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Ethnic Structure, Inequality and Governance of the Public Sector in Latvia

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Introduction

This report discusses the issue of ethnic equality and governance in respect to socio-political stability in Latvia from the historic perspective. Latvia, just like the overwhelming majority of modern states is multi-ethnic and multi-cultural country. Latvian history and geography is a relevant factor in order to understand the dynamics of ethnic relations and ethnopolitics. Geopolitically, Latvia is squeezed on the shores of the Baltic between larger powers, Russia, Germany, Poland, and Sweden. Time to time, each of these countries was eager to dominate the region and its population by political, economic, and cultural means thus influencing Latvia's ethnic composition as well as ethnic relations. During the two World Wars of the 20th century, country was twice turned into extensive war zone. It has experienced several occupations and dominance of totalitarian ideologies. Latvia was ruled by democratic, authoritarian, and totalitarian regimes one after another. It has experienced market economy as well as centralized communist rule. Its population went through economically wealthy periods and faced hunger. People of Latvia have experienced respect and humanity in their mutual relations just like they have been facing terror, humiliation, deportations and death.

Most of political analysts would argue that these are not conditions favouring independent and democratic statehood. Indeed, the world, even Europe knows dozens of ethnic groups and nations much larger in size and in economic power which never have experienced their own statehood.

However, Latvia seems successfully avoiding established clichés. First, it has emerged like a salamander out of fire of the First World War. Afterwards, it emerged from the ruins of the Soviet Empire claiming its presence on the world map once more after 50 years forgetness.

Apart of peculiarities allowing Latvia to achieve its nationhood, country is particularly interesting case for ethnic studies. Before the Second World War, ethnic Latvians, comprised more than 70% of total population. Other ethnic groups were in size under 10% each. Therefore, because of this relative ethnic unipolarity with one large ethnic group and several small ones, it was relatively easily to create the newly established Latvia as nation-state. Along with this previous socio-political traditions as well as international environment facilitated the Latvian politicians to formulate minority policy granting minorities broad spectrum of collective rights for instance educational autonomy. However, the facilitation of ethnic differences and various ethnic and linguistic identities did not culminate into integrated political and cultural community. Relatively large number of minority representatives remained alienated from the state institutions also after a longer period of time. It served as one of the reasons for the authoritarian government of 1930s to rethink the project of the nation-state building. It resulted in decrease of liberal concessions and rights given to minority groups. An attempt was made to increase cultural and political homogeneity by curtailing collective rights and identities of minorities.

Ultimately largest impact to ethnic relations and ethnopolitics was made by the Soviet occupation lasting for more than two generations. It has left heavy inheritance making interwar minority-majority quarrels seem irrelevant compared to current day integration issues. Unprecedented migration amounts facilitated social and ethnic diversity along with ethnic tension during the years of Soviet occupation. On the eve of second republic, share of ethnic Latvians decreased to 52% in 1989 making this ethnic majority feeling threatened and questioning its chances for linguistic and cultural continuity.

Number of political scientists as well as politicians were arguing that country has become bipolar according to its actual dynamics. There were suggestions to institutionalize bipolarity by taking as an example case of Belgium or Switzerland. Most of these suggestions were made from the fear of possibility of ethnic violence where Latvians would insist on restoring the unipolar state while ethnic Slavonic immigrants would resist any attempts to decrease concessions given to their language and power during the Soviet era.

However, during the last decade restored Latvia has been firmly developing its institutions and society in the direction of multicultural as well as unipolar state. At the same time it successfully avoided ethnic violence scenarios which took place in similar multiethnic and post Soviet environments like Moldova or former Yugoslavia.

In fact it might be argued that promotion of ethnic unipolarity along with generally unquestioned support to democratic market reforms domestically and orientation towards Latvian integration in European and Transatlantic organisations internationally assisted to avoid and overcome threats of ethnic tension.

Moreover, from today's perspective it is possible to argue that another approach, namely institutionalization of bipolarity would obviously facilitate the ethnic tension. More than this, it would never let Latvia reach its goal of EU and NATO membership which by itself is an important guarantee of political stability, democracy and human rights in Latvia. Acceptance of bipolarity in the Latvian post-Soviet circumstances would eventually be based on automatic inclusion of Soviet era immigrants in the Latvian body politic. Their relative size and political orientation would keep *de jure* the Russian language as official tongue of the country as well as create a strong Russia orientated power elite eventually sceptical of market, EU, and NATO orientated reforms. This elite would be able to count on Russia's international support since the last would be interested in retaining its influence in its former Baltic territories. Such scenario would further radicalise large segments of ethnic Latvian population which would not find their rights and political ideals reflected in the re-established country.

By saying this it should be also stressed that it is wrong to suggest that Latvian society has completed its transition as far as ethnic integration. Many mistakes have been committed and despite of the ethnic stability, Latvian authorities did not yet succeed to integrate large segments of minority population. As latest data on EU referendum shows, "yes" vote was mainly gained due to ethnic Latvian support while percentage of

Eurosceptics among ethnic Russians is corresponding to Latviansceptics within this group.

Ethnic integration remains a goal to be reached. There still remain number of unanswered questions to be tested over a larger time frame. For instance, what is going to happen with the young generation of Soviet era immigrants? Will they increasingly chose Latvian identity or will struggle to return to their parent's identity and political views? What will be Russia's impact on ethnic integration processes in Latvia after country joins EU and NATO? Will Russian political elite accept unipolar tendencies or resist them?

Important aspect of unipolar Latvian perspective is cooperation between ethnic Latvian and Russian elites and politicians. Until present, there were no coalition government established which would include Russian orientated parties. Minority representatives were included only as individuals taking part in the parties supported by mainly ethnic Latvian voters. It must be noted that in the interwar Latvia parties were more clearly formed according to ethnic groups compared to the second republic, but at the same time minority parties were also frequent partners of coalition governments. At present, no serious party is willing to present itself as ethnically orientated party. However, party dynamics prove ethnicity to be important voting argument.

One of the reasons for minority exclusion from governance at the present stage is question of their political orientation. It is assumed that Russian orientated parties present the political model facilitating Latvia's orientation towards Russia and preservice of privileges given to Russian language during the Soviet era thus undermining the development of harmonious and integrated multicultural Latvian society.

Compared to interwar period, minority society has become larger, more monolithic, more sizable and therefore more self-sufficient. Compared to the interwar period, minority society is almost only Russian speaking and in majority consists of relatively late immigrated individuals what makes it more politically orientated towards former regime or in the best case towards emerging strong neighbour Russia.

On this basis, the hypothesis can be suggested that present day Latvia has a larger potential for the ethnic tension compared to the interwar republic while the degree of ethnic integration in both political systems is comparable.

It is the main argument of this research that in the long term, institutionalization and promotion of unipolarity within the framework of liberal democracy and international minority rights will facilitate the decrease of ethnic tension.

This research insists that unipolarity project is the only viable way to avoid ethnic tension in the future Latvia. It should be implemented while simultaneously granting a relative degree of public recognition to various minority identities with particular stress on previously discriminated small minorities who were denied any recognition under the Soviet rule and which continue to be marginal ethnic groups in the present day Latvia.

This research consists of three major parts in order to bolster the main argument. The first part deals with ethnic structures and governance in the first republic (1918-1940). Precisely, in this time the vision of peaceful coexistence of various ethnic groups in one

country was institutionalized. Coexistence was based on the idea of minority autonomy granting broad public recognition to minority communities in Latvia. Minorities enjoyed state financed educational and linguistic autonomy. Politically, they were mainly organized in ethnic parties while ethnic Latvians based their political participation on traditional left right cleavage. In general, the economic positions of minorities were disproportionally strong. On the eve of the Soviet occupation, however, the degree of minority integration in the mainstream society can be strongly discussed. According to this research there is obvious lack of proof that broad minority cultural autonomy of the interwar period *per se* facilitated the establishment of integrated and thus harmonious civil society.

Following this argument, first chapter will give insight in ethnic composition of the Latvian society at the beginning of 20th century. It will discuss ethnic representation in politics and economics, as well as linguistic and educational policy of the republic.

The second chapter will deal with Latvia under the Soviet rule. It is particularly important period since it irreversibly changed Latvian society, politics and economics. During the changes of regime, several minorities were lost while number of Slavic origin immigrants drastically increased with following consequences of linguistic Russification. Ironically, but it is possible to argue that despite or thanks to the Soviet ideology ethnocultural identification along community lines within the overall society continued to be stressed. Thus, on the one hand it helped to preserve some ethnic identities (Latvian) while on the other hand it hindered to overcome ethnic community limits and did not facilitate integration.

In order to describe and analyse the situation, migration patterns will be discussed. Ethnic representation in occupied Latvia's institutions presented. Major sources of ethno-political tension will be revealed.

The third chapter will discuss the current state of affairs in Latvia as far as ethnic equality and governance is concerned. Chapter will start with an overview of the issues that underpinned the national and democratic movement for independence. Political actors and parties involved in this process will be discussed and the major issues of public debate of majority-minority relations revealed.

Afterwards, there will be waste material on ethnic composition of state institutions and enterprises. Data on parliament, municipalities, power structures, as well as business and education sphere will be discussed. At the end will be presented statistics on changes in language skills and inter-ethnic attitudes among population.

On the basis of given analysis conclusions will be made about dilemma of bipolar versus unipolar policies as reflection of the current state of affairs or construction tools with an ultimate goal to ease the ethnic tension and bolster social cohesion.

As far as methodology is concerned, for the period of analysis covering about 100 years, not always comparable data can be presented. Statistical methods and points of interest of statistical institutions may differ in various historic periods. As far as Soviet period is discussed, not all data are trustable. In general, statistics on Latvia can be regarded as satisfactory for the research purposes.

This research is based on available official statistics, archive materials, secondary sources and quantitative surveys. Part of data, especially on the current state of things is compiled during two last years interviewing various persons in state institutions and academic circles. Part of data on ethnic representation was collected during another research done by author in 2001. The research was dealing with occupational representation and ethnic discrimination Latvia. Part of materials was collected via posted questionnaire.¹

1. Part

Ethnic Equality, Governance and Political Stability in the Interwar Latvia (1918-1940)

Regardless of the existence or absence of independent nationhood, Latvia has never been a monoethnic society. At least for several centuries, along with Latvians there were living a number of ethnic minorities having various share of power. Coexistence of various ethnic groups on the same territory and under the same political regime frequently rises the question about the integrity of this population. Do these groups live together or they just live along each other? Do values and loyalties overcome the ethnic boundaries within the overall society? What influence structure and principles of ethnic relations have on power distribution and political stability? These are some of the questions this chapter will try to answer in order to give a clearer overview of ethnic relations and ethnic policy in interwar Latvia. The historical discourse is highly relevant in order to understand how and why contemporary Latvian ethnic policy was constructed in one and not in another way. First, this chapter will briefly introduce to origins of ethnic diversity in Latvia. Afterwards, description and analysis of interwar ethnic situation in various socio-political spheres will be given.

A Brief History of Ethnic Structure and Origins of the Ethnically Diverse Latvian Society

The Latvian nation formation process was influenced by several factors, such as:

- Invasion of the German led crusaders in 13th century ;
- Introduction of school system by the Swedish Crown in 17th century ;
- Contribution of the German romanticists and humanists to the Latvian ethnic awareness (17th-18th centuries) ;
- Abolishing of the serfdom in early 19th century.

¹The data derive from responses received to written requests sent in 2001 to state institutions, municipal governments, state enterprises and private companies to provide information about the ethnic origin of persons employed or elected. Data are available from 23 local governments and 7 of the largest cities, almost all government ministries, army, police, municipal police, the largest state enterprises (in terms of persons employed), 17 of 60 private companies addressed, and 19 institutions of higher learning. Private companies were asked to provide supplementary answers on attitudes of employers and employees towards ethnically mixed staff and on whether ethnicity influenced choice of employee or employed. Private companies were also asked about the ethnic origin of management. Private companies were guaranteed confidentiality. Subsequently, the results obtained from the information requests were analysed and discussed in interviews with minority employees in state institutions and in business and with other experts.

Finally, the Latvian ethnic nation has consolidated during the cultural awakening in the mid-19th century. According to Ernest Gellner's terminology, Latvians entered the 20th century as bride still waiting for its groom, the nation state (Gellner 1997: 50-59). Only in 1918-1920, the nation-state was established on the ruins of the Russian Empire and defended in the Independence War against German and Soviet troops.

Minorities

There is no assured data on the ethnic structure of the Latvian society before the nation-state. Data is complicated to get, because the first population census in the Baltic's was made only in 1887. Additionally, the contemporary Latvian territory was not united in one administrative unit until the establishment of the nation state in 1918. Also the principles of census were not always identical. Ethnicity was determinate either by religion or native language.

According to some researchers in 1887, in the later territory of Latvia, ethnic Latvians constituted about 68 per cent of all inhabitants. The rest of the population were made up of four largest minorities, Jews, Germans, Russians, and Poles (Skujenieks 1930).

After the establishment of Latvian state in 1918 as a consequence of war and migration process, the ethnic Latvian share increased to 76 per cent in 1920 and remained relatively intact until Soviet invasion in 1940 (See Table 1.1).

Table No.1.1 Ethnic Heterogeneity of the Latvian Population before and during the First republic

Ethnicity	1887		1920		1930		1935	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Latvians	1,318,112	68	1,154,849	76	1,394,957	73	1,472,612	75
Jews	142,315	7,4	78,777	5,2	94,388	4,9	93,479	4,8
Germans	120,191	6,2	57,921	3,8	69,855	3,6	62,144	3,2
Russians	232,204 ²	12	82,360	5,6	201,778	11	206,499	11
Poles	65,056	3,4	42,064	2,7	59,743	3,1	48,948	2,5

Sources: (Skujenieks 1930; Skujenieks 1937).

The Russians

The Russian minority was the largest and one of the oldest non-native ethnic groups in interwar Latvia. Despite the fact that there are references to ethnic Russian merchants even in the middle age Baltic towns, their numeric presence remained marginal until the very 19th century when Baltic territory and Finland were included in the Russian Empire. For instance, in the early 19th century in two (Kurzeme, Zemgale) out of three Latvian provinces lived only about 800 ethnic Russians (Volkovs 1996:7). However, in 1881, the were already

² According to researcher Vladislav Volkov, this number was only 171,000, since there should not be included other ethnic slavs, for example, Belorussians (Author).

about 20.000 ethnic Russians in the same two provinces (Volkovs 1996:7). At the end of 19th century, Russians become the largest minority in Latvia. At the same time, the largest minority can be regarded as youngest minority since its size increased relatively lately.

Theoretically, the influx of Russians into Latvia may be divided into three immigration waves. The first considerable groups of Russian settlers appeared as early as in the 16th and the 17th centuries. They were the first Russian political refugees and religious dissidents seeking protection from the repressions of the Russian Tsar. They were called the "Old Believers" because they refused to accept liturgical reforms and growing interference by Russian Tsars into church affairs. The majority of them settled in the Eastern part of Latvia. In 1935, there were 107,000 "Old Believers", who constituted almost half of Latvia's Russian population (Šilde 1976: 462). At the end of the 19th century, the second great wave of Russian immigration reached Latvia. During the administrative russification and industrial revolution, a large number of state and army officials and workers moved in. The biggest social source of Russian newcomers was Russian peasants fleeing from Russia to autonomous Baltic province because of the widespread religious and social oppression (Volkovs 1996: 121). Mainly, Russian newcomers were settled in the eastern part of Latvia and in the cities. However, during World War I, the consequent evacuation of factories and their work force led to a considerable reduction in size of these Russians in Latvia. In 1918, at the beginning of the First republic, the Russian population was only half of their pre-war number (Volkovs 1996: 124).

Later, the heterogeneity as well as number of the Russian population in Latvia increased with the arrival of asylum seeking refugees from Soviet Russia, including former Russian army officers, intellectuals, and representatives of many other social groups (Lieven 1993: 182). In 1930, there were 202,000 Russians, who constituted 10.6 per cent of Latvia's population (see Table 1.1). During the 1920s and 1930s, the vast majority of ethnic Russians lived in the countryside, mostly in Latgale (Ceichners 1930). Almost all of the rest (14 per cent of the whole minority group) were situated in Riga (Skujenieks 1937: 374). During the first years of Latvian independence, Riga became the largest centre of Russian immigrants after Paris. Despite of the migration patterns, the number of the ethnic Russians in the inter-war Latvia increased mainly due to noticeably high birth rates (Volkovs 1996: 125). The structure of the Russian minority suggests that it differed from many other traditional minorities by its composition. Except, first migration wave the large part of ethnic Russians were either migrant labour, or military, administrators, and post revolution political refugees lacking deep roots in the Latvian socio-cultural environment. In other words, lack of ethnic

base on the territory of Latvia, relatively brief association with it are the main characteristics differing Russians from other minorities in the interwar Latvia.

The Jews

The second largest ethnic minority in Latvia after the Russians were the Jews. Historically, the Jewish population has been present in Latvia for almost 500 years (Bregmanis 1990: 121). The Jewish population consisted of different groups of Jewish settlers who had come to Latvia from both East and West. Originally, they were Western merchants entering new markets and refugees from the Ukraine, Poland and Russia, who had escaped from frequent pogroms and were looking for more safe environments (Bregmanis 1990: 120). Just like early Russian immigrants, many Jews were finding in the Baltic's, the relative safe heaven from the social, economic and political oppression. The first Jewish community on the territory of Latvia was developed in Piltene since 1570 (Dribins et al 2001: 10).

During the late 19th century industrial revolution, Russian administration abolished settlement restrictions earlier imposed on Jews. New conditions and opportunities contributed the Jewish immigration to Latvia. In 1881, in Kurzeme (Courland) Jews were already 8,2% of total population. They comprised 32% of town dwellers and in some towns like Tukums, Bauska, and Jaunjelgava, share of the ethnic Jewish population was almost or more than 50% out of total (Dribins et al 2001: 19). Also the cities of Latgale, the Latvian eastern part were Jewish in character.

In 1930, there were 94,000 Jews in Latvia, 4.8 per cent of the total population (see Table1.1). Around 47 per cent of the Jewish minority lived in Riga, while almost all of the rest were situated in Latgale and smaller towns (Rezekne, Daugavpils, etc.) in Eastern Latvia (Skujenieks 1937). Jews remained the second largest ethnic minority in Latvia until the Second World War and following Soviet and Nazi occupations. Jews can be regarded as traditional minority, a genuine part of overall society. Its status as such being reflected even in the Latvian folklore like famous Mid-Summer Eve play by Rudolfs Blaumanis.

The Baltic Germans

The first evidence of the German presence in the Baltic's is connected with merchants, crusaders, and missionaries in 12th century. After, in 1199, Pope Innocent III announced the Crusade against the Balts, influx of German nobility, merchants, artisans, public servants, and pilgrims began (Dribins et al 2000: 255). By the end of 13th century, the ethnic Germans constituted about 7-8% of all residents (Dribins et al 2000: 255). In the 18th century, the German nobility was joined by a significant number of German intellectuals and peasants.

During and shortly after World War I, the German population decreased due to massive emigration to Germany, but in the early 1920s, around 70,000 Germans were left.

The Baltic Germans were the third largest ethnic minority in the interwar republic. In 1920, around 3.8 per cent of Latvia's total population was made up of Germans (Garleff 1978).

The vast majority of them had become highly urbanized, and approximately 62 per cent of all Baltic Germans lived in Riga. Smaller numbers of Germans could be found in other Latvian towns. The Baltic Germans living in the countryside were concentrated mainly in the villages of Irši (Hirschenhof) and Altiena (Helfreichshof) in settlements with a few thousand German peasants, who had been living there since 1760s. Their relative separateness from the surrounding Latvian population had allowed them to preserve their national identity and customs for generations. As a minority community in Latvia, the Baltic Germans ceased to exist during the Second World War due to consequences of the Stalin-Hitler Pact which facilitated the removal of the German minority from Latvia to Nazi Germany. Despite of centuries of political tension between the Germans and the Latvians, also Baltic Germans can be regarded as traditional minority with deep cultural roots in Latvia.

The Poles

The Poles were the fourth largest group and one of the oldest traditional ethnic minorities in Latvia. The first considerable number of Poles appeared in Latvia due to changing state borders: in 1561, the Polish Kingdom obtained the Eastern part of Latvia, and later a number of Latvian peasants adopted a Polish cultural identity within Latvia (Jekabsons 1993). One of the basic features of the Polish minority was its relatively social and political homogeneity, a feature which strengthened its power position in Latvia. Before World War II, the Polish minority constituted approximately 3 per cent of Latvia's population and was thus regarded as an influential ethnic group in the country (See Table 1.1). Around 32 per cent of the Polish minority lived in Riga, whereas almost all the rest was situated in Latgale.(Skujenieks 1937; Jēkabsons 1993: 100).

Apart of above mentioned largest minorities, inter-war Latvia had number of smaller ethnic groups living in their territory. As far as numbers, distinguished should be Byelorussians. Historically, there were arguments about the number of persons of Byelorussian origin living in Latvia due to their weak and changing self-identification. Thus, in 1920, according to some authors there were almost 75 thousand Byelorussians living in Latvia. However, already in 1935 there were registered only 26 thousand Byelorussians (Apine 1995: 83-85).

Minorities mentioned above have several features in common. First, the majority of the Germans, Jews, Russians, and Poles have been living in Latvia for centuries before the establishment of the Latvian nation state in 1918. Therefore, they were perceived by Latvians as traditional minorities.

Second, three of the ethnic groups discussed above, namely the Germans, the Russians and the Poles, were representatives of former colonial powers and historically they disproportionately represented the upper strata of society. Frequently, the belonging to these particular ethnic groups guaranteed the place in the upper social strata in the period prior to the Latvian nation-state.

Third, frequently claims for collective rights were made on behalf of these groups after the establishment of the Latvian state. Mainly because of correlation between three factors, the ethnic characteristics, traditionally dominant socio-economic role, and deep historic roots of these minorities in Latvia.

Socio-Economic Position of Minorities Before the Independence

Before the establishment of the Latvian nation-state, the Russians and the Germans were largely dominating Latvian politics, economics and culture due to consequences of historical conquests and undemocratic regime of the Empire. The Latvians and the Jews were ethnicities frequently facing limits to up-ward mobility and/or being the most exposed to discrimination based on ethnic or social origin.

Russians

During the last decades of Tsarist time in Latvia, ethnic Russians as Empire nation dominated and were over represented in such spheres as administration and police, Army, and Church affairs. At the end of 19th century, ethnic Russians out of total Latvian population were not more than 12 per cent while in the army they were between 70-80 per cent, among administration and police in Kurzeme and Zemgale region there were 17% ethnic Russians, in Zemgale, 30%, in Vidzeme, but in Daugavpils district 45%.³ During the last decades of 19th century, Russian representation increased in the education sphere which was undergoing Russification policy. As a result about 90% of Latvian teachers lost their jobs due to insufficient knowledge of Russian (Klīve 1969: 15). The Russification policies and following administrative amendments of 1888 and 1889 replaced the German dominated institutions with the Russian police and court system. A majority of employees there were ethnic Russians. Differently, from previous ethnic German administrators, Russian bureaucrats were without any knowledge of the native languages (Thaden 1981:241) and did not have roots in the local community. The largest

social group among Russians were peasants (54%), while middle class (administrators, merchants, industrialists) were about 35% but nobleman made up 8% (Volkovs 1996: 120).

Germans

If ethnic Russians, before the independence were dominating in the Empire administration, ethnic Germans were particularly dominating in both, administration and economics. The Baltic German gentry played a leading role in autonomous administration of the Baltic's until the late 19th century. Baltic Germans were also actively involved in the administration of whole Empire. Hundreds of Baltic German officers served in the Russian military. 760 officers, including 69 generals participated in the Russian war against Napoleon. German autonomy and political power was challenged by the Russification at the end of 19th century. Administration, courts and education became fully Russian. The exception was largest towns where Germans have kept the political control due to the high property census which was the conditions for political participation. German situation improved at the beginning of 20th century, shortly before the revolution of 1905-1907 (Dribins et al 2000:258-259).

As far as economics, according to Hiden Hiden 1987: 82), before World War I, 85% of Latvian industry belonged to owners of German origin, while Jews held strong position in trade. In agriculture, since the 19th century, class privileges based on ethnic origin combined with the unsolved agrarian question had been among the basic sources of social and national tension in Latvia, including the revolution 1905. The Baltic-German nobility possessed around 1,640 estates larger than 2,000 hectares each, while 61 per cent of the Latvian peasants were landless (Balodis 1957: 364).

Jews

As far as the Jewish were concerned they were culturally and politically discriminated during whole Tsarist period in Latvia. However, compared to the rest of the Empire, the local Baltic German administration showed relative tolerance towards Jews (Dribins 1996:9). Frequently, the emerging Latvian nationalists have seen Jews as natural political allies against the Tsarist regime. Statistics show, that in the last decade of the Russian Empire ethnic Jews and Latvians were disproportionably much involved in the leftist Bolshevik movement. According to data published by the Latvian historian Guntars Ābols estimated that in 1906 out of 10.000 Latvians 80 were leftist party members. Out of 10.000 Jews more than 100 were leftist party members. Compared to ethnic Russians, where from each 10.000 only 6 were involved in leftist politics (Abols 2002: 123).

Political, economic, and cultural disadvantages of ethnic Latvians as well as some other ethnicities were hoped to be eliminated after the establishment of the democratic Latvian nation-state. Moreover, political reality and the emerging international law provided that the elimination of the ethnic oppression and discrimination has to be achieved by democratic and civilised means, as much as possible avoiding revenge and involving representatives of all ethnic groups living in Latvia.

Ethnic Policy and Political Power of Minorities in the First Republic (1918-1940)

In 1918 the ethnic policy of the newly established country was shaped by vision why this state should be established. Ethnic Latvian major hope was to undo the historic injustice done by foreign rulers. First of all through democratic reforms to guarantee political and economic equality regardless of ethnic origin or social as well as cultural recognition. Previously leading German and Russian minority representatives, on their behalf hoped not to lose their economic, cultural and political positions granted by previous political regime. The eventual contradiction and possible conflicting aims were obvious. However, they were relatively successfully avoided due to political principles built in the fundament of the new republic. It must be noted that the nation-state founding fathers were under the two major influences:

- The historically long tradition of peaceful coexistence of relatively separated ethno-cultural groups. Tradition fostered by the German idealists like Fichte, and Herder was taken over by the Latvian cultural nationalists and provided the basis for idea of necessity of cultural autonomy.
- The influence of the new international law demanding democracy and cultural autonomy for minorities in the newly established nation-states after the First World War. The last factor demands more attention in this research since the international settings largely influenced also the ethnic policy of the post-Soviet Latvia in 1990s.

International Framework

The ethnic policy of the new state was heavily dependent on the requirements of dominating world powers concerning its ethnic policy. Only by following newly proclaimed international standards could Latvia gain the international legitimacy and support needed so badly by the new country. The winners of the war attempted to build the Post-World War I relations between countries and nations on completely new principles of coexistence in order to avoid future political turbulences. The new perception of world order implied the recognition of the national collective rights of all earlier oppressed nations through the democratic principle of national self-determination. However, the acknowledgment of new political nations was tied up with the demand to create democratic governmental systems. In this way the new international policy aimed to secure an alliance between nationalism and democracy. Wilson, the then President of the United States, expressed idealistic concerns for the rights of small nations and announced

National self-determination to be a moral principle essential for the achievement of justice and peace in the world (Claude 1955: 11). However, the principle of “one nation, one state” could not be fully realized. Many newly established countries had a considerable amount of minorities like Jews, Poles, and Germans (Claude 1955), and therefore the leaders meeting at the Peace Conference recognized the need to expand the principle of national collective recognition to minorities as well. In order to attain a balance between majority and minorities, minorities’ rights of national self-determination were limited to the acknowledgement of their cultural autonomy within already existing states.

W. Wilson suggested that all states seeking admission to the League of Nations should promise the League Council to treat their minorities well in order to reach a compromise between the nation-state and its ethnic minorities (Thornberry 1991: 38). However, discussions took mainly the strength and decisive role of the leading world powers into account. Consequently, it was decided that the demands for minority rights should apply only to new states.⁴ Latvia was regarded as a newly established state; together with the number of East and Central European countries. The international demands made on Latvia and those of the ethnic minorities furthered the development of an ethnic policy based on a differentiate strategy and encouraging the persistence of a multi-cultural society within the framework of one political system. However, the later developments in the 1930s showed also the weak parts of the new approach. In many newly established countries the badly needed cohesion of society was undermined by the claims of ethno-factionalism and overstress to importance of ethnic belonging. The problem, well present in Latvia already during the times of Russian Empire.

Legal Structure of Ethnic Relations in the Inter-War Latvia

As a result of domestic and international political choices, the principles of Latvian policy attempted to build the democracy which reflected both: the idea individual equality as well as equality of cultural communities. According to the modern terminology it was an attempt to combine liberal equality with respect for multicultural diversity.

According to this vision, the first representative body of the new state, the Latvian People's Council declared that (Šilde 1993: 168).

- Constitutional Assembly will be elected on the basis of proportional representation by citizens of both sexes by universal, equal, direct and secret vote (Article 1.2)
- National minorities are to send representatives to the Constitutional Assembly, who have been elected on the basis of proportional representation (Article 4.1);
- Minority participants in the Latvian People's Council are to take part in the formation of the provisional government (Article 4.2);
- The cultural and national rights of various ethnic groups must be guaranteed by constitution (Article 4.3).

⁴. The British representative, Headlam-Morley, put forth the following justification, "The East European states, because they are new, inexperienced, and have no established traditions may just be related in a different category from the older established states" (Peteris-Putins 1988).

In a speech proclaiming the sovereignty of the Latvian state, Prime Minister K. Ulmanis promptly encouraged all citizens "independently of ethnic origin" to participate in the construction of the new state, because "the rights of all nations will be provided" (Šilde 1996: 261). Despite the bitter history of Latvian-German relations, the Baltic Germans via Paul Schiemann, a representative of German democratic circles in Latvia, were the first minority group to respond to the government's appeal for cooperation. Schiemann stated, "We have to declare that we (the Baltic Germans) like the majority of the population have a historical right to our homeland and that we are called to cooperate with the government, as is every Latvian" (Garleff 1978). Apart from local initiatives, Latvian and Baltic-German cooperation could also develop due to changes in German foreign policy. Germany relatively fast gave up its annexation and revisionist policy and started to support the Baltic-German minority as Latvian historical, cultural community which was "a vital key to the success of the Weimar Republic's goal of friendly Weimar-Baltic relations". One of Germany's principal diplomatic aims was to make the Latvians distinguish between "the Reich German and the Baltic German, where emphasis was put on German policy and not on that pursued by Baltic barons"(Crowe 1993:5). On July 15, 1920, the Latvian-German treaty was signed abolishing formal warfare between the two countries. The third article of the treaty declared that both sides would agree to avoid any attempt to destabilize the legally elected government of the other state (Feldmanis et al 1993: 10). Thus, the new policy of the former German empire provided opportunities for the advance and defence of national interests without automatically threatening Latvian independence. As to long-term relations, the principle of political non-interference seriously improved Latvian-Baltic German relations as well. It must be noted that above mentioned example of post-war Latvian-German relations is ultimately different even opposite to today's Latvian-Russian relations.

Along with Baltic Germans also Jews took an active part in political process. In 1919 among Latvian People's Council were 14 Jewish members. There are known also 3 Polish members of the Latvian People's Council. Therefore, it is possible to argue that despite of the ethnic Latvian dominance also ethnic minorities were taking part in the building process of the new democracy.

Minority Positions in The Inter-War Latvian Economy

Looking from the ethnic perspective, the main characteristic of the interwar Latvian economics was disproportionally large share of minority owned business in commerce and industry. In the agricultural sector the pre-independence domination of the ethnic German landlords was annihilated by the agrarian reform.

Implementation of the agrarian reform ensured not only relative economic equality and market freedom but also the leading position of ethnic Latvian farmers in the countryside. Since the 19th century, class privileges combined with the unsolved agrarian question had been among the basic sources of social and ethnic tension in

Latvia. The Baltic-German nobility possessed around 1,640 estates larger than 2,000 hectares each, while 61 per cent of the Latvian peasants were landless (Balodis 1991; Spekke 1957). The agrarian reform was introduced on September 14, 1920 (Hidden 1987), and according to it landlords lost most of their property. Nobles who were found guilty of treason lost these rights as well (Balodis 1991: 210). Land confiscated by the Latvian government was redistributed to landless peasants at a symbolic price (10 to 20 Lats per hectare). The veterans of the Independence War were able to obtain land even more easily. The number of peasant farms increased from 83,000 in 1905 to 216,000 in 1929, while ethnic German losses within agriculture were around 80 per cent (Hiden 1987: 37; Spekke 1957: 364). According to Jonh Hiden, Paul Schiemann, one of the leaders of the Baltic German community complained that 90% of Baltic German welth had gone into the coffers of the Latvian state. Innitially, it imposed severe strains on the German welfare organizations (Hiden 1987: 37).

After the reform 85%t of the profit from agriculture was produced by ethnic Latvian farmers (Pabriks 1992: 35). In 1936, the share of agriculture in GDP was 38% while industry 24%, and commerce 15,4%. In 1935, in agriculture were employed 61% of all employees, in industry 7%, but in commerce 4% (Volkovs 1996:22). Majority of employed in agriculture were Latvians and Russians. Minorities share among the employees of the agriculture sector were 18,6% thus proportionally less than among ethnic Latvians.

Table 1.2 Minority Employment and Ownership in Agriculture

Ethnicity	Employment (%)	Ownership of Land (%)
Germans	0,7	1,33
Russians	12,7	8
Byelorussians	1,6	1,3
Jews	0,1	0,08
Poles	1,6	1,8

Source: (Skujenieks 1937: 497; Skujenieks 1932: 321)..

Table above shows that among the minorities, only ethnic Russians were in large numbers employed in the agriculture. Proportionally, the largest estates belonged to ethnic Germans also after the land reform.

Minority Positions in Industry

In 1930, from all ethnic groups employed in industry 70% were ethnic Latvians, 8,8% Jews, 7,8% were ethnic Germans, 7,4% ethnic Russians, and 3,9% ethnic Poles (Ceichners 1930: 324). Jews and ethnic Germans were over represented; Latvian and Polish share was

almost equal to their share in total population while the Russians were relatively under represented in this employment group.

Before World War I, situation in industry was similar to that in the agriculture. Namely, 85 per cent of Latvian industry belonged to owners of German origin (Hiden 1987: 82). After the war, their influence decreased, but not so drastically as in agriculture. 15 per cent of all industrial enterprises with collective ownership belonged to the German minority. These enterprises produced 36 per cent of total industrial production.

Apart from the Germans, the Jewish minority held strong positions within industry and trade as well. Individuals belonging to the Jewish minority owned 23 per cent of collective enterprises with 35 per cent of the value of production (Pabriks 1992: 114). Among industrial enterprises with individual ownership, the impact of ethnic minorities was a little lower. In total industrial enterprises owned by ethnic minorities (25% of total population) produced about 48 per cent of all industrial production (Pabriks 1992).

The main reasons for the success of minorities in industry were the colonial past of Latvia, the traditions of employment, and the existence of a start capital, which frequently was absent among entrepreneurs of Latvian origin. For instance, in 1930 entrepreneurs of minority ethnic origin possessed a capital of 52.2 million Lats, while ethnic Latvian businessmen had only 19.6 million Lats (Ceichners 1930: 323).

Ethnic Minorities in The Commerce

Situation in the sphere of commerce was similar to that of industry. Moreover, in commerce the

Domination and over representation of ethnic minority entrepreneurs could be seen the most in The inter-war Latvia (See Table No.1.4).

Table 1.3 Ownership of commercial enterprises according to the owners' ethnicity (1934)
%. cent

Ethnicity	Countryside	Towns	Total
Latvians	60	53	56
Germans	2.1	6	5.1
Russians	7.2	5.4	5.8
Jews	20	30.7	28.5
Poles	18	2	1.8

Source: "Tirdzniecības Uzņēmumi pēc Tautības". 1934 Rīga: **VSP Mēneša Bilētens Statistikai un Konjuktūrai**. No. 6, p. 237.

Minority representatives not only owned proportionally more commercial enterprises but these enterprises were proportionally larger than the average enterprise. Therefore, in 1930, the minorities' trade organizations accounted for about 60 per cent of total trade turnover (See Table 1.3.).

Table 1.4 Turnover of trade organizations according to the owners' ethnicity (million Lats and%)

Ethnicity	1933		1935		1936		Difference 1935-1936
Latvians	303,7	40.5	381,3	42.5	528,7	48.4	+147.4
Germans	85,1	11.3	98,2	11	86,3	7.9	-11.9
Jews	295,1	39.3	349	38.4	408,8	37.5	+59.8
Russians	27	3.6	30,6	3.4	26,1	2.4	-4.5
Others	39,2	5.2	38	4.2	41,8	3.8	+3.8
Total	750,1	100	897,1	100	1091	100	+194.6

Source: Valsts statistikas pārvalde. 1938. **Tirdzniecības uzņēmumu apgrozījumi pēc tautībām.** Valsts statistikas pārvalde. 1937. "Iekšējā Tirdzniecība 1933-1936." **Mēneša Biļetens Statistikai un Konjuktūrai.**

Sources identify that the inter-war Latvian industry and commerce were overwhelmingly dominated by the ethnic minority capital and enterprises. Similar situation was observed also in so called liberal or free professions. Among the doctors, lawyers, etc. the ethnic minorities were over represented as well. For instance, in 1930 when minority origin citizens constituted about 27 per cent of the population, persons of minority origin employed in these professions constituted about 45 per cent. For example in 1931, 47 per cent of the dentists were of Jewish and German origin according to the extreme right wing newspaper Ugunskrusts printed in 1932 (No. 11).

As far as data on employment according to ethnicity is concerned table below shows minority share in trade, in liberal professions and administration of the inter-war Latvia.

Table 1.5 Employment according to nationality, 1930 (%).

Nationality	Total Population	In Trade	In Liberal Professions	In Administration
Latvians	73	41	55	83
Germans	4	11	18	5
Jews	5	38	14	1
Russians	13	-	-	-
Others	5	-	-	-

Source: (Graudins 1992)

According to Graudins, the public administration was the only employer that could absorb the growing number of Latvian middle class, well-educated specialists unable to enter industry or trade due to the strong competition from minorities. Therefore, after the attainment of independence, the public administration was filled almost entirely by the formerly deprived new Latvian middle class (see Table 1.5 above). Minority over-representation in the leading spheres of Latvian economy served as a reason for ethnic and political tension in 1930s. But at the same time it also gave enough reasons for the minorities to feel well under the new political system where their business and well being could prosper without artificial restrictions.

Minorities in the Politics

In 1919, the Latvian People's Council decided upon the necessity to elect the Constitutional Assembly in order to develop and adopt the Constitution. In April, 1920 the Assembly was elected and people of Latvia first time in their history could participate in democratic elections regardless of ethnic or social origin or gender. In the Constitutional Assembly were elected 16 parties and party groups which differed according to two major characteristics: left-right orientation and ethnicity. Namely, since the beginning of the Latvian state ethnicity was viewed as a factor for political mobilisation, especially among the minority population. Such approach was facilitated by the founding principles of the Latvian state reflecting its history as well as international rules of post War order. In the Constitutional Assembly Out of 150 seats minority party representatives received 17 seats.

