most recently, in the context of Ukrainian women in Italy, by Lena Näre⁹. The analysis is based on Näre's proposed notion of 'intrinsic capabilities for mobility', according to which, migrants from the post-socialist space rely strongly on capabilities to gather individual strength, are willing to take the risks that migration can involve, as well as mobilise social and family contacts in order to leave the country and improve their lives abroad. But, before offering detailed theoretical accounts, I will provide a historical context of the immigration of Russian speakers from the Slavic republics to Latvia. After fine-tuning the theoretical lens on 'intrinsic capability of mobility', I will proceed with the analysis, where special attention will be paid to findings on recent emigration trends, emigration motivations as well as future scenarios of further emigration and linkages to societal security.

Historical background

Changes of ethnic proportions have been large-scale throughout the 20th century in Latvia. In 1935, Russians, Belarusians, and

⁷ Nussbaum, M. (2000). *Women and human development. The Capabilities Approach*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

⁸ Sen, A. (1992). *Inequality Reexamined*. (New York: Russell Sage Foundation); Sen, A. (2010). *The Idea of Justice*. (London: Penguin Books).

⁹ Näre, L. (2014). Agency as capabilities: Ukrainian women's narratives of social change and mobility. *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 47, pp. 223–231.

Ukrainians accounted for 10.3%. During the Soviet period, the proportion rose almost four-fold, reaching 42%. In comparison, there were 75% Latvians registered in the Latvian territory in the census of 1935. The proportion of ethnic Latvians decreased to 52% in the census of 1989. The largest inflows took place between the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁰ The ratio between Latvians and Russian speakers also changed due to emigration and deportations. See the changes of ethnic composition in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Changing ethnic proportions in Latvia, in numbers

Ethnicity	1935	1989	2000	2015
Latvians	1 467 035	1 387 757	1 370 703	1 223 650
Russians	168 266	905 515	703 243	512 400
Belarusians	26 803	119 702	97 150	67 318
Ukrainians	1844	92 101	63 644	44 709
Poles	48 637	60 416	59 505	42 466

Source: Central Statistical Bureau, Latvia, Population and social processes. Available at: <http://www.csb.gov.lv/en/dati/metadata-38714.html>

As we can see from the table, the total population is constantly decreasing in Latvia, compared to the year 1989. The number of ethnic Latvians is also decreasing. However, due to a more rapid decline of the Russian-speaking population, the relative proportion of Latvians increased to 61.6%, in 2015. A significant part of these changes are rooted not only in a natural decline, but also in emigration.

The complexity of the Russian-speakers' diaspora is historically intrinsic due to migration processes, geopolitics, language usage, as well as citizenship qualification criteria. Of course, not all of those who declare themselves as Russians, Belarusians, Ukrainians, and Poles speak Russian as their everyday language. Besides, some chose not to reveal their ethnicity. However, the statistical trend and

¹⁰ Tabuna, A. (2001). Historical heritage. In: Tabuns, A. *National, State and Regime Identity in Latvia*. (Riga: Pērse), pp. 31–32. CSB (1999). Statistical Yearbook of Latvia, 1998. (Riga: Central Statistical Bureau).

correlation between ethnicities and language usage is still strong. In the Baltic state Latvia, the ethno-linguistic minority — Russian speakers — makes up about one-third of the population (36%) according to the latest census data.¹¹ The case of the Russian speakers is however more complicated, as they are also internally divided by whether or not they hold EU citizenship. In the mid-1990s, about a half of the Russian population knew Latvian, while about nine-tenths of Latvians knew Russian.¹² This obvious asymmetry of bilingualism is also a crucial aspect of Russian speakers' cultural and social ties in Latvia and with diaspora members abroad. Currently, the young generation of Russian speakers acquire the Latvian language quickly and most finish schools with a good and fluent command of Latvian. However, the Russian-speaking population (those who state that they speak Russian as a first language, regardless of their ascribed ethnicity) is large.

Another important aspect for the historical background is the process of naturalisation that is taking place in Latvia¹³. Since naturalisation was introduced in 1995, 143 239 people have received Latvian citizenship including 14 391 underage children who naturalised together with their parents¹⁴. Naturalisation rates peaked immediately after Latvia joined the EU, but then plummeted around 2007, and continued to decrease year by year, to less than 1000 naturalised persons in 2014.

The overall population is rapidly declining in Latvia, as mentioned previously: it was 2.3 million after the country regained its independence in 1991, but due to low birth rates and, most importantly, high emigration, it stood only at 1.9 million at the beginning

¹¹ CSB (2011). Census data on language spoken in everyday life. Available at: <http://data.csb.gov.lv/pxweb/lv/Sociala/?rxid=cdcb978c-22b0-416a-aacc-aa650d3e2ce0> (accessed 22 February 2016).

¹² UNDP (1995). Human Development Report. Latvia. (Riga: UNDP), p. 38.

¹³ LR Pilsonibas likums (1994). *Latvijas Vēstnesis*, Nr. 93/224. Available at: <http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=57512> (accessed 22 February 2016).

¹⁴ OCMA (2015). Statistics on naturalization. Data for 31 October 2015. Available at: <http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/sakums/statistika/naturalizacija.html> (accessed 22 February 2016).

of 2015¹⁵. According to the census in 2011, at least 220 000 emigrated from Latvia during 2001–2011.

Theorising capability of mobility

The notion of ‘intrinsic capability of mobility’ was innovatively introduced by Finnish scholar, Lena Näre, who researched how Ukrainian women use their capabilities to get out of a crisis — personal, economic, and lately, also military crisis in their home country. She put forward a theoretical argument that capabilities can be theorised as individual and collective agency, in other words, the will and capability to exert one’s will, freedom and pursue their own needs for better lives. Näre also stressed that capabilities should be better seen as evolving and changing — as a continuum of capabilities. She justified this by analysing how, following emigration to Italy, women used their individual capabilities to exit low-paid jobs in domestic work and aim for better paid and more prestigious jobs in other sectors and even other countries. Their capabilities were built on past experiences, social networks and their own agency to pursue better work positions.

The capability approach was famously introduced by economist Amartya Sen¹⁶. Concerned with issues of inequality and justice, he provided a critique to developmental economy which tends to ignore people’s capabilities to pursue better lives. He proposed that it is important to concentrate on what people can and are able to do, for instance, in order to overcome various inequalities. Importantly, he, as well as Nussbaum,¹⁷ has emphasised that it is crucial to understand what people choose to do, what are the values and needs in their own terms, and what opportunities they pursue and are able to achieve. Nussbaum has proposed a long list of capabilities, which

¹⁵ CSB (2015). Population statistics. ISG02. Available at: http://data.csb.gov.lv/pxweb/lv/Sociala/Sociala__ikgad__iedz__iedzskaitis/?tablelist=true&rxd=cdcb978c-22-b0-416a-aacc-aa650d3e2ce0 (accessed 22 February 2016).

¹⁶ Sen, A. (1992). *Inequality Reexamined*. (New York: Russell Sage Foundation).

