

Host land or homeland?: Civic-cultural identity and banal integration in Latvia

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Abstract

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This dissertation challenges conventional approaches in the study of minority integration by looking at the spaces in which integration occurs, rather than at instances of conflict. It develops a framework that considers banal manifestations of social integration in quotidian and national life. Concentrating on the case study of Russian-speakers and ethnic titulars in Latvia, it compares top-down, elite-led discourse on integration with lived interethnic interactions. In many conventional analyses, Latvia is considered a divided society wherein ethnic, linguistic, and cultural cleavages separate ethnic Latvians from the proportionally large population of Russian-speakers “left behind” when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. This population has been analyzed through immigrant, diaspora, and fifth column frameworks that suggest Russian speakers remain outside of the Latvian state and nation, if not always civically, then certainly culturally. This dissertation argues the frameworks and indicators traditionally used to measure integration do not sufficiently consider integration in everyday experiences, and therefore overlook much of the integration that is occurring on the ground. Rather, banality – or the lived experiences that fade into the hum of everyday life – is an indicator of significant interpersonal and socio-national integration that incorporates

minorities as active members of the nation.

The dissertation considers relevant theories in the study of integration, nationalism, and identity to create frameworks of interpersonal and socio-national banal integration. These capture both person-to-person experiences and minority engagement with society and the state. The dissertation then links the theoretical concept with three critical elements in the Latvian integration debate. First, it notes the disconnect between top-down integration priorities and ground-level realities. Second, it examines banal integration in daily life, looking at interpersonal interactions, public spaces, and civic connections with the state. Finally, the dissertation considers the ways in which minorities engage as embedded members of the Latvian nation, looking at participation in cultural events and national holidays.

Theoretically, this dissertation highlights the necessity of prioritizing banal, quotidian experiences over elite-led discourse in the study of integration. Methodologically, it accomplishes this goal through a multi-method approach, using extant document summary and analysis, medium-n survey data, and qualitative ethnography. Empirically, the dissertation pushes back against a narrative of conflict in Latvian and Russian-speaker relations. Indeed, it argues that not only is Latvian society far less divided than it discursively appears, in many cases, minorities see themselves as active members of the *Latvian* cultural and civic nation, not tangential to it. This dissertation is a dedicated analysis of the Latvian case, but contributes more broadly to the literature on post-Soviet diaspora and migration studies, integration studies, and questions of nationalism and identity in the modern global context.

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Dedication

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Chapter 1 | Introduction

In July of 2013, the streets of Riga were filled with singers, dancers, folklorists, musicians, and artists in a colorful display of woolen skirts, linen farm shirts, beaded crowns, and sprays of fresh flowers. The capital of Latvia was alive with an energy that fills the city and the national airwaves every few years, as Latvians from across the country and the world come together in the Nationwide Latvian Song and Dance Celebration that literally gives voice to the nation. Overlooking the excitement, the bustle of performers, and the eager audience stands Milda, the proud woman atop the Monument of Freedom, holding together the three stars representing the historic regions of the Latvian nation.

Less than two months prior, directly across the Daugava River, another crowd wearing military medals and Russian flags gathered at the Soviet-era Victory Monument, an imposing obelisk whose five-pointed stars symbolize the gains of the Red Army in World War II. On May 9, thousands of Latvia's Russian speakers congregate in the park around the monument to commemorate the veterans of the war and the Soviet victory with red and yellow flowers, picnic baskets, and concerts. But for many in Latvia, this celebration is a cruel reminder of a violent Soviet occupation that followed WWII, not an occasion to gather in revelry.

These events are neither comparable by scale, nor by theme, nor by participants. Yet images from both form a heady visual contrast for a population that is often described as deeply divided. Numerous academic pieces, media segments, and political speeches have highlighted the ethnic and political animosity that appears to underline the relationship between titular Latvians and Russian-speakers, who make up nearly a quarter of the Latvian population. Incompatible interpretations of history and precarious geopolitics drive the narrative that Latvia is a state divided, if not physically, then certainly ethno-culturally.

But is this the state of ethnic relations in Latvia? Does ethnicity form an insurmountable

cultural cleavage or can Latvia become a socially and culturally integrated society? Is one integrated by virtue of countable measures like passport, school type, or neighborhood? Or, perhaps by preferences in language, media, friends? Or even more nebulous – emotion, a “feeling” of belonging? When does an ethnic minority become a living part of the nation, and not simply a group that lives among it?

Integration in the Baltic context has received a deluge of academic attention from the early post-Soviet days, where researchers have considered, reconsidered, and analyzed the complicated factors that impact society. Discourse on integration clearly names a need to mitigate a conflictual situation between distinct groups defined by any number of boundaries, e.g. ethnicity, language, loyalty, or civic participation. These are indicators politicians, journalists, and researchers can spot and cite. They are distinct and discrete measures, and they make it possible to count integration and its many perceived failures.

Yet what of the opposite? What happens when integration is silent; when it merges into the buzz of everyday life? Silence should not be mistaken for non-existence; indeed, integration is arguably most effective when it cannot be easily measured. In fading into the background of people’s quotidian existence, the concept becomes unnoticeable and irrelevant. Is this not the true goal of integration? – not to count ethnic population density and language usage, but to create a social setting where individuals of differing, complex identity live in relative harmony. A state of integration is one in which friendships are not based on ethnicity, but on mutual interests; where neighbors are friendly because of personality, not linguistic preferences. This banal version of integration is one that often exists, even in contentious settings. Though high-level discourse may emphasize tensions among groups, banal integration reflects a social cohesion among individuals that is so much a part of everyday life it is barely quantifiable; it goes unnoticed by the society which plays it out. Banal integration does not suggest that other elements of the integration question are not valid or relevant; rather, the concept seeks to fill in the gaps between the elite-led, top-down conceptions of

integration – e.g. policy, language, ethnicity and citizenship controversies – to home in on horizontal interactions that exist at the ground level.

How does a host land become a homeland? When can one become an “us” and not a “them”? Does this transition happen with a conscious choice, or can it happen quietly, where even the individual is unaware of crossing nebulous boundaries? The purpose of this dissertation is not to answer these questions outright, but to delve deeper into the quiet social processes of identity, nationalism, and integration to which they point.

Baltic background

While the questions of integration are germane to all societies with diverse populations, this dissertation concentrates on the questions in the empirical case of Latvia, a small country that sits on a large number of literal and figurative borders. Latvia can be described in myriad ways. Its geographic position has shifted dramatically over the course of the last century, although its borders have changed very little. Latvia was once in the center of Europe, then the Western edge of Soviet Union, now the Eastern flank of the European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organization, though it sees itself among the nations of the north. It is at a cultural, political and military crossroads, yet its strategic positioning is often overlooked for its population size of just under 2 million. While it might prefer to be known as “the land that sings”¹, Latvia is more frequently referenced as a post-Soviet state, a moniker that is not all together appealing. Indeed, Latvia’s history as an independent nation is longer than the history of its illegal incorporation into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, but the effects of the 48-year occupation have had lasting impacts even for a nation that led the resistance against the Soviet Union through the power of song.²

Though not particularly catchy, “the post-Soviet land that sings” is not an inaccurate way to

¹ Latvia’s official travel slogan starting in 2014 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2014).

² See Šmidchens, 2014.

describe the country for the purposes of this dissertation, which deals not only with the social legacy of Soviet policies, but also with the efforts to rebuild the Latvian civic-cultural nation. During the Soviet period, Latvia's demography shifted considerably. Latvians made up 75% of the country during its interwar independence (1918-1940); by the end of the Cold War, ethnic Latvians were just barely 50% of Latvia's population, endangering its existence as a *nation-state*. The difference was largely made up by an influx in Russian-speakers, Soviet-era migrants who had filled the industrial and cultural needs of the Union with their labor and linguistic influence. When Latvia regained its independence in the Singing Revolution³, its legal basis was the pre-World War II state, but more than a quarter of the population of this renewed state had no connection to its previous iteration – in fact, many could not even speak its language.

In the quarter century that has followed the 1990 renewed declaration of independence, the questions of what to do with this post-Soviet Russian-speaking population and how to rebuild a Latvian nation-state have been at the forefront of political discussions, media outrage, and social scholarship. By many accounts, Latvia remains a divided society to this day, with Russian speakers and Latvians living in and dealing with separate media spheres, social circles, and political interests. Indeed, Russian speakers are often described as being on the periphery of society, some without citizenship, and without access to the civic state or the cultural nation. On the other hand, efforts to institutionally incorporate Russian-speakers into Latvian society have been decried as assimilationist attempts to purge Latvia of minority cultures. Russian-speaking politicians and media outlets (often with murky ties to the Russian Federation) stoke the dual narratives of oppression and assimilation. Latvian politicians and media outlets, for their part, are quick to tout the precarious position of the Latvian language

³ The Singing Revolution refers to events in the Baltic States between 1987 and 1991 that led to the restoration of independence from the Soviet Union. The term comes from the extensive use of both folk and protest songs used in demonstrations and events throughout the period (see Šmidchens, 2014).

and culture, and the threat of extinction by Russian hands. In the wake of the 2014 annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, the fear that a high population of Russian speakers may be cause for similar action in the south-eastern region of Latgale further served to paint Russian speakers as an unintegrated, potential 5th column in international analysis.

Driving questions

In an attempt to address the daunting integration question in the Latvian case, politicians and bureaucrats have spent innumerable hours drafting, debating and implementing successful and unsuccessful social integration policies. These policies form the basis of most discussion on integration in Latvia, but do not always consider the day-to-day experiences of common individuals. Certainly, ethnic identity, elite action/inaction, and concerning figures regarding demographics and political participation are significant to the study of Baltic integration; however, an over-emphasis on elites, policies, and narrow statistics cannot fully capture the progress of integration on the ground. Indeed, decisively negative conclusions regarding the overall status of integration in the Baltics, and Latvia in particular, choke out empirics that also suggest more progress. These examples exist when analyzing individuals and horizontal interactions, but are often lost in the overwhelming focus on vertical discord in ethnic media, politics, and censuses. Researchers must be wary of overgeneralizing when it comes to measuring something as personal, changing and difficult to operationalize as one's identity, sense of national belonging, and how they relate to neighbors and friends. This prompts the first driving theoretical question of this dissertation: How do vertical integration policies compare with horizontal realities? In other words, what are top-down policies on integration and are they reflective of society's needs and realities? Can horizontal integration at the ground level force bottom-up change?

The second driving question aims to uncover the invisible: Is integration an absence of conflict, and if so, what is that absence? The message that Latvia is a divided society is consistent, but it is incongruous with lived reality. Latvians and Russian-speakers share the

same cafés, grocery stores, libraries – but these are not sites of division or conflict. How can social scientists describe this invisible reality? How does one identify markers of quotidian integration? This line of inquiry drives the creation of the scale of interpersonal and socio-national banal integration.

The third driving question deals with balance between a peacefully integrated society and a nationally integrated society. The preservation of Latvian national culture is at the heart of Latvian state building and integration policy. Perhaps for this reason, the Latvian Ministry of Culture is one of the leading government institutions from which integration policy flows. The rationale for highlighting the titular culture through state-sponsored mechanisms is commonplace among most, if not all, nation-states. For all the multiculturalism and effects of globalization, states promote national narratives that tend to be based on the titular ethnic or cultural group. This, importantly, is not necessarily mutually exclusive with protection of minority cultures, though the ability to hold hyphenated identities can be a marker of successful integration. This prompts the third driving question of this dissertation: Can minorities see cultural and civic nationalism as banal? Or alternatively, can banal integration be national?

Significance of the study

This dissertation addresses theoretical concepts common to modern societies. A globalized world does not lack for multiculturalism, interethnicity, and multifaceted identity construction. These are both personal and social characteristics that have served to bring societies together, as well as tear them violently apart. Group boundaries and hostilities have been the focus of innumerable academic treatises. Ethnic violence has plagued most corners of the earth for reasons that have ultimately been engineered and constructed, but are rarely, if ever, inherent. Yet seeing – and studying – conflict is much easier than understanding its absence.

This work attempts to broaden the theoretical questions of nationalism, identity and

integration in the space where differences exist, but daily life supersedes conflict. In other words, seeing the forest instead of the trees. I argue that cleavages in societies may well fade when the spotlight is turned away from the points of fracture and more generally illuminates the broader functioning of society. While this dissertation looks to differences in ethno-linguistic identity as the primary fault line, the theoretical construction of banal integration may well hold true for other social rifts.

Latvia straddles military, economic, and social borders between Transatlantic structures and the Russia Federation. Culturally, it links to the accomplishments of both East and West, while struggling to maintain a distinct Latvianness in a globalized world. When it emerged from the USSR in the 1990s, Latvia had to balance the goals of rebuilding a both national and civic state while managing opposing pressure from every angle. This precarious equilibrium between the primacy of the national and the civic is becoming more hotly debated across the world in the second decade of the new millennium. Lessons from Latvian integration successes and failures will be critical as nationalism rises in an even more interconnected world. In this dissertation, I engage not only with the questions of nationalism in this case, but contribute more broadly to integration studies, as well as the literature on post-Soviet diaspora and migration studies. This work also pushes the envelope as to how the concepts of civic and cultural engagement with the state and nation can be understood.

Empirically, my case study of Latvia is significant to the growing field of Baltic Sea regional studies and the ever-changing state of the (post-)post-Soviet field. It offers original data and new perspectives on a topic of critical importance to the Latvian state, and demands a reevaluation of how the questions of integration are addressed politically and socially. A significant benefit of area studies is the ability to approach a case from multiple disciplinary viewpoints. I have aimed to develop broad expertise in the study of Latvia to avoid falling into disciplinary silos and allow insights from many angles shape my study and conclusions.

Methodologically, this dissertation joins the vanguard of prioritizing the everyday in social science scholarship. This means moving the discussion away from rigid research plans and embracing the undefined. It is possible to study integration by looking solely at parliamentary transcripts or media discourse; this has been done and it has produced valid and compelling results. It remains just as necessary to look beyond these quantifiable measures of integration and dive into on-the-ground realities – fieldwork that does not always fit into defined periods or codes, fieldwork that is confusing and requires an understanding of place and people to make sense of it. While all good science is hard science, understanding a people and place is not something that can be done from afar or by a practitioner with only surface-level knowledge. Through this dissertation, I contribute to the validity of in-depth area studies and messy ethnography as a pushback against a big data trend, as well as produce insights relevant beyond the empirical focus of Latvia.

Host land or homeland?

Where did these questions come from? The answer finds its roots in my own experiences. In 2013, I was part of the flower-laden crowd of the Nationwide Latvian Song and Dance Festival. I came as a folk dance performer, not from a country village, but from across an ocean. The baggage my group and I carried consisted of more than our training gear and handmade folk costumes; we came primarily as second and third-generation Latvian refugees, whose parents or grandparents had fled World War II and the advancing Red Army to eventually settle in the United States. For us, coming to the song and dance festival was our way of “being Latvian,” of proving that we belonged to this Latvian nation, even though we were generations removed from Latvian soil.

I had just finished writing my master’s thesis on integration trends in education and citizenship, so I was not uneducated on the questions of nationhood, patriotism, identity, or belonging. I knew that there were many Russian-speakers who were becoming citizens or learning the Latvian language. I had even had colleagues who worked for the Latvian Ministry

of Foreign Affairs, but conducted office chitchat in Russian. That Russian-speakers could have civic markers of being Latvian did not surprise me. That one could be a Russian speaker and a patriot did not surprise me. What did surprise me – and all good dissertations come from some surprise – was seeing a mid-aged folk dance group preparing for the Latvian Song and Dance Celebration, in Latvian regional folk costumes, speaking Russian to one another. This was something more than knowing the language or respecting sovereignty or even engaging civically with Latvia. This was being Latvian while also being something else. Like me, and yet not at all.

Both my group and this Russian-speaking group were part of a 15,000-dancer performance. We performed for love of dance, but also for love of something unique to Latvia. We declared ourselves as part of the Latvian nation in our dress, our footwork, and the innumerable hours of rehearsal and travel we had committed to take part in this celebration. My group coming from the US was welcomed as part of the Latvian diaspora, as something separate from the “real” Latvian groups. This group of Russian speakers seemingly blended in with “real” Latvians. This is not illogical – they were from Latvia. But it nagged at me, that when the topic of the Latvian nation is broached, it is likely that my group of Americans will more quickly be labeled “Latvian” than Russian-speakers who have lived in Latvia their whole lives. One could easily count the number of diaspora groups, but how many Russian-speakers were part of the festival – not as minorities, but as Latvians? They are the invisible gap. Their integration cannot be seen; it is overwritten by perceptions of ethnic, linguistic, or cultural conflict, and yet they are there. Dancing alongside us.

In this dissertation, I argue that social science must expand its measures of integration to include not only countable indicators, but also the quotidian, the unnoticed, the banal. In low-conflict societies, individuals’ quotidian actions can tell a far more comprehensive story of national civic-cultural identity and integration than the political posturing of elites. Russian-speakers’ identification with Latvia and Russia as “host” and “home” lands is far subtler than

it appears in news reports. While the security concerns touted by Baltic elites and the human rights concerns voiced by Russian elites have some basis in reality, there is a striking lack of attention paid to the flip side: the diminished value of these concerns in the banalities of interethnic life and national celebration.

Overview of the dissertation structure

This dissertation looks at the progression of civic and cultural integration in Latvia from three perspectives: the vertical, the horizontal, and the national. Before addressing my own findings, in Chapter 2 I begin with a critical review of the literature and the development of my theoretical structure. This chapter offers a review of themes and theories that encompass the multidisciplinary nature of social integration studies. I offer a critique of the state of the field as it relates specifically to post-Soviet Russian speakers, and challenge the tendency to group Russian speakers in diasporic or immigrant frameworks that serve to artificially delineate them from titular populations. Rather, I argue this prevents a comprehensive understanding of Russian-speaker experiences as rooted members of post-Soviet societies. In the last section of this chapter, I develop my conceptual framework of interpersonal and socio-national banal integration, which shifts the focus of integration studies from the methodological counting of traditional indicators to a holistic approach that elevates the role individual participation in daily social life.

Chapter 3 takes the conceptual framework of banal integration and moves towards the methodological challenges of capturing the “every day” in social science. I embrace a mixed-methods approach, combining ethnography and a medium-n survey to form the basis of my original contributions to the field. This is supplemented by extant document summary and analysis. I consider the case study of Latvia, the local settings in which my fieldwork was conducted and the methodological constraints of such research, including my reflexive perspective as a researcher.

In Chapter 4, I address the vertical development of integration strategies and policies as introduced by politicians, influenced by external pressures, and adopted from the bottom up. This chapter highlights the consistent disconnect between the way integration is discussed in media, academic, and policy circles, and the way it is experienced in real life. I look at how “Latvian” is defined, the historical legacies and modern phenomena that impact policy development, and the ways in which the top-down discussion conflicts with bottom-up movement. My argument here is that while the state has struggled to develop a comprehensive “integration strategy” that meets subjective criteria, as a rule-of-law democracy, it has provided basic structures that allow individuals to effectively integrate by choice. The rhetoric surrounding the integration question demands that integration “happens”, but overlooks the ways in which it simply “is”.

Chapter 5 offers a deeper look at how integration manifests itself banally in daily life. I examine the gap between the way integration is discussed colloquially and the way integration is lived colloquially, considering interpersonal interactions, public spaces, and the significant insignificance of language. Banality in vertical civic associations between ethnic minorities and state is reengaged, looking at survey and citizenship data that suggests a progressive move towards defining Latvia as a home state rather than a host state for minorities. I argue that contrary to inflammatory rhetoric, banal integration is prevalent at various levels of salience throughout the cases and locations I study.

Zooming out, Chapter 6 considers the banal ways in which minorities integrate on a national cultural scale. I engage the intersection of ecstatic nationalism and banal integration, arguing that minorities may recognize their participation in national (patriotic) events not as conscious efforts to integrate, but as banal elements of their lives. This chapter recalls the vignette presented in this introduction, looking at minority participation in what is arguably the most “national” Latvian event: The Song and Dance Celebration. The experiences of youth and pedagogues in minority and mixed educational environments are primary examples. The

chapter concludes with an overview of banality in national and ethnically divisive commemoration events.

To conclude, I return to my initial questions and assumptions about the status of integration both socially in Latvia and more broadly in the academy. After a review of my findings and their significance to the field, I consider the ways in which my theoretical framework of banal integration may map onto other empirical cases, as well as its salience beyond questions of ethnicity and nationalism. Inevitably, the need for future research exists, and I offer suggestions into both the academic and policy directions this might take. Bringing this work full circle, I revisit my own experiences and what it means to be Latvian in its myriad forms.

A note on terminology

“What’s in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.” So goes the classic quote from Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*. The play has no lack of reinterpretations; not least is its recent reincarnation in the Latvian cinema. *Romeo n’ Джульетта* (Martinsons, 2015) transposes the familial hatred of the Capulets and Montagues onto Latvia’s ethnic landscape, placing two star-crossed lovers from Latvian and Russian families in the midst of ethnic strife and hatred.

The tragedy of the canonical play is that, often, names do matter; names identify differences, real or perceived, and give tangibility to a concept. This is overwhelmingly true in the case of Latvian integration rhetoric and framing, but also has trickle-down effects in academia. The complexity of groupist language is discussed further in Chapter 2 and a more complex political debate on what it means to be “Latvian” and “Russian” appears in Chapters 4 and 5, but it is necessary to note some of the terminological choices I have made at the outset.

Ethnicity and identity, as this dissertation argues, is exceedingly complex; in the Latvian case, this is further complicated by a contentious history. The national integration debate is primarily constructed between ethnic Latvians and non-titulars, the majority of whom speak

Russian in the home as their first language. For this reason, this population has been dubbed “the Russian speaking population”. This designation is unwieldy, and lumps together the pre-war Russian minority, post-Soviet population (those who migrated to Latvia during the Soviet period), their descendants (born in Latvia, but in Russian-speaking homes), and new Russian immigrants. It is not necessarily a marker of Russian ethnicity, as many Russian speakers are of other Slavic or Central Asian heritage, or perhaps identify as “Soviet”. It is also not a marker of linguistic fluency. Indeed, most “Russian speakers” are also “Latvian speakers,” while many “Latvian speakers” are also “Russian speakers.” However, to avoid complex linguistic gymnastics, I join with convention and use “Russian speaker” or “(Russian-speaking) minority” throughout this dissertation. I do so with the above caveats in mind, recognizing that this is an oversimplification that is necessary for the sake of brevity.

I avoid using definitive articles (e.g. “the Latvians”, “the Russian speakers”, “the Russians”) to reference populations because this implies a collective group identity (see Brubaker, 2004, 2006). When discussing relationships to Latvia, I tend to preface references to ethnic Latvians with “ethnic” or “titular”, while using Latvian grammatical construction of the genitive (Latvia’s/of Latvia) to denote civic, rather than ethnic, relationships. “Latvian” (e.g. “the Latvian government”) is also primarily used as a civic designation, and not an attempt to ethnicize the population or state structures.

As is apparent throughout the dissertation, linguistic frames remain sources of debate. As a social scientist in the constructivist paradigm, I, like many others, recognize that these choices have an impact on how we talk about topics like integration. By flagging my linguistic choices here, I hope to clarify my position that the question itself is impossibly murky, rather than use these choices to imply boundaries or borders.

Chapter 2 | Studying integration

Social science is the study of societies and human interaction. It builds from a number of disciplines, each with its own cannon of theories and methodologies. This division of labor allows for the manageable study of the complex notion of society, but runs the risk of isolating thinking into siloed disciplinary fields. A considerable advantage in the field of international studies is a concentrated area focus that allows for disciplinary crossover when considering empirical problems and their potential solutions. The question of integration studies does not lack for complexity, but rather draws upon issues debated by political scientists, sociologists, economists, anthropologists, and the like, overlapping so much as to be inseparable. In this chapter, I explore the definitions of integration. I then offer a review of the themes with which social integration studies deal (here: identity, ethnicity, and nationalism), as well as a critique of the literature that deals more closely with the case study at hand, i.e. Russian-speakers in the post-Soviet space. This review of the literature intends to highlight the state of the field, identify areas of weakness and consider further developments. I argue that current frameworks tend to preference groupist, elite-led, top-down integration discourse, but fail to capture the necessary nuance of integration in everyday life. Indeed, the analytical discourse itself has the potential to create problems that impact empirical solutions. Lastly, the goal of this chapter is to develop an alternative framework of “banal integration” that elevates the role of the quotidian in integration studies. This framework draws from the concepts developed by Michal Billig (banal nationalism) and Rogers Brubaker (everyday ethnicity), but shifts the subject matter from nationalism and ethnicity to integration.

What is integration & who does it?

Though integration refers to any number of concepts – from technology to management and beyond – this dissertation is concerned with the issue of social integration. The definition of social integration is fluid, and conceived of by many different sectors, academics, organizations, policy makers, etc., over the course of many centuries (see Muižnieks, 2010,

for a history of the concept). It can be addressed from the perspective of any number of disciplines – geography (e.g. integrated versus segregated neighborhoods), economics (e.g. access to labor markets), sociology (e.g. diversified identities), politics (e.g. democratic civil society), anthropology (e.g. cultural development). Indeed, each of these present an important piece of the picture of social integration. Over the course of this dissertation, I will concentrate on themes most relevant to the fields of anthropology, political science and sociology.

For a basic definition of the term, I turn to the United Nations Report on the World Summit for Social Development, which offers a necessarily broad understanding of the concept:

“Social integration, or the capacity of people to live together with full respect for the dignity of each individual, the common good, pluralism and diversity, non-violence and solidarity, as well as their ability to participate in social, cultural, economic and political life, encompasses all aspects of social development and all policies” (United Nations, 1995).

This definition of social integration is not limited by top-down conceptions stressing the connection between the state and society, but also highlights the importance of peaceful interpersonal interaction. Importantly, integration is not defined solely by civic measures (e.g. citizenship) or by group identity (e.g. ethnicity); rather, it provokes the question of “who” is doing the integrating. Here, the UN alludes to individual agency; it references the “capacity of people” to coexist with respect for “each individual.” This is significant because it does not fall into a trap of accidental groupism, but instead leaves room for individuals to make integrative choices without being inherent representatives of a “type” of people. The actions of individuals – not groups – form the foundation of my framework of banal integration (developed later in this chapter).

Still, much of the literature on integration does rely on the endemic problem of groupist language. This seems only natural; it is difficult to fully extract the concept of groups from social integration, particularly when considering national societies. Social integration is a

concept precisely because humans and societies are not homogenous; differences exist – be they ethnic, linguistic, cultural, physical, political, socio-economic, etc. – causing the “need” for integration. This dissertation deals primarily with the categories of ethnicity, language and civic-cultural identity as analytical boundaries between populations. While I join constructivists in contesting the notion of bounded identity, it is important to recognize that groups or group concepts do form the basis of much of what is written on integration. Brubaker has critiqued the “tendency to treat ethnic groups, nations and races as substantial entities to which interests and agency can be attributed ... as if they were homogenous, externally bounded groups, even unitary collective actors with common purposes” (2004, p. 8). However, this tendency is persistent, both academically and politically. I have found it conceptually useful to employ Brubaker’s (2006) distinction between groups and categories in my own work. That is, categories provide a basis for the potential formation of groups, but membership in a particular category does not imply group solidarity (e.g. the difference between “Hungarians” [category] and “*the* Hungarians” [group]). Though the analytical distinction is necessary, the practical use of groups in integration rhetoric is widespread. Indeed, Brubaker argues, “social science scholarship has long been closely entwined with nationalist politics,” which has served to support national assumptions of group boundedness and homogeneity (2006, p. 10). Groupism may be on theoretically shaky ground, but it is employed to great effect by elites when building the nation and eliciting conflict.





Any number global tragedies have occurred on the basis of pitting one group against another (Chiro & McCauley, 2006). Indeed, even in previously-integrated societies, inter-group violence can erupt when boundaries between groups are made salient by elite actors (e.g. the Balkan conflicts).⁴ Even in less extreme examples, intergroup relationships exist on a continuum between segregation and integration. According to Romann and Weingrod, “the degree of segregation in everyday life [can] measure the extent of the structural division

⁴ See Bringa, 1995; Bringa et al., 2001; Ekmanis, 2014.

within a given society,” as is illustrated in their study of Arabs and Jews “living together separately” in post-1967 Jerusalem (1991, pp. 29–30).

Berry’s model of immigrant acculturation is one of the leading frameworks for understanding the concept of integration (2001). He provides four categories of acculturation: 1) integration: maintaining immigrant culture in tandem with becoming involved in host culture; 2) assimilation: relinquishing immigrant culture in favor of host culture; 3) separation: maintaining immigrant culture and rejecting host culture; 4) marginalization: non-participation in either immigrant culture or host culture (see Fig. 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Berry’s acculturation model

	Maintain immigrant (heritage) culture	Reject immigrant (heritage) culture
Accept host (local) culture	 <p>Integration</p>	 <p>Assimilation</p>
Reject host (local) culture	 <p>Separation</p>	 <p>Marginalization</p>

Based on: Berry, 2001.

Berry’s matrix focuses on the strategies of individuals to accept or reject the host culture while maintaining or rejecting heritage culture. When considering societies instead of individuals, these terms translate into 1) multiculturalism; 2) melting pot; 3) segregation; 4) exclusion (Sam & Berry, 2006). The strategies employed by both the individual and the society dictate the resulting context of acculturation. If integration is the intended norm, the actions of the individual and the depth of structural division can determine both the need and/or desire for integration, as well as the ability to integrate. This is part of the “two-way street of mutual accommodation” that is key to integration (Muižnieks, 2010); it requires effort on the

part of minorities to integrate, as well as the structural promotion of such integration.

As Berry argues, integration must not be confused with either separation nor assimilation. To support integration, a state must inherently support multiculturalism to some degree. Inter-group relationships are critical to an integrated society; "While acknowledging the reality of cultural diversity, integration does not entail the parallel, separate coexistence of ethnocultural groups, but rather their interaction" (Muižnieks, 2010, p. 29). In most cases, the basis of interaction is the founding society; in the case of nation-states, the national titular culture (e.g. German in Germany, French in France, Russian in Russia) forms the foundation of the civic-cultural society into which minority populations integrate; "promoting integration into a common societal culture has been seen as essential to social equality and political cohesion in modern states" (Kymlicka, 2001, pp. 20–21). Importantly, the conditions of integration neither denies the existence or maintenance of minority culture, nor does it prevent minority influences on the society in question. Rather, the national basis serves as the zero point from which minorities can choose to separate, integrate or assimilate. This is also the guiding principle in the Latvian case:

"Social integration – inclusion of all people living in Latvia into society notwithstanding of their national belonging and self-identification. The common basis for the integration [sic] is the Latvian language, the feeling of belonging to the State of Latvia and its democratic values, respect for Latvia's unique cultural space and development of a shared social memory. Social integration promotes civil participation focused on the democratic and rational solution of social problems, as well as strengthens mutual cooperation and trust between individuals. At the same time, integration means openness and respect of the constituent nation for the uniqueness of national minorities and their right to maintain their distinctive identity. The task of integration is also to promote the inclusion of immigrants into society, providing motivating means and opportunities to engage in a cohesive society" (Ministry of Culture, 2012, p. 7).

Muižnieks argues, "it is only through participation that minorities, immigrants and other members of society develop a sense of belonging to a broader national community. This sense of belonging has traditionally been seen as a core aim of integration" (Muižnieks, 2010, p. 30). Civically, this necessitates "generating 'vertical' ties between the government and the governed" (Weiner, 1965 in Muižnieks, 2010, p. 17). Interpersonally, it requires interpersonal

contact and mutual participation (Allport, 1954). For Putnam, horizontal civic engagement is a key element of social capital formation (1994, pp. 173–174). Vertical networks and strong interpersonal networks — even when dense — are less important than crosscutting horizontal networks (1994, p. 175). Bridging social capital (inclusive and externally focused) and associational life is vital to a state’s healthy civic life; the same can be said for a state’s integrational progress. Putnam argues, “social capital makes us smarter, healthier, safer, richer, and better able to govern a just and stable democracy” (2000, p. 290). Crosscutting horizontal networks are similarly critical to “making social integration work”.

Social integration is by no means a simple or straightforward task, neither is its definition or guiding frameworks. Indeed, it cannot stand alone, but is rather influenced by much larger concepts that have informed the construction of states and societies for centuries. Identity, ethnicity and nationalism are critical concepts that have spurred debate and theory-building across the social sciences. These theories are intrinsic to the questions of national social integration with which this dissertation deals.

Theories of identity, ethnicity & nationalism

Research concerning the integration of minority populations into a state necessitates a brief discussion of nationalism, identity, and ethnicity. These fields, approached from the perspective of many disciplines, provide the theoretical backing for many studies of minority integration, which inherently engages questions of loyalty to the home or host state, individual and group identity, and mechanisms of embedding one’s self in a society. However, these theories are not unique to the study of integration. They are necessarily broad, but often unwieldy in the face of the nuances required to study a specific population. Indeed, even the tendency to name populations is to group them (Brubaker, 2006), which becomes problematic when balancing between the study of nations, the study of individual psychology, and the study of acculturation strategies. These theories are also products of the contexts in which they were written, and often lack self-reflection. While recognizing the impact of these theoretical frameworks on integration, social scientists are called to be wary of their pitfalls,

which range from the presumption of group boundedness to an “orientalist” perspective of the East.

Integration in the context of this dissertation concerns “Russian-speakers” in Latvia. Within its very premise, it is impossible to remove the “nation” from integration. Indeed, naming “Russian-speakers” and “Latvia” already points to two national ideologies and the deep presence of the national question in the field of integration studies. Studies of nationalism have largely been shaped by time, both in terms of historical epochs and the global context in which they were written. Ethnicity and nation as primordial, inherent and unchanging has largely been relegated to the past in social science paradigms (though arguably less so in political discourse). Barth’s work on the porous quality of boundaries and the transmutability of ethnicity and identity denies the presumption that individuals are intrinsically bound by ethnicity; rather, even ethnicity can be developed contextually and separate from primordial characteristics (Barth & Universitetet i Bergen, 1969). More recently, Hale argues that the delineation between the primordialist and constructivists paradigms has been largely miscast; rather, construction of ethnic identity has been largely acknowledged, though so too has the stability of ethnic identities once created (2004, pp. 461–462).

Broadly-accepted theories of nationalism emphasize the concept’s roots in modernity and the constructed nature of ethnicity and nationhood (Anderson, 2006; Gellner, 1983; Tilly, 1990; Weber, 1976). As Gellner argues, modern changes to political structures and economic developments created a need for an industrialized, educated populace, which led to the formation of a high national culture; “a modern industrial state can only function with a mobile, literate, culturally standardized interchangeable population” (1983, p. 44). Anderson credits the formation of the nation to perceived social ties that unite strangers, linked directly to the rise of vernacular languages, print-capitalism and the decline of pre-Enlightenment thinking; “it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (2006, p. 15). For Tilly (1990), European states were formed from a base of

relative cultural homogeneity and the ability to create bureaucratic structures to mobilize resources to war and solidify the territories of the nation. Weber (1976) considers the expansion of roads and the dissemination of centralized systems as critical to reshaping the local affinities of peasants into unified Frenchmen. In the theoretical conceptions of modernists, external modern pressures led to the centralization of the institutions of education, culture, industry, and the military, thus uniting previously disparate groups under the banner of a collective nation.

Such theorists point to the conditions of modernity which brought about the elite-led construction of the nation. This was a critique of the primordial argument that nations are both ancient and natural, i.e. that humans are drawn to distinguish groups between blood ties, language, territory, etc. (Smith, 1999). Edging out a path between hardliners on both the primordialist and modernist front, proponent of ethnonationalist theory, Smith argues that while *nationalism* is modern, *nations* have premodern origins. *Ethnies* or “named human populations with shared ancestry myths, histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory, and a sense of solidarity” inform the creation of the “ethnic nation” (1986, p. 32). Elites in modern nation-states have often used the myth of ethnic group boundedness to form the territorial and emotional bounds of the nation. While ethnic groupism may not theoretically not an effective mechanism for determining an individual’s identity or nationalist tendencies, ethnic myths still play significant roles in many states constructing internal and external boundaries.⁵

Nationalism as an elite construction in the modern period is the fundamentally accepted theoretical foundation of the nation; the question of whether the nation can remove itself from its “ethnic ties” and embrace a civic notion that divorces love of the state from ethnic elitism has also been debated (Beiner, 1999, p. 4; Kymlicka, 1999, p. 132). Beiner questions whether a distinction between civic and ethnic nationalism can exist, or rather, if civic

⁵ For example, consider Brazil’s “race tribunals” (Garcia-Navarro, 2016) and Chapter 4 for a discussion of *tautība* in Latvia.

nationalism is “(unwarranted) liberal self-congratulation” (1999, p. 4). Indeed, much of the basis of integration depends on the ability for nation-states to also be multicultural. Without the transmutation of the ethno-national to the civic, the primary conditions for integration (which, as Berry argues, is a multicultural society) cannot be met and integration cannot occur. Scholars have argued that national identity formation is distinct from ethnic nationalism; rather, the way in which the nation is framed can support both ethnic and civic constructions of state identity (Giuliano, 2000; Kymlicka, 1999; Shulman, 2002).

In tandem with the discussion of ethnicity and nationalism comes the question of an individual’s identity. Defining who one is can be a complex and, in some ways, unproductive enterprise. Individuals enhance or mute certain aspects of their multi-faceted identities depending on social situations in which they find themselves (Tajfel, 1978). Laitin similarly argues that individuals maintain personal and social identities, which assume primordial and constructed qualities, respectively; he argues that these identities are part of a Janus-faced structure, in which each can exist without impinging on the other (1998, pp. 20–21).

According to Laitin,

“Social identities are distinct from personal identities and they are built from available categories that both divide and unite people in a society. People have *inter alia* national identities, racial identities, religious identities, and hometown identities. Yet issues of social identity become part of public discourse only when the categories themselves become fuzzy” (1998, p. 16).

This points to another problem in integration literature; while it is theoretically acknowledged that individuals adjust their identity to match their surroundings, there is a strong analytical desire to group and categorize individuals based on one or two identity indicators (e.g. language, ethnicity). Yet these categories are not only theoretically “fuzzy,” they often do not demand mutual exclusivity (e.g. it is possible to be both Hungarian and Romanian, or to speak both Latvian and Russian). Much of the literature on integration places such importance on defining who people *are* in order to measure how a “group” acts, but if who an individual is remains consistently variable and the “group” to which they belong is not bounded or

homogenous, then analysis runs a deep risk of reinforcing groupist concepts that are distanced from reality.⁶

(Re)emergent nationalism

The emergence of nationalism and the foundation of the nation state as the underpinning of modern society is largely the result of Western thinkers and elites. Yet the West has more attempted to distance itself from the concept of “nationalism,” which has been reframed to describe not the foundations of a nation-state, but its (exclusionary) boundaries. Nationalism has been set in contrast to liberal Western ideologies that preferences freedom of individuals over devotion to the state. However, Brubaker (1996) argues that Europe again contends with the reemergent nation state, particularly in the reshaping of the post-communist space.

Academic biases are clear in the way that nationalism is discussed in regarding post-Soviet Eastern/Central Europe. The presumed rise of “ethnonationalism” in the Baltic countries (largely manifested in citizenship and language requirements for non-titulars) has been brutally critiqued by Western social scientists as unabashedly discriminatory (Kolstø, 1999; Linz & Stepan, 1996; G. Smith, 1996), while similar policies west of the Iron Curtain have existed throughout the 20th century with no such damning scrutiny (Ekmanis, 2013; Howard, 2009). Indeed, it is problematic that the reemerging and new democracies of the post-Soviet state have been decried as “nationalist”, when their model stemmed from the status quo of the interwar period of independence – a nationalist model developed and promoted by the West. (Indeed, in some cases, these Eastern European interwar nations were arguably more multicultural than their Western examples.) The “endemic condition” of the nation state remains accepted in the West, but demonized in the Western view of the East (Billig, 1995, p. 6; J. King, 2001).

⁶ For example, in social scientific surveys, question phrasing can have a pronounced effect on identifying and solidifying individual and “group” identities. A tangible example of this concept can be seen in the difference between opinion polling that would suggest Russian-speakers in Eastern Latvia harbor separatist sentiments and the decisive lack of separatist action among most Russian-speakers.

Billig (1995) and King (2001) are unapologetic in their critique of the Western attitudes that have consistently “othered” nationalism as a symptom of the East, as inherently conflictual and bloody, and as something that remains far from the acceptable displays of “patriotism” in the established nations of the West. Billig critiques the embeddedness of national ideology in the social sciences; “Social scientists often assume that it is natural that speakers of the same language should seek their own political identity,” yet do not recognize this as the very definition of nationalism (1995, p. 13). Like Brubaker’s critique of the reinforcement of groupism through the use of groupist language, Billig argues that self-reflection must challenge academics’ assumption of nationalism in their own lives, not only in extreme versions elsewhere. Indeed, “When talking of ‘our’ beliefs, one might prefer other different words such as ‘patriotism’, ‘loyalty’, or ‘societal identification.’ Such terms banish the word ‘nation’, and with it the spectre of nationalism, at least in regard to ‘our’ attachments and identities” (Billig, 1995, p. 16).

Billig’s critique of the “do as I say, not as I do” Western attitude toward nationalism is particularly relevant to the way in which post-Soviet European nations sought to rebuild their states, and the mechanisms they used to develop integration policies (see Chapter 4). Criticism of policies designed to reestablish the ethno-cultural base of the population clashed with the evolved liberal guidance of Western states, who did not face such demographic concerns. As King points out, Eastern European nations “returning to Europe” were critiqued for embracing “ethnic nationalism” instead of the more appropriate “civic nationalism” (2001). This has resulted in EU-imposed standards that, somewhat ironically, have led to Eastern European state structures that in some cases are far more hospitable to minority ethnicities than their Western examples. However, external conditions are now changing the Western view of nation and nationalism.

The current state of the world exhibits tendencies toward extreme nationalist revival in the West. Brexit, the U.S. and French presidential races of 2016-17, and reactions to the Syrian

refugee crisis are just some of the global events sparking a reversion to right-wing, isolationist nationalism. This new reality demands a reevaluation not only of Western perceptions of Eastern “nationalism”, but deeper self-reflection of nationalism and multiculturalism. Researchers must contend with an increasingly complex construction of what it means to be a nation, going beyond territory and ethnicity to encompass individual identities and multifaceted ethnicities. In the West, this comes as external pressures (migration and globalism) rock the taken-for-granted national foundation of European nation-states. In the case of Baltic minority populations, external pressures have already forced a consideration of maintaining a balance between the promotion of the titular ethnicity, and the acknowledgement of multiculturalism. The challenges of forming and maintaining the nation, as well as the various elements of civic, cultural and ethnic identity are the complicated underpinnings of integration, not only in practice, but also in social scientific analysis.

Balancing theory & reality: Russian-speaker integration

The challenges of incorporating a minority population into a titular society is not unique to Latvia or the Baltic countries. Most states deal with multicultural populations; how these populations live together in peace or conflict is the line of inquiry for many social science studies. This is becoming ever-more prevalent, particularly in Europe, as multi-culturalism increasingly refers not to the blend of diverse, yet local, cultures (e.g. Hungarians in Romania), but as migrants come increasingly from “beyond the pale” of European titular nations. Russian-speakers in Latvia and post-Soviet successor countries are not unknown immigrants. Yet, the language of immigrant acculturation and diaspora are often used to frame the population and their (non)incorporation into their host state. These populations occupy a precarious place in what Brubaker terms a “triadic nexus”: immigrant population caught between a nationalizing (host) state and an external national homeland that advocates on behalf of its “compatriots” (Brubaker, 1995, 1996).⁷ These frames are geared toward the categories of immigrant and diaspora, which, though on paper may share similarities with

⁷ A politically constructed, not necessarily ethnographic, homeland.

post-Soviet Russian-speakers, cannot fully capture the complexity of the population. The categories of immigrant and diaspora have distinct and critical meaning, but neither maps to the experiences and contexts of post-Soviet Russian-speakers and the national states in which they now live.

While analytically useful to conceptualize the non-titular population and make the study of such populations comparable to other empirical examples, the frameworks of immigrant and diaspora to describe the post-Soviet Russian-speaker condition are fraught with the pitfalls of groupism. Brubaker himself later argues, "Starting with groups, one is led to ask what groups want, demand, or aspire toward; how they think of themselves and others; how they act in relation to other groups. One is led almost automatically by the substantialist language to attribute identity, agency, interests, and will to groups" (2006, p. 11). Recall that the UN definition of social integration references "the capacity of *people* to live together with full respect for the dignity of each *individual*," not the capacity of groups to respect groups (1995). For some time, dealing with the integration of post-Soviet Russian-speakers into titular post-Soviet territories has been fraught with difficulty. The subject has been pushed through the lens of many theoretical structures encompassing many of the fields that relate to the question at hand. Very often, these frameworks intrinsically label integration as *opposition*; that is, two groups in opposition to each other must in some way be forced to combine. Integration becomes conflictualized in its terminology. The use of such macro-frameworks in integration studies runs the risk of prejudging populations as inherently outside of their host country, which is decisively not the case in the empirical example of the post-Soviet space. There remains a significant gap between the way integration is addressed analytically, and the way in which it is experienced in reality.

Immigrant acculturation

Berry's model has become popular for analyzing the "left behind" post-Soviet population, however his theory provides a distinction between immigrant and minority mentalities, "First, [immigrant] groups are usually culturally defined (including specific features of language,

religion, status and “race”) ... Second, immigrants are typically less familiar to the resident population ... third, immigrants are typically less similar to the resident population” (2001, pp. 621–622). The Russian-speaking minority in the post-Soviet space falls somewhere between these definitions; they are culturally defined (linguistically), but also both *familiar* and *similar* to the population. This highlights a critical distinction between “Russian-speaker” and “immigrant”. Russian-speakers are inherently familiar to their ethnically Latvian counterparts – in the 100 years of Latvian statehood and occupation, Russians have consistently been a part of the social fabric of the nation. Indeed, Russian influences have been present in the region for far longer than that. The difference between perceptions of Russian-speakers and perceptions of immigrants in Latvia has been put in sharp relief as a result of the European migrant crisis. The collective Latvian (including Russian-speakers) reaction to the potential possibility of less than 1,000 Muslim immigrants seeking asylum in Latvia was overwhelmingly perceived as the basis for a clash of cultures, while Russian-speakers are considered in many ways intrinsically part of Latvia’s environment.⁸

Russian-speakers descended from Soviet-era migrants are often born in the territory of the now titular state, or their arrival occurred during the Soviet period when it was not *immigration* but migration. Brubaker also contends that while Soviet Russians recognized their relocation from the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic to non-Russian Soviet Socialist Republics, their experience was “not only legally and politically defined as internal migration, but was psychologically experienced as such” (Brubaker, 2000, p. 3). Thus, they did not define themselves as “immigrants” when the republics broke from the Soviet state. Indeed, while Russian-speakers may be referred to as “Russians” (*krievi*), or more pejoratively, “occupants” (*okupanti*), the label of “immigrant” is very infrequently used. Russian-speakers cannot fully fit the paradigm of immigrant, which is part of the reason this framework cannot completely serve the study of this population.

⁸ Certainly, other factors also played into the discursive hostility towards potential migrants; however, disruptions to *local* culture was a consistently named factor (Ekmanis & Safranová, 2016).

Diaspora

While Berry's framework would liken Russian-speakers to immigrants, much of the literature regarding post-Soviet minorities uses diasporic framing as a mechanism to situate minority populations (Birka, 2016; Brubaker, 1996; Kuşçu, 2016 and others). The trend towards using diaspora frameworks to study Russian-speakers presents social scientists with similar snares. As is often noted in the literature, post-Soviet Russian-speakers did not move across borders, borders moved across them, leaving them stranded from their "national" or "titular" homeland (i.e. Russia).⁹ The definition of "diaspora" has been reworked, loosening to include what Brubaker and Laitin term "accidental" and "beached" diasporas. Taking into consideration the role of the "homeland" on diasporic populations, both in terms of consciousness and in terms of actual influence, it is clear why the diaspora is an attractive frame for the analysis of Russian-speakers in the post-Soviet space (Brubaker, 2000; C. King & Melvin, 1999; Kuşçu, 2016; Laitin, 1998; Safran, 1991). Indeed, Brubaker's (1996) triadic nexus, formed between the national minority, nationalizing state (host land) and external homeland, gains considerable value in the context of revanchist Russia decades after the fall of the USSR and the state's desire to use both soft and hard power to affect change in their "sphere of influence". While this trend has inspired interesting research, equating post-Soviets (displaced in name) with diaspora populations (displaced in space) creates murky parallels. Being displaced in name may engender an emotionally traumatic break with the dissolution of a home state, but this does not equate with the physical upheaval under the traumatic circumstances that defines classical diasporas. Expanding the definition of diaspora to include these *symbolic* breaks with actual, *physical* displacement and resettlement in a *foreign* land leaves the term unable to appropriately define either category. Though perhaps "beached" in the dissolution of the Soviet Union, many post-Soviets remained in their same apartments

⁹ While the post-Soviet minority population is not exclusively of Russian heritage, Russia as the successor state to the Soviet Union lays claim to protecting "the rights and legitimate interests of Russian citizens and compatriots living abroad" (Президент России, 2008). There are, of course, exceptions. In particular, Polish minority communities have strong affiliations with Poland as home state, which was a satellite state of the Soviet Union and not a Soviet Socialist Republic.

with the same neighbors in the neighborhoods – not in the barracks of refugee camps or on the streets of an unfamiliar country. Equating moving borders with moving populations potentially severely miscategorizes these populations, particularly when considering the post-Soviets (i.e. children born in the “diaspora”).

Traits of diaspora populations transposed onto post-Soviets complicates their ability to integrate in their “new” homeland. Boundary maintenance and a separation from the host state are significant to maintain the diaspora (Butler, 2001; Kuşçu, 2016). Brubaker warns that a diaspora does not necessarily possess the qualities of a bounded identity; rather, considering the diaspora as a category of practice, “we are able to observe that not all of the individuals who are considered members of a diaspora actually have a diasporic stance” (Brubaker, 2000; Kuşçu, 2016). However, there is an implication that a diaspora group is unable to fully integrate into their host society, and indeed, even members who do not actively “practice” as a member of the diaspora “may mobilize in times of crisis” (Shain & Barth, 2003). Birka (2016) argues, while multiple systems of cultural reference do not prevent or hinder integration or feelings of belonging to a country, diaspora identity and affiliation with an “external homeland” does affect the nature of the relationship between the minority population and the state. By using a diaspora framework to analyze minority populations in the post-Soviet sphere, analysts run the risk of prejudging the nature of minority populations. In this framing, there is an assumption of a precarious balance between moderate diaspora and 5th column activists. It precludes the population from integration into their “host” society by virtue of framing it as inherently not — or worse, unable to become — part of the nation. Indeed, Safran defines diaspora as expatriate minority communities that “believe they are not — and perhaps cannot be — fully accepted by their host country” (Safran, 1991).