Early nation-state building process had to go through the thorny reconciliation process between the Latvians, the ethnic majority and the Baltic Germans, the former dominant ethnic group. Despite the fact that number of minority representatives were participating in the Independence war, the ethnic tension was not disappearing unnoticed.

Representatives of Jewish and German minorities were also participating in the Latvian Independence War. It helped them to ensure the right to be among the new nation-state builders. Thus, more than 1000 Jewish volunteers took part in the Independence War (1918-1920) (Dribins 1996: 13). In 1919, on the side of the new Latvian state accounted for about 5000 German Home Guards led by British command and by Baron Georg von Taube and placed on the Eastern Front in Latvia against Bolshevik Russia (Ciganovs 2001). In total, out of 1824 Orders of Lācplēsis, the highest Latvian military award, 95 were given to minority origin war heroes (Šēnbergs 1995: 19). Most of them (47) were Baltic Germans, Russians (15), Lithuanians (11), Poles (9), Estonians (6),

Jews (4), Belorussians (3). Also three ordens were awarded to women. At the same time, it is important to bear in mind also initial centrifugal tendencies of the German minority. According to John Hiden, British historian, the First World War ultimately fostered a growing feeling of solidarity between Reich Germans and Baltic Germans. Initially, German minority at large, was not applauding to independent Latvia. However, since political support to irredentist tendencies were not provided by the post-revolutionary Germany, they had to realise relatively fast the need to take an active part in the Latvian nation-state building process. Changes of the Baltic German mind in favour of independent Latvia was determined by the democratic leadership of the Baltic Germans in the person of Paul Schiemann, by supportive policies of the Weimar republic, and by the democratic nature of the new nation-state.

However, as noted by John Hiden, the legacy of colonial past and centuries long German minority dominance could not be taken away in the retreating German army kitbags (Hiden 1987: 36). It could only be eased by the democratic institutions and new principles fostering ethnic and political reconciliation.

Parliament

In the inter-war Latvian Parliamentary elections German, Jewish, and Polish minorities usually received proportionally the largest representation. In the interwar Latvia Parliament elections took place 4 times, before coup d'état in 1934. In average, minority parties received between 15 to 19 seats out of 100. Taking into account, that minority population were about 25%, one might argue that minorities were slightly under represented. However, not all minority voters voted only for ethnic parties and minorities among themselves were not equally represented. Namely, the largest minority in Latvia, the Russians were not the largest faction in the Parliament. Thus, in 1928, the Russian minority parties had 6 MP's (6%) while in total population they constituted about 11%. At the same time, Germans were only 3,6% out of total population but received 6 seats as well. In the same elections, the Jewish parties had 3 seats while Polish 2 seats (Blūzma 1990: 84).

The ability to influence the political process and to formulate certain demands in support of a particular ethnic group was frequently dependent upon the parties' capability to organize the ethnic minorities internally. Only the German, the Polish, and to a lesser extent the Jewish, minority groups found themselves capable of overcoming the internal contradictions created by different social structures, distinct religions, and various languages.⁵

^{5.} Due to distinct religions and tension between the large body of Russian farmers and the small elite of former Russian officials and merchants, the Russian minority was divided among five parties which had enormous difficulties in cooperating with each other. The Jews were represented by nine parties facing difficulties in overcoming the ideological disparity which had divided them into Zionist, non-Zionist and socialist factions. The existence of two languages - Yiddish and Hebrew - as well as the influence of Latvian, German, and Russian cultures on the Jewish minority were important factors

Table No.1.2 MP's of Minority Parties in the Parliaments of the First Republic.⁶

Party	1922	1925	1928	1931
German Parties	6	4	6	5
United List of Russians	2	-	-	-
Jewish National Block	2	-	-	-
Agudas Israel	2	2	1	2
United Polish Parties	1	-	-	2
The Central Committee of Latvian Orthodox	1	-	-	-
The List of Lithuanians and Catholics	1	-	-	-
Ceire Cion	1	1	1	-
Bunds (Jewish Social Democratic Party)	1	1	1	-
Staroveri (Old Believers)	-	2	-	-
Polish Catholic Union of Latvian Poles	-	2	2	-
Organisation of	-	2	2	-

as well. In comparison, the interests of all Poles in Latvia were represented by one organization - the Union of Poles. Finally, five Baltic German parties worked under the supervision of their common representative organization - the League of Baltic German Political Organizations Registered in Latvia (Bregmanis, 1990: 135; Feldmanis, 1985: 14; Garleff, 1978: 82-85; Jekabsons, 1993: 101).

⁶ Data on the elections of inter-war republic (1920-33) are taken from the official paper publications of State Board of Statistics with kind help of Visvaldis Valtenbergs (Author).

Orthodox and Russians				
The Association of Russian Parish Public Workers	–	1	2	1
Zionist Organisation Mizchrahi	-	1	2	1
United List of Old Believers	-	-	2	-
Russian orthodox and the Voters of the Labour Nation	-	-	-	2
The List of orthodox, Old believers and United Russian Organisations	-	-	-	1
Orthodox Voters	-	-	-	1
The Association of the Russian Peasants and Russian Public Voters	-	-	-	1
The List of Riga Germans for Vidzeme	-	-	-	1
20	17	16	19	17

As one can see from the table above, minorities in Latvia were actively participating in the political process of parliamentary Latvia. However, not all minorities were equally successful to organize their ethnic voters. Germans, despite of the existence of several

parties almost in all elections succeeded to create a united list which gave them proportionally more representation in the Parliament than their share in total population. Jews, despite of existence of separate party lists gained proportional representation. So did the Poles. In turn, Russians never succeeded to have united list of parties for the elections. They remained scattered and politically under represented as far as ethnic parties are concerned. Outside ethnic parties, in 4th Saeima (Parliament) 1 Russian was elected from social democratic party and 1 from communists.⁷ Among reasons hindering Russian unity can be mentioned several factors, namely religious, regional, political, and economic divide as well as absence of minority tradition in Latvia. Russians, as former Empire nation never experienced a need to be mobilized ethnically to reach political, economic or cultural goals. However, at the end of the inter-war parliamentary period voting for ethnic Russian parties slightly increased among the Russian voters. Every parliament had presidium consisting of several members, almost all of them included some minority representative (Šilde 1976: 388-389).

Administration and Governments

As far as administration and executive powers are concerned, in absolute numbers in the administration of the first republic dominated ethnic Latvians, however, the share of German minority remained relatively high as well. For instance, in administration were employed 3,2% of all employees. From total of ethnic Latvians in administration were employed 3,6% but from the Baltic Germans 4,1% (Blūzma 1990: 56-57). Other minorities were relatively less represented. A number of minority representatives, particularly ethnic Germans, have held important post during the inter-war period. Several Baltic Germans, Edvin Magnus, Baldwin Disterlo, Bernhard Berent, and Robert Erhard served as Ministers of Justice and Finance respectively. In the Senate of the Supreme Court served Professor August Loeber (Dribins et al 2000:69-70). Some minority representatives were included already in the temporary governments before the election of the Constitutional Assembly.

Table 1.6 Ethnic representation in three temporary governments before the election of the constitutional Assembly, and first government after the Constitutional Assembly.

Government	Number of Ministers	Minority representatives
1 st	12	1 (German Block)
2 nd	10	2 (German Block) 1 (Jewish Block)

⁷ See www.latinst.lv

3 rd	11	1 (German Block) 1 (Jewish Block)
4 th	14	1 (Jewish Block)

Source: Šilde 1976: 706.

Table above shows that even if minority representatives were not exactly proportionally represented in the first governments, they were included in all of them. Mainly, there were German and Jewish representatives which were the most organized as well as largest minorities.

During the period of parliamentary democracy (1922-1934) there were 13 governments. Number of governments, particularly right wing governments relied on the support of minority MP's. However, in most of governments there were no minority ministers present.

After coup of 1934, in authoritarian government of Karlis Ulmanis minority representatives were not among the government members. Except, the last Minister of Foreign Affairs before the occupation of Latvia by Soviets was German origin Wilhelm Munter.

On the municipal level, in 1922, after the elections of the Constitutional Assembly, in 32 towns 62 out of 726 or 8,54% local representatives were ethnic Germans. In Riga municipality, Germans were 13 out of 90 or 11,70% (Dribins 2000). Thus, the proportionality index of German representation in these spheres of administration at the beginning of the republic was 2,24 and 3,07 respectively.⁸ Also in the Army, in 1920, 5,7% of the Latvian military have been the Baltic Germans serving in Landeswehr, a separate Baltic German unit. Since 1921 to 1931 the Latvian Navy was headed by the Baltic German Arčibalds Keizerlings.

Despite the fact, that first time in history Jews became equal citizens to other ethnic groups their representation in the administration was relatively smaller than involvement in economics. In 1935, there were 2,2% of Jews working in the state institutions (Dribins et al 2001: 26-31). Taking into account that in 1935, there were 4,8% Jews out of total, it is obvious that there were very small number of Jews employed in administration of the first republic. Also Russians and Poles were proportionally less employed in the state institutions compared to ethnic Latvians or Germans.

⁸ Proportionality index is calculated comparing the share of the minority in the total population to the share in the respective sphere (Author.).

Minority Education and National Unity

In the economic sphere political principles of the first republic reflected the popular philosophy of economic freedoms guaranteed to individuals regardless of ethnic origin. In turn, the educational and language policy was based upon the understanding of collective belonging and respect for ethnic diversity instead of individualistic approach. Therefore, in the nest of education the cuckoo's egg of political as well as ethno-linguistic tension was laid. Namely, the broad educational autonomy ensured the existence of various ethnic identities but it could not ensure the development of cohesive Latvian society with common political loyalties and common language.

Educational Autonomy

Laws granting the educational autonomy for minority groups were among the first legislative acts passed by the Latvian government. In December, 1919, following earlier declarations, laws on this issue were adopted by the Latvian People's Council.⁹ According to these laws, each minority was granted authority to establish schools for pupils between the age of six and 16. These schools were allowed to teach the pupils in accordance with minority traditions and in their particular native language. All educational programmes and needs were financed by the state budget (Bluzma, 1990: 58).

Minority schools would be required to teach only three compulsory subjects in compliance with the Latvian educational system: Latvian literature, history and geography. In addition, the Latvian language would be taught from the second grade. The administration of the various minority schools was under the jurisdiction of autonomous units within the School Department, which was itself under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. In response to this, German, Jewish, Russian, Polish and Byelorussian boards each responsible for their particular schools were established (Adamovics 1927:17). The leaders of these boards were elected by the minority groups themselves. Minority administrations were responsible for financial matters and for the educational programmes to be implemented in

⁹. The educational autonomy of minority groups in Latvia was based only on legislative grounds, and never received constitutional guarantees. Internal struggle between the regionally and ideologically opposite- orientated Latvian parties was one of the major reasons why the rights of the minorities were not guaranteed by constitution. Some representatives from Latgale (Easter Latvia) were disappointed about the rejection of their demand for territorial autonomy, while the social democrats were upset about parliament's rejection to approve strikes as a lawful political method of protest. Consequently, they did not vote for the second part of the constitutional draft, which dealt with matters of minority autonomy (Bluzma, 1990: 54).

their schools. There was reason to open a minority school and thus being eligible to receive state funding if at least 30 minority children were present(Kalnciema 1992: 120).

Governmental policy to grant funding for minority education in their native language facilitated the situation where share of minority schools increased more rapidly than schools with Latvian educational language. In 1930./31.out of total 28,1% were minority schools (Bluzma 1990: 58). In 1933, there were 1502 Latvian, 236 Russian, 100 Jewish, 88 German, 35 Polish, 23 Byelorussian, 13 Lithuanian, 4 Estonian, and 56 mixed elementary schools (Pabriks 1992: 12). Already in 1927 (See Table 1.7. below), share of German as well as Jewish schools were procentually higher than share of respective minorities in total.

Table 1.7 Percentage of schools in relation to the size of ethnic groups (1927)

Ethnicity	Size (%)	Elementary	Secondary
Latvians	73.4	71.7	65.1
Germans	3.8	4.7	7.9
Russians	10.5	9.1	4.7
Byelorussians	2	1.9	0.8
Jews	5.2	6.9	1.8
Poles	2.8	3.7	2.4
Lithuanians	1.3	1.2	0.6
Estonians	0.4	0.3	0.2

Source: Adamovics1927: 22.

The Baltic Germans and Jews were minorities benefiting the most from the minority educational policy. Proportionally, German and Jewish minorities had the largest number of secondary school students per inhabitant. Thus, in average, 0.7% ethnic Latvians were studying in the secondary school while there were 2% ethnic Germans, 2,2% Jews, 0,8% ethnic Poles, and 0,5% ethnic Russians (Šilde 1976: 440). In the schools of respective minorities were the smallest classes which also meant that relation between the number of teachers and pupils were better than in other schools. Namely, if in ethnic Latvian and ethnic Russian schools, 1 teacher was teaching in average 32 children, in the German or Jewish schools the relation was 1 to 20 (Bluzma 1990: 60). Later, it produced complains on behalf of ethnic Latvians about unequal distribution of fundings favouring minorities. In turn, it

increased political tension. Relatively high quality of teaching as well as available resources facilitated the situation where number of ethnic Latvian children was attending minority schools and being educated in minority languages. Also minority children were frequently choosing schools of other ethnicity than their origin. For instance, in the German schools 20% of pupils were of non-German origin. In the Russian schools were 6,9% of other ethnicities (Bluzma 1990). This fact in already in early 1930s raised arguments against the school system based strictly on ethnic differentiation since differentiation did not work as it was supposed.

State education system have had at least two other outcomes. First, during the first decade of Latvian independent statehood dramatically raised literacy rates among the Slav minorities (Russians, Byelorussians, Poles), as well as Lithuanians (See Table 1.8. below).

Table 1.8 Increase in literacy among various ethnic groups (%).

Ethnicity	1920	1935
Latvians	84.3	92.1
Germans	94.6	97.5
Russians	43.9	66.9
Byelorussians	41.1	71.4
Jews	82.8	90.0
Poles	68.8	82.0
Lithuanians	64.6	78.5

Source: Bluzma 1990: 53-79.

However, it did not mean that ultimately increased literacy in Latvian. For instance, if ethnic Latvians in multicultural Riga usually spoke 2-3 languages, ethnic Germans, Jews, and Poles even 3-4 languages in average, majority of ethnic Russians remained monolingual. According to available data, in 1930s, only 15% of ethnic Russians could speak Latvian (Volkovs 1996:24). Consequently, this fact rised objections to the existing minority education system from the side of authorities.

On the other hand, the Law of Educational Autonomy was considered a great achievement by the ethnic minorities. Especially, it was favoured by the German representatives.¹⁰ It has been argued that educational autonomy is a basis of ethnic culture, and that the creation and maintenance of German schools became the essence of the German minority's activities in Latvia; that it was the "legacy" of the Baltic Germans, their reward, as it were, for their own historical tradition of not having tried to Germanize the Latvians (Hiden 1987: 52). From the historic as well as political perspective this argument is interesting since in the early 2000s it was repeated also by some ethnic Russian politicians objecting to the introduction of higher share of Latvian language in the minority schools of the second republic. Namely, in modern times it is argued that Latvian language schools were not closed after the occupation of 1940, therefore no education reform is needed in the ethnic Russian schools today.

Linguistic Rights

Apart of educational system, collective rights of ethnic groups in the interwar Latvia were granted by the language laws. However, already after the establishment of the independent Latvia, the introduction of minority linguistic rights did not run as smoothly as that of educational legislation. The temporary parliament, the Latvian People's Council, was unwilling to solve this issue until the Constituent Assembly had been elected. According to the leading right wing party, Latvian Peasants' Party and other centre parties, territorial linguistic rights would be a challenge to the indivisibility, and consequently the national independence, of the country.

It was also argued that minorities could not apply for special linguistic rights in Latvia as long as the Latvian language had not been declared the official tongue (Kalnciema 1992: 119). The liberally minded Latvian middle class was more concerned with individual prospects in a united democratic country than with collective peculiarities remaining privileges of past. Also for rational reasons, the Latvian language was decided to serve as *lingua franca* in the new country since the Latvians constituted the majority of the population. However, at the end of the day linguistic regulations were based on compromise reflecting the demands of the minority politicians as well as the needs of general population.

^{10.} Karl Keller, a German representative, argued that people who are against the educational autonomy of minority groups are automatically against the earlier declared platform of the LPC. According to Keller, such a law provides the necessary step towards a Latvia where no class and no nation is neglected (Latvijas TautasPadome 1920: 588).

Regulations Concerning the Latvian Language

The first years of independence showed that large number of ethnic minorities employed in the state institutions did not master the Latvian language. In November 1921, the Cabinet of Ministers issued rules stating that employees in state institutions should obtain a Latvian language proficiency certificate within two years. From 1923, only persons with sufficient fluency in Latvian would be hired by the state. Employees unable to speak Latvian would be an exception, employed only with the consent of the government. Historian Šilde writes that in 1923, in the Latvian University 31 per cent of lectures were given in minority languages (19.6% in Russian, 8.9% in German, 1,7% in English). Minority professors were given period of time to learn sufficient Latvian. Famous law professor Dr. August Loeber, an ethnic German was first from the minority professors to start to teach in Latvian (Šilde 1976: 444) thus giving an example of new political loyalty.

In 1932, Latvian was declared to be the official state language of the republic (Bluzma 1990: 63). Thus, the knowledge of Latvian language became criteria for the person to apply for the work in the state institutions. In the long term, the decision to ensure Latvian language knowledge of the state officials increased the efficiency of the state institutions as well as granted new, higher social, political and economic status to the Latvian language. However, it was also ensured that state policy supporting Latvian as lingua franca has left some state support for minority tongues as well.

Regulations concerning the Use of Minority Languages

The minority demand to have a support for official use of their languages was found in the late 1920s. In 1929, special rules were established concerning the rights of parliamentarians. Namely, along with Latvian speeches in Parliament could be held in German and Russian. Written documents, however, had to be translated into Latvian (Bluzma 1990).

The 1932 regulation declaring the Latvian language to be the official state language included several articles on the protection of minority languages as well. The 1932 Act stipulated that in towns and regions where one single minority represented more than 50 per cent of the total population, the local authorities were allowed to use German or Russian along with Latvian (Bluzma 1990: 155-156). Also other local authorities were permitted to use German or Russian if it was accepted by the chairman or required by one-third of the members of the local council. In both cases, the local authorities were required to provide a translation into

Latvian if requested by one participant in the meeting. According to existing legislation, any other language could be used in meetings, religious activities, trade, newspapers, books, and education offered by non-governmental institutions.

The most obvious outcome of these legislative acts was the use of German in the village of Hischenhof, a predominantly German community, and the use of Russian in the Far East area of Jaunlatgale (Abrene). The right to publish in a minority language was widely exercised as well. Thus, in 1936, there was 7 German, 4 Russian, 2 Jewish and 1 Lithuanian newspaper in circulation (Maldups 1937: 107).

Ethnic Relations Under Authoritarian Rule (1934-1940)

In May 15, 1934, after the coup d'état committed by Prime Minister Karlis Ulmanis, one of the founding fathers of the republic number of reforms concerning minorities was under way.

Ulmanis' main complaint was that people had lost their feeling of unity and creative nationalism during the period of parliamentary rule, and that the time had come to revive this unity and solve the existing problems (Dunsdorfs 1978: 281). Ulmanis was convinced that parliament was unable to provide political stability and solve the economic problems of the country, because it had developed a "will of its own" instead of reflecting the general will of the people (Dunsdorfs 1978: 344).

It was argued that cultural and economic revival should be realized through authoritarian rule, because the latest development in the world had demonstrated the superiority of personal leadership to the democratic system (Auškaps 1993: 182; 222). Authoritarianism was pointed to as a major means to attain the "lost" identity and unity of the nation. The Latvian historian Dunsdorf seemed to be right when he claimed that the Latvian middle-class was bored with democracy (Dunsdorfs 1978: 233). In many ways, the combination of reformed national doctrines and domestic and external socio-economic influences determined these changes.

Economic Rearrangements

It is possible to distinguish three aspects of economic reform introduced by the new regime:

- 1) Finances and credit;
- 2) Establishment of state monopolies;
- 3) Control over different kinds of economic organizations (Štamers 1992: 26).

Because of the nationalization of number of banks and properties, the German and Jewish financiers were the major losers due to their serious involvement in financial business (Ceichners 1930: 323). Thus, in 1940 only 3 banks with joint foreign-Jewish capital were left. All Latvian private banks had been liquidated as well (Aizsilnieks 1968: 634). Curiously, liquidation of ethnic Latvian banks as well was not in contradiction to Ulmanis' ideological conviction, because since Latvia was considered a nation-state, there was no difference between state and Latvian capital. In 1936, it was announced that 84 per cent of all banking capital belonged to the Latvians since 84% of capital was in the state hands (Štamers 1992: 30).

The number of established monopolies was another factor promoting Latvian undertakings and decreasing the minorities' share within commerce and trade. With the help of the Latvian Credit Bank, the new government nationalized a large number of enterprises belonging mainly to Germans and other non-Latvians. In 1939, 28 commercial and trade undertakings were dominated by state capital. Namely approximately 30 per cent of the total capital of joint-stock companies¹¹ Furthermore, up to 25 per cent of the shares in state monopolies were sold to ethnic Latvians, with an annual profit of 6 to 12 per cent guaranteed by the state (Aizsilnieks 1968: 616).

The direct consequences of this policy were:

- First, the development of a free market was restricted by bureaucratic interference;
- Second, the minorities' share and in particular the Baltic-German participation in commerce and trade decreased.

Thus, in 1936 (compared to 1933) the turnover share of Baltic-German capital in trade decreased from 11.3 to 7.9 per cent. The Jewish part decreased from 39.3 to 37.5 per cent. The Russian from 3.6 to 2.4 per cent, while the turnover share of Latvian trading companies increased from 40 per cent to 48 per cent (see Table 1.5).

Governmental control over Latvia's economic life was strengthened through a number of institutions. In 1934, the Chamber of Trade and Commerce was created. Later, the Chamber of Agriculture, the Chamber of Artisans, and the Chamber of Labour were established as well (Dunsdorfs 1978:363). The chambers represented the state interests in the economy and achieved control over agricultural, commercial, and trade societies that had been created by

¹¹ Ibid, p.31.

businessmen earlier in order to promote mutual cooperation. Consequently, some 90 commercial, 72 artisans, and a large number of agricultural societies were liquidated (Dunsdorfs 1978:363). The majority of the property was confiscated, and the assets and liabilities of various organizations were taken over by the Latvian Credit Bank. A number of these societies, like the Large Guild of Riga and the Small Guild of Riga, had represented the economic and cultural interests of the German minority in Latvia for centuries (Feldmanis et al 1993: 37).

The general state policy was explained by the need for social and national justice, implying that the profit created by the whole of society should be controlled by the whole of society, rather than by a minority (meaning Germans) wrote official state newspaper Valdibas Vestnesis 7 January 1936. The economic policy of the government, implemented by the chambers, aimed to eliminate non-Latvian competitors by other means as well, e.g. Latvian-controlled agriculture received subsidies, while the activities of the German, Jewish, and Russian industries and commercial businesses were reduced by restrictions on their imports.¹²

Furthermore, certain laws had an indirect impact on the economic position of the minorities. The prohibition of trade on Sundays is one example because it only left five working days per week for the Jews due to their religion that does not allow them to work on Saturdays wrote a major newspaper jaunakas Ziņas in 24 June, 1934. Consequently, from 1937 onwards, the state and the Latvian middle-class benefited most from the economic reforms introduced by Ulmanis' cabinet. It may be argued that as far as ethnic relations are concerned, the national-authoritarian government introduced ethnically discriminating practices in the economic field.

Educational Reforms

In July 1934, a new law on education was passed, which gave the right of direct supervision over minority schools to the Ministry of Education. The earlier established boards of minority schools were dissolved, and one supervisor was appointed for each ethnic minority according to information published in Valdibas Vestnesis 25 July 1934. In accordance with the new law, restrictions were put on parents when choosing school for their children. Thus, if one of the parents was an ethnic Latvian, the children should attend a school with instruction in Latvian (Article 6). The same rule was applied to children of minority origin who were not able to communicate freely in their parents' mother tongue (Article

7)(Dunsdorfs 1978:358; Štamers 1992). Here it must be mentioned that about 12,5% of all marriages were mixed.. Among the Latvians there were 7% mixed marriages, among Russians – 20%, Poles – 52%, Germans – 62%, but Jews – 3% according to official statistics in 1939. Large part of children from these marriages was supposed to go to schools teaching in Latvian.

Apart of this, a minimal limit to the size of minority schools was introduced. Secondary schools had to be closed if less than 75 pupils had attended the school during the last two years (Article 83). Consequently, in 1934 the number of secondary schools with teaching in non-Latvian languages dropped from 41 to 17 according to the information published in official newspaper *Valdības Vestnesis* 31 July 1935. The new law also stated that Latvian should be the only language used in public vocational schools. This meant that almost all vocational schools with teaching in minority languages were closed, except for two German and four Jewish schools which were financed by private means wrote the same newspaper.

Since authoritarian government was suspicious about the political orientation of Baltic Germans and rising influence of German Nazism in Latvia, English instead of German became the compulsory second language to be taught in all Latvian public schools (Dunsdorfs 1978: 358).

Linguistic Reforms

After 1934, the authoritarian government initiated legislative changes aimed at strengthening the use of Latvian as the main language of the country. On June 14, 1934 the Cabinet of Ministers stated that in the case of public activities use of minority languages could be used only by permission from the Ministry of the Interior. Violations of these rules would be punished by a very high fine (1,000 Lats)¹³ or imprisonment for six months (Bluzma 1990: 66).

In January, 1935 the government adopted the State Language Law, according to which Latvian was the only official language when conducting affairs and all kinds of documentation was accepted as valid only if in Latvian (Bluzma 1990). Furthermore, all public announcements, advertisements, price tags, and labels on goods must be in Latvian. All

¹² See the Latvian State Archive, 2574f., 6.apr., 296l., p. 28.

¹³. 1 USD = 6.05 Lats (1938-1940).

institutions and enterprises had to use Latvian in all documents related to the conduct of their affairs.

However, in the case of internal affairs, enterprises were allowed to use a minority language along with the state language (Bluzma 1990: 158). By permission from the Ministry of the Interior, German and Russian were also permitted in municipalities with ethnically mixed populations where one of the minorities constituted at least 50 per cent of the total population.

Conclusion. Power, Ethnic Structure and Governance in The Interwar Republic.

The basic idea behind the pluralistic linguistic and educational ethno-policy of the first decade of independent Latvia was to ensure the democratic rights of all ethnic communities inhabiting country. These were the rights lacking during the previous Russian imperial regime. The building of cohesive and integrated nation in Latvia was the secondary goal at least until the early thirties of 20th century.

Perhaps, the chosen strategy corresponded to the needs of the early years of the young democracy, efficiently minimizing the risk of ethnic tension and opposition of different communities to the new and weakly established state authority. However, during the later years when state acquired self-confidence and international respect, the ethno-differentialisation strategy increasingly hindered movement towards popular unity, at least in the minds of the majority of the ethnic Latvians.

Broadly available educational autonomy well guaranteed the perseverance of separate ethnic identities in Latvia, but it frequently failed to provide the necessary up-ward mobility to the individuals of minority origin. It also made very obvious differences between various ethnic groups in political and economic spheres. As far as the first issue, data shows that already in early 1930s the increasing number of ethnic Russians began to send their children in schools where instruction language was Latvian (Volkovs 1996: 23). If in 1920s about 73% of Russian children attended minority schools, in early 1930s this number decreased to some 60%. After the coup in 1934, increased also the number of Jewish families sending their children to Latvian schools.

At the same time, increased political pressure from both sides, namely minorities as well as from the state authorities supporting changes in the ethnic policy. Ethnic Russian politicians while stressing that Russian minority is a part of the Russian nation in Russia required

additional state guaranties to the Russian language in Latvia. Among others it was proposed to guarantee the use of Russian in regions where they constitute more than 15% of inhabitants. It was also proposed to make use of Russian official in Post, courts, and in correspondence between municipal and state authorities. It was argued that it would assist ethnic Russians to overcome social isolation and facilitate mobility since they badly new Latvian (Volkovs 1996: 27).

On the other hand, after the elections of 4th Saeima, in 1931, among others government proposed to cut financing of the minority school system proposing minorities to orientate towards educating their children in Latvian. It was argument that all citizens irrespectively of ethnic origin should be involved in Latvian culture (Volkovs 1996: 34). Because of the opposition of minority as well as left wing parties, the suggested reforms were not introduced.

In the early thirties during the world economic crisis it became more obvious that in Latvian politics frequently dominates ethnic factionalism where minorities were attempting from time to time increase their ethno-cultural rights while Latvians and the state authorities were more tended to stress interests of overall community and majority. Especially, contradictions increased due to changes of international environment. Nazi Germany became increasingly interested in the Baltic German community but USSR in the left wing and pro-Russian groups in Latvia. After Hitler sized power in Germany, Germany's attitude towards Baltic Germans had changed compared to Weimar approach. Nazi Germany attempted to use Baltic Germans as tool of their aggressive politics. Process of social cohesion between ethnic Germans and Latvians was halted.

Inesis Feldmanis, a Latvian historian writes that first decade of independent statehood for Baltic German-Latvian relations was hard, but incresing signs of cohesion and Baltic German orientation in favour of Latvia could be observed. After 1933, however, there could be observed increasing signs of Baltic German alienation from and hatred to Latvia. "...Nationalsocialist ideas were taking over (German) schools, churches and all numerous organisations..." (Feldmanis 2001: 170).

In turn, Soviet policies were first relying on support among left wing simpatizers among whom were relativelt large number of ethnic Russians and Jews (Gordon 1994: 40-41). As far as Russians are concerned, it must be noted that among ethnic Russians were also a sizable group of persons, former Tsarist administrators and militaries hostile to Soviet

Russia. These persons were used by the Soviet intelligence to provoke tension between two countries (Niedre et al 2001: 223-241).

Germany and Russia, powerful neighbours of Latvia used heterogeneity of population, and internal ethnic quarrels in favour of their political and economic goals. Thereofer, Within the discourse of the ethnic policy “loyalty” became the key word characterising ethnic relations in Latvia at the eve of Soviet occupation. Changing international situation in combination with changing ethnic policies domestically were among reasons hindering integration of Latvian society.

Economic, educational, and linguistic reforms implemented by the authoritarian regime considerably decreased cultural autonomy available to ethnic minorities during the first decade of the republic, but did not abolish it. Apart of this, while introduction of the authoritarian regime curtailed citizen’s rights of all citizens, for minority’s entrepreneurs the regime meant also worsening economic and commercial situation. It definitely increased ethnic tension and dissatisfaction with the regime among the number of minority representatives, however, it never lead to any inter-ethnic violence. At the same time, while ethnic Latvians relatively dominated administration and politics in the first republic, ethnic minorities preserved strong positions in economy.

The new regime after 1934 offered certain chances for assimilation which went hand in hand with abilities to up-ward mobility unavailable during the democratic regime. But in the same time it eliminated the previous chance of minorities to influence politics through their political parties in the Parliament. Increase of the dangers of the war, decline of the democracy in Europe and threats to Latvian independence demanded many individuals of minority origin to reaffirm or reject their previous cultural and political identities and loyalties.

Internal changes in the ethnic policy, lack of democracy combined with external hopes to receive political assistance from Germany and Soviet Russia, threat of holocaust and Second World War did not facilitate the consolidation of multiethnic population of Latvia. It rather facilitated ethnic minorities to withdraw their support and loyalty to Latvia. Vice versa, ethnic heterogeneity and short history of democracy helped to deconstruct the establsished nation-state.

Interwar Latvian political system effectively avoided ethnic tension and provided peaceful coexistence of various ethnicities. However, it failed to produce a longterm integrated and

cohesive society able to resist unprecedented external challenges of 1930s. Partly it was due to:

- Initial institutionalized dominance of collective identification of ethnic groups over individual identification of citizens;
- Disproportion of economic wealth between ethnic minorities and majority;
- Wrong approach of Ulmanis reforms attempted to further popular consolidation by anti-democratic means;
- Weakly institutionalized Latvian state identity due to its short history of only 20 years;
- Wrong timing of reforms due to aggressive policies of Nazi Germany and Soviet Union;
- Approaching Second World War.

Part 2.

Ethnic Structure and Equality in the Soviet Era (1940-1991)

In August 23, 1939 a non-aggression treaty was signed between the communist ruled Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. Along with confirmation of friendliness between the countries, an agreement was made upon the partition of Poland and eventual occupation of the Baltic States by the Soviets (Meissner 1978: 139).

The Soviet occupation of Latvia in June 1940 was followed by 51 year long Soviet dominance in the Baltics. During this period the ethnic structure as well as division of power within the society enormously changed. Curiously enough, it can be argued that occupation itself and social changes brought by it on the Latvian society later served as a reason and cause for the fall of this regime in Latvia. The Soviet regime caused increased alienation of ethnic Latvians from the Soviet system due to posed threats to their identity and language.

The increasing alienation of individuals and Latvians as an ethnic group from the Soviet overall society was one of the basic elements facilitating the restoration of independent Latvian statehood. In other words, Soviets failed to produce cohesive society capable of socializing the future Latvian generations into the Homo Sovieticus, therefore, it was programmed to fail. The lack of democracy and the the Soviet ethnic policy failed to provide the equality of opportunities to individuals as well as ethnic minorities in the basic spheres of socio-political life, namely politics, economy, and culture. Additionally, it could not erase collective memories of independent statehood from the minds of large segments of ethnic Latvians. Moreover, these memories served as an efficient vaccine against the Sovietization. In mid-1980s, when the regime attempted to liberalize its face, alienated individuals and ethnic groups in Latvia used the chance to fill the gap between their expectations and previously unavailable oportunities by returning to the idea of independent statehood as credible alternative to the Soviet system.

In this chapter, first the demographic and structural changes of Latvia's society will be discussed. Afterwards, particular attention will be given to education, and language policies.

It will be followed by the discussion administration and employment practice in the Soviet Latvia. In the end major conclusions will be presented.

Changes of Ethnic Structure and Ethnic Relationships

The prelude of human catastrophe initiated by the Soviet occupation and the Second World War marked the beginning of drastic changes in the ethnic structure of Latvian society. Both groups were equally affected, the Latvian majority as well as traditional minorities. First, from the map of Latvia forever disappeared economically, politically, and culturally influencive Baltic German minority.

German Minority

The majority of Baltic-German minority were convinced that increased Soviet power in Latvia would be a disaster for their ethnic group since they remembered red terror of 1919 when Riga was shortly ruled by Soviets. Confusion and fear was used also by Hitler who on October 6, 1939 declared the need to unite all ethnic Germans and initiated a repatriation of the minorities "back home" from the countries where they had been dispersed. On the same date the German Ambassador in Riga met with the Latvian authorities and asked for their support to carry out displacement of Baltic Germans. On October 30, 1939 an agreement was reached about the moving of Latvian citizens of German descent to Germany (Karaluns 1987: 112-118). Rumours were rife among the Latvians and other ethnic groups that local Germans had been told that Hitler had asked the Soviet government for two weeks to evacuate his people from the Baltic region, and that afterwards the communists would enter the region (Feldmanis 1994). Scared of a possible Soviet intervention, the majority of the Baltic-German minority agreed to leave Latvia. In addition to the ethnic Germans, some Latvians and representatives of other ethnic minorities tried to emigrate declaring their belonging to the Baltic German community. Among the emigrants were recognized names of apparently Slavic origin, such as Goluboff, Karotygin, Kulikow, Ostrouchov, Trofimow, Melnikow (Wildenberg), etc.).¹⁴ Nevertheless, some of the Baltic Germans including famous politician P. Schiemann remained in Latvia despite approaching threats and agitation. The main reason of remaining Germans to reject emigration was Latvian patriotism and deep roots of Germans in Latvia. Officially were mentioned reasons such as "love of the country", or "participant in the Latvian freedom war", as well as changing ethnic identity ("no knowledge of the German language"), etc.¹⁵.

During the late 1939 and early 1940, approximately 53,000 Baltic Germans were relocated from Latvia to provinces belonging to the Third Reich (Aizsilnieks, 1968: 605). With the emigration of the Baltic Germans, Latvia had lost a great number of highly educated and entrepreneurial people and a large amount of its economic potential (See part 1.).¹⁶

It may be argued that the emigration of the Baltic Germans was the first consequence of the Latvian subjugation to the Soviet Union, which initiated the political, economic and cultural disintegration of the Latvian nationhood.

¹⁴ See the Latvian State Archive, 2570.f., apr. 13, 861l., p. 78

¹⁵ See the Latvian State Archive, 3721.f. apr. 7, 168l., pp. 13-17., 2370.f., apr. 13, 1455l.

¹⁶ The Baltic-German minority constituted approximately 3.2 per cent of the total Latvian population and paid 16.2 per cent of all taxes (Aizsilnieks, 1968: 605).

Jewish Minority

Another economically and politically influential minority, the Jews almost wholly disappeared from Latvia's ethnic map, after the Soviet occupation in 1940 was replaced by the Nazi occupation in summer 1941 following the beginning of war between previous allies, Soviets and Germans.

Until October 15, 1941 the Nazis killed 30,025 Latvian Jews and 3,387 citizens of other ethnicity. The remaining Latvian Jewish population was placed in ghettos and liquidated there or sent to the Stutthof concentration camp. Out of approximately 70,000 Latvian Jews who had remained in Latvia after the Soviet retreat, only about 4,000 survived Nazi executions (Gordons 1994: 62; Misiunas et al 1993: 61-64). All together, during 1941-1945 the Nazis repressed approximately 90,000 former Latvian citizens (Balodis 1991: 329).

Considerable number of Jewish origin citizens have been repressed also during the first year of Soviet rule when massive deportations according to prepared lists began on the night between June 13-14, 1941. Those arrested were taken to railway stations to be loaded onto 662 cattle and goods wagons with grated window openings and a hole sawn in the floor. All families were separated (Dunsdorfs 1975:20; Strods 1992:20). In one night, approximately 20,700 people were deported, of whom about 15,000 were ethnic Latvians and 5,000 Latvian Jews. Among the deported were 35.1 per cent women, 22.1 per cent children, including 291 babies. As to the social belonging of those deported, 474 were teachers, 430 officers, 20 per cent were members of the last Latvian Parliament, many were writers, merchants, industrialists, doctors, rabbis, etc (Bambals 1992: 81; Gordons 1994: 48; Strods 1992: 20).

During the Second World War, communist and Nazi repressions in Latvia supplemented each other. In 1945 following ethnic criteria, the Soviet authorities deported 384 ethnic German families who had remained in Latvia after the voluntary relocation of Baltic Germans in 1939 (Strods 1992: 19). Also many Latvian-Jewish intellectuals as well as entrepreneurs were deported to Siberia by Soviets already during the first year of occupation (Šaca-Marjaša 1992).

All together, since 1939 to early 1950s the nation of 2,000,000 people had lost approximately 700,000 citizens of all ethnic origins due to warfare, emigration and deportations (Zvidriņš et al 1992: 48). At least 189,000 of these had been directly repressed by the Soviet authorities (see Table 2.1 below).

Table 2.1 The Direct Victims of the Communist Repressions in Latvia 1940-1985

Year	Deported	Arrested and executed	Total	Per cent
1940-41	20,700	7,670	28,370	14.8
1945-53	119,000	41,762	160,762	88.9
1954-85	-	2,541	2,541	1.3

Source: (Strods 1992).