¹⁷ Nussbaum, M. (2000). *Women and Human Development. The Capabilities Approach*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

are universal to all humans, but are specifically shaped in economic, social, cultural, and political contexts. Also, Ingrid Roybens¹⁸ has provided a list of capabilities, but more specifically, through the gender perspective. Roybens included such capabilities as paid work, leisure, autonomy of one's own time, social relations, recognitions, empowerment etc. For women in various cultures, mobility can be a desired vehicle to obtain needs. Through the capability approach, as Näre emphasises, we can ask and answer: for what reasons, values, and needs do people exercise their agency?

Importantly, Näre draws attention to historical and contemporary constraints to human agency: capabilities are then not only what people achieve but also about the opportunities they have or do not have. For instance, international mobility requires various resources: social networks, money, capabilities to search and find work and shelter. However, these capabilities can become seriously restricted due to the legal status, for instance, if people need visas or a legal political status, but cannot obtain them for certain reasons.

Similarly, also ethnic minorities may have more specific, historically formed and continuously evolving capabilities.

Analysis

In the context of emigration of Russian speakers, I operationalised the proposed notion of 'intrinsic capability of mobility' by Näre¹⁹ on historical and current trends of emigration, which is actively exercised by Russian speakers, on social networks that enable mobility to certain destinations, emotional and cultural factors and ties among the Russian-speaking diaspora members, for practical as well as for political reasons.

For analysis in this chapter, capabilities should be understood also as historically embedded. There were diverse and rapidly

¹⁸ Robeyns, I. (2003). Sen's capability approach and gender inequality: Selecting relevant capabilities. *Feminist Economics*, Vol. 9, Nos. 2–3, pp. 61–92.

¹⁹ Näre, L. (2014). Agency as capabilities: Ukrainian women's narratives of social change and mobility. *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 47, pp. 223–231.

evolving emigration trajectories of Russian speakers from the Baltics, including emigration of the professional elite and military personnel and their families after the collapse of the Soviet Union²⁰. Moreover, capabilities historically are embedded also on two distinct interpretations of history. According to Ammon Cheskin,²¹ from the official Latvian perspective the Soviet Union occupied Latvia, and the consequences were grave: deportations followed, many thousands died, were persecuted and moved in exile. A policy of “Russification” seriously endangered the existence of the Latvian language, while an influx of people from the Slavic republics changed the ethnic proportions dramatically.

In contrast the Russian perspective emphasises the heroic role of the Red Army in liberating Latvia from fascism, and points a finger at the harsh, uncivilised and un-European discrimination against Russian speakers in Latvia.²²

A product of such conflicting interpretation includes two cultural stereotypes: a proper Latvian and a proper Russian. As Russel King et al.²³ interpreted these binaries (building on Cheskin’s interpretation), the stereotypical Latvian must speak Latvian, maintain “Latvian” cultural values, display loyalty to the Latvian state, and not challenge the official narratives and interpretations of Latvian history. The latter does not subscribe to these views and is alleged as ambiguous and possibly disloyal to the Latvian state, and suspicious of placing his or her ideals towards the Russian Federation²⁴.

²⁰ Heleniak, T. (2004). Migration of the Russian diaspora after the breakup of the Soviet Union. *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 57, No. 2, p. 99–116.

²¹ Cheskin, A. (2013). Exploring Russian-speaking identity from below: the case of Latvia. *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 3, pp. 288–289.

²² Ibid.

²³ King, R., Lulle, A., Conti, F., Mueller, D., Scotto, G. (2014). *The Lure of London: A comparative study of recent graduate migration from Germany, Italy and Latvia*. Sussex Centre for Migration Research, Working Paper No. 75 07/2014.

²⁴ Cheskin, A. (2013). Exploring Russian-speaking identity from below: the case of Latvia. *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 3, pp. 287–312. Birkā, I., Muižnieks, N., Rozenvalds, J. (2013). Ethnicity and Social Cohesion in the Post-Soviet Baltic States. *Patterns of Prejudice Special Issue Social Cohesion and Social Change in Europe*, Vol. 47, No. 3, p. 292.

However, Cheskin's research with Russian speakers in Riga challenged these historical and discursive narratives, and found that the research subjects were able to integrate various competing positions into their ongoing sense of Latvian-Russian identity. Their subjectivities were much broader than stereotyped "Latvians" and "Russians". The main difference was not political, but rather cultural — Russian speakers want to maintain their culture and language. Therefore, capabilities of language also become an important category.

In summary, intrinsic capability of mobility involve at least the following aspects: historical experience of migration, social networks, large-scale emigration as a typical practice among Russian speakers, economic motivations as well as cultural – language issues.

EMIGRATION TRENDS

The background of intrinsic capability of mobility is related to the historical experience. The net migration in Latvia was positive up to 1990. However, after 1991, it changed to negative and remained such during the following years. For instance, in 1998, more people emigrated to Russia — 3189 persons, compared to 1930, who immigrated to Latvia from Russia. Although emigration to Israel, another important destination for (mostly) Russian speakers, many of whom were Jews, took place most notably immediately after Latvia regained its independence, this emigration trajectory still continued throughout the late 1990s. Accordingly, in 1998, 387 persons emigrated to Israel (while 50 arrived from there). A similarly important destination for Russian speakers, due to established communities abroad, was Germany²⁵: 971 persons went to Germany while 62 immigrated to Latvia from Germany, in 1998²⁶.

²⁵ However, we have to be once again careful in such interpretations because Latvian speakers also went to Germany, Israel, and Russia due to formerly established contacts and family networks.

²⁶ Tabuna, A. (2001). Historical heritage. In: Tabuns, A. (Ed.). *National, State and Regime Identity in Latvia*. (Riga: Pērse), p. 34.

Russian speakers form a considerable part of recent emigrants from Latvia, those who emigrated since 2001. Emigration of Russian speakers is relatively higher when compared with the other ethnic groups living permanently in Latvia. For instance, in 2014, 50.8% of long-term emigrants from Latvia were Latvians, 30.1% Russians, 2.4% Belarusians, and 2.9% Ukrainians²⁷.

Table 2
Emigration, by ethnicity, numbers and relative proportion of all emigrants

Ethnicity	2011	%	2012	%	2013	%	2014	%
All emigrants	30 311	100	25 163	100	22 561	100	19 017	100
Latvians	11 823	39.9	11 106	44.1	10 794	47.8	9 655	50.8
Russians	11 087	36.6	8 879	35.3	7 068	31.3	5 722	30.1
Belarusians	810	2.7	752	3.0	600	2.7	462	2.4
Ukrainians	1 320	4.4	952	3.8	726	3.2	554	2.9
Poles	1 028	3.4	771	3.1	635	2.8	464	2.4

Source: Central Statistical Bureau, Latvia. IBG041. Available at: http://data.csb.gov.lv/pxweb/lv/Sociala/Sociala__ikgad__iedz__migr/IB0041.px/table/tableViewLayout1/?rxid=cd

However, a more revealing picture appears if we evaluate these trends in comparison to immigration. Immigration numbers are low in Latvia and net migration has remained negative throughout all the years, since Latvia regained its independence. In recent years, 10 234 people emigrated in 2011, 13 303 in 2012, 8 299 in 2013, and 10 365 in 2014. Immigration data includes an important component of return migration. In fact, more than a half of long-term immigrants are actually Latvian citizens returning back to Latvia from a certain time spent in emigration. The big exception, however, are Russian speakers: they come from Russia as well as countries where Russian is widely spoken (e.g. Belarus and Ukraine) and some also return from emigration in the so-called Western countries. Revealingly, Latvians tend to return more, as shown in Table 3, below.