Stratification

Russian-speakers analytically live in frameworks that place them outside of the titular or civic population, yet they are consistently called upon to become part of the wider population. How is this possible? While the above frameworks are heavily relied upon, one of the more recent

trends in the study of integration is engaging with the struggle to define nuances. This has manifested in stratifying minorities as analytical groups, differentiating between Russian-speaking ethnicities, regional affiliations, education brackets and age groups (Birka, 2016; Breggin, 2014; Cheskin, 2013; Dzenovska, 2010; Karklins & Zepa, 1996; Laizāne, Putniņa, & Mileiko, 2015; Zepa et al., 2013 and others). Age and the generation gap has become a particularly relevant category of demarcation as Latvia celebrates a quarter of a century free of Soviet occupation, which means that today's Russian-speaking youth in Latvia have entirely different experiences with the Latvian state, and, as such, different mechanisms of expressing their identities. This leaves them as an important analytical category to understand the progression of integration strategies. Unpacking nested identities is beginning to drive research on integration strategies, particularly among youth (and is considered in this dissertation, as well).

Though the state's integration policies have been widely criticized (Cheskin, 2015; Hanovs, 2016; Ījabs, 2015), recent studies do accent notable developments as regards young Russian-speaking individuals and their relation to Latvia and ethnic Latvians. A study of Russian minority schools conducted by Laizāne et al. (2015), using peer-interview methodology supports the hypothesis that Russian-speaking youth in Latvia have a complex identity structure; they recognize their ethnic and linguistic background as different from ethnic Latvians, but also identify themselves as Latvian civically. Importantly, Laizāne et al. note that Russian-speaking students largely interpret their linguistic identity as a personal characteristic, not necessarily part of a larger, salient group. Rather, interviews revealed that ethno-linguistic or national identities are less important to informants than the character of an individual person. Researchers measured a strong sense of attachment to Latvia, as well as a need to learn Latvian for both integrative and instrumental reasons (Laizāne et al., 2015)¹⁰. Laizāne et al., did notice a significant distance between Russian-Latvians and

¹⁰ Laitin (1998) also emphasized the importance of instrumentality in his assessment of motivations to learn Latvian.

Latvian-Latvians, but noted that perceived differences between groups were minimized when there was significant contact between groups, for example, through collaboration in interest education curriculum, which largely includes arts and culture activities. This is not novel: In 1998, Laitin predicted that the Russian-speaking population (to which he attributes a conglomerate identity) would assimilate linguistically to Latvian society. The Russian-speaking community would adopt “the ever changing cultural practices of dominant society with the goal of crossing a fluid cultural boundary separating [minorities] from dominant society” (1998, p. 35).

On the other hand, Birka’s 2016 comparison of Russian-speaking youth attachment to the state using Baltic Institute of Social Science surveys (2004 and 2010), showed that while “a sense of belonging to Russia and a sense of belonging to Latvia are not mutually exclusive”, Russian-speakers expressing a sense of closeness with Russia also demonstrate a preference for all-Russian environments and perceive discrimination toward Russian-speakers in Latvia (2016, p. 219). Other studies emphasize the development of a specific Russian-Latvian identity among young people, but note a similar frustration with the status of Russian culture in Latvia (Cheskin, 2013, 2015; Muižnieks, 2010).

Though demonstrating some level of integratory progress, particularly in the areas of language acquisition, a large portion of analyses still highlight barriers between ethnic Latvians and Russian speakers. At times, this barrier is partially constructed by the nature of the study, which places the Russian-speaker out of context in their daily life and, in some cases, in opposition to “real” Latvians. This is the persistent pitfall of groupism. For example, the series of BISS surveys Birka uses operationalizes “willingness to identify with national group” by asking informants to respond to statements such as “Latvians and Russians (Russian speakers) are two conflicting camps”, or, “I have no problem with Latvians; Latvians are the same as everyone else” (Birka, 2016, p. 226). The first statement clearly puts these groups in conflict with one another. The second statement, while seemingly more innocuous,

also implies that the respondent is *not* Latvian. Even if they are “the same as everyone else”, the question formulation clearly distances the respondent from the national group, indicating that that is a group of which they cannot be a part. Indeed, as Benedict Anderson notes in *Imagined Communities* (2006), the fallacy of the census is that individuals are presented with categories into which they are required to fit; this both limits the available identities they can “officially” possess, and requires them to perhaps falsely choose a primary identity according to the standards provided them. Not only are individuals with mixed ethnic heritage faced with the difficulty of defining their ethnicity, but Russian-speakers with nested civic, cultural, and ethnic identities are left in limbo and often outside the nation (Laizāne et al., 2015, p. 68; Šūpule, 2012).

Banality of integration in daily life

Integration, as much of the above literature suggests, is framed in conflictual terms wherein an outsider group is expected to reshape itself according to its host society. It can be “achieved” only when the people inhabiting a territory meet all of the requirements of an “integrated society”. In Latvia, “social integration” is codified by the Ministry of Culture as:

“inclusion of all people living in Latvia into society notwithstanding of their national belonging and self-identification. The common basis for the integration is the Latvian language, the feeling of belonging to the State of Latvia and its democratic values, respect for Latvia’s unique cultural space and development of a shared social memory” (Ministry of Culture, 2012, p. 7).

This statement is not inherently conflictual, but it tends toward an absolutism that cannot account for integration that occurs in daily life. Integration cannot be viewed only as a state to be achieved, but rather occurs constantly in the individual actions and interactions of daily life. It exists not only in the demonstrative merge of cultures, but also in the banal hum that underpins the quotidian. This banality is difficult for social scientists and policy makers to label; without a label, it is a challenge to observe, study, and analyze. This difficulty does not diminish its relevance.

In his seminal work, *Banal Nationalism*, Michael Billig references this phenomena of labeling:

“The national flag hanging outside a public building in the United States attracts no special attention. It belongs to no special sociological genus. Having no name, it cannot be identified as a problem” (1995, p. 6). Without a name, it is difficult to categorize sociological situations. Because “integration” is so often defined by top-down, absolutist terms, it cannot adequately and simply describe what happens laterally in individuals' daily lives. Integration need not be marked with statements declaring “respect for Latvia’s unique cultural space”, rather, this respect is adequately demonstrated by the absence of conflict. In their review of post-Soviet literature on nation-building and identity, Seliverstova & Pawlusz observe that the “renegotiation of what nation is for people and 'materialization' of nation happens not in the couloirs of government buildings, but in the domain of everyday life – streets, homes, markets, schools, shops, stadiums, etc.” (2016, p. 72). Indeed, though by many “indicators” of integration – school attendance, citizenship acquisition, media markets, etc. – Latvia is “a divided society,” integration remains “invisible” everywhere. Yet with no ability to *name* this invisible integration, it cannot be seen.

Conceptual framework of banal integration

This dissertation offers a step toward operationalizing the banal. I argue that while the importance of the quotidian is increasingly acknowledged theoretically for the ways in which it shapes identity and nation-building, the discussion of integration, particularly in the post-Soviet context, has primarily relied on external frameworks that place barriers between real life and academic analysis. The primacy of top-down indicators and measures of integration progress overshadows what happens in the “domain of everyday life”. Operationalizing quotidian existence remains difficult, but necessary.

The focus on measurable criterion, while necessary in its own right, does not sufficiently reflect the way individuals interact on a daily basis. Neither official nor academic frameworks have sufficiently met this need to fill in these “invisible” gaps. Following the example of Billig in his critique of the study of nationalism (that it is invisible everywhere), in this dissertation, I test a tangential argument in the study of integration, i.e. a framework for looking at integration

in its banal form. I define banal integration as the individual interactions between minorities and titulars and minorities and the state in the milieu of daily life.¹¹ It considers the way in which individuals fulfill the qualities of an integrated society not by marking “integratory events,” but by noting their absence. For example, the difference between hosting a discussion on the state of Latvian- and Russian-speaker relations, and frequenting the same café as other Russian- and Latvian-speakers after such an event. While the first is a demonstration of “achieving” an integratory event, the second is an unnoticed, but still significant form of interaction that describes progress towards integration in daily life.

The conceptual structure of banal integration is based on two groups: 1) interpersonal banal integration – which focuses on interactions between individuals (Table 2.1) and 2) socio-national banal integration – which focuses on interactions between individuals and the state and society (Table 2.2).

Table 2.1 Interpersonal banal integration

Extensive	In-depth engagement between minority/majority, code-switching tends toward majority language, may still include non-reciprocal bilingualism	Friends, family
Moderate	Consistent engagement between minority/majority, may be characterized by non-reciprocal bilingualism, minority linguistic accommodation or code-switching to national language	Collegial interaction; classmates; individuals in regular contact; active code-switching to national language
Basic	Superficial engagement between minority/majority, may be characterized by mutual linguistic accommodation	Employee-customer interaction
None	Little to no engagement between minority/majority	Isolated ethnolinguistic communities

¹¹ In the case of Latvia, these categories are minority and titular population categories, i.e. Russian-speakers and Latvian-speakers, though in other contexts, the population categories may be different.

Table 2.2 Socio-national banal integration

Extensive	High level of belonging to city, region, state; fluency in state language; active engagement in civic associational life; active engagement in national cultural life	Code switching to state language; identification with state; active participation, patriotism
Moderate	Feeling of belonging to city, region, state; at least moderate fluency in state language; some engagement in civic associational life; demonstrates passive interest	At least minimal engagement with state language; linguistic accommodation
Basic	State-issued passport, basic understanding of state language; non-citizen passport; minimal engagement in civic associational life or limited to minority gatherings; sees cultural “flags” but does not actively engage	Ethnolinguistic enclaves; non-reciprocal bilingualism
None	No attachment/engagement with /estranged from nation (language, civic identity, cultural life)	Foreign nationals

**Note that one need not necessarily be proud of the country in which they live to be integrated.*

Interpersonal banal integration

Interpersonal banal integration refers to the quality of interactions between individuals of different population categories. Interpersonal banal integration occurs in both public and private interactions. It is characterized as an intrinsic part of daily life, i.e. interactions that do not necessarily require extensive effort on the part of the individuals engaging. For the purposes of this dissertation, my framework of interpersonal banal integration divides the quality of these interactions into four types: none, basic, moderate, extensive. Three of these levels are explored using qualitative and quantitative data collected for this study.¹²

¹² The absence of interpersonal banal integration (category “none”) is not explored in-depth within the bounds of my case study of Latvia, primarily because resources allocated to this study did not permit deep research in ethnolinguistic enclaves. However, while there are almost certainly communities that sustain little to no interaction with the titular majority (including Roma communities), these are not prevalent for the vast majority of the population. Additionally, this study focuses primarily on the post-Soviet generation, who must almost certainly engage with majority individuals and institutions at the very least at a basic level. The argument which stems from this supposition is that Latvia is a

None: Cases in which there is little to no interpersonal engagement between minority and majority individuals can be categorized as “none.” This may be structurally determined (e.g. legal segregation) or self-imposed separation/marginalization (e.g. ethnolinguistic enclaves). No interpersonal integration is not necessarily an indicator of the same designation in the corresponding framework of socio-national integration. For example, it may be possible to live in a minority ethnic enclave with little to no contact with the general population (consider Chinatowns in U.S. cities), while still being a citizen of the state (basic socio-national integration).

Basic: The category of “basic” interpersonal banal integration encompasses superficial interactions between minority and majority individuals. At a fundamental level, this includes spatial cohabitation, i.e. sharing spaces such as streets, cafes, libraries, apartment complexes, schools, etc. Achieving the level of basic interpersonal integration does not necessitate quality interpersonal interactions. Rather, it is the minimum level of interaction from which additional levels of integration can be built. Literature on failed attempts at integration frequently cite the presence of conflict, whether physical or verbal. If these instances of hostile engagement negate the premise of integration, then there must be some mechanisms of quantifying the lack of hostile engagement. Therefore, the category of “basic” interpersonal banal integration attempts to lay the foundation for defining minority/majority interaction without hostility. I argue that cohabitation with the absence of physical and verbal hostility is in and of itself is a distinct step toward integration. Importantly, basic banal integration is not the same as distinct ethnic communities living side by side in relative peace (separation, in Berry’s terms). In order to qualify as basic *integration* there must be direct – if only superficial – engagement between minority and majority individuals. The key element of basic interpersonal banal integration is the ability to live in the same society and interact at a primary level without verbal or physical hostility. It does not require significant effort on

country with, at the bare minimum, a basic level of banal integration, i.e. there is some level of contact between majority and minority individuals on a moderately regular basis.

the part of either the minority or the majority individual, neither is it a hallmark of “successful” integration. I argue, however, that it is a significant baseline to consider, particularly in the context of post-Soviet integration, in which analyses often ignore that a very fundamental step of integration is simply living together.

Moderate: Moderate interpersonal banal integration moves beyond the basic ability to coexist and interact in non-hostile, mutually accommodating environments. It is expressed as consistent engagement between minority/majority individuals, which may be conducted through non-reciprocal bilingualism and bilateral code-switching (both majority to minority and minority to majority). These interactions include relationships between colleagues, classmates, acquaintances, and other individuals in frequent contact.

Extensive: Extensive interpersonal integration is characterized by deep relationships between minority and titular, i.e. friendships, marriages, familial connections, close collegial relationships. While these may employ non-reciprocal bilingualism, there may be a tendency toward the majority language. Interpersonally, these relationships indicate a deep trust and intimacy between minority and majority individuals; in Putnam’s (2000) terms, bonding social capital.

Socio-national banal integration

Where interpersonal banal integration is concerned with interactions and relationships between individuals, socio-national banal integration considers the ways in which individuals engage with the society and the state. This combines vertical integration (engagement with the state) with horizontal integration (engagement with the social environment). This may be demonstrated at a basic level with state identification, but at an extensive level with active engagement in associational life. Socio-national integration does not necessarily require demonstrative displays; rather, it is based on the ways in which the individual engages with the state and nation without significant attention to its integratory value. When considering the integration of an ethnolinguistic minority into a national majority society, the quality of

interaction is measured by the minority actor's level of engagement with markers of the majority nation (e.g. language, national symbols, social norms). This does not preclude the minority actor from maintaining personal affiliation with heritage markers, but rather gauges their displayed ability or willingness to operate in the majority national environment.

None: No socio-national banal integration is largely a status for foreign nationals and undocumented immigrants, or characterized by the complete rejection of the sovereignty of the state. I contend that even the most limited engagement with the state and social environment qualifies as basic socio-national integration, therefore the category of "none" is largely unexplored in this case study.

Basic: Basic socio-national integration is the bare minimum of engagement with the state and titular society. It is categorized by the possession of some sort of state-issued identifying document (passport, non-citizen passport) and a bare minimum understanding of the national language. A basic recognition of the national social environment (e.g. recognizing signs in the state language, observing of national holidays or events) also contributes to basic socio-national integration. It does not require active engagement, but rather the acknowledgement of living in the socio-national context. For example, living in an ethnic enclave or isolated media environment, but shopping at a store where labels are in the national language, showing state issued identification, or acknowledging national symbols.

Moderate: Moderate socio-national integration goes beyond passive acknowledgement of the state to include moderate levels of engagement with state and nation. This may be characterized by a feeling of belonging to a regional locale, participation in community or national organizations that include both minority and majority members, voting, and a moderate knowledge and use of the state language.

Extensive: Extensive socio-national banal integration can be categorized by a deep sense of belonging to the state and identification with others from that state (e.g. recognizing the state

as a homeland, identifying as a national of the state in foreign contexts, cheering for a fellow national in international sporting events, etc.). Importantly, belonging may include, but does not necessarily imply, pride in the state. Extensive socio-national banal integration is additionally characterized by engagement with community, civic associational life, and consistent code-switching to the state language. This categorization does not demand either declarative statements of integration, nor a departure from minority identity. Rather, it largely hinges on banal markers of self-identification with the state, whether that be consistent use of the titular language in public settings, or active participation in national events.

Clarifications & assumptions

The outlines of the various levels of interpersonal and socio-national banal integration are not definite; they are not intended to be a list of indicators one can indiscriminately “check off.” Rather, there remains “wiggle room” within each of levels of banal integration. This is both out of necessity and methodologically intentional. First, because banal integration is “invisible,” all of its markers cannot be quantified, it is not possible to produce a list of every instance in which banal integration “is”. Second, studying banal integration requires the engagement of the researcher to observe and interpret the social context in which they are operating. Banal integration is not something that can be studied from afar, simply by counting ethno-linguistic demographics or linguistic patterns. To understand if a neighborhood is banally integrated, one must actually experience the neighborhood. Therefore, the categories outlined above are intended as guideline indicators, benchmarks that help identify areas in which banal integration is occurring. This is not a perfect mechanism, but it is a step towards uncovering the invisible.

Within the framework, I take a number of assumptions to be true. The first is that integration is quotidian and constantly occurring; it cannot be separated from the realities of daily life. Second, individuals do not constantly think of themselves as ethnically bounded. Third, politicians and events may make ethnic groups salient, but salience does not necessarily force

ethnic division at the quotidian level. Fourth, banal integration and “ecstatic nationalism”¹³ are not mutually exclusive.

Quotidian integration refers to the horizontal interactions among individuals and between individuals and society in everyday life. Here, this is primarily operationalized through observations of public spaces of social interaction (e.g. cafés, libraries, schools, clubs). It does not ignore language as an indicator of integration; rather, this remains an important aspect of flagging integratory categories (e.g. first-language Latvians and not). Quotidian integration is an inherent part of the socio-national landscape; it can be “flagged” (as Billig suggests), by national flags, signage, architecture, etc., and can exist at multiple levels. That is, even if individuals do not actively engage interpersonally or socio-nationally, except in extreme cases of isolation, most live in an integrated context with socially common reference points.

The presumption that individuals do not consistently think of themselves as ethnically bounded does not intend to imply that individuals do not acknowledge, embrace or act on their ethnicity or nationality. Rather, it seeks to demonstrate that individuals are complex with many identities and that ethnicity is not the sole or perhaps most dominant determinant of interpersonal interaction or engagement. The language in which one initiates conversation is an external marker of ethnicity; however, in multicultural, multilingual environments (such as Latvia) this should not be overly stressed. Importantly, presuming the mutability of ethnic boundaries does not prevent people from creating rigid boundaries when provoked. Provoked reactions should not be mistaken for the absence of quotidian interaction (e.g. it is possible for Russian and Latvian speakers to argue over whether or not Latvia was occupied by the Soviet Union, but still share spaces and interact with other titulars/minorities without conflict).

Politics and politicians are significant factors in state integration policies and public discourse on integration in general. States that are interested in integration necessarily have a level of

¹³ See Chapter 6 and Skey, 2006.

majority/minority division, on which politicians can capitalize, provoking a national and international discourse of discontent and conflict. This is arguably the case in Latvia, which is very frequently framed as a space of divided media and political landscapes. While politicians, and, subsequently media, can make ethnicity and division salient, it does not necessarily provoke a change in individuals' daily lives and interactions.

The fourth presumption is that banal integration and ecstatic nationalism is not mutually exclusive. This seems a contradiction in terms – banality is anti-thema to ecstasy. However, in pointing to this concept, I intend to demonstrate that minority participation in ecstatic national events is an extension of banal integration. Ecstatic national events (e.g. independence day celebrations, national festivals) capitalize on majority national symbols and interrupt daily routines (Skey, 2006). These characteristics would outwardly presume them to be exclusionary or patronizing to minorities. I would argue this is not necessarily the case; rather, minorities may participate in national displays of ecstatic nationalism, recognizing such participation as banal in the context of their lives. Skey argues ecstatic nationalism is inherently linked to banal nationalism through events that “both illuminate and materialise the often rather nebulous solidarities that are presumed to underpin daily (national) life” (2006, p. 146). Indeed, “ecstatic national events provide first-hand evidence” of a knowable community (2006, p. 127). I argue that they provide first-hand experience of being part of the nation, which is particularly significant to the exhibition of banal integration in both interpersonal and socio national forms.

Another everyday ethnicity?

Rogers Brubaker presents a compelling case study of the top-down and bottom-up manifestations of ethnicity and nationalism in his aptly titled *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town* (2006). In many respects my study closely mirrors his, with a distinct focus on competing categories, national symbolism and a post-communist environment. His work sheds light on many of the frustrations of the field elucidated above, and deeply informs my own work with regard to distinguishing between the nuances of groups

and categories, nationals and citizens, states and nations. Brubaker's aim in his work is to identify "when, how, and in what settings ethnicity 'happened' in the course of ordinary daily routines" (2006, p. 16). Methodologically, this also includes when ethnicity does not happen. However, while Brubaker is focused on when ethnicity *becomes salient*, my dissertation intends to identify the conditions under which ethno-linguistic identity *is not determinative*.

Though Brubaker notes that everyday life is not necessarily "pervasively organized by strong ethnic 'identities'" (2006, p. 11), his basic argument is "social life is powerfully, though unevenly, structured along ethnic lines; and ethnic and national categories are part of the taken-for-granted framework of social and political experience. Ethnicity and nationhood (or 'nationness') 'happen' every day" (Brubaker, 2006, pp. 6–7). Brubaker suggests, while ethnicity does not necessarily outwardly manifest constantly in daily life, it provides underlying structure and can become visible beyond the common measure of collective action or violence, that is, in everyday life. My approach comes from the opposite side; rather than measuring when ethnicity emerges, my study is an attempt to identify when ethnolinguistic identity may be marked, but is not salient. For example, one's ethnolinguistic identity may be marked by speaking Russian in a café, but this is not necessarily a barrier to the ways in which one is integrated in society. While certainly ethnicity and nation are intrinsically linked to the study of social integration (particularly in the Latvian case), my proposed framework is not concerned with how ethnicity is constructed in the context of the nation. Indeed, the case of Russian-speakers in Latvia has much less to do with the salience of ethnic boundaries and much more to do with the ways in which ethno-linguistic boundaries are secondary to interactions with other minorities and titulars. While *Everyday Ethnicity* provides a methodological and theoretical strategy of combining the top-down and quotidian in the study of disparate population categories, it remains complimentary, but distinct from banal integration.

Summary

To look at banal integration in contrast: If *integration* is top-down, political, elite-led, labeled,

grouped, and conflictual, then *banal integration* is quotidian, unlabeled and unnamed, uncategorized, invisible, unmarked and routine. It does not exist separately or separated, but is part of daily life, the daily landscape. Similar to Billig's critique of the way in which the West distances itself from the "extremist" tones of "nationalism", yet itself inhabits its "ideological habits" in everyday life, "integration" is mentioned primarily when there are problems, but becomes invisible when it is indeed part of everyday life. Instead of looking for the "flags" that show integration's failures, or highlight successful exceptions, there is a desperate need to acknowledge integration when it goes unnoticed – the goal of integration itself.

The study of minority integration, particularly in the post-Soviet space, has long-relied on theoretical frameworks that allow for effective analysis of integration at the elite level, but are less equipped to explain how integration manifests on the ground. This challenge is particularly highlighted in the distinction between a focus on conflict in high-level discourse, but its relative absence in daily life. Analyses have tended toward an emphasis on integration's failures, on top-down indicators of integration, and a lack of focus on interpersonal interaction in the "negative space" between these measures.

This dissertation argues that banal integration can neither be observed nor achieved by a sole focus on the top-down, elite-enhanced mechanisms. Rather it requires a similar focus on the horizontal interactions of people's everyday lives observed in the context of vertical mechanisms. Importantly, this comes not only from looking at relationships between friends and acquaintances, or how these impact the depth of integratory measures (Kronenfeld, 2003); rather it includes holistic understanding of the state of integration in societies. Though complicated by a demand for clearly articulated, theoretically intense methods, observing the way a society interacts is critical to understand the invisible presence of integration.

This dissertation is a test of the salience of banality as a framework for understanding integration in its quotidian manifestations. Rather than focusing on prescribed indicators of integration such as declarations of ethnicity or language preferences on national censuses,

banal integration provides a mechanism for operationalizing integration through its “invisible” indicators. Banal integration reflects not only quotidian co-existence between majority/minority groups, but also interaction and mutual engagement. It seeks to unpack both the banality of interpersonal relationships and the banality of minorities’ relationship with the state in which they live. Demonstrating banal integration is analytically difficult. It requires multiple methodological approaches and an acknowledgement of complexity; this will be explored in Chapter 3. Recognizing the value of banal is critical to enhancing the study of integration in the post-Soviet space, as well as in other multicultural contexts. This dissertation focuses on a Baltic case study, but the framework is intended to be useful to social scientists beyond the post-Soviet world, allowing us to look differently at integration in diverse states – an increasingly relevant necessity in a world that is simultaneously globalizing and nationalizing.

Chapter 3 | Methodology: Challenges of capturing the banal

While a major critique of the literature on integration is a too-narrow focus on policies that obfuscate reality (i.e. not seeing the forest for the trees), constructing a methodological framework for the study of the banal is akin to catching a cloud while walking in fog. Defined indicators with data from official sources are easily measured and analyzed by policy makers and researchers alike. Defining what happens in the day to day lives of individuals and how this impacts their perceptions, attitudes, and actions is much more nuanced and difficult to capture. It taps into a longtime challenge of social science research, which preferences countable and clear-cut data, sometimes at the expense of overlooking the way social science theories manifest for regular people.

This methodological challenge is one strongly felt in questions of nation-building in the post-Soviet space. Many, if not most, studies of the post-Soviet space consider questions of identity and nation from a top-down perspective, prioritizing “loud” sources (e.g. elite opinions, policy documents, and media discourse) and quantifiable measures (e.g. language or citizenship as proxies for identity) (Brubaker, 1995, 1996; Laitin, 1998; Muižnieks, 2010; Rozenvalds, 2010 and others). A growing trend in the literature combines the top-down approach with bottom-up interpretations of identity and nation, while likewise exploring diversity in their methodological structure (e.g. the use of peer-to-peer interviewing techniques) (Brubaker, 2006; Cheskin, 2013; Laizāne et al., 2015). However, Seliverstova and Pawlusz argue, while informal aspects of identity formation are theoretically acknowledged, “little has been done to reflect upon them in terms of methodology of such research in the post-Soviet context” (2016, p. 73).

In their reflections on the study of post-Soviet nation-building and identity formation, Seliverstova and Pawlusz embrace the “messiness” of studying the banal, pushing back

against the “era of growing codification of research methods” to offer a “set of ideas about how to approach identity formation in the context of everyday life” that validates interpretive, nuanced, and lived experiences (Seliverstova & Pawlusz, 2016, p. 82). Their empirical cases¹⁴ are similar to my own, as are their described methodological frustrations and solutions. Their focus remains on the fields of nation-building and identity formation, which I argue is topically tangential, but conceptually parallel to the study of integration. These shared challenges and solutions are telling of a growing trend in post-Soviet studies. Research conducted is increasingly interdisciplinary, multi-methodological, concentrated on horizontal interactions, and researcher involved. While ethnography and researcher reflexivity has been a staple of anthropology, in other social science disciplines, student in particular often feel pressure to separate data and analysis from lived experiences. Defined frameworks of analysis are preferred (it is easier to assign meaning to clear-cut graphs than it is to interpret stories), though the reality they attempt to reflect remains much more complex than any matrix. This complexity is becoming the primary focus of more studies, arguably reflective of a changing epistemological paradigm in the “harder” of the social sciences.

My own research, as reflected in this dissertation, is another attempt to navigate the choppy waters between scientific validity and empirical reality in the study of a complex and multifaceted topic. I focus on three primary facets of banal integration in my case study of Latvia: top-down policy challenges and bottom-up realities, banality in daily life, and banality in cultural nationalism (Chapters 4, 5, and 6, respectively). In the course of my own fieldwork, I have organically adopted many of the strategies Seliverstova and Pawlusz identify in their 2016 article, which is used here as a conceptual support of my methodological practices. This includes a method of inquiry that is both inherently mixed, and continuously developing to adapt to conditions in the field, prioritizing “findings over methodological formality and,

¹⁴ National identity in musical performance (Estonia) and invisible aspects of identity through visible representations in domestic sphere (Ukraine).

therefore, enhance[ing] the possibility of discovering aspects of identity creation and negotiation that are more complex, novel or marginalised in previous studies” (Seliverstova & Pawlusz, 2016, p. 80). Similarly, I consider both my own positionality as a researcher, as well as how this has changed based on the experiences I encountered in my fieldwork.

With these challenges in mind, this chapter sets out my case study and method of inquiry. Social science research is imperfect; it lacks the sterility of a lab environment and risks variance by any number of external influences. In my approach, I seek to strike an appropriate balance between maintaining the high standards social science research demands, while also embracing the fluidity of the data itself. I contend that this provides a more nuanced analysis of the social processes that contribute to the understanding of integration in its banal form.

Case study settings

Over the course of my fieldwork, primarily conducted September 2015 – March 2016 and September 2016 – May 2017, I have concentrated on four primary locations of data collection (see Table 3.1). My data remains specific to the locations I have observed and subject to my own positionality. It does not attempt to fully explain integration in all settings in Latvia, but it does offer a series of significant and alternate perspectives on the debate and how it compares across different types of locations. Because my ethnographic research was collected primarily through extended periods living in Settings 1 and 4, observations from these locales are highlighted to give both urban and rural perspectives on highly diverse settings. Observations from Settings 2 and 3 provide additional perspectives from predominantly Russian-speaking areas.

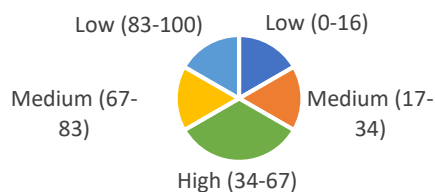
Table 3.1 Observational settings

	Geography	Population (residents)*	Diversity**	Interethnic contact	Methodology
Setting 1: Daugavpils municipality (village)	Rural	~25,100 (municipality) ~1,700 (parish)	High (65% Russian-speaking)	High	Participant observation, interviews, surveys
Setting 2: Daugavpils (city)	Urban	~100,000	Medium low (79% Russian-speaking)	Low titular contact	Participant observation, focus groups, interviews, surveys
<i>Riga (general)</i>	<i>Capital</i>	<i>658,640</i>	<i>High; 49.6% Russian-speaking; 38.6% Latvian-speaking</i>		
Setting 3: Riga (micro-regions)	Urban (capital)	~22,700 - ~59,273	Medium (~66% Russian-speaking)	Low titular contact in region	Participant observation, interviews, focus groups
Setting 4: Riga (center)	Urban (capital)	~30,700*	Medium (30% Russian-speaking)	High	Participant observation, interviews

**This refers to the number of registered residents in this area. Riga city center is a hub for business, commerce, entertainment, etc.; residents may live in other sections of the city or in suburbs, but many commute to the center for business or pleasure daily.*

**

Dominance of one linguistic population/diversity scale



Data: Central Statistical Bureau, 2016; 2012

These locations of data collection were chosen for a variety of theoretical and instrumental reasons. Settings 1 and 2 offer a rural/urban perspective on a highly rhetorically and demographically important region. Daugavpils municipality (Setting 1) surrounds Daugavpils city and is ethnically and linguistically diverse. On the whole, the rural region suffers from a disadvantaged economic position. It is poor, many houses and apartments are for sale or abandoned (their former occupants in search of economic opportunity in Riga or abroad). Many children live with grandparents or in foster homes because of this regional exodus. Employment opportunities are scarce, particularly in the winter when agricultural hands are not needed. Much of the life of the area stems either from school (with multiple extracurricular opportunities) or from cultural centers (see Chapter 6). Travel in this region is difficult without personal transportation; intercity/village busses are on limited schedules and often require going through Daugavpils as a hub. The population in each parish is small, which makes investing resources to conduct research here less compelling. However, the diversity and close intermingling of the population makes such regions critical to the study of Latvian integration in banal settings, which is why I chose to invest resources in studying this population.

Daugavpils city (Setting 2) has informally obtained the moniker “Little Russia” (and indeed is advertised as such by Russian-language teaching programs). It has a high concentration of Russian speakers whose loyalties are often publicly interpreted as hostile to the state of Latvia. Indeed, in the February 2016 BBC2 film, “World War Three: Inside the War Room,” British military strategists depict an uprising of Russian patriots in Daugavpils as ground zero for a conflagration that would bring about the fall of NATO and demolish transatlantic security in a Crimea-style takeover (Range, 2016). The colloquial myth is that few people in Daugavpils speak Latvian and that it is a city of questionable loyalty to Latvia. It is on the south-eastern border of the country, nearly as far from Riga as is physically possible. These factors make it a key area of exploration in this case study of Latvian integration.

Riga is unequivocally the only real urban metropolis in Latvia. It maintains the standards of a European capital and attracts tourists, students and ex-pats with relatively low costs for relatively high standards of living. It is the main population center (more than a third of the country lives in Riga), as well as the hub of intellectual resources (libraries, government centers, universities, etc.). Instrumentally, the available resources offer the best location for completing dissertation work, but as a population hub and literal and figurative center of the country, Riga is also a key location to study integration in its banal setting. On the whole, Riga is highly diversified. The city is divided into more than 50 neighborhoods/micro-regions, which have their own ethno-linguistic, as well as socio-economic, population balance. Therefore, I have included a breakdown of two main neighborhood/types in which my research was conducted (Settings 3 and 4).

A majority of my Rigan observations are from the city center (Setting 4). This is where I lived and worked on a daily basis for a majority of my fieldwork, and therefore, I was able to become intimately familiar with the routines and pace of this part of the city. The diversity in this region is higher than the linguistic preferences of registered residents because the center is the veritable hub of the city where much of the business, education and entertainment spaces exist. Micro-regions adopt their own sub-cultures, tend to embody an ethnic slant and are often home to individuals lower on the socio-economic scale. However, most micro-regions serve primarily as housing (many Soviet-era multi-story concrete apartment blocks); colloquially, they have earned the name "sleeping regions" (*guJamrajoni*). Indeed, the city is only about 20 kilometers wide, and much of the activity happens in and around the center. Observations and research conducted in Setting 3 (two micro-regions) offer an insight into the areas' effect on participation in national cultural events, but the primary participant observation conducted for this dissertation remains in the city center.

A significant portion of my city life observations comes from the café scene. Oxford defines café culture as "a lifestyle characterized by regular socializing in pavement cafes, typically

that associated with European countries such as France or Italy” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2017). Café culture is strong in Latvia as well, though winter months pushes conversations from outdoor terraces to the heated indoors. These observations tend to highlight certain populations, primarily younger, middle class populations, though my observations include individuals of all walks of life. Café culture is an operationalization of the public realm, i.e. a location in which strangers with limited knowledge of each other meet and interact. According to Sennet, the most important function of the public realm is that it enables activities that do not occur in private; “in public, people can access unfamiliar knowledge, expanding the horizons of their information” (Sennett, n.d.). The public sphere (Öffentlichkeit) provides anonymity, but also forms an environment of democratic discussion and public opinion (Habermas, 1989). The café is an interesting place to conduct participant observation research, not least as a student myself, it provides a meta experience of writing about integration in a space where integration is constantly occurring. Indeed, the ubiquitous café is one of the places in which the concept of the banal integration framework was born; it is incongruous to consider the problems of Latvian integration while constantly surrounded by individuals who display no barrier to integration. While in intellectual discussions the integration “problem” is consistently highlighted, these discussions often take place in spaces where integration is actively occurring. The café in Riga serves many functions: it is a hub for friends to meet, for business deals to take place, and a stationary place to witness a wide range of customer-employee interactions. It provides a window into many aspects of daily life and perspective on multiple levels of integration.

Method of inquiry

The field of international studies is inherently interdisciplinary, drawing from any number of fields to address problem-focused empirical research. By nature, it considers theoretical frameworks from multiple disciplinary perspective; it is therefore also a field in which data collection benefits from a multi-method approach. My study of banal integration taps primarily

into three traditional disciplines: political science, sociology, and anthropology. The methods of inquiry I employ necessarily follow the models of these fields, including both qualitative and quantitative data collection.

Extant document summary & analysis

There has been significant research on the Latvian case of integration; indeed, it is one of the most popular topics of study in the region and attracts the critical gaze of professional researchers and students alike. Social science studies demand both replicability and new contributions. In the current academic environment in the U.S., the consistent pressure to publish new and novel findings may come at the expense of confirming work done previously, or reinterpreting findings from alternative perspectives. My goal in this dissertation is to both consider the work of others, reconsider it from the parameters of my proffered framework of banal integration, and enhance it with a close look at regional specificity and in-depth ethnographic fieldwork.

This first comes in the form of document and extant study analysis. While the underpinnings of the fields of nationalism, integration, and identity are broad and largely theoretical academic concepts that can be reasonably distanced from the empirical cases of study, the Latvian case complicates the “separation between research and state”. As a small country, Latvian human resources are limited; qualified specialists in the subject of integration are few in number. The line between practitioner, academic, and policy maker is fuzzy at best, and often non-existent.¹⁵ This is not necessarily a fault, but it means it is both impossible and impractical to artificially separate policy discussions of integration from extant research. Indeed, Muižnieks himself notes,

¹⁵ For example, Nils Muižnieks, who has vastly contributed to the study of integration policy and indicators in Latvia with exceptional work, occupied the Latvian governmental post of Special Assignments Minister for Social Integration Affairs (November 2002- December 2004), and has held multiple additional positions that deal directly with integration policy and discourse, including President of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (2010 - 2012) and currently, as the Commissioner for Human Rights for the Council of Europe (2012 - present).

“Previous efforts [to study integration] were often plagued by a host of problems. Most of the aforementioned efforts were either surveys focusing on attitudes or thematic studies with a focus on one aspect of integration or one minority. No official consensus was ever reached on indicators, so those who commissioned research or carried it out proceeded using various methodologies and approaches. ... the major funders of research (the integration secretariat and the Society Integration Foundation) had a certain vested interest in the results” (2010, p. 9).

In the first of my case study chapters (Chapter 4), I use policy documents and extant data to provide a general picture of the complicated nature of integration study and policy making in Latvia. This is not a literature review that more broadly discusses the theoretical nature of the subject and the academic challenges; rather, it considers both the research and policy work that has been done in the development (or non-development) of integration policy in Latvia in five key issues. This cannot be a comprehensive analysis (the space and resources needed surpass those of this dissertation), but it provides a necessary framework of top-down policy challenges in which my substantive contributions of banal integration can reside. I consider the wide breadth of policy and research documents, their circular development and the disconnect between elite-led rhetoric and ground level realities. Through this retrospective, I offer a general analysis that considers the complexity of the case of Latvia.

Ethnography

A definite standard in sociology and anthropology, though increasingly so in political science, ethnographic research forms the basis of my approach. Ethnographic research involves “directly interacting with people *in situ* in order to gain an understanding of that particularly social world from an insider’s perspective” (L. Adams, 2009, p. 317). This process allows the researcher to collect thick descriptions of social interactions that cannot be obtained using other methods; it seeks to “uncover the explicit and implicit cultural knowledge that guides behavior” and addresses the “‘cognitive content’ of identity better than most other methods” (L. Adams, 2009, p. 318). Ethnography is a particularly useful instrument in the study of daily life, allowing the researcher to record the processes of social interaction and meaning at a mundane level (Certeau, 1984; Seliverstova & Pawlusz, 2016). Each interaction is unique,

and therefore contributes something new to the study of integration in particular, but more broadly contributes to the body of knowledge informing the development of the discipline.

In this work, I use three primary ethnographic techniques: interviews, focus groups, and participant observation. Face to face interviews and focus groups were the primary method of inquiry for the section of my study that considers banal integration in expressions of cultural nationalism (Chapter 6). I conducted face-to-face semi-formal interviews with 12 educators in Riga and Daugavpils city and municipality between October 2015 and February 2016. These were primarily conducted in the informants' workplace (i.e. schools), with open-ended questions regarding participation in cultural events, student reactions, and personal perceptions of such events, as well as the routine associated with performances. "The inclusion of data on perceptions is important, as perception can become reality if it serves to guide the behavior of individuals or groups in society or policy-makers" (Muižnieks, 2010, p. 31). The perceptions at the ground level can likewise inform bottom-up change. I also conducted focus group discussions (ranging in size from 16 to 50 participants) with three student choir and dance groups during rehearsal periods. These semi-formal discussions are supplementary to the larger scale participant observation that I have conducted over the course of several periods of field work (September 2015 – March 2016; September 2016 – May 2017).

To address my line of inquiry regarding expressions of cultural nationalism, I participated directly in six cultural groups (1 vocal ensemble [Daugavpils municipality], 1 folklore group [Riga] and 3 folk dance groups [Riga]), as well as observed four additional groups in Daugavpils and Daugavpils municipality (1 folklore group, 3 folkdance groups, and 2 choirs/ensembles). I also attended multiple public events, including commemoration days and concerts. The data collected far surpasses that which is included in this dissertation. Indeed, while some of the data is extraneous, it contributes to my knowledge of the environment and social processes in toto, informing my interpretation of events and interactions.

To capture data regarding my second line of inquiry, banality of integration in daily life (Chapter 5), participant observation, supplemented with informal interviews, has been my primary method. According to Fox and Miller-Idriss, “participant observation is sensitive to context – not as it is supplied by the researcher but as it is constituted by ordinary people according to the contingencies of their everyday lives” (2008, p. 556). I consider informal interviews to include open-ended discussions with ordinary people in Latvia (Brubaker, 2006, p. 381). Some of these individuals are close acquaintances, others are strangers, colleagues, or friends of friends. These informal interviews did not concentrate on a target population, but rather serve as a “man on the street” contribution to my overall participant observation. Observations were recorded in field notes over the course of more than a year spent in Latvia. As I suggest at the beginning of this chapter, banality is difficult to record, precisely because of its ineffable nature. I have made a concerted effort to not only describe the sights, sites, and contexts of “visible” ethno-linguistic integration (e.g. where it is marked by code-switching or demeanor), but also instances in which it is “deflected, ignored and subverted” (Fox & Miller-Idriss, 2008, p. 556). Research conducted within the bounds of my doctoral dissertation has not been limited to these recent stints in the field. Rather, it has been informed by a body of work that formally spans the past 10 years of academic inquiry in this and related topics with a deep regional area focus on Latvia and the Baltic Sea Region.¹⁶ This has subsequently enhanced my ability to more fully capture quotidian details relevant to my research question, while allowing me to adapt my focus quickly to new information gained in the field.

My field notes, while they are records of the extensive time I spend in Latvia, are specifically concentrated around three distinct areas. The first is public settings, such as cafes, libraries, restaurants, streets, etc. In these cases, I considered interactions between customer-service personnel, strangers, acquaintances, friends, and families. These observations were informed

¹⁶ See Ekmanis, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015.

by small talk exchanged with individuals. I also attended public gatherings of national holidays and memorial days.

The second specific area of concentration is the month of embedded research in Daugavpils municipality, which centered around a dual-stream (Russian and Latvian) local school. This concentrated on peer-to-peer (student and teacher), as well as student-teacher interaction, perceptions, attitudes, and activities. I broadly documented the life of the community with a particular focus on interpretations and (non)use of ethnicity and language in every day contexts.

The third area of intensive participant observation narrowed in on community and school cultural groups. This was primarily done from the “inside-out”; as a participant in the groups themselves, I could capture a better understanding of the group dynamics, how interactions and bonds were formed, and how these extended beyond rehearsals and performances into the personal lives of the individuals participating. The data collected through participant observation were recorded in log form, but later manually coded and analyzed according to the scales of interpersonal and socio-national banal integration described in Chapter 2 (Tables 2.2 & 2.3). Again, the volume of these observations far outweighs the examples and data that is presented here, but each serves to inform the way in which the presented data is conceptualized as a part of my research.

While participant observation involves documenting, coding, and analyzing researcher produced data, it remains important to not assume meaning into or onto observations; lack of meaning can be just as significant as demonstrated meaning. For example, many studies considering the use of language in Latvia highlight the perceived tension between Latvian and Russian in the public sphere; many such studies use language as a proxy for nationality, identity, ethnicity, etc. However, an observation of a customer conducting a transaction in a coffee shop in Russian should not be necessarily be read as anti-Latvian. In such cases, it is

the onus of the research to not only record interactions themselves, but also the observable indicators around them (e.g. attitudes, tones, tangential interactions). Participant observation allows the researcher to make the quantifiable qualitative, which yields a much richer picture than the simple counting of the number of non-accommodating bilingual interactions.

Participant observation is both active and passive; in the context of this research, I act not only an observer, but functioning member of the society which I study. My physical appearance, demeanor, and linguistic traits do not initially mark me as an outsider, therefore I am able to blend into the scene which I am observing. In more selective scenarios, such as group rehearsals, or the month of embedded participant observation I spent in a rural school, my role was Janus-faced. I was both an outsider, and an active participant in the social context, interacting with colleagues and forming friendships. Following social science norms and considering the well-being of my informants, I did not misrepresent my reasons for being in the country, or my university affiliation. In his work on “everyday ethnicity” in Cluj, Romania, Brubaker also considers the methodological challenges of living in an environment without overtly evoking the specter of nationalism or ethnicity (2006). My explanation of my research was usually general, so as not to overly influence my interactions with them. For example, I might answer that I am studying integration, cultural integration, minority participation, and cultural organizational groups. Indeed, as my fieldwork has developed, so has my line of inquiry, each interaction informing the next.

Medium-n student survey

In order to reconsider the previous work done on integration from my own perspectives, I borrow from key indicators and topics that appear in integration policy and research to provide in-depth data concentrating on a particular regional subgroup of the Latvian population. I conducted a medium-n survey targeting 15-19-year-olds in minority, mainstream, and dual-stream schools from Daugavpils city and Daugavpils municipality. The survey considered several areas of the integration discussion, including linguistic practices, civil society, legal

ties, and indicators of belonging (see Appendix 1 for the survey instrument).

Survey development

The survey was drafted in Fall 2015 with significant influence from Dr. Anda Laķe's (Latvian Academy of Culture) survey of 2013 Latvian National Song and Dance Celebration participants (Laķe, 2013; Laķe & Grīnberga, 2014). Initially, I intended to distribute the survey to university and mid-aged (*vidējā paaudze*) dance collectives in Latvia. However, in response to the demands of the field, my larger research plan was modified to concentrate on high school youth, and the survey was modified for these parameters to target a general population of teenagers. The survey received initial comments from Dr. Guntis Šmidchens, as well as in-depth comment and strategic development insight from Dr. Anda Laķe and LAC research assistants. To expand the potential impact of the survey, in conjunction with LAC, questions from the 2013 survey of festival participants, as well as questions that were planned for a future survey of 2015 School Youth Song and Dance Celebration participants¹⁷ were included in my survey.

In collaboration with Dr. Laķe and researcher Līga Grīnberga, my questionnaire was formatted and reviewed in detail. The survey was organized into three sections: attitudes/perceptions of and participation in Song and Dance celebrations, participation in extracurricular/cultural activities, and demographics and values questions. The survey was written for a general student population, but included filters on specific themes (see the survey instrument in Appendix 1).

The wording of multiple questions was discussed in depth, including how to appropriately define "amateur artists' collectives/groups" (*amatiermākslas kolektīvi/mākslenieciskie kolektīvi*) to be understandable for high school students, appropriate terminology for "go on

¹⁷ The 2015 School Youth Song and Dance Celebration survey had an intended nationwide distribution to participants, however, the response rate was unexpectedly low and has not provided for significant comparison with my survey to date.

a date,” and gender standards. I initially included “male/female/don't wish to answer” options, informed by critical gender theory and increasingly standardized in the United States. Upon consultation with LAC, we decided to remove the “don't wish to answer” option, which does not fit into the social context of Latvia where gender fluidity is stigmatized; high school students would be unlikely to take such a question seriously.

One of the most significant questions that came under discussion regarded citizenship and ethnicity/nationality, addressed through questions regarding the respondents’ passport.¹⁸ These types of identity questions are not generally asked, because they are considered politically sensitive. According to Muižnieks, “In their enthusiasm to implement EU directives on data protection, some Latvian authorities have gone so far as to declare all ethnic data ‘sensitive data,’ thereby depriving researchers and policy-makers of a crucial tool” (2010, p. 12). Rather, the question of ethnicity/identity is often dealt with by asking which language the respondent primarily uses to converse. As I argue, language is an imperfect indicator that cannot sufficiently define civic, ethnic or cultural identity. My goal with including questions of citizenship and ethnicity/nationality was to provide a multi-pronged indicator of identity. Because it was critical to the initial hypothetical reasoning of the dissertation, it was decided to include these questions at the end of the questionnaire. Indeed, as Muižnieks continues, “If the appropriate safeguards are in place and the data are anonymous, voluntary and based on self-identification, they can facilitate combating discrimination and aid those developing policy initiatives” (2010, p. 12). Significantly, no negative feedback was associated with this question on the pilot survey; only six respondents overall abstained from the question.

The survey was approved for distribution to students ages 15 and higher by the National Center for Education of the Republic of Latvia (*Valsts izglītības satūras centrs*). Daugavpils University partially supported the copying of paper questionnaires.

¹⁸ See Chapter 4 for a discussion of the terminological issues surrounding this categorization.

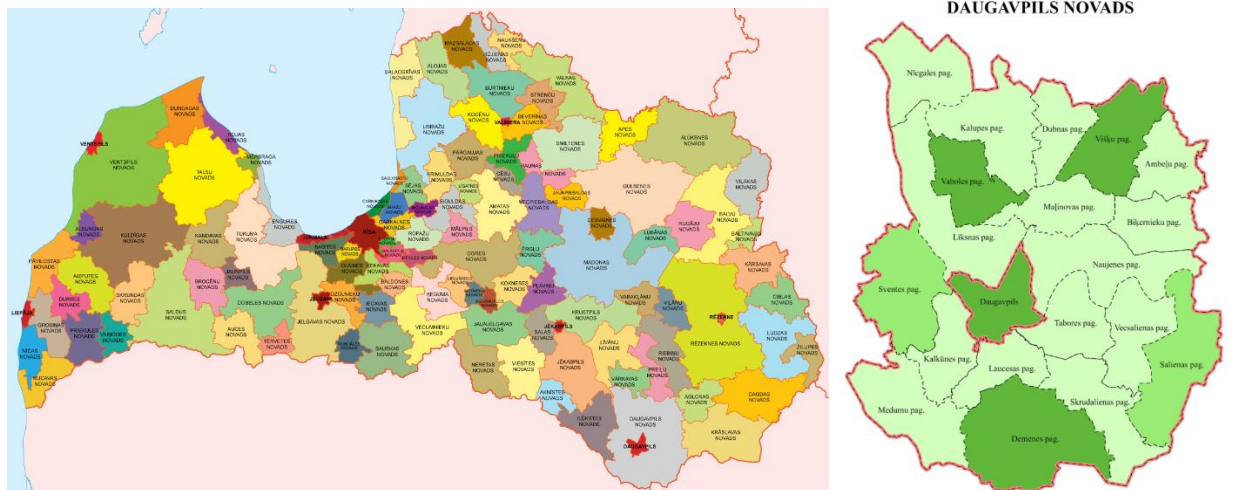
Pilot

The survey was piloted with assistance from a LAC bachelor's student in grade 11 of a rural high school in Daugavpils municipality. The school is ethnically diverse, and though it was piloted in Latvian classes, Russian-speakers were also part of the pilot survey. Eight students were interviewed one-on-one with researchers; six students filled out a paper questionnaire.

Several modifications were made from the initial survey based on the results of this pilot, including order, temporal tense, typographical errors and clarifications/additions (e.g. expanding the question on spoken language to include the regional language of Latgalian¹⁹). Though there were no problems with the Latvian language survey instrument in the pilot, the survey was also translated into Russian by an LAC student and provided as an option to students in other educational institutions.

Sample & distribution

Figures 5.1 & 5.2: Map of Latvia (municipalities) & Map of Daugavpils municipality



5.1 Map of Latvia showing municipalities and large cities. 5.2 Parishes in Daugavpils municipality. Schools are operational in five parishes and Daugavpils city (mid- and dark-toned sections). Schools in dark-toned parishes/city were surveyed.²⁰

¹⁹ It remains debated as to whether Latgalian is a separate language, or a dialect of Latvian.

²⁰ Images: Daugavpils novada dome, n.d.; Wikipedia user Kikos.