Most of those killed, deported or emigrated represented the political, economic, and cultural elite of the nation, and therefore it may be argued that in the beginning of the 1950s the Latvian nation had been socially decimated, and its ethno-cultural continuity had been considerably undermined. According to former Soviet historian Juris Goldmanis in the early 1950s the period of transition from capitalism to socialism was over and that it had been accompanied by radical changes in the consciousness and social behaviour of the Latvian people (Goldmanis 1982: 82).

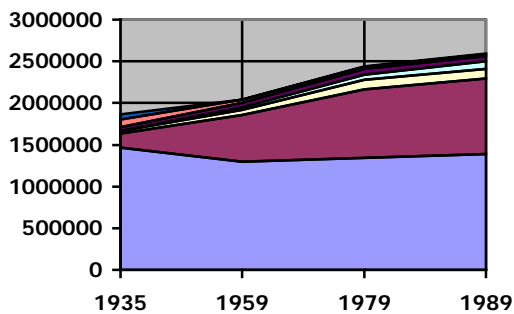
Post-War Immigration

Two traditional minorities, Germans and Jews having lived in Latvia for centuries ceased to exist as consequence of occupations, holocaust, deportations, and displacement. At the same time, Latvia faced unprecedented increase in numbers of Russians, Byelorussians, and Ukrainians. In 1959 the first post-war census indicated that the number of Russians in Latvia had increased by 388,000 persons since 1935 or 2.3 times. The number of Byelorussians had grown by 35,000 or 1.3 times, and the number of Ukrainians had jumped from less than 2,000 to 30,000 or 15 times (Dreifelds 1990; Mežs 1994).

During the following years from 1961 to 1989 (the last Soviet census) or within the time span of one generation, 1,466,700 newcomers immigrated to Latvia, of whom approximately 332,000 settled permanently. After a while, the rest fled from Latvia for various reasons (Dreifelds 1990: 52). According to Latvian statisticians, during the Soviet period in Latvia the intensity of immigration per 1000 inhabitants was the highest in whole post war Europe. In the period from 1946 to 1990, share of migration added increase of total

population was 61.2% in average.¹⁷ Despite of lack of precise data, especially about the Soviet military presence, the approximate estimate is that in the period 1949-1990 in Latvia immigrated 532.700 persons (Mežs et al 2002). There is no precise estimate of the first post-war years (1946-1950). As a result of immigration, the size of ethnic Slavs (Russians, Byelorussians, Ukrainians) in 1989 compared to 1935 increased by 5,7 times (Zvidriņš et al 1992: 50-51).

Chart 2.1 Changes of Ethnic Proportions in Latvia 1939-1989



As chart No.2.1 shows, the population increase after the Second World War happened ultimately because of immigration of Soviet citizens of mainly ethnic Russian, Ukrainian and Byelorussian origin to Latvia. First, it altered the previous, centuries long lasted ethnic composition of society. Second, it increased the share of non-native ethnicities from previously about 25% from total to more than 45% of total at the end of 1980s. Central authorities in Moscow ultimately controlled and encouraged these migration policies. Additionally, migration policies went hand in hand with changes of ethnic structure in the governance of occupied Latvia. Obviously, the Soviet immigrants in Latvia did not have incentive and wish to learn the local language and to get accustomed to the local culture. Therefore, migration strongly affected language and educational environment.

Later, on the eve of independence in the late 1980s, precisely the above mentioned issues, namely migration, governance and education served as powerful mobilizing factor behind the independence movement in Latvia. Migration outcomes turned into issue facilitating

¹⁷ See *Latvijas demografijas gadagramata* 2000, p.26; p.62.

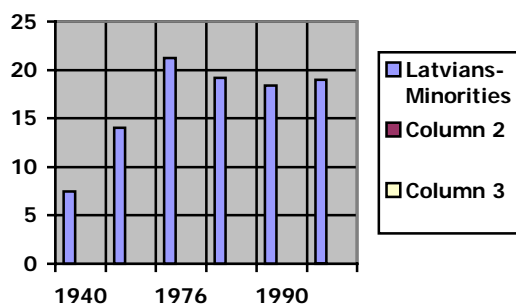
ethno-political tension in Latvia. The old ethnic structures and political and cultural balance of the inter-war republic has been changed in almost one decade. Speedy changes served as additional source of conflict in inter-ethnic relations between groups of people without previous common experience.

However, not all experience of inter-ethnic relations of the previous political system and previous history of peaceful ethnic coexistence was eradicated. Steady increase of the share of inter-ethnic marriages reflect that political questions frequently did not dominate individual relationships between Latvians and newly arrived Soviet immigrants (See Chart No.2.1). Partly, it can be explained by the closed nature of the Soviet totalitarianism. Regime efficiently halted any expressions of dissent and punished anything which in the liberal democracy would be associated with the spirit of civil society. Partly, it also can be explained by the centuries long experience of the Baltic ethnicities to live in peaceful social environment regardless of political regime.

At the beginning of 1950s marriages between ethnic Latvians and ethnic Russians show steady increase to about 20 per cent, the level which exists also in present day Latvia. Moreover, despite of Russification data show that in families where one of the parents was Latvian, approximately 71.4 per cent of the children identified themselves as Latvians (Dreifelds 1990: 60). Despite or thanks to repressive official policies, Latvian identity remained of high value. Many Latvian parents felt internal duty to strengthen this identity via their offspring.

It can be argued that during the years of Soviet occupation, the ethnic Latvian population increasingly consolidated around ethno-cultural values such as language and culture. It happened despite the fact that ethnic Latvians found it increasingly difficult to pursue their individual goals through upward mobility while preserving their collective identity.

Chart. 2.2 Marriages between Ethnic Latvians and Minorities



Source: Zvidriņš et al 1992 and also see newspaper Diena 26 November , 1994.

Different situation appeared among smaller ethnic minorities. Data reflect a very high level of inter-ethnic marriages. Most of descendants of these families identified themselves as Russian speakers.

Education and language reforms

The education and language policy of Soviets in Latvia was constructed to facilitate the overall use of Russian, to decrease the role of Latvian, and eliminate the use of other minority languages. Additionally, the education system became highly ideologized. Eventually, it served as powerfull source of ethnic tension as well as of Latvian alienation from the Soviet regime.

Russian as Lingua Franca

Before the occupation, the knowledge of Russian among the Latvian population was relatively weak. From all individuals who spoke and understood Russian, 84,2% were ethnic Russians (Volkovs 1996: 24). Thus, in mid-thirties only about 240,000 could speak Russian. During the Soviet occupation the situation radically changed.

In 1979 according to official statistics, only 19.1 per cent of all Russians living in Latvia indicated knowledge of Latvian. In the same time 58.3 per cent of the Latvians knew Russian. Consequently, 76.8 per cent of the total population of Latvia could converse in Russian but only 62.9 per cent in Latvian (Dreifelds 1990: 53). In the long term, Soviet linguistic policy created an asymmetric bilingualism where Russian minority not only relatively increased in size but also became a political and linguistic majority.

This situation was a result of the Soviet education policy stating that Latvian language classes in Russian schools were optional, and that there should be more Russian classes in Latvian schools than the other way around.¹⁸ Furthermore, a subject like Latvian history

^{18.} General education became more and more Russified, with the number of Russian classes exceeding Latvian classes for Latvian pupils. As to the teaching of foreign languages, Russian schools had 18

disappeared from the curriculum and was substituted by the history of the USSR, actually meaning Russian history of Russia (Veisbergs 1993: 32). Russian got a status as the "second mother tongue" and was described as "one of the richest of all languages," "created for poetry," etc., but also as one of the easiest languages to learn (Soikane-Trapane 1986: 61).

The Faculty of the Russian Language was established at the Institute of Pedagogy, and all university students were supposed to learn Russian (Goldmanis 1986: 56).

Ideologization of Education System and Society

Changes in educational and cultural spheres (Cultural Revolution) intended to generate "the right perception of things" among the popular masses according to Soviet ideologists (Drizulis 1986: 63). Soon after the occupation, approximately 700 teachers were dismissed and replaced by 1,021 poorly educated people, whose main criteria of appointment were their social background (Berzina, 1992: 101).¹⁹ In early 1941, the Soviet system planned to retrain approximately 6,000 teachers (Drizulis 1986: 170). All private schools were taken over; the organizational system of education and scholarship was altered. The Latvian system with 12 years of primary and secondary school was reduced to an 11-year-system similar to that of the Soviet Union (Misiunas et al 1993: 36). Education was controlled by the local leaders of Comsomol and the Pioneers, who supervised the teachers' activities. The teachers' personal libraries were also controlled, and teachers had to spend 10 per cent of their salaries to buy books of a communist nature (Bērziņa 1992: 102). The educational system at the University of Latvia was also reformed according to Soviet standards, religious freedoms cut and the Faculty of Theology was closed.

An official list of banned books and brochures was issued in November 1940, and additional lists presented in February and March 1941 brought the total number of proscribed titles to 4,000: books on history, politics, philosophy, and sociology, and all literature written by Latvian authors (Misiunas et al 1993: 37). Books written by famous writers K. Skalbe, J. Akuraters, V. Pludonis, A. Brigadere, E. Virza, A. Grins, A. Kenins, etc. were removed from school libraries - writings that might be considered to be at the core of Latvian national culture. Many of the above-mentioned authors contributed to the

classes of Latvian a month, whereas Latvian students had 44 classes of Russian a month, and Russian teachers received 25 per cent higher salaries (Veisbergs, 1993: 32).

¹⁹. Out of 814 political educators, only about 8 per cent had a pedagogical education, while 274 persons had passed four grades of elementary school (Berzina 1992: 102).

rebirth of the Latvian state and supported the evolution of the nation through their literary contributions. The works of the representatives of national culture were replaced by ideological literature. Thus, from 1944 to 1953 1,278,300 pieces of Lenin's works and 160,000 pieces of "The Short Course of History of the Communist Party" were published (Goldmanis 1982: 70-71). The re-education of the population was also supported by executive methods. As early as in 1944-45, many teachers and pupils were arrested and deported to Soviet concentration camps (Berziņa 1992: 105). Saved were not also minority cultural heritage. Jewish synagogues that had been destroyed during the war were not rebuilt (Šaca-Marjaša 1992).

One of the main targets of the Soviet ideology in Latvia was to reduce the importance of the independent nationhood and Latvian identity while simultaneously stressing importance and role of Russian culture and identity in Latvia.

Thus, it was argued that the ancient Latvian tribes had grown and developed "only thanks to their organic connection with the Russian principalities, to the extremely powerful influence of Russian culture" (Misiunas et al 1993: 118-119).

During the following years, narcissism in connection with everything Russian became grotesque. Soviet scientists felt obliged to demonstrate the superiority of everything Russian in all fields of life (Simon 1991: 207). In 1949 80 per cent of the Latvian War Museum's material was destroyed, and so were many pieces of art, paintings, and books made by distinguished Latvian intellectuals. The collections were supplied with material of an agitation nature (Veikmane 1992: 112). The traditional Latvian song festivals held in 1948 and 1950 were turned into manifestations of Communist Party propaganda through the inclusion of Russian and Soviet songs, dances, and music (Goldmanis 1986), and the celebrations on Midsummer's Night - the major national festival in Latvian history - was prohibited (Misiunas et al 1993: 154). The streets and squares in towns and villages were renamed with the names of Soviet statesmen, politicians, or Russian national heroes (Lenin, Kirov, Suvorov, and Pushkin). On signs information was given both in Latvian and Russian, and all official party correspondence was written in Russian or in Russian and Latvian (Goldmanis 1982: 68). As it was declared in 1949 by Kalnberzins, First Secretary of the Latvian CP, it would not be permitted to oppose the Latvian nation to the Great Russian nation. According to the Soviet ideologist Goldmanis, Kalnberzins, the first secretary of the LCP, declared already in 1944 at the sixth plenary meeting of the Communists of Latvia that the main danger in Latvia was bourgeois nationalism. Therefore, special attention should be devoted to the re-education of Latvian intellectuals to convert them from educators of society into propaganda tools of Marxist-Leninist education (Goldmanis 1982).

The decrease of the public use of Latvian language as symbol of nationalism was among the by-pass results of ideological struggle against Latvia orientated identity.

As a result, in 1989, only 36 per cent of the Latvians afforded to use Latvian first when addressing strangers in their own country, whereas 64 per cent used Russian. In case the person spoken to did not know Latvian, 64 per cent always immediately switched to Russian, whereas only 3 per cent adamantly kept to Latvian. By way of comparison, 90 per cent of the Russians in Latvia initiated conversations in Russian, and switched to Latvian - if necessary - only in 20 per cent of the cases (Dreifelds 1990: 65). Obviously, ideological pressure increased ethnic tension and facilitated concerns about ethnic equality from the Latvian side.

Minority schools

During the first year of occupation the new Soviet authorities initiated the development of a minority school network. During one year, the number of state-financed minority schools increased from 278 to 393, however, mainly it was done at the expense of Russian schools whose number was doubled (Bregmanis 1989: 28-29; Goldmanis 1986: 54-55).

Afterwards, during the first post-war years, all minority schools, cultural societies, theatres, etc. established before the war were closed. In 1945-46, apart from the Latvian and Russian schools in Latvia only five Polish, two Estonian and two Lithuanian schools were left, and they were closed during the following years (Goldmanis 1986).

From early 1950s to 1988, in Latvia existed education system only in two languages, Russian and Latvian with Russian perceived as dominant language. The 1958 law on education changed made the study of a second language voluntary rather than obligatory, and in practice this meant that the Russian-speaking population in non-Russian republics was not obliged to learn the local language, while non-Russians could not avoid learning Russian. Furthermore, suggestions were made to shorten the period of compulsory education by one year. The new plan included a revision of the official ideology as well. Thus, it was declared that the final goal of all nations was continued rapprochement and future merging (On the basis of Russian language and culture). In 1961, this goal was officially incorporated in the programme of the USSR Communist Party (Apine 1987: 8). One may argue that towards the end of the 1950s the Soviet authorities revived the ideological coalition between Marxism-Leninism and Russian nationalism as the strongest expression of the collective identity in the USSR, which might escalate the centralizing tendencies and indivisibility of the empire additionally.

Thus, from 1970 to 1979 the percentage of ethnic Latvians speaking Russian as their second language increased to 58.3 per cent (Simon 1991:397).

Despite the fact that starting from 1970s most Latvians could keep conversations freely in Russian they choose education institutions in their native language.

Table 2.3 Share of Minority Students in Universities

Institution	% of minority students
Academy of Art	8.0
Academy of Music	17.0
University of Latvia	45.0
Technical University	64.0
Riga Medical Institute	36.0
Daugavpils Pedagogical Institute	63.0
Institute of Civil Aviation ²⁰	98.6

Source: (Zvidriņš et al 1992: 100)

The Soviet education system created the situation where two major linguistic groups, Latvians and Russians increasingly favoured education institutions with their native language of instruction. In the institutions where language of instruction was Russian, almost no ethnic Latvian students enrolled. At the same time, in the institutions with mainly Latvian as instruction language smaller number of Russians was studying due to no knowledge of Latvian. Increasing linguistic and ethnic segregation took place undermining ethnic equality.

The attitude of ethnic Latvians can be described as an increasing a social and psychological rejection of everything Russian and consequently of everything Soviet (Pabriks et al 2001: 48). For instance, approximately 60 per cent of ethnic Latvians were able to use Russian relatively free, it could be argued that language proficiency would not play a decisive role in choosing one's education or profession, even if the language of instruction was Russian. Ethnic Latvians, however, preferred to study or to work in clearly Latvian surroundings, frequently without any kind of financial considerations in mind.

Also, despite the fact that the use of Russian as a second language increased enormously during the Soviet occupation, the adoption of Russian as a native or first language increased very little.

While totalitarian regime was unable to conquer the minds and change person's internal identity feeling, it appeared efficient to ensure stability and peace in the public sphere.

Thus, still in late 1980s, 64 per cent of ethnic Latvians first used Russian to address strangers in their own country (Dreifelds 1990).

Administration and Employment

Considerable under-representation of ethnic Latvians in the Soviet administration along with the cultural Russification and political Sovietization served as an additional reason of Latvian alienation from the Soviet regime. Ideological and ethnic changes started immediately after the occupation. At least 9,000 communists were transferred to Latvia from elsewhere in the first years of occupation from early 1945 to 1951 since the Soviet rulers distrusted anyone who had not undergone 20 years of Sovietization in the USSR (Misiunas et al 1993: 78-80). Large number of them were ethnic Russians who occupied relevant posts in occupation administration. Part of the new leadership did not hide the understanding that new Soviet governance should be understood as Russian governance (Volkovs 1996: 42).

In the early years of occupation the new administration also heavily relied on local ethnic Russians who entered Communist party. Thus in Daugavpils region more than half of Communists were ethnic Russians and Byelorussians while they made up only 21% of total population in the region (Volkovs 1996).

In March 1953, Stalin's death marked a temporary change in Soviet policy towards Latvia. The proposed policy of Khrushchev, one of the major pretenders for the leading post in the Soviet Union, contained three elements that might provide the new leader with considerable popular support all over the Soviet Union. *First*, already since 1953 the Communist Party had reduced its reliance on political repression, and Khrushchev understood that only a denunciation of Stalin's reign of terror could lessen the feeling of alienation between the population and the Soviet elite, and initiate a process of rapprochement (Aksjutin 1989: 33). During the post-Stalin period, the proverbial knock on the door around midnight no longer occurred unexpectedly, and those accused of unacceptable political behaviour were warned by the authorities before action was taken against them (Debardeleben 1992:546). *Second*, the nationality issue seemed to become an important aspect of the politics of the USSR again when the existing system was to be reformed. Concessions were the only way in which to gain the non-Russian nations' support for the new leadership (Simon 1991: 228).

Khrushchev continued the political strategy of Beria, head of the NKVD, who had presented several memos to the CC's Presidium in early June 1953 and condemned Stalin's nationality policy. On June 12, 1953 the CC's Presidium passed a resolution: "1. All Party and state

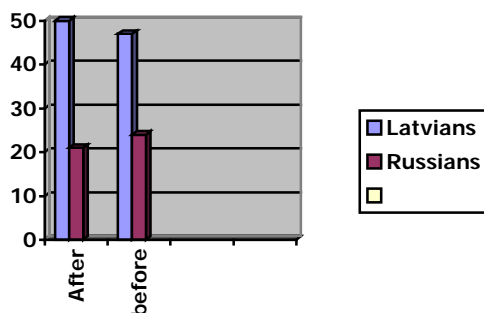
²⁰ The latter education was conducted in Russian (Author).

organs shall radically improve conditions in the national republics and end the distortions in Soviet nationality policy. 2. They shall organize the education, advancement, and promotion of as many locals as possible to leadership positions. The replaced nomenclature functionaries, who do not speak the local language, are to be recalled to the disposal of the CPSU's CC. 3. In the national republics, correspondence is to be conducted in the local vernacular." (Simon 1991). Khrushchev's initial antipathy towards Russian nationalism and religion made the non-Russians believe that the new Soviet leadership was going to return to the political principles of Lenin, under which the minorities had in many cases played a decisive role (Dunlop 1983: 27-31; Simon 1991: 228-233).

As early as on June 22-23, 1953, after the changes in the political doctrine of Moscow, the local Latvian CC initiated a comprehensive promotion of Latvian cadres to executive positions in party, Soviet, and economic organs. Soon, Valentin Ershov, an ethnic Russian and Second Secretary in the local communist party responsible for the policy of cadres, was replaced by Vilis Krumins, an ethnic Latvian (Krumins 1990: 82; Misiunas et al 1993; Simon 1991: 229). In 1957, Eduards Berklavs another Latvian became Vice-Chairman of the Latvian Council of Ministers.

A number of leading positions were given to younger Latvian communists representing the idealistic and national trend of the movement (Krūmiņš 1990: 79-84). During the following years, the share of local ethnic Latvians in the Communist Party and the Soviets increased considerably. Thus, in May 1958 the Council of Trade Unions had 21 Russian members out of 71. The previous Council had had 24 Russians out of 47. Only one Russian member of the CC Bureau remained, and he had in fact been a citizen of the pre-war Latvian state. Only two bureau members were post-war immigrants (Misiunas 1993: 140-141).

Chart 2.3 Increase of Ethnic Latvians in the Trade Union Council After the Death of Stalin in 1950s.



For a short while Latvians increasingly took over posts in the party and Soviet authorities in the countryside and towns after the death of Stalin. Mainly due to structural reforms, 50 per

cent of the regional party leaders, 60 per cent of the chairmen in the kolkhozes, 35 per cent of the directors of industrial enterprises, and 31 per cent of the leading engineers were replaced (Krūmiņš 1990: 88).

In 1956, three main aspects of the policy initiated by the local Latvian authorities under the leadership of Eduards Berklavs could be distinguished. First, several decisions were adopted requiring the executives of the party, soviets, and economy to be proficient in Latvian and Russian. As a prominent party official suggested, "The level of party work would be raised significantly if communists would conduct talks among workers in the language native to workers". Action was also taken to increase the number of compulsory hours for the study of Latvian in the republic's schools (Smith 1990: 59). The demands also included increased teaching of Latvian, Latvian history, and geography in schools.²¹ In the labour market, a 2-year-period for the acquisition of a second language was announced, and when this period had elapsed, an employee could be dismissed from his job if he did not meet the bilingual demand. Second, the Latvian officials passed regulations restricting immigration, which had reached enormous numbers during the past 15 years.

Empire Strikes Back

The Soviet central authorities did not tolerate the reforms proposed and initiated by the national communists. In June 1959 Khrushchev himself visited Riga, and during the last day of his stay the First Secretary of the CPSU had an unfriendly conversation with Berklavs, the leader of national communists. During the following month, a purge comparable to repressions against Hungarian reforms of 1950s or *Prague Spring* 1968 was initiated against the Latvian national communists.

One of the first high-ranking victims of the shake-up within the Latvian Communist Party was Eduards Berklavs, Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR. He was accused of favouring "national isolationism" and "individualism" against "all-union" interests (Babris 1967: 207-208). During the following three years, approximately 2,000 national communists in Latvia lost their positions, among them Aleksandr Nikonov, a Latvian born Russian and Minister of Agriculture during the Berklavs period (Dreifelds 1990: 50). The leadership of the local communist party was taken over by russified Latvians who had been born or had lived in the USSR (Pelshe, Voss) or ethnic Russian communists. The number of ethnic Latvians involved in the communist party and administration decreased and until the very end of the Soviet rule remained disproportional small. For instance, in 1965 39 per cent of the party members were Latvians, including the russified ones, although 62 per cent of the population were Latvians in 1959 (Misiunas 1990: 209).

Soviet distrust of indigenous party members was decisive for the relatively little involvement of the local population in the Soviet elite, and in particular in the Communist Party. Thus, in the early 1970s the three Baltic republics had only 40 to 49 Communist Party

²¹ See **The Baltic States 1940-1972**. 1973. The Baltic Committee in Scandinavia, Stockholm. p.89.

members per 1,000 inhabitants, compared to 74 in the Russian Republic and 80 in Georgia. This figure also included ethnic non-locals living in the Baltic's, and thus it reflects an exaggeration of Communist Party membership among the native Balts (Clemens 1991: 65). Compared to Lithuania and Estonia, the Latvian Communist Party had the lowest percentage of ethnic Latvian members, i.e. approximately 35 to 39 per cent of all members (See Table 2.4).

Table 2.4 Communist Party size and ethnicity 1960-1990 in Three Baltic States (size in thousands of members and candidates, January 1 of the years mentioned)

	Latvia		Estonia		Lithuania	
	Size	% of Latvians	Size	% of Estonians	Size	% of Lithuanians
1960	66	35	33.4	49	54.3	58
1965	95.7	39	54.8	52	86.4	64
1970	122.4	-	70.2	52	116.6	67
1975	140.0	-	81.5	52	140.2	68
1980	158.0	-	95.3	51	165.8	69
1985	170.8	-	107.6	50	190.6	71
1989	-	-	-	-	209.5	71
1990	177.4	39	110.3	50	-	-

Note: Due to the low percentage of ethnic Latvians in the Communist Party, data on the ethnicity of the members in Latvia were never published.

Source: (Huyer, S., E. et al 1993)

Moreover, most of them came from circles outside the decision-making nomenclature. In 1971 only three out of 13 bureau members of the LCP CC were born in Latvia, and in 1986 only four out of 13 bureau members were Latvians (Misiunas et al 1993; Hazners 1986: 46). Until the mid-1980s, Latvia's administration remained in the hands of Russian Latvians with a significant mixture of Russians and other non-Latvians.

In society in general, only 28 per cent of those in the Soviet administrative network were ethnic Latvians (Zvidriņš et al 1992: 103), and the situation did not improve when Mikhail Gorbachev had been appointed First Secretary of the CPSU. He seemed to be less sensitive

to national concerns than his predecessors, and thus questioned the minority elite's demand to participate at the centre and have some priority in the appointment of local officials (Burg 1990: 26).

At the end of the Soviet period in Latvia, among ethnic Latvians about 3% were employed in administration while among the ethnic Russians this number was more than double higher 6,4%.²²

Unequal representation in administration, inability to influence local policies, and ideological and ethnic limits to up-ward mobility of ethnic Latvians introduced by the purge of 1950s could be mentioned among the reasons facilitating the fall of the Soviet regime in Latvia some 30 years later once the opportunity appeared.

Ethnic Equality in Economy, Employment, and Living Conditions

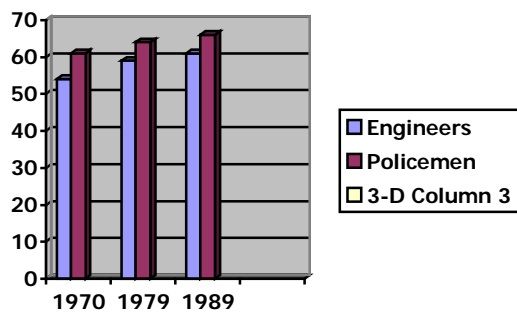
The Soviet plan to industrialize Latvia and to make the working class the main social force in society required additional manpower soon after the occupation.

Already by 1948, due to immigration, ethnic Latvians made up disproportional small number (55.8%) of all industrial labour (Kregere 1992: 137). Also, in early 1960s after the repression of national communists, the course of industrialization was based mainly on immigrant labour, and Pelshe, the new First Secretary of the Latvian CP, repeatedly asked the central authorities to transfer new cadres to Latvia. Already in 1961, 75,2 per cent of industrial managers were of Russian or other minority origin (Kregere 1992). Concerning the immigration of labour, the attitude of the new leadership may be characterized by a statement made by a high-ranking Soviet Latvian official arguing that nothing is wrong even if 3,000,000 more people should come to Latvia (Krūmiņš 1990: 93).

Newly arriving immigrants were increasingly taking over positions also in such spheres as middle level managers and police (See Chart 2.3). Soon, in these spheres locals were disproportionally under-represented. As far as proportionality index, in 1989 ethnic Latvians Among policemen were under-represented by 37% (index 0,63) but among engineers under-representation was by 28% (index 0,72).

Chart 2.4 Share of Soviet Immigrants and Minorities Among Engineers and Policemen (%)

²² See 1989 census in Latvija, pp.110-120.



Source: Zvidriņš et al 1992.

Because of ideological concerns as well as the large number of immigrant employees, the new Soviet leadership chose Russian as the language of communication in the party, the governmental apparatus, and in the field of economics. Since the new top leaders of the republic did not speak Latvian, all speeches were held in Russian (Kregere 1992).

Thus, under-representation in the economic and administrative spheres served as additional factor increasingly forcing Latvian out of daily communication. Apart of linguistic privileges granted to Russian by the Soviet regime, large part of newcomers to Latvia enjoyed privileges in obtaining living space. Research of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia (Riekstiņš 2002: 444-492) indicates that large part of Soviet era immigrants received flats and living space in prestigious living parts in Riga and other towns due to their privileged treatment. Previous dwellers were deported or asked to leave their properties.²³ Thus, only in the first year of occupation, more than 30 apartment buildings in Riga have been given to various Soviet officials arriving to Latvia (Riekstiņš 2002). Later in the year 500 more flats were demanded to the officers of the Red Army. Tradition to provide Soviet officials and other immigrants in power positions with living space by ignoring any property rights or principles of justice continued also after the war. During the third awakening (1987-1991), halting discriminatory policies giving Soviet immigrants privileges to obtain flats were among major issues tackled by the popular movement.

Evaluating the Consequences of the Soviet Regime

During the Soviet rule in Latvia potential of the ethnic conflict increased due to Soviet failure to produce Homo Sovieticus and to replace existing ethnic collective identity with over reaching Soviet identity. Contrary, the Soviet totalitarian nature and discriminatory policy based on ethnic and social status and identity produced internally divided society and strengthened the existing ethnic divisions. The Soviet system were perceived as Russian as

²³ M. Nukša, former General Secretar of the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was asked to leave his flat within 14 days. It was taken by Soviet immigrant Hotjko (Riekstiņš 2002:449)

far as its content and policies. Other ethnic groups perceived ethnic Russians as ruling ethnicity. In the Latvian case, the Soviet regime failed to produce a viable political alternative to the previous nation-state. The Soviet regime was perceived as unjust and repressive. The Soviet system increasingly alienated the majority of ethnic Latvians from itself as well as from the rest of population mainly due to three factors.

First, during the Soviet period Latvian society experienced unprecedented demographic changes of society. Traditional minorities were replaced by the large number of Soviet era immigrants without the requirement to integrate in the local population. Contrary, the local ethnic Latvian majority was ultimately demanded to adjust to language, culture and ideology of the new regime. Soviet government facilitated the use of Russian instead of Latvian as lingua franca on the territory of Latvia. Ethnic Latvian population felt deprived and misrepresented culturally and linguistically.

Second, newcomers, frequently of non-native origin were favoured in administration and governance due to ideological as well as political motives.

Third, the Soviet regime failed to gain legitimacy also in the economic terms. Despite the fact that Latvia together with Estonia and Lithuania enjoyed the highest living standards within the USSR, many Latvians did not find Soviet achievements convincing enough. First, despite the statistics, in the 1980s, average Latvians felt increasingly deprived economically because it seemed to them that they did not receive an equitable share of what they annually to the whole union market. There were frequent complains that if not the greedy Soviet Union with the centralized socialist economy, they would be much better off. Economic arguments against the Soviet rule were combined with political ones. The inter-war statehood was brought back in the memory as viable solution to all the problems of Sovietization. Thus, the goal to achieve independent statehood was bolstered by rational calculation as well as by perception of justice.

Combination of these factors, political, economic, cultural misrecognition of previously independent nation lead to unprecedented popular movement in 1980s which finalised in the renovation of independent Latvian nationhood in 1991. In 1970s the reasons of alienation and resistance to the regime is the best exemplified by the Latvian dissidents punished by the Soviets. Thus, Gunars Astra, who received a seven-year sentence in strict regime incarceration, followed by five additional years in internal exile said in court: "... I am a Latvian. I insist on being known as a Latvian - not just a Rīgasian, as persons of Riga are often called. ... It hurts and humiliates me to see the facade of factories carrying large signs in Latvian, e.g. STRAUME, VEF, RER, when in fact

everything behind this facade is being done in Russian: the orders, the reports, the information, the technical data - everything. ... It hurts and humiliates me to see my native language slowly pushed out of the way. It can still be found on the stages of certain theatres and in folklife museums, but even there the foreign influence of Russian is noticeable. ... It is truly humiliating to realize that Russian-born students ... get credits in Latvian language studies without any basic knowledge, while Latvian students are required to have working knowledge of Russian to pass. ... I am sad that native Latvian children must view their bedtime stories from Moscow television stations, since no local programmes are permitted, and that they are not given a chance to sing their own Latvian folksongs, of which there are so many. ... I feel deeply offended when in stores, on public transit, in offices or simply on the street in Latvia there is such a disregard for my native tongue. When addressing someone in Latvian, I may get a very indignant response in Russian, as if to say, "Don't you know Russian?"²⁴

The last decade before the collapse of the Soviet power in Latvia could be characterized by increasing fear of the irreversibility of demographic, linguistic, and political changes. The ethnic Latvians increasingly felt like an ethnic minority in their once independent country. On the other hand there were no seen chances to revert the ever increasing immigration and ever decreasing role of Latvian. Withdrawal, apathy, alienation, egoism these were the characteristics of the individual and the nation forced in the false mode of being without hope of future.

Therefore, the weakening of the repressive mechanism under the Gorbatshev was perceived as the last and only chance to reverse the irreversible in defiance of the fate of occupied nation-state.

²⁴ See "The Final Statement of Gunars Astra", in *The World Federation of Free Latvians, Latvian Dissent. Case Histories of the 1983 Soviet Campaign to Silence Political Dissidents in Occupied Latvia* (USA: World Federation of Free Latvians, 1983).

3. Part

Ethnic Politics in Latvia (1991-2003)

In August 1991, after 51 year of annexion by the Soviet Union, Latvia regained its independence. The country faced number of challenges. First, it had to go through the process of de-sovietization including deconstruction of the Soviet institutions and bureaucracy as well as change of ideology, symbols, monuments, even street signs, and ending with investigation of the Soviet crimes against humanity. Second, independence meant returning to the nation building process halted by the Soviet invasion and efficiently undermined by sovietization and russification of all spheres of socio-political life. Particularly, it meant attempts to build common identity. The aim to achieve overreaching linguistic, cultural and political unity within territory of Latvia and political identity orientated towards democratic and independent Latvia. At least in the ininitial stage of this project the frequently glorified, relatively short history of the inter-war independence provided the needed and the necessary example. Third, regaining of independence meant Latvia's firm orientation both ideologically and institutionally towards the contemporary Western model of market economy and democracy. Membership in the EU, Council of Europe, OSCE, and NATO symbolized the only way to secure independence and sustainable development.

Aspects of de-sovietization, democratization, and market reform should be seen as basic transition components of Latvia's nation-building process in 1990s. In this respect, Latvia stands together with the two other Baltic States and aside of all other formerly Sovietized states. Such Soviet Union satellites like Poland and Hungary were never really concerned with nation building process since they never lost it. In turn, the majority of the former Soviet Union republics were never guided in their reforms by the western model as eagerly as were the Balts. Most of the former Soviet republics neither shared a European/Western history nor did they have an interwar independence experience like the Balts.

Therefore, two mutually connected aspects, the historic experience of statehood and its efficient deconstruction by the Soviet power is the major Baltic characteristic distinguishing these countries from the rest of the societies involved in the Central and Easter European transition of 1990s. Moreover, these are factors influencing the most the character of transition in the Baltic's. They still continue to influence the development of Latvia at least as ethnic policy is concerned. One can argue that in the Latvian case, project of nation-state building provided much of the rational and emotional motivation for the democratization, market reform, and de-sovietization. Thus, differently from the rest of the Central and Easter European transition, in Latvia democratization and market reform were goal as well as the mean.

This characteristic of Latvian society in transition should be kept in mind while discussing ethnic politics and/or comparing it with the Western model. When the ideology of multiculturalism was born in the 1970s the major questions established Western democracies feared were as follows. What should be the response of liberal democracy to increasing ethnic diversity? How should minorities gain public

recognition? How to help previously discriminated minorities? To propose the same questions or the same discourse in the analysis of the Latvian or Baltic case can be misleading if not wrong.

Since the restoration of the independent statehood, the main question in Latvia is how to construct a cohesive liberal democratic society? Along with it stands another question. How to de-sovietize the state institutions and the society while avoiding discrimination or unnecessary restrictions towards the former privileged Russian population?

While answering these questions the following has to be kept in mind. First, after the restoration of independence Latvians had to turn from former Soviet minority into Latvia's majority. Second, in the same time former privileged Russian population was turning from previously dominant and largest Soviet nation into Latvia's ethnic minority. Apart from structural changes it meant a huge psychological transition for both ethnic groups. The challenge to Russian population can be compared to challenge to interwar Baltic German population which as well turned from privileged and dominant ethnic group into average ethnic minority after the establishment of the Latvian state.

However, there are also similarities as far as comparison of modern multicultural dilemmas in Latvia and in the rest of the west. Similar discourse and questions in West as well as in Latvia can be applied while discussing policies towards small and traditional minorities, like Poles or Jews. In the Soviet era these minorities were denied recognition and faced discriminatory policies which had to be changed after the re-establishment of independence.

Thus, Western European minority discourse in its full sense could be only applied to small and frequently traditional minorities. However, its application in a broader sense without seeing the rest of the transition process makes analysis unaccountable. In this chapter an attempt to provide more a complex analysis of ethnic relations and ethnic policy of transition period from 1991 to 2004 will be offered.

The main hypothesis of this chapter is that after restoring independence, Latvian ethnic policy step by step turned into liberal democratic policy orientated towards a unipolar society where individualistic values are dominating over collective values. This orientation is the outcome of Latvia's particular blend of three factors, the historic experience of the interwar republic, the current political model of western nation states, and practical considerations of national security.

The chapter will be devoted to the early independence movement and its characteristics. Afterwards, there will be discussion of major issues of ethnic policy through the prism of nation building process, such as citizenship, language policies, and education policies. Internal and external political influences will be analysed.

Particular attention will be devoted to the analysis of ethnic representation and power in democratic institutions of restored Latvia, like parties, parliament, government and power structures as well as in the labour market. At the end, some major considerations

concerning political stability, ethnic violence, and prospects of the creation of a cohesive society will be revealed.

Singing Revolution: We Are Talking About Freedom

Paul McCartney's sound track "Freedom" was released 15 years after the beginning of independence movement in Latvia. However, it can be regarded as wonderful background music nicely describing emotions and the mood of the mid-1980s in the Baltics. Therefore, I chose words from this song as the title for this sub-chapter introducing the reader with characters and dilemmas of so called third awakening. It was a popular movement of unprecedented scale, sense of solidarity and exemplary non-violence known as the singing revolution.

In 1987, Anna, a Latvian student age 21 exclaimed "It is the beginning" while hearing about the first, small anti-Soviet demonstration at the Monument of Freedom in the Latvian capital Riga. She was thinking of the beginning of the end to the Soviet regime as an anti-democratic regime. She was also thinking in particular terms, namely the end of the Soviet regime in Latvia. Due to her age she never lived in the interwar Republic of Latvia, but her family upbringing, especially her grandparents influence made her feel that the democratic and independent Latvia is a norm to return to. She was thinking about personal and national freedom, justice and individual as well as collective rights for her and her nation as a whole.

However, it must be noted that the same information in the mass media covering the event at the Monument of Freedom made many other people feel different from Anna. Ludmilla, a Russian schoolteacher whose father was a retired Soviet officer settled in Latvia in the early 1950s. She remembered her father's stories about Latvian guerrillas in the forest desperately trying to prevent Soviet authorities to build communism in Latvia, to organize collective farms and to construct heavy industry. They were against everything her Soviet fatherland so badly needed in order to defend itself against Western capitalism. In fact, she never could understand why many otherwise educated and polite Latvians seemed so distant and silent, even strange when she tried to explain those benefits which the communist party and the Soviet Union had given to them. She deeply condemned this latest event in the centre of Socialist Riga. Obviously, it was initiated by hostile Western radio stations once more trying to revoke the petty bourgeois Latvian nationalism.

Having introduced Ludmilla, it has to be acknowledged that the range of opinions among Soviet Latvia's inhabitants was still broader.