²⁷ Jurkāne-Hobeine, I. (2015). Krievvalodigo emigrantu bērnu transnacionālās saites ar Latviju. No: Lulle, A., Klave, E. (red.). *Radot iespējas attīstībai: diasporas bērni un jaunieši*. (Riga: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds), 259. lpp.

Table 3
Immigration, by ethnicity, in relative proportion

Ethnicity	2011	2012	2013	2014
Latvians	48.5	47.2	37.1	37.4
Russians	30.0	30.5	29.7	30.8
Belarusians	3.7	3.5	3.8	4.1
Ukrainians	3.2	3.8	4.7	6.3
Poles	2.0	2.5	2.0	1.8

Source: Central Statistical Bureau, Latvia. IBG041. Available at: http://data.csb.gov.lv/pxweb/lv/Sociala/Sociala__ikgad__iedz__migr/IB0041.px/table/tableViewLayout1?rxid=cd

Even despite the fact that general immigration statistics do not distinguish between Russian immigrants who are actually return migrants, and Russians who come from Russia, we can observe that return migration among recent emigrants is much less pronounced among Russian speakers than it is among Latvians. In other words, Russian speakers tend to emigrate for good and therefore would remain in the destination countries as a newly emerging diaspora. Note also that immigration of Ukrainians also relatively increased in 2013–2014, which is an obvious consequence of the military conflict in Ukraine, not the return migration of Russian-speaking emigrants from Latvia. In terms of age²⁸, Russian speakers, especially in the middle-age group (35–54), are more willing to emigrate, compared to Latvian speakers.

In summary, the historical experience of migration as well as widespread practices of emigration nowadays do add to capabilities for emigration. Latvian citizenship for those who leave is used somewhat instrumentally, as a vehicle to cross the EU borders freely and not as an emotional statement and loyalty to the Latvian state as such. Moreover, in many cases, they add to a willingness to remain abroad for good, and decrease incentives for return migration to Latvia.

²⁸ Ivlevs, A. (2013). Minorities on the move? Assessing post-enlargement emigration intentions of Latvia's Russian speaking minority. *The Annals of Regional Science: An International Journal of Urban, Regional and Environmental Research and Policy*, Vol. 51, No. 1, p. 47.

EMIGRATION FACTORS: LANGUAGE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC MOTIVATIONS

Language is a capability that enables emigration and social ties abroad. Russian is widely spoken also among people who have emigrated from other former Soviet republics, and therefore, can be used in order to find employment and social contacts. In everyday practices, networks are based on language rather than on ethnicity.²⁹

However, a capability of the Latvian language, which is crucial in Latvia, changes while being outside Latvia. According to the latest emigrant survey carried out in 2014, reaching more than 14 000 respondents online, 62% of Russian speakers said it was not important to know the Latvian language, compared to 28% Latvians living abroad who also agreed that the Latvian language was not important in their current lives.³⁰

Accordingly, we can infer that the Russian language, social networks among other Russian speakers served as important components for capability of mobility.

Among young people who have left Latvia, there was a certain ease as to how people narrated their decision to leave Latvia, especially younger people who left immediately after school, but the lasting sense was rather a desire to break away from being described as a “Russian speaker” and thus not fully belonging to the Latvian state and “Latvian” values.³¹

There are stereotypes about Russian speakers and Latvians. A study³² in the mid- 2000s showed that, among Russians in Latvia, a common stereotype is that Latvians are nationalists. This

²⁹ Laitin, D. (1995). Identity in formation: the Russian-speaking nationality in the post-Soviet diaspora. *European Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 36, No. 2, pp. 281–316.

³⁰ Kaprāns, M. (2015). Lielbritānijā dzīvojošo Latvijas emigrantu attālinātā nacionālisma izpausmes: Kulturālā un politiskā dimensija. *Akadēmiskā Dzīve*, Nr. 51, 77.–88. lpp.

³¹ Lulle, A., Jurkane-Hobein, I. (n.d.) Strangers within? Russian-speakers' migration from Latvia to London: a study in power geometry and intersectionality. Unpublished manuscript.

³² Zepa, B. (Ed.) (2006). *Integration Practices and Perspectives*. (Riga: Silca Printi), p. 21.

nationalism offends and alienates Latvians from Russians. On the other hand, Latvians hold the stereotype that Russians are chauvinists and do not want to learn the Latvian language. Although, according to quantitative survey data, Latvian nationalism or Russian chauvinism was supported only by tiny segments in the society, in everyday discourses such stereotypes were particularly strong. Therefore, we can say that capability of mobility has also an "exit" dimension — moving away from a place where such unhelpful stereotypes are constantly reminded in a public discourse.

Furthermore, capability to improve one's socio-economic position through emigration, turns out to be, possibly, the most important characteristic of an evolving Russian-speaking diaspora outside Latvia. In terms of economic needs, Charles Woolfson³³ has also cautioned that exit strategies by both Russian speakers and Latvians demonstrate a disillusion with a neoliberal economic course. A lack in fluency of the Latvian language could have also constrained capabilities for some to pursue upward social mobility and professional careers. Those who do not master the Latvian language well enough, are disqualified from working in certain professions.³⁴ Aptekar³⁵, who interviewed actual migrants in Ireland, emphasised that Russian-speaking emigrants from Latvia emigrated more due to socio-economic factors, in contrast to those from neighbouring Estonia, who stressed more the disturbing

³³ Woolfson, C. (2009). Labour migration, neoliberalism and ethnopolitics in the new Europe: the case of Latvia. *Antipode: A Journal of Radical Geography*, Vol. 41, No. 3, pp. 952–982.

³⁴ Regulations 733. (2009). Regulations Regarding the Amount of the Knowledge of the Official Language and the Procedures for Examination of the Knowledge of the Official Language for the Performance of Professional Duties and Duties of Office, Receipt of the Permanent Residence Permit and Obtaining of the Status of a Long-term Resident of the European Union and the State Fee for Examination of the Fluency in the Official Language. Available at: <http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=194735#position=1169> (accessed 22 February 2016).

³⁵ Sen, A. (1992). *Inequality Reexamined*. (New York: Russell Sage Foundation); Sen, A. (2010). *The Idea of Justice*. (London: Penguin Books).

sense of being an ethnic minority in Estonia.³⁶ Similarly, Ivlevs³⁷ highlighted the same factors in his study on emigration incentives among the Russian-speaking population in Latvia. Ivlevs also added a third factor — resentment towards the education system in Latvia and requirements to study in Latvian or bilingually in secondary schools. In short: language, which is widely spoken and that people want to maintain, political empowerment by leaving a place with stereotyping discourses, education and knowledge, work with decent remuneration,³⁸ are capabilities that matter the most while pursuing better lives abroad.