The survey was conducted between February 5 and March 1, 2016²¹ and distributed in five of 13 high schools in Daugavpils city and three of five high schools in Daugavpils municipality (8 of the 18 regional high schools total), as well as to one Saturday lecture class for high school students at Daugavpils University. Initially the survey was targeted to students in grade 11 and 12, but in response to school and class availability, this was expanded to include students in 9th and 10th grade. In the 2015/2016 school year in which the survey was distributed, there were a total of 2,408 eligible students within Daugavpils and Daugavpils municipality. A total of 384 surveys were collected. In some surveys distributed at Daugavpils University, a handful of students indicated they lived outside of the Daugavpils area, but within Latgale; others did not capture school type data and are excluded in some presented findings.

All 13 high school in Daugavpils city and five high schools in Daugavpils municipality were contacted via email and telephone and asked to participate in the survey. Eight schools responded positively; one school requested a survey date beyond the scope of the research timeframe. Timing, exam preparation, and pressures associated with requests for other VISC surveys were noted as reasons for schools to not take part in the survey. The grades participating in the survey varied between each school, depending on time and other obligations. All students present in surveyed classes participated. I personally introduced the survey and made clarifying statements in each class, speaking in either English or Latvian and introducing myself as a student researcher at the University of Washington. This outside status allowed me to more effectively negotiate any potential bias that may have been assumed from a local Latvian researcher. Some students found the survey humorous, but general reaction to the survey was largely quiet. Most dutifully filled it out, though they were assured that it was not required. In some schools, I moved through several classes to

²¹ The survey was conducted in the few days following the BBC2 film *World War Three: Inside the War Room* (Range, 2016), which imagines a scenario in which WWII begins with a Crimea-style takeover of Daugavpils. However, it is not necessarily clear that this was watched or widely discussed in Daugavpils, and may have little to no impact on the results of the survey.

distribute surveys and clarify the first question on tense, but left teachers to supervise; however, in most cases, I remained in the classroom from start to finish. The survey took approximately 25 minutes to complete.

The survey captured around 15% of the total target population in Daugavpils city and municipality. Resources – physical, financial, and otherwise – limited the scope of the survey. However, the results presented are not intended to represent the wider high school student population across Latvia. Rather, it does offer a valid picture of student attitudes, actions, and perceptions in a region that has both demographic and rhetorical importance in the debate on integration in Latvia. This survey both reconsiders previous work on integration, and enhances regional specificity. However, while this methodology gives a general picture of student attitudes in Daugavpils city and municipality, to capture variation and nuance, it is supplementary to the qualitative data. According to Fox and Miller-Idriss, “[qualitative] methods (used in conjunction with survey methods) can provide a richer and more balanced picture of the scope, depth and content of the everyday meanings of the nation,” and, as I argue, integration, as well (2008, p. 555).

Constraints

Identity, nationality, and ethnicity is constructed, multifaceted, and mutable. It chosen or imposed, based on what can “plausibly be connected to [individuals’] history and present set of behaviors” (Laitin, 1998, p. 16). Academics serve no small role in the application and imposition of identity; not least in the topic of integration. As Anderson argues, “The fiction of the census is that everyone is in it, and everyone has one – and only one – extremely clear place. No fractions” (2006, 166).

The multi-pronged methodology I employ is an effort to capture part of the multi-faceted nature of integration – in discourse and in life. It is far from perfect and far from complete. As a lone researcher with minimal funding and access to resources – even those as simple as

a vehicle – my work is necessarily constrained by the banal limitations of time, money, and space. I have sought to embed myself in the communities on which my work primarily focuses, make use of public spaces and services, and gain a deep-seated sense of the interactions and lifestyles around me. However, there are biases inherent to the work. I have attempted to make intentional choices that help to balance the biases that are unintentional, e.g. an extended research trip to the impoverished Latgalian countryside to counterbalance a focus on the moderately affluent Rigan city center. Similarly, I use both quantifiable survey data and interpretative qualitative data to provide a more holistic picture of the societies I study.

The nature of identity and integration is ephemeral and undefined; it is influenced by any number of outside forces. Indeed, “the concept of the everyday or banal is never fixed; it is not uniform as it does not have well-defined borders” (Seliverstova & Pawlusz, 2016, p. 83). This study cannot and does not claim to be fully representative of the country. It is limited by its sources and temporal constraints. In many cases, it can only serve as a snapshot of the way things are in a single context. However, this should not diminish its contribution to either the study of Latvia as a case, or banal integration as a whole. “Messy and imperfect” data is just as easily termed “rich and complex.” If its constraints are recognized, each case study has the ability to inform future discovery and theoretical insights. Though certainly imperfect in scope, that is the intended goal of this study.

Reflexive perspective

The real world is not a sterile laboratory, neither is the ethnographic researcher omnipotent or external. Academics cannot be and neither should be presumed to be locked away in an ivory tower, immune to the social processes which we study. Necessarily, our fields of research and lines of inquiry are informed by our interests – even our passions. This is not to say that an effective researcher can eschew the positivist paradigm entirely. One must be extraordinarily wary of biasing results to accomplish one’s personal agenda. However, each researcher is guided by their own personal experiences. They may be emotionally affected by

the stories of their informants or the constraints of the field. These impacts on the research should not be ignored; rather, emotional reflexivity of the researcher can act as both a source of data and inform the analytical approach, particularly when the topic of the study is ephemeral (Seliverstova & Pawlusz, 2016, p. 73).

My own background (both academic and personal) is necessarily relevant to my chosen topic of integration. Like many of my subjects, I fall into multiple ethnic, linguistic, and national categories. The product of a “mixed marriage” (American white Anglo Saxon protestant and Latvian), my cultural heritage informs my world view, while my personal history of growing up in ethnically diverse rural Arizona brings a different perspective on ethnic integration. Trained in the American university system, I bring a definite Western sensibility to my research in Eastern Europe, though I find myself consistently caught between stereotypes. In a backlash against centuries-long epistemology elevating the outside gaze (and the presumed hierarchy of power favoring Western standards of knowing), indigenous researchers in non-Western contexts are increasingly preferred over the external gaze of the Western academic. Researchers touching on ethnicity in the Baltics have often been pre-judged in the opposite manner (e.g. Estonians discussing minority rights must eschew the assumption that they inherently biased toward an Estonian viewpoint). I argue that in the case of the Baltic region, as in non-Western cases, indigenous researchers, or those that straddle the boundary between insider and outsider, can provide perspective critical to understanding the social context of issues that cannot be fully accessed by outsiders.

Indeed, in research tangential to my dissertation work, I collaborated with a Latvian-born Russian-speaking researcher on issues of Russian-speaker and Latvian integration.²² Our academic perspective and lived experiences were similar (having both grown up in Arizona and being trained in West Coast American universities). Our emotional and personal

²² See Ekmanis & Safranova, 2016.

perspectives regarding the Russian-speaking population in Latvia were informed by our diverse heritage, and memories/stories passed down from our parents. Working together, we were able to access both sides of the Latvian-Russian integration coin in our joint project (undoubtedly informing our work going forward). This offered us enhanced access, but also allowed us to observe nuances that pointed to greater similarities between the Russian- and Latvian-speaking populations that are often overlooked by researchers with less of a personal connection to the subject, or alternatively, overlooked by indigenous researchers for whom the field is daily life.²³

A double-edged sword of ethnography is the way in which being constantly embedded in the field can serve to merge the personal with the academic, and complicates the line between friend and researcher. However, discussions that have resulted from informal or personal interaction are also valuable contributions to my research as a participant observer. For all their informality, they enrich my understanding of the social context around which my study revolves. As I build relationships with individuals, information they share with me becomes increasingly valid to my understanding of the social context from an insider's perspective. Empathizing with informants also provides a window into better understanding their daily lives; it gives context to why individuals vocalize certain attitudes or act in certain ways. For example, interacting with children in the rural backwaters of the Latvian borderlands takes an emotional toll; questions like "Where will these children be in 5 or 10 years? What opportunities will they have?" surface emotionally, but also make clear why certain political issues remain on the backburner or why certain social choices have been made. It enriches the researcher's understanding to embrace their reflexive positionality.

Anthropological ethics requires researchers to consider not only the data they collect from

²³ This is in no way meant to discount other researchers or the validity of other studies; rather, it is meant to simply highlight the relevance of researcher positionality in capturing diverse and nuanced aspects of such sensitive topics of inquiry.

their informants, but also the way in which it impacts the community from which they glean knowledge. This element of researcher responsibility was particularly important to my month of fieldwork in Daugavpils municipality, where I lived and worked in a small rural community. I continue to make an active effort to maintain the connections forged there.

Both the idea for and the result of my research is informed by my own experiences living and working in Latvia. As an undergraduate, I became frustrated with the way in which the anti-Russian Latvian diaspora narrative conflicted with my personal experiences working with Latvian and Russian-speakers in the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Integration in the questions of citizenship and education became the topic of my master's thesis. My experience at the 2013 Nationwide Song and Dance Celebration, observing a group of middle aged dancers dressed in Latvian folk costumes speaking in Russian, was in conflict with the academic discourse on integration that I had previously studied, and sparked the first step towards this project. Each of these experiences has shaped my understanding of the topic of integration, the case study of Latvia, and the research I conduct. I cannot separate my work from myself, neither do I believe it is right to do so. As the field of international studies relies on the lessons of multiple academic disciplines to triangulate data to enhance the project's external validity, I contend that my reflexive experiences serve a similar goal to enhance the depth and quality of this research.

Chapter 4 | Against the grain: A look at the state of top-down 'integration'

In the literature review (Chapter 2), I critiqued the theoretical structures that have often framed the discussion on Russian-speaker integration in the post-Soviet space (e.g. immigrant, diaspora, etc.). In the following three chapters, I turn to a deeper investigation of my case study country, Latvia. Chapter 4 considers the Latvian government's approach to integration and the development of integration policy. This includes a brief discussion of the history of Latvia, which has had a considerable effect on the way that integration policy has developed and been implemented in the post-Soviet period. A primary source for considering current policy recommendations is the "Guidelines on National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy (2012-2018)," issued by the Ministry of Culture (2012). These guidelines highlight 13 problems in the areas of civil society, national identity, and integration, five of which are discussed in this and following chapters. Additionally, this chapter considers internal and external criticisms of the Latvian approach to the "integration problem" and the ways in which this approach fits within the proposed framework of banal integration. How these issues manifest in the "real" world will be the focus of Chapters 5 and 6.

This chapter is not intended as a comprehensive analysis of Latvian integration policy, partially, because no such thing actually exists. Rather, it means to highlight the challenges faced in key areas of integration policy over the past 27 years, external and internal pressures, and watershed moments. Many other scholars referenced here have tackled these issues in far greater depth. A general consensus is that Latvia lacks for a coordinated integration policy. Nominally under the Ministry of Culture, which offers guidelines, integration policy is carried out across ministries and governmental bodies. It is telling that even as this chapter is being written, the political will to move toward a consolidated integration policy is stagnated. In some ways, this political dysfunction may be a reason so much of the research concentrates

on elite-led, top-down policy and discourse. It is constantly changing, consistently an area of media focus, and rarely without controversy.

It is important to note that policy documents dealing with integration often do not focus solely on internal (i.e. Russian-speaker) integration. Integration with the West has been both a policy priority, as well as a primary shaper of Latvia's minority integration policy. As Muižnieks (2010) argues, the international situation has a pronounced effect on social integration. This goes beyond minority integration concerns and extends to the problem of the ever-increasing Latvian diaspora. After joining the European Union in 2004, Latvia saw an uptick in naturalization rates, but also a mass exodus to take advantage of the right of free movement in the EU. This economic migration was further compounded by the 2008 economic crisis, which hit Latvia hardest in Europe (Åslund, 2011; Muižnieks, 2010, p. 8). Maintaining connections between the diaspora population, the Latvian state, and national culture has become a serious concern of the Latvian government, sometimes eclipsing the pressing issues of integration in the homeland. However, Latvian emigrants and Russian-speaking immigrants are frequently tied together in political integration rhetoric, as integration in Latvia is often synonymous with maintaining and/or developing Latvian identity.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the topic of integration in the post-Soviet Baltic countries is plagued with incessant contradictions. Not only is the immigrant population lumped together with an emigrant population, but the Russia-speaking population is trapped in two competing frameworks: 1) potential fifth columnists who must actively prove their loyalty to the Baltic nation; 2) passive victims of ethnonationalist policies who need/desire external protection (both Russian and Western). Similarly, the Latvian state is criticized for 1) failing to integrate Russian-speakers and 2) attempting to assimilate Russian-speakers. Such double-edged critiques are often simultaneous and reference the exact same policies. External pressures have further served to complicate top-down integration policy. The contradictory nature of the way in which integration is discussed, analyzed, and legislated has distanced the discourse

from realities on the ground, and often overlooks relative successes. Latvia is a rule of law democracy; I argue that the mechanisms for integration – though controversial and perhaps inefficient – exist and are functional. The institutional path to banal integration is clear, even if the policy discourse does not reflect that.

This chapter is structured in the following way: First, I consider the multicultural history of Latvia, as well as the modern definition of “Latvian”, its inclusivity, exclusivity, and malleability. I will then look at the rocky development of Latvian post-Soviet integration policy and external/internal pressures. This includes a discussion of five issues areas laid out in the Ministry of Culture’s guidelines and how they factor into both integration policy and its development: 1) history and memory; 2) citizenship; 3) education; 4) language; and 5) culture. Latvian integration policy has often been contradictory and self-defeating, leading to critiques that “while Latvian authorities are strongly opposed to a two-community state, some of its policies as well as the attitudes of the ethnic Latvians impede the transition to a one-community state” (Kolstø, 1999, p. 304). Yet the data shows that there has not been a significant barrier to Russian-speaker access to the state or nation, despite the controversy that surrounds integration mechanisms (internally and externally). Lastly, I look at how the top-down integration policies and discourse conflict with the way integration is experienced in daily life. I argue that while elite-led policies remain complex and imperfect (though arguably functional), banal integration occurs in quotidian life without much emphasis on the problems highlighted in policy construction.

Building & rebuilding the Latvian state

The story of post-Soviet integration policy begins well before the fall of the USSR, and is informed by the much longer history of Latvians in the Baltic littoral. Baltic history is unsurprisingly complex and remains outside the scope of this dissertation (see Kasekamp, 2010; Plakans, 1995, 2011). In the context of this work, it is important to note that the territory of the Baltic littoral over the course of time frequently changed hands and was subject

to Swedish, German, and Russian rule for centuries. The end of the 12th century came with German crusaders and in 1201, Bishop Albert founded the city of Riga, which flourished as a member of the Hanseatic League. German nobility and church men governed the territory, while ethnic Latvians were concentrated in the peasantry. However, Baltic Germans were also key to the development of the Latvian national conscious, first documenting the peoples and the languages of the littoral (Henry of Livonia), later bringing the ideals of enlightenment to the region and legitimizing the indigenous cultures (Johann Gottfried Herder) (Kasekamp, 2010; Plakans, 2011; Šmidchens, 2014).

In the 18th century, the territories of Latvia were absorbed into the Russian Empire in three governorates – Courland (Kurzeme), Livonia (Vidzeme) and Vitebsk (Latgale). Though part of the Russian Empire, Baltic Germans remained as the main administrators in the Courland and Livonia governorates. After the abolishment of serfdom in the Russian Empire (which came first to Courland [1817] and Livonia [1819], but four decades later to Vitebsk [1861]), the number of educated Latvians grew and the first Latvian National Awakening brought cultural national awareness to the ethnic group in the second half of the 19th century (Kasekamp, 2010; Plakans, 2011). (The first Latvian National Song Festival was also held during this period of national awakening). Latvians were swept up in the wave of national self-determination that overtook Europe in the early 20th century and was compounded by the 1905 Revolution, World War I, Russian Revolution and subsequent wars of independence. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania emerged in the interwar period as some of Europe's newest states, declaring independence in 1918.

Though the countries followed the trend of national self-determination in the West, these nascent states retained a deeply multicultural history and populace. According to Smith, et al, the countries developed in a manner that “deliberately eschewed pre-existing notions of ‘one nation, one culture’ within a single state”; rather a civic national identity formed the basis of the state:

“In the case of Latvia specifically, the 18 November 1918 declaration of independence was addressed not to ‘the Latvians’ but to the ‘citizens of Latvia’ ... Although the declaration referred to the ‘united ethnographic boundaries’ of the state, undertakings were also made to respect the ‘ethnic rights’ of minority groups, and a Nationalities Commission established to oversee this. Similarly, the 1922 Constitution made reference to a single political ‘nation of Latvia’ (*Latvijas tauta*), while stating that ethnic Latvian (*latviešu tauta*) were only one of a number of ‘sovereign and autonomous’ ethnic communities entitled to preserve their distinct cultural heritage, religion and language.” (Smith, Galbreath, & Swain, 2010, p. 32)

Multiculturalism was enshrined in the founding documents of Latvia’s political birth. Latvia’s post-Soviet restoration of independence retained the original 1922 constitution with only minor amendments (Rozenvalds, 2010, p. 35), but new policies distinguished between national minorities and Soviet-era migrants.

Independence as a parliamentary democracy lasted less than two decades. In 1934, Kārlis Ulmanis, Latvia’s president-cum-“benevolent dictator” followed the authoritarian trends overtaking Europe, suspended the Constitution and increased state control of the press and economy. Ulmanis believed in a “Latvia for Latvians” and promoted Latvianization policies that served to assimilate minorities in the school system and increase Latvian control of the workplace. However, there were no radical departures in policy toward minorities; indeed, “the treatment of minorities in the Baltic states was in stark contrast to the fate of Estonian and Latvian communities in Soviet Russia who were the target of ethnic cleansing during the Great Terror” (Kasekamp, 2010, p. 119). Under Ulmanis’ reign, the Latvian economy grew and developed. Ulmanis was also the last head of the independent Latvian state before WWII; as such – despite his suspension of democratic processes – Ulmanis and this period in Latvian history is often viewed through rose-colored glasses.

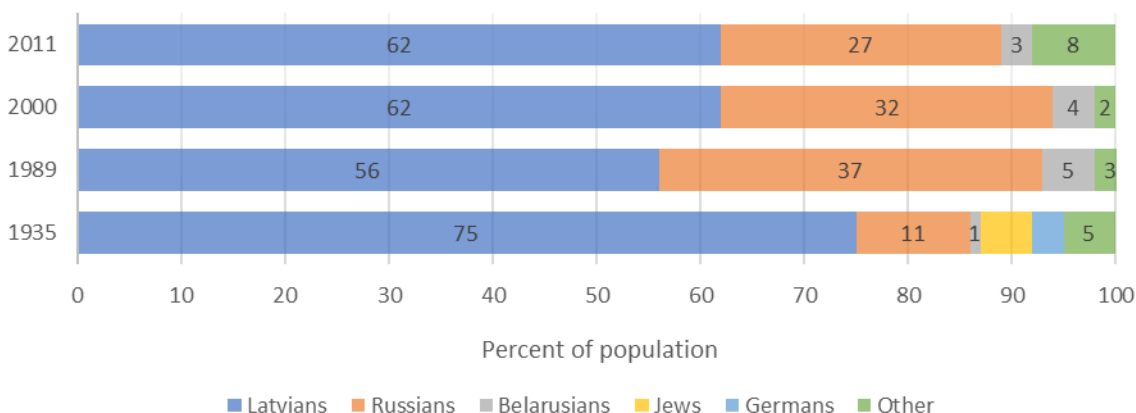
This is influenced in no small way by the terror that ended Ulmanis’ rule and struck Latvia with a vengeance during World War II. Though declaring neutrality at the start of the war, the Baltic countries were ill-fated geographically. In a precarious position between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, the Baltic states became bloodlands, occupied first by Soviet

Russia in 1940, then Nazi Germany in 1941 and again by the USSR in 1944. Over the course of these occupations, Latvia's population was devastated by Soviet deportations, Baltic German repatriation, the annihilation of nearly the entire Latvian Jewish population, and the wave of refugees to the West – more than 250,000 people were lost (Kasekamp, 2010). This dissertation does not allow the space to adequately address the necessarily details of this time period, which is complex and tragic (see Applebaum, 2012; Eksteins, 1999; Ezergailis, 1996, 2005; Snyder, 2010 and others). The effect on the populace was deep trauma largely experienced along ethnic lines, then subsequently enhanced and repressed in the 45 years of Soviet occupation that followed.

The Soviet occupation continued the traumatic experiences of the war, not least in the Stalinist years, wherein 57,000 Latvians were deported to Siberia as enemies of the people. Industrial advancements encouraged large-scale labor migrations, which further lowered the share of ethnic Latvians in Latvia. However, more banal elements of the Soviet period have also had an effect on modern integration policy. Political repression and the tight constraints on the populace significantly degraded functional civil society, eroding social capital (Howard, 2003; Kasekamp, 2010; Plakans, 2011). The Soviet governing structure put minimal power directly in the hands of Latvians, ergo Latvians were largely responsible for only sectors directly relating to their ethnic kin, while all-Union decisions were largely in the hands of Russians and Moscow. The argument therefore stems that in the post-Soviet period, Latvian elites had not been adequately prepared to consider the needs of other communities in the way they addressed the needs of ethnic Latvians. This could have contributed to the erosion of the Constitutionally-enshrined principles of civic nation among the ideology of elites in the 1990s who “perceived it negatively and in an intensely overwrought fashion” (Vēbers, 2007, cited in Rozenvalds, 2010). Making up only 0.5% of the total Soviet population, Latvians were also accustomed the position of an insignificant minority in the context of USSR (Rozenvalds, 2010, p. 36-7). The advantages afforded Russian-speakers in the USSR and the large influx

of Russian-speaking migrants during the Soviet period similarly fed into a minority complex that Latvian elites retained as they shaped the post-Soviet state.

Figure 4.1 Latvian Population by Year/Ethnicity



Data: Central Statistical Bureau, 2012.

The popular movements for restoring independence took an initially moderate stance regarding minorities in the late 1980s, when Russian-speakers were not largely politically united. Indeed, in 1990 39% of minority respondents were in favor of Latvian independence and researchers calculate that approximately 25% of minorities voted for Latvian independence in 1991 (Rozenvalds, 2010, p. 32; Zepa, 1992). However, concern for the validity of the titular nation eventually blinded leaders in the independence movement and early policy makers. In the final years of the Soviet Union’s existence, the ethnic makeup of Latvia’s population had changed dramatically. While ethnic Latvians were 75% of the population in 1935 and ethnic Russians 11%, by 1989, the ethnic populations were much closer in size 56% and 37%, respectively (though linguistically, much closer to 50-50) (Fig. 4.1) (Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 2012).

The fact that the titular nation of the Latvian state made up barely half of the population as a whole was of great concern for post-Soviet nation builders after independence was restored in 1991. Latvian political elite were hopeful that there would be significant repatriation of

Soviet-era migrants to Russia and therefore did not make a concerted effort to incorporate the significant Russian-speaking minority into the renewed Latvian state. After an initial outflow and the removal of Soviet troops in 1994, outmigration dwindled, and a significant need to rethink naturalization and general integration policy was slowly recognized. By the late 1990s, survey data suggested that 90% of non-citizens and 94% of citizens planned to stay in the country, but that value differences between ethnic Latvians and non-Latvians threatened the development of a “binational society” (Baltic Data House, 1998, cited in Rozenvalds, 2010). Integration policies only began to develop in the late 1990s, prompted by both Western pressure (e.g. the European Union, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and United Nations Development Program) and Russian reaction to the “oppression” of Russian-speaking “co-nationals.” This demanded “real steps toward the consolidation of society” that sought to bring the Russian-speaking minority closer to the state and national values (Rozenvalds, 2010, p. 50). In 2000, Latvia (and Estonia, which faced similar demographic problems) adopted State Integration Programs “with the declared aim of integrating Russian-speakers into society” (Kasekamp, 2010, p. 185). Arguably the decentralized nature of integration policy means that Latvia continues to lack a true integration strategy. Efforts have largely focused on the five key issue areas identified at the beginning of this chapter: 1) history and memory; 2) citizenship; 3) education; 4) language; 5) culture.

Defining ‘a Latvian’

Before looking at these key issue areas of integration, it is important to have a better understanding of the complexity of defining what it is to be “Latvian.” According to the Ministry of Culture:

“One can be not only born a Latvian but also consciously become one. Each person’s choice determines whether alongside his or her Latvian identity, which is the common one, he or she wishes to maintain also his or her national uniqueness and minority identity” (2012, p. 12).

The Ministry of Culture's guideline document on integration outlines basic definitions of individuals and groups in Latvia. These definitions provide a rhetorical rationale for who is and can be Latvian – and who is not. Not unlike Latvia's integration policy in general, these basic definitions are both inclusive and exclusive, with a tendency to cherry-pick the individuals that are welcome with open arms into the "Latvian" fold, and those who must demonstrate effort to transform from "other" into "Latvian."

The title of this section in the guidelines gives some indication as to how complex labels and identity are in Latvia: "Latvia needs every Latvian and Latvian citizen (including those who do not live in Latvia) – every inhabitant of Latvia."²⁴ These definitions are offered with a caveat that "the clarifications are not absolute and apply only to these Guidelines" (2012, p.5), but the Ministry of Culture is a primary government institution dealing with the issues of integration, therefore these guidelines and definitions are arguably generally reflective of the state attitude toward these terms and relevant to the way in which they affect integration policy and development from a top-down perspective.

"Nation – people having their own Nation State or fighting to achieve one. The Latvians have been a nation since the beginning of the 20th century, when the idea of Latvian national self-determination began to spread among the Latvian people. This came into being in 1918, when, using the people's freedom of self-determination, the Nation State of Latvia – Latvia, was established. The Latvians had developed as a cultural nation earlier – in the 19th century. The features of a cultural nation: unifying national culture, language, feeling of community, common national interests and readiness to defend them.

"Latvian – a person who by at least one national cultural criterion (especially language, culture, origin) and feeling of subjective belonging, identifies himself as belonging to the Latvian nation. The concepts "Latvian" and "Latvian nation" are wider than the concept "Latvian citizen" because someone belonging to the Latvian nation may not necessarily be a Latvian citizen.

"Latvian citizen – a person having Latvian citizenship according to the law. In

²⁴ This makes only marginally more sense in the Latvian-language document, but remains terribly unwieldy: "*Ikviens latvietis un Latvijas pilsonis (arī tie, kas nedzīvo Latvijā), ikviens Latvijas iedzīvotājs ir vajadzīgs Latvijai*" (my translation: "Each Latvian and Latvian citizen (including those who do not live in Latvia), each Latvian inhabitant is necessary to Latvia").

accordance with Article 64 of the Constitution, the body of Latvian citizens is the collective State legislator consisting of citizens enjoying full rights.

“Latvian people – the bearer of the sovereign power of the State of Latvia as prescribed in Article 2 of the Constitution. The ‘Latvian people’ are all of the citizens regardless of the nationality and those belonging to the Latvian nation regardless of whether they are citizens or not. All those belonging to the Latvian nation must have the right to the citizenship of their State that, when obtained, gives them the right to participate in the democratic government process of the State of Latvia” (2012, p. 5-6).

These categories overlap and are fuzzy, which is reflective of the way that these terms are used. The phrasing appears to promote some version of “civic assimilationism’ – a view that accepts cultural and linguistic diversity in the private sphere, but argues that a shared, homogeneous public or societal culture is essential for common goals” (Muižnieks, 2010, p. 20). The “wideness” of “Latvian” could be read in a manner that includes non-citizens or other immigrants, but the rhetoric and priorities of state funding indicate that this is instead more likely to be directed towards individuals in the Latvian diaspora, especially children of Latvians born abroad who do not have Latvian citizenship. The definition remains theoretically subjective to include individuals who feel they “belong” and who meet the requirements of national cultural criteria, but how this is measured is unclear. These definitions are worded in a manner that offers nearly unlimited inclusiveness to ethnic Latvians, but avoid the blanket inclusion of Soviet-era migrants (and descendants) without active effort on the part of the individual to “become” part of the Latvian people. This disparity is further highlighted in the definitions of national “others”.

“National minorities – Latvian citizens differing from Latvians in terms of language and culture having traditionally lived in Latvia for generations and belonging to the State of Latvia and the Latvian society but simultaneously wishing to preserve and develop their culture and language.

“Immigrants – foreigners living in Latvia with fixed term or permanent residency permits, as well as Latvian non-citizens. Within the meaning of the Lisbon Treaty they are third country nationals. There are three groups of immigrants in Latvia. The largest group are the former citizens of the USSR who arrived to Latvia as a result of the USSR

occupation policy and their descendants to who the so-called “Law on Non-citizens”²⁵ has granted special privileges in comparison with other immigrant groups (non-citizens do not have to apply for residence or work permits as do new immigrants; non-citizens have the right of naturalization and to join the body of Latvian citizens thus acquiring all the rights, including the right to vote.) The second immigrant group are long-term or permanent residents with non-EU, EEA or Swiss Confederation citizenship (mainly Russian citizens who have renounced their Latvian non-citizen status). The third group: the new immigrants who arrived to Latvia after 1992 from the countries which are not Member States of the European Union (mainly from the former USSR republics).²⁶

“Latvian Non-citizens – former USSR citizens and their descendants to whom, according to the law, have been given special status and who have the right of naturalization on an individual basis” (2012, p. 6-7).

These definitions are critical to the way that the state perceives (and allows) minorities to develop a formal relationship with the state. The rhetoric here clearly draws a line between “national minorities” (i.e. historical minorities that helped found the Latvian nation-state in the interwar period, including Russians), and Soviet-era migrants and their descendants. This is not an insignificant distinction from the perspective of Latvian history. The idea of a Russian-speaking minority in Latvia obfuscates two key issues: 1) not all Russian speakers are Russian, and 2) Soviet-era Russian migrants come from a different socio-cultural and historical background, as compared with pre-World War II Russian minorities. This document not-so-subtly hints at the difference between Soviet-era migrants and national minorities, which is informed by the Soviet Union’s occupation of the Latvian state. However, these differences do not adequately register with international frameworks protecting minorities. When considering the demography of the Russian-speaking “minority,” external pressures to

²⁵ Non-citizenship is a status that applies only to former Soviet citizens and their descendants who have not naturalized as citizens of any state. When reestablishing independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, the Latvian government reverted to the 1919 citizenship law in the 1991 Renewal of the Republic of Latvia Citizen’s Rights and Fundamental Principles of Nationality, invoking the principle of state continuity from the interwar period (similar proceedings occurred in Estonia) (Krūma 2010). Citizens of the interwar Latvian state and their descendants had the right to regain Latvian citizenship automatically, while Soviet-era migrants were able to receive non-citizen passports or go through a naturalization process. Non-citizens are primarily Russian-speakers; they have the right to naturalize, but many have not chosen to do so for both emotional and instrumental reasons (Ekmanis 2013).

²⁶ Immigrants from EU, EEA and Swiss Confederation are not considered in this document.

create pro-minority policies without a deeper consideration of history have often served to segregate, rather than include these minorities in the state. However, despite these historical, linguistic, and policy difficulties, non-citizens and minority Russians do not remain outside of society; though the state conceptualizes these population groups in an unclear way, most maintain institutional ties, regardless of their legal status.

The definitions used in the Guidelines can easily be interpreted as evidence that the Latvia government is not wholly welcoming to Russian-speakers as part of the Latvian people/nation. However, an alternative explanation for the loose and confusing language could come from the opposite argument, i.e. that including minorities as part of the Latvian nation is hostile to the rights of minorities. As Muižnieks notes, "Calls to use 'Latvian' to describe all residents or citizens of Latvia regardless of ethnicity have sparked accusations of assimilation" (2010, p. 13). Are these group constructs exclusionary or assimilationist? (And is group construction not inherently problematic?) This is just one in a series of catch-22's in which the Latvian state finds itself in the integration discussion. Indeed, this may be a reason these definitions of belonging are so murky.

The linguistic confusion over the definitions of nationality and ethnicity plays no small role in this discussion, causing both internal discomfort and misunderstanding by outside analysts. To begin, in Latvian (as in English) there is no one word to describe a person's civic belonging to Latvia that distinguishes from their ethnic heritage; the term *latvietis* (Latvian) often, but not always, maintains an ethnic characteristic. However, minorities may self-assign the civic meaning of *latvietis* without distancing themselves from their minority ethnicity.²⁷ The Constitution uses *Latvijas tauta* (the people of [the country] of Latvia). *Tauta* itself is an unclear word, meaning "folk", "people", "nation." The derivative term *tautība* is translated as either nationality and/or ethnicity in government documents, but this translation is not

²⁷ This is apparent in diaspora social media groups, for example, where immigrants post in "Latvian" groups in both titular and minority languages.

standardized in policy translations and is occasionally misinterpreted by analysts. The complexity of the term is important because the category of *tautība* is officially noted in the Latvian population registry; here it most closely translates to ethnicity.

Parents may choose to register their child's *tautība* as any official ethnicity recorded for up to two generations on either parent's side (i.e. ethnicity of a parent or grandparent). Until July 2002, *tautība* was officially listed in all passports. Between 2002 and 2012, listing this category was optional. It was officially excluded between April 2012 and April 2013, but is currently optional again. All passports, however, have the category "Pilsonība/Nationality/Nacionalité" (citizenship/nationality), which is listed as *Latvijas* (of Latvia). (Only a person's *pilsonība*, not *tautība*, appears on state issued identification cards). A person may change their registered *tautība* in accordance with the Law on Names, Last Names and Nationality (Latvijas Republikas Saeima, 2016a). In an attempt to broaden the definition of Latvian, provisions have been made to allow individuals to change their *tautība* to *latvietis* (Latvian), provided certain residency and/or linguistic requirements are met (Latvijas Republikas Saeima, 2016a). This is a new amendment to the law, having only come into effect in October 2016, and was not without controversy. Proponents of the change echoed arguments of inclusiveness:

"We believe that *tautība* (nationality) should not only be looked at ethnically or as a search for a Latvian gene, if people live in Latvia, then they must be given an opportunity to voluntarily assimilate. Why should we prevent people who feel belonging to the Latvian nation from becoming Latvian?" said parliamentary deputy Andrejs Judins from the center-right "Latvian" party *Vietnotība* (Unity) in an interview for Latvian media outlet *Krustpunktā* (Crossroads) (Tomsons & Unāma, 2016, translated).

The opposite argument was espoused by Edvīns Šnore, from the right-wing party *Nacionālā apvienība* (National Alliance):

"We don't really see the point. If there are a few exceptions, then I agree, but why should such a basic element of the law be amended? The situation isn't so simple. The

concept and approach to *tautība* has been opened – they look at these things differently. But there are also countries and nations where the ethnic balance is such, that the defined titular nation (*pamatnācija*) is threatened. Particularly, if the country is small. In our capital Latvians are already a linguistic minority” (Tomsons & Unāma, 2016, translated).

Šnore’s view echoes that of the early elites, who were very clear in their desire to preserve the ethnic nation (Kolstø, 1999). The changes to the law were passed three months after the above interview. Given the 71 euro fee and hassle to register a change in *tautība*, the amendment and the discussion surrounding it is arguably symbolic. However, it marks a positive step toward legislatively reinforcing the civic quality of “Latvian,” though it requires significant investment from individuals themselves. Even so, it is unlikely that this change would have any tangible effect on an individual’s daily life – rarely are any documents indicating ethnicity displayed.

Deciding who is part of the nation and who is not remains a pressing topic, not only in Latvia, but in the Western world, as well. In Latvia, there is a clear historical rationale for attempts to protect the titular nation, which has been strongly criticized by external pressures (e.g. EU, Russia, OSCE, etc.), though attempts to more broadly incorporate individuals to the nation are similarly met with backlash. However, the same questions of civic and ethnic belonging are currently up for debate across Europe and the US, not least due to a recent influx of refugees and migrants from Muslim-majority and African countries.²⁸ In Latvia, there has been widespread concern regarding potential changes to Latvia’s demographic make-up and a “clash of cultures” that may be sparked by the arrival of Muslim immigrants.²⁹ The study by Ekmanis and Safranova further pointed to the mutability of what it means to “be Latvian,” noting a distinct Balto-Slavic nationalism between Russian-speakers and ethnic Latvians

²⁸ Consider recent campaigns and elections playing to the populist, nationalist and isolationist sentiments in the U.S. (Donald Trump), the U.K. (Brexit), France (Marine Le Pen), the Netherlands (Geert Wilders), Hungary (Viktor Orban), and others.

²⁹ In a slightly humorous example, respondents in focus groups led by Ekmanis and Safranova in 2015 highlighted Latvia’s identity as “a pork-eating country” as an example of why it would be difficult for Muslims to integrate (Ekmanis & Safranova, 2016).

regarding the potential arrival of Muslim immigrants. As one Latvian speaking respondent from Daugavpils noted, “There is the opinion in Latvia that Russians [Russian-speakers] are our enemies, but if refugees are coming, then the sentiment is that Russians are our biggest neighbors and friends” (Ekmanis & Safranová, 2016).³⁰

Latvia has consistently struggled to find the words and terms it needs to rebuild the post-Soviet nation and constituents, but the challenges it faces can no longer be written off as an ailment of an ethnocentric Eastern “other.” These issues have become germane in a world caught between the balance of globalization and resurgent nationalism. The global temperature is important to consider in the Latvian case not only to provide comparison, but particularly because Latvian integration policy has developed largely as a result of external influences, both prior to its declaration of statehood, and after its regained independence.

Integrating an integration policy

History & memory

History and memory are key elements in the integration discussion, not only because they significantly impact attitudes and perceptions, but because they are deeply imbedded in state integration guidelines. Social integration, according to the Ministry of Culture, requires a common social memory; “Properly organized social memory provides landmarks for moral standards; it strengthens the feeling of being a part of the State and geopolitical entity. Divided social memory means a divided society”(Ministry of Culture, 2012, p.29). A shared history of the past is not a simple theme in the Latvian context; despite decades – if not centuries – of cohabitation between ethnic Latvians and ethnic minorities, interpretations of historical periods (particularly World War II and Latvia’s incorporation in the Soviet Union) can be polarizing.

External pressures from Western international organizations and states, as well as from

³⁰ To contextualize, the speaker was referencing the discourse on Russian/Latvian tension, not her personal lived experiences regarding integration.

Russia, further serve to complicate the way in which Latvia both internally deals with its complex history, as well as the way it presents itself to others. Muižnieks outlines a major concern in this subject:

“In a representative survey conducted in 1993, ethnic Latvians were asked whether they or any member of their family had ‘suffered’ under the Soviets, the Nazis, neither or both. ‘Suffered’ was defined as having someone in the family deported, executed or imprisoned. The answers were illuminating: 32% claimed to have suffered at the hands of the Soviets, 6% at the hands of the Nazis, 5% from both and 56% from neither. These figures demonstrate why, for most Latvians, Soviet rule was far worse than Nazi rule, an attitude which runs counter to that predominating in contemporary Russia and Western Europe” (Muižnieks, 2011, p. 11).

It is important to note that the primary target of Nazi atrocities, the Latvian Jewish population, was nearly annihilated; Jewish suffering does not appear strongly in the narrative because there are very few memories to draw upon. In the 50 years after the War, the Western narrative highlighted the ultimate good of the Allies, including the Soviet Union. Emerging from behind the Iron Curtain, Soviet and Warsaw Pact countries were confronted with their own involvement in World War II,³¹ while only beginning to be able to express their own suffering at the hands of the Soviet apparatus that killed tens of millions (Courtois & Kramer, 1999; Muižnieks, 2011). One must understand the cognitive dissonance that must have been experienced – “the twentieth-century histories of the three Baltic countries contained no single coherent story agreed upon by adults” (Plakans, 2011, p. 436). According to Rozenvalds:

“The truly complex and tragic history of Latvia and the Latvians in the 20th century created the conviction in everyday consciousness of the unique character of Latvia’s situation. ... This was thought to impose some special obligation on Western countries towards Latvians and Latvia, while Latvians, for their part, had the right, in the name of overcoming the injustices of the past, to act in ways that were not always in accordance with the accepted standards for civilized political behavior of the Western world” (2010, p. 35).

³¹ The question of culpability in World War II is exceedingly complex; not least because of forced conscription and Latvian involvement in both the Nazi German and Soviet armies during the war (see Kasekamp, 2010, p. 136-141).

The point of this brief glimpse into WWII and Soviet history and post-history is to note why the Baltics struggled and continue to struggle with building a framework of national history. Indeed, the ways in which Latvians (and particularly Latvian elite) experienced their own suffering, and the subsequent tempering of these issues by the West and Russia, contributed to a “catastrophe rationale”, which contributed to lukewarm attitude towards integrating the Russian-speaking population in the 1990s. In the context of Latvian integration policy, it is necessary to understand that many of these questions of how to deal with history remain open (see Muižnieks, 2011).

Multifaceted interpretations of historical events and the primacy of this historical narrative in integration policy has severely undercut integration efforts. For example, in 2009, 55% of Russian-speakers shared the view that that Latvia was not occupied by the Soviet Union, rather that it was voluntarily annexed (Zelče, 2011, p. 58, cited in Ministry of Culture, 2012, p. 30).³² Similarly, a 2008 study indicated that among native Russian-speaking school children, 40% did not believe there had been a Soviet occupation; only 12% of Latvian school children agreed (Curika, 2008, p.17, cited in Ministry of Culture, 2012, p. 30). Events such as the unofficial March 16 Latvian Legionnaires memorial are often used by the Russian Federation or extremists in Latvia to argue that the state is an active supporter of fascism.³³ On the other hand, Soviet WWII Victory Day is still celebrated on May 9 by many Russian speakers, which many ethnic Latvians interpret as an affront to Latvian sovereignty and memory of victims of Soviet atrocities.³⁴

These points of tension and their ethnic dividing line has been a major source of contention

³² The doctrine of legal continuity (*de facto* occupation, but *de jure* independence, as defined by the non-recognition of Soviet annexation by many Western countries) is “the bedrock of Baltic independence” (Muižnieks, 2011, p. 13).

³³ Despite this difficult history, there is no doubt that Latvia is a democratic and free nation, not least in comparison with its main geopolitical historical rival. Since 1998, Latvia has scored between 1 and 2 on the Freedom House scale of democracy (1.5 in 2017) (Freedom House, 2017a). The Russian Federation has fallen from a 4.5 rating in 1999 to a 6.5 rating in 2017 (Freedom House, 2017b).

³⁴ See Chapter 6 for more on the celebrations and commemoration days.

in Latvian integration policy, which highlights a critical need to develop a shared understanding of history and memory. The argument is that the state is unable to sustain two vastly different narratives of state development and history. There is a strong sentiment that solidifying a national collective memory (around the ethnic Latvian interpretation) is critical to the integration of Russian-speaking minorities. “Collective memory is not history, though it is sometimes made from similar material,” argues Kansteiner. “It is a collective phenomenon but only manifests itself in the actions and statements of individuals. It can take hold of historically and socially remote events but often privileges the interests of the contemporary” (2002, p. 180). Popularizing a national collective memory is a known element of nation-building (Anderson, 2006; Gellner, 1983). This has been a priority of Latvian integration strategy because it not only provides a unifying picture of the nation-state, but because it also provides a sense of acknowledgement that “alleviates traumatic stress” from the Latvian perspective (Edkins, 2003, p. 15).

History and memory have a significant impact on nation-building and shape integration discourse; in the context of my argument on banal integration, it is important to note that these questions of history and memory are not actively relevant in the daily lives of most of Latvia’s inhabitants. Indeed, even when individuals’ understanding of history does manifest publicly, as in commemoration days, for many, personal family history appears to play a larger role than conflictual narratives (see Chapter 6). History and memory remains both at the top of the state’s policy recommendation for dealing with the challenges of integration, and a critical influence on how integration policy has developed, which is why I discuss it here. Importantly, horizontal engagement with history is not a primary element of banal quotidian life and the way in which the national historical narrative is constructed is not a barrier to Russian-speaker integration on a day-to-day basis.

Citizenship

According to the Ministry of Culture, “Latvian citizenship is the basis for creating a lasting

legal connection with the State of Latvia” (2012, p. 19). Citizenship is consistently defined as a critical element of the integration topic, both because of the economic exodus of Latvians to the West, as well as concern with integrating the post-Soviet Russian-speaking population. The comparatively large non-citizen population³⁵ has been a point of major concern for Latvian policy makers, as has the decline in motivation for naturalization among this population. In Heavy historical baggage has complicated the way in which citizenship policy has been adopted and discussed; rational discussion on the topic easily gives way to “controversy-needing activists” – Latvian “enthocrats” and Russian “occupants” – who have enhanced the tension in the discourse (Plakans, 2011, pp. 444–5).

Latvian elites initially hoped that comparatively strict laws would encourage the repatriation of Soviet era migrants to Russia. When independence was reestablished in 1991, Latvia utilized the doctrine of continuity to establish citizenship on the basis of the interwar state and preserve a titular majority based on the argument that the Soviet annexation constituted an illegal occupation; this caused endemic problems with the civic integration of the large Soviet migrant population, who were considered migrants (with the obligation to naturalize) (Mole, 2012). According to Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, the transfer of civilians from the territory of the occupation force to the occupied territory is prohibited; therefore Soviet-era settlers can legally be classified as occupiers in Latvian territory (1949). Though the legal basis for the doctrine of continuity was valid, the preferences to increase the proportion of ethnic Latvians in the country was thinly, if at all, veiled. Latvia faced harsh

³⁵ In 1999 around 25% of the population were non-citizens; in 2000, 21% (Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 2012). Latvia ratified the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Stateless Persons in 1990 and the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons in 1999; in accordance with these international standards, Latvian law distinguishes between stateless persons and non-citizens. Some international actors, including Russia, do not accept this distinction. According to Latvian law, the category of non-citizen is only applicable to “citizens of the former USSR who reside in the Republic of Latvia as well as [those] who are in temporary absence and their children,” given that they comply with the standards of the law (Latvijas Republikas Saeima, 2006). Non-citizens have most of the rights of Latvian citizens, with the exceptions of the right to vote and work in civil service or national security positions. Unlike stateless persons, they enjoy Latvian consular protection and are able to travel on a non-citizen passport (Ekmanis, 2013, p. 16-17).

criticism from the East and West; analysts labeled the state an ethnodemocracy that sought to disenfranchise minorities (Kolstø, 1999; Mole, 2012; G. Smith, 1996). Yet, as Tilly argues, “Almost all European governments eventually took steps which homogenized their populations,” both by minority exodus and by the institution of state languages and institutions; failure to do so risked state fragmentation (Tilly, 1975, pp. 43–44, cited in Kolstø, 1999, p. 283). Western forces were quick to decry the reestablishment of the Latvian (and Estonian) nation-state, but minimized the impact of their own European precedent.³⁶

In 1994, the Fifth Saeima adopted the Law on Citizenship, which contained strict naturalization quotas designed to maintain a Latvian majority (Dreifelds, 1996, p. 98; Eglītis, 2002). Under pressure from the international community, then-President Guntis Ulmanis rejected the numerical quota, opting for an amended version of the citizenship law in 1994. This law included “naturalization windows,” which staggered naturalization eligibility by birth (Šūpule, 2007). The Citizenship Law was amended in 1998, again under international pressure as Latvia aimed to join the European Union. This was a watershed moment. “Window naturalization” was abolished, and a bureaucratic, but accessible, path to citizenship was established for children born in Latvia to non-citizen or stateless parents.

The 1998 law was called into question for accusations of being overly restrictive, particularly in its stance towards non-citizen naturalization (which required Latvian language and civic tests, as well as an oath of loyalty) (Howard, 2009). This critique has been influenced by outside pressure (not least complaints from Russia). However, even in its 1998 form, the Latvian law on citizenship was less restrictive than one third of the EU-15 countries analyzed by Howard, including Austria, Denmark, Greece, Spain and Italy (Ekmanis, 2013). In 2009, Howard predicted that Latvia would not experience much citizenship liberalization in the near future; he perceived the nationality question as too politically sensitive to allow for “radical

³⁶ Consider the application of *jus sanguinis* in German citizenship law and the large population of German Turks.

changes” (p. 177). This has not been the case.

Globalization pressure and critical emigration statistics³⁷ have made maintaining vertical ties between the state and individuals a policy priority, leading to a significant reevaluation of the Latvian citizenship law in the 2010s. While the impetus of reevaluating the law was likely the severe hemorrhaging of citizens to the West, dealing with what has been termed a continuing and significant “problem” (i.e. the non-citizen population) has also been a consistent concern. 2013 was yet another liberalizing watershed moment that extended even greater access to Latvian citizenship. Changes were made to retain diaspora citizens (through dual citizenship), simplify the process of naturalization, as well as automatically provide citizenship to children born in Latvia to stateless or non-citizen parents³⁸ (Latvijas Republikas Saeima, 2013). As the Ministry of Foreign Affairs states,

“Amendments to the Law on Citizenship further attests to Latvia’s good will aimed toward unifying and integrating society. Since the reestablishment of independence in 1991, Latvia has achieved progress in the complicated and challenging process of creating an integrated society. Each step has been dedicated to realizing the collective goal, and we can be pleased with what has been achieved”³⁹ (2016).

The statement is arguably too self-congratulatory, though it is worth noting that Latvian citizenship legislation (even before 2013 amendments) has been on-par with Western Europe. Still, the issue of non-citizenship is repeatedly voiced as “a significant problem,” not only by integration specialists, but also by media outlets. The naturalization requirement for non-citizens is often framed in doomsday language (e.g. “Is Latvia condemning older generations to non-citizenship?”, “Living in limbo: Latvia’s ‘non-citizen’ policy leaves thousands feeling stateless” or, in the case of Latvia’s neighbor “Nationality is Ethnicity: Estonia’s Problematic

³⁷ According to demographer Pēteris Zvidriņš, Latvia’s population decreases by 55 people per day or 1650 per month – three times the size of Latvia’s smallest town (Kas Jauns, 2017).

³⁸ Based on the will of at least one parent (Latvijas Republikas Saeima, 2013).

³⁹ “Grozījumi Pilsonības likumā ir kārtējais Latvijas labās gribas pierādījums, kas vērsta uz sabiedrības apvienošanu un integrāciju. Kopš neatkarības atjaunošanas 1991. gadā Latvija ir sasniegusi progresu sarežģītajā un izaicinošajā integrētas sabiedrības veidošanas procesā. Katrs solis ir bijis veltīts kopējā mērķa īstenošanai, un mēs varam būt gandarīti par sasniegto” (original Latvian).

Citizenship Policy”).⁴⁰ This discourse stirs up emotion, but rarely considers international standards for citizenship acquisition (which range from restricted to unrestricted interpretations of *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis*).

Around 11% of the Latvian population currently holds non-citizen status – significantly reduced from 25% in 1991 (Pilsonības un migrācijas lietu pārvalde, 2017). Naturalization spiked between 1999 and 2007, beginning with the 1998 abolishment of window naturalization and continuing through the 2004 accession to the EU (Šūpule, 2007, p. 203).⁴¹ As Laitin predicted, accessibility to the European job market appears to have been an incentive to naturalize (1998). However, in 2007, when Latvia joined the Schengen Zone, non-citizens and permanent Latvian residents with Russian passports were also free to travel within EU. Conversely, in 2008 Russia opened visa-free travel to non-citizens⁴², but not Latvian citizens, limiting the incentive to naturalize, particularly for those with connections to the West and the East (Ivjevs & King, 2012; Kasekamp, 2010, p. 186). Indeed, 15% of non-citizens surveyed in 2014 noted visa-free travel to Russia as a reason to not pursue naturalization (Pilsonības un migrācijas lietu pārvalde, 2014). While 25% of non-citizens noted their intention to naturalize in the future, 14% were satisfied with their current status (up 6% from 2012). 19% held the belief that citizenship should be granted automatically (down 6%), and 17% were not planning to naturalize because they hoped that naturalization requirements would be eased.⁴³ Concerns that they would be unable to pass naturalization tests was cited as the reason by 22% of non-citizens surveyed who were not planning to naturalize; however 59% of non-citizens reported their Latvian language skills as conversational or higher (highest language skills were recorded for those under 30). Indeed, the vast majority of minorities in

⁴⁰ Consider the dramatic language used in recent articles by Brown (2017), Sukonova (2016) and Trimbach (2017) (including a publication by Vice and Foreign Policy Research Institute).