Vladimir together with his parents came to Latvia in 1960s as a 10 year old child from Russia's deep countryside. Just like all other Russian children he attended school in the

Russian language while his neighbour, a Latvian girl went in other school where everything was taught in Latvian. Afterwards, he went to university and became an engineer in one of Soviet industrial plants in Riga. No doubt, the Soviet Union was his patria. He did not know much of the local history, but from his few Latvian co-workers he had heard occasionally that this Soviet republic was once a capitalist country. In fact, he himself did not feel anymore convinced about the benefits of the Soviet system. Shops frequently had shortages of meat and cheese. Usually, he wore Czech or even Finnish shoes instead of the Soviet. Despite of the official lip service, the Soviet system was running into obvious economic hardships. Perhaps, some changes would be in place in the end? Perhaps, those demonstrating Latvians in the centre of Riga were not speaking total nonsense? If they would skip the unnecessary nationalistic rhetoric about independence and language rights the talk about better economic perspectives and more democracy could make sense also for Vladimir.

The above mentioned three invented persons and their opinions were chosen in order to give a better understanding of the different moods and various divisions in the society once the independence movement started. Above all it is important to stress, that obviously one could not speak of a cohesive society in Latvia in mid-1980s despite of illusions Ludmilla or even Vladimir possessed before awakening. Moreover, it was a fragmentised society and not only because of ethnic origin. Public opinions varied by what John Stuart Mill called the lack of “common political antedecedents: the possession of national history, and consequent community of recollections; collective pride and humiliation, pleasure and regret, connected with the same incidents in the past.” (Mill 1958: 229).

Soviet Latvia's society was internally divided by number of factors such as different understanding of history, and linguistic as well as educational segregation of ethnic Latvians and ethnic Russians. Particularly, it could be observed among ethnic Latvians and those Soviet citizens of mainly Russian origin who settled in Latvia after the World War II. Moreover, for two generations under Soviet occupation Latvia's society had been closed totalitarian society without any possibility of open discussions, stripped of characteristics of a civil society and with accelerating economic inefficiency despite of otherwise ever climbing statistics.

Hence, no wonder that the above mentioned three characters developed very different reactions to the same event since they were living in different worlds despite their actual life next door to each other. The ability to cross the dividing line was taken away by the regime. In fact, people like Ludmilla did not have the slightest imagination about the existence of any other reality until the very beginning of the independence movement in Latvia. Anna and Ludmilla were speaking different languages, reading and listening different media, learning different history in school and at home. Awakening proved, they were thinking different thoughts reflecting contradicting and mutually exclusive values.

Benedict Anderson's theory of the nation as an imagined community (Anderson 1991) could easily use Latvia's late Soviet era society as a case example to prove its validity. Above mentioned three characters did not belong to one and the same nation in their

imagination despite the fact that all three lived on the same territory, in the same time and under the same regime. For those of us unwilling to dive into the depth of social theories, the movie “Matrix” depicting people living in different but parallel realities could be an alternative example to describe the situation in Latvia on the eve of independence.

In the second chapter I already tried to answer question why the Soviet regime has failed in the Baltics. It did because its origin was illegitimate. While its continuation was totalitarian system causing death of tens of thousand citizens, eliminating basic liberties, but most important regime’s economic, demographic, and cultural policies threatened the very existence of the local ethnic and linguistic identity as an identity of majority. Once the opportunity to question the legitimacy of the regime and its policy appeared in the mid-1980s, the language of freedom was understood by most of ethnic Latvians like Anna.

Slogan on the front page of the independence movement’s informative bulletin *Atmoda* sounded “Now or never!”

Chronology of Independence Movement 1986-1990: From Dissent to Parliament

Although opposition to the Soviet regime in Latvia existed throughout the all occupation period, organised mass opposition involving tens and hundreds thousand of people could be seen only in the second half of 1980s. In the first post-war decade opposition centred on the national partisan. In the later decades of the Soviet regime resistance consisted of various small dissident groups usually severely punished by the Soviet regime (Zīle 1998: 64-86).

Situation changed after the election of Mikhail Gorbachev as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 15 March 1985. The new communist leader initiated reforms know as *perestroika* in order to avoid the economic and military collapse of the regime. Among others *perestroika* eased the Soviet repressive mechanism in order to promote public support to reforms. Window of opportunity was used by the Latvian dissent which initiated the first phase (1986-1988) of the independence movement in Latvia.

In July 1986, three Latvian workers founded Helsinki – 86, a human rights watch group to “Monitor how the economic, cultural, and individual rights of our people are respected” (Eglitis 1993: 9). The group was placed under permanent surveillance of KGB but nor did it prevent it from public activities neither it stopped the establishment of other groups opposing the regime. Thus, on 28. February 1987 the Environment Protection Club (*Vides Aizsardzības Klubs - VAK*) was established. Along with ecologic orientation it campaigned for preservation of historic monuments and symbols, folklore and culture, thus combining “thinking green” with “thinking patriotic”. Activities of Club was irritation to the Soviet authorities since among others it meant protection of politic and historic monuments of the inter-war republic for some reason still not destroyed by the Soviets.

Activities of these organizations reflected the concerns of waste majority of local Latvian population who was not willing to continue to accept Soviet policy decisions threatening their cultural identity as well as environment without their consent. Thus, the Soviet plans to construction hydroelectric complex on Daugava River and Underground in Riga was seriously objected. Also the side effects of these industrial plans were opposed, for instance the inevitable immigration of many Slavic workers and their privileges compared to local population. These points got previously unprecedented public support. In a short period of time more than 30,000 signatures were gathered in order to oppose possible environmental damage and migration of population which the planned dam on the river would cause if constructed. Popular mobilisation provided a taste of democracy and whettered the appetites of those who craved more (Pabriks et al 2001: 52). Soon followed the challenge to the regime itself marking the beginning of so called calendar demonstrations.

On June 14, 1987, when most of East-Central Europe was still freezing under the snow cover of Soviet totalitarianism, news of the first snowdrop, an unsanctioned, anti-Soviet demonstration in Riga spread in the world media. Helsinki -86's was calling to commemorate the Soviet deportations of Latvia's citizens in June 1941. Several thousand participants responded to the call (Bruvers 1987). In the same year two other calendar demonstrations marked the anniversaries of the Molotov-Ribentrop Pact and Proclamation of Latvian Republic, on August 23 and November 18 respectively. Each event gathered the increasing number of participants while their organization was solely on the shoulders of informal and numerically small organizations. Innitiators were mainly Soviet dissidents, former political prisoners and their family members and friends. As far as an ethnic origin, overwhelming majority of organizers and participants were ethnic Latvians. As far as characters briefly described at the beginning of the chapter, neither Vladimir nor Ludmilla were part of these events yet. However, the tide of popular wave followed these trailblazers. In March 25, 1988, the Central Committee of Latvia's Communist party under the public preasure allowed to commemorate another Soviet deportation of Latvia's civilians to Siberia in 1949. Thousands of people took part, including a number of widely known Latvian intellectuals.

Spring of 1988 could be used as a benchmark of the second phase of independence movement. The second phase (1988-1990) was distinguished by the creation of mass popular movement (Popular Front) under the leadership of intellectuals. This phase ended with elections to the Soviet Latvian Supreme Council in March 1990 where Popular Front gained majority of seats.

In spring 1988, the creative unions, organizations that united the majority (Trapans 1991: 31) of Latvia's intellectuals, called for discussion how intellectuals should deal with consequences of Stalinism. On June 1 and 2, 1988 conference took place discussing contemporary social and economic problems including those of privileges of Soviet nomenklatura and military personell, migration, and unjust distribution system of flats. It was demanded to unveil so called "white spots" of history previously avoided or falsified by the Soviet historians and regime. Journalist, Victors Avotins suggested to organize the

Popular Front, a democratic people's movement in support of perestroika.²⁵ Moreover, storm of opinions was initiated by Mavriks Vulfsons, journalist and professor of Accademy of Art, a Jewish origin communist known with his political activities already in the inte-war Latvia. He stated that in 1940 Latvia was violently occupied by Soviet military forces. Previously, dissidents could only say so gathering already their belongings for departure to Siberian prisons or mental hospitals. No quest of Soviet legitimacy was tolerated. Now the legitimacy of Soviet regime was challenged by one of its own people stating publicly words what many people like Anna were thinking privately. Courage of the old professor opened a Pandora box. Suddenly, popular opposition to the Soviet regime became a just cause in the eyes of the Latvian majority. On July 10, 1988, the Latvian National Independence Movement (LNNK) was founded as the *first national mass movement* demanding the restoration of an independent Latvia (Pabriks et al 2001: 54). Eduards Berklavs, one of the formerly repressed Latvian national communists was elected in the leadership of the movement. In the following period of Awakening the LNNK presented itself as the most consequent and ardent supporter of the principle of legal restoration of the Republic of Latvia. LNNK together with other earlier established groups formed Informal Popular Front in order to stress their independence from influence of the Communist party. At the same time bulk of the members of the organization became also members of politically moderate Popular Front established in October 1988 under the guidance of Latvian intellectuals. Informal Popular Front was granted a substructure status within the PF (Kalniete 2000: 44). Popular front was considered moderate since it attempted to reach it goals via established soviet structures while informal organizations opposed them. Another difference between these tho independence movement branches were the attitude towards the political independence of Latvia. Informal groups demanded the Latvian independence and de-occupation much earlier than Popular Front. The later proclaimed complete political independence as its possible goal only in May 31, 1989.

According to the memories of Sandra Kalniete, head of PF Coordination centre and contemporary Minister of Foreign Affairs, summer of 1988 before the founding congress of Popular Front was filled with heated public discussions. Strong opposition to the idea of Popular Front came from the workers of large industrial enterprises, military schools and Shipping Company where employees of ethnic Russian and migrant origin constituted an absolute majority. Since the very beginning, the idea of Popular Front was discredited by majority of Russian language press as well as by the local branch of Communist party. On the one hand, the Central Committee of LCP attempted to restrict activities of the organizers of PF while on the other hand it did everything to gain control within the organization.

Marina Kostanecka, a Russian origin member of the Popular Front noted in the founding congress that among the delegates are disproportionally few ethnic Russians due to their pasivity and lack of correct information about the event from media operating in the

²⁵ It should be noted that under the Soviet regime lexicology chosen by orators was careful and frequently contained double meaning not directly reflected in words in order to avoid repressions (Author).

Russian.²⁶ There have been also provocations inviting for ethnic violence. Shortly before the founding congress in Latvia were distributed flyers in broken Latvian promoting violence against ethnic Russians. Later, it appeared that flyers were published in the Headquarters of the Soviet Military in Riga (Kalniete 2000: 75).

In order to inform public about goals and principles of the Popular Front, informative campaign was initiated by the Front itself. From the very beginning the information campaign was aimed at both, Latvians as well as Russians. Already, in October 7, 1988 the first issue of "Atmoda" (Awakening), PF informative bulletin was published in Latvian and Russian. In the founding congress two editors Elita Veidemane and Grigory Aleksejev were affirmed for both language editions respectively.

Lectors group within the Front was founded in order to organize public discussions about Popular Front and relevant socio-political issues. Within a year, the Latvian Popular Front membership grew to 230,000 persons. It united about 10 per cent of Latvia's population in the democratic movement. Even if percentage of ethnic Russians involved in the activities of the Front remained low, it succeeded to win the hearts and souls of many smaller minority representatives residing in Latvia. Already in November and early December 1988 the Popular Front helped initiate 18 national cultural associations (Muižnieks 1993) for minorities like Poles, Jews, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Moldavians, Estonians, Germans, Azeri, Tartars, Lithuanians, as well as Russians. Popular Front supported also the establishment of minority education similar to that of the inter-war Latvia. Already in September, 1989 the first Jewish school in the Soviet Union was opened in Latvia. Later, Polish, Estonian, and Ukrainian schools have been set up, and 11 language Sunday schools were in function in 1991-1992 (Veisbergs 1993: 35).

In December 3, 1988, Front assisted to organize the Association of Minority Culture Organizations existing also in present. In the same month the first Nationalities Forum gathered representatives of minority and Russian. It passed resolutions in support to incentives of Popular Front. Support to Popular Front was also gained from a number of Russian intellectuals like Marina Kostanecka, Vladlen Dozorcev, Jury Abizov, and others, who had expressed their concern about the fate of the individual and culture in the Soviet Union. Along with Popular Front, also radical independence organizations like LNNK were attempting to break information frontiers between ethnic groups established by Soviet ideology and linguistically divided media by providing information also in Russian where possible. Moreover, these activities were not limited within the Baltic area. Latvian, Estonian, and Lithuanian Popular movements established contacts all over the former Soviet Union serving as an example of peaceful democratic reforms in Caucasus, Middle Asia, Ukraine, Belorus, and Russia itself. In March 25, 1989, after whole Soviet Union elections to the People's Congress in Moscow, the Baltic Popular Fronts assisted to consolidate democratic forces in the Soviet Union level.

The ultimate strategic goal of Popular Front was to eradicate the active opposition to fragile independence movement within Latvia as well as within whole Soviet Union. It

²⁶ See speech of Marina Kostanecka in the PF founding congress. **Latvijas Tautas Fronte. Gads Pirmais.** 1989. Riga., pp.14-18.

could not afford to fail with democratic reforms since a few believed another chance ever will be given. Popular Front's co-operation with non-Russian ethnic minorities within Latvia as well as outside it, and co-operation with other democratic movements in the USSR greatly assisted this movement. Along with the ethnic Latvian support, Popular front obtained the support of smaller ethnic minorities. Minorities saw the chance to promote their collective as well as individual identity and rights while cooperating with Latvians and the Popular Front.

The Russian immigrant population was divided in their attitude towards suddenly resurgent Latvians. The internal political consolidation of the ethnic Latvian population, support from a number of non-Latvian intellectuals, and the segmentation of the non-Latvian population along ethnic and political lines made it possible for the Popular Front to pursue a political strategy aiming to achieve independence. In other words, many persons whose personal story was similar to that of Vladimir described at the beginning of chapter either started to support Popular Front or avoided to oppose the movement. However, the same could not be said about characters like Ludmilla.

In November 11-13, 1988 Vadim Medvedjev, Ideological Secretary of the Central Committee of CPSU visited Latvia. Visit strengthened the dominating conservative wing of Latvian Communist Party and KGB. Under their auspices the International Working People's Front (Interfront) was created in January 7-8, 1989. Interfront's aim was to avoid the erosion of Communist Party rule and oppose any changes that threatened the privileged status of Russian-speaking immigrants (Pabriks et al 2001: 56). Interfront and Communist Party gained support of those Russian speakers who did not share ideas of democratization, independence of Latvia, decrease of the role of Russian language, and eventual decrease of the role of Moscow in the Latvian administration. Persons sharing Ludmilla's political view joined the Interfront movement. There were representatives of Soviet Latvian bureaucracy, retired Soviet military personell (Blūzma et al 1998: 166).

Establishment of the Interfront had at least two consequences. First, despite of Popular Front's attempts to involve in its activities as much as possible non-ethnic Latvians, the Front remained mainly ethnic Latvian. After establishment of the Interfront, ethno-political polarization obtained a structural frame since Interfront gained its support almost exclusively from those with Russian as their mother tongue. Second, Latvia's Communist Party faced increasing split with its minority of ethnic Latvians mainly leaning in support of Popular Front while its conservative Russian majority together with KGB and Soviet Military were Godfathers of the Interfront. Due to these clear dividing lines and role of existing power structures Latvia's population was facing increasing threat of violence as well as danger of contr-reformation. Nobody could predict even the possible reaction of central Moscow authorities or tactics of Military and Communist Party in Latvia towards the Popular Front and its activists.

In its early stage the Latvian Popular Front could mainly rely on public activities like demonstrations, collecting of signatures and writing petitions in order to achieve its political goals. The Latvian Popular Front clarified two proposals: First, to guarantee the status of

Latvian as the official language of Latvia. Second, to stop fostering immigration from the rest of the USSR.

In 14 february 1989 the Soviet Latvian authorities were forced to adopt the so-called decree No. 46., following the requirements of the Latvian Popular Front. The decree proposed a number of measures "... for the termination of the mechanical growth of the population and the regulation of the migration processes in the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic (LSSR)". As a consequence, the previously fostered and encouraged immigration in Latvia from other parts of the USSR almost stopped since 1989.

On May 5, 1989 - under political pressure from the Latvian Popular Front - the Supreme Council of Latvia adopted the Language Law making Latvian the state (official) language. In practice, this meant real bilingualism and recognition of the Latvian language for the first time in Soviet-Latvian history as the law presupposed the use of both Latvian and Russian in administration. The law also envisaged a three-year transition period, during which non-Latvians working in the state sector would have to learn Latvian.

In 15 February 1990 the Soviet Latvian authorities accepted the national flag and anthem of the inter-war republic as symbols of Soviet Latvia instead of previous Soviet symbolic. This request of the Popular Front splitted its supporters. Many feared that change of political symbols before the independence is achieved would legitimize the existing regime and undermine the attempts of de-occupation (Kalniete 2000).

Already before the adoption of the Language Law by the Supreme Council, on 25 February 1989, the Interfront organized a demonstration where a resolution was adopted oposing strongly granting the Latvian language an official status (Kalniete 2000: 460). On 23 February 1989 a similar Interfront activity was organized against the Latvian Supreme Council's decision to stop Soviet encouraged migration into Latvia. Hence, already in 1989 part of the ethnic Russian population judged Latvian linguistic claims as unfair, unsocialist and nationalistic. However, it is true that these decisions of the Supreme Soviet were challending the dominance of Soviet power and existing privileges of the Russian language. The reaction of the Interfront showed clearly that Soviet system supporters were not open for any changes, even the compromise to support the introduction of bilingualism was unacceptable to them. Therefore, it would be naïve to expect that later the same people would accept Latvian as the lingua franca in Latvia. It seems only logically that in the years to come the majority of the independence opponents would use any available means of a democratic society to oppose Latvia's language policy. In April 1989, Interfront leadership attempted to organize strike in the largest industrial enterprises of Latvia against political changes in Latvia. As early as 1989 Soviet ideology and Russian ethnic identity frequently merged as mobilizing force for part of the Russian population of Latvia. Nostalgia for the Soviet system was born before it had managed to pass away.

Popular Front activities could be observed also outside Latvia and the Baltics. On the whole Union level, one of the co-ordinated sucesses of the democratic movements under the leadership of the Baltic Popular Front's was their impact on the drafting of the new Soviet Constitution in late 1988, early 1989. Finally Moscow was forced to step back at least in one

issue under the public pressure from the Baltics and Caucasus. It had to re-include an article allowing republics to exit the Soviet Union. Such article existed even in Stalin's Constitution of 1936 while new editors wanted to take it out from the new version. Therefore, the rights to exit any union are so important to the Balts while discussing the European Constitutional Treaty some 14 years later.

Which Road to Freedom?

In early 1989 the idea to restore the independence of Latvia became more and more accepted common thought. The sociological survey of May 1989 showed that 57 per cent ethnic Latvians and 9% other residents of Latvia openly supported independent Latvia outside the USSR (Zepa 1992: 22-26). Namely, large part of mainly ethnic Latvian population did not regard the idea of freedom as impossible dream anymore. In a large extend idea of independence was nurtured by the dissident circles, but in 1988 it was taken over and further promoted as political goal by LNNK (Latvian National Independence Movement) and other informal organizations. Under their influence the public view was formed as well as the Popular Front leadership influenced. In October, 1989, the second PF Congress adopted the resolution stating that the ultimate goal is Independent Latvia. However, it was easier to be stated as to be achieved. Freedoms are seldom given rather taken.

From today's perspective in the late 1980s it is possible to distinguish two different but mutually supplementary roads to achieve the independence. In this research I would name them *Route de Facto* and *Route de Jure*. Paradox, but the Latvian popular movement managed to go both ways simultaneously. After the re-establishment of independence their principles were merged forming basic political principles of the re-newed state.

Route de Jure

This approach can be characterized by strict reference to the judicial continuity of the inter-war Republic of Latvia. In 1940 Latvia was occupied by the Soviet forces, but it never ceased *de Jure* to exist despite of the establishment of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic (LSSR) by the Soviet authorities. Most of the international society neither recognized the Baltic annexion by the Soviets nor actively opposed it due to actual international power balance between the West and the Soviets. For instance, in the number of countries (USA, Great Britain) Latvian embassies continued to exist enjoying the support of the host countries. Adherents of Route de Jure to independence insisted that independence means the legal restoration of the inter-war republic including its constitution, laws, and democratic institutions. As the first step to the restoration of the independence was mentioned registration of citizens of the Republic of Latvia. Namely, all those who once were themselves holders of the passports of the inter-war republic or their descendents should be registred to express the wish to restore the independent and democratic Latvia. In February 1989 informal²⁷ Latvian National Independence Movement, Environment Protection Club, Helsinki – 86 as well as number of LPF regional organizations united in the attempt to create Citizens' Committees and organize Citizens Congress (Blūzma et al 1998: 174). The

²⁷ Organizations without the official Soviet recognition (Author)

Committees registered all those who were citizens of Latvia before occupation in June 1940, and their descendents. Apart of this, Committees addressed the Soviet immigrant population by encouraging all those who openly support independence to register as well. Committees expressed rediness to grant citizenship to these persons irrespective of their knowledge of Latvian after the restoration of independence. According to Andris Pauls-Pavuls, a member of Committee, about 900,000 of citizens and their descendents as well as 43,000 non-citizens were registered in 1990.

In 8-23 April, 1990 the Citizens Congress was elected. Its major strategic task was distinguished restoration of democratic statehood. Tactically, it meant careful collaboration to the newly elected Supreme Council where since 1990 already dominated Popular Front. Collaboration was based upon 5 principles (Eglitis 1990:2-3).

- Restoration of the Republic of Latvia according to the 1920 Peace Treaty between USSR and Latvia;
- Restoration of the republic according to the democratic Latvian Constitution of 1922;
- Granting of Latvian citizenship to citizens of other countries residing in Latvia only after the withdrawal of Soviet troops and restoration of legitime Latvian authority;
- No referendums in the presence of the Soviet military and with participation of the Soviet citizens;
- No treaties between the Soviet Latvian authorities and USSR without the Congress accept.²⁸

One of the major successes of the Citizens Committees was its insistance on the legal continuity of the Latvian statehood. Through their activities Committees managed effectively shape the strategy of the Popular Front which innitially came on the political scene with moderate demands about sovereignty, federation, and support for perestroika. Leadership of the Popular Front officially did not support activities of the Congress and Committees (Bluzma et al 1998: 175) but many its members were members of the Congress as well. Popular Front was the only officially recognized organization by the Soviets, therefore its demands were more moderate, adapted to the situation de facto.

The leadership of the Committees understood their inability to achieve the independence with their uncompromise approach. Thus, both organizations, Citizens Committees and the Popular Front needed each other. Despite of relatively radical strategy, Committees enjoyed high popular support. In September 1989, 39 per cent of ethnic Latvians and 23 per cent of other ethnicities supported this organization (Zepa 1992: 23). In early 1990 Citizens Committees and the PF came to agreement. Committees agreed that they will not ask population to boycott elections in the Latvian Supreme Council. In turn, Popular Front, in a case of victory, will use its officially (by the Soviet terms) obtained power to re-establish independent Latvia.

Route de Facto

²⁸ Congress was fearing that Soviet Latvian Supreme Council could sign new Union Treaty thus legitimizing Latvian incorporation in the USSR (Author).

Originally, Popular Front was established to use the window of opportunity provided by perestroika to advance the interests of Latvia. These interests can be described by analysing the content of more than 500 letters of support to the PF presented in its first Congress. 46 per cent of writers insisted on constitutional and economic independence of Latvia. 40 per cent demanded the Popular Front should safeguard Latvian language and culture, 36 per cent of the respondents demanded to abolish Soviet migration policy. 37 per cent of the letters asked the Popular Front to devote its main attention to the question of human rights and justice (Latvijas Tautas Fronte, 1989: 63).

The Latvian Popular Front sought to satisfy this demand by legal means (accepted by the Soviet system) available in concrete political circumstances. First it acted as a pressure group. Second, differently from the Citizens Committees attempting to create their own state institutions, the Popular Front focused on gaining power in the existing Soviet institutions. Therefore, the road to independence used by Popular Front can be described as *Route de Facto*.

In March 1989, the Popular Front won 80 per cent of seats allocated for Latvian delegates to the all-Union Congress. In Moscow, one of the first demands of the Baltic delegates was to establish the commission to evaluate the political and legal consequences of the Molotov-Ribentrop Pact and its additional protocols signed by the USSR and Nazi Germany in 1939. Thus, the Popular Front questioned the legitimacy of the Soviet regime in the Baltics in the very heart of the Soviet Union institutions. It provided to the Baltic claims support of the democratic movements all over the union as well as furthered the understanding about Baltics as different case from the rest of the Soviet Union republics.

After initial denials of the very existence of the protocols facilitating the occupation of the Baltics in 1940, in 24 December 1989 the Congress admitted the protocols of the Pact as illegal. Despite of this, the Soviet authorities avoided to follow the logical consequence to declare the fact of the Baltic occupation itself. After the collapse of the USSR, the Russian Federation as the legal successor state of the USSR continues to deny the very fact of occupation. Thus, the current position of the Russian Federation differs from the position of the rest of international society concerning the Baltic occupation in 1940.²⁹ It is one of the reasons why the legal and political consequences of the Baltic occupation have not been fully assessed internationally, yet.

In 1989, the Latvian Popular Front was victorious in Latvian municipal elections as well. Next year, it was able to use municipality structures and its personell to prepare for the victory in Soviet Latvia Supreme Council elections held in 18 March 1990. The Popular Front and other independence movements did not recognize the Supreme Council elections as fair since in it elections could participate also Soviet military personell stationed in Latvia. However, on Soviet terms it provided “a legal way” how to achieve political power and influence.

²⁹ In Novemebr 2003 is 20 year anniversary since the European Parliament condemned the Baltic occupation in 1940 (Author)

The PF deputies received 136 seats or more than 2/3 of the seats from 201 seats in the Council. Declaration of Independence was passed with 138 votes on 4 May 1990.

Among others Declaration of Independence stated (Kalniete 2000: 424-425):

- Priority of international legal principles over legal norms of the nation states;
- Immediate renewal of those 4 articles of the Latvian Constitution of 1922 stating that Latvia is independent and democratic republic, its legitimate power belongs to people of Latvia, and parliament is elected in equal, open, direct, and proportional elections;
- Guarantees of social, economic, cultural rights, as well as political freedoms corresponding to accepted international human rights norms to all permanent residents of Latvia including those citizens of the USSR who would not like to take the Latvian citizenship while remaining residents of Latvia.

Apart of this, the Supreme Council declared the transition period to independence which ended in 21 August 1991 after the unsuccessful Coup d'état in Moscow.

The Popular Front's moderate strategy of route de facto was frequently criticised by other informal independence movements. Therefore, in order to remain legitimate movement in the eyes of majority of Latvians, it had to incorporate most of demands of informal organizations. At the same time the way how it was done prevented ethnic violence and postponed Soviet Empire's strike back until January 1991. Stress on the preservation of ethnic identity of all ethnic groups residing in Latvia. Support for minority education programmes. Promises of civil and economic rights as well as the chance to obtain citizenship to Soviet immigrants. Strong appeal to democracy, civil rights, and market economy, these were the major factors which mobilized also number of ethnic minority representatives, including ethnic Russians to support the Popular Front and independence.

In May 1990, during the Declaration of Independence, 85 per cent of ethnic Latvians and already 26 per cent of other ethnicities supported independence (Zepa 1992: 23). Support of minorities to independence increased even more after Soviet leadership and military decided to use force to halt the Baltics exit strategy from the USSR. In January 1991 the Communist Party of Latvia together with Interfront organized "National Salvation Committee" and called for resignation of the government. Simultaneously, Soviet military occupied Press Building attempting to control media. In Lithuania, TV station was occupied leaving fourteen unarmed civilians dead and hundreds injured. On January 20th, Soviet special task forces attacked the Latvian Ministry of Interior, along with policemen killing also number of civilians and journalists. Further escalation of violence was stopped due to broad public support to the elected governments as well by the protests of international society to use of force in the Baltics by the Soviet authorities.

On January 13th at 4.45 a.m., Dainis Ivans, the Supreme Council member and PF leader appealed to the nation in Latvian and Russian to defend the freedom and republic (Ivans 1995: 321; Pabriks, Purs 2001: 63). Barricades were constructed all over downtown Riga. Almost for the first time on the barricades a sizable minority were ethnic Russians. In the shadow of the January events, many Russians had to make a choice between the Communist Party, Soviet military, and violence on the one side and Latvians with their claims of

independence, democracy and free market on the other side. Communist Party and Interfront were ready to use violence. In turn, many ordinary Russians were not ready to accept violence as a mean to preserve the Soviet Union. According to data, in March 1991, along with 94 per cent of ethnic Latvians, already about 38 per cent of other ethnicities supported the new government and road to political freedom (Zepa 1992: 23). As far as the political choices of three characters in the beginning of this chapter are concerned, Vladimir would be along Anna among the defenders of barricades while Ludmila would chose "Salvation Committee". Choice of Anna and Ludmila was dictated by the conviction while for Vladimir it was partly conviction and partly dictated option or lack of fisable alternatives. In spring only 17 per cent non-ethnic Latvians believed in the preservation of the Soviet regime in Latvia (Zepa 1992: 24). Once violence was used against the independence movement in Latvia Soviet Union and perestroika ideology were discredited among Latvians as well as among many ethnic Russians.

Dilemmas of Citizenship

While the notion of citizenship has not been central in studies of the democratization of former communist countries (Danjoux 2002: 68), it definitely plays enormous role in the study of the Baltic transition to independence, democracy and market economy. In a large extend, Latvian citizenship policies are responsible for both, the political success as well as the ethno-political tension during the transition period in Latvia.

Discussion on citizenship policies in Latvia is placed between number of other theoretical and political dilemmas and questions. First, the central argument is that citizenship question *per se* can not be approached outside the context of Soviet occupation since attitudes and analysis of citizenship policies of Latvia frequently depends on the observer's attitude towards the legitimacy of the Soviet power in the Baltics. Second, the implementation and the amendements of the citizenship policy should be seen in the context of domestic political stability, democracy, and accession to European Union and NATO as the major Latvian foreign policy goal since the restoration of independence.

Did the Soviet Union occupy Latvia? Is Latvia a new or a restored state? Despite the fact that the restoration of the citizenship is legitimate is it politically wise and politically correct? Do the Soviet immigrants in Latvia have a right to Latvian citizenship? If yes, on what terms this right can be granted? Finally, how the citizenship question in the post-Soviet Latvia influences political stability, ethnic relations, and Latvia's international position? These and many other questions are important to answer in order to understand the discourse about and policy of the Latvian citizenship. Despite of the unavoidable length of any study attempting to deal with citizenship deeply enough, in this part of the chapter I will try to provide a brief introduction to this issue.

First, it is important to note that from the very beginning of the independence movement in mid-1980s, the issues of citizenship and restoration of statehood was inseparably binded to each other. As mentioned above Citizens Committees saw the registration of former Latvian citizens and their descendents as a political tool to achieve independence. Legitimization of the body of citizens would mean the legitimization of the restored state. This group of

independence movement saw the insistence on the legal continuity as the main tool to achieve the independence. The supporters of the restoration of the interwar Republic of Latvia insisted on legal continuity, and illegitimacy of the Soviet rule despite of its relatively long existence. Additionally, the *realpolitik* argument of this camp was that by giving up the principle of legal continuity of the state, there would happen legitimization of the Soviet reforms as well as demographic changes of the Latvian society. Hence majority of the Soviet era immigrants was opposing independence, they would use their political rights and with the support of Soviet central authorities destroy any attempts to regain independence by democratic means. Supporters of legal continuity feared that independence, democratic and market reforms will not be politically sustainable and even achievable if not the route of legal continuity. Therefore, the supporters of legal continuity insisted that the decision about naturalization and/or citizenship rights of the Soviet immigrants in Latvia may be decided only after the restoration of independence. It may be decided by citizens of Latvia, exclusively. Therefore, it can be argued that above mentioned position consisted of two principles, namely the principle of right as well as pragmatic political considerations.

Couriously, but particularly because of the pragmatic political considerations, number of the Popular Front politicians in the early stage favoured another approach as far as statehood and citizenship was concerned. Hence, the interwar Republic of Latvia were not existing *de facto* for more than 50 years, several Popular Front lawyers (Juris Bojars, Andris Plotnieks) suggested that it would be wise to proclame of a new state, with new body of citizens and a new constitution (Kalniete 2000). Also number of national communists favoured this option.

Supporters of this citizenship approach argued that it is politically unwise and unrealistic to chose the path of restoration. Soviet central authorities would oppose such claims and even will not engage in talks with “political radicals” of the legal continuity camp. It would be much easier to use established political networks of communist system to trade for autonomy or independence with Moscow. Finally, pragmatically thinking about perestroika, it would be hard if not impossible to imagine that Moscow would agree on a peaceful secession of Latvia and establishment of capitalist system. In the first year of Popular Front, large part of its leaders were thinking of greater democracy and autonomy within the reformed Soviet Union. Smaller part imagined future Latvia as Soviet satelite like Poland or Hungary. Only a very small part thought of something like Finlandization of Latvia refering to post war relations between the Soviet Union and Finland as an example. Not many members of popular movements deared to dream of real independent statehood and even smaller number believed it will be achieved in 1991. According to this opinion, the inter-war republic was lost for ever.

Representatives of both opinion camps understood that they could not avoid discussion about Latvian citizenship chances for the Soviet era immigrants. A peaceful path of transition was heavily dependent on their decisions and policies. While the first group offered to restore the body of citizens and then let them decide on the status of the Soviet newcomers, the second group offered to define the body of citizens from the perspective of the new state as soon as possible. At the same time, both camps tried to give assurances to the Soviet immigrants that any future decision will not aim at their forcefull expulsion from

Latvia. Vice versa, decision will be based on the existing human rights instruments, international rules and democratic principles.

Representatives of both camps formed their opinions according to their legal understanding as well as realpolitik. If the first camp feared about possibility to achieve independence, the second did it as well. Namely, supporters of the new state idea argued that acceptance of legal continuity would be perceived as too radical by Moscow as well as by Latvia's Russian population of Soviet origin. In turn it would cause additional ethnic tension and transition would be halted by the invasion from Moscow. Additionally, it was argued that Popular Front moderate politics have been quite successful to rule and divide opinions of the non-ethnic Latvian population of Latvia. Small minorities and number of ethnic Russian intellectuals supported democratization and even claims of independence.

In several researches on the discourse of citizenship issue in the Baltics, frequently the representatives of the first group are defined as exclusionist while the second group is prised as inclusionists and therefore more genuine democrats and liberals(Ricken 2000). I am not sure this stereotyping is correct. Namely, if the first argument of legal continuity was based on the principle of the right as well as realpolitik considerations, the second was an outcome of political considerations and Soviet legal experience of its authors. The Soviet educated lawyers have learned the conditionality of the law. Conditionality of justice was applied here as well. It meant that the law may be modified according to the political need. In the Soviet Union, the idea that goal justifies any means was exercised at least since the Constitution of Stalin in 1936. On the paper it could be perceived as the most democratic constitution of the world but in practice it represented one of the most extensive unhuman regimes of the 20th century. Therefore, I would like to suggest that position taken by so called inclusionists and liberals was frequently based on hypocritic understanding of the law and justice. Their principles presupposed easy changes and interpretation of legislation according to the current political need. Conditions before the collapse of the Soviet Union regime in Latvia required the use of moderate ideas and theses ideas were offered by the number of Popular Front lawyers, members, and national communists.

After the establishment of the Citizenship Committees, these institutions became the real civic alternative to Popular Front. In order to follow the *rute de facto*, the Popular Front had to ensure that their political efforts will not be opposed by the Committees, for instance in the elections of the Supreme Council. The support of committees was received by accepting principles of legal continuity offered by the Committees, National Independence Movement and other informal civic organizations. Thus, already the Declaration of Independence in 4 May, 1990, states that status of non-citizens permanently residing in Latvia will be decided after the establishment of independence. It becomes quite clear that first post Soviet Latvian authorities accepted the principles of right and restoration instead of idea about establishment of the new republic.

As far as the earlier Popular Front documents are regarded, there are several major documents related to the citizenship issue of Soviet era immigrants. Most of them are dated to summer 1989. In 15 July 1989, the Popular Front Council declared that the Popular Front supports the idea that person can become a Latvian citizen regardless of ethnic or social

origin or religious belonging if the person supports and is ready to implement the idea of independent Latvian statehood. Additionally, Popular Front supports the idea that citizenship is granted to every permanent resident residing in Latvia for at least 10 years.

However, document does not clarify, are the boths conditions mutually inclusive or exclusive. Moreover, it requires the citizenship candidates to implement the idea of independence. It could be understood as necessity to take part in the popular movement. More important seems that the last requirement to Soviet immigrants in order to obtain citizenship was proposed also by the informal independence movements and Citizens Committees. Citizens Committees attempted to include in their movement also Soviet newcomers. Citizens Committees encouraged to register those non-citizens who are ready to be engaged in the struggle for independence. In return they offered to grant Latvian citizenship regardless of the current knowledge of the Latvian language after the restoration of independence. About 43,000 non-citizens replied to this offer and registered themselves in Citizens Committees until May 1990.

In 1 May 1990, the Citizens Congress published decision About the Citizenship of the Latvian Republic and Citizens of Other Countries Residing in Latvia. Among others, decision stated that citizenship issue could be decided after the restoration of Latvian constitutional institutions. Decision also assured that citizenship is independent of ethnicity, religion or political conviction. Moreover, decision stated that human rights including rights of non-discrimination according to ethnic origin apply to all persons residing in Latvia. Particular reference is made to denial of any possibility of demographic changes or regulation by force. The last principle was intended to ensure that there will not follow any expulsion of the Soviet era immigrants after the restoration of independence. This declaration should be regarded as important factor ensuring political stability and avoiding the ethnic tension since there have been also radical claims from the Latvian nationalist side to expell Soviet immigrants back to the Soviet Union. The ruling communist ideologists have been attempting to use references to these claims to facilitate fear among the ethnic Russian population in order to increase their support to Interfront movement and communist regime in Latvia.

By analysing this situation it is impotant to notice that Citizenship Committee leadership was ready to make a temporary compromise regarding the Latvian language knowledge in return to loyalty and patriotism from the side of non-citizens. It also should be noted that both, Citizenship Committees as well as the Popular Front always declared support, acceptance, and referance to international human rights standarts. It served as additional guarantee to peaceful transition of the regime in the politically and ethnically divided social environment. As a result very few opponents of the popular movement believed in the possible violence from the side of independence movement. Trust in peaceful transition and its democratic nature did not allow communists, and Soviet military to gain the ultimate ethnic Russian support to suppress the transition even if it was challenging the existence of the Soviet Union.

The discussion and solutions to citizenship issue can be divided into two periods. The first period is before the actual independence was gained in August 1991 while the second period

marks the citizenship discourse after the independence. After August 1991 the previous ideas had to be implemented.

Defining the Nation

In 1991, during the first few months of independence, Latvia's Supreme Council passed several laws stipulating the boundaries of the Latvian political nation and defining the rights and duties of the population living in Latvia. On October 15, 1991, the Supreme Council of Latvia passed a resolution "On the renewal of Republic of Latvia citizens' rights and fundamental principles of naturalization" (5th Saeima - Republic of Latvia Standing Commission on Human Rights, 1993: 71-73). It stated that despite the long-standing internationally illegal annexation of Latvia by the USSR, a body of Latvian citizens had continued to exist. Accordingly, the Supreme Council restored citizenship of the Republic of Latvia to persons who had been citizens of the Republic of Latvia as of June 17, 1940, and their descendants. Thus, the legal continuity approach was taking over the idea of establishing the new state on the ruins of the Soviet Empire.