FUTURE MIGRATION SCENARIOS

When it comes to future migration directions, as already mentioned, there is a trend of less pronounced return migration. However, in Lulle and Jurkāne-Hobeine's work, several respondents stressed that, while outside Latvia, they started appreciating even more that they are also part of a Latvian culture, they tried following Latvian media more through the Internet and made some effort to improve their Latvian while in London. A desire to return to Latvia, if economic prospects permit, was considered too, especially among younger respondents. One of the reasons was that they did not feel fully accepted by English society either.³⁹ However, by rapidly losing their knowledge of Latvian language, and not teaching the language to their offspring, return to Latvia becomes a more difficult migration strategy.

³⁶ Aptekar, S. (2009). Contexts of exit in the migration of Russian-speakers from the Baltic countries to Ireland. *Ethnicities*, Vol. 9, No. 4, p. 509.

³⁷ Ivlevs, A. (2013). Minorities on the move? Assessing post-enlargement emigration intentions of Latvia's Russian speaking minority. *The Annals of Regional Science: An International Journal of Urban, Regional and Environmental Research and Policy*, Vol. 51, No. 1, pp. 33–52.

³⁸ Robeyns, I. (2003). Sen's capability approach and gender inequality: Selecting relevant capabilities. *Feminist Economic*, Vol. 9, Nos. 2–3, pp. 61–92.

³⁹ Lulle, A., Jurkāne-Hobein, I. (n.d.) Strangers within? Russian-speakers' migration from Latvia to London: a study in power geometry and intersectionality. Unpublished manuscript.

However, Russian speakers still found themselves in freer and more respected relations where their mixed ethnicity and linguistic practices were not devalued. Command of the Russian language is also valued, especially in the world metropolises where there are large communities of Russian speakers. Russian speakers from Latvia draw a strong boundary between themselves as European (Latvian) citizens and Russian speakers and those from Russia. Being away from Latvia, yet seeing Latvia as the country of birth and the country of citizenship, strengthens the self-identification with the notion of 'Russian speakers from Latvia'.⁴⁰ Lulle and Jurkāne-Hobeine⁴¹ have also noted a high level of nostalgia and appreciation of their homeland, Latvia. Therefore, relatedness to Latvia is actually closer to ethnic Latvians than binary stereotypes of Latvians and Russians would envisage.

The most realistic future scenario remains that a more permanent diaspora forms outside Latvia, where links to Latvia are personal and social, e.g., to relatives, as well as nostalgic (as a place of birth for most Russian-speaking migrants from Latvia), but with comparatively weak ties to Latvia as a state.

Conclusions

When summarising the main findings of the "capability of mobility" in relation to the broader contexts of the capability approach, the following aspects become the most salient.

First, as Näre⁴² has proposed, capabilities develop as a continuum. They are always changing throughout the migration history. Therefore, I conclude that it is important to disentangle how historical and *specific* migratory contexts have played a role in

⁴⁰ Lulle, A., Jurkāne-Hobein, I. (n.d.) Strangers within? Russian-speakers' migration from Latvia to London: a study in power geometry and intersectionality. Unpublished manuscript.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Näre, L. (2014). Agency as capabilities: Ukrainian women's narratives of social change and mobility. *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 47, pp. 223–231.

developing capabilities for leaving Latvia with relative ease. This is also in line with Ivlevs⁴³ findings that family histories of migration might be passed over to younger generations. There are weaker intentions to return to Latvia and these may correspond with weaker political linkages to the Latvian state. The diaspora of Russian speakers outside Latvia is possibly a permanent phenomenon.

Second, the matter of geopolitics. After restoration of the independence of the Republic of Latvia, those who did not have strong incentives to stay or lacked strong links with Latvia, left the country. Moreover, in many cases, they had already some existing diaspora links in other countries. Besides, and especially, when it comes to recent emigrants, those who have immigrated into other EU countries, with Latvian citizenship, had strengthened mobility capability. As citizens of Latvia they could search for work freely in the EU.

The Russian language, as a widely spoken language, turns out to be an important tool in the search for work and further developing social links to other Russian speakers abroad. Therefore, the formation of a Russian-speaking diaspora has a strong instrumental and rational approach.

With respect to the main motivations for emigration, socio-economic reasons were among the strongest ones. Capability of mobility, therefore, is strongly linked to capability to overcome economic inequalities⁴⁴ and obtain work and earn better salaries, especially in the Western countries.

However, the research also suggests that Russian speakers from Latvia do have emotional and nostalgic links to Latvia, especially if it was their place of birth. This aspect should be taken forward in future research, developing a further understanding on how the Russian-speaking diaspora could be better approached in the

⁴³ Ivlevs, A. (2013). Minorities on the move? Assessing post-enlargement emigration intentions of Latvia's Russian speaking minority. *The Annals of Regional Science: An International Journal of Urban, Regional and Environmental Research and Policy*, Vol. 51, No. 1, pp. 33–52.

⁴⁴ Sen, A. (1992). *Inequality Reexamined*. (New York: Russell Sage Foundation).

broader diaspora policy of Latvia. Also, little is still known about certain diaspora communities outside the EU, for instance, in Russia and whether members of this community are willing to develop capabilities of transnational linkages with Latvia. Last, but not least, more research and action research in particular, is needed to pave the way for how the state of Latvia could develop policies that involve Russian speakers who do forge ties with Latvia in the current diaspora and return policies and discourses.

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Russian-speaking Community in Jelgava

OTTO TABUNS¹

Abstract

This chapter presents a regional case of societal security aspects with regard to Russian speakers. Based on twenty interviews with stakeholders, in the second part of 2015, this case reflects the views of decision-makers and opinion-makers from community associations, municipal officials, teachers, and youths. They cover the age brackets from youths (up to 26 years old) to senior citizens (retirees), in a variety of social and professional roles. The case illustrates Russian speakers in the light of the secondary, yet persistent ethnic and religious identities among the adults. It also dwells on the reasoning of Russian-speaking youths, who pursue the command of Latvian language and interaction with its speakers. The analysis intends to complement an accurate countrywide portrayal of inclusion.

Keywords: Russian speakers, regional example, secondary identity, education

Background

The city of Jelgava shares much of the modern political and social history with the rest of Latvia. However, it is distinct in that it represents the closest ethnic and linguistic make-up of the average Latvian compared with Riga, or most other rural areas. Therefore, it is an important regional example to examine while seeking a comprehensive analysis of what matters for Russian speakers across the country, in terms of societal security.

Jelgava is situated over forty kilometres south from Riga, the capital city of Latvia. The resident population of the city is around 60 000, making it the fourth largest city in Latvia after Riga, Daugavpils, and

¹ University of Latvia.

Liepāja. Much of the historically rich city was destroyed during the Second World War, and it was rebuilt anew afterwards. Being a transit junction, it was industrialised and attracted people from the surrounding region owing to urbanisation, as well as those migrating from the Soviet Union, almost doubling its pre-war population.

Despite its close proximity to Riga, the city hosts its own network of cultural, entertainment, sports, healthcare, and educational institutions (including a university) and facilities. Additionally, there are enough employment possibilities in services and manufacturing for it to avoid being considered one of the sleeper-suburbs of the country.

According to the national census of 2011, 58% of the resident population used Latvian as the main language at home, whereas 41% used Russian. The level of Latvian language usage is almost identical to the proportion of ethnic Latvians in Jelgava (58.5%). In contrast, the level of Russian language is larger than the percentage of ethnic Russians (27.9%).