⁴¹ Obligatory military service through 2006 for male citizens may have slowed naturalization.

⁴² Visa-free travel was extended to former citizens of the USSR without other citizenship (e.g. Latvian non-citizens born before February 6, 1992). On April 5, 2016, Putin extended visa-free travel to Latvian and Estonian non-citizens born after February 6, 1992 (LETA - BNS, 2017).

⁴³ Naturalization requirements were eased in 2013, a year before the survey was conducted.

Latvia speak the national language (Druviete et al., 2016). 80% of Latvia's non-citizens are over 40, which likely helps explain drops in naturalization rates. This proportion of older non-citizens will continue to increase as *jus soli* is easily accessible to children of non-citizens. Though limited in government employment and voting rights, non-citizens receive many of the same protections as Latvian citizens. Those who have not naturalized over the past 25+ years of independence may not perceive any additional incentives to make the effort to naturalize, particularly those who are older.⁴⁴ Latvian legislation itself does not prove an inordinate barrier to the naturalization of non-citizens or Russian-speakers, and 2013 amendments have further solidified the state's incorporation of the post-Soviet descendent population.

While changes to the citizenship law encourage domestic integration, there is also a strong indication that integration with the West is a priority for the Latvian government. The 2013 amendments included a dual citizenship provision with EU and NATO members, Australia, Brazil and New Zealand; this allows Latvians in the diaspora to civically integrate into these countries without renouncing their legal relationship to Latvia. The selection of countries with which dual citizenship is allowed is slightly bizarre at first glance, but is very consciously conceived to include the major countries receiving Latvians. The list does not include Russia or the Commonwealth of Independent States (i.e. non-EU post-Soviet countries), which are

⁴⁴ The naturalization language and civics tests have been a primary concern for non-citizens. This is partially due to the perceived offense of requiring long-time residents (Soviet migrants) to qualify for citizenship, but partially due to the fact that, particularly in the early years of independence, "although having lived in the country for decades, many ethnic Russians had little knowledge of the [Latvian] language and little desire to learn" (Kasekamp, 2010, p. 185). A valid criticism of the language and civic testing requirement has been the limited resources allocated to teaching the state language. Between 1990 and 2012, about 75,000 people learned the language through courses sponsored by governmental and non-governmental organizations, but the courses are "fragmentarily available" (Ministry of Culture, 2012, p. 20). This is an endemic concern in Latvian integration attempts – policy is not always matched with resources (Muižnieks, 2010, p. 7). At the same time, efforts to increase minority schoolchildren's access to Latvian language and civics was met with extreme controversy and accusations of assimilation – another catch-22 of Latvian integration policy (see Education in this chapter).

home countries to most of Latvia's immigrant populations.⁴⁵ This is reflective of a one-sided integration policy; while the state wants to retain Latvians, it also demands a commitment from immigrants who want to civically integrate. This is similarly borne out in the way in which Latvian citizenship requirements for descendants of Latvian citizens in the diaspora compares with naturalization processes. While diaspora applicants face a cumbersome bureaucratic process, there are no language or civic exam requirements. Again, the small-state "catastrophe rationale" for preserving the titular nation is apparent.

Though the equitability of Latvian citizenship policy is reasonably questionable, Latvia is far from failing its immigrants and emigrants. The high rate of successful naturalizations confirms legal accessibility to civic integration. Latvia has a functional framework to promote integration with Russian-speakers and Europe on a civic scale; the success of Russian-speakers in Latvian politics further attests to this. Particularly in the wake of the 2013 amendments, citizenship and active involvement in civic life is increasingly accessible, and the major concern – the status of non-citizens – is decreasing in significance each year.

Education

One of the main resources of nation-building and social integration is the school system; however, Latvian education is similarly fraught with the challenges of historical legacy and an unwieldy balance between minority rights and segregation. Educational institutions are critical spaces of integration; "central to socialization theory is the thesis that educational institutions transmit norms, values, and models of behavior deemed to be appropriate in a given society" (Coenders & Scheepers, 2003, p. 316). Latvia has struggled to both comply with European minority standards/maintain national minorities and integrate the large minority population. What has resulted is the maintenance of a huge minority school system that runs the risk of

⁴⁵ World War II refugees who left Latvia between June 17, 1940 and May 4, 1990 fleeing occupation forces, and their descendants born until October 1, 2014 may apply for Latvian citizenship, regardless of their other nationality. Because these refugees were largely fleeing Soviet occupation, it is unlikely that many apply for dual citizenship with CIS nationalities.

artificial segregation and complicates integration.

The state finances bilingual education in seven minority school-languages: Russian, Polish, Hebrew, Ukrainian, Estonian, Lithuanian and Belarusian. As of the 2015/2016 school year, Latvia had 811 educational institutions,⁴⁶ 104 of which were minority schools. Russian schools make up 90% (94) of minority institutions – more than 10% of all educational programs in the country overall. An additional 71 institutions are dual stream (Latvian and minority). Students are not obligated to attend either minority or mainstream schools; this is largely a decision left to the parents (in areas with populations large enough to sustain multiple schools). According to the Ministry of Education and Science, minority education works towards the goals of “maintain[ing] ethnic identity” and “form[ing] the basic conception on the cultural heritage of Latvia, Europe and the world” (2013a, 2013b). The standard of minority education in many other EU countries is far lower, for example, native language instruction within mainstream schools (European Communities, 2004). In Latvia, separate minority education is a relic of both the interwar and Soviet period; the structure was retained after renewed independence, not least because of a lack in trained pedagogues. Through the mid-1990s, minority schools operated under different education programs; now, schools technically operate according to the same curriculum standards issued by the Ministry of Education and Science, though concerns that compliance with national curriculum ranges are valid.⁴⁷

School reforms in Latvia have followed the rickety trend of integration legislation in general. From the late 1980s through 1995, education was liberalized and state influence was reduced (Heidmets et al., 2011; Kangro & James, 2008). These changes were influenced by a variety of external actors (foreign and domestic NGOs, IGOs, etc.), leaving not only the school system

⁴⁶ A falling number of students, particularly in rural schools, has led to increasing school closures.

⁴⁷ As demonstrated by differences in minority versus Latvian student perceptions of World War II history.

decentralized, but the ideology behind the reforms uninformed, decentralized, and the results incompatible (Dedze & Catlaks, 2003). Attempts to regain state control and standardization in both Latvian and minority schools were made in the second half of the 1990s. Again, this was influenced by external actors, implemented in piecemeal fashion, underfunded and under measured (Dedze & Catlaks, 2003; Ekmanis, 2013; Kangro & James, 2008; Silova, 2002). Primary stakeholders (i.e. educators and parents) were not sufficiently part of the discussion on educational reforms (Silova, 2006).⁴⁸

Perhaps one of the most controversial – but also effective – reforms in Latvian education was initiated in the 1998 education law, which increased the usage of Latvian as the language of instruction in minority schools to a 60/40 split (Latvian and minority, respectively) starting in 2004. This change was heavily protested by Russian-language activists, who accused the reforms of being assimilationist. Russia’s attempts to maintain links to “compatriots” (Russian-speaking citizens, non-citizens, and citizens of Russia) in Latvia has involved regularly accusing Latvia of violating international norms of minority education rights, often appealing to Europe and capitalizing on sympathetic photo opportunities showcasing distressed children (Hogan-Brun, 2006, pp. 328–9; Petrenko, 2008). However, the reforms were supported by both the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, lending much-needed credibility to the Latvian government (Muižnieks, 2004; Petrenko, 2008). The 2004 reforms for this bilingual education standard have been critical to the linguistic integration of Russian-speaking youth. In 1998, Laitin predicted an “intergenerational shift” toward acquiring fluency in the titular language (Laitin, 1998, p. 155). In 2003, 75% of non-Latvians supported bilingual education, indicating a desire for minority youth to develop Latvian language skills (Zepa, 2003). The efficacy of the reforms can be seen in the more than 90% of minority

⁴⁸ Lack of stakeholder involvement is an overarching critique of Latvian integration efforts and policy.

young people who speak Latvian fluently today (Druviete et al., 2016).

Though these reforms significantly increased language skills of minority youth – critical to their access to the labor market – a backlash of this reform may be the ongoing segregation of the school system. In 1998 Kolstø reported “An increasing number of [non-Latvians] are sending their children to schools with Latvian as the language of instruction. While less than 3 percent of the Russian parents had graduated from Latvian schools themselves, more than 18 percent now had children in Latvian schools” (1999, p. 303). The rate of transfer from minority to Latvian mainstream schools decreased after 2005, suggesting that increased linguistic integration in minority schools may have slowed physical integration and perpetuated a lack of interethnic contact among young people in Latvia.⁴⁹ Concern that enrollment in Russian minority schools generally is growing fails to take into account the comparative economic advantage that may be considered by the parents. Both Russian and Latvian language skills are often requirements in the job market; with the 2004 changes, Russian minority schools may offer comparatively better linguistic education in both Latvian and Russian than Latvian schools alone. Interethnic contact is found in other organizations (e.g. cultural or sports groups), and segregation diminishes as youth enter higher education institutions, the workplace or “mixed” marriages.

In education, as in much of Latvian policy, integration with the West has become increasingly prioritized. Where Russian used to dominate as the second language in Latvia, in the post-Soviet period, English has become a mandatory foreign language for all students. English is

⁴⁹ There is a larger debate as to the benefits of interethnic mixing in schools, however, it is difficult to define a consensus. For example, a study of American students indicated that, at some ratios of interethnic mixing, school heterogeneity may facilitate friendship segregation, rather than integration (Moody, 2001). Several European studies have highlighted integration successes of mixed schools. While there is some risk of intergroup conflict in mixed schools, a Belgian study on Flemish and immigrant students concluded that, “monocultural schools should be avoided to stimulate intergroup contacts and thus to promote social integration” (Van Houtte & Stevens, 2009, p. 235). Similarly, studies of Dutch school segregation have cited concerns stemming from decreased interethnic contact (Karsten et al., 2005, p. 244). Minority segregation is often tied to academic failures (Bankston & Caldas, 1997).

a “new kind of functional literacy” that significantly impacts European integration and economic opportunities for Balts (Vihalemm, Siiner, & Masso, 2011); Ose suggests that bilingual education in Latvian and English could speed the process of integration with the West (Ose, 2002, cited in Dilans, 2009, p. 7). Russian is the second most popular foreign language for school children to study, but among Latvian speakers, proficiency has decreased considerably. Rather, the replacement of Russian with English as the mandatory second language is an indicator of EU integration and a reorientation from East to West.

The school system in Latvia remains largely – though not exclusively – divided by students’ home language, particularly in urban regions, where the number of pupils is sufficient to sustain multiple schools (e.g. in Riga nearly half of the schools are Russian minority schools). Minority protectionism through education programs walk a fine line. Though ostensibly a liberal attempt to provide cultural access, providing pupils with ethno-linguistic school choice can, in some cases, be “misguided humanism that undermines some children’s prospects” (Wikan, 2002, p. 51). Wikan suggests that the international “politically correct” attitude to maintaining minority culture in educational institutions may be counter intuitive; rather, it has a backlash that prevent issues, such as school segregation, from being adequately addressed. Important again is the distinction between a traditional minority and the post-Soviet minority – this is neither understood by the international community, nor fully dealt within Latvian education policy. Rather than fostering Russian ethnic and cultural identity, the continued two-pronged school system may be one of the largest barriers to integration from a young age. However, proposed changes to the school structure are nascent at best; talk of reform opens up the same argument between integration and assimilation. There is a considerable concern that the Russian Federation would be eager to fill a vacuum created by the shutdown of Latvian state-funded Russian schools (with un-regulated curriculum). Indeed, the Latvian education system in general hurts for both resources and trained and willing educators. Low enrollment numbers have also led to the shutdown of schools in the tens each

year. Educational reform must surely be on the horizon, though how this will affect the issue of minority schools is unknown. Integration as addressed thus far in the realm of education in the post-Soviet period has largely maintained spatial segregation, but reforms have succeeded in enhancing minority knowledge of the state language and increasing youth access to the Latvian and Western labor market. As Soviet-era pedagogues are replaced by a new generation of teachers, it is likely that differences will continue to fade.

Language

The question of language and culture is paramount to the discussion of integration in Latvia. This has already been discussed in relation to the above topics of integration, but I consider a brief overview here as well. Language has a long history in the craft of state building; “Language is a very important element in characterizing cultures and nations, and the institutional strengthening of a language is a power factor in constructing a nation” (Zepa, 2006, p. 133; see also Anderson, 2006; Gellner, 1983 and others). Similarly, the post-Soviet Latvian state elite sought to consolidate the nation around the ethnic Latvian language and culture. The intense changes to the demography of the country, the long period of the primacy of the Russian language during Soviet occupation, and the short span of independence within which to (re)cement the Latvian nation-state have led to the protectionist integration policies defined above. These all relate to the status of the Latvian language and culture, which “create the foundation for national identity; strengthens [sic] feeling of belonging to the nation and the State of Latvia” (Ministry of Culture, 2012, p. 19). Language is a cornerstone of Latvian integration policy. Indeed, policy makers argue that reducing the use of Latvian “would be a threat to the successful social integration;” the language sets a standard baseline for the existence of the nation state (Baltiņš et al., 2017; 2012, p. 20).

While knowledge of minority languages is also desirable, “knowledge of the national language can not only facilitate contact, communication and cooperation, it can also further participation and equal access to various social goods” (Muižnieks, 2010, p. 30). In 1999, the

Saeima passed a strict law that required all public and many private institutions to conduct business in Latvian. Under international pressure, this law was vetoed by President Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga (Kasekamp, 2010, p. 185). Despite Western criticism of Latvian policies, requiring competence in a state language to have complete access to the state and job market is not a concept relegated to the Baltics. As an informant in a 2006 study noted:

“When I see someone who has lived in Latvia for 10, 15, 20 or more years, and that person complains that it is too hard, that he has to speak too much Latvian – well that seems peculiar to me. I don’t know how many guest workers are moving to Ireland, England and Germany, but it is only logical than [sic] when they go there to work, they resolve the language issue within the first few months” (Zepa, 2006, p. 219).

The state has been primarily concerned with establishing the dominance of Latvian in the public sphere, which has had mixed results. While reported knowledge of the national language is very high among minorities (around 90%), concerns that the Russian language maintains a grasp in the public sector is a main concern of policy makers and sociolinguists (Baltiņš et al., 2017). Earlier discourse focused on the discrimination of Russian-speakers in the work force (for lack of Latvian language skills); the frame has now shifted to the “discriminatory hurdles in the labour market, especially for young Latvians whose Russian language skills have declined in the last 20 years” (Ministry of Culture, 2012, p. 22). The decrease in the primacy of Russian as a second language is undoubtedly related to historical grievances, but also distinctly part of Latvia’s effort to “Return to Europe.” Western integration in this discussion is again paramount, where English as the international *lingua franca* in the region has grown considerably. This orientation is notable in interactions between Latvians and nationals of former Soviet countries; while Russian once served as the common language, today, English dominates, particularly among youth.

Current State Language Law ensures that state institutions and private institutions (when their work comes in contact with the public) be accessible in the state language. Information in other languages may be provided on demand, but cannot be imposed gratuitously. This

has led to controversial enforcement of the law in regions such as Latgale, which has a high concentration of Russian speakers (LSM, 2014). Similarly, Riga mayor Nils Ušakovs (a Russian-speaker from the center left party *Saskaņa*⁵⁰), came under fire for speaking with schoolchildren in Russian during an official City Council event (LSM, 2017). He was also recently fined for his use of Russian and English on his official Facebook page (the Russian page, which has over 23,000 followers will now be financed from personal funds) (Diena, 2017).

The polarization of language and ethnic discourse played out large scale in February 2012, when pro-Moscow activists initiated a referendum to promote Russian as a second official national language. This was largely in response to a failed referendum attempt by right-wing party *Nacionāla apvienība* (National Alliance) to force all state-financed schools to instruct only in the Latvian language.⁵¹ The language referendum was unlikely to pass, and though it did receive considerable (and unsurprising) support in the southeastern region (which is heavily concentrated with Russian speakers), only six municipalities of 110 and the city of Daugavpils voted in the majority to promote Russian as a second language.⁵² The overwhelming defeat of the referendum on Russian as a second national language is another watershed moment in the integration discussion. Indeed, both Latvian and Russian-speaking respondents have agreed that people in Latvia must know how to speak Latvian for years (93.1% and 72.2% in 2011, respectively) (Zepa 2011, p. 26).

While official procedures, events and documentation must be available in Latvian, there is little to prevent the use of Russian language from being casually used on a daily basis, even in government institutions. However, the primacy of the language question has arguably been

⁵⁰ *Saskaņa* (formerly translated as Harmony, now Concord) is a nominally center-left party, but primarily known for its representation of Russian minority interests. It has a cooperation agreement with Vladimir Putin's party in the Russian Federation, *Единая Россия* (United Russia).

⁵¹ This attempt did not gain the necessary number of signatures to push a referendum ("What's my language?," 2012).

⁵² It should be noted, however, that the majority of individuals have no problem conducting business in Russian in this region; rather, Latvian speakers are often disadvantaged.

arguably overblown in top down discussions, while causing few problems in day to day interpersonal integration.⁵³ Despite the concern regarding the language situation from top down regulators, non-bilingual accommodation and the acceptance of the multi-linguistic Latvian landscape is common (see Chapter 5). Latvian Public Broadcasting reports “Tolerance among the people of Latvia for the widespread use of Russian-language in daily life often seems at odds with the strict approach of state language authorities, who are under constant duty to enforce the letter of the law” (LSM, 2014). The pedantic approach of language monitors is increasingly out of step with the real language situation in Latvia, even fining the city of Riga for replacing the diacritical mark over the “i” (Rīga) with a heart in a welcoming sign (Latvian Public Broadcasting, 2014). Though the initial hardline stance on language law has certainly contributed to Latvian linguistic acquisition among minorities, overbearing regulation threatens the success of integration by tugging the conversation toward polarized discourse.

Culture

As with language, Latvian integration policy is consistent in its strong need to protect the Latvian culture as the foundation of the nation state. Latvian ethnic culture and cultural celebrations are highlighted by the state, for example, in the extensive funding of events such as the Nationwide Latvian Song and Dance Celebration (see Chapter 6). Ensuring Latvia as a state in which the Latvian culture can thrive is, like language, a top priority for lawmakers.

The primacy of ethnic Latvian culture in state rhetoric has been criticized as exclusionary and contributes to the perception of discrimination against Russian-speakers (Cheskin, 2015; Kolstø, 1999). “Many Russian speakers therefore still view Baltic cultures in terms of ‘their’ and not ‘our’ culture ... titular cultures have not been projected as inclusive, but instead in

⁵³ Indeed, it is a mistake to argue that Russian language in the workplace or even among officials is a complete indicator of hostile attitudes to the Latvian state. For example, as an intern in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the summer of 2010, two of my colleagues, both with mixed Latvian and Russian backgrounds, consistently used Russian to communicate, but saw no cognitive dissidence between their preferred language and their work for the state.

highly ethnicized terms” (Cheskin 2015, p. 304-305). Baltic integration programs have been distinctly one-sided, i.e. demanding that Russian-speakers move toward the titular nation, rather than the titular nation move toward Russian-speakers. It is no secret that Latvia preferences the special status of Latvian language and culture within the ethnographic bounds of the state. A declared purpose of the law on language is “the maintenance of the cultural and historic heritage of the Latvian nation;” the state is the only body fundamentally responsible for protecting the language and culture of the Latvian nation (Latvijas Republikas Saeima, 2000).

The “establishment of pervasive high cultures” is a known methodology to cement a nation (Gellner, 1983, p. 54, cited in Kolstø, 1999, pg. 283). Demands to increase Russian influence on the Latvian cultural nation seem disproportionate, given that Russia itself has a population more than 70 times the size of Latvia’s and resources that far surpass the Latvian state. Indeed, as Cheskin notes, “Russian speakers commonly have a desire to learn the culture and language associated with their state of residence, whilst simultaneously maintaining Russian cultural and linguistic identities” (2015), indicating that maintaining minority culture is both possible, and does not conflict with acquisition of local cultural traits.⁵⁴ External influences on Latvia’s cultural space are central to the cultural rhetoric in public policy, which has been “influenced and enriched by Latvia’s national minorities and the cultures of other countries” (Ministry of Culture, 2013, p. 25). Though resources are more clearly channeled into the promotion of ethnic Latvian culture and ethnic Latvian culture remains the foundation of the nation-state, it is difficult to argue that minority cultural markers are ignored; rather, they are an intrinsic part of the Latvian landscape (see Chapter 5).

Like the rest of Latvian integration policy, culture is yet another area in which Latvia has striven to integrate with the West. According to the Ministry of Culture, “Luminaries of both

⁵⁴ Not only do Russian-speakers participate in Latvian traditions, such as midsummer’s eve, Russian cultural events are similarly part of the cultural life of Latvia (see Ch. 6 for more).

Latvian, as well as other nationalities, whose names are known in Europe and the rest of the world *belong to the Latvian cultural space*" (2012, pg. 26, emphasis added). This again is a dual sided coin of Latvian cultural integration – is both a nod to the inclusion of minority cultural achievements, but also claims such achievements in the name of Latvia. Auers argues Latvia has attempted the posthumous "capture" of intellectuals born in what is now the territory of Latvia, but with name recognition in the West (namely, Isaiah Berlin, Mark Rothkoff, and Sergei Eisenstein) "as a part of the Latvian state's post-Soviet reorientation from East to West" (Auers, 2013, p. 125). However, the connection to Latvia the state is tenuous at best, as these cultural figures were both of Jewish heritage and born in the Russian empire. The state's attempt to "recapture" them as an intrinsic part of the Latvian cultural landscape is somewhat disingenuous.

Living cultural figures have also, perhaps more intentionally, contributed to the portrayal of Latvia in the world. This is not limited to ethnic Latvian luminaries (e.g. opera singers Kristīne Opolais and Elīna Garanča, or composer Andris Nelsons – all well known internationally in their genres), but also minority cultural figures. "Claiming" cultural figures is not solely a mechanism to enhance Latvia's international status. Cultural figures can also choose their own attachment to Latvian civic roots – over or alongside minority ethnic roots. Ballet dancer and actor Mikail Baryshnikov, who in 2016 returned to his hometown of Riga (b. 1948) with his production "Brodsky/Baryshnikov", in the same year was also granted Latvian citizenship for special achievements for the state (Latvijas Republikas Saeima, 2016b). In a letter to the Latvian parliament, Baryshnikov thanked Latvia for the invitation to become a Latvian citizen, remarking on his complex relationship to the state:

"My childhood in Riga was not always easy because I was the son of Russian parents. In fact, my father was sent to Latvia to occupy the country. Despite these unfortunate circumstances, I was left with a strong connection with Latvia's people. Perhaps my family's controversial place there is what led me to support Latvian independence and national sovereignty in my heart" (Baryshnikov, 2016).

Andrejs Osokins, a world-class, award-winning pianist presents himself as a “London-based musician ... one of the most-sought after Latvian pianists” on his website (Osokin, 2016). He represents Latvia in competitions and presents himself as Latvian internationally; however, Osokins is from a Russian-speaking family and is featured on the website “*Latvijas Krievi*” (Latvia’s Russians). The identity Osokins and Baryshnikov display as both civic Latvians and ethnic Russians is another indication of the multicultural reality of Latvia’s society that is frequently overlooked in discourse.

Again, discourse and reality appear to live on different planes. While it is taken for granted that Western states promote national culture first and foremost, in Latvia, this has consistently been met with challenges from both West and East. Language and culture lay the foundation for the development of the nation, but Latvia consistently finds itself in unclear territory of how to include its minorities without assimilating them, while also embracing luminaries and the influences of the long co-mingling of cultures in the region. According to the Ministry of Culture, art and culture have “great integration potential, a range of barriers exist” (2012, p. 26). Finding the balance between coopting and including remains another challenge of integration policy and rhetoric.

Elite-led strategies in conflict with realities?

Myriad reasons have contributed to unclear and stunted state mechanisms for integrating the post-Soviet population, not least external pressure from Russia on behalf of its co-nationals, ethnocentric elites, and efforts to integrate with the West. Institutional mechanisms for integration exist and are functional, however, the rhetoric surrounding Latvian integration policies remains arguably ineffective, circular, and contradictory in many ways. There is a plethora of research that has already picked apart state programs and their failings. This chapter has considered the top-down structure of and challenges to key issue areas in Latvian integration, but elite-led integration programs are not the focus of my dissertation. A general knowledge of the way integration has developed over the course of the last quarter century

is critical to understanding Latvia as a case study, but equally important is the daily hubbub of banal integration life that is consistently drowned out by this discourse.

To highlight this disparity, which will be further explored in Chapters 5 and 6, I offer a vignette of a social integration project that failed to connect top-down interpretations with lived realities. In discussing the complex terminology of integration, I referenced the recent retelling of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in the Latvian cinema (*Romeo n' Джульетта*). This interpretation of the story places the Montegues and Capulets in modern-day Latvia, taking on the mantle of the Russian Romeo and the Latvian Juliet. The film is violent and crude, both in language and, occasionally, in its cinematic value. It has been used as a platform to launch a discussion project "*Šekspīrs manā pagalmā*" ("Shakespeare in my courtyard") on integration among youth; this project received financing from the Society Integration Foundation (*Sabiedrības integrācijas fonds*), an administrative, but non-political organization under the national government. *Šekspīrs manā pagalmā* hosted five screenings of the film to 30 schools (minority and mainstream), which were followed by discussions among the students, experts from the Ministry of Education and NGOs, as well as the filmmakers and actors. The goal of this project was to "air out" the questions of conflict, integration and ethnicity in Latvia that highlighted by policy makers. Students were asked questions such as: "What is the main conflict and the reason for it in the film? How do Latvian and Russian youth coexist in Latvia?" This question, along with many of the others in the project (see Appendix 2), prejudiced the answer organizers hoped to elicit. Not only did the second part of the question answer the first (without addressing other issues, such as economic inequality, which also appears as a theme of the film), it automatically constructed a conflict between Latvians and Russians. As Fox and Miller-Idriss argue, "Nationally framed questions typically elicit nationally framed answers" (Fox & Miller-Idriss, 2008, p. 556).

With the permission of the organizers, I attended one of these student screenings, which happened in the morning, during school hours. Students from 10th and 11th grade classes

were accompanied by their teachers; both minority and majority schools attended. Reflexively, watching the film was uncomfortable – it is violent and is excessive in its use of “*krievi*” (“Russians”) spoken pejoratively, along with cursing. In a country where U.S. blockbusters are readily accessible, *Romeo n' Джульетта* smacks of a low-budget regional film, and the dialogue and acting is occasionally forced. In an audience of teenagers, this was met with snickering.

An opening scene in the film shows a band of teenage Latvian boys walking through the streets with a Latvian flag – “*Latvijas karogs*” said someone in the theater. They encounter a group of Russian boys, words like “*okupanti*” (“occupiers”) are thrown (both in the film and in the theater, mockingly), and the scene results in fisticuffs. Juliet’s mother (Latvian), later remarks, “What did they think was going to happen, carrying the flag down the street?” Scenes like this appear throughout the movie, which follows the storyline of the play rather closely, resulting in the death of not just the title, but also the supporting characters. Yet the Latvian flag is everywhere in Latvia without provoking excessive violence – not least in Russian or other minority schools. This scene and the controversy it suggests is somewhat ridiculous to an audience familiar with the actual Latvian landscape.

This distance from reality was also clearly felt in the discussion after the screening. The most vocal discussants were the moderators (the film’s director, a Latvian actor, a government bureaucrat, and the director of the NGO Ghetto Games). The teenage target audience was quiet; many were content to pull out their cellphones and ignore the discussion all together. When asked if the events in the film reflected real life, a few boys said that, yes, they have seen similar fights in Riga microregions. One girl said she had seen a fight, but when asked if it was Russians against Latvians, she said she was far away and could not tell. Most of the audience respondents, however, said that the scenes in the film were exaggerated. At the end of the presentation, a teacher came up to the organizers to thank them for the presentation, saying, “I am a Russian teacher at a Latvian school, and truly, our students

aren't like this. They are so kind and sweet. Sure, they curse, but nothing like this." When asked outright if someone in the audience truly felt a hatred for Latvians or Russians, one or two boys raised their hands – whether their response was genuine, or a teenage reaction was unclear. One girl said that no one would admit it if they did. A teacher added that ethnic tension is not part of his real life – his colleagues are both Latvian- and Russian-speaking, and they all have friendly relations.

The audience response – lukewarm on the point of ethnic conflict in their own daily lives – was quite a stark contrast to the discussion leaders, who hit the topic hard, and in decidedly groupist terminology, using the boundary delineating terms of *latvieši* and *krievi* (Latvians and Russians), which are not only ethnically incorrect given the vast diversity of the Russian and Latvian speaking populations, but served to define Russians in Latvia as decidedly not Latvian.

Many of the moderators frequently made apologies to the Russian-speaking community, lamenting the fact that many young Latvians do not want to learn Russian, and that this is a skill set that should be valued and exercised. The government representative similarly noted that her own conversations at work are held in three languages (Latvian, Russian, and English) and that it seems absurd that conversations and forms at the Office of Migration and Citizenship cannot be filled out in any language other than Latvian. But this apparent placating of the Russian-speaking community, perhaps in an attempt to make Russian-speaking students more comfortable, was both ironic (given that it was a government-sponsored event), and completely out of touch with the linguistic reality of the students themselves.

Indeed, when asked outright if language was a point of contention between Latvians and Russians, only seven people in a theater of 60-70 audience members raised their hand. One girl (Latvian school) said that she has non-reciprocal bilingual conversations with Russian speakers; language doesn't matter, she said, as long as people can communicate. Most

telling, perhaps, is that despite the disclaimer that respondents could speak in either Latvian or Russian, the entire conversation was in Latvian, minority school students included. The forced discussion on ethnic conflict not only did not seem to resonate with the general student population, the theme was not borne out in the reality of the situation. Ethnicity and tension was not at the forefront of these students' minds, many of whom would rather play on their phones than even listen to what is touted as a major social issue in the country in which they live. Despite the encouragement of the moderators to engage with the discussion, these teenagers seemed to have other things on their mind. Indeed, at the end of the conversation many girls came up to the front to have their picture taken with the Latvian star of the movie – celebrity far outweighing any ethnic boundary set for them.

The tenor of the conversation and the forced direction on the subject of integration and conflict distracted from the discussion of other themes. Indeed, the mention that the film was really about the lack of economic opportunity (jobs) and bored youth in Latvia was glossed over by the moderators. These factors are arguably more relevant to the daily lives of students and teachers in the audience.

This episode showcases in a nutshell the extreme disjuncture between top-down vertical integration efforts that seek to highlight the ethnic tension in society with the reality that most individuals are living in, which is a moderately peaceful, open, and multicultural nation. This hour-long discussion on its own brings out several of the themes that will be discussed in Chapter 5 on the banality of integration interpersonally and socio-culturally: integrative spaces; the insignificance of the language problem; the generation gap; the break between stereotypes and reality.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to present a broad picture of Latvian integration policy, its challenges, contradictions, and distance from the lived realities of many individuals. Certainly,

early elite efforts to rebuild the new Latvian state on the basis of the Latvian ethnic nation backfired. Instead of incorporating Soviet-era minorities from the start, arguably paternalistic policies (citizenship, education, etc.) intended to assert the primacy of Latvian served to consolidate the Russian-speaking minority, and attracted harsh external criticism and pressure. While there is little question that significant mistakes were made in the early years of regained independence, the internalized trauma of the Soviet occupation played a significant role in the development (or non-development) of an integration policy in Latvia, particularly in the 1990s and early 2000s. The illegal occupation of the Latvian state and the extensive demographic changes that occurred over the course of the 50-year occupation “created a kind of ‘catastrophe rationale’” and “minority complex” among Latvians, i.e. a very real fear that the Latvian nation was on the verge of extinction as the rationale for protectionist policies (Rozenvalds, 2010).

Europe was not patient with Latvia, rather pushed it to quickly adopt Western norms that challenged local constituencies, memories, and perceptions (Auers, 2013, p. 128). Pressure from Russia and Russian-speaking extremists, also forced a balance between integrating the post-Soviet population without assimilating Russian-speakers. Anxiety over these three issues – 1) maintaining the Latvian titular nation 2) protecting Russian-speaking rights 3) ensuring European compliance – led to a disjointed approach to integration policy. Latvia continues to hurt for a coordinated integration strategy; policies have been overseen by a number of disjointed bodies and ministries. Yet the strength of Latvia’s rule of law democracy is apparent. Twenty-seven years on, efforts to integrate Russian-speakers while maintaining a Latvian nation remain at a topic of considerable debate in the political realm, but in practice many of the hot button integration issues are already in the processes of being solved. Russian-speakers are forming civic connections to the state in language and citizenship, already propelling them to basic and moderate levels of socio-national integration.

I argue that these high-level policy issues continue to fade when it comes to the domain of

daily life. As easy as controversy is to spark in elite-led discourse or along radical ethnic lines, in the everyday lived experience of most of Latvia's inhabitants, life goes on without much attention paid to issues like historical memory or education policy. The institutional norms that have developed already provide clear paths toward integration. Over the course of 27 years many of the initial issues of integration are well on their way towards being resolved, yet the discourse remains remarkably conflictual. How this further contrasts with banal existence in the case study of Latvia is further explored in Chapters 5 and 6.

Chapter 5 | Banal integration in everyday life

The previous chapter presented an overview of the development of Latvian policies related to integration, as well as the conflictual discourse that surrounds the topic. I argued that the state is faced with a series of catch-22 scenarios, criticized for promoting integration policies that are simultaneously read as exclusionary or assimilationist. While Chapter 4 considered the top-down challenges of integration in Latvia, this chapter pushes back against elite-led rhetoric to explore the ways in which integration manifested in the daily lives of individuals. Exploring integration in daily life is fraught with similar difficulties. There remains a considerable gap between how individuals verbally explain ethnicity and Russian-speaker integration and how they actually act in their multi-ethnic environments. While examples of failure or difficulty are easily noticed and counted, here I attempt to investigate how integration discourse compares to its *banal* reality in the lives of individuals, i.e. how it is automatic and unnoticed. The natural occurrence of integration, unmediated by direct national programs or political efforts, is a critical and underdeveloped area of research in the field.

As I acknowledge in Chapters 2 and 4, external factors have the ability to make ethnicity and division salient. In this chapter, I address how expressed points of contention, (i.e. ethnic conflict, Russian-speakers as not Latvian, oppression/exclusion of Russian-speakers in social environments, and contentious language usage) contrast with banal reality (low violence, multifaceted indicators of belonging, integrated spaces, and the insignificance of language). First, I consider how integration is discussed, taking into consideration stereotypes, biases and their weaknesses. Next, I look at the lived environment and the way integration is banally manifested in Latvian sites and "sights." Lastly, I consider banality in how youth perceive their belonging to the nation. I argue that my observations contest the rhetoric that 1) it is oppressive to be Russian-speaking in Latvia and 2) there is limited movement towards Latvian identity development for Russian speakers. Within these themes, I offer a valuation of the

comparative levels of integration displayed in these settings, exploring the ground-level manifestation of two types of banal integration in their various stages: 1) interpersonal banal integration (which focuses on interactions between individuals) and 2) socio-national banal integration (which focuses on the relationships formed between the individual and the state). I argue that banal integration is prominent across different spaces in Latvia, though it appears at various levels of salience (see Tables 2.2 & 2.3). Latvia inherently meets the qualifications of a “basic” integrated society as a comparatively peaceful, multicultural country. However, in many contexts it moves beyond a basic classification to both a moderate and extensive level of interpersonal and socio-national banal integration with increasing interethnic engagement both on an individual basis and with the state.

I illustrate the concepts of both interpersonal and socio-national banal integration through a series of vignettes, observations and personal stories that I have both actively pursued in my research and those that have appeared by virtue of classical participant observation, i.e. unsolicited or organic interactions with individuals in my target population.⁵⁵ I then reference the quantitative data collected in my survey of Daugavpils (city and municipality) high school students, and the attitudes and perceptions minority youth display with regard to their socio-national integration. When researchers discuss integration, it is not enough to look at group mechanisms for defining ethnicity or social belonging. Understanding how integration progresses in a living society demands a closer look at how individuals act in their daily lives. The cases and examples presented here are intended to give context to the framework of banal integration. As is germane to this type of study, some of these observations are quantifiable, while others describe the scenery of daily life for individuals living in multi-ethnic contexts. The focus remains on the ways individuals interact with each other, their perceptions of their connections to the state and their multicultural realities. My argument remains that

⁵⁵ Conversations conducted in Latvian; quotes are approximate translations presented in conversation format for readability. Names have been changed.

Latvia is not a failure in integration, but that individuals live multicultural and integrated lives in a national state.

Talking integration

Top-down discussions of integration often conflict with the way in which minority and titular populations interact in daily life. Political and media rhetoric trickles down into informal and social perceptions of the integration issue and affects the way in which integration is discussed – though often not the way it is experienced. What emerges are sets of verbalized beliefs or perceptions that are often inherently contradictory (e.g. the Russian language is everywhere – but I can't find anyone with whom to practice my Russian), and not reflective of daily life. Generational differences, experiences, and developed stereotypes are also relevant to the way in which integration is discussed. In this section, I explore the informal narrative of integration among Latvian speakers, how it relates to top-down rhetoric, and how it compares with actual experiences of banal integration.

Negativity bias & the generation gap

In many of the observations and discussions I conducted throughout my fieldwork, negative encounters with Russians appear to have been deeply embedded in personal memories; these experiences inform the way in which Russian-speaker integration is navigated in conversation. Indeed, bad experiences have been found to have a greater impact on an individual's psychology than positive events (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001). For example, conflicting "gangs" that maintain some sort of neighborhood, ethnic, or subcultural identity are frequently "cited" in discussions as examples of ethnic tensions; yet not only are Latvian "gangs" incomparable to those in other parts of the world, inter-gang rivalries are often spurious to the lived realities of most individuals. In contrast to the image depicted in political and media debates, the overall minority/majority situation in Latvia is physically very peaceful – violence is notably rare (Overseas Security Advisory Council, 2016).

This subject of personal engagement in street fighting was broached at a late-night countryside gathering of about eight individuals, two of whom are soldiers, three or four – self-described metalheads. Reinis, a soldier from Jelgava, the “birthplace” of metal music in Latvia, noted that when he was growing up in the 1990s, gang fights were between metalheads and Russians.

Reinis: The Russians would hang out by the entrance [of a concert] and when a metalhead would leave the concert to smoke, he’d get a pounding.

Egita: In Daugavpils [Egita’s hometown], there was a metal concert and a fight between two metalheads and a gang of Russians broke out. In the paper, it was reported as: ‘A fight breaks out at the metal concert.’ But in reality, only two of the fighters were metalheads, the rest were Russians.

Reinis: And when they run out of metalheads to fight, they just start fighting among themselves. ... Someone once punched out a [slur for Russian’s] glasses, which cost him 70 euro. But he was pretty happy about that 70-euro debt.

These clashes and their retellings along ethnic lines highlight both the manner in which ethnicity is discussed, while potentially ignoring other non-ethnic factors that lead to such clashes (e.g. bored youth, alcohol). As in the example developed in Chapter 4 of both the fighting depicted in the film *Romeo n' Джульетта* and the subsequent discussion with Rigan teenagers, the tendency to associate violence with ethnicity paints a vivid picture conflict, but one that is overly simplistic. It contributes to an overarching picture of ethnic strife that, when informants are pressed, is rarely born out in the experiences of daily life (Ekmanis & Safranova, 2016).

Contact impacts perceptions, as does the context in which contact occurs. In Latvia, history and memory have played an extensive role in the integration discussion. As such, there is often a perceptible difference in attitudes towards integration among Latvians who have a direct experience with Soviet occupation, in comparison with those for whom the memory is passed down from older family members. This does not suggest that all individuals with Soviet experience have negative attitudes, but that this is a relevant element of “talking integration.”

The difference in attitudes toward integration between younger and older Latvians is not surprising, but it does manifest even among close contacts.

A conversation I shared with a couple with an age gap of about 10 years illustrates the generational difference in attitudes towards Russian speakers within the parameters of a close romantic relationship. The question of who does Latvia belong to/who can be “Latvian” was addressed as Jānis, the male partner (age: ~37), made a remark about fighting with Russians in the ubiquitous *pagalms* (courtyard between Soviet-era apartment block housing).⁵⁶ Jānis argued that non-(ethnic) Latvians should not feel ownership over the country.

Ilona (age: 20-25): But what about people who were born here? Who have lived here all of their lives? Why would they want to live in Russia in that terrible economic situation?

Jānis: You young generation don’t feel it as much. But for me, the offense [of occupation] is still too raw. I still remember my family stories. We owned an apartment in Riga.

Ilona: For that?

Jānis: Come on, owning a house in Riga? That’s a big deal. If a Russian officer came in and knocked on your door, asking for water or something to drink and you let him in, then he came in and plunked down his suitcase. There was a rule that if you let him in, then you agreed to housing him.

Ilona: Then better to not let him in!

Jānis: Sure, and then what happens to your family? [implying arrest or deportation]. The Russians say [to Latvians], ‘Look, we brought culture to your land.’ Sure. When Russian women came here, they would wear silk nightgowns with lace as dresses [in public].⁵⁷ They had never seen anything so nice. Sure, you brought us culture [*sarcastically*]. ... The environment [under Soviet occupation] was such that you could inform on your neighbors. You don’t like that guy? Well [goodbye]. Sometimes they would have quotas [for deportations]. In small towns, that’s hard. You know everybody by sight at least. In those small places, they are more or less your extended family.

⁵⁶ Masha Gessen describes the mental image of the Soviet courtyard: “The courtyard is a central fixture of postwar Soviet life ... Soviet children tended to grow up in the communal spaces outside their overcrowded apartment buildings. ... strewn with litter and populated by toughs” (Gessen, 2012).

⁵⁷ A similar story was told to me independently by an informant, who personally witnessed this trend when living in Riga during the 1930s and 1940s.

How do you send some of them away? If you have an order to deport, say, 10, it's better to tell them and advise them to disappear.

Ilona: One of my high school literature teachers – and I can say that I haven't graduated from high school all that long ago – told us this story from her youth. They weren't able to read the Latvian classics, Rainis, Aspāzija.⁵⁸ So they had a reading circle of just their close, close friends [*savējie*]. And then one day, a girl just didn't come, and she never came again. Was she deported? Maybe she was an informant? They don't know. They never saw her again.

This conversation, while not a representative sample, does, however, showcase the stark contrast of attitudes toward post-Soviet integration between an individual who has internalized negative experiences with the Soviet Union and one who was raised in independent, post-Soviet Latvia. To Ilona these stories of Latvian oppression have a legendary quality. She recognizes them as part of Latvian history, but they are only pseudo-tangible to her; they do not significantly inform her worldview. She knows them, understands them, but is distanced from them, and remains slightly in awe of the magnitude these episodes have had on others. She accepts Russian-speakers, particularly those born in Latvia, as a normal part of the Latvian landscape; for her there is no inherent reason they should not be Latvian. Jānis, on the other hand, has a deeper personal experience with the Soviet period having been born in the late 1970s. Though he did not experience deportations, his own experience as a young person in the stagnant era of the Soviet Union remains relevant to his views, and is reflective of the “catastrophe rationale” that shaped integration discourse and policy in the 1990s. He has internalized these memories as conflictual and inherently connected to Russians, and still feels a raw disrespect that he associates with these experiences.

The stereotype & its weaknesses

In both colloquial and professional discussions, when the subject of Russian-speaker integration is broached, a distinct patterned response emerges among Latvian speakers. This

⁵⁸ Rainis (1865-1929) and Aspazija (1865-1943) are well-respected Latvian literary and political figures instrumental in the development of the Latvian state.

response begins by explaining that there is a significant problem with integration in Latvia (occasionally referencing stories such as those above). However, within a few sentences, this “problem” is extensively qualified with the individual’s own experiences, which almost universally include an example of close collegial relationships, personal friendships, and/or intermarriage with Russian speakers. Maintaining the stereotype of the integration problem requires defining the difference between personal Russian-speaking contacts and “others.” Russian-speakers with whom informants have personal relationships are qualified as having “good” or “acceptable” characteristics: they speak Latvian, respect Latvian culture, are open-minded, are clean and orderly. “Bad Russians”, conversely: speak only in Russian, dismiss Latvian/Latvians as inferior to Russian/Russians, have “backwards” standards of health and education, are nostalgic for the Soviet Union. As the conversation progresses, informants often emphasize that Latvians are not all “good”; rather, ethnicity or language is irrelevant to whether or not a person is an “acceptable” member of society.

The ultimate deconstruction of initial prejudicial reactions regarding integration in Latvia is not novel or unique; indeed, it is a classic example of Gordon Allport’s contact hypothesis, which asserts that positive interpersonal contact can effectively reduce prejudices between minority and majority groups (1954). This theory that interpersonal intergroup contact can have a positive effect on reducing conflict and prejudice relies on criteria such as equal status, common goals, cooperation, support of authorities, and personal interaction. More recent evaluations of the hypothesis contend that these original conditions facilitate positive effects, but are not necessarily required (Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner, & Christ, 2011). Critics have argued that the contact hypothesis applies on an individual level, but cannot be extrapolated to groups (Forbes, 2004). However, this is not problematic in the context of banal integration, which preferences the actions of individuals, but does not assume group cohesion. Indeed, while top-down discourse maintains a negative groupist stereotype regarding integration, individual interactions here observed remain effective in reducing prejudice between Latvians

and Russian-speakers.

It is necessary to recall that “Russian-speaker” is an unwieldy and broad category – there are considerably different reactions to different sub-categories of Russian-speakers, e.g. “Soviet Russians”, young Russian-speakers and “new” Russian immigrants. In contrast to their “Soviet” predecessors, young Russian-speakers are frequently described as generally integrated.⁵⁹ They have the advantage of being born in Latvia, and have increased access to language, citizenship, and, presumably, contact with ethnic Latvians. Though “Soviet Russians” arguably have more linguistic, social, and institutional access than “new Russians,” their social status is often internally perceived as lower; they have the disadvantage of being a “beached diaspora” and losing the ubiquity of Russian in their home surroundings (Laitin, 1998). New Russian immigrants, by contrast, are often well-educated and make an active choice to come to Latvia. This difference is demonstrated in surveys that indicate Russian-speaker dissatisfaction with the status of Russian in Latvia and the feeling of oppression (Bērziņa, Bērziņš, & Hiršs, 2016; Birka, 2016; Hiršs, 2016). Conversely, most new immigrants from the Russian Federation are often highlighted and praised for their concerted efforts to become part of the Latvian nation:

“There are certainly a lot of types of Russians here. Among those that have recently moved, I have never heard anything bad about Latvia. Those who arrived in the Soviet period often complain about life and cannot understand why we want to send our children to a Latvian school. I say: If I wanted to send them to a Russian school, I would live in Russia. If you don’t like something, learn the language, become citizens, be involved in the processes, or leave! But I want to be accepted, to be one of us, not a foreigner.” – Andrejs Maksjutovs, a new Russian immigrant interviewed for *Latvijas Avīze* (Beinerte, 2017, translated).

The distinction between “old Soviets” and “new” Russians – as well as “old Soviets” and young Russian-speakers – largely indicates that ethnic strife is not the underlying issue of ethnic integration in Latvia. Ethnic affiliation does not prevent social inclusion or acceptance, but

⁵⁹ Indeed, informants, in the same breath, will lament the state of integration in Latvia, but acknowledge the increases in integration among young Russian-speakers.

Russian-speaker attitude towards Latvia is valued.

The Latvian language is another basic tenet of national society, defined as a “common basis” for integration by the Ministry of Culture (2012). Similarly, Latvian speakers exhibit a tendency to highlight linguistic imbalances between Latvian and Russian, particularly the perception of the dominance of Russian language in public life. However, this lament is often followed by a contradictory admission – the tendency to “sin ourselves” and code switch to Russian when conversing with a Russian speaker:

“There is even a saying, ‘Where there is one Russian [in a group of Latvians], everyone will speak Russian’⁶⁰. We do the same when we are with our friends. It is easier for us to speak Russian, than it is for them to speak in the state language.” – Teacher, rural school, Daugavpils municipality.

“My girl is six, in the fall we will send her to Latvian school. My wife and my parents have already passed the [Latvian] language exam, I also hope to do so in the spring. ... I understand, read, it’s harder to speak, and here, as soon as anyone hears that I am not a Latvian, they immediately switch to Russian or English, I can’t practice.” – Pāvels Pereverzevs, a new Russian immigrant interviewed for *Latvijas Avīze* (Beinerte, 2017, translated).

While expressing frustration at what is perceived as disrespect for the national language, Latvian speakers are often quick to codeswitch to accommodate Russian speakers, leaving little incentive to codeswitch to Latvian.⁶¹ This is arguably a self-inflicted wound acknowledged by socio-linguists and yet another example of the contradictory nature of integration discussions (Baltiņš et al., 2017). Similarly ironically, while the “one Russian” rule is cited so much as to be a folk saying in both Latvian and Russian speaking regions, in more heavily Latvian environments, respondents often go on to complain that their Russian language skills suffer because their Russian friends speak Latvian, leaving them no opportunity to practice.

⁶⁰ This is a common folk saying that I encountered in any number of discussions with Latvians regarding language usage.

⁶¹ Codeswitching to Russian is more prevalent in heavily Russian-speaking areas and among older generations. Indeed, young Latvian-speakers are far less likely to speak Russian than their older counterparts (Ministry of Culture, 2012). Colloquially, and among some analysts, the tendency to code-switch to Russian has been labeled as a Latvian national trait of low self-worth.

This, in turn, indicates increasing Russian-speaker accommodation to the national language.

Dual and contradictory narratives of integration are common and patterned among Latvian speakers. This reveals an engrained problem with the discussion of integration both in the literature and in colloquial language in Latvia, where Russian-speaker integration is enigmatically described as a Catch-22: 1) Russian-speakers do not integrate (unless they are friends), and 2) Russian-speakers do not speak Latvian (but Latvian speakers actively switch to Russian). The descriptions of state of Russian-speaker integration often paint contradictory pictures, resulting in a “damned if you do, damned if you don’t” scenario not only for Russian speakers and Latvians in real life, but for the general tenor of the rhetoric surrounding the issue. But how do these narratives of integration play out in everyday scenarios? Does history and memory affect common interaction? Is language usage key? I argue that this rhetorical division falls to the wayside when looking at daily practices.

Public interactions

“I like a lot of things in Latvia, but the biggest thing is how strangers act with each other: in the store, in the café, in state institutions. Welcoming, smiling, and helping.
– Andrejs Maksjutovs, new Russian immigrant, interviewed for *Latvijas Avīze* (Beinerte, 2017, translated).