As far as numbers are concerned in 1991, about 70 per cent of 2667.9 thousand permanent residents of more than 90 ethnicities were recognized as Latvian citizens of the restored Republic of Latvia. According to statistics made in 1994, the ethnic minorities constituted approximately 22 per cent of the total amount of citizens after the restoration of previous citizenship (Diena 15 February, 1995). It is important to note that even the hardline Latvian nationalist supporters of citizenship restoration approach never perceived this path as ethnically exclusive. Indeed, some Latvian nationalists would prefer nations political and ethnic body to be congruent, but they did not dare to challenge the legacy of the inter-war republic. Even if it meant restoration of citizenship to 22 percent of ethnic non-Latvians regardless of their contemporary knowledge of Latvian and political loyalty. Therefore, the implemented way of defining political body of Latvia could not be regarded as ethnically based. It also helped to sustain peaceful transition since citizenship restoration further divided already fragmented non-ethnic Latvian population while ethnic Latvian part of society remained politically relatively homogeneous. Looking from this perspective the society of Latvia in early nineties could not be truly defined as bi-polar since apart of ethnic Latvians there were no another pole for centrifugal tendencies.

As far as the ethnicity of non-citizens, they were Soviet era immigrants of mainly Russian and Ukrainian ethnic origin. In 1991 they constituted about 29 per cent of permanent residents who could not claim to have some kind of legal connection to the body of citizens of the pre-war republic. From earlier described three characters, both, Ludmilla and Vladimir were not regarded as citizens of the restored republic. Their possibility to obtain Latvian citizenship was left in the hands of Latvia's legislative body.

Table 3.1 Citizenship According to Ethnic Origin and Total Number of Non-Citizens According to Ethnicity (Thousand).

Ethnicity	Citizens (per cent)	Non-citizens (thousands)
Latvians	98.3	24.2
Gipsies	89.3	0.8
Poles	60.9	25.3
Jews	44.7	8.4
Belorussians	19.3	8.7
Russians	37.9	473.0
Ukrainians	6.0	64.4

Source: See Official newspaper Latvijas Vestnesis, 22 March, 1995.

Table above shows that among non-ethnic Latvians Gipsies or Roma, as well as Poles have had the largest share of pre-war citizens. On the other hand, the large part of Jews, Russians, and Belorussians had been immigrating to Latvian territory under the Soviet regime. Ukrainians constitute the ethnic group which in the inter-war period was not present in the territory Latvia. It explains their small share among citizens. As far as the absolute numbers are concerned, ethnic Russians constitute the largest group of non-citizens. The number of ethnic Russian non-citizens exceeded 470.000.

Regarding the Soviet era immigrant population, the Supreme Council attempted to establish several fundamental principles of naturalization. It stated that naturalization would begin no sooner than July 1, 1992 – the date when all residents of Latvia were supposed to have been registered – and that a citizenship law would be passed to enable permanent residents to naturalize (Grigorjevs, 1993: 12). According to the draft principles of naturalization, citizenship could be granted to a permanent resident if he or she had been living in Latvia for 16 years, had learned Latvian, knew the fundamental principles of the constitution, and had sworn a citizen's oath to the Republic of Latvia (5th Saeima - Republic of Latvia Standing Commission on Human Rights, 1993: 72). However, it must be noted, that after fierce political discussions the citizenship law was passed only in 1994, but naturalization began only in 1995.

On December 10, 1992, following the resolution on citizenship, the Latvian Supreme Council adopted a constitutional law about the rights and obligations of citizens and persons (5th Saeima - Republic of Latvia Standing Commission on Human Rights, 1993: 66-70). It reflected the liberal democratic principles of the restored state. The law defined the economic, social, and personal rights and duties of persons living on the territory of Latvia. The law stated that the most fundamental values of the State of Latvia is the individual, his existence, freedom, honour and rights, and that it is the responsibility of the state to protect these values. Everyone has the right to do everything that has not been prohibited by law. Concerning citizens, the law proclaimed that all citizens have equal rights and responsibilities, regardless of how they have obtained citizenship. Citizens participate in the decision-making process on state and social issues, either directly or through the mediation of freely elected representatives. Citizens have equal rights to hold state offices, to establish political parties, to possess land and natural resources, to freely leave and return to Latvia, and to possess registered weapons. These were the basic rights prohibited by the previous Soviet regime.

Law also stated that a citizen must be loyal to the Republic of Latvia and has the right and responsibility to defend its freedom, independence and democratic parliamentary system. A citizen must do military service and fulfil other obligations to the state as stipulated by law.

As far as the non-citizens population, in section 3, the law stated the rights and obligations of a person. According to the law, all persons in Latvia are equal before the law regardless of race, nationality, sex, language, party affiliation, political and religious persuasion, social, material and occupational standing and origin. A person's residence is inviolable.

The law stated that a person may own any kind of property, except land and natural resources which may be owned only by citizens. Everybody has the right to material security in old age, during illness, or in case of total or partial disability, as well as in the case of the loss of the breadwinner. A person has the right to receive unemployment benefits if he has no other means of subsistence and if he is unemployed due to circumstances beyond his control. A person has the right to freely depart or emigrate to foreign countries. A person has the right to move freely within the territory of Latvia. A person has the right to freely acquire and disseminate information and to express his views and ideas in oral, written or any other form. The realization of these rights must not be restricted by censorship. No one must be forced to express his political, religious, ethical, or other views or his party affiliation. All people have the right to form and participate in public organizations. The state guarantees freedom of assembly for previously announced peaceful gatherings, meetings, street processions and demonstrations.

The new law tackled also state relations to religion previously forbidden issue by the Soviets. It was declared that the restored state just like the inter-war republic is separate from the church, and guarantees freedom of religion. People or their associations have the right to practice religious rituals and ceremonies, and no one must be forced to participate in such activities, or to learn religious doctrines. Religious or ideological motives do not free anyone from their responsibilities to the state and their obligation to observe the law.

Everyone has the right to receive medical care. The state protects the health of the public and guarantees everybody the minimum level of medical assistance stipulated by law. Everyone has the right to get an education. As far as ethnic or linguistic preferences, persons and their societies have the right to establish educational institutions at various levels with any language of instruction. The acquisition of education in such schools is under state supervision.

The law also stated that everyone has an obligation to observe the laws of the Republic of Latvia. As far as ethnic tolerance is concerned, the law required to respect the customs and traditions of the Latvian people and of the national and ethnic groups living in Latvia as well as to respect the national pride of other persons. Thus, the tradition of political principles of the independence movement have been institutionalized.

Along with fundamental rights as well as cultural, economic and social rights, several debateable restrictions for non-citizens were introduced, for instance that work on airliners or as lecturers or scientific researchers at the Latvian Medical Academy could be offered only on a contractual basis.

During the first year of independence, the democracy and citizenry of Latvia have been restored. The next major political task was to deal with the huge share of Soviet immigrants. Because of the legal as well as humanitarian considerations, these persons kept the status of permanent residents enjoying most of cultural, social, and economic rights. On the other hand, it was clear, that solution must be found concerning the political rights of this group of the population.

In this respect it must be noted that vivacious citizenship debate took place in the social and political environment with not established democratic traditions and lack of democratic political culture. Frequently non-citizens were regarded by the ethnic Latvian population as bearers of the Soviet ideology and Soviet power in Latvia. Additionally, the post-independence debate on citizenship took place along with negotiations on withdrawal of Soviet/Russian troops from Latvia. Thus, security issue was still far to be settled since the Russian military left Latvia only in 1994.

Within this social and political context, representatives of the Latvian National Independence Movement, and the Citizens Committee argued that decisions on the naturalization issue may be made only by the parliament elected by the existing citizens of the Republic of Latvia. Therefore, the present Supreme Council does not have legal authority to make any changes in the body of citizens of the Republic of Latvia. Alongside the naturalization would not be possible until the occupation troops had been withdrawn.³⁰

Argument was taking also an ethnic nature where some of the nationalists were arguing that naturalization quotas should guarantee that the ethnic Latvians and the ethnic Livs would constitute no less than 75 per cent of the total number of citizens in future. It was also argued that in the naturalization process, privileges should be granted to legal immigrants to Latvia from before 1940 and their descendants, spouses of citizens of the Republic of Latvia, ethnic Latvians and Livs returning for permanent residence in Latvia, and Estonians and Lithuanians residing in Latvia

Mainly, such argument arise from the fear about the weakness of the Latvian language and political stability. The idea behind the restrictive naturalization was to maximally decrease the chance of naturalization of persons perceived as not loyal to the new political regime. In a large sence judgement about loyalty overlapped with ethnicity of the possible applicant.

^{30.} According to information given by the Latvian Defence Ministry, a Russian Army consisting of 27,000 man was still situated in Latvia in January 1993 (Diena, January 16, 1993).

For the same reason, those who favoured restrictive naturalization rules wanted to establish special programmes to promote the return of ethnic Latvian refugees from abroad as well as voluntary repatriation of Soviet immigrants.

Former leadership of Popular Front including non-ethnic Latvians and number of national communists expressed more moderate opinions concerning the naturalization. Thus, the newly established Party of National Concord and the Democratic Party supported the view that citizenship issues must and can be decided upon by the Supreme Council (Diena, 9 February, 1993; Diena, 26 January, 1993). The moderates argued that citizenship should be granted to all persons who had resided in Latvia until the adoption of the Declaration of Independence (1990), who mastered conversational Latvian, who had resided in Latvia for at least five years, and who had not been found guilty of serious crimes. The naturalization concept of the Moderates stressed social homogenization and membership as a simultaneous process.

Among the political parties and interest groups of the restored Latvia were also forces representing opinion of previous Interfront and hard-line communists. People from these organizations used the freedoms of democratic system to adapt their opinions according to the requirements and style of democratic system. There were political movements and parties like the Equal Rights Movement, and the Baltic Constitutional Party (BKP), and the Democratic Initiative Centre (DIC). Ethnic Russians and members of other non-Latvian ethnicities constituted the majority of the adherents in this camp.

According to these political movements, Latvia is a new state. It was not occupied by the Soviet Union and even if it would be, it would not justify the restoration approach. As far as citizenship is concerned, these political forces regarded the existing division of society in citizens and Soviet era immigrants as illegitimate and artificial, caused by the “false perception” of the USSR's occupation of Latvia (Diena 22 January, 1993). According to their opinion, all persons living in Latvia before May 4, 1990 should be recognized as Latvian citizens automatically and without any conditionality.

It must be noted that this political position was supported and continues to be supported by the official Russian authorities claiming that any other solution of citizenship except above mentioned is discriminatory. Position of the Russian Federation concerning the citizenship issue in Latvia was formed as early as 1992 and continues to be unchanged.

Political forces rejecting the legitimacy of the restoration strategy also opposed the increase of the Latvian language role, therefore, just like previously the Interfront, they declared their support to all languages used on the territory of Latvia. In reality it would mean the institutionalization of the status quo established in the Soviet era where Russian dominated. It was argued that along with Latvian, Russian should be given status as an official language. The ethnic Latvians and Livs should maintain and develop the Latvian, Latgallian and Liv languages and cultures (See The Newsletter of the Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies, No. 1, February-March, 1994: 4). Representatives of the Equal Rights Movement also doubted whether it would be necessary to integrate the non-Latvian population into Latvian society since it would imply that they would have to

give up some of their national characteristics. Thus, it was questioned the very idea of strengthening the Latvian language role by trying to set the internal divisions within the ethnic Latvian camp.

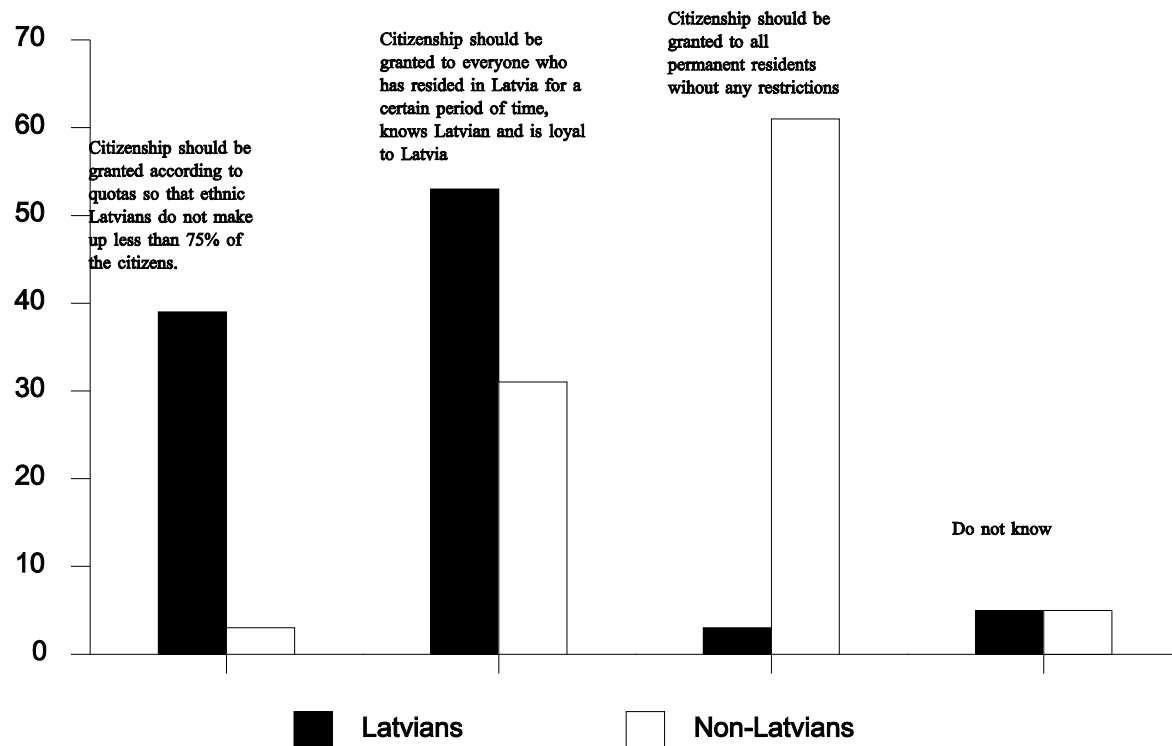
There were also expressed ideas to institutionalize two community system in Latvia. The BKP suggested that the Vice-President of Latvia should be an ethnic Russian, whereas the President should be an ethnic Latvian (Ligers, 1993: 6).

In order to have a better picture of the citizenship discussion in the early nineties, it is important to look also at public opinions outside the political elite, parties and interest groups.

Available data allow me to examine how proposed political strategies could find supporters within the population. According to Poulsen, Danish political scientist's survey made in 1991-92 (*Weekendavisen* 13-19 March, 1992), 46 per cent of the ethnic Latvians and 12 per cent of the ethnic Russians completely agreed that citizenship must be granted only to former Latvian citizens and their descendants. 23 per cent of the ethnic Latvians and 4 per cent of the ethnic Russians completely supported the view that post-war immigrants should return to their homeland. Poulsen found that 81 per cent of the Latvians and 29 per cent of the Russians completely supported the view that citizenship should be granted only to those who master Latvian, know the history of Latvia and the constitution and are loyal towards Latvia.

In October 1993, a similar survey was presented by Latvian sociologists (see Figure 3.1), who distinguished between three alternative citizenship models. Respondents were asked to express their opinions about the following alternatives (*Diena* 7 October, 1993): The first alternative was that citizenship should be granted to post-war immigrants according to a quota principle so that ethnic Latvians and Livs would constitute 75 per cent of the citizens (the Latvian radical view). The second alternative was that citizenship should be granted to those who know Latvian, are loyal to the country and have been residing in Latvia for a certain period of time (the moderate Latvian view). The third alternative was to grant citizenship to all residents without any preconditions (the view of the former regime supporters/Russia view).

Figure 3.1 Public Opinions about Citizenship and Naturalization in 1993.



According to the survey, the first alternative was supported by 39 per cent of the ethnic Latvians and 3 per cent of the non-Latvians. The second alternative was supported by 53 per cent of the ethnic Latvians and 31 per cent of the non-Latvians. The third alternative gained the support of 3 per cent of the ethnic Latvians and 61 per cent of the non-Latvians.

Since Latvia's population in 1991 was made up of 53 per cent ethnic Latvians and 47 per cent non-Latvians, one may argue that the majority of the population, regardless of ethnic origin and possession of the Latvian citizenship, favoured the second alternative, i.e. integration. However, among the ethnic Latvians the first alternative was popular as well, whereas most Russians supported the third alternative. It also can be claimed that mutual understanding about the depth of the problem and relative unwillingness for radical solutions have been present in the public opinions of both groups. However, the impact of moderate views among the ethnic Latvians exceeded the radical claim about the ethnic proportions of citizenry after naturalization. At the same time among the ethnic Russians supporters of the radical Interfront/Russia solution dominated.

As a result of discussions and political consultations, it was agreed on a compromise that the new citizenship law will be passed only by the newly elected Parliament instead of Supreme Council elected under the Soviet supervision and within the presence of the Soviet troops. The first, post-Soviet Parliament of the restored Republic of Latvia was elected in June 1993.

Five widely different citizenship law drafts have been submitted until September 1993. After extensive debates and political consultations with various international bodies, in 22 July, 1994, the Citizenship Law was adopted.

Among the requirements to know the basics of the Latvian language, constitution and history, the Law included the timetable (Window system) for naturalization based on length of residence in Latvia. According to the window system, citizenship applicants were divided into different groups: During 1995, members of a citizen's family could be granted citizenship; From January 1, 1996 to 2000, people born in Latvia can apply for citizenship. Priority was given to younger people. According to the initial law after year 2001 people born outside Latvia could apply for citizenship.

The initial citizenship law of 1994 was criticized and could be justly criticized by internal as well as external experts and international organizations. The major concerns and critics were several. It could be understood that citizenship issue in the early years of the post-Soviet independence was a critical theme because of its dependence of other politically difficult issues. Namely, there were the question of the legitimacy of the Supreme Council's decisions, presence and interests of the Soviet/Russian military, opposition of the former Soviet elite, questions of identity, loyalty, and independence.

However, despite of the complexity of the problem, it is possible to argue that Supreme Council was politically legitimate to make a decision on the Citizenship Law if it had enough legitimacy to declare the independence. Moreover, it could be argued, that if the Supreme Council would decide on the naturalization regulations already in 1992 instead of 1994, many Soviet era immigrants would not have time to become so alienated from the new state institutions. Civic society would be earlier consolidated and the number of naturalized persons would be higher while the number of non-citizens smaller.

There is also a place for the criticism as far as the content of the Law of 1994. Window system did not correspond liberal democratic principles since instead of the principle of individuality, a collective principle was applied to all potential applicants. Owing the restrictive nature of the law and a degree of a political apathy among the Soviet immigrants, the naturalization process proceeded very slowly. Thus, from 1995 to 1998, about 200,000 Soviet immigrants were eligible to apply for citizenship. Up to the end of 1996, less than 17,000 made this choice (Pabriks et al, 2001: 78).

As a result of internal as well as external criticism, in 22 June 1998, the Latvian Parliament adopted sixteen amendments to the Citizenship Law. The Law was radically liberalized, lifting the so-called window system, permitting every resident the right to apply for citizenship without any restrictions and granting the Latvian citizenship to non-citizens children born on the Latvian soil after August 1991. The amendments were considered in accordance with the recommendations of the OSCE, as well as the European Union. However, nationalist deputies in the parliament began a constitutional manoeuvre that suspended the law pending a signature campaign in support of a referendum on the matter (Pabriks et al, 2001). On 3 October 1998, the referendum was held and more than 53 per cent of the Latvian citizens supported the liberalization of the

law. The referendum can be regarded as a threshold between the nationalism and liberal democracy in Latvia. It proved that Latvian society is able to deal with its Soviet past and Soviet consequences in the democratic and civilized manner. It also paved the way for civic consolidation of the democratic Latvian society regardless of the ethnic origin. The ethnic Latvian society increasingly turned from previously closed and defensive minority psychology into an increasingly open society. The decision also marked the point of break in the Latvian accession to the European Union and NATO, the organizations highly concerned about political stability and democracy in the Baltic region.

As the major mistakes of the Latvian citizenship policies of the last decade can be distinguished:

- Delays with citizenship legislation and naturalization;
- Initial restrictive and illiberal nature of the Citizenship Law before it was amended in 1998.

At this point it should be noted that evolution and improvement of citizenship legislation proceeded as a result of domestic political struggles and the international pressure. This intertwined nature of the citizenship discourse and its dependence on international situation is relatively well described by Nils Muižnieks and Ilze Brands-Kehris (Muižnieks et al 2003). Their argument can be summed up as follows. Latvia has made an impressive progress in creating a consolidating democracy due to three major factors:

- Genuine adherence to democratic principles even by the Latvian nationalists;
- The fundamental priority of the Latvian politics to gain membership in the EU and NATO;
- Lack of political alternatives to democratization and western orientation.

In large the Latvian politicians understood that the only way to secure the national independence and democracy goes through the Latvian membership in above mentioned international organizations. Therefore in its legislation and reforms Latvia has been guided by political criteria and advice of these organizations: The Council of Europe, The OSCE, and the European Union. The other organizations such as the United Nations, the Council of the Baltic Sea States, and the NATO played a significant role as well.

Under the request of the Latvian government, the OSCE Mission to Latvia has been established in the fall of 1993. The major contribution of the Mission to the citizenship debate was the consulting provided to the Latvian side and provision of reliable information to the Western countries. The last role of the Mission was highly relevant since it provided credible arguments to the West to counter Russia's continuous and unfounded claims about human rights abuses in the Baltics. In general, the tensions with Russians were running high.

It must be understood that the nature of the criticism to the Latvian citizenship policy by the Western countries and Russia differed in its core. The Western political establishment never questioned the Latvian right to perceive their country as a legitimate successor of the inter-war republic. From this point of view, the legal division of post-Soviet residents into citizens and the Soviet immigrants was not questioned. Also the recent admissibility

documentation of The Court of Human Rights regarding Slivenko claim against Latvia is based on the legitimacy of the division of post-Soviet Latvia's residents in Latvian citizens and others. The Western doubts and concerns were rather in the sphere of technicalities of the citizenship legislation, procedure of naturalization and its speed. On the other hand, Russia was objecting to the very core of citizenship policy doubting the route of legitimate continuity of the Latvian state. It can be argued that this aggressive Russia's position was incompatible with the Latvian position. It forced Latvians to move in the Western direction as fast as possible. Russia's attitude towards Latvia did not leave illusions about possibility to improve relations with the previous colonial power willing to regain its dominance in the region otherwise than through the mechanisms and institutions of the European Union. In this context, the strengthening the newly regained independence had to go, and were indeed going hand in hand with the acceptance of liberal democratic norms by the Latvian political elite. Increasing acceptance of liberal democratic principles and values in the citizenship policy of Latvia:

- Assisted Latvians to reach the membership in the EU and NATO;
- Assisted to implement legislation based on the compromise between the ethnic Latvian and ethnic Russian nationalist retories where none of them could claim the Western political support;
- Decreased the influence of Russia in the Latvian domestic politics by turning Latvia into more prosperous and integrated part of the Western value as well as political system.

During the last decade the citizenship policy questions has lost its place among the most heated political questions. In the early and mid-1990s the citizenship issue was the major political issue in the Latvian ethnic politics. In turn, after amendements and national referendum in 1998 the citizenship issue almost has left the political agenda since except Russia almost nobody doubts³¹ its current correspondence to liberal democratic norms and international standards. What still has left on the political agenda from the citizenship issue is the relatively low naturalization rates of the non-citizens and their lack of motivation to obtain the Latvian citizenship.

Language Policy and Minority Education Policy

The language legislation is another major sphere where the heated ethno-political discourse was taking place during the period of Latvia's transition from the Soviet ruled territory to the EU and NATO member state. Also in this sphere one could observe considerable political struggle including ethnic mobilization of Latvians as well as Russians by political actors and NGO's. There also can be observed deep involvement of international organizations in the shaping of the Latvian language legislation. As a result of almost a decade long heated public debate the current Latvian language policy is based on liberal democratic principles and corresponds to international criteria.

³¹ For instance, since 1997 EU has repeatedly confirmed Latvia's conformity with political criteria of this organization.

However, differently from the citizenship issue, the language discourse has not yet left the public discourse due planned reform of minority education system. The reform, introducing the Latvian language as the dominating teaching language in minority secondary schools starting from 2004 continues to face opposition from ethnic Russian orientated parties as well as from the neighbouring Russia.

It is important to bear in mind the highly sensitive nature of language as a political issue in order to understand the debate concerning this issue during the period between restoration of independence and accession to the EU and NATO. As mentioned in the second chapter, the legacy of the Soviet rule in Latvia has drastically changed Latvia's linguistic environment thus challenging its cultural as well as political identity. In this regard, as the major consequences of the Soviet occupation should be reminded:

- Hyper immigration sponsored by the Soviet authorities resulting in the massive demographic changes where ethnic Russian share has reached 30 per cent of permanent residents while ethnic Latvian share in total population decreased to almost 50 per cent;
- As a result of migration and Soviet Russification policies, the role of Latvian has been drastically reduced in the public domain dividing society into two groups. The first group were mainly ethnic Latvians and those minority representatives who along Latvian could speak also Russian. The second group of largely Soviet settlers who during the Soviet period and due to it remained monolingual in Russian.

Bearing this in mind the main goal of the language policy planners of the independent Latvia was to reverse the Soviet era linguistic policy consequences and return to Latvian its lost position of *lingua franca* on the territory of Latvia.

In 1989, on the eve of regaining independence, the data on language knowledge indicated that Russian has become the most used language. 81.6% of all Latvia's permanent residents could freely communicate in Russian. In comparison, Latvian was known only by 62% of total population (Hirša 2002: 6). Latvian society could be characterized by *linguistic asymmetries* where 68.3% of ethnic Latvians knew Russian but only 21.1% of ethnic Russians knew Latvian.

The large part of traditional ethnic minorities as well as the large part of the Soviet settlers of non-Russian ethnic origin was linguistically Russified. Russian as native was identified by 74.9% Jews, 64.8% Byelorussians, 54.2% Poles, 49.4% Ukrainians, and 2.6% ethnic Latvians (Hirša 2002). In fact, according to linguistic identification, the Soviet language policies have had created a bi-polar society. Frequently, precisely because of the linguistic inability to access the mass media operating in Latvian, the political orientation and attitudes of Russian speakers differed and continue to differ from those who were bilingual or whose native language was Latvian. Here it must be also beared in mind crucially different information available on the mass media operating in Latvian and Russian. Apart of frequently contrary positioned political attitudes expressed in these media, it widely argued by the media experts regardless of their ethnic

origin that at large in Latvian territory operating Russian media is of much worse quality than Latvian language media (Kruks 2001).

Already in the late 1980s the attitudes towards independence movement showed that the ethno-linguistic division of the population largely overlapped with the political division of the population. Only about 38 per cent of the non-Latvians permanently living in Latvia supported the political independence of the country (Zepa 1992). Also more than a decade later there is found a strong correlation between the linguistic identity and the national referendum on the European Union membership held in September 2003. Paradoxically, but the membership in the EU was won mainly by the ethnic Latvian vote, particularly by the rural ethnic Latvian vote. Despite that the larger and more complex research on this issue is required the outcome or vote can be partly explained by the ethnic Latvian considerations about national security and independence. In turn, the part of ethnic Russians became increasingly disillusioned by the EU policies regarding Latvian citizenship, language, and education legislation. Number of pro-Russia orientated politicians, local Russian mass media as well as Russia itself have been feeding this part of population with false promises of radical changes of the Latvian ethnic policy after accession to the EU. On the eve of referendum, it became more and more clear that the Western policies are not going to challenge the ethnic policy principles established in Latvia during the last decade under the assistance and according to the principles of the West. False expectations based on the false information and perceptions of the political reality decreased the share of pro-EU supporters among so called Russian speakers. Additionally, it can be argued that some part of this population decided to vote against the EU because the Latvian membership in the Union would even more decrease the Russian influence on the Latvian domestic politics. Up to today the linguistic isolationism, lack of knowledge of Latvian of a large part of the population is a serious hindrance to political integrity of Latvia's population.

This hindrance to linguistic and thus political integration is clearly understood by the Latvian as well as by the Russian authorities. On the language issues just like with the citizenship policy, Russia is taking a different stand compared to the Western democracies. There are observed continuous Russian attempts to influence the development of Latvian language and minority education policy according to the declared Russian geopolitical interests to dominate the Baltic seaboard. Therefore, it can be argued that current stand of Russia regarding the Latvian integration policy is rather destructive aiming at preservice and creation of non-integrated and Russia orientated group of population as a tool to Russian interests in the region. This approach was defined relatively early.

In 1992 it was declared that Russia should use the pretext of human rights of so called Russian speakers in order to retain its influence in the Baltics (Danjoux 2002: 30). The definition of Russian speakers whose interests Russia was claiming to guard varied broadly, from ethnic, linguistic, and cultural characteristics to political orientation of "compatriots" a term used by the Russian authorities. If the first characteristics would imply more of culture orientation, the last is stressing more political orientation. Compatriot means identification with the common patria and thus with its interests

correspondingly. According to Putin, compatriot is an ethno-cultural and a spiritual self-identification.³² Obviously, this spiritual self-identification is closely related with spiritual affiliation to Russia since Russian authorities themselves stress that term as well as the programme of assistance to compatriots was created taking into account the history and peculiarities of dissolution of the Soviet Union.

In this respect, the Russian strategy since 1992 can be summarised according to S.A. Karaganov presentation at Moscow's International Relations Institute (Danjoux 2002: 30):

- Russians in the "Near abroad"³³ should stay there and be used there as a leverage by Russia;
- Russia should invest in the "near abroad";
- Russia should promote the use of the Russian language in the "near abroad".
- Since 2001, after Putin became the President of the Russian Federation, this strategy was rapidly filled with financial and political content. According to the deputy of the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Programme on assistance to compatriots abroad was created in order to support following activities:
- Sponsoring and consolidating non-governmental and political organizations of compatriots;
- Comemorating important historic events of the Soviet and Russian history;
- Providing educational and material assistance to compatriots;
- Assisting the creation and spread of Russian language media;
- Sponsoring court cases of individuals against the Latvian state.

According to Russian officials, in 2003 Russia invested 210 billion roubles in order to reach above mentioned goals in CIS and in the Baltic countries.

As far as language policy is concerned, Mitrofanova admits that Russia is determined to strengthen the role of the Russian language in the post-Soviet geographic area since it is a principal question of the Russian policy. According to official sources, Russia is aiming to facilitate declaration of Russian as official language in the neighbouring countries. As good examples are mentioned Belorussia and Kazakhstan, where Russian already has an official status as *lingua franca*.

Under these circumstances it can be argued that while dealing with consequences of the linguistic Russification of the Soviet period, the Latvian linguistic policy is permanently influenced by contemporary Russian strategic linguistic aims and financial investments to reach contrary goals in the Baltics. Despite of this, the Latvian authorities are determined to reach the goal where the Latvian language becomes *lingua franca* on the

³² Interview of Galina Belous with Eleonora Mitrofanova, First deputy of the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs in *Parlamentskaja Gazeta* 25. November, 2003.

³³ A degrading term to the former Soviet republics, including the Baltic states stressing them as the "natural" sphere of Russian geopolitical interests (Author).

territory of Latvia. Obviously, it is impossible without diminishing the previously dominant role of Russian. Therefore, it contradicts to the Russian geopolitical and linguistic goals aimed to preserve or even increase the role of Russian in the public domain of neighbouring countries.

As far as the Western views concerning the language policies in Latvia are concerned they share the Latvian approach with one precondition. Allies are determined to see the Latvian language policy goals to be reached within the scope of liberal democratic norms and international obligations. In short, this is the environment where the Latvian linguistic policy is formed during the last decade. Below is offered a closer view on these policies.

The contemporary Latvian linguistic policies is dating back to the last years of Soviet era. It is possible to distinguish three periods of these policies according to their legal framework.

Within the period from 1989 to 1999 Latvian legislation has passed three Language Laws:

- The Language Law of Latvian SSR (1989-1992);
- The Language Law (1992-1999);
- The Language Law (1999-present).

As mentioned earlier in 1989, under the pressure from the popular movements, the Latvian Supreme Council had adopted a Language Law in order to strengthen Latvian fading away from the public sphere. In practice it meant encouragement of Russian and Latvian bilingualism, the maximum end imaginable to reach under the Soviet rule. In some extent, the law followed the pattern of reforms attempted to introduce by the Latvian national communists in 1950s crushed by Khrushchev in 1959 (See part 2.).

The law envisaged a three-year transition period during which non-ethnic Latvians working in the state sector would have to learn varying degrees of Latvian in correspondence to the needs of their profession. For example, non-ethnic Latvian managers and senior officials were supposed to be able to communicate in Latvian, and doctors had to be able to talk with their patients in Latvian as well (Kamenska 1994:7).

With assistance of foreign donors increased also teaching capability of Latvian. With assistance of UNDP in 1995 was launched The National Programme for Latvian Language Training (NPLLT). The programme was designed for those residents of Latvia whose native language is not Latvian. Since mid-1990s, Soros Foundation-Latvia was actively involved in the project “Open School” facilitating language learning and bilingual teaching methodology in minority schools. In early 2000s, also the Naturalization Board launched language training courses for citizenship applicants thus encouraging applicants and improving their passing capacity.

After the restoration of independence the limits to linguistic reforms set by the Soviet authorities ceased to exist. The Latvian authorities proceeded to plan the increase of the role of Latvian by setting the plan for Latvian to become lingua franca in Latvia. In the sphere of the language policy just like in the sphere of the citizenship policy one could observe a clear attempts restore the situation existing before the occupation.

In 1992 was adopted the Law on amendments and additions to the previous language law. It declared Latvian to be the sole state language. After the restoration of independence, one of the first steps taken by the Latvian authorities was the creation of the *State Language Centre* in February 1992 (Kamenska 1994: 7). The *State Language Inspection* and *State Language Proficiency Certification Commission* were established as part of the centre. The State Language Centre should provide legislation on language issues and supervise its implementation by institutionalized state intrusion into society to regulate language use. Concerns about the legitimacy of this intrusion as well as Russia lead accusations of human rights abuse of Russian speaking population were turned down. A United Nations fact finding mission to Latvia concluded in November 1992 that “the language law itself is not incompatible with international law nor with generally accepted human rights standards”(Muižnieks et al. 2003: 44).

In the educational sphere the law guaranteed right to be educated in Latvian in Latvia, but individuals of minority origin living in Latvia had the right to be educated in their native language. In specialized and vocational secondary schools, the languages used are Latvian as well as other languages according to the specialization necessary for the Republic of Latvia. It meant that Russian was allowed to be used in these schools as language of instruction. In practice, it was done in those schools or study programmes where sole Russian speakers were dominating or in those schools which according to Soviet tradition were forming segregated language groups of students. In state-financed institutions of higher education, the basic language of instruction became Latvian beginning with the second year of studies. This article of the Law could be regarded of major importance since it supposed to break with established Soviet tradition of organizing higher education studies in linguistically segregated Latvian and Russian study groups. Universities were given transition period implying that starting from the second study year all students in public universities should be able to learn in Latvian.

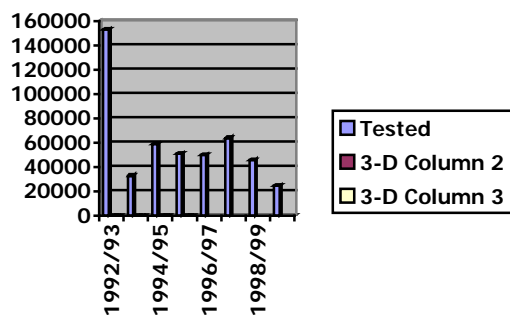
Along with the adoption of amendments to the Language Law, several new laws and regulations concerning the use of languages in Latvia were adopted as well. On June 4, 1992, a Place Name Commission was created with the purpose of promoting the preservation, restoration and precise usage of historical place names and place names characteristic of the Latvian cultural environment. On July 1, 1992, a law "On Additions to the Latvian Code on Administrative Violations Concerning the Official State Language Issues" was adopted, clarifying the responsibility of persons and organizations in cases of violations of the language law. On July 2, 1992, the Council of Ministers passed a resolution on the "Naming and Renaming of Railway Stations, Ports, Airports and Geographical Objects". On November 4, 1992, the Council of Ministers passed a resolution concerning regulations of the "Official State Language Usage in Titles and

Information". The amendments to the Language Law and all additional legal acts adopted by the Latvian authorities during the first year of independence were supposed to create an environmental framework in which the position of Latvian language in Latvia's overall society could be strengthened and the Latvian language could be established as the main means of communication.

On May 25, 1992, the Council of Ministers passed regulations concerning the "Official State Language Proficiency Certification", implying that three levels of language proficiency were established - a basic, an intermediary and an advanced level.

In the period from 1992 to 2000 there were about 515.300 persons tested as far as their knowledge of Latvian.

Figure 3.2 Latvian language tests 1992-2000 (Hirša 2002).



In October 1997, the government attempted to pass the new language law expanding the state language regulations also to some spheres of private sector, for instance private company board meetings and shops. As far the debate about public and private rights and interests, the idea behind this intrusion could be compared to recent debate in Norway to require proportional representation of both genders in the boards of private companies. The Latvian authorities were guided by the idea to provide the Latvian speaking customer and employee with the possibility to use Latvian in private sector as well. In several business spheres as well as in Eastern Latvian region of Latgale it was frequent the situation where customer would not get service if not using Russian. In most of cases it would be rather because of the no knowledge of Latvian by the sales personal than genuine ethnic intolerance. However, it was facilitating linguistic tension and ethnic Latvian dissatisfaction with their national authorities.

On the other hand, starting from 1997 the Latvian legislation was drawing more and more of attention of various international organizations, especially EU. Thus, before becoming an EU candidate country, Latvian linguistic legislation was challenged by the existing European perceptions and values traditionally stressing strong division of public and private. In 1998 the new draft law was highly criticized by the experts of OSCE HCNM as well as the European Commission (Muižnieks et al. 2003) which due to lack of sufficient expertise was relying on OSCE experts. The report noted that many provisions “take insufficient account of the distinction between the public and private spheres” and risk “contravening international legal standards of human rights, most notably freedom of expression”(Muižnieks et al. 2003: 44).

Consultations and tough negotiations with the OSCE and the EU officials were taking place all 1998 long as well as in the first half of 1999 when the Law was finally adopted with necessary corrections. Law stipulated regulation of language use in the private sphere only if there was a legitimate public interest precisely defined by the authors and OSCE consultants. In result the private sphere was secured from unfounded public intrusion. OSCE High Commissioner confirmed its essential conformity with international obligations and commitments (Muižnieks et al.2003). In 2000 corresponding regulations with similar judgement from OSCE and EU were passed.

The new law and regulations seems to be providing a good case example of highly precise and scrupulous language regulations. In this regard it must be noted that international legal standards has a very few examples of linguistic regulations within the context of historically complicated linguistic environment. As mentioned before with the gender equality legislation there is not yet created clear international principles taking into account the public and private interests, rights of individuals, and goals equality, political stability and integrated society. If for the sake of gender equality private line will be overstepped, it can happen that the debate of language policy might return to the spotlights.