Latvian and Russian both cover 99% of the main languages used at home, hence the conclusion that residents of other ethnic communities (13.6%) are mostly Russian-speaking. As a result, Jelgava is effectively bilingual. Furthermore, belonging primarily to one or another language speaker group is the overarching societal identity. In the case of Russian speakers, it is a wider identity than just the ethnic one. Throughout the interviews, several sets of major identities were outlined by people as they discussed their own communities and those that they know through public interaction, friendship, marriage, etc. (Table 1).

Table 1
Major self-assessed cultural identities in Jelgava's resident population

Main language spoken	Ethnicity	Professed religion (if any)
Latvian	Latvian	Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox
	Other than Latvian	Christian, Judaism, Muslim
Russian	Russian	Orthodox
	Belarusian	Orthodox, Catholic, Unitarian
	Ukrainian	Orthodox, Catholic
	Polish	Catholic
	Jewish	Judaism, Christian Orthodox
	Other	Christianity, Muslim

Adults and culture

The Russian language forms the overarching shared identity for most people belonging to the ethnic minorities of Jelgava; simultaneously, it is a mistake to perceive the Russian speakers of Jelgava as a social monolith or a single actor. Each major ethnic community, even if most do speak Russian, is represented by a separate community association.

Belarusians form the second largest minority, and make up the most Russophone community other than Russian. Among them, families having one spouse of another Slavic nationality (Russian, Ukrainian, Polish) prefer to send their children to the Russian language comprehensive education programme schools. However, the local Belarusians in Jelgava are proportionally six times more active² in their ethnic community association than Russians are in theirs.

Religion plays a particular role within and across the communities united by Russian as the main language at home. This factor outlines one of the threats perceived by adult Russian speakers. The leader of the local Russian association explained: “Language and religion — Russian and Orthodoxy — are on the same level of importance. It is the core of what we are.” The Eastern Orthodox Church adhered to by most Russians, Ukrainians, many Belarusians, and some Latvians, Romani, and others, provide their religious services in Jelgava in the Russian language exclusively. The Roman Catholic Church adhered to by many Belarusians and some Ukrainians provide their religious services in Jelgava in Latvian, Polish, and Ukrainian.

The Jewish community of Jelgava is mostly Russian-speaking. Many representatives or their parents have settled in the city from Russia, Ukraine, or Belarus. The community is rather secular, and

² 40 out of 15 210 local Russians are active members of their ethnic community association. Meanwhile, the corresponding number for the local Belarusians is 53 out of 3145. Data from the respective associations (membership) and the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, as of 2015.

there is no synagogue in Jelgava; some, according to the head of the community association, have embraced the (mostly Russian-speaking) Christian Orthodox community to “find their niche” of group belonging, to socialise and celebrate holidays and festive events with other people who share their native language. This move alleviates the inclusion into the rest of the Russian speaker fraction, united by a common language and religion.

Community associations representing mostly Russian speakers are all highly content with the support they receive from the municipality. The support ranges from free facilities for communal events to funds designated for community projects. While the availability of European Union projects is well received in principle, several community associations lack the human capacity to deal with the administrative demands associated with acquiring the funds from Brussels. All in all, Russian speakers in Jelgava are able to satisfy their needs of cultural autonomy and self-realisation in terms of ethnic identity.

A lack of youth participation is a particular issue common to all community associations. Most of the active members belong to the adult and senior age groups (people at least in their forties). They find the loss of identity of their children and grandchildren a threat to their communities. As expressed by a local Ukrainian with regard to their community association, “What ‘association’ are you talking about? A knitters’ club — is what it is.”

Jelgava has examples of integration paradoxes. For instance, many local Belarusians are keen to actually pursue integration. The latest courses provided by Jelgava Belarusian association, in 2015, for fifty participants, were signed up for in full by the lunchtime on the same day the offer was published. Simultaneously, the respective members are more sensitive when their attitude does not gather a symmetrical response from the government.

The Belarusian community choir that performs in Latvian was invited to the Latvian Song and Dance Festival in 2013 for the first time; and even then, as pointed out by the community association, it was not listed for the opening or closing concert.

The association representative expressed disappointment that “a foreigner singing a Latvian folk song is presented to an audience and everyone applauds. Yet if we — compatriots, wish to do the same, even if there is a little accent in the way, we are treated differently despite our genuine intentions”.

Another issue is labelling of identity.

In Latvian, there is no proper word for a person from Latvia³. It is always difficult to explain about “Latvian Belarusians”. While in Russian there is such word [denoting people from Latvia], we were referred to as “О, латыши приехали!”⁴ when visiting Belarus.

Citizenship as a belonging to a specific country has a marginal role in identity, and is evaluated, on the one hand, as “divisive, as some who voted for independence did not become citizens and still bear a grudge”. On the other hand, it is discarded as not making a big difference: “...if they can carry on without Latvian citizenship in Latvia with no problem for twenty five years, why should they change their minds now?” A more blunt observation by a senior male citizen was that, “they haven’t changed and won’t, and will stay here to die the same as they were”.

Threats to societal security in the eyes of local Russian speakers are limited, yet clear cut. Since 2014, external threats dominate the perception of the Russian-speaking community. A local Russian woman summarised that, “threat number one is how the Ukraine issue affects us. Threat number two is unmanageable amounts of refugees, especially those with a different religion than us.”

Misinformation plays a role in group responses to the issues among local Russian speakers.

They show one thing on the PBK [First Baltic Channel, in Russian] and the LNT [Latvian Independent TV, in Latvian] so how are we

³ One explanation is that the formation of the Latvian language predates the statehood of Latvia by several centuries. The endonym “latvietis”, literally — a Latvian, has an ethnic rather than a national or territorial connotation. This is an interesting point considering Jelgava as the cradle of literary Latvian language, hosting many of the ethnic Latvian intellectual elite.

⁴ “Oh, the [ethnic] Latvians have arrived!”

supposed to find out what goes on in Ukraine, in Syria? And even if we do, we cannot resolve these issues from here, thus there is no use in dwelling on the subjects in our common discussions.

The conflict in Ukraine has threatened the Russian speakers of Jelgava the most, by challenging the internal communal unity. The effect on how Russian speakers relate to Latvian speakers (e.g., due to views for or against the position of the Latvian, Russian, or Ukrainian governments) is practically non-evident if compared to how it affected relations within Jelgava's Russian-speaking population itself.

The community associations have consciously avoided internal discussion of political issues as a part of their activities since the Referendum for Russian to be recognised as an official language took place, in 2011. The local Ukrainian association showed divisions in 2013, when the proposal for displaying an exhibition to commemorate the 70th anniversary of Holodomor was disputed. The events in Ukraine from February 2014 onwards furthered the tensions.