Over the course of several months, I have documented more than 100 discrete instances of Russian-speaker and Latvian-speaker interactions in public – primarily in cafés, but also libraries, public transportation, and on the street – that run the gambit between hostility to extensive interpersonal banal integration (non-accommodation, non-reciprocal bilingualism, linguistic accommodation, codeswitching to the national language, and extensive interpersonal interaction). However, the number of actual observations far exceeds those formally documented simply because they are so ubiquitous. For example, sitting in a café in the center of Riga, it is natural that over the course of an hour, one can witness five or more interactions of code switching and non-reciprocal bilingualism from both Russian and Latvian speaking employees and customers. (This means that the employee is not always responsible

for accommodating to a Russian-speaking customer; neither does a Russian-speaking customer always expect the employee to accommodate to Russian.) These interactions also cut across multiple age groups, i.e. code switching to Latvian does not only occur among the young.

In public, it is not a challenge to be either a Russian-speaker, Latvian speaker or English speaker (in Riga). This has been deemed problematic by the Ministry of Culture, which laments surveys that indicate Russian speakers use Russian on the streets and in shops (73.6%, according to a SKDS 2010 survey, though among youth, Latvian has increased (Ministry of Culture, 2012, p. 23; SKDS, 2010)). Integration is cited as the reason to promote Latvian language dominance in the public sphere; however, far more significant in the framework of banal integration is not the language used, but that hostility does not appear to arise on the basis of ethnicity or language in public settings among the vast majority of interactions. Spaces are shared and services are provided and received primarily without conflict. I note a handful of the hundreds of interactions I have observed as examples of basic, moderate, and extensive banal integration. Over the course of 12 months of fieldwork conducted in Latvia, I documented less than five instances of conflict – however, these appeared primarily motivated by an external factor, and were primarily verbal conflicts handled without external force.

EX 1: A drunk middle-aged man (45-60) enters the coffee shop, loudly slurring speech in Russian, appearing to make references to “Россия” (“Russia”) and approaching a group of foreign customers. After assisting the current customer, the barista turns to him and says “Labdien” (“Hello”). He responds to the greeting in Latvian, but continues his slurred speech in Russian, indicating that he would like to buy a coffee. The barista apologizes, says there will not be any coffee, and directs him to the door. He points to his change purse and talks to other customers. The barista comes out from behind the counter, politely says “I’m sorry, here is the door” (“Atvainojos, šeit ir durvis”), indicates the door, and says she will call the police if necessary. The inebriated man leaves without a struggle and the customers in the café continue their business. (Feb. 28, 2017, Coffee Inn, Center region, Riga)

EX 2: On the main street in Riga (*Brīvības iela*) passing the Esplanāde park, a group

of adolescent boys pushes past an older woman (60-70), who tells them to watch where they are going in Latvian. They respond in crudely over their shoulder in Russian, then proceed to jaywalk across a busy intersection, laughing. (Oct. 11, 2016, Center region, Riga)

EX 3: In the many research trips I have taken to Daugavpils, I have only been faced with linguistic difficulties three times, all in communication with chauffeurs (two taxi drivers, one bus driver). Only with one taxi driver were my efforts to communicate in Latvian (as well as English, German, and French) ignored, with no attempt to speak to me in any language other than Russian. When I exited the vehicle at my intended destination, the driver said to me "learn Russian" ("учи русский").⁶² (Feb. 1, 2016, Daugavpils)

Interactions such as these are noticeable and jarring; drawing attention to such interactions creates the illusion that ethnicity and language is a point of conflict in public life. But these interactions are rare. It is telling that over the course of two years living on and off in Latvia, as a researcher I have witnessed only a handful of similar situations, where conflict occurs between minority and titular speakers. In addition, the presence of external factors (alcohol and immaturity), indicate that such conflict may not inherently be motivated by ethnic differences. It is necessary to emphasize that the point of this analysis is not to *deny* points of ethno-linguistic tension or conflict in Latvian society, rather it is to highlight that in daily life, these types of tensions are rarely displayed in my areas of observation.

The vast majority of interactions in public spaces indicate basic to moderate levels of interpersonal banal integration, though extensive integration is also not uncommon. Approximately 40% of the total encounters I have documented are coded at the basic level of integration; approximately half are coded at the moderate level, while extensive integration observations make up around 10% of the interactions observed in public settings. Again, a main difficulty of studying and operationalizing banal integration is that it is very difficult to study and categorize what one cannot see. The majority of these public displays of banal

⁶² My reaction was to take the comment in good humor, though after the contact had passed, I found myself growing more frustrated by this "command" to learn Russian in order to communicate over a basic service in Latvia.

integration are fleeting observations and rely on the individuals observed indicating their ethnolinguistic background; this leaves the count of extensive integration artificially low.

Basic interpersonal banal integration considers interactions that are brief, mundane, mutually intelligible, but often conducted using non-reciprocating bilingualism. Several examples of this categorization follow:

EX 4: Two women (age: 30-40) come into the coffee shop together, speaking in Russian. At the counter, the barista greets them with "*Labdien*." Woman 1 replies "*Labdien*" and proceeds to order a black coffee in Russian. The barista responds with the price in Latvian. Woman 2 completes her transaction with the barista in Latvian, but continues speaking Russian with her companion. (March 2, 2017, Coffee Inn, Center region, Riga)

Within the space of a three-minute interaction, both basic and moderate interpersonal integration is displayed. Woman 1 and the barista engage at the basic level - non-reciprocal bilingualism. Woman 2 and the barista engage at a moderate level – code-switching to the state language in a customer-service interaction.

EX 5: Two Russian-speaking women come into a café (age: 30-40; 40-50). Woman 1 asks in Russian whether there is a lunch special. The barista responds in Latvian, "Not today." The women nod and leave, but return 15 minutes later to order dessert. The women speak in Russian (with the exception of "*siera kūka*" [cheesecake]), the barista responds in Latvian, but the interaction remains courteous and does not differ from the barista's interactions with Latvian-speaking clientele. When exiting, the women leave, saying "*спасибо*" ("thank you"); the barista responds "*visu labu*" ("goodbye/all the best"). (Feb. 10, 2017, Miera, Center region, Riga)

As in Example 4, non-reciprocal bilingualism does not prevent the interaction from taking place, nor does it dictate the level of service provided/received. Ethno-linguistic differences are neither scorned, nor do they prevent Russian and Latvian speakers from sharing the same publicly-accessible environment.

EX 6: A woman and man (age: 20s) enter a Daugavpils café, speaking together in Latvian. It is *Lāčplēša diena* (Veteran's Day) and the girl has a Latvian flag ribbon pinned on her shirt. The man orders for them in Russian. It appears that his first language is Russian (and assumes that the barista's first language is also Russian),

but he codeswitches to Latvian to accommodate his partner. (Nov. 11, 2015, Šokoladņa, Daugavpils)

This interaction, which occurs in Setting 2, the Russian-speaking city of Daugavpils, offers a reverse example of basic codeswitching to Russian, alongside an example of extensive interpersonal integration displayed by the man's interactions with his partner. This example also further serves to illustrate the ease of living as a Russian-speaker in Daugavpils, running counter to the frequent argument that Russians in Latvia are linguistically oppressed. (It can also be noted that I conducted my own order in Latvian with the barista, illustrating a mutually accessible linguistic environment.)

Active minority-speaker efforts to conduct short transactions in the titular language display a level of integration beyond basic integration. Likewise, longer formal discussions, such as business interactions and collegial interactions using non-reciprocal bilingualism and code-switching are also indicators of moderate banal integration. These are the most-commonly observed interactions in public spaces between minority and titular speakers.

EX 7: Two employees at Humana (used clothing chain), conduct an entire conversation with each other, each speaking their respective languages (Russian and Latvian). (Oct. 22, 2015, Humana, Center Region, Riga)

EX 8: A middle-aged man (age: 45-55) is using the printing services at the Riga Central Library, speaking on the phone in Russian. In Russian, he tells the female librarian (age: 50-60) he has printed pages. She responds in Latvian. He responds with the number of pages in Russian. She responds with the price per page in Latvian. He answers with the total price in Latvian. They then proceed to banter back and forth for a minute in Latvian. (Feb. 28, 2017, Riga Central Library, Riga)

These two scenes are examples of increasingly progressive moderate banal integration. In Example 7 non-reciprocal bilingualism is used to conduct a normal conversation between colleagues. Example 8 again features non-reciprocal bilingualism in a customer-service interaction, but proceeds to develop into titular codeswitching and friendly banter. A similar scenario occurred again within the next hour, with mutual and consistent codeswitching

between Latvian and Russian between two librarians (age: 50-60) and one female customer (age: 60-70). This library also hosts a free bilingual play group for Latvian- and Russian-speaking children (Fig. 5.1), as well as Latvian language practice groups for Russian speakers. One such group was observed of six middle-aged/older women (age: 50-70) reading and translating in Russian and Latvian while also conducting their own friendly (laughter) conversations through non-reciprocal bilingualism (March 2, 2017).

Figure 5.1 Bilingual club advertisement



Advertisement posted in Riga Central Library foyer.

Text: "Bilingual club 'Together' invites preschool-aged children (4-6 years old) to start speaking Latvian!"

[Same text in Russian; details on location/sign up in Latvian.]

Bottom text:

"No cost"

"Let's read! Let's play! Let's make friends! Let's laugh!"

Extensive banal integration in public settings can be coded by close collegial, friend-to-friend, or family interactions that employ both non-reciprocal bilingualism, as well as titular language code-switching. This categorization differs from moderate banal integration because it demonstrates not only the ability to conduct productive conversations across ethno-linguistic lines, but also indicates deep interpersonal relationships developed between members of different ethno-linguistic categories. These interactions remain banal because they are an unforced part of daily life.

EX 9: Three woman (age: 30s-40s) sit together at a table, one woman appears to be a Russian speaker, the other two women appear to be Latvian speakers (based on their interpersonal communication). The conversation between all three women is continually code switching between Russian and Latvian, where each woman is engaging in both languages. (Sept. 28, 2016, Bezē, Center region, Riga)

EX 10: A group of 4-5 teenage friends (both boys and girls) walk towards the Old Town near Vērmanes Park, speaking primarily in Latvian, with one speaking in Russian. (Oct. 9, 2016, Vērmanes Park, Center region, Riga)

EX 11: A family of three (mother, father (age: 30s), toddler) and a male/female couple (age: 30s) are eating at a Daugavpils café/restaurant. The mother speaks to the child in Latvian; the father also speaks in Latvian, but with a strong Russian accent. Both the mother and father speak Russian to the couple, as well as to the server. (Feb. 2, 2017, Arsenāls, Daugavpils)

These examples showcase extensive interpersonal banal integration by their familiarity and high-level codeswitching. Individuals do not deny their own linguistic preferences, they indicate an acknowledgement of Latvian as the national language, particularly in the case of the parents consciously code switching to Latvian when engaging with their son. Extensive interpersonal banal integration, while it does appear in casual observations of public settings such as these, can best be observed through engaging directly with informants.

My fieldwork in Setting 1, the small community in Daugavpils municipality with a high level of ethnic diversity, offered the opportunity to document extensive banal integration. While it is possible to observe interethnic interaction in public spaces in cities, countryside observations are distinctly limited by the lack of public gathering spaces; rather, many interactions take place in schools or cultural houses. Here, ethnic background and linguistic preferences are not secret; indeed, it is significant to note the banality with which ethnolinguistic identity is discussed in such settings. To be ethnically Latvian or ethnically Russian does not carry an inherent stigma.⁶³ Indeed, students' *tautība* is listed in class rosters.

"We don't have a purely Latvian school in this municipality. A lot of minority and Russian-speaking students ... come together there with Latvian children. Also, schools that are labeled Latvian schools have mostly children from Russian-speaking families. ... We don't separate; everything happens together. ... Children learn respect for other languages. We are people." – Director, Daugavpils municipal interest education.

Given the proximity and size of rural communities, it is not out of place for teachers to know

⁶³ There is a more distinct prejudice toward Roma.

in-depth details about students' families; similarly, students are also aware of their classmates' background. However, it makes little to no difference in their interactions, both according to teachers and borne out by participant observation.

Assistant director (rural, dual stream school): "Children argue, don't argue. But if we're talking about ethnicity (*tautība*), then not at all. That's not even a question for us. They are just children as children.

Teacher 1: "In a few cases 'the Russian and the Latvian' is played out. But it is only a few cases and very rare."

Assistant director: "That's not the way it is every day."

Teacher 2: "There is no, 'you're a Russian, I'm a Latvian.'"

While Latvian is the dominant official language (in school), nearly everyone in this environment is bilingual in Latvian and Russian. As such, codeswitching mid-conversation is common (to both languages); non-reciprocal bilingualism is also used, though Latvian-speakers tend to switch more frequently to Russian "because it is easier." Within Setting 1, the dominant state of integration is extensive, both in terms of interpersonal interaction and in socio-national awareness of being part of the Latvian national fabric.

In the public sphere, Russian minority and titular integration remains a distinctly inherent element of society. The interactions observable on a daily basis in two of Latvia's main cities and in a rural, diverse community point to a social environment that neither punishes minorities for using their preferred language, nor excludes them from communal social environments. Though not representative of the entire country, these observations illustrate that integration does not only happen at a basic non-reciprocal linguistic level, but that distinct examples of extensively integrated individuals are visible in public social settings. I argue these observations both serve to contest the rhetoric that 1) it is oppressive to be Russian-speaking in Latvia and 2) there is limited movement toward Latvian identity development for Russian speakers.

This section has offered a diversity of interactions observed in public spaces in rural, urban and demographically differentiated environments. While occasions of tension have been noted, the vast majority of interactions between self-flagging ethno-linguistically diverse populations have illustrated at least a moderate level of banal integration, where ethno-linguistic background is neither hidden, nor demonstratively punished. Indeed, there is also significant codeswitching to the titular language, which indicates a distinct progression beyond the basic banal integration marker of peaceful coexistence, toward moderate and extensive involvement in the national society.

The significant insignificance of language

Language is consistently used as a measure of ethnic identity, and while much of the discourse points to language as a source of tension, the data presented above supports the argument that language in the Latvian context does not create insurmountable barriers to banal integration. According to the 2010/2011 Latvian Human Development report, “56% of Latvians and 34% of Russians feel that *their* language and culture are endangered in Latvia” (Zepa and Kļave, 2011, p. 33). Certainly, Russian, one of the largest languages in the world, is under no imminent threat. However, even Latvian is on relatively sound (if much smaller) footing. According to a recent study on language conducted by the Latvian Language Agency (*Latvijas Valodas aģentūra*), there is no real basis for considering Latvian an endangered language. It is spoken across generations and sociolinguistic groups; 90% of minorities living in Latvia and nearly 100% of young people between 18-23 know the language (Druviete et al., 2016). Not only does the data counteract the myth, but the banality and duality of language usage in daily life similarly serves to contrast perception with reality.

In 2012, when a referendum to make Russian the second national language was voted on, Daugavpils voted distinctly in favor of the motion (85%). This has been noted as a further proof that Daugavpils and Russian speakers are anti-Latvia and pro-Russia. This is a dangerous conclusion to draw, and is not necessarily borne out by other statistical measures

of the city. According to the 2011 census, 54% of the city is ethnic Russian; 20% is ethnic Latvian. What researchers often fail to account for when discussing Daugavpils is that it is a Russian-speaking city, therefore it is completely unsurprising that Daugavpils inhabitants would be in favor of conducting official business in the language of their daily lives. Linguistic preference cannot be substituted as an indicator of national belonging; therefore, it is spurious to conclude that the desire to include Russian as an official language is tantamount to disloyalty. That is not to say that some (or many) voters may not harbor pro-Russia sentiments, but language remains an imperfect indicator of socio-national integration.

In my experiences in Daugavpils, I rarely encountered a hostile environment due to Latvian language usage. As a first-time visitor to Daugavpils in 2013, I was warned by a local Latvian woman (age: 40-50) that it is preferable to speak in English instead of Latvian in the city so as not to be perceived locally as an “uppity Latvian”. The veracity of this statement was then demonstrated in an interaction between the woman and an older (age: 55-65) female clerk at a grocery store: The Latvian woman placed her order in Latvian, but the clerk only responded when it was given in Russian. However, after receiving the warning, I found that speaking in Latvian was far more efficient and accepted than English, and met with no hostility in my experiences. In this same visit, I observed the Gaudeamus Baltic university student song and dance celebration, where performers had come to Daugavpils from across Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia. On the tram to a performance, a father and son, dressed in their Latvian folk costumes and speaking Latvian with each other, debated which stop would put them closest to their performance venue. The father, switching to Russian, asked a passenger who, moments before had been having a heated discussion in Russian on his cell phone. The passenger responded and explained in detail how to get to their destination – in Latvian. This series of interactions both appropriately demonstrates the diversity of the language environment in Daugavpils, while similarly problematizing the assumption of Russian language as indicative of hostility to Latvian(s).

From a banal interpersonal perspective, this language non-question is not only borne out in the high rate of non-reciprocal bilingualism and codeswitching in the public sphere (as indicated above), but in the more extensive integration that occurs in the elusive private sphere. Perhaps the most telling indicator that interpersonal banal integration is not only occurring in Latvia, but is deeply rooted in the social environment is the high number of “mixed marriages” (*jauktās laulības*). One in five married Latvians has a partner of a different ethnic background, while around a quarter of Russians in Latvia have at least one Latvian family member (Estii Koostoo Kogu, 2011, Secretariat of the Special Tasks Minister for Social Integration, 2003). These marriages and other deep interpersonal relationships are microcosms of the diversity of identity and that is germane to much of the Latvian population.

EX 12: A married couple (age: mid-20s) joins a group of Latvians at a countryside gathering. The woman, Signe, is Latvian. Her husband, Alexei, is Russian. Alexei’s online social media presence is almost exclusively in Russian, while Signe’s is in Latvian. Alexei and Signe speak Russian together, but Latvian in the presence of third-party Latvians (contradictory to the “one Russian rule”). They each speak their preferred language to their dog.

EX 13: Despite expressed negative views of Russian speakers in her city (Daugavpils), Marga (age: 40-50) is from a “mixed” marriage twice over: her father is a Ukrainian Russian speaker, and she speaks Russian with her husband (who she met in a Latvian folk dance collective). Conversations with Latvian colleagues are sometimes conducted bilingually in Russian and Latvian.

EX 14: Jeļena (age: 55-65) moved to rural Latgale to teach Russian at a local school. She still lives in a Soviet-era apartment. Her family is of mixed ethnic heritage. Her husband similarly has a diverse ethnic background; together they speak in Russian. Jeļena speaks primarily in Latvian to her grown daughter, though her husband speaks Russian. Jeļena’s granddaughter speaks only in Latvian.

EX 15: Mareks’ (age: late 20s) mother is Latvian, his father is Russian. Mareks’ family language was Russian, he says he only learned Latvian when he joined his fraternity (a Russian fraternity in Latvia). Mareks speaks with an accent and occasionally self-corrects word choice or grammar. However, he defines himself as a Latvian patriot, in contrast to his father and father’s mother (who are related to a Russian military figure). They do not speak Latvian, nor do they want Latvian passports. Mareks credits this attitude to the fact that they had significant personal loss when the Soviet Union collapsed. While his father is well-read, his formal education is not strong, and the post-Soviet environment was not kind to him. This has caused some strife in his

marriage, and Mareks says his father likes to pick fights with him and his mother about Latvian. Among young people and in schools, Mareks feels that each year, respect for Latvian culture grows. While he believes that Russian schools should exist, he also believes that the patriotic curriculum (pro-Latvia) should increase to showcase both minority contributions to Latvia and national culture, which he defines as Latvian language and as a way of life. However, language for Mareks is demonstrably fluid. Our conversation was conducted in Latvian, but when we were approached by his fraternity brother, Juris (a Latvian in a Russian fraternity) their conversation was conducted in Russian, though Juris spoke Latvian with me.

EX 16: Kristīne (age: 21) is from rural Latvia and is very active in the Latvian folklore scene, as is her boyfriend. She lives with her boyfriend's family in a largely Russian-speaking micro-region of Riga. Her boyfriend's family language is Russian, but because Kristīne doesn't speak Russian, they have all started speaking in Latvian. Kristīne says she used to correct her boyfriend's grammar, but now she has adopted some of his phrasing; she thinks it is endearing.

The perceived cleavage between Latvian and Russian language is consistently demonstrated to be a non-issue in both formal and personal interactions. Such observations are indicative of two key elements of the integration discussion. First, they demonstrate that Latvia is not a "divided" society – structural and social division would prevent the high rate of contact and development of deep interpersonal relationships. Second, they contextualize both the increased use of Latvian by Russian-speakers, and the relative insignificance of ethnicity and language in relationship formation. This harkens back to the claim made earlier in the chapter that, while Russian-speaking integration is verbalized as problematic, ethnicity and language have little to do with the value of a person or the extensive interpersonal connections they form.

'Sights' of integration

Billig (1995) argues that banal nationalism is a phenomenon that fades into the background, and because of its ubiquity, becomes difficult to observe and quantify. It is, therefore, important to the understanding of banal integration to consider not only individuals in a society, but the settings in which the society lives and breathes. As is outlined in Chapter 3, my data collection considers four distinct settings in Latvia:

Table 5.1 Observational settings

	Geography	Diversity	Interethnic contact
Setting 1: Daugavpils municipality	Rural	High	High
Setting 2: Daugavpils (city)	Urban	Medium low (78.9% Russian- speaking)	Low titular contact
Setting 3: Riga (micro-region)	Urban (capital)	Medium low (38.6% Latvian- speaking; 49.6% Russian- speaking)	Low titular contact in region, diverse city
Setting 4: Riga (center)	Urban (capital)	High	High

Population data: Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 2016

According to Fox & Miller-Idriss, “This is the nation as it is marked in accents and code-switching, displayed in dress and demeanor, cued by sights and sounds ... and this is the nation as it is also deflected, ignored and subverted” (2008, p. 556). Sites and sights of integration quite literally lay the groundwork for an integrative society. While sites provide physical access and common spaces of interaction, visual cues and cityscapes can serve to “flag” both the nation and the inherent integration that forms the basis of the state.

In the literature on Russian-speaking integration in Latvia, one of the more frequently highlighted concerns centers around descriptions of the state’s ethnonational cultural tendencies (promotion of exclusively ethnic Latvian cultural elements) and limited public acknowledgement of Russian culture. The assumption that accompanies literature on Russian-speaker integration in the Baltics is that Russian speakers are obligated to merge into a fully ethnic Latvian environment. However, this analysis does not fully consider the inherent diversity of the Latvian nation-state and its subsequent territorial development. Minorities and minority culture were not only protected under the laws of the interwar Latvian Republic, they

helped to shape it (D. J. Smith et al., 2010). The Republic of Latvia has never been monoethnic; minority cultures and contributions of individuals are preserved both institutionally (e.g. within the school system), socially in community norms, and physically in the landscape of the nation. Indeed, the very foundation of integration in Berry's acculturation model is based on the balance of accepting host culture and maintaining heritage culture; integration itself necessitates a cultural exchange, which is banally evident both physically and in social contexts (Berry, 2001).

Russo-Slavic, Germanic and Western influences are flush throughout Latvian society. It is completely plausible to sit in a café with English signage, Russian décor, and Latvian-speaking baristas without any cognitive dissidence. Ethnic minorities are not a hidden or separate part of society; they are both visible and banal. A small, but perhaps telling case is found in the Latvian name's day calendar. Each day of the year has several names assigned, and individuals with these names are celebrated by friends, family and colleagues; champagne is popped, cakes are cut and the individual often receives a deluge of congratulations personally and on social media, along with their respective "name siblings." These names appear on almost every calendar and planner printed for Latvia and name's days are celebrated across the country. It is therefore important that not only ethnic Latvian names (e.g. Tāivaldis, Inguna, Dzintra) or even Latvianizations of Christian/Western names (e.g. Jānis, Jēkabs, Anna) are part of this celebration, but Russo-Slavic and Germanic names also appear alongside their Latvian counterparts (e.g. Bernhards, Boriss, Jadviga, Vladimirs). As in other cases highlighted in this chapter, this seems unremarkable and self-evident. However, such examples remain critical reminders of the banality of the integration of Russian speakers in the Latvian social environment. It is remarkable because it is not exceptional. It is important in the Latvian integration debate because it is a clear example of the Russian-speaker socio-national integration that is already commonplace.

Landscapes & cityscapes

Integration is an inherent part of the Latvian state and national landscape; it is important to consider not only by virtue of its history, but also with regard to the very space in which inhabitants of Latvia now live. The cityscapes especially, though rural environments, as well, are deeply embedded with the markings of Latvia's multiculturalism, visually and physically. While the cities are rife with monuments, architecture and exhibits that flag Latvia's imbedded multiculturalism, I also attempt to highlight banal markers that may be overlooked.

Countryside: The environment in Setting 1, a small village in Daugavpils municipality, is little more than a series of buildings on two main crossroads – a school, which serves students from multiple villages and towns in the area, an extracurricular arts and music school, two small stores, Soviet bloc apartment buildings, and private homes. Several kilometers to the west is a village with a cultural center; to the southeast is a town with a technical school and a community center, which serve as hubs for local amateur artist collectives. The linguistic environment here and in surrounding small villages is fundamentally mixed, as are families. Indeed, it is very difficult to pinpoint “pure” Latvians. There is a Latgalian linguistic and cultural presence, and individuals can easily identify who is from their own parish by virtue of minor variations in pronunciation. Most of my time as a researcher here was spent in the local school and the cultural center in the next village. These institutions are “flagged” with Latvian flags and signage, but conversations consistently code-switched from Latvian to Russian or Latgalian. Amateur artist groups hosted here are based on ethnic Latvian cultural arts (choirs, folklore groups), but also Western influences (modern dance); participants in such groups are ethnolinguistically diverse. Books available in the mini-libraries are in Latvian and Russian. In comparison to the bustling urban environments of Riga and (to a lesser extent Daugavpils), Setting 1 is humble, with the markings of a post-Soviet village, but its population is extremely diverse in background and heritage. The school, which provides both a major source of employment and socialization for young people consistently flags the Latvian nation in

curriculum and decor.

Daugavpils: The city of Daugavpils (Setting 2) is Latvia's second largest urban space with a population of around 100,000.⁶⁴ 78.9% of Daugavpils residents speak Russian as their home language; 8.7% speak Latvian as their home language (Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 2016, p.114). While most individuals (especially young people) ostensibly speak Latvian when necessary, Latvian-speakers are fluent in Russian and will often initiate or continue conversations in Russian in private and public settings. The city itself has an incongruous feeling about it; the text of the city (storefronts, signs, advertisements) is primarily in Latvian (86%) (Pošeiko, 2015), but the city operates almost exclusively in Russian. For example, (despite Latvian language laws) it is nearly impossible to attend the local cinema in any language other than Russian (English-language movies are dubbed in Russian, Latvian films or subtitles are extremely rare) (4. studija, 2014). For all intents and purposes, it is far easier to live in Daugavpils as a Russian speaker than a Latvian speaker. In fact, Riga and Daugavpils are "linguistic destinations," advertised to Russian-language learners as a "safe and calm environment" in which to learn Russian (Russian Language Academy Durbe, 2017). The program "Learn Russian in the EU" advertises its immersion courses: "We are pleased to invite you to Daugavpils, a Russian-language enclave in the European Union, 'the most Russian' city in Latvia and the entire EU. In Daugavpils nearly everyone speaks standard modern Russian as their native or primary language" (Learn Russian in European Union, 2016). Many Latvians from other parts of the country maintain a rather draconian view of the city as a Russian enclave in colloquial conversations, though few expressing these opinions seem to have been there recently, if ever.⁶⁵ "*Vai vispār tur runā latviski?*" ("Does anyone there speak Latvian at all?"), has been commonly asked of me; the answer remains that it is a Russian-speaking

⁶⁴ 93,312, according to the 2011 population census (Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 2016)

⁶⁵ Again, this is an example of the hypocrisy in the literature on Russian speaker integration in Latvia. Daugavpils cannot simultaneously be a Russian enclave hostile to Latvians and a place where Russian-speakers are systematically oppressed in their daily lives. These constructions of the city conflict with each other. The obvious answer then, is that it is neither, but something in between.

city, but a Latvian one, nonetheless.

While the city certainly maintains a Russian linguistic environment, it is significant to note that this is not simply a relic of Soviet-era migration policies; rather, the city has long been Latvia's cultural melting pot, with strong ethnic minority communities – not only Russian, but Polish, Jewish and Belarusian, as well. Daugavpils's two main tourist sites – the Rothko Center and Baznīcu kalns (Hill of Churches) – attest to the long-standing multicultural history of the city, and multiculturalism as a point of modern pride. While the Rothko Center highlights the famous son of the city (painter Mark Rothko, born Markus Rothkowitz in what was then Dvinsk, Russian Empire), Baznīcu kalns showcases the religious and ethnic diversity of the city, where one can see the worship centers of four religions (Orthodox [Russian], Lutheran [Latvian], Catholic [Polish/Latgalian] and Old Believers [Russian]). City festivals often highlight this diversity, including performances from multiple ethnic artists' groups.

Riga: In the capital, Riga (Settings 3/4), the Latvian nation is consistently flagged (literally) and Milda, the Latvian "Lady Liberty" towers above the main thoroughfare at the top of the Monument of Freedom (*Brīvības piemineklis*). Latvian ethno-cultural symbols are *en vogue* prominently throughout the city both in the form of home and store décor, as well as fashion accessories. The city showcases its Latvianness, but as a historic Hansa port, it simultaneously embraces a deep multicultural narrative, readily seen in the highest concentration of *Jugendstil* architecture in Europe and the German script adorning buildings. Soviet architecture and monuments are also visible throughout the city. In the post-Soviet period, Riga moved toward "relatvianization" to reflect the city as it was in the 1930s; minorities also regained symbolic sites. Pourchier-Plasseraud argues, "The cohabitation of all these [ethnic] groups [in their symbolic areas] takes place smoothly and politely" (2006, p. 193). I argue that it is more than just polite cohabitation; rather it is reflective of a highly-integrated environment.

Despite both scholarly and lay criticism that only Latvian culture is promoted in public spaces, Russian and other minority culture is prominently and inherently part of the capital of the country. In the capital, 17% of streets named for a person or historical/cultural event are references to Russia's cultural figures (among them, Lermontov, Pushkin and Gogol). The Russian Orthodox churches found across the city, and prominently in the center, attest to the history of pre-Soviet Russian presence. Similarly, Russian art and literature is highly respected in the repertoires of the National Opera and Ballet and National Theater, as well as outlets dedicated specifically to Russian culture (Russian Cultural Days at the Latvian National Library, Mikhail Chekov Russian Theater, Russian Cultural Fond of Latvia, etc.). Russian folk traditions are celebrated on the streets in collaboration with Latvian traditions (Fig. 5.2 & 5.3) and Russian-speakers take part in street fairs celebrating Latvian national holidays.

Figures 5.2, 5.3 & 5.4: Posters, Street Festivals & Advertisement



Fig. 5.2: Public sign posting, bilingually advertising a Moscow Patriarchal Choir performance in Riga Dom Cathedral; below: an advertisement for a [Latvian] beer and folklore festival. (*Matīsa & Krišjāna Barona streets*)

Fig. 5.3: *Lielā diena* (grand day - spring equinox) celebration in the center of Old Town Riga (*Līvu laukums*) with interactive performances led by Russian and Latvian folklore groups; sponsored by Riga City Council.

Fig. 5.4: Lexus advertisement in Latvian highlighting a woman with a Slavic name: "We are already a million. Jeļena. Entrepreneur. Crossfit enthusiast. Mother. Hybridcar owner." (*Tērbatas & Bruņinieku streets*)

The city's public education system has 44 minority schools (of a total 115); another 15 schools

are dual track.⁶⁶ This means that in the *Latvian capital*, only 49% of schools are fully “Latvian” schools (Rīgas Dome, 2017).⁶⁷ Advertisements with Russian translations are prominent, and advertising campaigns prominently feature Slavic names with Latvian text, which serves to both normalize the presence of ethnic non-Latvians, and include such individuals in the ownership of the environment (Fig. 5.4). Indeed, the city’s mayor is a prominent Russian-speaker who has maintained his office since 2009. Discussions on the streets in the city center are frequently in the Russian language, as well as German and English; collectively, foreign languages often seemingly eclipse the presence of Latvian language. Riga is a multicultural metropolis, where Latvian fluency is not necessary. In fact, according to 2012 Eurobarometer, 95% of Latvia’s population speaks at least one foreign language – 41% more than the European Union average (Druviete et al., 2016).

Though vastly different in terms of geographic location, ethnic diversity, linguistic dominance, and the urban/rural divide, Riga, Daugavpils, and Daugavpils municipality are all sites of banal integration where the Latvian nation is flagged, be it with literal flags, in texts and symbols, or in artist groups. Multicultural influences are not only visible in special events (such as folklore festivals), they are germane to the landscape, fading into the background of advertisements, architecture, and street conversations. These observations serve to highlight the extent to which integration is in the hum of everyday life in much of Latvia without controversy, or indeed much attention at all. These sites and sights continually flag both the state and the inclusion of its minorities.

Belonging to the nation

Does this hum of banal integration that is present in the lived environment and in interpersonal interaction affect perceptions of belonging? In order to become part of the

⁶⁶ All state funded schools, both minority and Latvian, also include Latvian language curriculum. Dual track schools are schools with both Latvian and minority education programs.

⁶⁷ 49.2% of Rigan students are in Latvian-language general education programs; 49.5% are in Russian minority programs; 1.3% have a different language of instruction (Druviete et al., 2016, p. 81).

nation, state rhetoric demands intangible feelings of belonging and respect from “integrating” individuals (Ministry of Culture, 2012). I argue measures of belonging or respect need not be demonstrative attempts to identify national loyalties. Rather, socio-national banal integration looks at the relationship between an individual and the state, and the depth or quality of this interaction. It considers the unnoticed ways in which the individual lives in a socio-national context, and, depending on the level of salience, may be indicative of attitudes of personal belonging or loyalty to the state. Not least in this measure is individuals’ formal and informal standing with the state, as measured by citizenship, residency, and involvement in state institutions and civil society organizations (e.g. public schools, community clubs, etc.). I argue these relationships affect individuals’ daily lives in significant, but often unnoticed ways; individuals become part of the nation with or without extensive effort.

Developing feelings of belonging to the Latvian state is particularly relevant to areas with large Russian-speaking populations. As argued in Chapter 4, overt efforts to “integrate” Russian speakers are often exclusionary and ineffective, serving to further highlight differences between “Latvians” and “Russians,” and enforcing the narrative that Russian speakers are not “real” Latvians. To explore how linguistic identification affects individuals’ relationship with the state, I turn to my survey of high school youth in Daugavpils and Daugavpils municipality. I argue, even in this heavily Russian-speaking area, young people display moderate to extensive levels of socio-national banal integration with the Latvian state. The data from this survey is original, though some of the topics addressed are reflective of those asked in other questionnaires. It is focused on a widely discussed, but understudied population in southeastern Latvia; it serves to both reinforce the validity of existing data, while providing greater nuance on the target population.

Researchers have often turned to language as the primary marker with which to categorize minority identities in Latvia. While home or school language certainly inform the environment in which students may live, this survey considers multiple indicators of ethnicity, nationality,

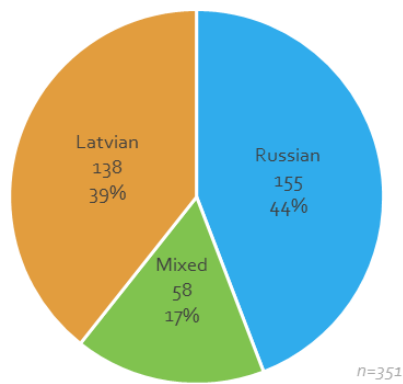
language and environment to offer a more nuanced picture of youth integration, how they view themselves and how they are socio-nationally integrated with the state and community. Home and school language usage can provide context for the environment in which students live, but are not sufficient indicators of students' exposure to either minority or titular language. Nearly 60% of students surveyed in Daugavpils city/municipality attend Latvian or mixed language schools (mixed language schools provide the option for bilingual and Russian-language education through 9th grade). Around 40% of students surveyed are enrolled in Russian minority schools.⁶⁸ However, home languages do not necessarily correspond with the school language environment. 56% of students surveyed indicated they are from a Russian-language home environment. An additional 30% live in mixed (Latvian/Latgalian and Russian) language environments (Figures 5.5 & 5.6).

This means that more than 80% of students surveyed live in some form of Russian-language home environment, but only half of these Russian-speaking students are enrolled in Russian-language schools. Correspondingly, half are exposed to Latvian peers and educational environment on a daily basis. Neither school language nor home language indicators are able to provide an exclusive picture of the ethno-linguistic or cultural environment in which students live. Indeed, home language is mixed for nearly a third of the surveyed students; this is an indicator that rarely appears in collected census materials (rather, populations are measured by indicated ethnicity or dominant home language).

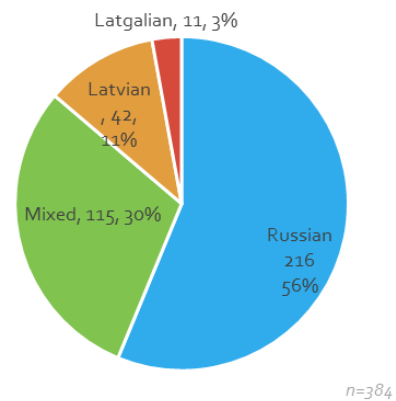
⁶⁸ The Daugavpils J. Pilsudska Polish Gymnasium did not participate in the survey, though the school's folk dance collective did contribute to qualitative data collection (See Chapter 6).

Figures 5.5 & 5.6

Respondents' school type



Respondents' home language



Russian-speaking students enrolled in Latvian schools demonstrate extensive socio-national banal integration. Their daily life actively involves code-switching to the state language and they have access and exposure to nationally-focused cultural and civic associational life. Students in minority schools similarly maintain at least a moderate level of socio-national integration; 60% of classes are in the state language, and they still maintain access to state and national symbols endemic to state-run institutions (e.g. flags, national holiday celebrations and activities, cultural extra-curricular groups, etc.). Even if some students are not actively involved in extra-curricular activities, many of their peers are, which develops a culture of civil society to which they are exposed and from which they tangentially benefit as audience members (see Chapter 6). Indeed, this banal affiliation with the education system automatically places students within a site of socio-national integration,⁶⁹ wherein the nation is literally and symbolically “flagged” continuously.⁷⁰ Even students in a Russian-speaking region are consistently exposed to a moderate level of socio-national integration in the school environment.

⁶⁹ Interpersonal integration depends on the ethnic diversity within a school.

⁷⁰ While there is skepticism about the level of adherence to state mandates for Latvian education, in all of the schools that I visited in the Daugavpils city/municipality (and Riga) the state was clearly flagged and lessons were conducted in Latvian (in addition to minority languages).

The next discrete measure of young people’s socio-national integration comes from their direct connection to the state. Passports and nationality are a hot-button topic in the Latvian integration debate, and, as such, are often avoided in studies, which use language as a proxy for ethno-national belonging. I argue this practice may overshadow the relative advancements of socio-national integration. Passports and identification cards are physical representations of individuals’ connection to the state, and a significant marker of their level of socio-national integration, particularly in the context of Latvia’s debate on non-citizens. Both citizens and non-citizens meet the qualifications for a basic level of socio-national integration – they are clearly connected with the state in a way that foreign nationals are not. However, a higher prevalence of citizenship certainly increases the state of socio-national integration, as does the *nationality (tautība)* listed by the passport/ID holder (recall the importance of *tautība* as discussed in Chapter 4).

Fig. 5.7 Type of passport

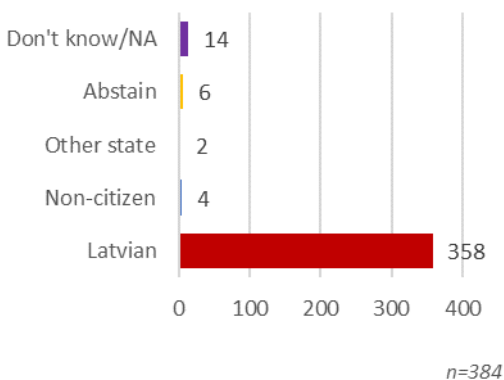
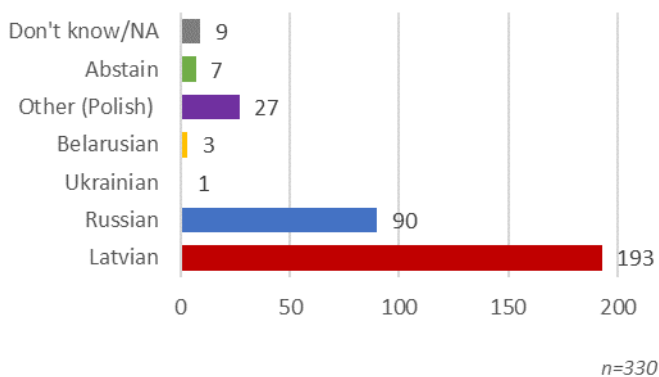


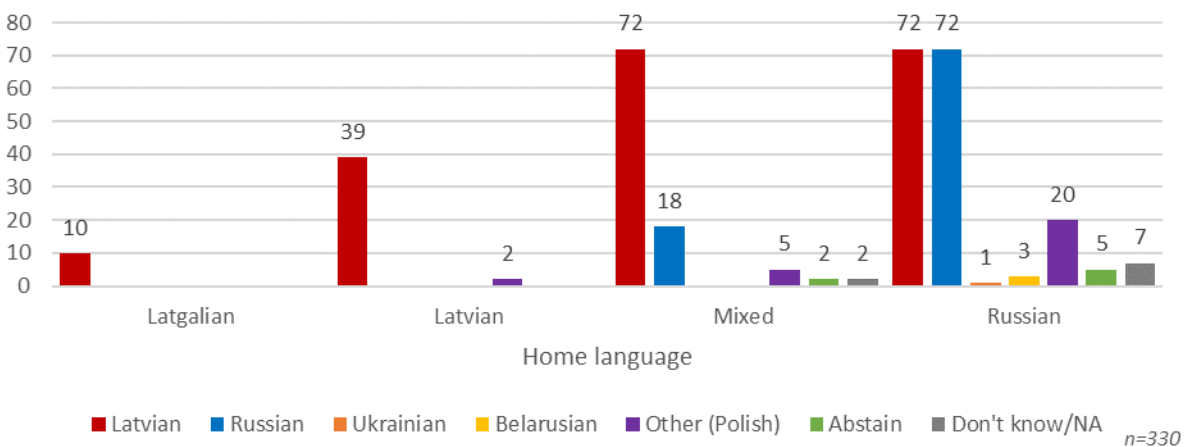
Fig. 5.8 Nationality listed in (Latvian) passport



In the case of Daugavpils area students, questions related to their passports (see survey instrument in Appendix 1) reveals data critical to the integration debate. Only six students (1.5%) chose to abstain from the question, while 93% of the students surveyed indicate that they have Latvian passports; this indicates that ethnicity and nationality are not considered topics as sensitive as some analysts suggest. Four respondents (1%) said they have a non-citizen passport; two listed that they hold the passport of another state. These data in and of themselves are significant (Figure 5.7). The overwhelming proportion of students surveyed

who have Latvian citizenship (as indicated by their passport) shows an important advancement in the diminishing prevalence of the non-citizen question. These students are intrinsically connected to the Latvian state — they have likely been citizens since birth, and their connection is solidified by the Latvian passport they possess. This civic marker of identity is particularly significant in a region that is assumed to be vulnerable to the lures of Russian citizenship and complains of a lack of rights for Russian speakers in Latvia. These concerns diminish when looking at the citizenship demographics of these youth in Daugavpils city and Daugavpils municipality.

Figure 5.9 Listed nationality in passport by home language (x-axis)



Similarly significant is the nationality that student respondents indicate is listed in their passports. While 56% of respondents listed Russian as their exclusive home language, only 27% of students responding to the nationality question list Russian as their nationality (Fig. 5.8). Eight percent of students list Polish (this likely underestimates the actual figure in the region given that the Polish gymnasium did not participate in the survey); 4 students overall list Belarussian or Ukrainian as their nationality (these ethnic identities are often subsumed into the “Russian” identity). The surprising number in these data is the 58% of students surveyed who list Latvian as their *tautība* (Fig. 5.9) This is an overwhelming number that

complicates the way researchers measure identity and minority status in Latvia, particularly given that only 14% of surveyed students speak exclusively Latvian or Latgalian at home. Nearly 75% of those in mixed language environments list Latvian as their nationality.

Even more interesting, perhaps, is that of those students who speak primarily Russian in the home, 40% list their nationality as Latvian — the same number as list their nationality as Russian. In this survey sample, 60% of those living in Russian language home environments list something other than Russian as their nationality. This is extremely relevant to the discussion of Latvian cultural integration. It has been argued that “identification with the State threatens [young people’s] ethnic identity” (Ministry of Culture, 2012, p. 18, citing Rungule & Koroleva, 2008). However, in the case of students surveyed, students are not “Latvianized” or assimilated into an exclusive “Latvian” environment, however, they clearly have a connection with being Latvian that goes beyond simple citizenship identity. They are not required to relinquish their ethno-linguistic identity, but they do find themselves connected to a Latvian *national* identity that is more than the rational civic benefits that a passport provides. While this does not exclude individuals with a different listed nationality from identifying as members of the Latvian nation-state, it does indicate that youth negotiate their national and cultural belonging in a complex way that goes beyond ethnolinguistic heritage, and indicates that these students are moderately or extensively integrated from a socio-national perspective.

Fig. 5.10 Feeling of belonging to hometown

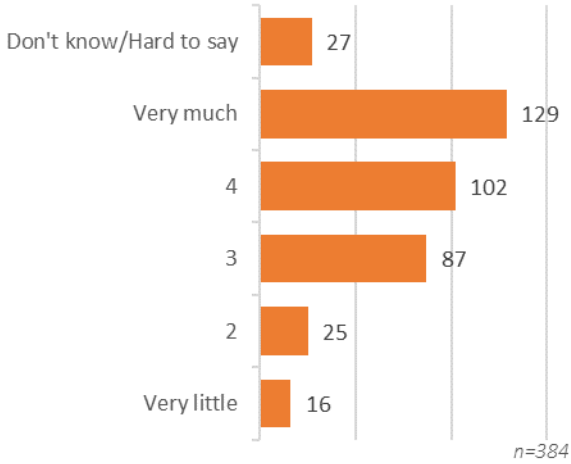


Fig. 5.11 Feeling of belonging to Latvia

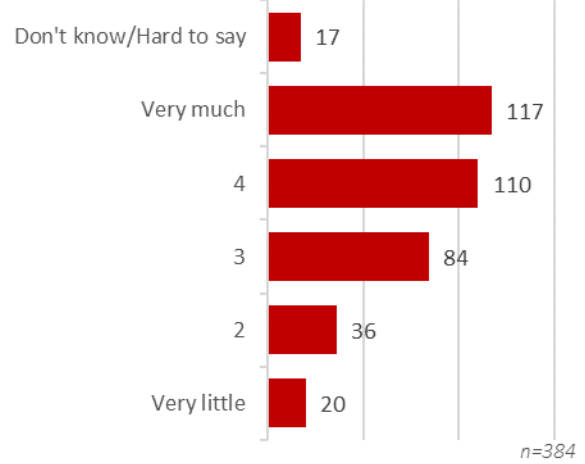


Fig. 5.12 Feeling of belonging to Europe

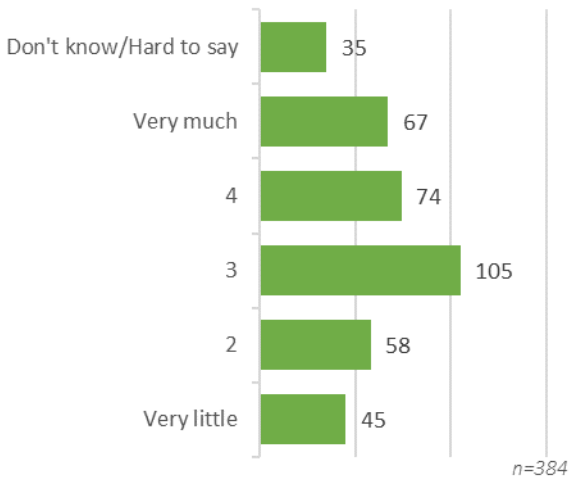


Fig. 5.13 Feeling of belonging to Russia

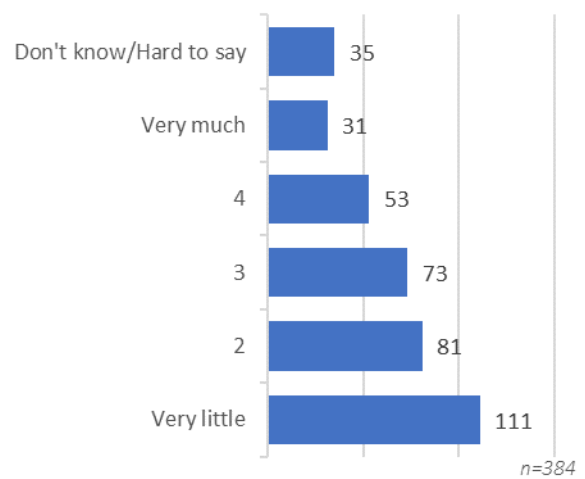
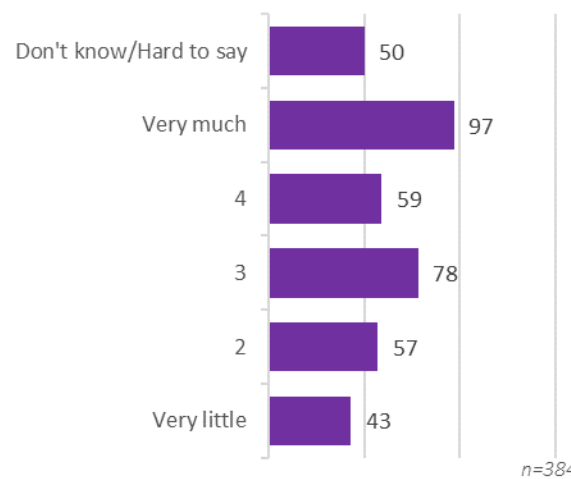


Fig. 5.14 Feeling of belonging to the world



While these “countable” variables suggest young people in the Daugavpils region are moderately or extensively integrated socio-nationally, young people also indicated their attitudes towards belonging, both to their local parish/municipality, as well as to Latvia, the Baltics, Europe, Russia, and the world (Fig. 5.10-5.14). This was measured by asking students to indicate on a 5-point scale to what extent they felt belonging to a set list of territories (city/municipality of residence; Latvia; the Baltics; Europe; the world; and Russia). (The question was phrased as “territorial” belonging to avoid conflating *place* with *politics*, e.g. it is possible to feel a measure of belonging to Russia without supporting the Kremlin, or belonging to Latvia without being satisfied with current politics.)