It must be remembered that correspondence of the Language Law to liberal democratic norms was achieved due to principal commitment of Latvian government to achieve the EU and NATO membership. In 1999, Latvia was invited to become the EU candidate and open accession negotiations. Also internally, the international requirements and national independence and security arguments were the crucial to convince public to liberalize the draft language law. In general, the ethnic Latvian public perceived liberalization as hard but necessary choice to secure their regained freedom.

Education System

After the re-establishment of independence, education system consisted of three types of schools according to the language of instruction:

- Latvian
- Russian
- Small minorities

The third group was tiny but with the support of the state it showed the tendency to increase. Along with the regulations on the Latvian language, the 1992 Language Law contained provisions encouraging the use of formerly discriminated minority languages. Within this context, a school for Jewish children was opened in Riga as early as in 1989, the first one in the entire Soviet Union. Later, under assistance of Popular Front, Polish, Estonian, and Ukrainian schools have been set up. After the restoration of independence, as early as 1991-1992 there were functioning Sunday schools in 11 minority languages providing opportunity to strengthen ethnic and linguistic identities of ethnic groups misrecognized by the Soviet authorities (Veisbergs 1993: 35). Table below shows that after the restoration of independence continued a steady tendency of increase of numerically small minority children attending respective minority schools offering instruction bilingually, in their native tongue and Latvian and/or even Russian.

Table 3.3 Dynamics of non-Russian minority schools 1991-2001 (Vebers et al 2002: 42).

Ethnicity	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01
Estonian	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Lithuanian					1	1	1	1	1	1
Jewish	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
Polish	3	3	4	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Ukrainian	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Byelorussian				1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Gypsy (class)							2	2	5	5

Language and education policies along the strengthening of Latvian included support to formerly discriminated minorities. It can be argued that such approach provided further fragmentation of so called Russian speaking population. As far as attitude to independent statehood, as a rule, representatives of smaller minorities tend to be better linguistically integrated. Frequently the fragmentation happens faster according to ideological and political lines than linguistic lines. Moreover, sociological data show that their political values and opinions are somewhere between the opinions held by majority of ethnic Russians and majority of ethnic Latvians. Thus, one might argue that Latvian language policy facilitates rather unipolar, Latvian dominated linguistic environment with

multicultural characteristics of ethnic diversity instead of two languages dominated society. An ultimate byproduct is increased political loyalty of minorities.

As far as schools operating in the Russian language, the number of pupils attending the Russian schools started to decrease after independence. Mainly, because negative birth rates, emigration, and increasing choice in favour of Latvian as instruction language. The choice of ethnic Russians to send their children in Latvian language schools was frequently determinate by necessity to acquire good knowledge of Latvian because of legal as well as market requirements.

In 1990. /92., in Latvian language learned 180.000 or 53.4% of all pupils but in Russian language 157.200 or 46.4% (Vebers 2001: 16). In 1999. /00, in Latvian language learned already about 66%, in Russian 33%, but in the languages of small minorities about 0.6% of children. In 2000, in Latvian learned 70.1%, in Russian 29.6%, but in the languages of small minorities about 0.4% of all pupils.³⁴

Data show that in 2001./02 in the first grade in Latvian language schools were enrolled 76.1% of all pupils while in Russian language schools 23.9% of total.³⁵ In 2001./02. In Latvia were 725 schools with Latvian as instruction language and 175 schools with Russian as major instruction language.³⁶

Linguistic preferences in the educational sphere show slight but permanent increase of the share of Latvian instead of Russian, especially among first grades.

One of the reasons for steady choice of Latvian as instruction language is parents doubts in the ability ethnic Russian school system to provide competitive knowledge of Latvian. For instance, according to the Ministry of Defence about one third of non-ethnic Latvian conscripts have very vague knowledge of Latvian. The quality and accessibility of educational opportunities of Latvian and in Latvian are important factors that determine a person's position in society and the job market. If persons belonging to minorities have obtained a good education and learned Latvian, they have greater opportunities to upward mobility.

As a consequence, the latest Education Law passed in 1999 along with the Language Law envisaged that in all minority schools, including schools with Russian as instruction language teaching process should proceed according to bilingual methodology. According to the law, starting from 2004 in these schools at least 60% of subjects in tenth grade shall be taught in Latvian while about 40% could remain in the minority language. The choice of subjects taught in Latvian remain in the hands of schools themselves. In 2007 all grades in the secondary school should teach according to this principle. The reform mainly targets schools with Russian language since other minority schools already use similar bilingual methodology since their establishment.

The official goal of the reformers the increase of the knowledge of Latvian among the young Russian generation. In turn it would make society linguistically uni-polar

³⁴ Data of statistician Ilmars Mežs, IOM.

³⁵ Data of the Ministry of Education.

³⁶ Data of Ministry of Education.

orientated while granting minorities the possibility to preserve their mother tongue in the education process .

The reform plan has met fierce opposition of number of ethnic Russian dominated parties and NGO's as well as as earned strong critics of Russia. The major complains are that education reform is aimed to assimilate the Russian speaking population. There is also criticism concerning the implementation process of the reform due to lack of teaching materials and vocational courses for teachers. So far the international organizations, OSCE and EU have not opposed the reform provided it takes place gradually. The reform is compatible with the Council of Europe Framework Convention for Protection of Minorities. The education reform does not run contrary to the current practice of the EU member states as well. Moreover, it provides the Latvian minorities with comperably larger options to use and learn their native languages in the state sponsored schools. However, it is very clear that the reform is a major blow to the Russian language dominance in the region and if implemented it would greatly assist Latvian authorities on their way to see Latvian as lingua franca in their country. Education reform is also one of the major corner stones of the integration policy drafted by the Latvian authorities in the late 1990s.

Institutes of Higher Education

Implemented linguistic reforms of 1990s provided that state sponsored higher education institutions provide education only in Latvian compared to the previous Soviet system. In turn, before the implementation of the new Education Law the secondary education provided a chance to graduate school without proper knowledge of Latvian.

Therefore, it is important to detect did the language and education policy influenced the minority chances to obtain higher education. This part portrays the ethnic origin of employees and students at 20 state and private institutions of higher learning. From some of the schools, data was obtained only concerning employees. Also, no data was available on the employees and students at the University of Latvia, which is the largest University in Latvia.

Table 3.4 Ethnic origin of employees and students at higher institutions of learning and proportionality indices in relation to the population as a whole

Institution of higher learning	Status	Proportion of minorities among staff (%)	PI relation to the population	Proportion of minorities in the student body (%)	PI relation to the population
J. Vītols Academy of Music	State	11.4	0.28	6.7	0.16
Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Christian Academy	Private	13.0	0.32		
Latvian Maritime Academy	State	21.0	0.51	40.0	0.97
Latvian Academy of Art	State	4.0	0.1		
Latvian Police Academy	State	-		14.0	0.34
Latvian Academy of Sports Education	State	23.5	0.57		
Liepāja Academy of Pedagogy	State	11.9	0.29		
Riga Institute of Aeronautics	Private	85.0	2.06	84.0	2.04
Riga School of Economics	Private	0			
Riga Teacher Training and Educational Management Academy	Private	8.5	0.2		
Riga Technical University	State	30	0.73		
Vidzeme University College	State	0		1.6	0.04
Latvian University of Agriculture	State	14.9	0.36	8.0	0.19
Latvian Academy of Culture	Private	17.0	0.41		

Riga International School of Economics and Business Administration	Private	-			
Latvian Academy of Medicine	State	16.2	0.39		
Institute of Transportation and Communications	Private	91.0	2.2	83.7	2.03
RIMPAK Livonija	Private	49	1.19		
Daugavpils Pedagogical University	State	54.5	1.32		
School of Banking	Private	25.0	0.6		

The table shows that in most institutions of higher learning minority employees and students are not dominant. One exception is the Daugavpils Pedagogical University, which is a state institution of higher learning located in Daugavpils, a city populated largely by ethnic minorities. Three private institutions of higher learning are the other exceptions. These are RIMPAK Livonija, the Institute of Transportation and Communications and the Riga Institute of Aeronautics. In the latter two institutions of higher learning the ratio of minority employees exceeds 85%. From a proportionality viewpoint in relation to Latvia's entire population regardless of citizenship, minority employees and students at these institutions of higher learning are represented at least 2 times more than their ratio in Latvian society. Sources suggest that despite of legislation large part of courses in these institutions is taking place in Russian. If so, it is one of the examples where deviations from the law are present mainly because of wish to avoid ethnic and social tension.

Taking data into account one possible conclusion could be that an ethnic division of economic labour may continue to persist in the future, especially in the transportation sector, because mostly minority origin specialists are trained in these professions.

As opposed to private institutions of higher learning, ethnic minorities at state institutions of higher learning are employed proportionately less. As far as students are concerned, one exception is the Naval Academy, where minorities and ethnic Latvians are represented proportionately and in accordance with their ratio among the population.

Concerning teaching staff in public and state sponsored institutions of higher learning, interviews indicate³⁷ that minorities have been less represented in the faculties of these institutions of higher learning since the Soviet period. In other words, even after the occupation of Latvia in 1940 and during the post-war period, institutions of higher learning retained an ethnically Latvian professorship. The USSR educational system was conservative and staff changes took place at a slow rate. Ideological control over institutions of higher learning was achieved by using existing staff. Technically important sectors were an exception. Here the language of instruction was changed from Latvian to Russian, and there was a more rapid turnover of staff. Pre-war specialists were replaced by persons who were loyal to the regime, and who had a good knowledge of Russian, or who were native speakers. The results of this policy can also be observed in the data collected for this study. The Riga Technical University and strategic sectors such as aeronautics, transportation, communications and navigation have the largest minority ratio among their employees. Over the past ten years, radical changes have taken place in education for the naval professions. The Naval Academy has begun to provide instruction in the Latvian language, as was the case before Latvia was annexed by the USSR. The ratio of ethnic Latvians teaching and studying there has increased over the past ten years. Thus, one might conclude that language reforms did not radically changed minority composition among teaching staff.

Concerning the ratio of minority students at institutions of higher learning, it was only possible to collect information on a few institutions. Still, based on the available data, it is possible to conclude that the ratio of minority students is greater at private universities and at institutions of higher learning linked to professions that used to be dominated by the Russian language. At state and regional institutions of higher learning, especially those established after the independence e.g., the Vidzeme University College, the ratio of minority students is smaller than their ratio among the population.

Furthermore, one can say that for historical reasons the minority ratio at private institutions of higher learning is relatively larger than at state universities for four reasons:

- Several private institutions of higher learning are oriented particularly toward minority students (RIMPAK Livonija, the Baltic Russian Institute);
- Several private institutions of higher learning use Russian as minimum in addition to Latvian;
- For some students, a more comfortable environment is one in which they can hear their native language and where the culture is familiar;

³⁷ Interview with Prof. Peteris Cimdinš, rector of the Vidzeme University College.

- The examinations at some of the departments of state institutions of higher learning are not always culturally neutral, i.e. students that have studied in Latvian before will have an easier time passing them.³⁸

Regarding future changes in student numbers, one could say that potential students will choose state institutions of higher learning more and more as their knowledge of Latvian improves. After education reform in the minority secondary schools will take place there should not be foreseen obstacles to ethnic minority involvement in the Universities.

The choices of some graduates of present secondary schools where instruction takes place in Russian were reviewed over the course of this study in a selective manner. For instance, 64% or 167 out of 259 graduates of the Riga Purvciems Secondary School who enrolled in Latvia's institutions of higher learning between 1999 and 2001 enrolled in state institutions of higher learning. The most popular state institutions of higher learning are the University of Latvia, the Riga Technical University, the Police Academy and the Maritime Academy. As of 1994, 21 graduates of Limbaži Secondary School No.2 have enrolled in institutions of higher learning. Only 7 graduates (33%) chose private institutions of higher learning.

1999/2000 data concerning the choice of graduates from schools where instruction takes place in Russian in the city of Rēzekne show that the school of choice is the regional Rēzekne School of Higher Education, which is a state institution of higher learning where instruction takes place in Latvian. 40 of the 110 graduates who finished secondary schools where instruction takes place in Russian at the end of the 1999/2000 school year are students at the Rēzekne School of Higher Education.³⁹ Next comes the Riga Technical University and the Business Institute, which is a private institution. 24 graduates enrolled in this school. Among the schools chosen were also the University of Latvia⁴⁰ and the Baltic Russian Institute, where studies were begun by 7 and 15 new students, respectively, from the Russian schools in Rēzekne. Here, it should be mentioned that a large part of subjects are taught in Russian only at the latter institution of higher learning. Approximately 60% of the graduates of Rēzekne Russian schools choose to continue their studies at state institutions of higher learning.

A selective look at the data obtained regarding the choice of institutions of higher learning of graduates from Rēzekne, Riga and Limbaži leads to the conclusion that graduates of schools where instruction takes place in Russian do not display special interest in private institutions of higher learning. This means that the new students consider their own knowledge of Latvian good enough to continue studies in Latvian. Thus, after reviewing the choices of these graduates, one can say that the number of new Russian specialists who are competitive and who have a good knowledge of Latvian will increase in Latvia's job market. The state administration will be able to employ a larger

³⁸ For instance, in entrance examinations at the University of Latvia, Faculty of Law at the end of the 1990s, students were required to have knowledge of Latvian folklore and other subjects not directly linked to law.

³⁹ Data obtained from Rēzekne Board of Education. Yearbook 2001., pp. 48-49.

⁴⁰ Also, the Riga Humanistic Institute and the Institute of International Relations.

number of persons belonging to minorities, under the condition that discrimination based on ethnic origin does not take place in the hiring process. From the viewpoint of ethnic conflict theory, increased involvement of minorities in state institutions would avert doubts concerning the state's unequal treatment of representatives of various ethnic groups. At the same time lack of Latvian language skills and relative sustainability of the Russian language environment hinders minority, especially ethnic Russian involvement in the state universities.

Improvement of Language Skills, Language Use and Political Attitudes According to Ethnicity

As far as language skills of various ethnicities in Latvia is concerned, it must be noted that enormous increase of knowledge of Latvian has been reached during the last decade despite of imperfectness of the education system, and lack of funds. In 2000, 79% of all permanent residents knew Latvian compared to 62% in 1989.⁴¹ Increased the knowledge of Latvian also among ethnic Russians reaching 52% compared to 21% in 1989. However, in total Russian is more known than Latvian. In 2000, 81% of total population declared knowledge of Russian. There are 21% of population without knowledge of Latvian. The highest percentage of ethnic Russians who know Latvian (68%) is among persons in age between 15 and 19. In all Russian age groups, Russians know more than Latvian. At the same time, only in the age group 5-9 years knowledge of Russian among ethnic Latvians is worse(20%) than knowledge of Latvian by Russians (36%). Because of the revival of the minority schools, increased the knowledge of native tongue among the small minorities. However, still only about 30% of individuals belonging to non-Russian minorities use their mother tongue as first language. Others remain mainly Russian speakers first.

In general, the tendency of post-Soviet Latvia regarding the language skills shows steady increase of the role of Latvian. However, it still can not be regarded as *lingua franca* at this stage. Asymmetric bilingualism persists in favour of Russian language despite of state policies favouring Latvian language. The position of Russian remains strong and widespread due to large number of Russian speakers as well as due to closeness of Russia.

Russian language remains frequently used language also in state and private enterprises and business. According to scientists of University of Latvia, in 18% of state enterprises mainly Russian is used as a mean of communication. In private business, Russian is used in 48% of enterprises Druviete et al. 2001: 23). In 10.5% of cases only Latvian is used.

As far as language use in mass media, in Latvia is published large number of newspapers as well as journals in Russian along with Latvian. According to surveys, usually permanent residents without Latvian citizenship frequently read newspapers in Russian only. According to survey, audience of radio listeners belonging to different language groups overlaps more frequently than auditorium of readers. TV is the most popular media among all ethnic groups. Also there is a relative overlap of viewers of various

⁴¹ Data obtained 2000.popular census (Author).

ethnicities. Until present, newspapers remain the media which the most divide population according to ethnicity as well as according to political and social views expressed in these written media.

In a few words the difference can be characterized in a way that most of media in Russian present cynical views about the state as such while media in Latvia on the same issues only criticize the authority, institutions or particular politicians. As a result, linguistic division of media and linguistic division of society continues to reproduce political division of society along with ethnic and linguistic lines concerning several issues. First, it is a question of citizenship issue where most of ethnic Latvians hold views that Soviet era immigrants should naturalize in order to obtain citizenship. In turn, large part of ethnic Russians regards Latvian citizenship as their automatic and natural right.

Second, the division is seen when the role of the Soviet Union in Latvia is discussed. In 2000, 58% of permanent residents non-citizens believed that during the occupation time high level of economic and cultural development was achieved in Latvia due to assistance of the USSR. According to census 2000 among citizens this view is held by 27%. Moreover, 51% of non-citizens support or rather support Latvia as part of Commonwealth of Independent States along with Byelorussia. Third, similar political disagreements along ethnic lines are concerning the education reform introducing Latvian language in Russian schools.

Thus, one can argue that divisions which at first glance seem as ethnic in fact are political divisions which partly overlap with ethnic or linguistic divisions. For instance, as far as pure ethnic or racial attitudes are concerned, attitudes of inhabitants of Latvia are relatively positive compared to the European average according to the information obtained in the Ministry of Integration. Thus, only 4.8% would not like to have racially different neighbours. Out of 31 countries reviewed with average dislike of 12.8% Latvia holds the third place after Sweden (2.5%), and Iceland (3.1%). Also in neighbouring Lithuania (9.7%) and Estonia (15.1%) the dislike of racially different neighbours is much higher.

Another indicator of relative ethnic tolerance is traditionally high rates of inter-ethnic marriages. The relative share of these marriages did not decrease also during the independence movement in late 1980s and early 1990s when the most painful reforms were introduced (See Table 3.5).

Table 3.5 Ethnically mixed Marriages, Latvians-Minorities (1990-2001), %.⁴²

1990	1995	2000	2001
18.4	18.1	19.5	18.2

It also should be added that inter-ethnic marriages create an environment of mutual respect and tolerance towards the ethnicity of involved persons. In the Latvian case, inter-ethnic families served and continue to serve as the Latvian language promotion institute

⁴² See 2002 Statistical Yearbook of Latvia, 2002, p.45.

since majority of children either define Latvian as their native language or they are bilingual.

The language and education policy of Latvia in 1990s and early 2000s continues to be a challenge to the non-ethnic Latvian population earlier not used to learn and speak Latvian. So, the challenge is the slow naturalization rates of Soviet era immigrants who until 2003 still lacked convincing motivation to opt for the Latvian citizenship. These factors continue to challenge the Latvian authorities dealing with ethnic politics.

On the other hand, strategy of the government to secure independence, democracy, and national security through the unquestioned attempts to integrate in the Western European institutions provided Latvia with additional impetus to organize its ethnic policy according to liberal democratic norms while guaranteeing internal stability. In turn, the international institutionalization of Latvia as independent country, accession to the EU and NATO along with reforms of liberal democratic nature creates the possibility for cohesive society based on Latvian language as lingua franca and Latvian citizenship as symbol of loyalty to the restored state. Traditional minorities as well as the Soviet era immigrants face an increasing choice of inclusion in the mainstream society. The political and linguistic divisions created by the Soviet legacy have a good chance to be eradicated within the following decades. Thus, there is a good chance that the society of Latvia will become increasingly uni-polar as far as its linguistic identification. On the other hand, the current linguistic policy provides ethnic minorities with a relatively large window of opportunity to preserve their ethnic identity in the spheres of education, mass media, and on the non-governmental level. Therefore, there is no ultimate threat of forceful assimilation or misrecognition with possible alienation as an outcome. On the other hand, during the last decade the number of ethnic Russians was facing an ultimate decrease of role of Russian in the official sphere. It has created dissatisfaction with governmental policies in the linguistic and educational areas as well as political tensions frequently supported by the neighboring Russia. It does not seem plausible that the Latvian authorities would abandon its initiated reforms of minority education system and support to increased use of Latvian in the public sphere. It seems that the only key to successful reduction of these tensions are careful and democratic procedure of reforms, continuing dialogue between the authorities and the opponents as well as the stress on individual values instead of collective ones. The current institutional framework and existing liberal democratic system is capable of tackling this issue in a successful manner.

4. Chapter

Ethnic Participation, Employment and Proportions

The collapse of the Soviet Empire and the restoration of independent Latvia produced serious demographic changes of Latvia's population. Among the major reasons facilitating these changes should be distinguished: Restoration of citizenship, changing language policies and linguistic priorities, decreasing role of the Russian language, as well as the general economic and social hardships of transition.

Along with demographic changes of the last decade, Latvia had to establish ministries, army, foreign service, and many other new state institutions. In turn, the existing Soviet institutions had to be rearranged according to new principles and needs. As far as elected bodies, the independent elections were taking place on the municipal as well as national levels. Given the highly multiethnic character of Latvia's society it is also highly relevant to analyse how these changes influenced ethnic relations? Is there a sufficient participation of individuals of minority origin in the state affairs, state and municipal institutions after the restoration of independence? If there are obvious disproportions of employment in the state and municipal institutions, is it because of the discrimination according to ethnic or some other collective characteristics? What are the reasons of disproportionate participation or lack of participation of individuals of minority origin in the state affairs? Did the transition process influenced welfare and social well being of various ethnicities in a different way by creating social inequalities based on ethnic origin? These are questions to be addressed in this chapter.

The preliminary assumption is that restoration of independence and following institutional and legislative reforms seriously changed ethnic proportions in the power structures. Minorities, particularly the ethnic Russians are much less employed in the state administrative institutions compared to the Soviet era. On the other hand it can be assumed that in future proportion of individuals of minority origin in the state and municipal bodies will increase due to several factors. Major factors influencing such development can be stated :

- Increasing knowledge of Latvian by the Soviet immigrant population;
- Democratic principles and increasing transparency in the state employment procedures; Naturalization of non-citizens;
- rise of salaries and prestige of the state administration.

Changing Migration and Demography

In 1989, two years before the restoration of independence the size of Latvian population in total reached 2.666.6 thousand (Zvidriņš et al. 1992: 57). The last Soviet census indicated that as a result of intensive migration process of the last 40 years, the number of newcomers in the following decades might exceed the number of titular nationality in

Latvia. According to data, in 1989 minority population of Latvia reached 48% of total population. Most of this group was made up of ethnic Russians (34% of total).⁴³

However, in the same time, the end of 1980s as well as the end of the Soviet dominance in Latvia marked new changes in migration processes. Ethnic composition and migration trends once more radically changed during the last years of the Soviet rule when the national independence movement took place as well as after the national independence was regained in 1991 (See Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Demographic and Ethnic Changes in Latvia (1989-2002) in Thousand.

Year	Migration Saldo	Natural Increase	Total
1989	-3968	6338	2370
1990	-13085	3106	-9979
1991	-15045	-116	-15161
1992	-53474	-3851	-57325
1993	-32333	-12438	-44771
1994	-22823	-17501	-40324
1995	-13713	-17336	-31049
1996	-10081	-14538	-24619
1997	-9420	-14703	-24123
1998	-5751	-15790	-21541
1999	-4085	-13448	-17533
2000	-5504	-11957	-17461
2001	-5159	-13327	-18486
2002	-1834	-12454	-14288
Total	-196275	-138015	-334290

Source: Ilmars Mežs, IOM Baltic representative

As Table 4.1 indicates, during the re-establishment of independence as well as in the following decade there could be observed serious decrease of Latvia's population due to migration as well as negative birth rates. As far as the birth rates are concerned, traditionally, Latvia's population had a very small natural increase of population. Additionally, should be mentioned the consequences of the Second World War, repressions and deportations of the Soviet regime, and high social expectations of families before deciding on family increase. In the recent decade, the hardship of transition was a serious obstacle to positive birth rates as well. In total, during the period 1989-2002, Latvia lost about 334.290 persons or 12.6% of its Soviet era inhabitants.

As far as reliability of the source it must be noted, that in 2000, the first post-independence census indicated that from the previous calculations there are missing some 40.000 persons. It was assumed that these individuals have left Latvia during 1990s

⁴³ Additionally, in Census was not included Soviet military personell stationated in Latvia due to policy of secrecy (Aut.).

without any official notice. Consequently this number was added to the emigrated ones in the period from 1989 to 2000.

The next table 4.2 explains the share of various ethnicities among the migrants in the same period. In this table above mentioned 40.000 people are not included since it is impossible to know their ethnicity.

Table 4.2 Migration and Natural Increase of Population According to Ethnicity (1989-2001)

Ethnicity	Migration saldo	<i>Natural Increase</i>	Total
Total	-152803	-125561	-278364
Latvians	5935	-52977	-47042
Russians	-90107	-48634	-138741
Byelorussians	-19258	-8946	-28204
Ukrainians	-22970	-380	-23350
Poles	-2130	-7212	-9342
Lithuanians	-2224	-2327	-4551
Jews	-12790	-3129	-15919
Gypsies	-157	1195	1038
Others	-9102	-3151	-12253

Source: Department of Migration and Citizenship, Census 2000, Interview with Ilmars Mežs, IOM Baltic representative

Table 4.2 shows that during the first decade of independence due to migration decreased the size of all ethnicities except Latvians. It can be explained by the return of exiles that left the country after Soviet occupation.

About 59% of decrease was due to emigration of ethnic Russians. In total, 86% of emigrants were of Easter Slavic origin, and the overwhelming majority of them left to the territory of former Soviet Union. Additional research on the reasons of emigration should be required. Social factors, family relations and political changes were of enormous influence. Large part of the Soviet emigrants was Soviet military and their family members.

According to department of Migration and Citizenship, in January 2003, in Latvia were registered 2.331.467 permanent residents.⁴⁴ As far as ethnic origin is concerned, the share of ethnic Latvians had increased from 52% in 1989 to 58.4% in 2003 while the share of ethnic Russians decreased from 34% to 29.0%. Also decreased the share of other non-ethnic Latvians.

Apart of ethnicity, the current Latvian population at large can be divided into three groups, citizens (77.01%), permanent residents (21.63%) and foreigners (1.36%). The first group consists of citizens of the first republic (1918-1940) and their descendents whose citizenship was re-activated after independence as well as of already naturalized Soviet era immigrants (See Table 4.3).

Table 4.3 Naturalized Persons 1995-2003.

1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Total
984	3016	2992	4439	12.427	14.900	10.636	9844	2034 ⁴⁵	61.273

Source: Naturalization Board, 2003

As far as naturalization is concerned, it has been of unexpected slow rate due to frequent lack of motivation on the side of non-citizens. Additionally, naturalization requires basic knowledge of Latvian not possessed by all applicants. There have been international evaluation of the naturalization requirements by the OSCE. In general, it was accepted as proper and well handled. The Naturalization Board and its current leadership is regarded by its international partners as well as by the high degree of social trust as one of the best functioning state institutions.

The second group consists mainly of Soviet era immigrants who declared intension for permanent stay in Latvia after the independence. At this moment, their legal status and rights in Latvia is somewhere between citizens and third country nationals if compared to other EU countries. According to Citizenship Law of July 1994, persons belonging to this group have privileged access to naturalization compared to third country nationals. They also enjoy all social, cultural, and economic rights granted to citizens.

Foreign nationals are the third group, and their number has slightly increased during the last years.

Table 4.4 Permanent residents and citizens by ethnic origin, January 2003

Ethnic origin	Percentage of ethnic group among citizenry	Percentage of ethnic group among permanent residents
Latvians	75.6	58.4
Russians	17.9	29.0
Byelorussians	1.4	3.9

⁴⁴ See homepage of Naturalization Board www.np.gov.lv

⁴⁵ Period from January to April, 2003

Poles	2.2	2.5
Ukrainians	0.5	2.6

Source: Department of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, 2003

All together, in Latvia in the early 2003 were registered 1.795.454 citizens, 504.277 non-citizens/permanent residents, and 31.736 foreigners.

As far as regional distribution according to ethnicity and citizenship, most of non-Latvian population according to ethnicity as well as citizenship is situated in capital Riga, other largest cities as well as in the Eastern Latvia. Thus, in Riga reside 253.015 non-citizens making up 34.2% of all Riga inhabitants. In the second largest city Daugavpils in the east of Latvia, non-citizens are 33.386 or 29.7% of city dwellers.

Taking into account that demographic changes took place along with extensive socio-political reforms also the ethnic composition of the state and municipal institutions has changed. If previously, in many spheres ethnic Russians and Soviet era immigrants were employed, after the independence was restored many of them has left or lost their positions.

Virtually all state institutions were created from the scratch. In many of them employment was found for participants and supporters of popular independence movement. Many ethnic Russians were neutral to these events or even taking opposite sides. Therefore their chances of employment in the reestablished state institutions were lower than those of ethnic Latvians. The following sub-chapters will examine ethnic representation in various public institutions and organizations.

Ethnic Representation in Three Pillars of Democracy

Parliament

After 1991, in Latvia parliamentary elections took place four times, in 1993, 1995, 1998, and 2002. Quality of statistics are better for the last two elections. For 5th and 6th Saeima (Parliament) elections there are no available data on ethnicity of deputies and deputy candidates, as well as there is lack of sociological analysis for this period.

However, data on 7th and 8th Parliamentary elections are relatively broad. Data shows that in the last two parliamentary elections between 16% to 21% of elected MP's were of minority origin (See Table 4.5).

Table 4.5 Ethnicity of Latvian Parliamentarians (Elections, 1998, 2002), (%)

Ethnicity	1998	2002
Latvians	84	79
Russians	10	14
Poles	3	1
Jews	2	1

Carelian	-	1
Lithuanians	1	-
Not indicated	-	4

Source: Central Electoral Committee.

Data also show the increase of minority origin MP's in 8th Parliament compared to previous 7th. It also can be pointed out that apart of Russians, two former traditional minority representatives, Poles and Jews are relatively well represented in politics.

As far as candidates to the Parliament are concerned, in 1998 elections there were 1081 candidates from whom 8.7% were of minority origin. There were elected 16%. In 2002, there were 1019 candidates from whom 19.7% were of minority origin. There were elected 21%. Comparing share of candidates and elected according to their ethnic origin it is possible to conclude that relative increase of minority participation in the elections do not necessarily increase their share among the elected. Also comparing the relative proportion of minority origin MP's in the parliaments of the second republic to the minority MP's in the parliaments of the inter-war republic, their proportionality is almost the same. However, the reasons are probably different. As far as gender is concerned, in 1998 there were elected 17% female MP's, but in 2002 18%.⁴⁶

Parties

As far as the ethnicity in governance and power sharing is concerned, three party characteristics should be distinguished in this research. First, the Latvian post-Soviet party system is relatively weakly institutionalized. Frequently, parties do not survive more than one election round and disappear within the time span of 4 years. Second, there is large number of parties competing for the seats in the Parliament; therefore a 5% threshold is introduced in the proportional election system. Third, the ethno-political issues play important role in election campaigns, and ethnic attitudes determinate party choice of voters.

In post-Soviet Latvia, in average before elections were formed 21 party lists (See table 4.6).

Table 3.6 Number of Party Lists and Their Success in the Parliamentary Elections (1993,1995,1998, 2002).

Parliament	Submitted Lists	Represented in the Parliament
1993 (5 th)	23	8
1995 (6 th)	19	7
1998 (7 th)	21	6

⁴⁶ Parliamentary elections.

2002 98 th)	20	6
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Source: Parliamentary Elections

As far as party ideological orientation is concerned, in the Latvian post-Soviet political environment, leftist orientation frequently means pro-Russia orientation, while rightist orientation is pro-market, pro-NATO, and pro-EU orientation. Ethnicity makes the analysis even more difficult since pro-Russia orientation is mainly supported by ethnic Russian voters while the support for the EU and NATO orientation is in a larger extend shared by ethnic Latvians.

During the whole post-Soviet period the Western orientation was dominating in the government. It has become additional argument for number of ethnic Russian voters to claim their under-representation in the politics in general. Indeed, among the leading party representatives and members, there are almost no minority origin individuals. In turn the ethnic Latvian support for pro-Russia orientated parties has been minor and their representation in the parliament via these parties is absent. Therefore, despite the fact that apart of marginal mini-parties there never been party in Latvia claiming ethnic representation, in practice parties are divided according to ethnic line. In the table below is described support for the major parties according to ethnicity.

Table 4.7 Voting Preferences According to Ethnicity (1998, 2002).

Party	Seats in Parliament		1998			2002		
	1998	2002	Latv.	Rus.	Other	Latv.	Rus.	Other
Latvia's Way ⁴⁷	21	-	68.1	24.8	7.1	87.3	10.0	2.7
PCTVL ⁴⁸	16	25	12.2	62.5	25.3	17.3	60.1	22.7
Union of Social Democrats ⁴⁹	14	-	57.9	29.9	12.2	65.7	25.0	9.3
TB/LNNK ⁵⁰	17	7	91.0	3.2	5.7	91.5	1.9	6.6
People's Party ⁵¹	24	20	81.6	8.9	9.5	82.6	12.8	4.6
New Era ⁵²	-	26	-	-	-	85.5	9.2	5.3
New Party ⁵³	8	-	71.1	16.9	12.1	-	-	-

⁴⁷ Centre liberal party, one of the leading parties until 2002 when failed threshold.

⁴⁸ PCTVL – For Human Rights in United Latvia, coalition of three pro-Russia orientated parties, People's Harmony Party, Socialist Party, Party Equality. Coalition has ceased to exist in spring 2003. In autumn, the second and the third party united back forming block under the same name – PCTVL.

⁴⁹ Left orientated party, managed to overcome threshold only in the 7th Saeima.

⁵⁰ Right wing Latvian nationalist party Fatherland and Freedom.

⁵¹ Conservatives

⁵² Newly established right wing orientated party, von elections in 2002.

⁵³ Existed only in 7th Saeima. Centre orientated ally of Latvia's Way.

Greens/Farmers Union ⁵⁴	-	10	85.9	6.8	7.4	80.9	10.0	9.1
First Party	-	12	-	-	-	88.8	11.2	-

Source: Survey of sociological institute SKDS, August, 1998, 2002.

Table 4.7 shows that in 1998 there were 3 parties, Latvia's Way, Social Democrats, and New party whose electorate reflected ethnic proportions of Latvian citizenry. Three parties, People's Party, Farmers Union, and TB/LNNK have collected their votes mainly from ethnic Latvians (81.6% - 91.0%). In turn, one party, PCTVL relied only on ethnic Russian and other minority support (87.8%). Respectively, about 90% of non-ethnic Latvian MP's came from PCTVL. Within the party faction itself, 15 out of 16 deputies were of minority origin in 1998.⁵⁵

It is possible to argue that ethnicity remains a powerful electoral factor in Latvia. Moreover, ethnicity is directly connected to particular political preferences and issues. Namely, PCTVL has collected majority of its ethnic Russian votes because of mainly three issues:

- Political and economic orientation towards Russia,
- Status quo in education system, namely support for segregated Latvian-Russian school system,
- Unconditional granting of citizenship rights to Soviet era immigrants.

On the other hand it is possible to argue that almost every party gains support from various ethnicities. Conservative People's Party and liberal Latvijas Way have about 10-20 per cent of ethnic Russian supporters. It could be explained by the fact that ethnicity is not the only reason why people vote for one or another party. Preferences are determined by the political attitudes towards Westward integration, economic reforms and other factors. Ethnically mixed families determinate a political choice as well. Ethnicity in Latvia can not be considered a pathologic diagnosis determining the fate of politics despite the fact that historic memories and political attitudes have an ethnic correlation.

The 2002 elections to the Parliament became the Pirric victory to PCTVL. It seized 25 per cent of seats but was not included in the governing coalition. Mainly, because of pro-Russian orientation. The People's Harmony party initiated split declaring support to governmental anti-corruption policies. Differently from two remaining partners, PHP declared support to the Latvian membership to the EU. Additionally it attempted to strengthen its position as social democratic party appealing to ethnic Latvian electorate as well. Their success in redefining priorities is unclear, yet. Two remaining pro-Russian orientated parties remain committed to orientation to Russia and to the ethnic Russian voter. One of the best known Equality Party leaders is Tatjana Ždanoka, former member of Interfront Movement while the Socialist party is lead by Alfreds Rubiks (Ethnic Latvian),

⁵⁴ Data on voters ethnicity for 1998 reflects preferences only for Farmers Union, since Farmers united with greens only before 8th parliamentary elections.

⁵⁵ Parliamentary statistics

the last leader of the Latvian Communist Party. Any alliances between these parties and the right wing orientated mainly ethnic Latvian dominated are impossible under their current leadership, ideological convictions, and in their positions taken under the previous regime. People's Harmony Party remains a political force, theoretically available to coalition. The leadership of New Era have been several times speculating about the possibility to build government by including this, mainly ethnic Russian dominated and supported party. Also the leader of this party (PHP), Jānis Jurkāns is an ethnic Latvian and the first Foreign Minister of the restored Latvia. However, the close ties this party leadership has established with Kremlin⁵⁶ remains an obstacle to inclusion of this minority supported party into the member of governing coalition at least for some time.

The most nationalistic ethnic Latvian party, TB/LNNK until elections 1998 gained many ethnic Latvian votes because of its explicit anti-Russian sentiment. However, it must be noted that the last elections of 2002 showed that TB/LNNK almost did not cross threshold.

The elections of 2002 proved to be a benchmark for the ethnic Latvian voter. Namely, the ethnic orientated retotics and slogans have been increasingly disappearing from the public discourse. It is possible to argue that Latvian orientated right wing parties are considering to expand their reach to non-ethnic Latvian voters but they do not know how to do it without undermining the support of the existing, established electorate. As suggests Horowitz's theory of ethnic conflict the inclusion of some non-ethnic Latvian candidates in the election list would barely increase support of ethnic Russians. Just like the ethnic Latvian leadership of PHP and Socialist Party does not grant ethnic Latvian support to these pro-Russia orientated parties.

As far as the evaluation of history, attitudes of Western-Eastern orientation, prospects of education, citizenship and language policy, both political camps continue to hold strictly contrary views. It could be assumed that after Latvian membership in the EU and NATO will be institutionalized, Socialist Party and Equality Party could lose some of its electorate since they would not be able to offer plausible means to reach proclaimed political goals. This was one of the reasons why PHP has dropped out of PCTVL coalition as well. An interesting exclusion have been Riga municipality, where after the elections of 2000, Social Democrats agreed to form coalition with PCTVL. Riga is regarded as the most important municipality in Latvia with large economic resources. However, in 2002 Parliamentary elections Social Democrats were not elected in the Parliament and possibility to form similar coalition on the governmental level faded away.

Government, State Institutions and Power Structures

After 1991, out of all ethnic groups, ethnic Latvians have the highest employment rate in organisations that are funded by the state budget. 35% of ethnic Latvians and 21% of ethnic Russians work in these organisations, which also include the ministries (Rose

⁵⁶ Janis Jurkans was the only politician who was invited by President Putin to Kremlin shortly before 2002 Parliamentary elections in Latvia thus gaining official support of Moscow in the eyes of the ethnic Russian electorate of pro-Russia orientation (Author).