Events in Ukraine changed the local community both in respect of Latvian speakers and Russian speakers. "And, following the Maidan, Latvians noticed that there are Ukrainians, too", said a member of the community. From a different angle, a local Russian claimed, "since then [Maidan], the Russian-speaking local Ukrainians are blacklisted in their own community", indicating divisions and exclusion. The former chair of the association said she was questioned by some other members, "why do you need to agitate other people", after holding the Ukrainian flag during the City Day parade, in May 2014 (where the associations along with other citywide organisations and institutions took part). Some others told her, "you are a nationalist! I would never lay flowers on those occasions" with regard to celebrating the National Day of Latvia or the days commemorating the deportations to Siberia. The loyalty towards historical narratives and values of the parties towards the conflict in Ukraine culminated in a publicly contested leadership change in 2015.

Local Ukrainians feel the threat of exclusion based on how their siding with Ukraine and against Russia is viewed by the rest of the Russian speakers.

Some [local Ukrainians] do not watch media in Latvian as a matter of principle, and rarely watch anything in Ukrainian. Latvia is alien to them and so is Ukraine. However, it is not Russia or the Soviet Union which is in their hearts, they have a belonging to no state or national identity. It is, instead, to Putin.

This shows a clash between an inherited Soviet identity and an identity obtained in the democratic European society Latvia is developing.

This is explicit with regard to religion, as noted by a female worshipper:

People may seem united at the church, but after the service some would go to a political event, and the paths of the community members split right there. For example, they attend the Easter service and then go to meet a pro-Russian deputy. It's not for me, you know.

Facing an Orthodox congregation where many share a pro-Russia and/or pro-Putin attitude, more nationalistic Ukrainians have either stopped going to church, or have switched to Greek Catholic services in Riga. These, in contrast to Orthodox services in Jelgava, are also provided in the Ukrainian language.

Youth and education

Much of the national, multilingual, comprehensive education saw its revival since Latvia regained independence in 1991. Jelgava has retained the bilingual character of the school system. 1992 saw the reorganisation of four Russian-speaking high schools into two high schools and two primary schools. Two special schools exist, one of them providing the appropriate education and care for Russian-speaking students.

In contrast to some other cities, no comprehensive religious or ethnic schools exist, fostering the respective identities. As a result, the

public school system has shaped the residents of Jelgava as effective Latvian or Russian speakers since the end of the war, i.e. covering almost all living generations. Hence, the language in the given bilingual framework is a fundamental public aspect of societal identity.

For the last twenty five years since Latvia regained independence, Russian-speaking students differ in the set of education they follow according to the language of instruction. The same student may pursue each level of education (preschool, primary, and secondary education) in either Latvian or (mostly) Russian⁵. The student can also change between programmes in a different language of instruction from one level to the next.

A male student who switched to a Latvian high school says,

I befriended Latvian students from Jelgava in a youth exchange programme in Lithuania and decided, upon returning, to switch to that Latvian school. I did not tell my parents, who learned about my choice when they noticed the Latvian titles on the new library books I brought home. It was a great scandal at home; however I did not change my mind.

Furthermore, a female student had switched the languages of instruction at each level:

First, I was sent to a Latvian kindergarten, but then my parents switched me to a Russian primary school. So I know my native [language] well. Meanwhile, I felt my Latvian fading away and I was afraid I would fail at university. So I switched to a Latvian high school.

In another instance, a parent objected due to the “bad grades you will get there”, resulting from learning in a non-native language. On the other side of the spectrum, a mother asked, “what are you waiting for?!” For many, parents have been either disinterested or told the students to “make your own mind[s] up”. Most were induced by the word of mouth of peers across the city and decided by themselves it was a necessary choice.

⁵ Since 2004, the minority education programmes set out 60% of the subjects given in the official language and the rest in the given minority language. All such programmes in Jelgava are instructed in Russian.

Apart from the few cases of parent opposition, for several, a reason for hesitation was the “stereotype that the Latvian schools were ‘nationalistic’”, as “no Russian speaker would survive there”. It has to be noted that a Latvian school that was stereotyped as the most nationalistic, had consistently ranked better at the city-wide quantitative results of curricular and extra-curricular activities.

Students generally agreed that the Russian schools provided a good Latvian language level, with qualified and inspirational teachers being instrumental. However, most recognised that their personal motivation was crucial: “If you don’t want to work, you won’t learn anything. But it is possible to pass by slacking off.”

A lack of practice of the Latvian language outside school, extra-curricular activities and at work, was recognised by many Russian-speaking students as both a factor inhibiting their inclusion and making them less competitive when looking for professional opportunities. As argued by a local education official,

... poor Latvian skills due to deficiencies in teaching or a lack of interaction in the language can limit chances of self-realisation, especially in extracurricular activities which are provided almost exclusively in Latvian and are popular among native Latvian speakers.

Many acknowledged the difficulty with exact sciences other than mathematics, where they had to learn the terminology which was not universal. Some blamed it on the substandard education provided in the existing bilingual setting, where less time would be wasted if everything was instructed in a single language throughout:

We studied the subject in Russian, yet the tests were in Latvian.
For half of the test you had to think what that one term stands for.

Many recognised the final exams that have to be passed in Latvian as the fundamental motivation of switching to a Latvian school, as these count when applying for university in Latvia. The rational motivation is also strong for Russian speakers, other than ethnic Russian, to make sure their children learn the Russian

language. Most notably it was for the role the language has in the private sector.

Rationality is a motivator for inclusion among youths in the long run: “I have to master the [Latvian] language. I will land the big job one day thanks to that.” Even if students use the opportunity to study abroad and/or relocate to the rest of the EU, they understand they will need to know the language if they consider returning one day. “By learning in a Latvian school among Latvians, I wish to understand Latvian thinking. I want to get to know their values”.

Understanding Latvia, by, first of all, mastering the language is also their competitive advantage compared to other Europeans. It also motivates for short-term perspectives. A student who switched from a Russian language primary school to a Latvian language high school, and planned to leave Latvia afterwards, explained: “Even if I only need the Latvian [language] here and now, I still need it here and now.”

Jelgava’s Russian community association wishes to sustain the “Russian schools” indefinitely, although they underline the need for better preparation of the students in the Latvian language within the given programmes. The leader of the association said,

It is not “we don’t want this or that” and “leave us alone”, but it is for the children to feel normal instead of being thrown out of a boat psychologically and emotionally.

A view more prevalent among the Russian-speaking non-Russian communities is that the Russian schools should be there “as long as are needed, yet not in perpetuity”. They expressed their wish to have their ethnic-specific subjects (e.g. minority language, literature, history) as an addition to the general curriculum. While respective language teachers have been invited via the European Voluntary Service, serving one year at a time, this does not provide a systemic solution. As said by a non-Russian mother from a mixed family: “How is my language going to be passed on to my children?”

Conclusion

Jelgava's Russian-speaking community hosts different secondary (ethnic, religious, and political) identities. Therefore, it cannot be analysed as a social monolith (and neither can the countrywide community). As the borders of the identities do not coincide with the state borders, the case of the city tends to represent the approach proposed by Roe⁶ and Thiel⁷. The identities are transforming and are rediscovered (e.g. ethnic), yet the manifestation of traditional values (language and religion) is still persistent.