Figures 5.15-5.19 Feeling of belonging to Latvia grouped by language/school

Fig. 5.15 Latvian/Latgalian home language

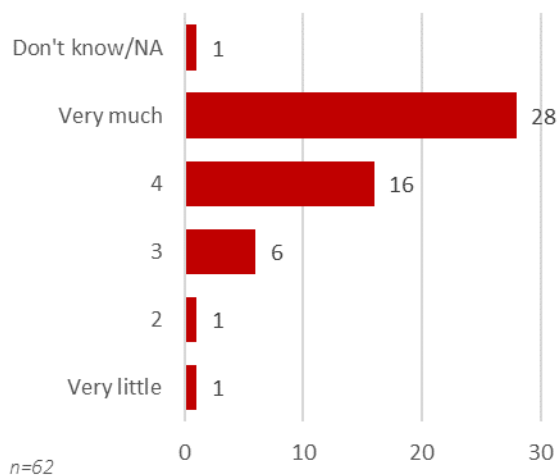


Fig.5.16 Latvian/mixed school

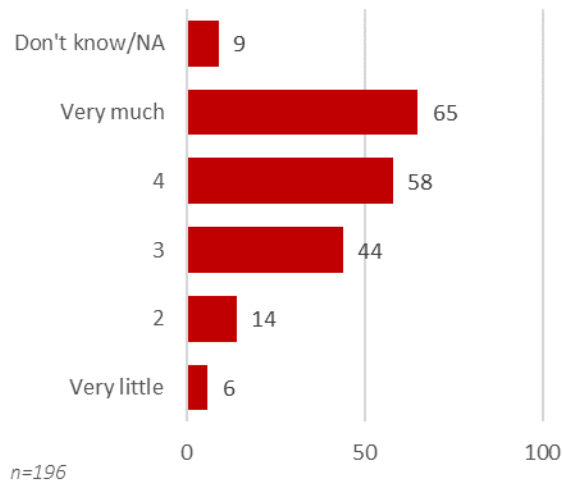


Fig. 5.17 Russian home language

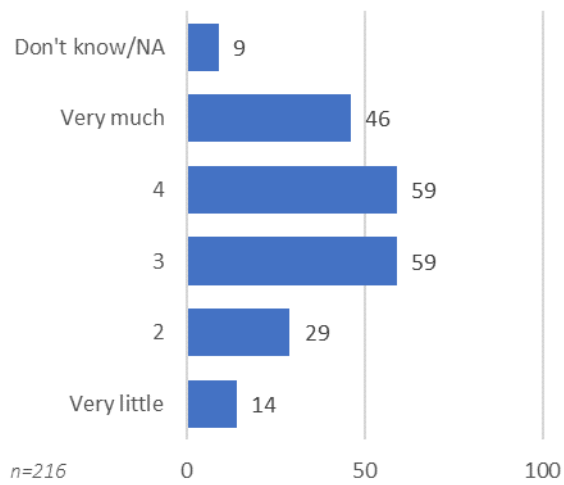


Fig. 5.18 Russian minority school

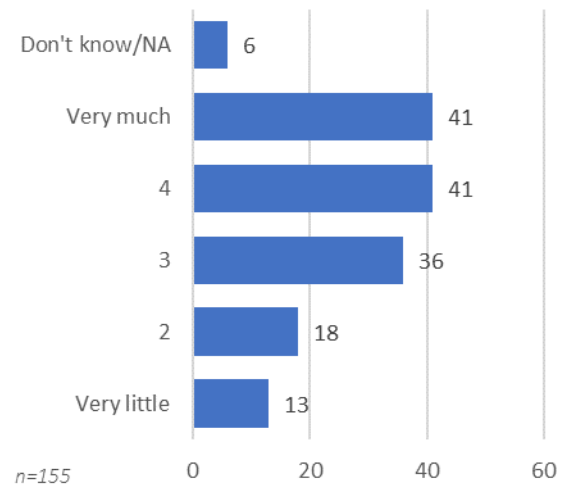
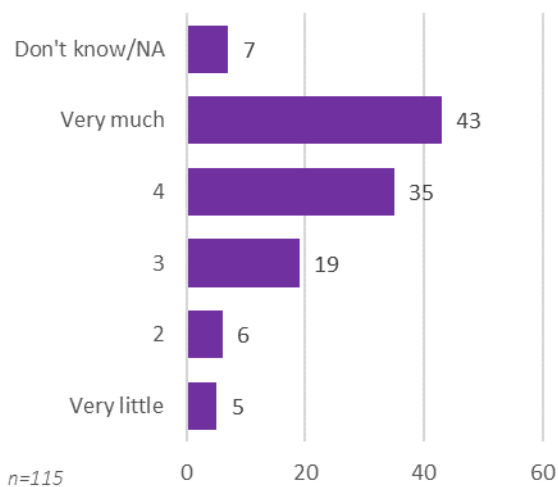


Fig. 5.19 Mixed (Latvian/Russian) home language



Expressed belonging to the local place of residence and Latvia was considerably stronger than belonging to any other locality. Students felt fairly high levels of belonging to the world; surprisingly, students displayed the least attitude of belonging to the territory of Russia. Indeed, majorities in both Latvian and Russian schools and across home languages displayed relatively high attitudes of belonging to Latvia (Fig. 5.15-5.19). The finding that a majority of students feel they belong to the country in which they live is not particularly novel. However, it is important in the context of the Latvian debate on integration; it similarly supports the findings of researchers such as Laizāne et al., who, in a study of nine schools across Latvia, argued that students tend to differentiate between national and ethnic identities. “[Students]

assign themselves ethnic Russianness, which, in their minds, has little to do with Russia the country. For this reason, many don't feel connected to Russia, they choose not to use the word 'Russian' and call themselves 'Russian speakers', because they feel more likely to belong to Latvia" (Laizāne et al., 2015). Similarly, it corresponds with feelings of belonging measured among the general population (Druviete et al., 2016). Particularly in the Daugavpils region, which is so frequently described as a Russian enclave, the relatively positive association with belonging to the region and state is an additional indicator of extensive banal integration. This association is banal because it is not an active demand on students, but it is extensive because it demonstrates a deep institutional and personal connection in Latvia.

Conclusion

The goal of this chapter has been to explore the way Russian-speaker integration is discussed and manifested in the banal, daily lives of individuals living in Riga, Daugavpils, and Daugavpils municipality. Using data gathered in a mixed methods approach, I argue that Latvian society is inherently multicultural and meets the baseline for basic banal integration, where individuals of multiple ethnicities are in common, peaceful contact, interacting without significant conflict on a daily basis.

This chapter has addressed some of the predominant (and contradictory) arguments of integration failure: ethnically-based violence, Russian-speakers as not Latvian, oppression/exclusion of Russian-speakers in social environments, separation as the norm, and language as a point of contention. Through the examples given and analyzed, I contend that these arguments, while dominant in the rhetoric and in poignant examples of non-integration, do not have a significant bearing on the operational daily lives of individuals living in the settings described. That is not to say that integration does not face challenges of this nature, but that for many individuals, these conflicts are talking points, not a consistent element of their quotidian lives.

The reality of integration is much more banal. Peaceful coexistence is the norm, expressed feelings of belonging to the state and territory is comparatively high, multiculturalism is widespread, spaces are shared, language is largely a non-issue and deep interethnic personal relationships are common. This analysis does not claim to be universal to the entirety of the country. Rather, it attempts to demonstrate the incongruence between the perceptions of integration, and its manifestation in daily life.

In Chapter 6, I move from quotidian sites, experiences, and interactions to a deeper exploration of banality in the processes of ecstatic nationalism, or how *Latvia's* minorities become *Latvian* minorities. Specifically, how do minorities negotiate their belonging to the Latvian nation and how is this exhibited? Consistent with the theoretical argument of this dissertation, I contend that being part of the nation is intrinsically a banal element of the daily lives of many (particularly youth) Russian-speakers.

Chapter 6 | Sound of the nation: Integration & ecstatic cultural nationalism

As argued in previous chapters, banal integration relies on two important concepts: 1) interpersonal integration and 2) socio-national integration. In Chapter 5, I discussed the ways in which individuals interact among themselves and with the state in quotidian life. Also important to the discussion of integration is way in which minorities participate banally in moments of national and cultural ecstasy. Exploring this side of banal integration attests to the conceptual framework's staying power as one that can describe *national integration* and not merely interpersonal contact theory. Integration must operate on both the horizontal and vertical planes to attest to state-society relations. For this reason, in this chapter, I focus on ways in which minorities integrate specifically in national cultural moments, not only as minorities, but also as nationals. My survey and ethnographic data has indicated that minorities feel belonging to Latvia (Figure 5.11); investigating how this belonging manifests helps to better outline the transition from host land to homeland, both in the actions of minorities and in the research that explores these relationships.

In this chapter I will first unpack Michael Skey's (2006) framework of ecstatic nationalism and how it relates to my conceptualization of banal integration. I follow this with a case study of school youth involvement in and preparations for the Latvian Song and Dance Celebration. This case study relies on data from a mixed methods perspective, including my survey of Daugavpils city/municipality youth, participant observation, focus groups, interviews and extant data. I first discuss what is known about minority participation in the Celebration, then move to student engagement, and personal perspectives on participation in artists' collectives. This includes data from schools in both the Latgale region, as well as Riga, which offers some perspective on center/periphery engagement. The chapter concludes with a discussion of controversial and national events.

The choice to use the Celebration as a primary case study of ecstatic nationalism is consciously made. Though decisively national and organized by the state, Song and Dance Celebrations celebrate artistic excellence and side step “hot button” ethnic issues.⁷¹ This dissertation also stresses the importance of culture as an access point to banal integration; exploring minority engagement with the Song and Dance Celebration appropriately merges both the cultural and the civic with the national. Preparations for the Song and Dance Celebration take place locally; participants are members of groups that meet regularly. Putnam argues, “the health of our public institutions depends, at least in part, on widespread participation in private voluntary groups — those networks of civic engagement that embody social capital” (2000, p. 336). Artists’ collectives preparing for the Song and Dance Celebration engage members in part of active civic life that goes beyond participation in public duties. Preparations for the Song and Dance Celebration span years, deepening both bonding and bridging social capital within groups and across them. As one of the pinnacles of modern Latvian culture (included on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2008), there is significant and expanding research conducted on Song and Dance Celebration. However, there have been repeated calls for more research on the engagement of Latvia’s minorities, not least from the Ministry of Culture itself. This chapter does not intend to be a comprehensive perspective of the Celebrations, but to move towards filling the gap of knowledge regarding minority participation.

Ecstatic nationalism & banal integration

In the previous chapter, the ways in which banal integration manifests in daily life were analyzed and unpacked. In this chapter, I turn to the banality of integration as it manifests in cases of ecstatic cultural nationalism. I refer to Michael Skey’s work, which reconsiders Billig’s banal nationalism within the framework of “ecstatic” outbursts of nationalism in nation-

⁷¹ Significantly, most Latvian national holidays are widely celebrated. See Ch. 6, section “Celebrating the nation.”

wide events. He argues, the banality of nationalism exists not only in the undercurrent of daily life, but also within the throws of national “ecstasy.” Ecstatic nationalism is important for two reasons: 1) it serves to recreate and concretize (or not) the nation, and clarifies how these ritualized performances relate to and (perhaps) inform the daily articulation and enactment of banal national identities; 2) it shows how national identity is “defined, disseminated and challenged” in a globalizing world (2006, p. 144).

Instead of drawing a direct parallel between ecstatic nationalism and “ecstatic integration”, I use Skey’s framework to explore the point of overlap between integration and nationalism. The relationship between minorities and the state can take on many levels of intensity; while one may be integrated by virtue of basic civic attachments (as discussed in Chapter 5), turning the host land into the homeland necessitates a more developed sense of belonging. My theoretical framework (Table 6.2) identifies multiple levels of socio-national banal integration. Ecstatic nationalism is the point that overlaps with extensive banal integration, i.e. where individuals engage with civic-cultural associational life and have direct points of contact with the nation. This overlap is nuanced; it does not assume minority assimilation or nationalist tendencies; rather, it points to an association with the nation that is banally integrative, i.e. an extension of daily life repackaged into a national event.

“Ecstatic events illuminate the banal, temporally structuring disparate lives, providing a sense of communal release, a significant bank of ‘shared’ memories (Connerton, 1989; Kong & Yeoh, 1997) and, just as importantly, realise the nation (albeit for a limited period) as a concrete community that can be seen, heard and idealised (Lukes, 1975, p. 301)” (Skey, 2006, p. 148).

Billig’s (1995) core argument in *Banal Nationalism* is that the habits by which the nation is reproduced have no label, and are therefore unnoticed. Because these habits are in the undercurrent of daily life, they are not easily categorized and studied. Skey argues that Billig “seems to underestimate the degree to which the banal and ... the ecstatic, are interlinked and reinforce each other” (2006, p. 146). Displays of ecstatic nationalism “both illuminate

and materialize the often rather nebulous solidarities that are presumed to underpin daily (national) life” ... “Put simply, ecstatic national events provide first-hand evidence” of a knowable community (2006, pp. 146–147). As this relates to the concept of integration, I argue that ecstatic national events also can provide first-hand *experience* of the nation; they “illuminate and materialize” not only presumed solidarities between co-ethnics, but also the often-invisible examples of banal integration among broader inhabitants of the nation. Indeed, Skey also addresses the value of ecstatic nationalism in internal nation building: “The drawing together of diverse peoples under one or more symbol(s) of the nation generates the impression of a unified, concrete and timeless national community” (2006, p. 153). Given the methodological difficulty of studying national identity, Skey’s framework for analyzing ecstatic national events guides analysis of how particular discourse of national identity and integration is articulated, disseminated, negotiated, or rejected.

The seven key indicators of an ideal ecstatic national event include the following factors: intention to promote social solidarity, authoritative pre-planning, opportunities to “recommit” to the “imagined” national community, interruption of daily routines, use of recognized symbols of nationalism, mediated coverage, and involvement of a central cast and audience. The Latvian Song and Dance Celebration is a nationwide event that embraces Latvian national culture as one of the largest recurring events in the Latvian landscape. Skey’s framework of an ideal ecstatic event maps closely with the manifestation of the Latvian Song and Dance Celebrations, making this case study an appropriate empirical investigation of the concept (see Table 6.1). Similarly, minority participation in the festival is an example of extensive socio-national banal integration (Table 6.2). Minorities participating demonstrate a high level of belonging to their city, region, and state, acting as representatives of these entities within the festival (carrying flags and marching in their regional position in the parade – a key

element of the festival that announces the nation in all of its parts).⁷² They are actively engaged in the cultural life of the nation, whether as participants contributing to the “diversity” of the nation, or as direct participants in the titular elements of the festival. Participating in local artists’ groups, as well as in the festival proper, demonstrates active civic associational engagement, which is critical to the development of a civic democratic state (Putnam, 2000).

Table 6.1 Elements of an ideal ecstatic event

Ideal ecstatic event (Skey)	Case study: Latvian Song and Dance Celebration
Intends to promote social solidarity	<i>Promotes involvement across regions, age groups, ethnicity, artists’ collectives</i>
Pre-planned (by an authority)	<i>Planned by the Latvian National Cultural Center, National Center for Education, government ministries</i>
Provides opportunities to “recommit” to the “imagined” national community	<i>Based on collective displays of national culture (song, dance, art), bringing periphery to the center; nation becomes physically and visually manifested</i>
Interrupts daily routines	<i>Week-long festival disrupts life in Riga and promotes travel to the center from the periphery</i>
Draws upon recognized symbols of everyday discourses of nationalism	<i>National flag, folk costume, folk song, national stage dance, ethnographic symbols, etc., used to embody the Latvian tauta (folk/people/nation)</i>
Mediated through coverage of the event/as a major news story	<i>Festival events broadcast live on national television and over Internet; covered by all major news outlets</i>
Involves central “cast” and live/mediated audiences; links public and private space	<i>Performers/directors as “central cast”; co-nationals at home and abroad are audiences; celebration accessible in home</i>

(Skey, 2006, pg. 151-2; 157)

⁷² The Celebration has been influenced by the Tsarist, interwar and Soviet period, while also being used as a mechanism for building the post-Soviet nation (see Adams, 2010). Both its deep tradition (going back to the late 19th century) and the mass scale of quotidian participation makes it more than a national “spectacle” and rather, a lived experience.

Table 6.2 Socio-national banal integration

Extensive	High level of belonging to city, region, state; fluency in state language; active engagement in civic associational life; active engagement in national cultural life
Moderate	Feeling of belonging to city, region, state; at least moderate fluency in state language; some engagement in civic associational life; demonstrates passive interest
Basic	State-issued passport, basic understanding of state language; non-citizen passport; minimal engagement in civic associational life or limited to minority gatherings; sees cultural “flags” but does not actively engage
None	No attachment/engagement with/estranged from nation (language, civic identity, cultural life)

Nation of singers & dancers

The Song and Dance Celebration maps almost precisely to Skey’s framework of an ecstatic national event, but how does this manifest in the real world? What meaning can be attributed to participation? This first necessitates a description of the basis and structure of the Song and Dance Celebration, as well as preparations for it.

A German tradition embraced during the 19th-century Latvian National Awakening⁷³ and expanded during Soviet occupation, the Song and Dance Celebration is a focal point of both Latvia’s cultural heritage and its cultural future. The primary events are the Nationwide Latvian Song and Dance Celebration and the School Youth Song and Dance Celebration, which take over the city of Riga for a week (on separate five-year cycles) with street performances, markets, concerts, and a general bustle of excitement as the capital fills with people from across the country and the diaspora. Smaller, regional festivals span the time and space⁷⁴ between these two main celebrations, but these large events are the critical national manifestations.

The Celebrations are made up of many different performances and competitions, but primarily

⁷³ The first Latvian song festival was held in 1873.

⁷⁴ Including in the diaspora.

center around two events: the stage folk dance⁷⁵ concert and the finale choir concert for which dance and choir collectives must start preparing several years before hand. The repertoire is Latvian-centered and very complex. Groups must be approved by a panel of experts to participate in these Celebration culmination performances, and they vie for top awards in preliminary contests. The festival also features performances by Latvia's ethnic minority groups displaying their folk culture, as well as smaller street performances by Latvian folklore collectives. Much of the prestige and displays of high-level talent comes from participation in the main choral and dance events. In 2013,⁷⁶ 62 individual events were part of the festival, 41 of which were free to the public; main events were broadcast on television (Latvijas Nacionālais kultūras centrs, 2014). The 2015 School Youth Song and Dance Celebration included 49 events (Valsts izglītības satura centrs, 2015). The Celebration incorporates artists from across Latvia – from the smallest municipality (rural Baltinava on the Russian border) to the many collectives of the capital city.

The Celebration and its organization is codified in Latvian law (Latvijas Republikas Saeima, 2005). The state takes on the primary responsibilities for organizing and financing the festival,⁷⁷ as well as maintaining the festival grounds; tasks are delegated to ministries and centers with direct purview over specific organizing activities. In 2013, the Celebration law was amended to allow participants to apply for a national work holiday, further codifying the importance of the event to Latvian society. The heavy involvement of the state in Celebration organization and financing may lead to external skepticism of the genuine meaning of the festival. However, participation is voluntary and self-motivated. People give up significant

⁷⁵ There are multiple definitions for “folk dance” in the Latvian context. As referenced here, folk dance and folk dance collectives refer to stage folk dance, which are folklore-inspired dances choreographed for the stage and meant to be viewed by an audience. For more on the evolution of folk dance in the Baltic, see Kapper, 2016.

⁷⁶ The most recent Nationwide Song and Dance Celebration was held in 2013. The most recent School Youth Song and Dance Celebration was in 2015. The next large Celebration will be in 2018, Latvia's centennial.

⁷⁷ In 2013, the State budget earmarked Ls 2.4 million for the Celebration (around 3.4 million euro/5.4 million dollars, according to the exchange rate archived by Latvijas Banka).

amounts of their free time not only to participate in the festival itself, but also in the years between festivals. They often contribute significant financial resources to funds costumes, transportation, director salaries, etc. Many collectives practice for five or more hours each week and give up their weekends to perform – it is no small time investment. While Latvia is unique in the Baltics for the level of government involvement in festival organization, the artistic, monetary, and temporal investment from performers is personal and significant.

The Celebration provides both participants and audience members an opportunity to “reconnect” with the nation; a large part of Latvia’s “imagined community” becomes the literal physical community of the nation over the course of the Celebration. In the culmination events of the dance concert and choir finale, as well as the parade, 40,000 participants from across the country and Latvian communities in the world literally stand side by side. Hundreds of thousands of audience members also experience the physical embodiment of the nation, while even more see these visual representations through live broadcasts and other media. In these moments, the national community is no longer simply a modernist concept, it is a physical reality. Engaging hundreds of thousands of individuals is particularly significant in a country with a population of less than 2 million. Participants alone make up 2 percent of the Latvian population; when audience members are included, this reaches around 10-20 percent of the country (UNESCO, n.d.).

As a state-sponsored event highlighting “ethnic Latvian” culture in the context of perceived social discord, it could be assumed that the Celebration is a source of tension and conflict. Instead, it is a source of artistic excellence, spirited competition, and unity for festival participants, nationwide audiences, and city spectators. While multicultural in its development, modern iterations of the Celebration have highlighted a debate between the competing goals of the festival. Does it intend to be a celebration of and for ethnic Latvians or of and for Latvia? Should it aim to be exclusive and limited to the most talented or to be inclusive and incorporate amateur participants? These facilitate deep discussions among the

organizers themselves, but are also critical to the discussion of cultural integration of Latvia's minorities. How accessible is this pinnacle of Latvian culture to minorities? Why must it be accessible? What does engagement provide participants and audience members? Indeed, Skey touches on these questions as well:

"If the world's major cities are becoming cultural melting pots, increasingly composed of disparate diasporic communities from around the world, then it might be argued that special occasions set aside for national worship offer little in the way of identification or psychological fulfilment? Alternatively, if a wide range of individuals and groups are willing to participate, to what degree do the organizers have to subtly accommodate this diversity of social background and opinion?" (Skey, 2006, pg. 155).

How minorities in Latvia participate in the Song and Dance Celebration speaks directly to the concepts Skey outlines and the depth and banality of their integration in the national scene.

If this is ecstatic, if it pulls people outside of their routine and into a highly organized, state-sponsored event, how can the Celebration also be part of banal integration? While the Song and Dance Celebration is an ecstatic national event, it is also a part of Latvian cultural life that exists in daily routines outside of the Celebration itself. Individuals rehearse in collectives multiple times per week; they often spend their free time with other participants – friends – further solidifying the banality of participation and the bonding and bridging social capital that associational life offers. Multiple artists' collectives operate in nearly every city and parish in the country, and artists from nearly every municipality are represented at each Song and Dance Celebration – it is not an outlying event, but a routine part of the cultural landscape in the country. Therefore, despite its ecstasy, it is also a critical part of the banal. Indeed, marked distance from participation in the event would be contradictory to the framework of Latvian banal nationalism. The Song and Dance Celebration is banal even in ecstasy; it is an ideal case study in which to investigate integration as the intersection of both the quotidian and the national.

Minority engagement in the Song & Dance Celebration

National culture and artistic expression has long been seen as a critical mechanism for encouraging integration. Writer Alfreds Goba discussed the power of dance to create social capital and bring non-Latvians into Latvian social life in the early 20th century (Goba, 1936):

"... In the border regions (Latgale, Ilūkste County) Latvian dance also conducts major national work because other nationalities there – who usually are not persuaded to come to Latvian events – happily participate if they know Latvian dances will be danced and taught. In some cases, the results are surprising. Hundreds of foreigners are interested in this Latvian social element. Along with dancing comes also the relevant Latvian melodies, sometimes also song. And, pulled into dance, actively participating, individuals are also more likely to come closer to other Latvian social forms. This, then, also contributes to the return to the Latvian nation of Latvians assimilated [russified] in the times of dependency [Tsarist times], and also contributes to non-Latvians melting into the Latvian element. In this way, dances help to strengthen our national borders. ..." (Goba, 1936, translated)

In the 21st century, the Latvian government similarly defines culture as a critical space to both appreciate outside contributions and to build connection to the Latvian nation:

"Latvian culture is the basis of the Latvian cultural space. For centuries this has been influenced and enriched by Latvia's minorities and the cultures of other countries. ... [Amateur artists' collectives] strengthen both local communities and national identity, as well as create a platform for intercultural dialogue. Cultural institutions (cultural centers, libraries, museums, music/art schools) have the potential to build lasting belonging to Latvia, both among Latvians and other ethnic groups. The tradition of the Song and Dance Celebration unites the community and nation; minorities must be encouraged to participate both as individuals, and as part of minority collectives. This process is particularly promoted among minority youth." (Latvijas Republikas Kultūras ministrija, 2011, translation)

In 2013, the participation of minority collectives in the Nationwide Song and Dance Celebration increased by 55% since 2008, from 53 to 96. However, these numbers capture only a basic outline of minority participation in the festival. They provide only a glimpse into the meaning it holds for this portion of the Latvian population. Significantly, these data primarily consider participants of specifically minority collectives; they do not include figures on minority individuals who participate in general or "Latvian" collectives/artist groups, nor do they address individuals of mixed ethnic heritage. Indeed, as discussed previously, Latvia has a high rate of

interethnic marriage, and individuals interpret their nationality in myriad ways. Counting only the participation of explicit minority collectives therefore serves to underestimate the impact of the Celebration on the wider population of Latvians who may identify linguistically or ethnically as a minority. It similarly overlooks minorities who may be involved behind the scenes, as volunteers, guards, technicians or vendors. Similarly, overstressing minority participation as “minority” underestimates their link to larger Latvian nation.

My research works to fill out these blank spaces regarding minority engagement with the Song and Dance Celebration, as well as give some perspective on interpretations of these events within minority groups. To do this, I turn back to the survey of school youth in the largely Russian-speaking area of Daugavpils city and municipality, as well as focus groups, participant observation and interviews with individual collectives and pedagogues. Given the embedded nature of culture in Latvian society, my research and data collection straddles both school and community groups, which, particularly in rural communities, have significant overlap. Later, I turn to a general discussion of the role that national events play in interpersonal banal integration, as well as overt socio-national integration.

General picture of Daugavpils city/municipality

Eighty-eight percent of surveyed youth in the Eastern Latvian region of Daugavpils municipality and Daugavpils (city) indicate that they are and have been active in extracurricular activities. Choir and folk dance, respectively, are the second and third most popular activities of those listed for high school students in the region (after sports) (Fig. 6.1). It is possible that these numbers do not fully capture the extent to which youth have been exposed to this element of Latvian culture, as some activities such as choir and folk dancing, are often a routine part of elementary school curriculum, and informants may not have

cognitively registered this previous participation.⁷⁸

Of those who participate in artists' groups, more than half (52%) do so to exercise artistic talent. Horizontal relationships are also a motivating factor: 44% agree that they participate to engage with friends/people of the same interest; 9% because their family is involved; 5% to seek new friendships/romantic partners. Maintaining Latvia's culture is a less acknowledged, but still motivating factor participating in artist collectives: 10% of respondents participate to display patriotism/belonging to the state; 17% do so to uphold local traditions; and 18% are motivated by the possibility of participating in a Song and Dance Celebration (Fig. 6.2). Significantly, the reasons youth in Daugavpils city and municipality participate in artist collectives generally follow the pattern of surveyed participants in the 2013 Song and Dance Celebration (Laķe & Grīnberga, 2014).⁷⁹ This indicates that youth in the heavily minority region of Daugavpils city/municipality share similar motivations and values of participation in artists' collectives with the larger Latvian population that actively participates in the Celebration. This reduces the analytical distance between these two groups, which are often put in conflict with one another.

⁷⁸ An issue with this question's phrasing was discovered in the first school surveyed. For some students, it appeared unclear if they should answer in the present or with regard to past activities. This was verbally clarified for all participants, but may serve to underestimate the actual level of participation.

⁷⁹ The question in both surveys overlap and are phrased almost identically, but Laķe's survey includes different available answers. Laķe's survey targeted 2013 Song and Dance Celebration participants.

Figure 6.1 Type of extracurricular activity in which respondents participate

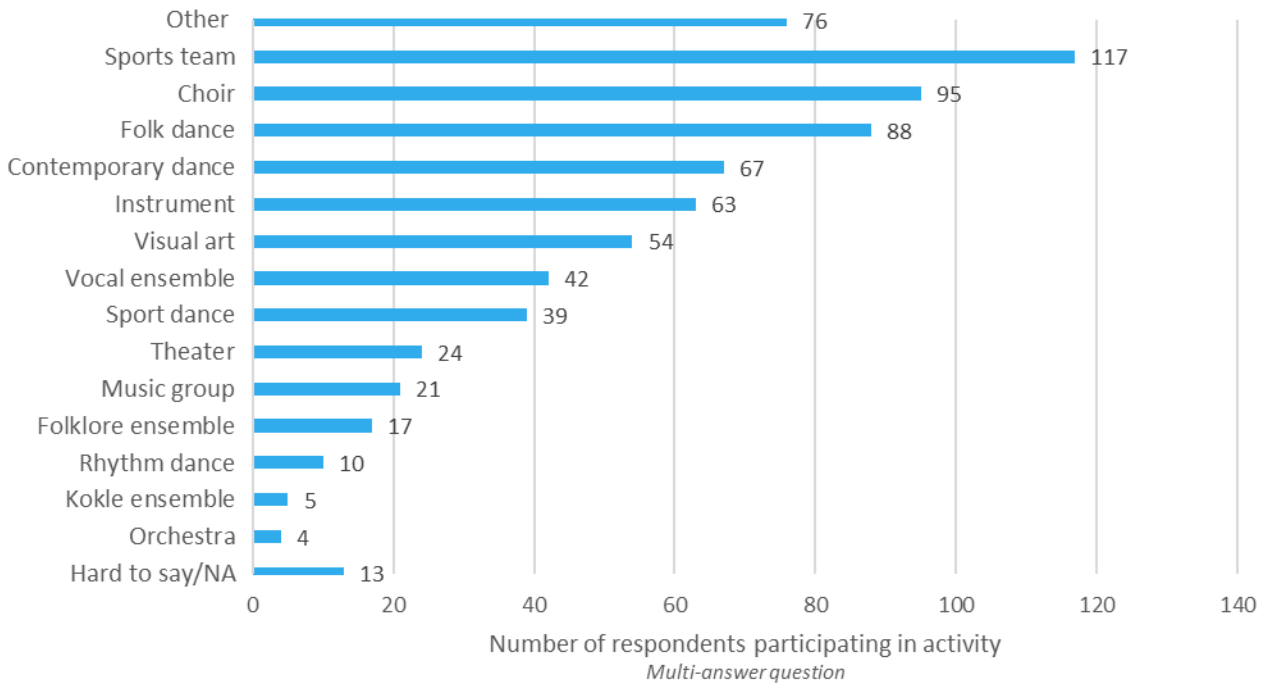


Figure 6.2 Reasons for participating in artistic groups

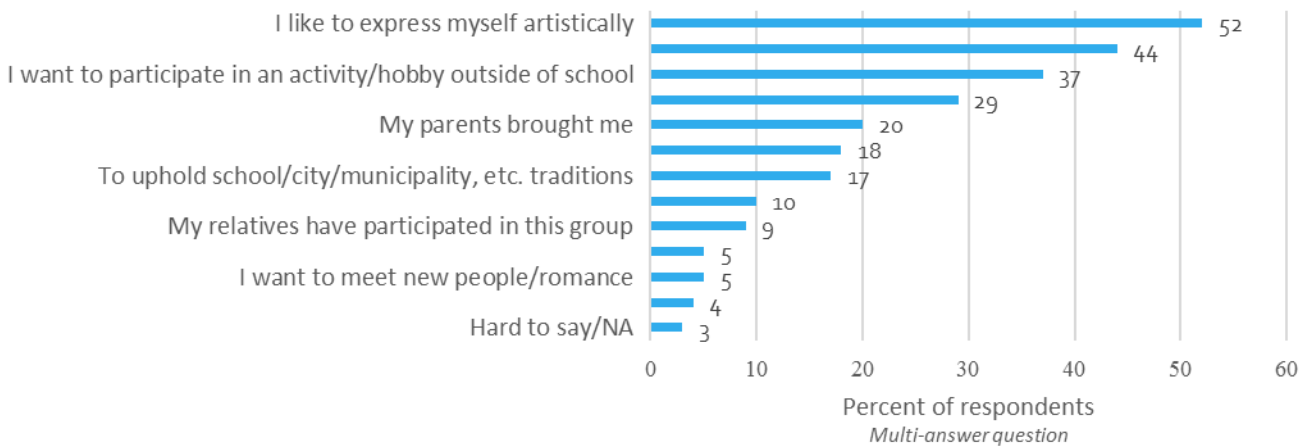


Figure 6.3 Number of times respondent participated in Nationwide Song & Dance Celebration

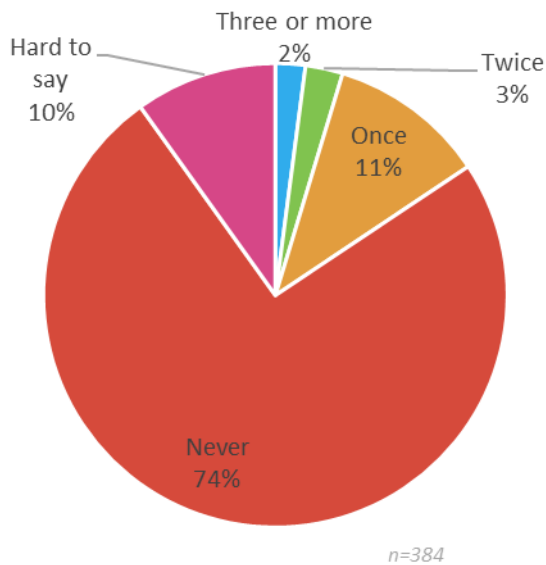
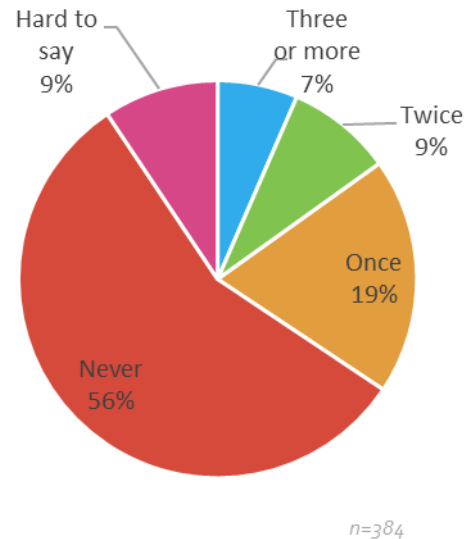


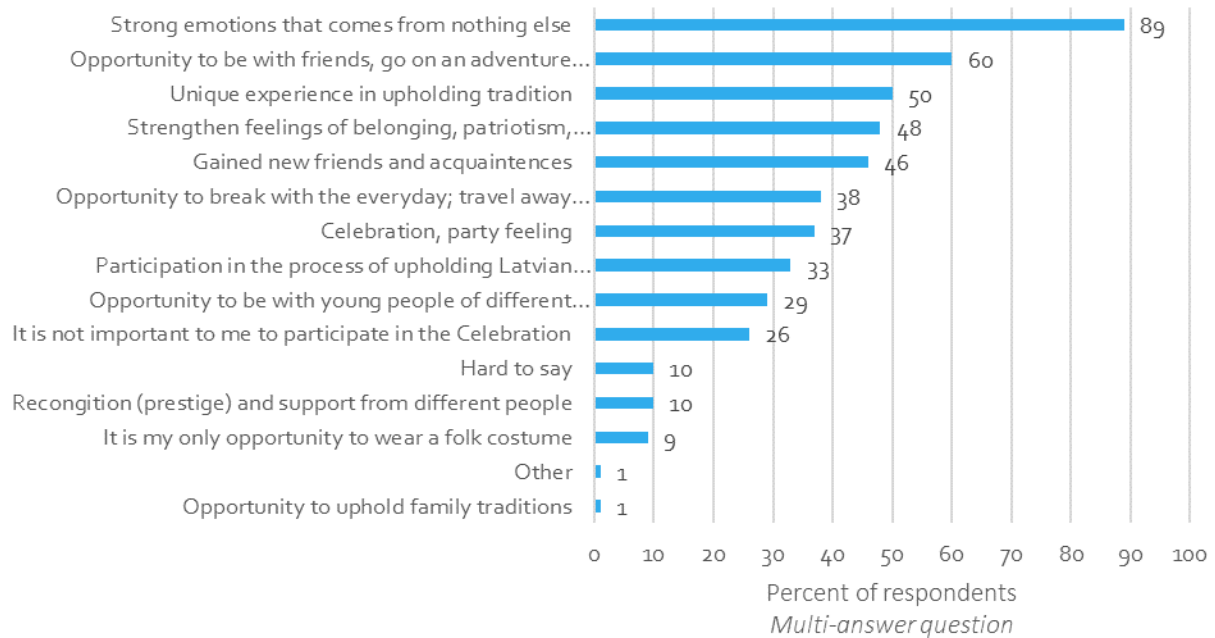
Figure 6.4 Number of times respondent participated in School Youth Song & Dance Celebration



Of the students taking my survey, 37% indicate they have participated in at least one Song and Dance Celebration. Most (35%) have participated in School Youth Song and Dance Celebrations, but 16% have participated in Nationwide Song and Dance Celebrations. Many have participated in more than one celebration of either type (Fig. 6.3 & 6.4). According to the festival programs, in 2010 and 2015, respectively, 33 and 34 groups from Daugavpils city and 7 and 16 groups from the municipality participated in Youth Song and Dance Festival. (These groups also include children under the age of 15, who were not part of the survey.) Active participants are not the only individuals who are affected by the Celebration; 65% of general students surveyed say they have engaged with festival, either by watching Celebration events on television or attending it in person. It is plausible that a much higher percentage has been an audience for their peers who perform festival repertoire, e.g. in school assemblies or local performances. There is both a high level of familiarity with the celebration, as well as a high level of interest in it – a significant finding as regards state-sponsored cultural

activities in a rural, Russian-speaking region.

Figure 6.5 Reasons for participating in a Celebration⁸⁰



The motivations for school youth in Daugavpils city/municipality to participate in the Celebration are similar to the motivations of Laķe’s survey of 2013 Celebration participants (Fig. 6.5). Above all, the strong emotions that the Celebration engenders is the most important element of participating in the Celebrations: 89% of Daugavpils youth indicated this, while 73% of 2013 Song and Dance Celebration participants surveyed by Laķe agreed with this statement. For Daugavpils youth, the ability to be with friends (60%) and engage in a unique experience (50%), were also top factors. Daugavpils city/municipality students who participated in the Song and Dance Celebration also indicated that national belonging (48%) and participation in the upkeep of Latvian traditions (33%) were important motivations for their involvement with artists’ collectives. Daugavpils youth see the festival as a greater indication of their Latvian patriotism (48% vs. 30% of Laķe’s informants). This questions the

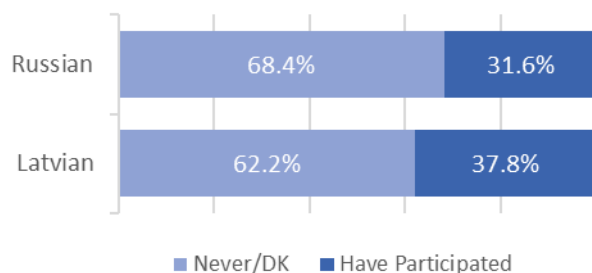
⁸⁰ See Appendix for full response options

stigma of Daugavpils city/municipality as a periphery community that remains outside of Latvian cultural values. Rather, these student responses indicate that they are similarly committed to the values and motivations of the Latvian cultural scene as are individuals who participate in the Song and Dance Celebration nationally.

Minority engagement

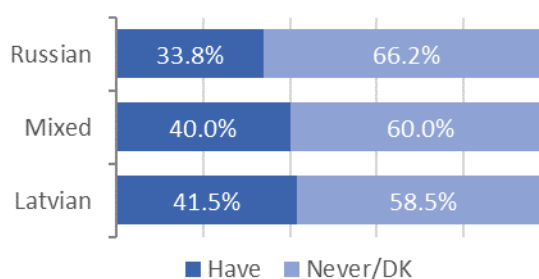
In schools where the language of instruction is Latvian, 38% of those surveyed indicated that they have participated in either Celebration. In Russian minority schools, 32% say they have participated in some element of the Celebration (Fig. 6.6). While perhaps unsurprising that the rate of participation is lower among minority school students as compared with their Latvian school peers, their participation is quite high in comparison with previous measures of Russian school youth in the country. For example, a survey of Russian school youth in Riga reported that only 1% of Russian students participated in the 2005 School Youth Song and Dance Celebration (Tisenkopfs, 2008). Respondents to my survey in schools with a history of participating in the youth Celebration also reported much higher rates of belonging to Latvia (as compared with Russia); this was true of both Russian minority schools and generally (Fig. 6.8 & 6.9).

Figure 6.6 Participation in any Celebration by school language (x-axis)



n=351 Mixed schools includ. in Latvian, due to similar access

Figure 6.7 Participation in any Celebration by home language (y-axis)



n=384

Figure 6.8 Feelings of belonging to Latvia in Russian minority schools with or without recent participation in Celebration (percent)

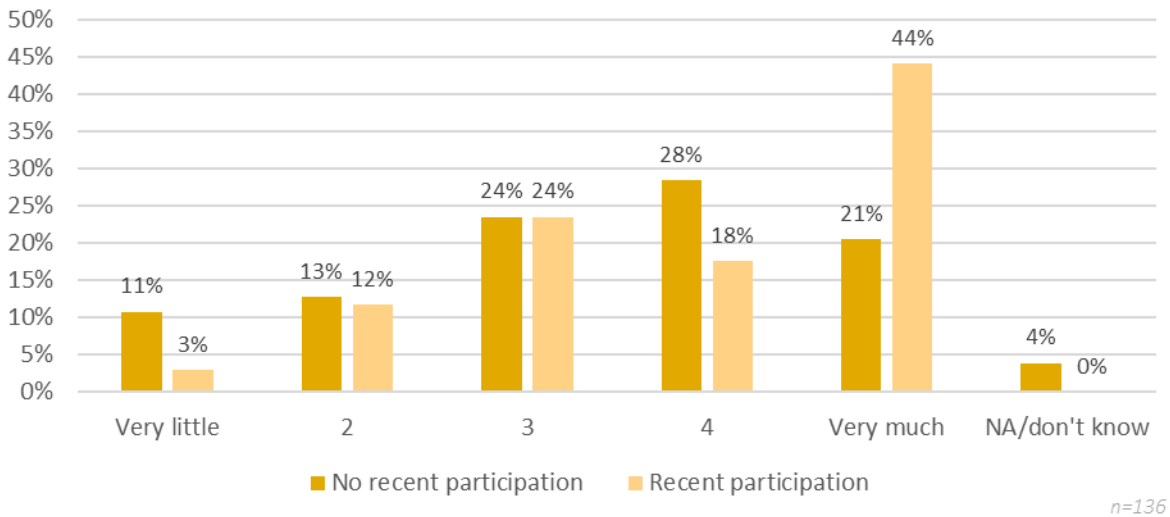
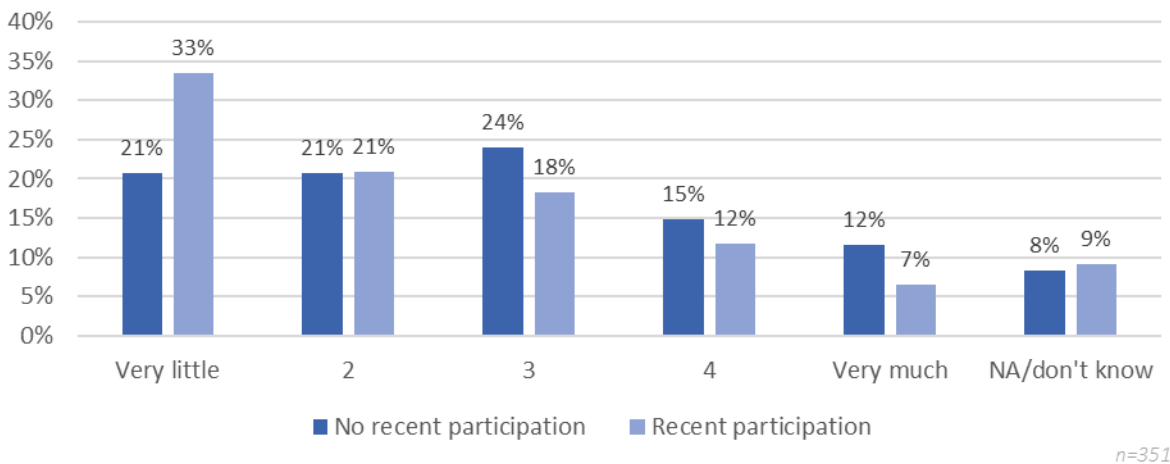


Figure 6.9 Feelings of belonging to Russia among all schools with or without recent participation in Celebration (percent)



Home language is commonly used as an indicator of minority status and also provides a point of comparison when measuring the participation of minority youth in the Song and Dance Celebrations. Forty-two percent of individuals who speak exclusively Latvian or Latgalian with their parents have participated in a celebration; only slightly fewer (40%) of those who speak both Latvian and Russian at home have participated (Fig. 6.7). Thirty-four percent of those in Russian-speaking home environments indicate that they have participated in the Song and Dance Celebrations. Significantly, this is on par with participation measured after the 2005

School Youth Celebration among ethnic Latvian school youth in Vidzeme, the most ethnically Latvian region of the country (36% participated) (CSP, 2015, p. 97; Tisenkopfs, 2008). These data complicate the analysis of ethnolinguistic identity and engagement with Latvian culture, indicating that neither home language nor school environment prohibit youth access to and participation in the Latvian cultural scene.⁸¹

The survey data of Daugavpils city/municipality school youth highlight several important factors with regard to banal integration and ecstatic nationalism: 1) the ubiquity of individuals' engagement in artist collectives confirms the banality of national cultural access; 2) reasons for participating in such groups link the banal interests of teenagers (e.g. flirting, entertainment) with their connection to the national state; 3) excitement for and engagement with the Song and Dance Celebration indicate that Daugavpils city/municipality youth are participants in the display of ecstatic nationalism, whether active or passive. This marks at least a moderate level of socio-national integration for most student respondents, but more extensive integration for active participants (Table 6.2). Both forms of engagement contribute to their understanding of the physical manifestation of the imagined national community. Perhaps the most revealing part of this survey data from the Daugavpils region is the prevalence of engagement and involvement across the many indicators of ethnicity and minority.⁸² Latvian and Russian speakers alike are engaged in the Celebration. As explored below, they are engaged both together and apart; however, the correlation between belonging to Latvia and participation in the Celebration highlights the intersection of banal

⁸¹ Certainly, some schools have more developed interest education programs; better funded schools have more options. Participation in the festival is not mandatory; students may choose to participate in order to gain some social or material benefit (friends, travel, etc.), but they are not required to participate.

⁸² Certainly, not everyone participates or watches the Celebration and some may have no interest in the Celebration or amateur artist collectives at all. I do not intend to dismiss these sentiments; indeed, they appear both within the titular Latvian and the minority community. However, this section is focused on demonstrating the banality of access and involvement, which is comparatively high in Daugavpils. It is not an attempt to argue that all Latvians and minorities are avid participants in cultural festivals.

integration and ecstatic nationalism.

Collective Celebrations

The descriptive data presented above provides a snapshot of Daugavpils city/municipality youth engagement in Latvian cultural events. The survey shows that, even though Russian is the home language of 78.9% of Daugavpils (city) and 65.5% of Daugavpils municipality residents, young people's national identity is articulated not only as part of the civic Latvian state, but also as part Latvian cultural life.

The qualitative fieldwork I have done engaging with multiple schools and artist collectives helps to put the survey data into a human context. While the numbers contribute to the representative validity of the behaviors and perceptions of youth, qualitative examples deepen the validity of the study to better reflect the ground-level realities that numbers alone cannot capture. Within the 11 school/community collectives that I studied, several key themes emerged that contribute to the holistic picture of engagement with the Song and Dance Celebration and the banality of Skey's framework of ecstatic nationalism. These include local environment, school integration, collective engagement with the Song and Dance Celebration, pedagogical enthusiasm, culture as access point, and integration challenges. All of my interviewees were comfortable being named⁸³ and were surprisingly forthcoming with information about their collectives, schools, and ethnic environments; because youth are involved, I have chosen to provide more generic codes for the schools and collectives in question.

Environment & school integration

I have looked in-depth at collectives engaging minority students in three distinct settings (see Chapter 3): 1) rural and ethnically diverse (high interethnic contact); 2) urban and Russian-

⁸³ As marked on signed informed consent documents (required by the University of Washington Institutional Review Board).

speaking (low titular contact); 3) micro-region in capital and Russian-speaking (low interethnic contact in school micro-region,⁸⁴ but diverse city).

Within the rural Latgalian context of **Setting 1**, only one local school is available to students. This is a “mixed” school, with a mainstream Latvian education program and a Russian minority education program. Parents may choose the stream in which to enroll their child through grade 9.⁸⁵ Though the surrounding area is primarily Russian speaking, most students are enrolled in the Latvian stream and speak Latvian with little or no difficulties. Indeed, administrators anticipate that within the next few years, the Russian stream will fade away without any need for state intervention.

“We don’t pressure them artificially [to join the Latvian stream]. We see that it will happen naturally, without any big conflicts. You may have heard in the press about the problems the state law on language caused. But with us, everything has gone very calmly – no stress.” – Director, rural school.

School officials identify this as a natural integration process that is consciously chosen by most parents. After independence, parents who understood the need for their children to speak Latvian quickly changed to enrollment in the Latvian stream. According to school officials, the majority of students who remain in the Russian stream have difficulty with languages, or come from poorly educated families with significant socio-economic risk.

“Those who are in the Russian stream often have a hard time learning. Of course, there are those who send their intelligent children to the Russian streams to get the basics in their own language, and then they send their children to the Latvian stream later. That is good, to learn in your first language. But then there are also those who just give the kids to us, without caring. ‘Teach the kids Latvian, we don’t care.’ ... Then there are those who live in a Russian [pro-Russia] environment at home.” – Teacher, rural school.

⁸⁴ A micro-region is a residential area designed and built primarily according to Soviet urban planning standards, usually made up of multi-story apartment complexes and public buildings. Micro-regions make up some of the distinct neighborhoods of Riga.

⁸⁵ This school sustains only a Latvian high school program; students completing the Russian primary school stream may switch to the Latvian stream, attend other local technical colleges/schools, or attend Russian high school in a nearby city.

The surrounding community setting is very rural and very poor. The school is the focal point of the town; two small stores, a small medical center, and housing (private homes and Soviet-era apartments) are all that surround it. The school here serves around 300 k-12 students from several surrounding parishes and towns, some of which are larger. However, this school is located on two main crossroads, and has thus remained open as a regional school – schools in other, larger towns have been closed because they are less accessible; their students are bussed in daily. The external environment outside of the school walls is largely Russian speaking. Most adult interactions are conducted in Russian, unless the speakers are known to be Latvian.

“Here on the street [the children] speak one word in Latvian, one in Russian. But it’s hard to be in a Latvian environment here – just at school or in [extracurricular] groups.” – Teacher, rural school.

My research in Setting 1 was supplemented by living in the community for a month, as well as making additional trips to the school before and a year later. I engaged daily with the school and community groups, observing and/or participating in the school choir, three school folk dance groups, two community youth vocal ensembles, and one all-ages folklore collective.