2000). Concerning administration, during the past ten years the ratio of non-ethnic Latvians has decreased in comparison to the Soviet period, when the administrations were dominated by minority employees due to the policy of sovietization and Russification.⁵⁷ The new institutions were formed mainly on the basis of individuals out of popular movement circles with Latvian citizenship. Additionally, institutions have been operating in Latvian. All above mentioned factors decreased chances of the ethnic Russian employment despite the absence of discriminatory practices on behalf of institutions. It also can be argued that it served as additional alienating factor between the ethnic Russians and the restored state. It is difficult to obtain precise data on employees in the state administration according to ethnicity since new statistics frequently does not require ethnicity. The requirement to define ethnicity in CV of job applicants is not anymore required as well while it was required in the Soviet era. Thus, the only chance for the employer to detect the ethnicity of the applicant is applicant's knowledge of Latvian. If a potential applicant speaks without accent, any discrimination on the ethnic basis is virtually impossible.

In 2002, 10 ministries which have had 1,673 employees were reviewed over the course of study. 92% or 1,542 employees are Latvian according to their ethnic origin, and 8% are minorities (See Table 4.8).

Table 4.8 Ethnic Proportionality in Ministries

Ethnic origin	Proportion among citizens (%) ⁵⁸	Proportion in the ministries (%)	Proportionality index
Latvians	76.3	92.1	1.2
Russians	17.4	5.7	0.32
Byelorussians	1.3	0.3	0.23
Poles	2.2	0.65	0.29
Ukrainians	0.4	0.17	0.42
Lithuanians	0.9	0.23	0.25
Jews	0.3	0.1	0.33
Others	0.9	0.6	0.66

When viewing the ministries as a whole, one can see that minorities are employed more seldom than one would expect given their share of the citizenry. Russians are represented in the ministries 68% less than in the citizenry. The other minorities are also proportionately employed more seldom in the ministries than ethnic Latvians. Of the most visible minorities, the Ukrainians are proportionately represented the most, 58% less than their ratio among Latvian citizens. Taking into account that the ratio of minority citizens in Latvia continues to rise as a result of naturalisation, the proportionality index for minorities may continue to decrease if there is no significant increase in the number of minority candidates for jobs in the ministries. This means that in order to achieve more

⁵⁷ According to the last 1989 Soviet census, there were only 31,5% Latvians employed in the administration in Latvia.

⁵⁸ Statistics of 2002

or less proportional representation in the upcoming years, state agencies should pay more attention to hiring minorities in these institutions. As far as gender distribution is concerned, one can argue that most of Latvian administrative institutions are run by females. Also in Ministries out of 1539 employed, 1092 or 71% are females. It can be explained by lower salaries in the state bureaucracy as well as better social conditions and security networks which in the state institutions are better compared to private.

The current situation shows that non-ethnic Latvians at large are passive applicants for the positions in the state institutions (See Table 4.9).

Table 4.9 Proportions of job applicants and those who were given the job in 2001⁵⁹

Ministry of	Total	Applicants				Those who were given the job			
		Latv.	%	Min.	%	Latv.	%	Min.	%
Ministry of Finance	316	259	82	57	18	27	90	3	10
Ministry of Justice	52	NA	NA	NA	NA	12	100	-	-
Ministry of Education and Science	117	NA	NA	NA	NA	26	93	2	7
Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development	114	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	?
Ministry of Interior	12	11	92	1	8	1	100	0	0
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	296	NA	NA	NA	NA	36		3	
Ministry of Transport	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ministry of Defence	150	NA	NA	NA	NA	24	92.3	2	7,7

As it is problematic to obtain data from all of the ministries, the table is incomplete. Still, it is clear that the number of minority applicants is considerably smaller than their proportion in the citizenry or the population as a whole. Furthermore, while few minority applicants applied for jobs, even fewer were hired. According to minority respondents interviewed in state institutions, the applicant's level of professionalism and knowledge of Latvian determine job selection. Another possible factor limiting the number of

⁵⁹ Pabriks, Artis. *Occupational Representation and Ethnic Discrimination in Latvia* (Riga: Nordic, 2002), p. 47.

minority applicants is that want ads for vacancies at state institutions appear only in the official (Latvian-language) print media, which is not read by most members of minority groups.

Power Structures

Power structures like military, police, municipal police, and fireman are important institutions which might contribute to ethnic harmony or discord in the multicultural society.

After 1991, many of these structures were created from scratch since they did not exist in the Soviet period. Newly created structures include military, municipal police, border guards, and in large extend major reforms happened also in the police. Data on above mentioned power structures shows proportional dominance of ethnic Latvians among the employees. Relatively large share of non-ethnic Latvians have remained in police, prisons administration, and among fireman. In the last two institutions, in the beginning of nineties were allowed to serve only citizens. However, at this moment legislation stipulates also the employment of persons without Latvian citizenship in Fire units. Table below shows ethnic proportionality in the Latvian military.

Table 4.10 Ethnicity in Various Military Units (2002)

Structure	Latvians	Minorities
Headquarters	99.3	0.7
Headquarters battalion	86.9	13.1
Unit of Special Tasks	80.2	19.8
Military Police	88.3	11.7
Parliament and State President Security Service	94.1	5.9
Centre of Military Medicine	89.5	10.5
Headquarters of Military Training	100.0	0.0
Military Academy	89.1	10.9
Sport Club	88.5	11.5
Centre of Logistics	76.3	23.7
Air Force	78.9	21.1
Navy	85.0	15
Home Guards and Infantry	90.1	9.9
Total	88.2	11.8

From table 3.9 one can see that most of military personnel are ethnic Latvians. Minority representatives are 11.8 percent. More than average, minorities serve in Air Forces, Centre of Logistics, Headquarters battalion, Unit of Special Tasks, and Navy.

Table 4.11 Ethnicity of Professionals in Military according to the Rank (2002) (Total and %).

Ethnicity	Officers		Instructors		Soldiers		Civilians		Total	
Latvians	1181	92.5	1699	91.4	648	81.2	559	78.6	4087	88.0
Russians	59	4.6	102	5.5	124	15.5	103	14.5	388	3.6
Lithuanians	13	1.0	15	0.8	6	0.8	4	0.6	38	0.8
Poles	8	0.6	17	0.9	11	1.4	12	1.7	48	1.0
Byelorussians	6	0.5	10	0.5	5	0.6	15	2.1	36	0.8
Ukrainians	6	0.5	12	0.6	1	0.1	13	1.8	32	0.7
Others	3	0.2	4	0.2	3	0.4	4	0.6	14	0.3
Total	1276	27.5	1859	40.0	798	17.2	710	15.3	4643	

As far as ranks are concerned, the largest share of minority representatives is among civilians employed in military (See Table 4.11). Ukrainians are the only ethnic minority whose proportion in military corresponds their proportion among Latvian citizens.

As far as fireman is concerned, 25.8 percent of personnel are of ethnic minority origin. It reflects the proportionality of minority origin individuals among the citizens. However, not all firemen are citizens (87.4%). Since as fireman can serve also permanent residents without Latvian citizenship, correct way to compare would be the proportions among all permanent residents. From this perspective, non-ethnic Latvians are slightly under represented. Their proportionality index is 0.75, namely they are less employed for 25 percent.

Table 4.12 Ethnicity and Citizenship of Fireman (2002)

Ethnicity	With special ranks		On Contract Basis		Total	
Latvians	1925	66.8	147	42.5	2072	64.2%
Citizens	2528	87.8	291	84.1	2819	87.4%
Non-Citizens	352	12.2	55	15.9	407	12.6%
Total	2880	100.0	346	100.0	3226	100.0

Police

In the Latvian State Police 3,45 employees or 34% out of total 9547 belong to ethnic minorities. During the Soviet period, working for the police was considered prestigious among Russians and many other minorities, while Latvians again were deterred because of the background checks and language requirements.⁶⁰ Over the last ten years, the

⁶⁰ Statistics show that during the 1980s no more than 35% of all Soviet militia workers who worked on Latvian territory were ethnically Latvian. See (Pabriks et al 2001).

number of ethnic Latvians employed in the police has almost doubled, probably due to circumstances involving Latvian independence and the newly-founded police academy, where instruction takes place in the Latvian language and only citizens may pursue study. However, minorities are still a large portion of the police force, having either retained jobs there or joined the police over the past ten years. From Table 3.12 one can see that the ratio of ethnically Latvian employees in the police is 14% smaller than their ratio in the citizenry.

Table 3.12 Ratio of minorities employed in the State Police and their proportionality index

Ethnic group	Total	Ratio in the workplace (%)	Proportionality index
Latvians	6291	65.8	0.86
Russians	2387	25.0	1.43
Byelorussians	287	3.0	2.3
Ukrainians	210	2.1	5.25
Poles	191	2.0	0.9
Lithuanians	76	0.7	0.77
Others	105	1.1	0.91

At the same time, the ratio of Russians, the largest minority, exceeds the ratio of ethnic Russians who are citizens by 43%. The ratio of Ukrainians and Byelorussians in the Latvian police is also noteworthy. All in all, the minority proportionality index in the police is 1.44. This means that in comparison to their ratio among the population, minorities in the police are hired 44% more. As far as gender perspective, in police are employed 1661 females and 7886 males. It is possible to argue that after independence was achieved there could be observed steady increase of ethnic Latvian employees in the Police.

The Latvian Border Guards are another newly established power unit where minorities are proportionally less employed.

Table 3.13 Employed According to Ethnicity in Latvian Border Guards 2002.

Ethnicity	Number	Percentage
Latvians	2639	80
Russians	428	13
Lithuanians	65	2.0
Estonians	6	0.2
Byelorussians	58	1.8
Poles	82	2.5
Ukrainians	20	0.6

Georgians	1	0.03
Azeri	3	0.09
Bulgarians	1	0.03
Moldavians	1	0.03
Total	3304	100

Latvian Border Guard units were re-established in December 13, 1991, and since 1997 they are under the Ministry of Interior. Proportion of ethnic Russians are slightly smaller than their share among citizens while Poles are proportionally represented. Ukrainians, Lithuanians, and some smaller minority employees are proportionally more represented compared to their share in citizenry. Looking from gender perspective, in Border Guards are employed 954 females and 2350 males.

Prisons Administration

In the Prison Administration and the State Police, one can observe the same ethnic profile that existed during the Soviet regime. All together 2228 persons are employed in the Prison Administration (see Table 3.14). Minority representatives are majority of employees and their share is 63.1 percent.

Table 3.14 Proportionality index of ethnic groups working in the Prison Administration

Ethnic group	Number	Proportion in the workplace (%)	Proportionality index
Latvians	824	36.9	0.48
Russians	1024	45.9	2.63
Byelorussians	124	5.5	4.23
Poles	112	5.0	2.27
Ukrainians	95	4.2	10.5
Others	49	2.1	2.33

The table above shows that in the Prison Administration the proportion of minorities is significantly higher than the proportion of these minorities among the citizenry. At the same time, the proportion of ethnic Latvians is 52% smaller than their proportion among the citizenry. The Ukrainians are the best-represented minority in the Administration. The proportion of Ukrainian employees exceeds this group's proportion among the citizenry by 10 times. The proportion of Poles and Russians is more than 2 times greater and the proportion of Byelorussians is 4 times greater than the corresponding group's share among the citizenry.

The large proportion of minorities in the Prison Administration stems from two causes. First, prior to the reestablishment of Latvia's independence, a very small proportion of ethnic Latvians worked in institutions linked to the Soviet security apparatus. While many Latvians could not pass background checks, such institutions were also not popular as potential employers among Latvians. To a large extent, during the Soviet period the

Russian language determined the selection of potential employees. From a present-day perspective, the Prison Administration is still a fairly attractive place in terms of employee social guarantees and still has not lost its appeal among minorities. At the same time, it has not gained in prestige among ethnic Latvians. It must be noted that the Prison Administration has inherited a large portion of its employees from former Soviet times, as those who did not want to lose their jobs applied for Latvian citizenship. The combined proportionality index in terms of minority representation in the Prison Administration is 2.66. Example of prison administration's ethnic proportions can be used as an example of internal ethnic tolerance. Very few non-ethnic Latvians have been released from this institution after the establishment of independence. Question remains, was it because of genuine ethnic equality or practical fear to lose majority of employees. Seems that both arguments were considered as important. As far as gender is concerned, in Prison administration there are employed 1478 males and 750 females. Prison administration is considered a relatively prestige working place due to state benefits and social guarantees particularly important in the period of economic transition.

Ethnicity in Courts

Over the course of this study, data was also compiled on all existing 35 courts, including 5 regional courts. Altogether 307 judges work in these courts, of which 215 are females and 91 males. 23 judges are of minority descent. Out of these 23 judges, 18 are Russian, 3 are Polish and 2 are Belarusian. Minority judges make up 7.49% of all judges, and the proportionality coefficient in relation to their ratio among the population is 0.31. Here, one must note that this means that there is an entire series of courts where no minority judges are employed. One must note that this disproportion in Latvia's courts has existed since the Soviet period, when ethnic Latvian judges predominated. Thus, one can say that ethnic disproportions in this realm have persisted for a longer time due to relatively conservative professional environment.

Municipal Police in Riga

Since 1990s along with police in municipalities is established municipal police. Data on ethnicity is available only on employment in Riga Municipal police. In 2001 there were employed 668 persons, 421 males and 247 females. Most of employed were ethnic Latvians (See Table 3.15).

Table 3.15 Ethnicity of Employed in Riga Municipal Police 2001.

Ethnicity	Number	Percentage
Latvians	565	84.5
Russians	72	10.8
Lithuanians	5	0.75
Poles	9	1.3
Byelorussians	8	1.2

Ukrainians	4	0.6
Estonians	3	0.4
Jews	2	0.3
Total	668	100

Patterns of ethnic proportionality in surveyed power structures reflect ethnic Latvian dominance in most of newly established institutions while those institutions which continued to exist since the Soviet time continue to employ large number of ethnic minorities, frequently the previous personnel.

Municipal Administration and Local Governments

This sub-chapter will review ethnic representation in Latvia's local governments and administrations. Review starts with information on municipal elections and statistics on Riga city council and departments. Afterwards, the ethnic composition of municipality's population and citizens will be ascertained, and then the weight of minority employees in the administration and representative institutions will be calculated.

Municipal Elections

In the second republic municipal elections took place two times, in 1997 and 2001. Elections are taking place according to the proportional voting system. However, along with party lists also electoral lists are permitted due to the weak institutionalization of parties. Namely, in many municipalities no party organizations exist. It is not the case of the larger towns and Riga. It also must be noted that since 2001, in Riga municipality pro-Russian coalition PCTVL is in the government together with the Social Democrats which traditionally were perceived as party supported by the ethnic Latvians.

Data on ethnic representation among candidates and elected deputies show that proportionally ethnic Latvians and males are over represented in Latvian municipalities. Reviewing 7 largest towns in Latvia, one can see higher minority representation compared to the country in total. If in 1997 in municipalities deputies of minority origin were 6.6% than in 7 largest towns there were 19.7 deputies of minority origin. Municipal elections in 2001 show even larger percentage of minority origin deputies in these towns (20.4%). Slightly increased also share of minority origin individuals in municipalities in total compared to previous elections. In towns, elected deputies of minority origin are more than their share among candidates.

Table 3.16. Ethnic and Gender Proportionality among Candidates and Deputies in Municipal Elections (1997, 2001).

Ethnicity, Gender	1997		2001	
	Cand.	Elected	Cand.	Elected
Latvians	93.7	93.4	92.1	92.4

Russians	3.3	3.9	4.6	4.5
Poles	1.0	0.9	0.9	1.0
Lithuanians	0.9	0.8	1.2	1.0
Byelorussians	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7
Others	0.4	0.2	0.7	0.0
Males	99.5	99.8	56.9	59.7
Females	0.5	0.2	43.1	40.3
Total	11942	4445	13560	4335

Table 3.17 Ethnic and Gender Proportionality among Candidates and Deputies in Municipal Elections (1997, 2001) in 7 Largest Towns.

Ethnicity, Gender	1997		2001	
	Cand.	Elected	Cand.	Elected
Latvians	89.4	80.3	85.3	79.6
Russians	5.9	13.4	9.6	15.5
Lithuanians	0.8	2.1	0.7	0.7
Jews	0.8	1.4	0.6	1.4
Poles	2.0	0.7	1.5	-
Georgians	0.1	0.7	0.2	0.7
Others	1.4	1.1	2.3	2.1
Males	97.6	98.6	76.7	78.9
Females	2.4	1.4	33.3	21.1
Total	1347	142	1655	142

Relatively under represented are females among elected deputies. However, their share in towns increased in 4 years from 1.4% to 21.1%. In total, female share increased drastically in 2001 compared to 1997 from 0.2% to 40.3%.

It is possible to argue that there is a tendency for increase of minority and female presence in municipal elected institutions, and changes are taking place rapidly.

Riga City

Riga city consist of 6 districts. In these districts are employed **284** (without Latgale district) persons, out of whom minority representatives are 7.5 percent but females are 73.3 percent.

Table 3.18 Ethnicity and Gender of Employees in Riga Administration according to Districts

Ethnicity	Centre	Vidzeme	North	Latgale	Kurzeme	Zemgale
Total	33	74	66	N/A	81	50
Males	10	21	22	N/A	24	18

Females	23	53	44	N/A	57	32
Latvians	30	66	55	N/A	75	41
Russians	3	2	9	N/A	3	9
Poles	-	4	-	N/A	1	-
Beloruss.	-	1	1	N/A	2	-
Ukrainians	-	-	-	N/A	-	-
Jews	-	-	1	N/A	-	-
Others	-	1	-	N/A	-	-

Table 3.19 below reflects the ethnic proportions of the populations and citizenry of Latvia's districts and cities.

Table 3.19 Proportions of minority residents and citizens in districts and cities

Districts and Cities	Russians		Byelorussians		Ukrainians		Poles	
	% of total population	% of citizens	% of total population	% of citizens	% of total population	% of citizens	% of total population	% of citizens
Aizkraukle	14.2	7.4	2.5	0.6	1.4	0.2	1.3	0.7
Alūksne	13.4	9.2	0.4	0.1	0.9	0.1	0.3	0.2
Balvi	19.1	14.9	0.6	0.2	0.7	0.1	0.3	0.2
Bauska	11.2	4.2	3.8	0.8	2	0.2	1.5	0.7
Cēsis	9.2	3.7	1.5	0.3	0.9	0.1	1	0.6
Daugavpils	37.8	28.2	6.4	2.2	1.2	0.2	11.7	9.4
City of Daugavpils	54.7	36.3	8.6	2.2	1.7	0.4	3.8	0.2
Gulbene	11.3	7.2	1	0.3	0.8	0.1	0.7	0.5
Jēkabpils	22.4	14.3	2.8	0.6	1.1	0.1	2.3	1.1
Jelgava	18.4	8.1	7.2	1.1	1.8	0.2	2.2	0.9
City of Jelgava	30.3	11.0	6.0	1.1	2.8	0.4	2	0.9
Krāslava	24.1	18.1	17.7	10.9	1	0.1	6.6	4.4
Liepāja	3.2	1.1	0.7	0.2	1	0.1	0.3	0.2
City of Liepāja	33.4	7.0	3.7	0.5	5.3	0.6	1.2	0.8
Limbaži	6.3	3.2	1.1	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.8	0.5
Ludza	35.7	28.1	3.9	2.9	1.2	0.2	1	0.9
Madona	8.7	5.1	1.2	0.4	0.7	0.1	0.5	0.2

Ogre	22.9	14.8	2.8	0.7	1.3	0.2	1.3	0.8
Preiļi	26.8	22.5	1.5	0.5	0.8	0.1	1.7	1.5
Rēzekne	38.8	35.0	1.1	0.3	0.6	0.1	1.2	1.0
City of Rēzekne	49.5	40.0	1.6	0.6	1.2	0.3	2.6	2.4
Rīga	24.3	9.7	4.1	0.8	2.5	0.3	1.7	0.9
City of Rīga	42.9	16.2	4.6	1.0	3.9	0.5	2.0	1.4
Saldus	5.2	2.0	1.4	0.4	1.1	0.2	0.5	0.3
Tukums	7.9	3.4	1.7	0.1	1.2	0.2	0.8	0.5
Valka	12.5	4.1	2.2	0.5	1.3	0.2	0.7	0.4
Ventspils	4.7	1.5	1.0	0.2	1.5	0.2	0.4	0.3
Valmiera	10.8	4.4	2.0	0.5	1.0	0.2	0.8	0.5

In the 23 districts and 5 cities reviewed, in 5 districts and 3 cities the proportion of Russians, Latvia's largest minority, is more than 15% of the citizenry. Of the other ethnic groups only the proportion of Byelorussians exceeds 15% in one locale - the Krāslava District. The ratio of other minorities in the reviewed districts and cities usually does not exceed a few percent. In nine of Latvia's districts the proportion of Russians, Latvia's largest minority, does not exceed 5%. In fourteen districts the proportion of the small minorities does not comprise even 1% of all citizens. As a significant portion of the members of these ethnic groups has not yet acquired Latvian citizenship, the proportion of minorities among the entire population is much larger than among the citizenry. In the 28 districts and cities that were reviewed, the proportion of Russians among the permanent residents exceeds 15% in fifteen districts and cities.

20 out of Latvia's 26 districts responded to the questionnaires concerning the ethnic origin of the members of the district council and administration. Of the cities surveyed, 22 responded. Table 3 contains data concerning the ethnic composition of the district councils and administrations, and Table 3.20 reflects the ethnic composition of city councils and administrations. In comparing these proportions it is essential to remember that only citizens can be elected to local governments, but persons without citizenship theoretically can be employed in the administration. However, in reality, employees without citizenship are rare in the administration.

Table 3.20 Proportions of district council and administration employees by ethnic origin (%), 2001

District	Latvians		Russians		Ukrainians		Byelorussians		Poles		Others	
	Council	Administration	Council	Administration	Council	Administration	Council	Administration	Council	Administration	Council	Administration
Bauska	100	88	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-

Daugavpils	69	58	19	18	4	2	-	10	8	12	-	-
Dobele	10 0	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gulbene	93	94	7	3	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-
Jēkabpils	10 0	96	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Krāslava	96	78	4	11	-	-	-	3	-	8	-	-
Kuldīga	10 0	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Liepāja	90	100	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-
Limbaži	10 0	91	-	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ludza	79	71	21	20	-	7	-	2	-	-	-	-
Ogre	10 0	94	-	-	-	3	-	3	-	-	-	-
Preiļi	10 0	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rēzekne	N A	75	NA	23	NA	2	N A	-	NA	-	NA	-
Rīga	96	93	4	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Saldus	N A	96	NA	2	NA	-	N A	-	NA	-	NA	2
Talsi	N A	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	N A	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Tukums	10 0	90	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	5	-	-
Valka	95	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-
Valmiera	10 0	97	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ventspils	10 0	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

NA= not available

Upon reviewing the ethnic proportions of district administrations and elected district representatives, one can see that, as a whole, Latvians dominate as the absolute majority in the makeup of Latvia's district councils and administrations. Out of twenty districts, in ten district councils only ethnic Latvians were elected. In four of those districts, administrations are mono-ethnically Latvian as well. Overall, six districts have no minority employees in local administration. At the same time, in six districts where only ethnic Latvians have been elected to the councils, the administrations are multiethnic. Upon compiling the data concerning 20 district councils and administrations, one can see that of all elected council representatives 6 percent are minorities. In the administrations, minorities comprise 12 percent.

Thus, one can conclude that:

- First, minorities are proportionately less represented in district councils and administrations than their proportions in these districts, both among permanent residents and citizens.
- Second, based on this data, one cannot say that the elected body influences the ethnic makeup of its administration, as the ratio of minorities represented in the administrations is double that of the ratio of minorities represented in the councils.

One of the primary reasons for the comparatively low representation of minorities in local government councils and administrations is the lack of citizenship and Latvian language knowledge among minorities. Surveys and interviews suggest that language knowledge is a decisive factor determining the ability to obtain employment. At the municipal level, it is likely that selection is oriented toward qualified personnel who know the Latvian language. In the following table it is possible to take a closer look at the ethnic proportions in local government administrations.

Table 3.21 Ethnic origin of city council and administration employees (%).

[illegible]

Tukums	100	98	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Valka	100	90	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Valmiera	100	92	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Ventspils	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

NA=not available

Upon reviewing data from 21 cities, one concludes that, as in the districts, ethnic Latvians dominate elected city councils and administrations. In 8 of the cities surveyed, no minority representatives were elected to the city councils. Two cities supplied no information concerning the ethnic origin of their representatives. No minorities work in two city administrations, while minorities are among the employees of 20 city administrations. Representatives of more than one minority work in most of these city administrations. All in all, minority representatives make up 12.3% in city councils and 11% in administrations. When comparing data on districts and cities, one can say that minority proportions in Latvia's district councils and administrations are more favourable to minorities than in the cities. In comparison to the number of elected deputies, minority representatives are represented significantly more in the district administrations.

In order to have a clearer overview of minority participation in local government and administration, I offer a look at the ethnic composition of each district and city, thereafter calculating the *proportionality index*. Tables 5 and 6 provide calculations of the percentage of minority representatives who are included in the reviewed local government councils and administrations. Cities and nearby districts are combined to provide a composite picture of the given locale.

Table 3.22 Minority representation in composite city and district councils and administrations 2001(%).

District, City	Russians		Byelorussians		Ukrainians		Poles	
	Council	Administration	Council	Administration	Council	Administration	Council	Administration
Aizkraukle*	-	-	-	4	-	-	18	7
Alūksne*	-	4	-	-	-	4	-	-
Balvi*	18	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bauska	9	6	-	-	-	-	4.5	2
Cēsis*	-	12.5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Daugavpils	19	18	-	10	4	2	8	12
City of Daugavpils	27	25	7	-	-	25	-	25
Gulbene	12.5	3	-	-	-	-	-	1.5
Jēkabpils**	-	2	-	-	-	2	-	-
Jelgava*	7	6	-	3	-	1	-	2

Krāslava	15.5	10	-	3	-	-	4.5	8.5
Liepāja	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
City of Liepāja	N	1	N	N	N	N	N	1
Limbaži	-	4.5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ludza	28.5	14.5	-	1	-	3.5	4.5	-
Madona*	-	12	-	2	-	-	-	2
Ogre	9	5	-	1.5	-	2.5	-	-
Preiļi	9	6.5	-	-	-	-	-	3
Rēzekne	NA	23	NA	-	NA	2	NA	-
City of Rēzekne	22	24	-	-	-	-	-	1
Rīga	4	7	-	-	-	-	-	-
Saldus	NA/-	2	NA/-	NA/-	NA/-	NA/-	NA/-	NA/-
Tukums	-	1	-	-	-	2.5	-	2.5
Valka	-	5	-	-	-	-	2.5	-
Ventspils	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Valmiera	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-

*Data submitted only on cities **Data submitted only on districts.

Table 3.23 Proportionality indices in city and district councils* and administrations** 2001 (cities and districts combined, except for the six largest cities)

District, City	Russians		Byelorussians		Ukrainians		Poles	
	Council	Administration	Council	Administration	Council	Administration	Council	Administration
Aizkraukle	-	-	-	1.6/6.6	-	-	13.8	5.3/10
Alūksne	-	0.3/0.4	-	-	-	4/10	-	-
Balvi	1.2	0.2/0.2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bauska	2.1	0.5/1.4	-	-	-	-	6.4	1.3/2.8
Cēsis	-	1.3/3.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Daugavpils	0.7	0.5/0.6	-	1.5/4.5	20	1.6/10	0.8	1/1.2
City of Daugavpils	0.7	0.4/0.7	3.2	-	-	15/63	-	6.5/12
Gulbene	1.7	0.2/0.4	-	-	-	-	-	2.1/3
City of Jelgava	0.6	0.2/0.5	-	0.5/2.7	-	0.3/2.5	-	1/ 2.2
Jēkabpils	-	0.1/0.1	-	-	-	1.8/20	-	-
Krāslava	0.85	0.4/0.5	-	0.1/0.3	-	-	1	1.3/2
Liepāja	6.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
City of Liepāja	NA	0.0/0.1	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	0.8/1.2
Limbaži	-	0.7/1.4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ludza	1	0.4/0.5	-	0.3/0.3	-	2.9/18	5	-
Madona	-	1.3/2.3	-	1.6/5	-	-	-	4/10
Ogre	0.6	0.2/0.3	-	0.5/2.1	-	1.9/13	-	-
Preiļi	0.4	0.2/0.3	-	-	-	-	-	1.7/2

Rēzekne	NA	0.6/0.6	-	-	-	-	-	2.5/3
City of Rēzekne	0.6	0.5/0.6	-	-	-	-	-	0.4/0.4
Rīga	0.4	0.3/0.7	-	-	-	-	-	-
Saldus	NA	0.4/1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tukums	-	0.2/0.3	-	-	-	2/13	-	3.1/5
Valka	-	0.4/1.2	-	-	-	-	6.2	-
Valmiera	-	0.5/1.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ventspils	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

*in relation to citizens **in relation to permanent residents NA=not available

As a whole, minority representation among council members and administrations is proportionately smaller than the presence of these ethnic groups in the local population.

Upon reviewing the ethnic representation proportionality index in the surveyed districts and cities, the first conclusion is that minority representation is very uneven and disproportionate. In other words, in many districts several minorities are not represented in the councils or the administration. At the same time, there are many councils and administrations where a certain minority's representation exceeds by several times the proportion of this ethnic group among the given district's citizenry or even its entire population. This, for instance, is the case in Limbaži, where out of all minorities only Russians are represented in the administration. When comparing representation in the administration with the ratio of this ethnic group in the district and the city in relation to Russians who are Latvian citizens, representation in the administration is 40% greater than the ratio among the district's citizenry. If the proportionality index is calculated in relation to Russians who are permanent residents, representation in the administration is 30% smaller than this group's ratio among the entire population. In the district and city of Madona, when looked at together, three of the four largest minorities are represented. In relation to the sum total of citizens, Russians are represented 2.3 times more, Byelorussians 5 times, and Poles 10 times more than the ratio of these ethnic groups in this specific district. If the relation is calculated based on the sum total of permanent residents instead of citizens, the ratio of ethnic Russians in the local governments is 30% greater, the ratio of Byelorussians is 60% greater and the ratio of Poles is 400% greater.

Concerning the Russian minority's proportionality index in Latvia's districts and cities when looked at together, out of 22 districts and cities, there are 6 administrations where Russians are represented more than their proportion among the citizens of the districts in question. On the other hand, in 16 districts one can observe the opposite situation – Russian representation in the administrations is less than their corresponding ratio. Of the 26 district and city administrations that were reviewed, ethnic Russians do not work in 3 administrations. Concerning Russian minority representation in elected councils, the proportionality index is greater than 1 in 5 councils. This means that representation in the council is greater than the ratio in the concrete district. At the same time, in 8 councils the proportionality index is less than 1. In this case, ethnic Russians are elected to the council less than this group's ratio in the district. Ethnic Russians have not been elected to 10 Councils.

Concerning the other minorities, the situation is as follows: Latvian citizens of Belarusian descent do not work in 18 administrations and have not been elected to 23 councils of the 24 that were reviewed. Their proportionality is less than the ratio of citizens in 2 districts, but the proportionality index is greater than one in 5 districts and cities. In these cases, representation is between 2.1 and 6.6 greater than the ethnic group's ratio in the corresponding local government.

Ukrainian representation is greater than their ratio in 8 administrations. In these local governments Ukrainian representation is from 10 to 63 times greater than the ratio of Latvian citizens of Ukrainian descent in the given local community. Taking into account the rather small size of the Ukrainian minority, Ukrainians are over-represented in all administrations where they are present. No Ukrainians work in 17 local governments. Inf the 25 local governments that were reviewed, an ethnic Ukrainian have been elected only to one (Daugavpils).

In 12 local government administrations, Poles are represented proportionately more than their ratio among the district's citizens. In one district they are represented less, and no ethnic Poles are employed in 13 local governments. Representatives of the Polish ethnic group have been elected to 6 councils, and in 5 of these they are represented more than their ratio among the population of the district.

From the viewpoint of political-administrative representation, representatives of the Polish minority seem to be best integrated into society. In other words, in 12 local governments members of the Polish minority are represented proportionately more than their ratio among the population. The Ukrainians have this sort of representation in 8 locations, the Russians – in 6, and the Byelorussians – in 5 administrations. Considering that numerically the Russians are the largest minority, one can say that this minority has the smallest representation. To a certain extent, this could be explained by the fact that a large part of the representatives of the Polish and Belarusian minorities who live in the rural districts have lived in these municipalities historically for a very long time. On the other hand, the ratio of Russians and Ukrainians rapidly increased only following Latvia's occupation during World War II. However, one must point out that in Latgale, a region that historically has been inhabited by minorities, representation of the Polish minority is very pronounced, while representation of the Russian minority is not. In Latgale there are 5 districts where Polish representation in the local government administration exceeds the ratio of this minority in the district. One of the reasons for this pronounced Polish representation could be the Polish representatives' command of the Latvian language, which is superior to that of the Russian minority's knowledge of Latvian. Russian employment in the administrations does not exceed the ratio of this minority in any of the reviewed districts. In only 2 of Latgale's districts is Russian representation in the elected institutions proportionate or greater than the ratio of Russians among the district's citizens. At the same time, the comparatively small Polish minority has the same situation in 2 of Latgale's districts.

In conclusion, one must note that minority employment in district administrations and elected representation in the councils very often is disproportionate to the corresponding minority's ratio in the given district. In some cases representation is greater than this ratio, but in most cases it is smaller or does not exist at all. Traditionally low minority representation has a negative impact on the consolidation of democracy because local government is closer to the grass roots and should attract the greatest interest from the public. It is also assumed that if the ethnic representation is insufficient of disproportionate mistrust of these institutions will be difficult to overcome.

The Latvian example is not fully in correspondence to these assumptions and theory. It is possible to argue that despite the importance of ethnicity in the political choice this is not the only way to judge the candidate. It can be assumed that ethnic choice plays a larger role in the capital Riga where is the most politicized ethnic environment. In turn, in the smaller municipalities and in the regions decisions are made under the influence of many other factors along ethnicity. Additionally, the alienation of particularly ethnic Russian population from the state authorities is relatively high not only due to recent political developments but rather due to historic experience. Namely, many of these people never experienced representative government and active role of civil society. Therefore, it is relatively irrelevant who is in charge. The political motivation to participate in the politics is relatively low and it is lower among the ethnic minorities compared to ethnic Latvians who frequently are driven by the sentiment to build their new country. It also must be noted that ethnic tensions in the country are present in the elite and party level but it is relatively absent on the private and municipal level. Historic experience of peaceful coexistence, living along each other and stress of the economic hardships under the transition to the market economy are reasons diminishing the role of ethnic identification on the municipal level.

Employment According to Ethnicity in Public and Private Sector.

Ethnic representation in state and local government institutions is one indicator of ethnic integration of multicultural society of Latvia. Another factor is welfare and employment in public and private sphere according to ethnicity of employees. Comparison of social welfare status of ethnic Latvians and ethnic minorities requires a separate and extensive research. Therefore, only the main conclusion of previously done researches on this subject will be addressed here shortly. The most prominent researches on living conditions in Latvia is made by Norwegian social scientist Aadne Aasland. In one of his last researches, Aasland concludes that as far as unemployment rates there is hardly any differences between citizens and non-citizens who are mainly of non ethnic Latvian origin (Aasland, 2002: 63). It is mainly because more than a half of the non-citizens live in the Latvian capital Riga where employment conditions are favourable. The fear of the job loss is frequently associated with the status of citizenship that ethnic origin. Paradoxically, but in Latvia, according to Aadne Aasland the share of poor individuals appear to be higher among citizens than among non-citizens (Aasland 2002: 70). Partly, it can be explained that ethnic minorities as well as non-citizens live more in urban areas while rural parts are mainly inhabited by the ethnic Latvians. The exclusion is Eastern Part of Latvia where ethnic minorities live historically long period. The region is also

economically backward. In the end Aadne Aasland concludes that statistically one can not prove significant difference between citizens and non-citizens as far as social equality, welfare and inclusion.

However, also ethnic representation in the economy and business can be used as an indicator of minority integration in the Latvian economy as well it indicates the relative wealth of population according to ethnicity.

Along with it, it is essential to ascertain whether ethnic origin in some way influences or determines a person's opportunities in business and the job market as a whole. Thus, in this subchapter I will review minority proportions at large in public and private businesses and discuss the significance of ethnic origin in the job market, which includes the want ads. Afterwards, there will be given insight in the employment according to ethnicity in the private sector.

Ethnic Origin and the Job Market

When speaking of potential ethnic representation in the job market, it is essential to ascertain in what way Latvia's population finds new work and whether ethnic origin plays any role in the process. According to newspaper Rīgas balss 24 february 2003 the percentage of ethnic minorities (including non-citizens) among registered unemployed persons has lately decreased until 49% which is slightly more than share of minorities among working age persons. Following these data it is possible to speculate that Latvian ethnic minorities and Soviet era immigrants do not follow the tradition world pattern where immigrant minorities are worse off economically compared to majority.

As far as choices and methods of employment seeking, interesting patterns can be observed in Latvia. According to data from the Baltic Barometer, 58% of minorities and 44% of ethnic Latvians have found work owing to informal connections instead of regular work ads (Rose 2000: 8). Taking into account that friendship and personal relations in Latvia's society are largely based on language, which is a source of identification, one can say that minorities and ethnic Latvians, when they need to find work, often see an opportunity to get a job through informal connections. Taking into account that friendship and close relations often exist within the confines of a group that speaks the same language, in most cases the search for work also takes place within the confines of one ethnic and/or linguistic group. As a result, a whole chain of companies develops in which the composition of the company's personnel is formed depending on ethnic, or in this case, linguistic affiliation. This fact was also confirmed through the interviews that were conducted during the course of the study. One interview subject stated that "many small companies hire people based on the principle of personal acquaintance."

The existing situation demonstrates that work forces are often formed based on a common language. Thus, the language that is used among employees and informal connections together has a strong influence on a person's choice of work. To a certain extent, this statement is also confirmed by the aforementioned Baltic Barometer study.

According to the survey, 73%, i.e., the majority of ethnic Latvians work in a group of employees where the language used at work is Latvian. 48% of persons belonging to minorities work in groups of employees where the language spoken at work is Russian. Only 13% of minority employees and 3% of ethnic Latvians work in places where the language spoken at work is not their native language (Rose 2000: 8).

While many seek and obtain work through informal connections, one must not forget the institutionalised job market, which includes the Unemployment Office. In this regard, in order to discuss the role of discrimination, it is important to ascertain whether want ads directly or indirectly reflect or indicate the desired ethnic origin of potential employees. Each of the 5 divisions of the Riga Unemployment Office has approximately 250-300 want ads on its bulletin board. An examination of these ads reveals that most do not contain any personal indications of an ethnic nature that could be interpreted directly or indirectly as discriminatory. Still, about 1.8% of the ads mentioned the necessary sex or age of the job candidate (Sorokin 2001).

Must be noted that in previous years (early 1990s), some ads contained information stating that the potential candidate must belong to a certain ethnic group or that knowledge of Latvian must be on a native speaker's level. Both indications could be interpreted as discriminatory.

Ethnic Employment in Public Sector

According to information provided by the Ministry of Economics, in 2001 29% of the labour force worked in state enterprises, and the share of GDP generated by these companies was 32%. This chapter examines four of the largest state-owned companies: the Latvian Railway Company, the Latvian Shipping Company,⁶¹ Lattelekom and Latvian Post.