With regard to Russian speakers in Jelgava, several dynamics persist. Firstly, it is the relation to Latvian speakers. Another, clearly overlooked, is the relation between ethnic Russians and other Russian speakers. It is possible to speak of a societal security dilemma, where the securing of identities by each of the latter two groups causes a reaction of the other. Notably, a reaction can be expected from the Latvian-speaking community, too. This outlines the horizontal competition threat seen by all mentioned groups. However, the vertical competition threat perceived from the refugees, at least for the Russian speakers, has withdrawn the horizontal competition from the top of the agenda for now. A threat of depopulation is not the most important, and is not likely to overcome the expected importance of horizontal competition, unless the demographic situation gets far worse than under current predictions.

Russians in Jelgava relate to ethnic Latvians, representing the agenda of the whole Russian-speaking community. Fear of changes affecting Russian schools is transposed as a possible challenge to all Russian speakers who would send their children to educational institutions that instruct in Russian rather than Latvian. Some Russian speakers, other than ethnic Russians, regard Latvian speakers as *primus inter pares* of all communities present. This may reflect a

⁶ Roe, P. (2005). *Ethnic Violence and the Societal Security Dilemma*. (Abingdon: Routledge).

⁷ Thiel, M. (2007). Identity, societal security and regional integration in Europe. *Jean Monnet/Robert Schuman Paper Series*, Vol. 7, No. 6, April 2007. Available at: http://aei.pitt.edu/8175/1/Thiel_IDsocietSec_long07_edi.pdf (accessed 3 February 2016).

feeling of being a minority within a minority, trying to avoid the threat of absorption as just a fraction of the Russian-speaking population. They support Latvian as the sole official language more definitely, despite it not being their native tongue, and defend it on utilitarian and moral grounds ("single master of the house"). This illustrates the concerns they see in potential friction between local ethnic Latvians and Russians, should there be no clear titular nation.

In the terms of Nussbaum's concept of central human capabilities⁸, challenges to life and senses, imagination and thought are not pertinent to the current agenda of Jelgava's Russian-speaking community. At the same time, external factors such as conflicts in Ukraine and Syria, raise the perception of possible threats in the future. A potential spread of conventional regional warfare or clashes with the culturally diverse refugees is discussed as the most important fear, yet has no immediate effect on individual security and general freedom in the opinions of the community stakeholders.

The emotions capability, including a critical assessment of what is good, is inhibited by the media reporting on the said external threats which is perceived as polarised and effectively partial. Attachment to other people has been among the notable effects of the conflict in Ukraine upon the local Russian speakers. Meanwhile, youths find the least problems in building plans for life, notably because of their ability to see themselves in a European setting, instead of it being simply national.

The affiliations capability is inhibited by barriers in the community-wise social interaction due to the views held on the conflict in Ukraine. Threats of exclusion on this account make individuals review their own belonging to one or another community or group. For example, it has motivated some people to renounce their culturally inherited religious identity. Religious identity for Russian speakers in Jelgava serves as an extension of linguistic identity,

⁸ Nussbaum, M. C. (2003). Capabilities as Fundamental Entitlements: Sen and Social Justice. *Feminist Economics*, Vol. 9, Nos. 2–3.

satisfying the needs for socialising (the play capability) and sharing common socio-political values. However, it has also served as a vehicle facilitating exclusion due to politicisation of affiliations.

With regard to identity, local Russian speakers have several. Some even have a stronger belonging to Latvia than some Latvians themselves, whereas others do not feel as though they belong to either Latvia or their ethnic homeland, yet hold Putin as their guiding star. Russian speakers other than Russian hold a secondary yet persistent ethnic identity, which makes the dynamics of how they relate to Latvians different to that of local Russians. Formal bilingualism or domination of a dyad of two main cultures would make them a minority within a minority instead of being one of all other minorities. This threatens their capabilities to sustain a distinct cultural identity.

Parts of the Russian-speaking community are genuinely keen on integration, embracing the Latvian language and belonging to Latvia. However, communal opinion makers have been reserved towards further integration (e.g., formally reviewing the role of the Russian language in public life). At the same time, we cannot talk about a status quo or cohabitation model between two quite defined communities “coexisting”, as it might have been in the early 1990s; the breakdown of communal separation following democratisation, as well as national and European-wide mobility for labour and education has made the Russian-speaking community change from within.

Russian speakers perceive societal security issues as inhibiting inclusion. However, they have been successful in working out strategies how to overcome the issues through utilitarian and, to a lesser extent, moral motivation. Simultaneously, no issue is challenging societal security to a point where anti-social and anti-systemic measures might be pursued by the Russian speakers to address any given question. Furthermore, in contrast to the definition given by Buzan, external threats have played a greater role in the perception of Russian speakers and their internal cohesion.

Jelgava exhibits a trade-off model of inclusion, as it is more plausible than the others. Although practically bilingual, the local

society is not separated along this line. Ethnic and religious identities, though secondary, are persistent, and showcase different affiliations within the local Russian-speaking community. We, therefore, cannot speak of just two communities that coexist under a precondition of adequate stability. Additionally, full integration is perceived as neither being pursued by the state, nor by the Russian speakers themselves. Thus, a formation of a single integrated community is not expected in the near future. On the other hand, youths are more rational, driven by utilitarian motivation. They look at the mobility opportunities they have as Europeans and interact to become more connected, overcome misinformation and pursue their individual personal and professional goals through mutually beneficial strategies with regard to Latvian speakers.



Conclusions

The study presented in the book is a picture, a camera shot captured by young scholars. The picture reveals the diversity of the Russian-speaking community in Latvia. It does not provide explanations to many questions that have been part of the public debate since Latvia regained its independence in the early 1990s, related to societal security; how to integrate 30 per cent of the population, of which approximately one-third identifies itself strongly with the state and society, one-third distances itself from independent Latvia, because of sentiments regarding the Soviet past, described as “the best thing that happened in their lives” and opts for self-exclusion, and one-third has been unable to decide on their self-identification for more than twenty years, namely, whether or not their lives should be based on a set of western or eastern values. The research was aimed at searching for arguments to support the choices made by Russian speakers regarding their affiliation with the state, society and other communities.

The main concept behind the analysis of the empirical data — interviews, focus group discussions, and secondary sources — is societal security. Despite the fact that the number and diversity of threats, risks, and vulnerabilities, which influence the quality of life and sustainability of the identity of groups and society at large, has only increased in the last decade, the same trends have not been monitored in the realm of security studies. On the one hand, there is a demand to “deepen and widen” the concept, due to the need for explanatory tools for migration, terrorism, international conflicts, populism, and many other trends. On the other hand, the dominance of hard security issues at international level take over the



security agenda, placing societal issues in the category of second-rank concepts. Aside from the theme of ranking, it is almost impossible to neglect relevant factors for societal security issues in the future, such as resilience, societal resilience, securitability (building individual and group security strategies based on central human capabilities), inclusion–exclusion, and, most importantly, the societal security dilemma.

The traditional concepts also need revision. There are several reasons demanding an upgrade of them, whether these are tendencies of a transnational character supported by development of communication and transport technologies, which create a background for virtual means of sustainability of minorities, or formation of powerful minorities challenging the majority in society. Reconsidered concepts are needed for comprehensive and evidence-based policies, which could replace failed or stagnating societal integration strategies.