All students in the Latvian stream’s first- and second-grades participate in the youngest folk dance group; as students get older they choose whether or not to continue with folk dancing. Around 17 individuals (students, teachers, and community members) participate in a local folklore group, which meets around once per week in a local cultural community center (*kultūras nams*). Despite the exclusive focus on an ethnic Latvian/Latgalian repertoire (often in conjunction with folklore calendar celebrations), the company is both open and diverse. Some are born Latgalians, but others have distinct Russian backgrounds. Russian-speaking and Latvian members of both the folk dance group and the folklore group have participated in the nationwide celebration (some multiple times). The community cultural house is also home to two children’s vocal ensembles, a younger group (roughly grades 1-4) and an older

group (grades 5-8). The younger group has 15-20 participants, the older group, 7-10. These groups meet twice weekly and are led by the same director as the school choir (which has around 15-20 participants). The children are also students in the same school and, while some participants overlap, the community group is a local parish organization⁸⁶; attendance is not connected with the school. These choirs/vocal ensembles are fairly new, and have yet to participate in the nationwide song festival, but have participated in regional competitions and smaller iterations.

Setting 2, a Russian-speaking urban setting, is the city of Daugavpils. Nearly 80% of the population in this city speaks Russian as their primary language. I engaged with two minority schools serving two ethnic populations: a Russian minority school (DRMS) and a Polish minority school (DPMS). From a Western perspective, the Polish school is most in line with the connotation of a minority educational institution, where individuals of Polish heritage constitute a minority within the city (they speak primarily Russian outside of school). The Russian school is a high performing educational institution in Latvia; its students score highly not only in “minority” subjects, but also in state level examinations in Latvian.

Unlike Setting 1, students at these schools have 13 general high schools in their city to choose from (of these 13, only two are Latvian mainstream, one is dual stream). As elite (high performing) and specific minority schools, it is fair to presume that most students at these schools attend as a result of these criteria. Their classmates primarily share their ethnic and linguistic identities, though they are largely fluent in Latvian, as well. Pedagogues within their schools attest that the students speak Latvian with much more proficiency than some of the teachers.

“They speak Latvian. The teachers don’t know it, but the children do.” — Teacher, DRMS.

⁸⁶ Parish now refers to an administrative district, not a religious district.

In Setting 2, I collected data on the folk dance program and choir in the Russian minority school through interviews with pedagogues.⁸⁷ Around 100 students were actively engaged in this cultural curriculum and most attended the Song and Dance Celebration in 2015. I also collected information on the folk dance program at the Polish minority school (3 groups of 16 participants each) through interviews with pedagogues and students, and rehearsal attendance.

Setting 3 is complex. The city setting is Riga, but the two Russian-minority schools I observed here (RRMS1 & RRMS2) are located in two Russian-speaking micro-regions (mostly Soviet-era apartment housing). Unlike Daugavpils, which has a long history as a multicultural, Russian-speaking city, these regions of Riga are primarily populated with Soviet-era migrants or their descendants with mid to low income levels. Within these specific micro-regions, there is little linguistic diversity, as well as a lack of historic connection to the pre-war Latvian state (as may be more perceptible in Daugavpils or the Riga city center). Depending on how often they go to other parts of Riga, students may or may not be frequently surrounded by ethnic Latvians (in Riga around 40% of the population speaks Latvian natively, while 50% speaks Russian as their primary language).

“If we didn’t [accent the Latvian], then this [micro-region] would truly be a Little Russia. They have to learn the Latvian language, otherwise they will have a hard life, work. They must see Latvia beyond this [micro-]region. ... Our choir is the total success – Number 1 choir in Riga (Number 3 in Latvia, in their age category), even better than ‘Latvian’ schools, based on the results of Latvian Song and Dance Festival.” – Director, RRMS1.

“In 1993 changes started. We became more open, to the society here, to integration. ... We started participating in the events that happened in the country. 1993 was also a time of change because everyone moved away⁸⁸ ... We are in a Russian-speaking region. Many families were [Soviet] officers’ families. When the officers’ families

⁸⁷ In DRMS, I spoke with the choir director and her Latvian colleague (Teacher, DRMS), who offered translations when necessary.

⁸⁸ In 1994 a bilateral agreement between the Republic of Latvia and the Russian Federation mandated the withdrawal of troops from Latvia (Galbreath, 2005).

moved away, then everything started.” – Deputy director, RRMS2.

In Setting 3, I engaged with two school choirs with 50-60 participants in each, speaking with pedagogues, directors and students. Both choirs participated in the 2015 festival.

These three settings are important to keep in mind when progressing with further analysis of the artistic groups I cover here. While all of these areas are predominantly Russian-speaking outside of school, Setting 1 has a high level of ethno-linguistic diversity and the educational environment is Latvian centered, Setting 2 is high-performing and minority centered, and Setting 3 is dominantly Russian-speaking, but in the multicultural capital city. All the schools here have made a committed effort to integrate students and provide patriotic and civic education⁸⁹ that meets or exceeds state requirements.

Collectives, participation & access

Despite the predominantly Russian-speaking environments, each of these settings hosts a number of artists’ collectives committed to learning and performing a Latvian repertoire. These groups perform not only within their own institutional settings, but also sing and dance in local, regional, national, and international competitions and concerts. Groups also include other ethnic songs and dances as part of their repertoires, both of Russian-speaking minorities and other folk traditions (e.g. Russian, Polish, Ukrainian, Greek, Jewish, and Irish folk dances; Russian, Latin American, English, and other songs). Depending on time constraints and competitions, particularly in the years of the Song and Dance Celebrations, the obligatory

⁸⁹ Patriotic and civic education (*patriotiskā un pilsoniskā audzināšana*) is part of the national education program. Its terminology should not be misread as Machiavellian nationalist education or indoctrination, rather “patriotic and civic education is connected only to concrete historical events, national symbols, [and] rituals, [education of which] is acquired only in history, geography and literature classes.” (“*Patriotiskā un pilsoniskā audzināšana sasaistāma tikai ar konkrētiem vēstures notikumiem, valsts simboliem, rituāliem, kas savukārt apgūstami tikai vēstures, ģeogrāfijas un literatūras stundās.*”) (Valsts jaunatnes iniciatīvu centrs, 2009, p. 7).

Song and Dance Celebration repertoire is given top billing.⁹⁰

“Minority choirs usually choose. Either they sing the Song Celebration repertoire and then they practically don’t have time for anything else and they integrate completely [in the Celebration], but they also can choose to not sing that. Then they sing in Russian, they sing in some other languages ... well, then they don’t go to the Song Celebration. That is why only two minority choirs, well three, from Riga participated in the [2015] Song Celebration.” – Deputy director, RRMS2. (She references the main Song Celebration performance, but does not include the participation of minority students in other parts of the Celebration.)

It is important to note that participation in the Song and Dance Celebration is not mandatory for these schools, indeed as the deputy director of RMS2 points out, in Riga, minority schools are not active participants (recall Tisenkopfs survey found only 1% of Riga minority school students actively participated in the 2005 School Youth Song and Dance Celebration (2008)). The city of Daugavpils, in comparison, had eight minority school groups (and two Latvian school groups) participate in the 2015 main choir event. Four minority groups (and one Latvian group) participated in the main dance event. Overall, 34 groups from Daugavpils participated in some aspect of the 2015 School Youth Song and Dance Celebration; 33 participated in 2010. It is important to recall that Russian speakers do not only participate in minority collectives, but are also members of Latvian collectives.⁹¹

“[A neighboring parish] is almost 100% Russian speaking. They have never had a Latvian school, only a Russian school, at least during the Soviet period. Then a few years ago, a folk dance collective was established – Latvian, not Russian. And they competed and for the first time their parish participated in the Nationwide Song and Dance Celebration. ... And this group, which was formed in a Russian environment, has a very Latvian name ... the old name of the village.” – Director, rural school.

Survey data suggests students are motivated by a variety of reasons to participate in artists’ collectives, but as teachers suggest, goals – whether the Celebration itself or concerts abroad

⁹⁰ This repertoire is obligatory only for the groups that are competing to participate in the Song and Dance Celebration. Schools or artists’ collectives are not mandated to participate and have the freedom to choose their repertoire.

⁹¹ Numbers of Russian speakers who participate in these types of collectives are not available, because they are not distinguished as minority collectives.

– impact student participation. Motivation for attending may range, but the students are consistently exposed to the Latvian cultural scene. They wear folk costumes, they hear the Latvian songs, and they become part of the greater national fabric when performing not only with their fellow dancers and singers, but also with groups from across the country who also know the same steps and the same lyrics.

Both students and directors noted the power of participation in the Celebration in creating a unifying atmosphere, what Skey would label “the intent to promote social solidarity” and “opportunity to recommit to the ‘imagined’ national community” (2006, p. 151).

“When we were singing [in the festival finale concert], there was a girl from another city – this was the first time I had seen her – and we looked into each other’s eyes and started to cry. ... I didn’t know her name, or what choir she was from – it was like one nation in that atmosphere.” – Choir director, RRMS1.

The students in Riga and their teachers report positive emotions that come with participation. Participation in the Celebration is something they have accomplished, something that connects them with the national community and something that connects them with the nation writ large. They describe a deep affinity for national “hymns” (e.g. *Saule, Pērkons, Daugava; Manā sirdī*), which are intimately connected to describing the “spirit” of the Latvian nation. The choirs I observed in Riga express a deep reverence and affinity for these songs, the words and their representations.

“It leaves a great impression when 12,000 people come together in one amphitheater. The first moment everyone starts singing, it sounds good.” – Student 3, RRMS2.

“When we sang the last verse [of *Manā sirdī* in a preliminary competition], with the words ‘everything is saved in the heart’ (*‘viss ir sirdī saglabāts’*) we had children in the center raise their hands to form a heart [with red chrysanthemums], but those in the center had white flowers. ... it was like the [Latvian] flag, but the formation was a heart. ... With their soul, the children sing with their soul.” – Choir director, RRMS1.

The Song and Dance Celebration is described as an investment of time and effort, but for lasting positive results. Indeed, the choir director of a Russian minority school shared an

anecdote from her own daughter, now grown, who expressed that she does not want to join the waves of emigrants from Latvia precisely because of the Song and Dance Celebration. Though perhaps hyperbolic, this indicates the deep emotional value associated with the Celebration among minorities and Latvian titulars alike.

“[The (Russian) choir teacher’s] daughter said that she wants to live in Latvia because she wants to participate in the Song Celebration. She, herself, has participated, and she helped her mother this year. It has remained in her memory since her school years. Her mother is an example, she herself has sung. [The daughter] is grown, but she still remembers those times. – Teacher, DRMS.

Pedagogical influence

The role of the pedagogue is extremely important for both student involvement in the Song and Dance Celebration, as well as their relationship to it. Most of the minority school interest group directors I spoke with had a limited grasp of the Latvian language, but all of them were enthusiastic about their students’ participation in the Celebration and in cultural events in general. Importantly these pedagogues, primarily Russian speakers, often not only provide students the opportunity to engage with Latvian culture – they themselves contribute to its creation. Multiple teachers here interviewed have actively applied their own professional talents to creating new Latvian folk dance choreographies and folk song arrangements, with which their respective groups perform and compete.⁹²

“It always depends on the pedagogue. If the pedagogue is happy, if they want to do this, they create the enthusiasm that is passed on to students. If the pedagogue is simply there because they are forced to be there, the child will also feel that.” – Director, municipality interest education.

It is extremely significant to note that many of the interest education pedagogues with whom I spoke, were not only Russian speakers, but had a *very minimal* grasp of the Latvian language. Despite their dedicated promotion of Latvia through their artistic groups, by

⁹² The Latvian Ministry of Culture is very active in supporting and encouraging such new developments in Latvian “folk culture arts.” These contributions are new, but are based on Latvian folk motifs. See (Kapper, 2016) for an explanation on folk dance.

conventional analysis their linguistic non-acquisition would immediately categorize them as part of the potential fifth column of Russian-speakers in conventional social science analysis. Yet their personal enthusiasm for the Celebration was referenced repeatedly by colleagues and students, and their pride in the accomplishments of their choirs and dance groups is palpable. These minority school pedagogues are not required to participate in the festival, they do not face a strong mandate from their surrounding communities;⁹³ rather they appear motivated by their personal passion for their art and for the opportunity to be nationally and internationally recognized as elite artists. Most display shelves full of awards and diplomas they and their groups have received. For minority schools and titular schools alike, the Celebration is linked to a source of pride and accomplishment; pedagogues develop an appreciation of Latvian culture by transmitting their personal passion to their students. This is arguably even more significant when it comes from teachers within the minority community, though Latvian teachers working with minority students also serve to contribute to moderate interpersonal banal integration while developing extensive socio-national connections between the state and their students.

Both from interviews and participant observation, it is clear that the teachers in all of the collectives I studied are very enthusiastic, regardless of their proficiency in Latvian or their ethnic background. Three minority teachers cried in my interviews with them or described episodes in which they have cried from their deep emotional investment to their students, their craft and their involvement with the Song and Dance Celebration.

“[The choir director] really experiences everything with her students, and her students see that – that’s why they also participate.” – Teacher, DRMS.

⁹³ Indeed, as multiple administrators noted, schools provide necessary contact with Latvian culture that may not be prevalent in students’ neighborhood communities. Unlike many ethnic Latvian students, who have familial history of participation in the Celebration or artistic collectives, many Russian-speaking students are the first in their families to participate.

Latvia's Russian speakers

Interviewed students and teachers clearly identify themselves as Russian-speakers, but they assign themselves as both part of the Latvian civic and Latvian cultural community. This is specifically manifested in the ecstatic national event of the Song and Dance Celebration, which provides an opportunity to become part of the nation for these minority students. However, this is not an uncontested sentiment. Indeed, in RRMS2, the negotiation of minority and state identity came to the fore in discussions with choir members and pedagogues. Respondents noted both their distance from "real" Latvians and their link to the state, articulating the process of integration in their daily lives. Students and pedagogues interpret their positionality to the festival, to other Latvians, and to the state directly. They self-identify both as minorities – as Russian speakers – but also as part of the state – as Latvian citizens. They negotiate their position in the Latvian cultural scene through comparison with Latvian titulars. In some cases, they frame themselves as similar to titular counterparts:

"We're not different, as a Russian school" – Choir director, RRMS2.

"When we are all doing the same thing, you can't feel a big difference." – Student 2, RRMS2.

The deputy director of one minority school did maintain the boundary between civic and ethnic "Latvianness," saying:

"You, of course, know that we are a minority choir, and that means that the feelings might differ from those of real Latvians. We are Latvian citizens, simply. Not simply, but we are." – Deputy director, RRMS2.

Defining a "real Latvian" is quite difficult, both analytically and for citizens themselves.⁹⁴ However, this should not necessarily be read as a denial of Latvian identity. In my observations both in Riga and Daugavpils, ethnicity was not a taboo topic. In the context of this research, people spoke very openly about their ethnic background, and without social

⁹⁴ Recall the discussion of *tautība* presented in Chapter 4.

stigma. Speaking as the deputy director of a minority school in a heavily Russian-speaking area, it is not surprising that a different ethnicity is highlighted. This difference is not denied, but neither does it prevent quality engagement with the nation.

“They [Latvian schools] can [participate], why can’t we? There’s this question, why can Latvian schools do it and we can’t? We also can, and we do. Truly, we still have the feeling that we still want to be preparing for the Song Celebration and singing those songs.” – Student 2, RRMS2.

These sentiments are not unique to the minority students in Riga. Minority schools in Daugavpils also interpret participation in the Song and Dance Celebration as a way to establish their connection with Latvia and Latvian people; this does not necessarily detract from their expressions or appreciation of their own ethnic heritage.

“They feel so many people doing the same thing, who love the same thing, who love to dance. There are many emotions in Dance Celebration. Love for your homeland, for your culture.” – Dance director, DPMS.

The schools actively support education in choir and folk dance, with broad repertoires including both the traditions of their ethnic homelands and Latvian standards. Participation in both of these cultural traditions goes hand in hand – it is standard practice for both the instructors and the students, and is reflected in their performances at school, in regional festivals and performances abroad. Though young people have multifaceted national identities, ethnicity is often salient, but it is not determinative. That is to say, an individual may be aware of their ethnic background, indeed, they may engage actively with it, but this does not prevent them from also engaging with the national culture of Latvia. Embodying both majority and minority culture is not a source of conflict; rather, it exemplifies the banality of integration in the lives of young people who participate in these groups.

“I tell my students, we have two homelands: Poland and Latvia. ... Poland is our Fatherland (*отечество/tēvzeme*), Latvia is our homeland (*родина/dzimtene*). ... We

are Latvian ambassadors in Poland, and Polish ambassadors in Latvia.”⁹⁵ – Dance director, DPMS.

The case of Polish students in Daugavpils is particularly interesting; they see themselves through the lens of three ethnic contexts: Polish Latvians who live in a Russian-speaking city. While Russian is their colloquial language, their education is in Polish and Latvian. Engaging with all of these ethnolinguistic contexts is very simply part of the daily existence of students. Far from being a taboo subject in these school contexts, ethnolinguistic background is both known and embraced. While Latvian “patriotic education” is part of the curriculum in all schools, by no means are minority cultural references excluded from Latvian schools.

“If [Russian-speaking students] are in the Latvian stream, then the parents are interested in the child learning the language, culture, traditions. But we can’t say that we don’t also try to learn their traditions. We also try to incorporate those somehow, find some sort of commonality.” – Assistant director, rural school.

The point of integration in these collectives and educational institutions is not to erase the cultural ethnolinguistic uniqueness of students or teachers. Rather, these provide access to the Latvian nation and allow students to negotiate their complex identities through multiple artistic expressions. Far from promoting assimilation, artistic groups and participation in the Song and Dance Celebration allows students to connect with the state and titulars without denying their ethnolinguistic background. They are not assimilated into ethnic Latvians, but they become Latvia’s.

Bridging the gap & bonding the nation

These choral and folk dance groups, regardless of the dominant ethnic group of their students, are distinct parts of a Latvian national cultural scene. The groups serve to foster civic associational life, and interpersonal connections among their members, contributing to bonding social capital. Similarly, they provide an important link to the state and to other

⁹⁵ In our discussion, the director used both the Russian and Latvian terms. The group travels annually to participate in Polish folk festivals, where their performances also include Latvian folk dance.

collective groups (bridging social capital). Social capital in both forms serves to not only strengthen individual belonging, but generally contributes to the stability of the democratic state (Putnam, 2000). Students and pedagogues interviewed and observed do not shun their connection to the Latvian state, Latvian culture, or the broader Latvian nation. Rather, they acknowledge and embody multiple cultural, ethnic, and linguistic identities. Many are Russian speakers, but they are far from an estranged diaspora or fifth column. Most are students who recognize their home as Latvia, even if their home language is something different.

“The best patriotic education is when [a child] participates in a folk art collective. Then he can think ‘this isn’t foreign, this is mine.’ It also belongs to him. ‘I belong to the Song and Dance Celebration, it doesn’t matter what language I speak.’” – Director, municipality interest education.

The schools that do participate in the Celebration note the positive influence it has on their students and on integration. According to the choir director in RRMS1, the Song and Dance Celebration provides an atmosphere to unite all of the ethnic groups within one nation; it is a space in which it is possible to feel the “collective soul of the nation.”

“The Song Celebration overall is like a bridge. ... The Song Celebration tradition allows us to learn about ancient culture, it makes it easier to understand people – their characteristics, their identities.” – Choir director, RRMS1.

Participation in the celebration also allows minority students from relatively isolated regions to meet other students from across Latvia. Though time is limited by a very intense rehearsal schedule, students say that they were able to befriend others. Even speaking of their experiences several months removed from the actual Celebration, the impressions that it left on participants are significant.

“During the Song Celebration, we could integrate with the Latvian [pause for the Latvian word, provided by a fellow student] society and could begin. It’s Latvian language practice, because during the Song Celebration we speak Latvian with everyone. Also within our own school we speak Latvian with one another. [Pedagogue: “Really?”] Yes, it was like that.” – Student 1, RRMS2.

The way we, adults, see it – there is so much preparation, so much work. But then when [students] participate, they feel. ... That stays with them for the rest of their lives. My husband, who will soon be 50, he remembers when he participated in the Song Celebration – he played in the brass orchestra. He remembers, and that was 35 years ago. It stays in your memory, that positive association. The [school] children will also be able to say that they participated. They are already waiting for the next [Celebration], those who are lucky. They didn't want to come home, they wanted to stay in Riga. It's a lot of work, but the emotions are positive." – Teacher, DRMS.

In interviews, rehearsals and daily observations, pedagogues and directors, as well as students, show that access to and involvement in Latvian cultural activities is a common and effective way to give students an opportunity to be part of the national scene. The Song and Dance Celebration is the textbook definition of Skey's ecstatic national event and creates the physical embodiment of the Latvian nation. It is a specifically *Latvian* nation, but it does not exclude minority participation. While minorities have the ability to display minority cultural arts, they are also accepted as part of the Latvian repertoire. The event is ecstatic, but student and teacher participation is banal. Rehearsals are part of everyday life, preparations span years, and student exposure to Latvian culture is germane. As Skey argues, ecstatic national events concretize the nation and clarifies how national ecstasy informs the daily articulation of banal national identities (2006, p. 144). This ecstatic Latvian national cultural event is a very clear embodiment of banal integration. It is a part of daily life for the many who participate and an environmental constant for passive onlookers. It provides a direct link for minorities to see themselves as part of the national cultural scene, both as representatives of Latvia and their ethnic heritage in the way they choose.

'A drop of tar in a jar of honey'

These examples of minority participation in the Song and Dance Celebration are not intended to erase or obfuscate the challenges that exist with minority integration in Latvia. Challenges remain especially prevalent in ethnically isolated regions and micro-regions where little interethnic contact occurs (such as Settings 2 and 3). However, it is extremely significant that even in these environments, neither an insurmountable physical nor cultural barrier prevents

minority collectives from forming, participating, and connecting with Latvian cultural activities. Participation may not necessarily be widespread, but it is possible even in the most remote regions, regardless of ethnolinguistic heritage. Also significant is the banality of participation, which becomes routine and a part of daily life for singers and dancers (as well as their parents and classmates). This in and of itself is a key and critical point in the discussion on minority cultural integration in Latvia, which so often highlights stark differences between ethnolinguistic communities. These data should not be misinterpreted as an attempt to whitewash integration challenges that remain, particularly in educational facilities. However, existing participation should neither be overshadowed.

Educators are not blind to the integration discourse in the country, nor are they unaware of the threats posed by Latvia's eastern neighbor Russia. Indeed, this is a major challenge that pedagogues in RRMS1 specifically point out.

"Teachers of Latvian lack methodical knowledge of how to teach Latvian for minorities, especially in circumstances when minority on municipal level is majority, and is backed by more than 150mil cultural environment [referring to the strength of the Russian cultural influence in Latvia]. Also we are fighting the marginalization of our graduates, because [the] environment of our neighborhood and its families [have a] negative influence on our students." – Director, RRMS1.

After the release of the BBC2 documentary predicting a World War III scenario sparking from ethnic tensions in Daugavpils, educators in rural Latvia also expressed fear that armed conflict could be on the horizon. Importantly, their fear was based in the actions of politicians in capital cities – not in their Russian-speaking neighbors. Educators in all three settings were very candid that there are individuals or families that live in a Russian media space and have negative attitudes to the Latvian state, but they do not see these individuals as a significant threat.

"But it is like tar in honey. You will really feel the one drop. Those who participate in choir, collectives, they turn, their attitudes change. Mostly those who participate are normal, loyal. ... [Unloyal students] are a very tiny percent, they don't constitute a risk

to us, or to the Latvian state, to anything.” – Teacher, rural school.

The “tar in honey” analogy is a rather apt one to describe the way in which integration enters the discourse in Latvia. It speaks to the tendency to over amplify voices promoting ethnic discord, while overlooking significant minority involvement and attachment to the Latvian state. The case study of the Song and Dance Celebration and its manifestations among school and community artists’ collectives speak to the accessibility to and appreciation of the Celebration for minorities and titulars alike. As Barth argues, even ethnic boundaries are porous (1969). Individual participation in Latvian collectives or the Latvian program does not necessarily indicate “assimilation,” but it is a clear indication of integration that is directly coupled with an expression of ecstatic nationalism.

Celebrating the nation

In events like the Song and Dance Celebration, the nation is culturally and physically manifested in the bodies, movements, and voices of participants and audience members. The festival is one that celebrates the state and the people of Latvia, and provides a path for the inclusion of minorities, both as ethnic representatives of their heritage and as civic and cultural members of the Latvian nation. Russian-speakers can and do participate in minority artists groups and performances highlighting minority cultures, as well as with ethnic Latvian peers in the main concerts. In the Celebration itself, members of the nation have the opportunity to contact and connect with peers from every part of Latvia. Many describe the Celebration as an opportunity to feel a part of the nation, expressing deep emotional attachment to the music, movement, and country.

I chose the Song and Dance Celebration as a case study to explore the intersection of banal integration and Skey’s ecstatic nationalism because it engages the titularly prescriptive, but still neutral element of civic-national culture. I argue that it fulfills Skey’s formulation by illuminating the banality of rituals that concretize the nation and create a “community that

can be seen, heard and idealized” (2006, p. 148). The Celebration provides a clear and bounded event, with set parameters in which to investigate this overlap of nationalism and banality for both minority and titular individuals. However, this link between banality and ecstatic nationalism is not limited to this largely cultural event. Commemoration days are also expressions of ecstatic nationalism, but often highlighted as sources of ethnic tension. I briefly touch on how my analysis complicates the way in which these events traditionally appear in the current discourse on Russian-speaker integration in Latvia. I do not intend for this to be a rigorous examination of these days; this has been and will be a fruitful avenue for more research. Rather, I offer a brief overview that puts these events in conversation with the framework of banal integration.

Latvian statehood

Two significant days marking Latvian sovereignty are part of *patriotiskā nedēļa* (patriotic week), which is bookended by Lāčplēšis Day on November 11 (*Lāčplēša diena* commemorating the 1919 War of Independence) and Independence Day on November 18 (*Latvijas Neatkarības proklamēšanas diena* commemorating the declaration of independence in 1918). If much of the ethnic tension reported in the Baltics is a symptom of 5th column activism, it would be logical to assume that these days are met with controversy and opposition with a pro-Russia agenda. However, like the Song and Dance Celebration, these days of ecstatic Latvian nationalism elicit little to no relevant push back. They are neither highly controversial in public discourse, nor are they met with protesters. Rather, these days are marked with a certain amount of reverence and celebration. Events on these days, such as torch walks and public concerts, are attended by Russian speakers and ethnic Latvians alike. Schools, both minority and mainstream, decorate in Latvian colors and participate in national events.

Riga hosts a number of events for Independence Day, including the president’s speech, *Staro Rīga* urban light festival, a military parade and a fireworks display. For the fireworks in particular, thousands of people crowd the shores of the Daugava River, first joining in the

national anthem, then enjoying the fireworks show, which is set to Latvian music. According to a 2008 survey, 18 November was observed by 66% of Latvians and 46% of minorities (*cittautieši*), while rated positively by 98% of Latvian students and 79% of Russian students (Zepa et al., 2008, cited in Ministry of Culture, 2012, p. 32). This event again matches Skey's definition of an ecstatic national event; it is a moment when the crowds embody and make seen the nation. Both Latvian and Russian is heard in the crowd and the environment is one of jubilation. Latvian Independence Day is nationally manifested as a party, as an excuse to enjoy a day off and celebrate with family or friends. Children with parents and youth alike are part of this celebration that is intrinsically national; Latvian and Russian speakers alike wear Latvian flag lapel pins or join in the singing of the anthem, drawing on the symbols of the nation and reaffirming the existence of the imagined national community. The ethnolinguistic diversity of this event, however, is not often highlighted.

A similarly festive environment surrounds May 4, which marks the restoration of Latvian independence from the Soviet Union. This holiday has a much smaller tradition, but emphasizing May 4 as a "*baltā galdauta svēkti*" ("white tablecloth holiday")⁹⁶ is an active initiative of the Ministry of Culture as part of the lead up to Latvia's centennial in 2018. In 2017, May 4 was celebrated in Riga with concerts and street festivals, including performances by youth artists' groups representing each of Latvia's historic regions (Kurzeme, Vidzeme, Zemgale, Latgale), as well as Latvian minority communities.⁹⁷ Craft workshops and stands set up in Vērmanes Garden and Brīvības Boulevard were bustling with children speaking in both Latvian and Russian. Many drew their own "symbols of freedom", which ranged from pictures of hamburgers to the Freedom Monument to the Latvian flag – these were also toted around by Russian-speaking families who, alongside Latvian speaking families, were enjoying

⁹⁶ This descriptor is used to embody the spirit of a holiday which one celebrates with friends and family, theoretically around a community table.

⁹⁷ The program "Zinu, zinu tēva sētu" was hosted in Vērmanes garden, a public park in the center of Riga.

a sunny day off in Riga dedicated to Latvian sovereignty.

War and commemoration

Despite the relative inclusivity of these decisively national holidays, divisive events, such as the commemoration of the Latvian Legionnaires (March 16) or celebration of Soviet Victory Day (May 9) (both commemorations of World War II), consistently take the spotlight in integration discussions. March 16 commemorates Latvian soldiers who were conscripted into the German Waffen-SS⁹⁸ and fought against the Soviet Red army.⁹⁹ Events remembering the Latvian Legionnaires usually consist of a church service and march by surviving veterans, supporters, and far right-wing politicians to lay flowers at the Latvian Monument of Freedom. While supporters of the march see this as an opportunity to commemorate veterans in their fight to protect the Latvian state from Soviet invasion, in the eyes of Russian activists (and media), it is framed as a celebration of fascism and attracts protestors. This often causes the event to be cited as a distinct point of Russian-Latvian tension.

In 2017, the crowd was large (approximately 500 onlookers, 1,500 marchers, and 250 police officers), but the event itself was calm. Indeed, while there were clear supporters of the march (largely older men and women with flowers), many in the crowd appeared to be in attendance just to see if something would happen. Both Latvian and Russian-language conversation was heard, but there was no real conflict among onlookers. Over the course of the hour or so, five individuals, who had come to provoke the events, were detained for disrupting the event, shouting “fascists!” at the marchers. This was handled quietly and efficiently within several minutes by police officers (who, among themselves, spoke in both Latvian and Russian). Despite these small outbursts, the event itself was peaceful and banal – quite the opposite of

⁹⁸ The Waffen-SS was condemned as a criminal organization at the Nuremberg Tribunals; further investigations by U.S. officials found Latvian/Estonian SS not criminal due to illegal conscription practices (see Ezergailis, 1997).

⁹⁹ Many families have members who were conscripted into both the German or the Soviet army during WWII.

the way it is framed.

May 9 commemorates the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany in what is dubbed the Great Patriotic War. It elicits a large celebration at the Victory Memorial to the Soviet Army and is attended by several thousand primarily Russian speakers and politicians from the *Saskaņa* party.¹⁰⁰ This is a controversial event because it is linked to Russian nationalism and celebrates what many Latvians recognize as the start of Soviet oppression in 1945; supporters argue they are commemorating the Soviet victory against fascism.

The events in 2017 drew huge crowds laden with flowers to the event. Many held posters with the photos and names of family members who served in the war. May 9 is not an officially observed holiday, and during the day the event was attended primarily by pensioners. Later, working adults and school children filled the park. While ostensibly a commemoration, the May 9 event feels like a street festival. Volunteers hand out May 9 flags and balloons, a stage with performers is set up, and vendors sell *šāšliki* (shashlik) and cotton candy to attendees. Apart from the occasional curious on-looker and the police and security personnel that surround the event, nearly everyone attending is a Russian-speaker; some carry Russian flags, others wear the orange-black ribbon of St. George, which is both associated with medals awarded for efforts in Great Patriotic War, and has recently become a symbol of support for Russian separatists in Eastern Ukraine. Participants and ribbon wearers are pointed to as a visual demonstration of the Russian nationalist sentiment and fifth column activism in Latvia. By virtue of attending, participants are linked to Russian and Soviet loyalists contradictory to respect for the sovereignty of Latvia.

While undoubtedly valid in many individual cases, it is worth noting that the event happened in a distinctly Latvian environment. Not only were all the signs, particularly for food tents, in Latvian, many of the vendors themselves were ethnically Latvian, speaking in Latvian to their

¹⁰⁰ Latvia officially celebrates Victory in Europe Day on May 8 and Europe Day on May 9.

colleagues, but financially benefiting from this “Russian” event.¹⁰¹ Announcers relayed all of the critical information regarding the event in Latvian, as well as Russian; the musical performers even offered an arrangement of a Latvian folk hymn, *Pūt, Vējiņi* (“Blow, wind”) as part of their repertoire. Perhaps the most incongruous visual is that 15 Latvian flags were waving over the event itself. The May 9 celebration in Riga is certainly not a *Latvian* event, but it does take place in a banal Latvian context. Automatically grouping attendees as hostile to the Latvian state oversimplifies individuals’ national identity. Indeed, some minority students I interviewed on Lāčplēsis Day, after their participation in a commemoration torch procession and during preparing a program for Latvian Independence Day in the next week, were also attendees of May 9 celebrations, proudly displaying St. George’s ribbon. These students are also active members of the New Riga Guard (*Jaunie rīgas sargi*), which is an initiative of the Ministry of Defense to popularize the National Armed Forces and recruit youth to participate in the Youth Guard movement (“Sākuma lapa | Jaunie Rīgas Sargi,” n.d.). How is it possible to categorize these students as a potential 5th column diaspora by virtue of their participation in May 9 celebrations, when they are also clear defenders of Latvian sovereignty?

Conclusion

In this chapter, I looked at the intersection between banal integration and ecstatic nationalism, focusing primarily on the case study of the Latvian Song and Dance Celebrations. National events, such as the Celebration or Independence Day, promote a physical and joyful manifestation of the nation in which participants are able to reestablish their connection with the state and with fellow members of their “imagined community.” Though extra-ordinary events, these instances of ecstatic nationalism underscore the banality of integration that exists in the undercurrent of daily life. Minorities are active participants in events that highlight the sovereignty and cultural importance of the Latvian nation, both as national minorities, and as Latvian nationals. Like their titular peers, minorities are active in the quotidian rituals

¹⁰¹ Likewise, many of the vendors at Latvian national celebrations are Russian speakers.

that support such events. In the case of the Song and Dance Celebration, this is clearly documented by the banality of rehearsal attendance and learning the Latvian repertoire. In more directly national events, like Independence Day, this stems from the banal activities flagging the nation that Billig describes (1995).

On the scale of socio-national banal integration, participation in ecstatic national events like the Song and Dance Celebration meet the standards of extensive integration. Participants demonstrate a high level of belonging to their city, region, and the state, as well as active engagement in national civic and cultural associational life. They are horizontally engaged with other members in their community, either directly through artists' collectives, or indirectly through trickle-down contact with audience members. Indeed, viewers of the ecstatic national event also demonstrate moderate integration standards as passive participants. As my empirical evidence suggests, the reach of the Song and Dance Celebration is widespread not only among titulars, but also across Russian-speaking areas and within Russian-speaking communities.

Commemoration days are frequently pointed to as evidence of the divisive society in Latvia. March 16 and May 9 represent the extreme complexity of history and reignite grievances that make provocative headlines, but do not appear on a day to day basis. In decisively Latvian national events (May 4, November 11, and November 18), the focus pans out to show a much broader swath of society celebrating Latvian sovereignty. In this big picture, minority participation goes unnoticed, even when it is demonstrably there. Complex identities and belonging for individuals and minorities in the Baltics must not be reduced to talking points on ethnic tension. Rather, researchers must strive to more holistically understand how minorities engage with their multifaceted and integrated identities.

This chapter is not intended as an argument that discounts the problems of integration in the Latvian case; rather, it presents evidence that demonstrates the ability of minorities to hold

both ethnolinguistic identities and be active participants in the cultural and civic life of the Latvian nation, even in their quotidian activities. This is an indication of the ubiquitous nature of integration that is difficult to measure, and so often overlooked. While events like May 9 celebrations should not be discounted, neither should participants be assumed enemies of the Latvian nation. Rather than only considering cases of anti-integration, this chapter has attempted to shed light on the alternative – the participation of minorities in ecstatic national events that bring minorities closer to extensive socio-national integration and connect them with the Latvian nation.

Chapter 7 | Conclusions: Embracing the banal

At the outset of this dissertation, I described my surprise at hearing a Latvian dance group speaking Russian at the 2013 Song and Dance Celebration. In the penultimate chapter, my interactions with students and teachers as active participants has reframed my surprise as something banal. It is not surprising that individuals see themselves as part of the country in which they have spent their lives. It is not surprising that they want to dance or sing or be part of something bigger than themselves. It is not surprising that they have access to many identities, many cultures, and many languages. That is their daily reality. To me, it is exciting; to them it is banal.

Integration in Latvia is a daunting question because it is packed with assumptions of hate, of aggression, and of conflict. It has been repeatedly framed as a cleavage between two groups that literally cannot understand each other, standing on linguistic, ethnic, and historical divides. Certainly, these divides exist, but they often only become borders when provoked. In daily life, these cleavages are porous boundaries that are crossed in boring and unnoticed ways, every day. This is banal integration – integration that fades into the drone of everyday life, that is not noticed because it is not noticeable.

Goals & findings

Over the course of this dissertation, I have challenged the conventional academic and public discourse that surrounds the questions of social integration both specific to the case study of Latvia, but also more broadly. My goal has been to reconsider the way in which disciplines and area-specific literature frame discussions of integration, pushing against the use of theoretical frames that overlook significant local nuances and elevating the value of the quotidian. Nationalism, identity, and ethnicity are at the core of modern social integration issues; these theories are broad, and though constructed, surprisingly ridged. As the wave of

post-Soviet independence turned into an undertow of reemergent nationalism, boundaries between ethnic groups within the “East” conflicted with the liberal identity of the West, creating points of tension for many societies struggling to “return to Europe”. New theoretical structures were considered to address these empirical imbalances, and old theories were tailored to better fit the massive social upheaval of millions of post-Soviets left in reforming nation states. Diasporic and immigrant frameworks have become some of the strongest theoretical reference points for former Soviets, but have ultimately built walls between new titulars and old majorities, rather than considered ways in which post-Soviet populations might be more at home in these new “host states” than in historic “homelands” elsewhere.

Through the course of this study, I have embraced the methodological and disciplinary diversity I have been trained in to bring the everyday into a deeper conversation with social science demands on internal and external validity. Social science has begun to increasingly preference the methodological benefits of big data, but this has left a critical gap in how we address relationships between living, breathing people. Ethnography and medium n-studies remain the primary tools to close that gap. Multimethod research that preferences the messy and complex alongside the defined and countable is increasingly needed, as is research that takes on multiple disciplinary perspectives. My goal here has been to provide insight into both the theoretical and empirical problems of studying integration.

I contend that integration does not always “happen”, but that it often simply “is”. This begs the question: How can we measure the invisible? In this work, I have tested the salience of banal integration as a conceptual framework by providing interpersonal and socio-national scales of measurement. These identify the levels at which social integration occurs in daily life, from none (isolation) to extensive (full integration). Perhaps more importantly, they provide space for the levels in between (basic and moderate). Extensive integration, where minorities are as much or more a part of the titular society as they are of their minority community is the preference for many; but just as important are the steps toward that type

of integration, which these scales attempt to highlight. My conceptual framework has also stressed the relationship between nationalism and integration, arguing that for minorities, being part of the nation can be banal and ecstatic, and often both. My work is far from isolated in the academic environment, but noticeably and gratefully draws on the work of many preeminent scholars, including, but not limited to, Benedict Anderson, Fredrik Barth, John Berry, Michael Billig, Rogers Brubaker, David Laitin, Nils Muižnieks, Robert Putnam, Michael Skey, and others.

Moving from the theoretical to the empirical, I returned to the place that prompted this study: political, social, and cultural developments of integration issues in the Republic of Latvia, the country of my area expertise. I first explored the conventional approach to studying integration, looking at the way in which vertical integration movement is measured through naturalization rates and linguistic practices, as well as civic accessibility to the state. Chapter 4 considered contradictions in top-down policy making and the persistent rhetoric of failure. I argue that both the actions of policy makers and the discourse of integration has been significantly affected by external pressures from the EU and Russia, as well as by a historical “catastrophe rationale” demanding the preservation of the Latvian titular nation. These factors have all contributed to the way in which integration policy has been formed and how it is discussed. While complex and inefficient policy may have hindered rapid social integration in the immediate post-Soviet period, Latvia has ultimately succeeded as a rule-of-law democracy on par with or exceeding the standards of the rest of Western Europe in minority rights. Rhetoric aside, the state has institutionalized democratic mechanisms that have facilitated quiet integration from the bottom up. This has cemented widespread basic socio-national integration, allowing minorities access to citizenship and language, while simultaneously supporting minority cultural expression.

In Chapter 5, the discussion delved further into the nuances of ground-level integration and how it manifests horizontally in the public and private lives of people living in Latvia. I argued

that lived realities often contradict the discursive perceptions of integration. High-level discourse emphasizes cleavages between Latvians and Russians; these stereotypes are a part of the way in which integration is talked about. Examples of non-integration more easily draw the eye than instances wherein it is silent. The way in which many Latvians “live” integration contradicts these discursive divides. Multicultural integration has taken deep root physically, in cityscapes and community settings; personally, in both informal daily interactions and high intensity interethnic relationships; and civically, with strong connections to the state territory and civic institutions. In daily life, integration is noticeably unnoticeable, ultimately fading into the background of many personal and community settings.

Establishing that banal integration exists in the daily lives of many Latvians, I then explored the intersection between banal integration and ecstatic nationalism in Chapter 6. I argued that being an active part of the nation is not always a declarative statement for minorities, but that it can also be an intrinsically banal part of their lives. This inquiry was operationalized through student participation in Latvia’s Song and Dance Celebration and a discussion of national holidays and commemoration events. I argue that far from being mutually exclusive, multiculturalism and diverse identity does not prevent a transition from host land to homeland; rather participation in daily associational life helps to naturally embed individuals in the nation. It is not correct to characterize Latvia’s Russian speakers as a beached diaspora that is inherently separated from the titular community. While some events are ethnically charged, overall, minorities can be part of the nation-state and part of their minority without conflict. Involvement in both national and minority community and culture is recognized as a part of daily routines. Indeed, the nation is “flagged” consistently in quotidian settings, and so it is not extraordinary in moments of national ecstasy.

Significance

Does the concept of banality lend itself to an appropriate framework for studying integration? I remain firm in my argument that banality has much to contribute to the way in which

integration is discussed and how it is approached. For researchers, it helps to move the focus away from problems, failed solutions, or technicolor examples of “successful” integration. These are not unimportant aspects of the field, but often disproportionately or unfairly shift the perspective to hotspots and flashpoints, without giving greater consideration to the daily experience of integration.

Likewise, this study forces a reevaluation of the theories previously used to frame integration in the post-Soviet space. Diaspora and immigrant frameworks provide useful comparisons, but cannot ultimately capture the nuance of the post-Soviet Russian situation. I join others in a certain critique of the East-West divide in the study of nationalism and identity in the former communist bloc. Western theorists “looking in” have frequently read the problems of post-Sovietism through an ethnic lens, with policy demands and perceptions that have failed to consider their own positionality and, often, hypocrisy. Not only is the ethnic issue often overplayed, the same issues have been frequently overlooked in the well-established nation-states that presume to set the standard for their Eastern neighbors. This East-West academic divide is not limited to questions of integration, but Western words have had an overwhelming effect on the way in which this topic is discursively played out, often without having a sufficiently strong grasp on local nuances. Indigenous research and perspectives have become increasingly valid to Western social science paradigms; local perspectives must also be given greater weight in new Europe without having to fight a disproportional pall of ethnic slant.

For practitioners and policy makers in Latvia, this research paints a more vibrant picture of how integration works in a variety of critical Latvian settings. My study turns daily experiences and interactions in the capital of Riga – likely a familiar haunt of many policy makers – into theoretically identifiable indicators of integration. Perhaps more significantly, it offers a deep and important window into the way that integration, ethnicity, and nationalism works in one of the smallest, least observable settings – a multiethnic community in the Latgalian countryside. Many Russian-speakers and ethnic Latvians have no problem speaking Latvian,

dancing Latvian, singing Latvian together, and indeed, do not even recognize these communal national activities as something bizarre. This helps move the integration rhetoric away from problems facing two distinct groups, and toward considering platforms for interaction. Providing access to platforms of interaction, whether in Riga cafés or Daugavpils cultural houses, is just as important as providing access to citizenship and language learning. Latvia is already well on its way to solidifying these civic, cultural, and community access points, particularly for the newest generation of Latvians.

Future research

The research that I have conducted has been necessarily limited by banal constraints of time and money. A logical extension of this work would be to expand similar lines of inquiry to other setting within Latvia. This would provide a larger pool of data from which to draw, make regional comparisons and more fully develop a picture of how people across the country engage with each other and with the nation as titulars and minorities. Latvia has a strong pool of academics committed to understanding the effects and meaning of culture, not least in my colleagues at the Latvian Academy of Culture, who are even now pursuing research on what the Song and Dance Celebration tradition means to participants beyond the festival week itself. This type of work is a natural link to my research; indeed, practitioners in Latvia are increasingly interested in the participation in and effects of these cultural events on minority populations.

Similarly relevant to the Latvian landscape is the future of the alternative diaspora population, i.e. Latvia's emigrants, and their (re)integration potential with their host/homeland. As referenced in this dissertation, this population is of critical importance to the Latvian state, and often serves as the other side of the integration coin, in which Latvian diaspora and Russian-speaking minorities are described using the same language and referenced in the same policies. Lessons on banal integration and minority nationalism have parallels for this population. Additional extensions of this research could include expanding it to other areas of

the post-Soviet space and considering regional patterns. While in this dissertation I stress the importance of the physical – face to face interpersonal interactions and the shared public realm – virtual social spaces also provide distinct and cultivated expressions of identity, nationalism and integration, and are another area for continued research.

More broadly, the concept of studying integration in its banal form speaks to empirical problems beyond the state of post-Soviet populations. Ultimately, integration questions are questions of opposing forces, and the way in which opposing forces merge. They are particularly relevant in national contexts. As much as globalization has taken hold of economies and societies, nationalism has become an ever-more relevant and revanchist factor to consider. This has recently manifested in global crises like the extreme population movements from the Middle East and north Africa to increasingly diverse European societies. Perhaps less visibly, it has also taken its toll within established societies, pitting those with increasingly disparate worldviews or class structures against each other (e.g. the liberal/conservative divide in the US). To what extent are these societies in need of integration? And to what extent are they already integrated? Does high-level conflict discourse indicate the same level of conflict on the ground? What is happening in the spaces between that conflict? The case of Latvia and their post-Soviet experience can offer insights into these new global challenges. My intention is not that this dissertation answer these questions, but that it helps us delve deeper into them.

Concluding thoughts

If my dissertation started among folk dancers at the 2013 Nationwide Song and Dance Celebration, then it ended among singers in a Latgalian iteration of the festival. In the last week of my second year in Latvia, just as I was crossing the t's and dotting the i's of this dissertation, the director of the countryside vocal ensemble in which I had sung during my fieldwork invited me back to Daugavpils municipality to sing with the group in "Krāsas Karogā," a Latgalian arts and music concert marking the celebrations on the path to Latvia's

centennial.

I took the early Sunday train from Riga and the bus from Daugavpils to spend the day rehearsing with more than 70 cultural groups from across Latgale. Exhausted by the heat and the rehearsal, our faces turning red under the hot sun while dancers practiced their steps in woolen skirts, our group finally returned to our bus to change, snack and remark on each other's sunburns. Dressed and ready, we joined in the crowds at the local church for an invocation and the parade of the choirs, dancers, and musicians making their way to the open-air amphitheater. Filing into the choir bleachers, preparing for a program that began with a processional of Latvian flags and the Latvian National anthem, the languages I heard from my fellow singers, from the dancers, from the brass band, and even from the sound technicians was primarily Russian. Each of these Russian-speakers – as well as those in the audience – were a part of one of the most nationally patriotic events that I had borne witness to in Latvia, with a concentration of flags and a repertoire itself that rivaled the Nationwide Song and Dance Festival. This celebration was Latgalian and Latvian to the core, but unmistakably created by Russian speakers, within and among ethnic Latvians.

This is something one could not know without being there. Through photos or video, one could easily tell by the flags around the amphitheater and the performance repertoire, that this was a nationally ecstatic event – that the performers felt themselves a part of Latgale and a part of Latvia. One could tell that the audience was happy to call for encores. But from a distance, one could never realize how many Russian speakers were in Latvian folk costumes, singing patriotic songs, and carrying the flag of their country – of Latvia. One would not know it from the concert recording, or even from the concert program that listed each cultural group – not as minorities or ethnic Latvian groups, but as representatives of their towns and municipalities. It was impossible to be a part of this event, where 10-year-olds stood next to 70-year-olds, singing the same patriotic songs, then turning to speak to their choir companions in Russian, Latvian, Latgalian or some combination of it all, and not have the

overwhelming sense that integration really “is”.

My encounter at the 2013 Song and Dance Celebration sparked a dissertation project that has grown and developed over the last four long years. During this time, I have questioned myself innumerable times – Was it all in my head? Have I read all the signs incorrectly? Are ethnic Latvians and Russian speakers truly divided? There is no doubt that cleavages exist, but for every episode of tension, I have also seen the opposite many more times over.

I could not think of any more perfect way in which to complete my dissertation work than in this unexpected return to Latgale, to a festival of song and dance and to the sights and sounds of banal integration in national ecstasy. Latvia is home to these singers and dancers, to their families. Standing on stage or sitting in the audience as part of a Latvian nation does not spontaneously “happen” – it “is” a part of daily life in rehearsals, in schools, in cafés, in friendships and in families. This is the undercurrent of integration in Latvia.

Banal integration is in the languages used and the passports carried, but it is more compelling in the friendships made, the songs sung and the people helped. In Latvia, fostering or hindering this process is less and less a function of politicians and media (Latvia’s or Russia’s); it is more and more a product of people. The mechanisms to legally integrate exist, but social integration begins with the capacity of individuals to live and participate in life together. No society is perfect, or immune to the human instinct to create boundaries. Certainly, some people do not live in the Latvia I have lived in, who find their opinions and passions shaped by borders and ethnic nations. But even for many of the most estranged from becoming part of the nation, the undercurrent of their everyday remains in some way Latvian. For others, Latvia may not be their heritage, but it is their home. The hum of integration in these quotidian experiences will one day cease to be a surprise, and become as banal to those of us writing about Latvia as it is to those who are living it every day.

Appendix 1

Survey instrument: English

Student survey

UW/JSIS/LKA/VISC | Feb. 2016 _____

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION]

Student survey

Hello!

I am a doctoral student from the University of Washington in the US and invite you to participate in research about how school youth in Latvia spend their free time, participate in interest groups and participate in artists' collectives. Your answers will help me to understand youth in Latvia's interests and opportunities to participate in song and dance celebrations. The research data will be available to Latvia's School Youth Song and Dance Celebration organizers, who will be able to use this information to improve the celebrations. The survey is anonymous, your name and surname will not be collected, and answers will be analyzed collectively. The survey should take no longer than 40 minutes to fill out. If you have questions about the research, please contact the researcher (+371 [26129959/indraekm@uw.edu](mailto:26129959@uw.edu)). If you have questions about the researcher's right to do this research, you may call the Institutional Review Board at the University of Washington: (206) 543-0098.

Thank you for your time!

Indra Ekmanis

1. Have you ever participated in an interest group, sports team, amateur artists' collective (choir, dance collective, wind orchestra, kokle ensemble, etc.)? *Mark one answer!*

Currently participating	1
Previously participated	2
Haven't participated See question 8	3
Hard to say	4

2. Please mark the activities in which you have participated (both in school and outside of school) in your free time. *Mark **all relevant** answers. If the activity you participate in in your free time is not listed, please write it in OTHER.*

FILTER: ANSWER ONLY IF YOU MARKED THAT YOU HAVE AT SOME POINT PARTICIPATED IN AN INTEREST GROUP, ARTISTS' COLLECTIVE, SPORTS TEAM, ETC. IN QUESTION 1!