The Latvian Railway Company

The Latvian Railway Company is one of the largest and most important state-controlled Latvian enterprises, which historically has had a multinational work force. The company is very important for the economy and it is growing. During the years under Soviet rule this enterprise was considered militarily important. Thus, security considerations were important in employment, meaning that ethnic Latvians were denied access. Moreover, as an all-Union enterprise controlled from Moscow, the chief language of communication there was Russian, not Latvian. This, to a certain extent, limited the employment of Latvians. The statistics compiled in this report show that the ethnic origin of the employees is still largely determined by the proportions that took shape during the Soviet period, when minority workers dominated in the transport sector.⁶² Out of 15,504

⁶¹ Latvian Shipping Company was privatized at the end of 2002. No newer data exists.

⁶² According to the 1989 census, minorities made up 63% of all persons working in transportation. See Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, **1989.gada tautas skaitīšanas rezultāti Latvija. Statistikas biļetens II daļa**. Riga: Latvijas Valsts statistikas komiteja, 1991, p. 46.

employees working for the Latvian Railway Company as of 1 April 2001, 11,058 or 71.1% were minority employees.

A look at Table 4.24 offers a more precise picture of minority employment. Here it must be mentioned that in contrast to the previous analysis of employees in administration, where calculations were made based on ratios of citizens, the proportionality index in these enterprises will be calculated based on the ethnic origin of Latvia's entire population. Citizenship does not influence the possibility of obtaining employment in a state enterprise.

Table 4.24 The largest ethnic groups employed by the Latvian Railway Company and their proportionality indices, 2001

Ethnic Group	Ratio in the LRC (%)	PI
Latvians	28.9	0.49
Russians	51.6	1.79
Byelorussians	8.4	2.1
Ukrainians	3.7	1.48
Poles	5.0	2.0
Others	2.4	1.7

The table shows that all minorities are well represented among the employees of the Latvian Railway Company. Proportionately, Byelorussians, Poles and Russians are best represented. The combined minority proportionality index for the Latvian Railroad is 1.72. This means that the ratio of minority employees at the Latvian Railway Company in relation to the ratio of the ethnic groups who reside in Latvia is 72% greater. The ratio of ethnic Latvians is 51% smaller.

The Latvian Shipping Company

The Latvian Shipping Company is one the largest state enterprises privatised at the end of 2002. The statistics obtained on Latvian Shipping before the privatization is split into three parts:

- The Latvian Shipping parent company
- The Latvian Shipping subsidiary companies
- The Latvian Shipping fleet

The first two involve primarily administration, while the latter involves ship crews. In 2001, 220 persons worked for the Latvian Shipping parent company, of which 114 employees or 51.8% were ethnically Latvian and the rest were minority employees.

Table 4.25 Ethnic makeup of the Latvian Shipping parent company's employees and their proportionality indexes

Ethnic origin	Ratio	Proportionality index
Latvians	51.8	0.88

Russians	35.9	1.24
Byelorussians	4.0	1.0
Ukrainians	5.0	2.0
Poles	0.9	0.36
Others	2.2	0.68

Upon reviewing the minority proportions of the Latvian Shipping parent company's work force, one can see that all the largest minorities except the Poles are employed proportionately to their share in the population. Or, more often, their ratio in the shipping company's administration exceeds their ratio in Latvia's population. Thus, Russians employed at Latvian Shipping exceed their ratio in Latvia's population by 24%, and the Ukrainians exceed this ratio by twice their share in the population. The proportionality index of minorities employed at the company is 1.15, which means that their ratio in the company is 15% greater than their ratio in society.

Concerning Latvian Shipping subsidiary companies, 116 out of 196 employees, or 59.1% of the work force in these companies, belong to minorities,

Table 4.26 Ethnic origin of the employees of the Latvian Shipping subsidiary companies and their proportionality indexes

Ethnic origin	Ratio	Proportionality index
Latvians	40.9	0.69
Russians	48.4	1.68
Byelorussians	7.1	1.77
Ukrainians	8.1	3.24
Poles	2.0	0.8
Others	1.0	0.71

Upon examining the ethnic origin of the employees of the Latvian Shipping subsidiary companies, one can see that the proportionality coefficient is in favour of the following minorities: Ukrainians, Byelorussians and Russians. The ratio of Russians employed by these companies is 68% greater than this minority's ratio in the Latvian population, the ratio of Ukrainian employees is more than 3 times greater, and the ratio of Byelorussians in these companies exceeds their ratio in society by 77%. The combined minority proportionality index in the Latvian Shipping subsidiary companies is 1.43. This means that the ratio of minorities in these companies exceeds the ratio of these ethnic groups in society by 43%.

As far as the Latvian Shipping fleet is concerned, no data on individual minorities has been obtained due to the fact that new contracts are signed with the seamen every year. Altogether, in 2001 the Latvian Shipping fleet, in which minorities made up about 1,600 or 80% of personnel, employed approximately 2,000 persons. According to these figures, the coefficient of minorities working for the Latvian Shipping fleet is 1.94, if the ratio of minorities among the Latvian population is taken as a basis. In other words, minorities are employed in the fleet 94% more than their ratio among the population.

Lattelekom

The company Lattelekom was established in January 1994 and it is the largest telecommunications company in Latvia. In 2001 the company had 4,399 employees, of which 34% or 1,503 were minorities. Table 16 shows the ratios of different ethnic groups among Lattelekom employees, and also the proportionality indices of the minorities who work in this company.

Table 4.27 Ethnic ratios of Lattelekom employees and proportionality indices

Ethnic origin	Ratio (%)	Proportionality index
Latvians	66.0	1.12
Russians	25.2	0.87
Byelorussians	3.3	0.83
Ukrainians	1.8	0.72
Poles	1.8	0.72
Others	2.0	0.62

The table shows that the ratio of ethnic Latvian employees in the company only slightly exceeds the ratio of Latvians in the entire population, and the ratio of minorities is somewhat smaller. The proportionality index of the minorities employed by Lattelekom is 0.82. This means that minorities at the company are employed 18% less than ethnic Latvians.

Latvian Post

In 2001 the state enterprise Latvian Post had 7,012 employees, of which 1,975 or 28.1% were ethnic minorities.

Table 4.28 Ethnic origin of employees at Latvian Post and proportionality indices

Ethnic origin	Ratio	Proportionality index
Latvians	71.8	1.22
Russians	19.5	0.68
Byelorussians	3.1	0.80
Ukrainians	1.25	0.5
Poles	2.0	0.8
Others	2.3	0.7

The table shows that a fairly large number of persons of minority origin work at the company; although in comparison to their ratio in Latvia's entire population their representation in the company is smaller. The minority employee proportionality index at Latvian Post is 0.68. This means that at this company minority employees are represented 32% less than their presence in society.

Upon reviewing all of the aforementioned company's one must conclude that the situation concerning minority employment is not clear across the board. In companies like the Latvian Railway and Latvian Shipping minority employees dominate, while Lattelekom and Latvian Post employ somewhat more ethnic Latvians. Other types of statistical data also indicate that at state enterprises and former state enterprises that have been recently privatised, minorities are a larger part of the work force than ethnic Latvians (31% and 26%, respectively). Minorities are more often employed in manufacturing, transportation and communications, trade, the army and the police (Rose 2000: 6).

All in all, one can say that minorities are well represented in state enterprises. This relatively large representation partly has to do with the fact that minorities were traditionally employed in these sectors even before the reestablishment of independence. The situation has not changed radically in the last 10 years.

Ethnic Representation in the Private Sector and Latvia's Largest Private Companies

Concerning private companies in Latvia, one could say that most have an ethnically mixed work force, but a significant number are mono-ethnic. Information has been compiled in Table 3.27 regarding 17 companies that are among the 100 largest taxpayers in Latvia.

Table 4.29 Minorities at private companies

Company	Proportion of minority employees (%)	Proportion of minorities in management (5-7 persons)	Is ethnic origin important in the hiring process?	Is ethnic origin important when choosing a job?
1.	35%	50%	Attention is paid to knowledge of Latvian	Potential employees frequently take note of this
2.	0	0	Attention is paid to this because the clientele is mostly mono-ethnic	—
3.	16%	33%	Attention is paid to professionalism and knowledge of	—

			Latvian	
4.	2%	0	-	-
5.	3%	0	-	-
6.	36%	33%	No	Many pay no attention to this
7.	12%	0	Language	No
8.	62%	29%	Professional qualities, personality are important, nationality has no significance	People consider the work and the salary
9.	60%	Very mixed	Nationality has no significance	
10.	26%	0	Language abilities, must know both	Language abilities determine selection and the desire to learn Latvian when working in a Latvian group of employees
11.	0	0	Must know Latvian	People do not choose a workplace where all employees belong to a nationality different than that of the applicant
12.	60%	57%	No attention is paid to nationality	Choices have been made based on the ethnic makeup of the employees
13.	0	0	Must know the language	Profit, work conditions are important

14.	67%	-	-	-
15.	66%	40%	Not taken into account, there have been no conflicts	The company thinks that it is not taken into account, due to unemployment, etc.
16.	39%	33%	Attention is paid to language, not nationality	If the company has 20-30 employees, ethnic origin plays a role. If the company is bigger, it does not.
17.	14%	29%	Must know the language	Potential employees take note of who works there

The table shows the following trends. Out of 17 private companies that are among the 100 largest taxpayers, 5 have a larger than proportionate share of minorities among their employees. Regarding the ethnic origin of the leading 5-7 persons at these companies, there are no completely precise data, but at no less than two of the companies this group is dominated by minorities, and at the rest their ratio is one third or more. The proportion of minorities in the management of one of the companies is larger than the proportion of minorities among all the company's employees.

Ethnic Latvians are dominant among the employees of eight companies, i.e., the ratio of minority employees at these companies is less than 20%. Three companies have no minority employees whatsoever. At the remaining four companies the ratio of minorities among employees is between 20% and 40%. One can conclude that minorities are well represented in private business. To a certain extent, this conclusion is also confirmed by other data, which indicate that at new private companies minorities (37%) are employed somewhat more than ethnic Latvians (29%) (Rose 2000: 5).

Concerning the leading personnel in the companies reviewed, at 8 of the companies minorities are not among the leading 5-7 employees. Seven of the surveyed companies stressed that a good knowledge of Latvian is important for potential employees. One company stated that employees must have a good knowledge of Latvian and Russian. Five companies said that the ethnic origin of potential employees is not important. Instead, there is an overriding interest in professional growth and salaries. During the surveys and interviews, several interlocutors suggested that in small companies with up to

30 employees there is a greater interest among employees and employers concerning language or the ethnic environment, but in larger companies this is less important.

16 out of 17 companies answered the question on whether ethnic origin is important when selecting employees or a work environment. Only one company stated that they take notice of the ethnic origin of potential employees, as “they work in a mono-ethnic environment and members of other ethnic groups would have a hard time feeling at home in this environment.” Such views suggest a high likelihood of direct or indirect discrimination by this company in its hiring practices. Six companies stated that potential employees take interest in what language their potential future colleagues speak and want to know which ethnic groups are already represented among the employees.

The following can be stated based on this limited survey:

- First, there is a significant proportion of minorities in the private sector and there are many companies with mixed staff, including ethnically mixed management in large companies.
- Second, there are also many companies that are mono-ethnic. There are many cases when the job seekers and possibly also employers focus on ethnic origin, which is often closely linked to a person’s native language.
- Third, lack of Latvian language skills is an important factor that hinders the formation of a multiethnic work force and definitely limits job opportunities for part of the population. According to survey data from 2000, only 43% of all citizens whose native language is not Latvian and only 23% of non-citizens whose native language is not Latvian could certainly work in a job requiring Latvian language knowledge.⁶³

Social and Ethnic Integration: Disparities and Solutions

Data on occupational proportionality according to ethnicity suggest that large changes have been taking place in sectors of the state institutions, parliament, ministries, army, and government. These institutions were newly established after the restoration of independence. Their employees or elected persons could be solely Latvian citizens, thus the proportion of ethnic Russians have decreased since the Soviet immigrants could not compete for these positions. The same applies to army created only after independence. Also requirement of knowledge of Latvian could be distinguished as additional factor diminishing non-ethnic Latvian participation. After the restoration of independence, the Latvian language was increasingly used in the state and municipal institutions while many Soviet immigrants have had a poor knowledge of Latvian.

On the other hand there are number of institutions, like Prison department, police, the state enterprises where previously have been employed disproportionately large number of ethnic non-Latvians. Through the period of transition their presence remained large in these institutions. These and other observations suggest that disproportions per se are not

⁶³ See publication by Baltic Social Science Institute. 2001. “On the Way to A Civic Society-2000.” Baltijas Socīālo zinātņu institūts, Naturalizācijas parvalde, Rīga, p. 102.

caused by genuine and widespread discrimination on the ethnic basis. The proportion of applicants of minority origin remains low for the positions in the state institutions. Of course, one can not rule out occasional and discrete discrimination on the ethnic basis while reviewing applications. However, interviews with minority representatives employed in the state service do not provide facts on this. Some individuals of minority origin even argued that they got position because they were ethnic minority origin in order to make the institution look more inclusive. It could be assumed that more possible discrimination according to ethnic origin could be observed in the private sphere where minority origin employers would opt for minority employees while majority dominated companies and businesses would prefer ethnic majority workers. Especially, it could be assumed about relatively small enterprises with monolingual collectives wishing to stay monolingual Russian or Latvian.

As far as the welfare of minority representatives is concerned, these and other researches suggest that except Roma the welfare of individuals of minority origin or non-citizens is comparable to that of Latvian majority. Most of disparities highlighted in the chapter stem from:

- The legacy of the Soviet ethnic and political division of labour;
- The indirect consequences of citizenship and language policy which are not discriminatory per se, but facilitated the initial decrease of non-ethnic Latvian employment in the state institutions;
- Self-segregation on the part of ethnic groups preferring monolingual and mono-ethnic working environment.

Bearing into mind the fact that most of political as well as economic and social divisions stem from fragmented nature of Latvia's society, social integration policy seems to be the only cure to existing situation.

In 1993/94 social scientists were among the first to draw the public attention to the need to construct ethnic policy based on ethnic integration perspective in order to diminish the threat of appearance of two community society split by language, citizenship, political orientation and welfare. In mid-1990s sociological data showed that large migration flows of early 1990s have stopped. It became increasingly clear, that the majority of Soviet era immigrants will remain in Latvia. Thus, linguistic, political, and cultural divisions inherited from the Soviet were present and would continue to be present as well. It was argued that eventually this division would hinder economic, political, cultural development of the country aiming at entrance in NATO and EU. Also international organizations like OSCE as well as the European Commission has recommended in its regular reports to implement activities aiming to promote the cohesive society. There was a genuine fear about ethnic tensions and political instability going hand in hand with interests of some political power groups in the neighboring Russia. In the existing post-Soviet environment where Latvia – Russia tensions were high, the internal ethno-political split could undermine and could be used to undermine political stability in Latvia as well as in whole Baltic Sea region. Examples of post-Soviet Moldova and Caucasus offered a grim perspective.

In March 1998 there was created a working group under the leadership of Cabinet of Ministers in order to draft the new social integration programme. Advisor to the President on Nationality Issues headed the working group. It included representatives of state institutions, academicians, and NGO and minority representatives. In 1999 draft of Integration Programme was presented to public and considerably debated among various social and ethnic groups. Debate was financially supported by international organizations particularly by the UNDP. The representatives of OSCE Mission to Latvia and the European Commission were also consulted during the elaboration of the Integration Programme. In February 2001, the revised Integration Programme was adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers. The goal of the programme was to tackle the alienation between the society and the state as well as promote ethnic integration. Its content includes such aspects of integration policy as:

- Civic participation and Political Integration
- Social and regional Integration of Society
- Education, language and Culture
- Information Sphere.

The major goal of this programme was to unify people living in Latvia as far as their rights, duties, language and values. In other words, the goal of the integration activities was to achieve unipolar society where liberal democratic values would dominate in the value sphere. Latvian language and culture would be a dominant one while respecting the multicultural diversity of society. Vaira Vike-Freiberga, the President of Latvia has proclaimed for number of times that Latvia needs every individual to be included in its society regardless of its ethnic origin. The only requirement is loyalty and knowledge of Latvian.

- According to this goal the major activities of the integration programme is devoted to:
- Facilitate naturalization;
- Increase knowledge of Latvian among non-ethnic Latvians;
- Facilitate dialogue and contacts between persons of diverse ethnicity;
- To prevent the rise of intolerance on the ethnic basis.

In order to implement the programme of social integration a number of institutions have been set up. In November 2000, the Society Integration Department was established under the Ministry of Justice. In October 2001 the Society Integration Foundation was established with the purpose to accumulate and distribute funds aimed to integration purposes.

Finally in 2002, the Ministry of Integration was established and Integration Department was administratively moved to this ministry. Apart of this, ministry is also supervising the work of the Integration Foundation. Along with it must be noted that large amount of activities within the integration sphere continues to be carried out by the National Programme for Latvian Language Training (NPLLT) as well as by the Naturalization Board and Ministry of Education. The largest administrative problem of social and ethnic

integration is broadness of the issue. Almost every ministry and many other state institutions in their daily activities deal with some issues which at least theoretically could have impact on the progress to cohesive society.

It is possible to argue that in the nearest future the largest responsibility as well as the amount of work in the integration sphere would be on the shoulders of the Ministry of Education which has started the reform of minority education system in order to eliminate its segregative nature. Therefore, one can argue that success of integration in Latvia will largely depend on the success of this reform. In a large extent the success or failure of the integration policies is difficult to assess in the short or even medium term. In the period from late 1980s to early 2000 the Latvian society and politics have moved their priorities from restoring the lost independence to shaping the future society of Latvia. Construction of liberal democracy has replaced deconstruction of the Soviet authoritarianism. Despite of set backs, and vivacious discussions concerning the citizenship, language policy, education reforms as well as economic and political reforms in general, the Latvian society managed to prevent ethnic violence and overcome ethnic tensions. Peaceful process was sustained despite of highly difficult political inheritance of foreign occupation, demographic changes, loss of democracy and political independence. Largely it was done due to high motivation of independence movement leaders to hold to democratic principles, their orientation to the Western political system and international organizations. Also the lack of feasible political alternative to the peaceful form of inter-ethnic negotiations were lacking. Any attempts to use force in dealing the Soviet inheritance would facilitate a violent response and exterminate any chances to rebuild democratic and independent Latvia. Liberal democratic principles, stress on individual values and creation of cohesive uni-polar society is distinguished as major challenge of the contemporary ethnic-policy of Latvia.

Conclusion

During the 20th century Latvia's society has undergone repeatedly several political, economic, and social transformations. In the early 20th century, Latvia was uni-polar society regarding the ethnic proportions of inhabitants. Ethnic Latvians constituted an absolute majority of about 70 per cent while other ethnic minorities, like Russians, Poles, Germans, and Jews did not exceed 5 to 10 per cent each. Latvia was then part of the Russian Empire. As far as the administration and power Russians, and Baltic Germans dominated. These power structures had been created by foreign conquerors institutionalizing ethnic inequalities which frequently overlapped with social inequalities. The actual uni-polarity of early 20th century Latvia neither allowed the ethnic Latvian majority to dominate in cultural or linguistic terms nor it provided chances of up-ward mobility to the minority dominated elite of society. Relatively segregated as well as relatively peaceful coexistence of various linguistic and ethnic groups was a characteristic for of this society.

Later, under the Soviet rule bi-polarity and existence of two communities were encouraged as a transition stage to united Soviet society imagined by its ideologists as the Soviet as far as its form and the Russian as far as its content. However, under this regime cohesive society was not reached. Vice versa, once all mighty totalitarian regime broke down at least partly because of its internal ethnic inequalities and discrimination. Two other political models, described in the research are those of inter-war Latvian nation-state and contemporary Latvia. Both attempted to create uni-polar society around the language and values of its core Latvian ethnicity. Both faced various internal and external challenges. The time given to the first was too short but its democratic experience provide a good starting point for the restored Republic of Latvia.

Will the actual characteristics of bi-polar society be turning into uni-polar democratic, cohesive as well as multicultural project of the restored nation-state is difficult to promise. However, its contemporary peaceful management of inter-ethnic relations according to liberal democratic value system and norms, fast economic advancement, and integration in the EU and NATO gives the good chances for those who will bet on this outcome.

After the first World War it was relatively easy for the ethnic Latvians to construct democratic nation-state because of the demographic uni-polarity. The new nation-state was attempted to be built on democratic political principles with the goal to provide equal opportunities to all individuals and ethnic groups. From the ethnic Latvian perspective the proclamation of the nation-state was aimed to realize the rights of self-determination of their nation. Minority rights were part of the political arrangements due to previous historic experiences as well as international demands required in return to the international recognition of the new nation state. Extensive minority rights based on educational and linguistic autonomy and diversity developed its positive as well as its dark sides. In the early years of the republic broad minority rights eased the ethnic tension in the relatively weak state. It also increased minority participation in the politics

of Latvia. Cultural recognition of various ethnicities helped individuals of these minorities to identify with the new state. Economically, previously dominated minorities preserved large share in Latvian economics. On the other hand, the extensive and institutionalization of Latvia's diversity along collective identity lines hindered the establishment of integrated and cohesive society. Each ethnicity organized separate political parties and interest groups attempting to further its respective interests in the parliament. Frequently, identification with separate ethnic group became more important than the common political identity and the affiliation to the Latvian state. In the long term some of minorities could not exercise up-ward mobility in the state institutions because their knowledge of Latvian remained low. After the Nazis came to power in Germany, the Baltic Germans were increasingly used by the German government to further Germany's political interests and influence in the Baltics. Also the Soviet Union searched for influence in Latvia by using left orientated individuals or ethnic Russians.

Therefore, after the coup d'état in 1934, the Latvian authoritarian government attempted to decrease the ethnic division by diminishing minority linguistic rights and educational autonomy, as well as the economic influence of minority owned business. In turn, the role of Latvian continued to increase. The nation-state building and the strengthening of uni-polar society did not succeed because of internal and external factors. Internally the attempt failed because the reforms were done without democratic consent of the society. In turn, the Soviet occupation in 1940 was the most influential external factor halting the consolidation of Latvia's society.

In the following decades of Soviet occupation the governing Soviet authorities drastically changed state institutions and society. Apart of the consequences of the Second World War decreasing the Latvian population, tragedy of holocaust and repatriation of the Baltic German minority resulted in the loss of two traditional and relatively well integrated ethnic minorities. Executions and deportations of the population to the Siberian concentration camps by the Soviets diminished opposition and further decreased the number of population. In turn, Latvia faced continuous influx of mainly Slavic origin Soviet citizens, a process intentionally organized by the Soviet authorities. As a result, over the period of 50 years long Soviet governance, the Latvian society became bi-polar regarding both the use of languages and political loyalties. Hence the society consisted of a permanently decreasing ethnic Latvian majority and a steady increasing ethnic Russian immigrant minority. The Soviet authorities encouraged Russian as lingua franca and consequently the role of previously dominating Latvian continuously diminished. Allowed were only those schools functioning either in Russian with minimum of Latvian language learning or Latvian schools with increasing number of Russian lessons over the decades of occupation.

Linguistically, the Soviet Latvian society could be characterized by asymmetric bilingualism where majority of ethnic Latvians became bilingual while ethnic Russians remained fluent only in Russian. Other ethnic minorities were increasingly Russified due to closure of minority schools. It is possible to argue that small minorities as well as ethnic Latvians faced direct and indirect discrimination on linguistic as well as ethnic basis. This Soviet language policy further alienated ethnic Latvian society from the

Soviet institutions and system as well as from the ethnic Russians. Consequently the society became politically polarized with ethnic Latvians longing for the restoration of the nation-state and independence while majority of ethnic Russian settlers did not share the experience of independent, non-Soviet statehood and therefore did not share the views dominant among Latvians. Linguistic suppression, cultural misrecognition, economic discrimination, and political repressions by the totalitarian Soviet regime were at the core of the Latvian independence movement in the mid-1980s. As soon as the regime got weaker it faced increased ethnic tensions.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and after the restoration of independence, the new Latvian authorities faced a linguistically and politically highly divided society. Attempts were made to restore the country's uni-polar nature similar to that of the inter-war period. Initially broad linguistic and educational rights were granted to all minorities, namely to ethnic Russians as well as to ethnic minorities discriminated in the Soviet time. On the one hand this policy fastly created loyalty of small minorities. On the other hand the restoration of Latvia's inter-war citizenship diminished the political influence of Soviet immigrant population. For both humanitarian reasons and for the pragmatic political considerations, the Soviet immigrant population was granted permanent residence as well as extensive cultural, economic and social rights identical to those of citizens. However, in order to obtain citizenship, individuals who arrived to Latvia after 1940 had to naturalize. Role of the Latvian language was increased aiming at its restoration as lingua franca on the Latvian territory. Because of political changes in the early 1990s and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Latvia, extensive migration processes took place in Latvia once more in its history. As a consequence a relatively large part of ethnic Russians and former Soviet immigrants left Latvia. The remaining part faced difficulties of adaptation to the new system and shared with Latvians an intensive transition period to market economy, liberal democracy and integration in the European Union and NATO.

From the perspective of ethnic equality, governance and participation, the share of ethnic Russians in the newly established state institutions has drastically decreased compared to the Soviet period. Also the share of elected individuals of minority origin decreased. However, it must be reminded that no comparison of elected bodies of Latvia and the Soviet Union can be done due to lack of free elections in the Soviet system.

Compared to the inter-war period the current party system of Latvia is not officially based on ethnic belonging. Namely there are no ethnic minority parties. However, data show that there are existing political divisions overlapping with ethnic divisions. Ethnic Russians tend to vote for more left and Russia oriented political forces while ethnic Latvians more orientate to right wing pro EU and NATO parties. However, it has to be noted that the parties that present the majority of the Russian speaking voters do have in their leadership well known ethnic Latvians. The example of the Latvian party system suggests that the simple inclusion of one ethnicity representatives in the electoral list of a party orientated mainly to another ethnicity does not automatically increase the ethnic mix of voters for the respective parties.

As far as the local municipalities are concerned, it is true that some of them do not have any ethnic Russian in the local government while having relatively large share of ethnic Russian residents. It must be noted that disproportionality did not appear because of any political intension. It was rather a result of concrete party struggle in the municipality. The interesting fact is that as a rule ethnic disproportions in the governing bodies do not increase ethnic tension. Perhaps, because there is a historic tradition inherited still from the Tsar as well as Soviet time. The tradition of general alienation from governing bodies. If people does not feel represented by the government it is indifferent to them who is representing them. Tradition of civil society is particularly weak among the ethnic Russians. Data show that the wish for political participation is among the last priorities of these people at least during the period of transition. Additionally, there is not a strong political tradition to claim that interests of individuals having the same ethnic origin can only be represented by the politicians of their ethnic origin.

However, the ethnic division in the politics very much correspond to political division of society. Namely, ethnic Russians tend to evaluate the Soviet past in much more positive terms compared to ethnic Latvians who orientate to the West and the inter-war political example. Until harmonization of historic memories and political views in general will not take the place, it is difficult to imagine political coalitions consisting of parties of contrary views. The existing situation is further complicated by the continuous ambitions of number of political forces in the neighbouring Russia. Political and linguistic bi-polarity is used to gain support to the Russian geopolitical aims of dominance in the region. Thus, bi-polarity can serve as a source of internal as well as international tension diminishing security and stability in the region.

Under the existing circumstances, the Latvian authorities are not willing to further insitutionalization of society build along collective identification criteria. Namely, more individualistic, liberal democratic approach is increasingly favoured allowing to include in the elite individuals on the basis of their personal merits and attitudes instead of consensus approach based on ethnic proportionality, fragmentation and pilarization of society.

As far as the increse of ethnic representation in the state and municipal authorities is concerned, politics of social and ethnic integration is favoured. The existing division and bi-polarity stems from:

- Curriculum differences and segregation of schools according to Russian and Latvian languages mainly;
- Division of society in citizens and non-citizens while naturalization is proceeding in a low speed;
- Continuous weak knowledge of Latvian among the minority population;
- Linguistically and politically divided mass media functioning in Russian and Latvian, providing customer with frequently contrary values and information facilitating the ethnic and political tensions;
- Regional differences as far as the degree and reasons of ethnic fragmentation is concerned.

Taking into account the actual bi-polarity and fragmentation of the Latvian society, the Latvian authorities created social integration programme as well as number of institutions including the Ministry of Integration in order to facilitate the development of uni-polar and cohesive society. As the main goals of the program can be distinguished the facilitation of naturalization of the former Soviet immigrants, increase of the Latvian language knowledge and dialogue and social contacts between the individuals of various ethnicities. Since the implementation of the programme started only in early 2000s it is early to judge about its success. Moreover, it is possible to distinguish key areas where some improvements should be seen. This research offers several general recommendations aimed to increase the cohesion of society and avoid possible political and ethnic tensions.

In the educational sphere serious attempts must be continued to increase the quality of bilingual education in the minority schools. It would include better training of teachers as far as methodology of teaching as well as their own knowledge of Latvian. Otherwise, the frequent situation is that minority teachers speak worse Latvian than their younger pupils.

Above mentioned would include state sponsored production of modern and qualitative textbooks available also to non-ethnic Latvian parents if needed.

As far as the education of social sciences and history is concerned many ethnic and political divisions stem from relatively weak knowledge of Latvian history and lack of the teaching materials dealing with the issues of the restoration of independence. Therefore, a state sponsored programme aimed on social sciences and history teaching and material creation should be provided. The goal should be socialization of new generation regardless of ethnic origin loyal to democratic Latvia.

In the sphere of naturalization courses of Latvian and constitution should be continued to offer to the potential candidates to citizenship. It would be advisable that successful candidates who attended courses would be repaid fee of learning.

It also would be advisable that children born to non-citizens in Latvia after 1991 would be automatically granted citizenship. Up to today, it is automatic but parents should register them as citizens. This requirement should be lifted. From almost 19.000 children less than 2000 are registered until 2004. Many parents ignore this chance to take care of their children future. In turn, the amendments should be that if parents do not wish their children to obtain Latvian citizenship they should inform about this authorities. Since the relative passivity of the parents it could be assumed that it would not be done. Therefore, children would easily become citizens of Latvia regardless of their parent opinions.

In the sphere of naturalization, the harmonization of exams in the school and naturalization exams should be continued. At this moment, those who pass the Latvian language exam in the school should not pass the language exam in the naturalization office. The similar procedure should be applied to the exam of history.

As far as the rights of non-citizens are concerned. There have been earlier recommendations to grant non-citizens the right to participate in municipal elections. Must be noted that this recommendation stem from the similar example in Estonia where pasive rights of vote were given to Estonian non-citizens. This research does not support the extension of municipal voting rights to non-citizens because of the differences between the Estonian and Latvian situations and because of general goal of naturalization.

In Estonia, in the early 1990s pasive voting rights in the municipal level were granted to former Soviet era immigrants in order not to fail with elections in the Estonian North East. In this region non-citizens constituted about 95 per cent of all inhabitants and without their participation the local border town Narva would remain without the government. Additionally, In early 1990 in Narva were present political opinions of irridentism similar to that of Transdnestier region in Moldova. Granting of passive voting rights and particularly the following economic advancement cemented the Estonian rule in the border region with Russia. No separatist tendencies have been observed in this region later.

In the Latvian case the majority of non-citizens are situated in Riga. There is no municipality where non-citizens numerically dominate. Also separatism tendencies have not been observed because there is simply no geographic place for them.

As far as the teaching of the Latvian language is concerned. It is highly important to improve the training of teachers of Latvian in the state universities.

Additionally, the Latvian language should be promoted as the most natural mean of communication and conversation in the society. It could be achieved by promoting of positive image of Latvian as modern and easy language of communication. This aspect has also a psychological and historic origin. Many ethnic Latvians are not used to hear broken or imperfect Latvian spoken by individuals of other ethnicities. In the Soviet time speaking Latvian to Russian would be considered ofending. Because of these reasons, the public spread of Latvian as a conversation language between minority representatives and ethnic Latvians is undermined.

Sociological surveys continue to show a large interest of non-ethnic Latvians to learn Latvian. Therefore, additional possibilities should be offered. For instance, the Employment Office should consider to offer language training along with professional re-education of unemployed. Language skills continue to be the largest hindrance to good employment chances to many non-ethnic Latvians.

As far as media is concerned, there is a necessity to continue to search for means how to provide the same information and value system to public regardless of their native tongue. Regional media should be approached separately.

As far as the integration of society in the regions, it must be devoted additional efforts to create sub-programmes of integration meeting the needs of particular region, either linguistic, social, or political.

It could be well assumed that number of minority representatives employed in the state and municipal institutions will increase if their language knowledge will continue to improve, if naturalization will continue and hiring procedures will be free of direct or indirect discrimination. Taking this into account, this research would recommend to increase the openness of hiring procedures in the state and municipal institutions as well as in the private sphere.

This research would not support positive discrimination measures providing additional bonus to minority origin applicants. Exception could be endemically discriminated minorities like Roma. Taking into account the relatively recent history of Soviet Russification, positive discrimination towards, for instance the ethnic Russians would possibly increase the ethnic tension from the side of ethnic Latvians. Moreover, the open hiring procedures and increasing linguistic and political integration and consolidation of the population under liberal democratic rules would allow to reach increased ethnic equality in the governance.

As far as the election rules are concerned. In Latvia the elections take place according to proportional system traditionally favouring minority representatives. Also in this sphere there could be foreseen the increase of number of individuals of minority origin due to ongoing naturalization process. Additionally, it should be noted that for the sake of cohesive society political fragmentation or polarization should not be encouraged as counter productive to the current process of social integration.

Increasing number of parties in Latvia are searching for additional voters. Ethnic polarization, fragmentation or polarization traditionally gave a stable number of ethnic voters but there are limits to their increase. The current Latvian parties are increasingly looking for the voters across the ethnic lines as well as towards non-citizens as eventual voters in the Latvian politics. Therefore, it could be expected that ethnic and political moderation can take place in the Latvian party environment in the future.

Additionally, in the institutional sphere the position of the Ministry of Integration could be re-considered. Integration monitoring and facilitation includes coordination of various activities in various ministries. Therefore, to have successful coordination it would be good to find the way how the Minister of Integration could get better access to the Prime Minister's office where the coordination of the ministry work takes place.

Research on ethnic equality, governance and political stability in Latvia suggests that ethnic inequality, absence of human rights and upward mobility for individuals of various ethnic groups can be a potential source of ethnic tension and political instability.

It is true that almost never in its history Latvian society did not experience ethnic violence. If the argument of Roger Brubaker (Brubaker 1996) is correct, ethnic violence

tend to reappear in the regions it has been observed historically. From this perspective Latvia stands a good chance to avoid the ethnic violence and perhaps even tensions also in the future. Despite of this, it is still a question why there were no ethnic violence in Latvia during the period of independence movement in 1980s while many other regions of former Soviet Union had it?

A possible answer is hidden in the nature and tactics of the popular movement as well as in the different priorities of ethnic Latvians and ethnic Russians. Ethnic Latvians wanted return to independent statehood and their linguistic rights while majority of ethnic Russians were more concerned with economic prospects offered by the reforms. Interests did not overlap and did not contradict, therefore, a peaceful transition was possible. Later, after the restoration of independence one can observe slow increase of ethnic and linguistic claims on the side of ethnic Russians. In turn, the ethnic Latvians started to prioritize other aspects of transition in the late 1990s and early 2000s. There could be increased tension concerning the education reform but under the circumstances where Latvia is the EU member state, the democratic process is granted and the influence of Russia diminishes a compromise can be found. In total, political experience of Latvia shows that elite is in general compromise orientated which is an additional factor for ethnic and political peacefulness.

In all transition processes which Latvia went through in the 20th century, ethnic affiliations were strong. They frequently assisted popular mobilization but they did not take over other political considerations like democracy, equality, and freedom. Also the group identification factor in the Latvian society does not facilitate the differentiation and violence as an outcome. The major collective identity characteristic is language. If person is speaking Latvian, he/she is a Latvian undifferentiable from others. No different color, race or appearance is characteristic to the current Latvian multicultural society. One of the largest possible sources of ethnic tension lies in the nature of contemporary ethnic policy. Because of the change of the regime and political goals the previously existed public borders of linguistic space has been challenged. There is no doubt that uni-polar project of the state requires the strengthening and increase the public space of the Latvian language use. Ultimately it could be done on the expense of Russian. How far Russians will be willing to step back from previously held positions to accommodate the Latvian claims?

It seems the increasingly, the limits of the Latvian language and culture expansion in the public sphere will be set by the international standards in those spheres where they exist. The previous experience of transition shows that despite of objections and tough political discussions the Latvian authorities are not going to disobey the international norms and rules. The liberal democratic legislation and the Western political orientation is considered the necessary basis for independent statehood guaranteed by the international support. Citizenship and language legislation of 1990s closely monitored and finally accepted by the OSCE, and the EU proves this assumption. As far as the ethnic and linguistic claims, the ethnic Russian part has left mainly one choice, to agree on the same international standards or face a misunderstanding of the West whose integral part Latvia has become.

What are the limits of group rights of minorities? The procedure offered by political scientist Bhikhu Parekh (Joppke et al 1999: 16) could be considered to accommodate various claims.

As 'probationary citizens', according to Parekh, immigrants have a 'moral right' to preserve their difference. If the immigrant way of life offends the 'operative public values' of a society, Parekh envisions a procedure where accommodation of claims is reached. It is done according to the following formula. If the practice is central to the minority's way of life, it should be allowed; if it violates a core value of the majority society, and is not important to the minority, it is to be abandoned. If a practice is dear to the minority but also violates a core value of society, it should be abandoned too. Joppke and Lukas (Joppke et al 1999:16) concludes that correspondance to such approach could be found in liberal democratic states, for instance the Great Britain.

I would like to argue that the outcome of Latvian ethnopolitical legislation and practice reflects extensive use of liberal democratic values and practices. Therefore, the Latvian current ethnopolitical development could be regarded as being in accordance with Parekh vision of conflict solution.

It can be argued that regardless of the actual situation or history the current political regime bears the ultimate responsibility for tendencies of ethnic exclusion and political stability. At the same time the research on Latvia confirms that ethnicity is not pathological. Liberal democratic principles of individualistic values and choices of collective identities offers a way how to accommodate individuals of various ethnic origins by pleasing majority and protecting minorities. Common principles of democracy and independent statehood as a guarantee of sustainable economic and political development should serve as uniting factor for historically fragmented Latvian population.

Latvia's return to political independence in spite of the fate put upon the Baltic region by its powerful neighbours has determinated the differences and priorities of transition in the region. At least in two perspectives the Baltic transition is different from that of many other post-socialist countries. First, it had to be seen through the prism nation-state reconstruction and the following need for cohesive society where the centre of power changes from Moscow to Riga. Second it implies changing political loyalties. Third, the independence and transition changed existing roles and positions of ethnic groups. Latvians once again represent a majority with very slowly fading away psychology of minority while the ethnic Russians try to accommodate with the position of ethnic minority instead of previously dominant position. This situation is partly comperable with the history of Baltic Germans after 1918. Historic experience show that the role in assisting this accomodation of the former countries of origin should not be under estimated. There are reasons to hope that after Latvia's integration into the EU and NATO Russia will chose to improve the relations with Latvia instead of calculating the means to influence its former subject.

The restoration of independent statehood offers a genuine chance for Latvia's population to amend the historic tradition to live embedded in ones own ethnic, cultural, and linguistic community while being ruled from outside or distance. There is a chance to create a society consisting of individuals of various ethnicities who live together with each other instead of living along each other like did their predecessors for centuries.

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