One of the most evident risks to societies in terms of security, that is also experienced in Latvia, is hybrid threats. In recent years, there have been enough studies revealing the essence of the concept and its application in many countries, most evidently in Ukraine. However, there is still a shortage of studies explaining and proposing how to build, “an ability by society or a community to deflect, withstand and cope with adverse situations, including internal and external impacts, by using its own qualities, abilities, knowledge, and resources that are accumulated and exercised in a networked and mutually reinforcing strategy, continuously developed at individual and community level across society”, emphasised by R. Bambals in his chapter.

The conclusion made in several chapters of the book underlines that the Russian-speaking community in Latvia is not concerned about its identity. The identity of Russians has not become a core of societal security and is not threatened either by the state or other social groups. Their concerns are the same as those of the Latvian-speaking community, namely, the economic situation in the country, well-being of their families, health care, and personal security.

The Russian speakers who left Latvia for other EU Member States also emphasise that their motivation was based on economic and social considerations, rather than threats to their identity.

In the economic sector, Russian speakers are well integrated and there is no evidence of discrimination or exclusion. However, there are certain risks deriving from their position in the economic structure of the country that should be monitored. For instance, the high level of employment of Russian speakers in such sectors as transit, transport which is vulnerable to geopolitical tensions or rapid changes in global markets, can leave an impact on the well-being of those employed in the sector and society at large. Therefore, decisions taken by the government to improve competitiveness in the sector, as well as diversification of its client base and development of alternative transportation routes and services, is a sign of resilience.

The behaviour of Russian speakers on social networks does not differ from their Latvian peers. Instead of relying on Russian language social networks, such as *Odnoklassniki.ru*, *Vkontakte.ru*, they prefer the most popular in Latvia, *Facebook* and *Draugiem.lv*. However, this fact does not provide any proof that two linguistic communities meet on social networks, at the same time however, there are no signs of self-exclusion from those platforms and switching to Russian ones. The fact that social media is not trusted as a source of information about political events proves that there are limited opportunities to utilise social networks for political mobilisation on a large scale. Additionally, Russian speakers are well aware of the information warfare taking place in virtual space.

Bilingual education in schools is one of the social integration tools determined by laws and policy methods. Interviews with students in the secondary schools of Latvia indicated that the younger generation is as diverse as the Russian-speaking community in general. The assumption that with generational changes there will be less problems with Latvian language proficiency, inclusion, and intolerance issues does not prove to be true. Russian speakers living in Latvian-dominated areas (Zemgale and Kurzeme regions) do not feel excluded from Latvian society and do not tend to distance

themselves for the purpose of protecting their language and identity. On the contrary, their sense of belonging to Latvia is very high and they associate their future with the country they are living in, while in such regions as the city of Riga and region of Latgale, due to the widespread of the Russian language and tools of influence used by Russian “public diplomacy” — media, culture, text books in schools, and many others, Russian speakers prefer self-exclusion, because of self-sufficiency, instead of expressing an interest in becoming an integral part of Latvian society. In Riga, for example, students are more critical about bilingual education and more resistant to learning the Latvian language. In the education sector, the societal security dilemma is more visible than in others. Russian speakers consider that Latvians are hostile and perceive them as outsiders, while interviews with the Latvian students demonstrate the opposite. One of the reasons behind the above mentioned misconception is a high level of instrumentalisation of the issue by politicians, and a lack of permanent communication between the two linguistic communities.

In terms of consumption of culture and leisure, there are more similarities than differences among the two linguistic groups. The research showed that the main difference lies in the intensity of the consumption; at state level there is a growing trend of inactive Russian speakers to participate and consume less cultural and leisure activities, but concerning active Russian speakers, their behaviour is similar to Latvians. Since Latvian culture is more supported by the government, the Russian-speaking community perceives it as a potential risk to Russian culture in the country. In the focus group interviews carried out in Pentecostal religious communities, another trend was evident — they distinguished culture in secular and Christian terms. Despite the diversity of respondents, almost all expressed their respect towards Latvia and society at large. The most accurate description made of their self-identification is, “a Russian soul living in Latvia”. Amongst the Pentecostals, their knowledge of the Latvian language is not questioned, because it is accepted as the best tool of successful inclusion into Latvian

society. However, at the same time they are concerned about their children losing Russian language skills as a substantial component of identity.

Inclusion of social groups in a wider societal fabric can take place with participation in the non-governmental organisations. The study of the NGO sector operating in the Russian-speaking community in Latvia, proved that it is weak and underdeveloped. There are two distinct groups of NGOs where Russian speakers participate; one is formed by organisations serving social purposes and formed at local level and the other has a clear political agenda and financial support from the Russian Federation. On the one hand, those NGOs argue that they pursue social integration and inclusion of Russian speakers into Latvian society, but the tools they choose serve quite the opposite — exclusionist strategy, self-isolation, and reluctance to accept Western values. These organisations can be characterised by politicisation and close ties with certain Russian-dominated political parties. A high level of centralisation, hierarchy, polarisation (ties with political parties), and financial resources provide the necessary capabilities to monopolise “the voice” of Russian speakers in Latvia.

In addition, the ideas promoted by the non-governmental sector in Latvia do not always coincide with the views held by the Russian-speaking population in this country. These public organisations are prone to depict the existing problems as considerably deeper than they actually are; this is related to the attempts to attract funding from Russia, maintain their public profile and secure other similar organisational survival-dictated activities. As a result, the ethnic stereotype promoted by the Russian-speaking NGOs in Latvia, which is greatly influenced by the imposed ideology and politicised ethnic conscience, is often in obvious contradiction to the ethnic stereotype which characterises the majority of the relatively apolitical Russian-speaking population in Latvia.

In the future, there are at least three options available for how to approach the inclusion–exclusion dilemma. The first is a continuation of the current (though recognised as ineffective) societal

integration policy based on Latvian language proficiency. There is no question that Latvian language is *a must* and *the only tool* which provides a background for communication between different ethnic and linguistic groups, serving the purpose of a coherent society. But, as several studies including this one, prove, there is no direct link between a knowledge of the Latvian language and loyalty to the Latvian state and acceptance of a common future. Loyalty to the Russian Federation and its leader can be expressed in different languages. The Latvian language does not cause immunity to policies threatening societal security. The second option is to preserve the status quo or pursue the cohabitation model, which in Latvia's case would correspond to the model of two linguistic communities. In this case, both are self-sufficient. They are inclusive *within* but are exclusive from *outside* their borders. Such a relationship between the communities could exist, except there is one "if", namely, Russia's compatriot policy based on using all available means, including military, in order to protect them and achieve the aim of *Russification*. Manifestation of this policy was observed in Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014. The geopolitical location of Latvia, its ethnic composition, and diversity of attitudes and views among the Russian-speaking community are not favourable to societal security. Therefore, the above mentioned policy options cannot be treated as feasible and contributing to societal security. The third option is based on an assumption that more integration or imposed integration does not automatically solve the societal security dilemma, but can cause the opposite effect and lead to self-exclusion, making this particular group exposed to manipulation from outside, which ultimately threatens societal and national security. Continuous communication among the different communities and acceptance of the multiplicity of identities is the only tool that will assist in overcoming the existing stereotypes and misconceptions, to foster a coherent society which, ultimately, will enhance societal security.



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