I dance in a folk dance collective	1
I dance in a modern dance group	2
I dance in a rhythm group	3
I play in a kokle ensemble	4
I participate in a folklore collective	5
I play a team sport	6
I sing in choir	7
I sing in a vocal ensemble	8
I play in a wind orchestra	9
I play/sing in a music group	10
I participate in dance sport	11
I participate in amateur theater	12
I play an instrument	13
I participate in visual arts	14
Other (PLEASE WRITE IN!)	15
Hard to say	16

3. Have you ever participated in a School Youth Song and Dance Celebration? If you have, mark how many times. *Mark only one answer!*

1 time	1
2 times	2
At least 3 times	3
I haven't participated See question 5	4
Hard to say	5

1

4. Please indicate the activities in which you have participated in the School Youth Song and Dance Celebration.

Mark **all necessary** answers.

FILTER: ONLY ANSWER IF YOU INDICATED YOU HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE SCHOOL YOUTH SONG AND DANCE CELEBRATION IN QUESTION 3!

I participated in street concerts	1
I participated in the folklore program	2
I participated in the wind orchestra program	3
I participated in kokle concerts	4
I sang in the choir	5
I danced in the dance concert	6
I participated in a minority artists' collective	7
Other (PLEASE WRITE IN!).....	8
Hard to say	9

5. Have you ever participated in the Nationwide Latvian Song and Dance Celebration? If you have, mark how many times.

Mark **only one** answer

1 time	1
2 times	2
At least 3 times	3
I haven't participated See question 7	4
Hard to say	5

6. Please indicate the activities in which you have participated in the School Youth Song and Dance Celebration.

Mark **all necessary** answers.

FILTER: ONLY ANSWER IF YOU INDICATED YOU HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE SCHOOL YOUTH SONG AND DANCE CELEBRATION IN QUESTION 5!

I participated in street concerts	1
I participated in the folklore program	2
I participated in the wind orchestra program	3
I participated in kokle concerts	4
I sang in the choir	5
I danced in the dance concert	6
I participated in a minority artists' collective	7
Other (PLEASE WRITE IN!).....	8
Hard to say	9

7. Why is it important to you to participate in the Song and Dance Celebration?

Mark **no more than the top 5** reasons!

FILTER: ONLY ANSWER IF YOU INDICATED YOU HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE SCHOOL YOUTH SONG AND DANCE CELEBRATION OR THE NATIONWIDE LATVIAN SONG AND DANCE CELEBRATION!

Opportunity to have unique experiences in upholding tradition	1
Strong emotions that comes from nothing else	2
Strengthen feelings of belonging, patriotism, togetherness with the Latvian folk/nation	3
Participation in the process of upholding Latvian tradition (these Celebrations)	4
Meet new friends and acquaintances	5
Celebration, party feeling	6
Opportunity to be with young people of different culture, region, values	7
Opportunity to uphold family traditions	8
Opportunity to be with friends, go on an adventure together	9
Recognition (prestige) and support from different people	10

Opportunity to break with the everyday; travel away from where I live	11
It is my only opportunity to wear a folk costume	12
Other (PLEASE WRITE IN!).....	13
It is not important to me to participate in the Celebration	14
Hard to say	15

8. Have you ever attended the Song and Dance Celebration as part of the audience?

Mark one answer!

I have attended	1
I have not attended	2
Hard to say	3

9. Have you ever watched Song and Dance Celebration events on TV?

Mark one answer!

I have watched	1
I have not watched	2
Hard to say	3

10. Have any of your parents been a member of an amateur artists' collective (choir, dance collective, etc.) (past or current)?

Mark one answer!

Yes, they are (have been)	1
I think, yes	2
I think, no	3
No, they aren't (have not been)	4
Hard to say	5

11. Have your parents participated in the Song and Dance Celebration as a participant?

Mark one answer!

Yes, they have participated	1
I think, yes	2
I think, no	3
No, they haven't participated	4
Hard to say	5

12. Please rate on a 5-point scale (where 1 – really dislike, but 5 – really like), how much you like or dislike the Song and Dance Celebration as a cultural event. *Mark one answer!*

<input type="checkbox"/> 01 (really dislike)	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05 (really like)	<input type="checkbox"/> 06 (hard to say)
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13. Please rate on a 5-point scale (where 1 – doesn't affect at all, but 5 – significantly affects), how much, in your opinion, participation in choirs or folk dance collectives impacts the following: *Mark one answer per row!*

		1 (doesn't affect at all)	2	3	4	5 (significantly affects)	6 Hard to say
1	Strengthen connections with Latvian culture	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06
2	Strengthen connections with Latvia as a state	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06

3	Strengthens friendships within the collective	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06
4	Widens circle of friends, acquaintances	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06
5	Positively affects the participant as a person	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06
6	Increases opportunities to participate in Latvian cultural events	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06
7	Strengthens belonging to family	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06

14. For people to participate in Latvian cultural events, how important/unimportant are the following, in your opinion:
 Mark one answer in each row!

		Very important	Fairly important	Fairly unimportant	Not important	Hard to say
1	Must be ethnically Latvian	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05
2	Must appreciate Latvian culture	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05
3	Participant must speak Latvian	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05
4	Participant must be specially prepared	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05
5	Participant must be a good team member	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05

15. Please indicate in which of the following activities you participate during the following named holidays.
 Mark all necessary answers!

		Celebrate/observe at school	Celebrate/observe with friends/family	Participate in a celebratory event where I live (municipality/city/parish)	Wear a special outfit	Wear a specific holiday accessory (ribbon, brooch, etc.)	Don't really celebrate/observe	Hard to say
1	Midsummer	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06	<input type="checkbox"/> 07
2	November 18	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06	<input type="checkbox"/> 07
3	Christmas	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06	<input type="checkbox"/> 07
4	Easter	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06	<input type="checkbox"/> 07
5	May 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06	<input type="checkbox"/> 07
6	Song and Dance Celebration	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06	<input type="checkbox"/> 07

QUESTIONS ABOUT AMATEUR ARTISTS' COLLECTIVES

Let's clarify a few things about your participation in collectives!

FILTER: ANSWER ONLY IF YOU INDICATED THAT YOU HAVE AT SOME POINT PARTICIPATED IN A AMATEUR ARTISTS' COLLECTIVE IN QUESTION 1!

16.a PLEASE WRITE IN THE COLLECTIVE(S) _____
 (Choir, folk dance collective, wind orchestra, kokle ensemble, etc.)

16. Was/is it a minority collective?
 Mark one answer!

Latvian See question 19	1
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Minority	2
Hard to say See question 19	3

17. If a minority collective, were/are Latvian musical pieces/dances part of the repertoire?

Mark one answer!

Yes	1
No	2
Hard to say	3

18. What are/were your favorite musical pieces/dances that your artists' collective fulfills/fulfilled?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

19. How often do/did you go to rehearsals?

Mark one answer!

Always or almost always	1
Often	2
Rarely	3
Hard to say	4

20. Does/did anyone participate in your collective who is not Latvian (by *tautība*)?

Mark one answer!

No	1
Yes, 1-3 people	2
Yes, more than 4 people	3
Hard to say	4

21. What language do/did you usually speak with them?

Mark one answer!

Latvian	1
Russian	2
Both Latvian and Russian	3
English	4
Other language (PLEASE WRITE IN!)	5
Hard to say	6

22. How old were you when you started participating in an artists' collective?

Mark one answer!

0 – 5 years old	1
6 – 10 years old	2
11 – 15 years old	3
16 – 18 years old	4
Hard to say	5

23. Why did you start participating in an amateur artists' collective?

Mark no more than **5 top reasons!**

I like to express myself artistically (singing/playing an instrument/dancing, etc.)	1
I was invited by the leader of the collective	2
My relatives (parents, siblings, etc.) have participated in this collective	3
My friends/people with similar interests participate in this group	4
I wanted to meet someone (romantically)	5

My parents brought me to the collective	6
I wanted to participate in the Song and Dance Celebration	7
I participate in the collective to uphold school/ city/ municipality, etc. traditions	8
I wanted to affirm my patriotism and belonging to Latvia/ the region	9
I wanted to get involved in an activity/ hobby outside of school	10
It is required (as in within school, etc.)	11
Other (PLEASE WRITE IN!)	12
Hard to say	13

24. Which of the following activities have you done with members of your collective and how often?
 Mark one answer in each row!

		Often	A few times	Never	Hard to say
1	I have participated in the collective's parties or other celebrations after rehearsals/concerts	1	2	3	4
2	We meet up outside of rehearsals/school	1	2	3	4
3	I have gone on a date	1	2	3	4

QUESTIONS ABOUT OTHER TOPICS

25. How important/unimportant is it for your friends to have the following characteristics?
 Mark one answer in each row!

		Very important	Fairly important	Fairly*	Unimportant	Hard to say
1	Trust	4	3	2	1	5
2	Same position in society	4	3	2	1	5
3	Same religious opinions	4	3	2	1	5
4	Same political opinions	4	3	2	1	5
5	Same ethnicity	4	3	2	1	5
6	Latvian language ability	4	3	2	1	5
7	Russian language ability	4	3	2	1	5
8	English language ability	4	3	2	1	5

* Formatting in printed version cut off the word "unimportant", but it appears that the meaning was largely clear

26. How important/unimportant is it for your girlfriend/boyfriend to have the following characteristics?
 Mark one answer in each row!

		Very important	Fairly important	Fairly*	Unimportant	Hard to say
1	Trust	4	3	2	1	5
2	Same position in society	4	3	2	1	5
3	Same religious opinions	4	3	2	1	5
4	Same political opinions	4	3	2	1	5
5	Same ethnicity	4	3	2	1	5
6	Latvian language ability	4	3	2	1	5
7	Russian language ability	4	3	2	1	5
8	English language ability	4	3	2	1	5

* Formatting in printed version cut off the word "unimportant", but it appears that the meaning was largely clear

27. Please indicate on a 5-point scale (where 1 – feel like I don't belong at all, but 5 – feel like I really belong), how much you feel you belong/don't belong to the following territories. Mark one answer in each row!

		5 (I feel like I really belong)	4	3	2	1 (I don't feel like I belong at all)	Hard to say
1	City/municipality where I live	5	4	3	2	1	6
2	Latvia	5	4	3	2	1	6
3	Baltics	5	4	3	2	1	6
4	Europe	5	4	3	2	1	6
5	Russia	5	4	3	2	1	6
6	World	5	4	3	2	1	6

28. Are you proud/not proud that you live in Latvia? Mark one answer!

I am proud	1
I am more proud than not	2
I am more not proud than proud	3
I am not proud	4
Hard to say	5

29. What languages do you speak with the following people?

Mark one answer in each row! If you for some reason don't communicate, speak with a type of person, mark in the column "I don't speak".

		Mostly Latvian	Mostly Russian	Both Latvian and Russian	Mostly Latgalian	Mostly in a different language (PLEASE WRITE IN!)	I don't speak	Hard to say
1	Mom	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	Dad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	Grandparents	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	Members of my collective	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	Friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	Classmates	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

30. Your gender:

Male	1
Female	2

31. Your age: _____

Write in whole numbers!

32. Place of residence (city, municipality, parish): _____

Write the most appropriate!

33. Indicate the type of passport you have! Mark all the appropriate answers!

Latvian passport	1
Non-citizen passport	2
Other country passport	3
Don't wish to answer	4
Hard to say	5

34. Is your nationality/ethnicity (*tautība*) written in your passport?

Yes See question 35	1
I think, yes See question 35	2

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I think, no	3
No	4
Hard to say	5

35. If yes, please indicate which! Mark one answer!

Latvian	1
Russian	2
Ukrainian	3
Belarusian	4
Other (PLEASE WRITE IN!).....	5
I don't wish to answer	6
Hard to say	7

Thank you for your responsiveness!

Survey instrument: Latvian

Skolēnu aptauja

UW/JSIS/LKA/VISC | Feb. 2016 _____

Skolēnu aptauja

Labdien!

Esmu ASV Vašingtonas universitātes doktorante un aicinu Jūs piedalīties pētījumā par Latvijas skolu jaunatnes brīvā laika pavadīšanas veidiem, dalību dažādos interešu pulciņos un mākslinieciskos kolektīvos. Jūsu atbildes man palīdzēs saprast Latvijas jauniešu interesi un iespējas piedalīties dziesmu un deju svētkos. Tāpat pētījuma dati būs pieejami Latvijas Skolu jaunatnes dziesmu un deju svētku rīkotājiem, kas iegūto informāciju varēs izmantot, lai uzlabotu svētku norisi. Aptaujas anketa ir anonīma, Jūsu vārds un uzvārds anketā netiek prasīts, jo iegūtās atbildes tiks analizētas tikai apkopotā veidā. Anketa aizpilde prasīs ne vairāk kā 40 minūtes. Ja rodas jautājumi par pētījumu, lūdzu sazināties ar pētnieci (+371 26129959/indraekm@uw.edu). Ja rodas jautājumi par pētnieces tiesībām veikt šo pētījumu, varat zvanīt Vašingtonas Universitātes pārbaudes komisijai: (206) 543-0098.

Pateicos par veltīto laiku!

Indra Ekmanis

1. Vai esat/neesat darbojies kādā interešu pulciņā, sporta komandā, amatiermākslas kolektīvā (koris, deju kolektīvs, pūtēju orķestris, koklētāju ansamblis, u.tml.)? *Atzīmējiet vienu atbildi!*

Šobrīd darbojos	1
Iepriekš esmu darbojies (-usies)	2
Neesmu darbojies Skatīt 8.jautājumu	3
Grūti pateikt	4

2. Norādiet, lūdzu, kur Jūs darbojaties (tai skaitā skolā vai ārpus skolas) savā brīvajā laikā.

Atzīmējiet visas nepieciešamās atbildes. Ja Jūsu brīvā laika aktivitāte nav nosaukta, tad, lūdzu, ierakstiet to pats (-i) pie variantā CITS.

FILTRS: ATBILDIET TIKAI TAD, JA 1.JAUTĀJUMĀ NORĀDĪJĀT, KA KĀDREIZ ESAT DARBOJIES (-USIES) KĀDĀ INTEREŠU PULCIŅĀ, MĀKSLAS KOLEKTĪVĀ, SPORTA KOMANDĀ, U.TML!

Dejoju tautas deju kolektīvā	1
Dejoju mūsdienu dejas kolektīvā	2
Dejoju ritma grupā	3
Spēlēju koklētāju ansablī	4
Darbojos folkloras kopā	5
Piedalos sporta komandā	6
Dziedu kori	7
Dziedu vokālajā ansablī	8
Spēlēju pūtēju/estrādes orķestrī	9
Spēlēju/dziedu mūzikas grupā	10
Dejoju sporta dejas	11
Darbojos amatierteātrī	12
Apgūstu kāda instrumenta spēli	13
Darbojos vizuālās mākslas jomā	14
Cits (IERAKSTIET, LŪDZU!)	15
Grūti pateikt	16

3. Vai esat kādreiz piedalījies (-usies) (kā dalībnieks) Skolu jaunatnes dziesmu un deju svētkos? Ja esat, tad, norādiet, cik reizi? *Atzīmējiet vienu atbildi!*

1 reizi	1
2 reizes	2
Vismaz 3 reizes	3
Neesmu piedalījies Skatīt 5.jautājumu	4
Grūti pateikt	5

1

4. Norādiet, lūdzu, kādās aktivitātēs Skolu jaunatnes dziesmu un deju svētkos esi piedalījies (-usies)?

Atzīmējiet **visas nepieciešamās** atbildes.

FILTRS: ATBILDIET TIKAI TAD, JA 3.JAUTĀJUMĀ NORĀDĪJĀT, KA ESAT PIEDALĪJIES SKOLU JAUNATNES DZIESMU UN DEJU SVĒTKOS!

Piedalījos ielu koncertos	1
Piedalījos folkloras programmā	2
Piedalījos pūtēju orķestra koncertos	3
Piedalījos kokļu koncertos	4
Dziedāju kopkorī	5
Dejoju deju lielkoncertā	6
Piedalījos mazākumtautību kolektīvu koncertā	7
Cits variants (IERAKSTIET, LŪDZU!).....	8
Grūti pateikt	9

5. Vai esat kādreiz piedalījies (-usies) (kā dalībnieks) Vispārējos latviešu Dziesmu un Deju svētkos? Ja esat, tad, norādiet, cik reišu? Atzīmējiet vienu atbildi!

1 reizi	1
2 reizes	2
Vismaz 3 reizes	3
Neesmu piedalījies Skatīt 7.jautājumu	4
Grūti pateikt	5

6. Norādiet, lūdzu, kādās aktivitātēs Vispārējos latviešu Dziesmu un Deju svētkos esi piedalījies (-usies)?

Atzīmējiet **visas nepieciešamās** atbildes.

FILTRS: ATBILDIET TIKAI TAD, JA 5.JAUTĀJUMĀ NORĀDĪJĀT, KA ESAT PIEDALĪJIES VISPĀRĒJOS LATVIEŠU DZIESMU UN DEJU SVĒTKOS!

Piedalījos ielu koncertos	1
Piedalījos folkloras programmā	2
Piedalījos pūtēju orķestra koncertos	3
Piedalījos kokļu koncertos	4
Dziedāju kopkorī	5
Dejoju deju lielkoncertā	6
Piedalījos mazākumtautību kolektīvu koncertā/skatē	7
Cits variants (IERAKSTIET, LŪDZU!).....	8
Grūti pateikt	9

7. Kādēj Jums svarīgi piedalīties Dziesmu un deju svētkos? Atzīmējiet ne vairāk kā 5 galvenos iemeslus!

FILTRS: ATBILDIET TIKAI TAD, JA NORĀDĪJĀT, KA ESAT PIEDALĪJIES SKOLU JAUNATNES DZIESMU UN DEJU SVĒTKOS VAI VISPĀRĒJOS LATVIEŠU DZIESMU UN DEJU SVĒTKOS!

Iespēja gūt unikālu/vienreizēju pieredzi tradīciju uzturēšanas jomā	1
Spilgtas emocijas, ko nesniedz nekas cits	2
Nostiprināta nacionālās piederības sajūta, patriotisms, kopības sajūta ar Latvijas tautu	3
Līdzdalība latviešu tradīcijas (Dziesmu un deju svētku) uzturēšanas procesā	4
Iegūti jauni draugi un paziņas	5
Svētku, ballītes sajūta	6
Iespēja būt kopā ar citādiem (citu kultūru, reģionu, vērtību) jauniešiem	7
Iespēja turpināt ģimenes tradīcijas	8
Iespēja būt kopā ar draugiem, kopīgi doties piedzīvojumos	9
Atzinība (prestīžs) un atbalsts no citiem cilvēkiem	10
Iespēja izrauties no ikdienas/ izbraukt no manas dzīvesvietas	11
Tā ir man vienīgā iespēja uzvilkt tautastērpu	12
Cits iemesls (IERAKSTIET, LŪDZU!).....	13
Man nav svarīgi piedalīties svētkos	14
Grūti pateikt	15

8. Vai esat/neesat kādreiz apmeklējis Dziesmu un deju svētkus kā skatītājs?*Atzīmējiet vienu atbildi!*

Esmu apmeklējis (-usi)	1
Neesmu apmeklējis (-usi)	2
Grūti pateikt	3

9. Vai esat/neesat skatījis Dziesmu un deju svētku norisi TV?*Atzīmējiet vienu atbildi!*

Esmu skatījis (-usies)	1
Neesmu skatījis (-usies)	2
Grūti pateikt	3

10. Vai kāds no Jūs vecākiem ir (ir bijis) kāda amatiermākslas (kora, deju kolektīva u.c.) kolektīva dalībnieks?*Atzīmējiet vienu atbildi!*

Jā, ir (ir bijis)	1
Domāju, ka jā	2
Domāju, ka nē	3
Nē, nav (nav bijis)	4
Grūti pateikt	5

11. Vai Jūsu vecāki ir piedalījušies Dziesmu un deju svētkos kā dalībnieki?*Atzīmējiet vienu atbildi!*

Jā, ir piedalījušies	1
Domāju, ka jā	2
Domāju, ka nē	3
Nē, nav piedalījušies	4
Grūti pateikt	5

12. Novērtējiet, lūdzu, 5 ballu skalā (kur 1 – ļoti nepatīk, bet 5 – ļoti patīk), cik lielā mērā Jums patīk vai nepatīk Dziesmu un deju svētki kā kultūras pasākums? Atzīmējiet vienu atbildi!

<input type="checkbox"/> 01 (Ļoti nepatīk)	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05 (Ļoti patīk)	<input type="checkbox"/> 06 (Grūti pateikt)
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13. Novērtējiet, lūdzu, 5 ballu skalā (kur 1 – nemaz neietekmē, bet 5 – būtiski ietekmē), cik lielā mērā, pēc Jūsu domām, piedalīšanās kori vai tautas deju kolektīvā ietekmē sekojošo? Atzīmējiet katrā rindīnā vienu atbildi!

		1 (nemaz neietekmē)	2	3	4	5 (būtiski ietekmē)	6 Grūti pateikt
1	Stiprina saites ar latviešu kultūru	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06
2	Stiprina saites ar Latviju kā valsti	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06
3	Stiprina draudzību dalībnieku vidū	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06
4	Paplašina draugu un paziņu loku	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06
5	Pozitīvi ietekmē dalībnieku kā personību	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06
6	Palielina iespējas piedalīties latviešu kultūras pasākumos	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06
7	Stiprina piederību ģimenei	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06

14. Lai cilvēki piedalītos latviešu kultūras pasākumos, cik svarīgas/nesvarīgas, Jūsaprāt, ir sekojošas lietas:

Atzīmējiet katrā rindīņā vienu atbildi!

		Ļoti svarīgi	Diezgan svarīgi	Diezgan mazsvarīgi	Nav svarīgi	Grūti pateikt
1	Jābūt latvietim (pēc tautības)	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05
2	Jāciens latviešu kultūra	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05
3	Dalībniekiem jāprot latviešu valoda	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05
4	Dalībniekiem jābūt īpaši tam sagatavotam	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05
5	Dalībniekiem jābūt uzticamiem komandas locekļiem	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05

15. Norādiet, lūdzu, kuras no minētajām aktivitātēm Jūs veicat nosauktajos svētkos.

Atzīmējiet **visas atbilstošās** atbildes!

		Svinu skolā	Svinu ar ģimeni/draugiem	Piedalos svinīgā pasākumā savā dzīvesvietā (novadā, pilsētā, pagastā)	Nēsāju svētku tērpu	Nēsāju svētkiem atbilstošos aksesuārus (lentītes, piespraudes, brošas, u.c.)	Īpaši nesvinu	Grūti pateikt
1	Līgo svētkos/Jāņos	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06	<input type="checkbox"/> 07
2	18. novembrī	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06	<input type="checkbox"/> 07
3	Ziemassvētkos	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06	<input type="checkbox"/> 07
4	Lieldienās	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06	<input type="checkbox"/> 07
5	9. maijā	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06	<input type="checkbox"/> 07
6	Dziesmu un deju svētkos	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06	<input type="checkbox"/> 07

JAUTĀJUMI PAR AMATIERMĀKSLAS KOLEKTĪVIEM

Vēlreiz precizēsim dažas lietas par Jūsu dalību kolektīvos!

FILTRS: ATBILDIET TIKAI TAD, JA 1.JAUTĀJUMĀ NORĀDĪJĀT, KA ESAT KĀDREIZ PIEDALĪJIES (-USIES) AMATIERMĀKSLAS KOLEKTĪVĀ!16.a LŪDZU, IERAKSTIET ATTEICĪGO(S) AMATIERMĀKSLAS KOLEKTĪVU(S) _____
(Koris, tautas deju kolektīvs, pūtēju orķestris, koklētāju ansamblis, u.tml.)

16. Vai tas ir/bija latviešu vai mazākumtautības kolektīvs?

Atzīmējiet vienu atbildi!

Latviešu Skatīt 19.jautājumu	1
Mazākumtautību	2
Grūti pateikt Skatīt 19.jautājumu	3

17. Ja mazākumtautības kolektīvs, vai latviešu skaņdarbi/dejas ir/bija daļa no repertuāra?

Atzīmējiet vienu atbildi!

Jā, ir	1
Nē, nav	2
Grūti pateikt	3

18. Kādi ir/bija Jūsu mīļākie skaņdarbi/dejas, ko izpilda amatiermākslas kolektīvs?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

19. Cik bieži Jūs ejat/gājāt uz mēģinājumiem?

Atzīmējiet vienu atbildi!

Vienmēr vai gandrīz vienmēr	1
Bieži	2
Reti	3
Grūti pateikt	4

20. Vai Jūsu kolektīvā piedalās/piedalījās kāds/kādi, kuri nav pēc tautības latvieši?

Atzīmējiet vienu atbildi!

Nē, nepiedalās	1
Jā, piedalās 1 – 3 cilvēki	2
Jā, piedalās vairāk nekā 4 cilvēki	3
Grūti pateikt	4

21. Kādā valodā Jūs parasti ar viņiem sarunājaties/sarunājāties?

Atzīmējiet vienu atbildi!

latviski	1
krieviski	2
Gan latviski, gan krieviski	3
angliski	4
Citā valodā (LŪDZU, IERAKSTIET!).....	5
Grūti pateikt	6

22. Kādā vecumā sākt piedalīties amatiermākslas kolektīvā?

Atzīmējiet vienu atbildi!

0 – 5 gadi	1
6 – 10 gadi	2
11 – 15 gadi	3
16 – 18 gadi	4
Grūti pateikt	5

23. Kādējā sākt darboties/ darbojies amatiermākslas kolektīvā?

Atzīmējiet ne vairāk kā 5 galvenos iemeslus!

Man patīk mākslinieciski izpausties (dziedāt/ spēlēt instrumentu/ dejot u.tml.)	1
Saņēmu uzaicinājumu no kolektīva vadītāja	2
Mani radnieki (vecāki, brāļi, māsa u.c.) piedalījušies šajā kolektīvā	3
Kolektīvā darbojas mani draugi/ cilvēki ar līdzīgām interesēm	4
Vēlējos iepazīties/ veidot romantiskas attiecības	5
Mani uz kolektīvu atveda vecāki	6
Vēlējos piedalīties Dziesmu un deju svētkos	7
Darbojoties kolektīvā, uzturu skolas/ pilsētas/ novada u.c. tradīcijas	8
Vēlos apliecināt patriotismu un piederību Latvijai/ reģionam	9
Vēlējos iesaistīties kaut kādā ārpuskolas aktivitātē/ hobijā	10
Tas ir obligāti (skolas ietvaros u.tml.)	11
Cits variants (LŪDZU, IERAKSTIET!)	12
Grūti pateikt	13

24. Ko no minētajām aktivitātēm esat darījis kopā ar amatiermākslas kolektīva biedriem un cik bieži?

Atzīmējiet katrā rindīņā vienu atbildi!

		Bieži	Dažreiz	Nekad	Grūti pateikt
1	Esmu piedalījies(-usies) kolektīva ballītēs un citās svinībās pēc mēģinājumiem/koncertiem	1	2	3	4
2	Satiekamies arī ārpus mēģinājumiem/skolas	1	2	3	4
3	Esmu gājis(-usi) uz satikšanos, randiņu	1	2	3	4

JAUTĀJUMI PAR CITIEM TEMATIEM

25. Cik svarīgas/nesvarīgas ir sekojošās īpašības Jūsu draugiem?

Atzīmējiet katrā rindīņā vienu atbildi!

		Ļoti svarīgi	Diezgan svarīgi	Diezgan	Nesvarīgi	Grūti pateikt
1	Uzticība	4	3	2	1	5
2	Vienāds stāvoklis sabiedrībā	4	3	2	1	5
3	Reliģisko uzskatu kopība	4	3	2	1	5
4	Politisko uzskatu saskaņa	4	3	2	1	5
5	Vienāda tautība	4	3	2	1	5
6	Latviešu valodas prasme	4	3	2	1	5
7	Krievu valodas prasme	4	3	2	1	5
8	Angļu valodas prasme	4	3	2	1	5

26. Cik svarīgas/nesvarīgas ir sekojošās īpašības Jūsu ideālajam draugam vai draudzenei?

Atzīmējiet katrā rindīņā vienu atbildi!

		Ļoti svarīgi	Diezgan svarīgi	Diezgan	Nesvarīgi	Grūti pateikt
1	Uzticība	4	3	2	1	5
2	Vienāds stāvoklis	4	3	2	1	5
3	Reliģisko uzskatu kopība	4	3	2	1	5
4	Politisko uzskatu saskaņa	4	3	2	1	5
5	Vienāda tautība	4	3	2	1	5
6	Latviešu valodas prasme	4	3	2	1	5
7	Krievu valodas prasme	4	3	2	1	5
8	Angļu valodas prasme	4	3	2	1	5

27. Norādiet, lūdzu, 5 ballu skalā (kur 1- nemaz nejūtos piederīgs; bet 5 – Jūtos ļoti piederīgs), cik lielā mērā Jūs jūtaties/nejūtaties piederīgs(-a) sekojošām teritorijām? Atzīmējiet katrā rindīņā vienu atbildi!

		5 (Jūtos ļoti piederīgs)	4	3	2	1 (Nemaz nejūtos piederīgs)	Grūti pateikt
1	Pilsētai/novadam, kurā dzīvojat	5	4	3	2	1	6
2	Latvijai	5	4	3	2	1	6
3	Baltijai	5	4	3	2	1	6
4	Eiropai	5	4	3	2	1	6
5	Krievijai	5	4	3	2	1	6
6	Pasaulei	5	4	3	2	1	6

28. Vai Jūs lepojaties/nelepojaties ar to, ka esat Latvijas iedzīvotājs? Atzīmējiet vienu atbildi!

Lepojos	1
Drīzāk lepojos kā nelepojos	2
Drīzāk nelepojos kā lepojos	3
Nelepojos	4
Grūti pateikt	5

29. Kādā valodā Jūs runājat ar sekojošiem cilvēkiem?

Atzīmējiet katrā rindiņā vienu atbildi! Ja Jums kādu iemeslu dēļ nav komunikācijas, sarunu ar minētajiem cilvēkiem, tad norādiet to kolonnā Nesarunājos.

		Pārsvārā latviski	Pārsvārā krieviski	Gan latviski, gan krieviski	Pārsvārā latgaliski	Pārsvārā citā(s) valodā(s) (LŪDZU, IERAKSTIET)	Nesarunājos	Grūti pateikt
1	Mammu	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	Tēti	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	Vecvecākiem	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	Kolektīvu biedriem	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	Draugiem	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	Klases biedriem	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

30. Jūsu dzimums:

Vīrietis	1
Sieviete	2

31. Jūsu vecums: _____

ierakstiet pilnos skaitļos!

32. Dzīvesvieta (pilsēta, novads, pagasts): _____

ierakstiet atbilstoši!

33. Norādiet, kāda veida pase Jums ir! Atzīmējiet visus atbilstošos variantus!

Latvijas pase	1
Nepilsona pase	2
Citas valsts pase	3
Nevēlos atbildēt	4
Grūti pateikt	5

34. Vai Jūsu pasē ir ierakstīta tautība?

Jā Skatīt 35.jautājumu	1
Domāju, ka jā Skatīt 35.jautājumu	2
Domāju, ka nē	3
Nē	4
Grūti pateikt	5

35. Ja jā, tad, norādiet, lūdzu, kāda! Atzīmējiet vienu atbildi!

Latvietis	1
Krievs	2
Ukrainis	3
Baltkrievs	4
Cits (LŪDZU, IERAKSTIET!).....	5
Nevēlos atbildēt	6
Grūti pateikt	7

Paldies par atsaucību!

Survey instrument: Russian

Опрос школьников

UW/JSIS/LKA/VISC | Фев.
2016 _____

[RUSSIAN TRANSLATION]

Опрос школьников

Добрый день!

Будучи аспирантом Вашингтонского университета в США, приглашаю принять участие в исследовании о разнообразиях досуга латвийской школьной молодёжи, а также её участия в различных кружках по интересам и творческих коллективах. Ваши ответы помогут мне оценить заинтересованность и возможности участия латвийской молодёжи в праздниках песни и танца. Данные исследования будут также доступны организаторам Праздника песни и танца школьной молодёжи Латвии, которые смогут использовать полученную информацию для улучшения проводимых праздников. Анкета опроса анонимна. Ваши имя и фамилия не требуются, так как полученные ответы будут анализироваться в обобщённой форме. Заполнение анкеты потребует не более 40 минут. В случае возникновения вопросов об исследовании, прошу связаться с его автором (+371 26129959/indraekm@uw.edu). По вопросам о правомерности автора проводить данное исследование можно обращаться в проверочную комиссию Вашингтонского университета: (206) 543-0098.

Благодарю за уделённое время!

Индра Экманис

1. Принимали ли Вы участие в работе какого-либо кружка, спортивной команды или коллектива художественной самодеятельности (хор, танцевальный коллектив, духовой оркестр, ансамбль кокетистов и т.п.)? Выберите один вариант ответа!

Участвую в данный момент	1
Участвовал(-а) раньше	2
Не участвовал(-а) См. Вопрос 8	3
Трудно сказать	4

2. Укажите, пожалуйста, в какой деятельности Вы принимали участие (в том числе в школе или за её пределами) в своё свободное время.

Отметьте **все подходящие** варианты ответа. Если Ваш вид деятельности в свободное время не назван, пожалуйста, укажите его сами в варианте ДРУГОЕ.

ФИЛЬТР: ОТВЕЧАЙТЕ ТОЛЬКО В ТОМ СЛУЧАЕ, ЕСЛИ В ОТВЕТЕ НА ВОПРОС 1 УКАЗАЛИ, ЧТО КОГДА-ЛИБО ПРИНИМАЛИ УЧАСТИЕ В РАБОТЕ КАКОГО-ЛИБО КРУЖКА, ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННОГО КОЛЛЕКТИВА, СПОРТИВНОЙ КОМАНДЫ И Т.П.!

Танцюю в коллективе народных танцев	1
Танцюю в коллективе современных танцев	2
Играю в перкуссионной группе/ Танцюю в ритм-группе	3
Играю на кокле в ансамбле	4
Участвую в работе фольклорного коллектива	5
Являюсь членом спортивной команды	6
Пою в хоре	7
Пою в вокальном ансамбле	8
Играю в духовом/эстрадном оркестре	9
Играю/пою в музыкальной группе	10
Занимаюсь спортивными танцами	11
Участвую в любительском театре	12
Осваиваю игру на каком-либо инструменте	13
Задействован(-а) в сфере изобразительного искусства	14
Другое (ПОЖАЛУЙСТА, УКАЖИТЕ!)	15
.....	
Трудно сказать	16

3. Были ли Вы когда-либо участником Праздника песни и танца школьной молодёжи? Если да, то укажите, сколько раз? Выберите один вариант ответа!

1

1 раз	1
2 раза	2
По меньшей мере 3 раза	3
Не участвовал(-а) См. Вопрос 5	4
Трудно сказать	5

4. Укажите, пожалуйста, в каких мероприятиях Праздника песни и танца школьной молодёжи Вы принимали участие?

Отметьте **все подходящие** варианты ответа.

ФИЛЬТР: ОТВЕЧАЙТЕ ТОЛЬКО В ТОМ СЛУЧАЕ, ЕСЛИ В ОТВЕТЕ НА ВОПРОС 3 УКАЗАЛИ, ЧТО УЧАСТВОВАЛИ В ПРАЗДНИКЕ ПЕСНИ И ТАНЦА ШКОЛЬНОЙ МОЛОДЁЖИ!

Участвовал(-а) в уличных концертах	1
Участвовал(-а) в фольклорной программе	2
Участвовал(-а) в концертах духового оркестра	3
Участвовал(-а) в концертах клетистов	4
Пел(-а) в сводном хоре	5
Участвовал в танцевальном гала-концерте	6
Участвовал(-а) в концерте творческих коллективов нацменьшинств	7
Другой вариант (ПОЖАЛУЙСТА, УКАЖИТЕ!)	8
.....	
Трудно сказать	9

5. Были ли Вы когда-либо официальным участником Вселатвийского праздника песни и танца? Если да, укажите, сколько раз? Выберите один вариант ответа!

1 раз	1
2 раза	2
По меньшей мере 3 раза	3
Не участвовал(-а) См. Вопрос 7	4
Трудно сказать	5

6. Укажите, пожалуйста, в каких мероприятиях Вселатвийского праздника песни и танца Вы принимали участие?

Отметьте **все подходящие** варианты ответа.

ФИЛЬТР: ОТВЕЧАЙТЕ ТОЛЬКО В ТОМ СЛУЧАЕ, ЕСЛИ В ОТВЕТЕ НА ВОПРОС 5 УКАЗАЛИ, ЧТО БЫЛИ УЧАСТНИКОМ ВСЕЛАТВИЙСКОГО ПРАЗДНИКА ПЕСНИ И ТАНЦА!

Участвовал(-а) в уличных концертах	1
Участвовал(-а) в фольклорной программе	2
Участвовал(-а) в концертах духового оркестра	3
Участвовал(-а) в концертах клетистов	4
Пел(-а) в сводном хоре	5
Участвовал в танцевальном гала-концерте	6
Участвовал(-а) в концерте/смотре творческих коллективов нацменьшинств	7
Другой вариант (ПОЖАЛУЙСТА, УКАЖИТЕ!)	8
.....	
Трудно сказать	9

7. Почему для Вас важно принимать участие в Празднике песни и танца? Укажите не более 5 основных причин!

ФИЛЬТР: ОТВЕЧАЙТЕ ТОЛЬКО В ТОМ СЛУЧАЕ, ЕСЛИ УКАЗАЛИ, ЧТО УЧАСТВОВАЛИ В ПРАЗДНИКЕ ПЕСНИ И ТАНЦА ШКОЛЬНОЙ МОЛОДЁЖИ ИЛИ ВО ВСЕЛАТВИЙСКОМ ПРАЗДНИКЕ ПЕСНИ И ТАНЦА!

Возможность получения уникального/разового опыта в сфере поддержания традиций	1
Неповторимые яркие впечатления	2
Укреплённое ощущение национальной принадлежности, патриотизм, осознание общности с народом Латвии	3
Соучастие в процессе поддержания латышских традиции (Праздника песни и танца)	4
Заведение новых друзей и знакомых	5
Ощущение праздника, вечеринки	6
Возможность быть вместе с другими молодыми людьми (представителями другой культуры, другого региона, других ценностей)	7
Возможность продолжения семейных традиций	8
Возможность быть вместе с друзьями, вместе отправиться на поиски приключений	9
Признание (престиж) и поддержка других людей	10
Возможность вырваться из повседневности/ выбраться из дому	11
Это моя единственная возможность надеть национальный костюм	12
Другая причина (ПОЖАЛУЙСТА, УКАЖИТЕ!).....	13
Для меня не важно участие в празднике	14
Трудно сказать	15

8. Посещали ли Вы когда-либо Праздник песни и танца в качестве зрителя?
Выберите один вариант ответа!

Посещал(-а)	1
Не посещал(-а)	2
Трудно сказать	3

9. Смотрели ли Вы мероприятия Праздника песни и танца по телевизору?
Выберите один вариант ответа!

Смотрел(-а)	1
Не смотрел(-а)	2
Трудно сказать	3

10. Является/являлся ли кто-либо из Ваших родителей участником какого-либо коллектива художественной самодеятельности (хора, танцевального коллектива и др.)?
Выберите один вариант ответа!

Да, является/являлся	1
Думаю, что да	2
Думаю, что нет	3
Нет, не является/не являлся	4
Трудно сказать	5

11. Были ли Ваши родители участниками Праздника песни и танца?
Выберите один вариант ответа!

Да, были	1
Думаю, что да	2
Думаю, что нет	3
Нет, не были	4
Трудно сказать	5

12. Оцените, пожалуйста, по 5-балльной шкале (1 – очень не нравится, 5 – очень нравится), в какой мере Вам нравится или не нравится Праздник песни и танца как культурное мероприятие? *Выберите один вариант ответа!*

<input type="checkbox"/> 01 (очень не нравится)	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05 (очень нравится)	<input type="checkbox"/> 06 (Трудно сказать)
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13. Оцените, пожалуйста, по 5-балльной шкале (1 – нисколько не влияет, 5 – существенно влияет), в какой мере, как Вам кажется, участие в хоре или коллективе народных танцев влияет на следующее? Выберите один ответ в каждой строчке!

		1 (нисколько не влияет)	2	3	4	5 (существенно влияет)	6 Трудно сказать
1	Укрепляет связь с латышской культурой	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06
2	Укрепляет связь с Латвией как государством	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06
3	Укрепляет дружбу среди участников	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06
4	Расширяет круг друзей и знакомых	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06
5	Положительно сказывается на участнике как на личности	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06
6	Расширяет возможности участия в латышских культурных мероприятиях	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06
7	Укрепляет принадлежность к семье	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06

14. Насколько, как Вы думаете, важны/неважны следующие вопросы для людей, принимающих участие в латышских культурных мероприятиях:

Выберите один ответ в каждой строчке!

		Очень важно	Довольно важно	Не очень важно	Неважно	Трудно сказать
1	Нужно быть латышом (по национальности)	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05
2	Нужно уважать латышскую культуру	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05
3	Участники должны знать латышский язык	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05
4	Участники должны быть специально подготовлены	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05
5	Участники должны быть надёжными членами команды	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05

15. Укажите, пожалуйста, чем из перечисленного Вы занимаетесь в рамках указанных праздников.

Отметьте все подходящие варианты ответа!

		Отмечаю в школе	Отмечаю с семьёй/друзьями	Участвую в торжественном (краевом, городском, волостном) мероприятии по месту жительства	Ношу праздничную одежду	Ношу соответствующие празднику аксессуары (ленточки, значки, броши и др.)	Особо не отмечаю	Трудно сказать
1	Лиго/Ивано в день	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06	<input type="checkbox"/> 07

4

2	18 ноября	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06	<input type="checkbox"/> 07
3	Рождество	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06	<input type="checkbox"/> 07
4	Пасха	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06	<input type="checkbox"/> 07
5	9 мая	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06	<input type="checkbox"/> 07
6	Праздник песни и танца	<input type="checkbox"/> 01	<input type="checkbox"/> 02	<input type="checkbox"/> 03	<input type="checkbox"/> 04	<input type="checkbox"/> 05	<input type="checkbox"/> 06	<input type="checkbox"/> 07

ВОПРОСЫ О КОЛЛЕКТИВАХ ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННОЙ САМОДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТИ
(Хорах, танцевальных коллективах, духовых оркестрах, ансамблях кокетистов и т.п.)

Ещё раз уточним некоторые аспекты Вашего участия в творческих коллективах!

ФИЛЬТР: ОТВЕЧАЙТЕ ТОЛЬКО В ТОМ СЛУЧАЕ, ЕСЛИ В ОТВЕТЕ НА ВОПРОС 1 УКАЗАЛИ, ЧТО КОГДА-ЛИБО ПРИНИМАЛИ УЧАСТИЕ В РАБОТЕ КАКОГО-ЛИБО КОЛЛЕКТИВА ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННОЙ САМОДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТИ!

16. Это был/есть латышский коллектив или коллектив нацменьшинства?

Выберите один ответ!

Латышский См. Вопрос 19	1
Коллектив нацменьшинства	2
Трудно сказать См. Вопрос 19	3

17. Если это был коллектив нацменьшинства, являются/были ли латышские музыкальные произведения/танцы частью репертуара?

Выберите один ответ!

Да	1
Нет	2
Трудно сказать	3

18. Какие музыкальные произведения/танцы в исполнении коллектива художественной самодеятельности являются/были Вашими любимыми?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

19. Как часто Вы ходите/ходили на репетиции?

Выберите один ответ!

Всегда или почти всегда	1
Часто	2
Редко	3
Трудно сказать	4

20. Участвует(-ют)/участвовал(-и) ли в Вашем коллективе кто-то, кто не является латышом по национальности?

Выберите один ответ!

Нет, не участвует	1
Да, участвует 1 – 3 человека	2
Да, участвует более 4 человек	3
Трудно сказать	4

21. На каком языке Вы обычно с ними говорите/говорили?*Выберите один ответ!*

На латышском	1
На русском	2
И на латышском, и на русском	3
На английском	4
На другом языке (ПОЖАЛУЙСТА, УКАЖИТЕ!).....	5
Трудно сказать	6

22. В каком возрасте Вы начали участвовать в работе коллектива художественной самодеятельности?*Выберите один ответ!*

0 – 5 лет	1
6 – 10 лет	2
11 – 15 лет	3
16 – 18 лет	4
Трудно сказать	5

23. Почему Вы начали заниматься/занимаетесь в коллективе художественной самодеятельности?*Укажите не более 5 основных причин!*

Мне нравится творчески самовыражаться (петь/ играть на инструменте/ танцевать и т.п.)	1
Получил(-а) приглашение от руководителя коллектива	2
Мои родственники (родители, братья, сёстры и др.) занимались в этом коллективе	3
Там занимались мои друзья/ люди со схожими интересами	4
Хотел(-а) познакомиться/ начать романтические отношения	5
Меня привели родители	6
Хотел(-а) участвовать в Празднике песни и танца	7
Занимаясь в коллективе, поддерживаю традиции школы/ города/ края и др.	8
Хочу подтвердить свой патриотизм и принадлежность к Латвии/региону	9
Хотел(-а) быть задействован(-а) в каком-нибудь внешкольном мероприятии/занятии	10
Это обязательно (в рамках школы и т.п.)	11
Другой вариант (ПОЖАЛУЙСТА, УКАЖИТЕ!)	12
Трудно сказать	13

24. Чем из перечисленного Вы занимались вместе с другими участниками коллектива художественной самодеятельности и как часто?*Выберите один ответ в каждой строчке!*

		Часто	Иногда	Никогда	Трудно сказать
1	Участвовал(-а) в вечеринках и других коллективных торжествах после репетиций/выступлений	1	2	3	4
2	Также встречались вне репетиций/школы	1	2	3	4
3	Ходил(-а) на встречу, свидание	1	2	3	4

ВОПРОСЫ НА ДРУГИЕ ТЕМЫ**25. Насколько для Вас важны/неважны следующие характеристики Ваших друзей?***Укажите один ответ в каждой строчке!*

		Очень важно	Довольно важно	Маловажно	Неважно	Трудно сказать
1	Верность	4	3	2	1	5
2	Одинаковое положение в обществе	4	3	2	1	5
3	Общность религиозных взглядов	4	3	2	1	5
4	Совпадение политических взглядов	4	3	2	1	5
5	Одна национальность	4	3	2	1	5
6	Знание латышского языка	4	3	2	1	5
7	Знание русского языка	4	3	2	1	5
8	Знание английского языка	4	3	2	1	5

26. Насколько для Вас важны/неважны следующие характеристики Вашего идеального друга/идеальной подруги? Выберите один ответ в каждой строчке!

		Очень важно	Довольно важно	Маловажно	Неважно	Трудно сказать
1	Верность	4	3	2	1	5
2	Одинаковое положение в обществе	4	3	2	1	5
3	Общность религиозных взглядов	4	3	2	1	5
4	Совпадение политических взглядов	4	3	2	1	5
5	Одна национальность	4	3	2	1	5
6	Знание латышского	4	3	2	1	5
7	Знание русского языка	4	3	2	1	5
8	Знание английского	4	3	2	1	5

27. Оцените, пожалуйста, по 5-балльной шкале (1 – не чувствую никакой принадлежности; 5 – чувствую полную принадлежность), в какой мере Вы чувствуете принадлежность к следующим территориям? Выберите один ответ в каждой строчке!

		5 (Чувствую полную принадлежность)	4	3	2	1 (Не чувствую никакой принадлежности)	Трудно сказать
1	К городу/краю, в котором живёте	5	4	3	2	1	6
2	К Латвии	5	4	3	2	1	6
3	К Балтии	5	4	3	2	1	6
4	К Европе	5	4	3	2	1	6
5	К России	5	4	3	2	1	6
6	К миру	5	4	3	2	1	6

28. Вы гордитесь или не гордитесь тем, что являетесь жителем Латвии? Выберите один вариант ответа!

Горжусь	1
---------	---

Скорее горжусь, чем нет	2
Скорее не горжусь, чем горжусь	3
Не горжусь	4
Трудно сказать	5

29. На каком языке Вы говорите со следующими людьми?

Выберите один ответ в каждой строчке! Если по какой-то причине Вы не поддерживаете общения с упомянутыми людьми, отметьте это в колонке *Не общаюсь*.

		В основном на латышском	В основном на русском	И на латышском, и на русском	В основном на латгальском	В основном на другом языке/ других языках (ПОЖАЛУЙСТА, УКАЖИТЕ)	Не общаюсь	Трудно сказать
1	С мамой	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	С папой	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	С бабушкой и дедушкой	1	2	3	4	5 _____	6	7
4	С участниками творческого коллектива	1	2	3	4	5 _____	6	7
5	С друзьями	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	С одноклассниками	1	2	3	4	5 _____	6	7

30. Ваш пол:

Мужчина	1
Женщина	2

31. Ваш возраст: _____

Укажите полный возраст!

32. Место жительства (город, край, волость): _____

Укажите подходящее!

33. Укажите, какого типа Ваш паспорт! Отметьте все подходящие варианты ответа!

Латвийский паспорт	1
Паспорт негражданина	2
Паспорт другой страны	3
Не хочу отвечать	4
Трудно сказать	5

34. Указана ли в Вашем паспорте национальность?

Да См. Вопрос 35	1
Думаю, что да См. Вопрос 35	2
Думаю, что нет	3
Нет	4
Трудно сказать	5

35. Если да, то укажите, пожалуйста, какая! Выберите один вариант ответа!

Латыш(-ка)	1
Русский/русская	2
Украинец/украинка	3
Белорус(-ка)	4

Опрос школьников

UW/JSIS/LKA/VISC | Фев.
2016_____

Другое (ПОЖАЛУЙСТА, УКАЖИТЕ!).....	5
Не хочу отвечать	6
Трудно сказать	7

Спасибо за отзывчивость!

Appendix 2

Šekspīrs manā pagalmā

- 1) Kāds ir galvenais konflikts un tā iemesls filmā? Kā Latvijā sadzīvo latviešu un krievu jaunieši?
- 2) Vai starp dažādu tautību jauniešiem pastāv dialogs, sadarbība? Kas to veicina?
- 3) Vai esmu izjutis diskrimināciju Latvijā valodas dēļ?
- 4) Vai es esmu tolerants pret cittautiešiem un kas veido manu attieksmi?
- 5) Kas veicina neiecietību? Kas mani motivē būt iecietīgam un saprotošam?
- 6) Kas nosaka, kas mēs esam un kā veidojas mūsu identitāte? Cik liela nozīme ir videi?
- 7) Kā var veicināt vienlīdzību sev apkārt?

Shakespeare in my courtyard

- 1) What is the main conflict in the film and the reason for it? How do Latvian and Russian youth live together in Latvia?
- 2) Is there dialogue, cooperation between youth of different ethnicities? Who/what promotes this?
- 3) Have I felt discriminated against in Latvia due to language?
- 4) Am I tolerant of other ethnicities and what impacts my attitude?
- 5) What promotes intolerance? What motivates me to be tolerant and understanding?
- 6) What determines who we are and what creates our identity? How much does environment matter?
- 7) How can one promote equality around one's self?

(Nodibinājums "MM art," 2016)

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