Views On Immigration In Latvia.

An Exploration of Opinions and Some Possible Causes.

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Abstract

Successful integration of immigrants and refugees depends on views and support in the host country. A majority of Latvians have a negative view of migrants and refugees. Why so? Does history, particularly forced migration during Soviet occupation, partially explain negative views? Is the presence of a relatively large number of Russians in Latvia who do not speak Latvian also a factor? Or just the policy emphasis on the creation of a homogeneous Latvian identity? Or other factors such as unemployment, the cost of immigrants, or fear for Islamists? This study aims to explore the current negative perceptions of immigrants and possible causes.

Employing a mixed methods research approach, this research consists of two levels: applying qualitative analysis, the first phase of the study generates mechanisms – three hypotheses – through which Sovietisation has influenced the negative attitudes towards refugees. Policy decisions and political discourse of post-independent Latvia have prescribed certain informal institutions or norms to Latvian society. These informal institutions have the potential to explain the negative attitudes vis-à-vis refugees. First, due to policies and rhetoric promoting linguistic and cultural assimilation of the Russian-speaking population in Latvia rather than integration, and focusing on the majority identity, Latvian society fails to perceive integration as a dynamic two-way process where an actively participating society is of crucial importance and emphasizes the determination of those *needing* to integrate instead. Second, efforts to restore and later preserve the national identity of post-independent Latvia promote the feeling among Latvians that the national identity is under threat by *Others*, therefore refugees also are perceived as a threat. Finally, continuous implementation of ethno-politics in post-Soviet Latvia has lead to cultural racism.

To illustrate these findings the second stage of this study employs two self-administered questionnaires with a total of 542 respondents. Although it is impossible to statistically confirm the Sovietisation factor in forming the negative attitudes, the quantitative part of the thesis did not refute the hypotheses. The survey results confirm that Latvians tend to perceive integration as a one-way process, that the society views refugees as a threat to the national identity, and that racist views based on cultural characteristics towards refugees among Latvians are present to a very large extent.

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Chapter 1: Introduction And Background

"If civilization is to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relationships – the ability of all peoples, of all kinds, to live together and work together in the same world, at peace."/Franklin D. Roosevelt, in a draft speech before he died in 1945/

An obvious but powerful truth! This ought to be endorsed by the entire world today, 71 years after Roosevelt said it. Yet, it seems we haven't moved nearly as far along the peace path as we should have.

The conflict in Syria has triggered the largest humanitarian crisis since the World War II, putting humanness and solidarity of the world, especially Europe, to a test. Millions of men, women and children must flee for their lives. Now it is time for us, people who were lucky to be born in a safe place, to cultivate the science of human relationships, as Roosevelt wisely said, to show our ability to accept those in need – to live together and work together. The key to our ability to live side by side in peace and understanding is successful integration.

It is impossible to achieve successful immigrant integration without host society members' support and active participation. Integration is possible only through *mutual* accommodation (Berry, 1974; Horenczyk, Jasinskaja-Lahti, Sam and Vedder, 2013; Kunst, Thomsen, Sam and Berry, 2015). Is Europe (and Latvia in particular) ready to cultivate that science of human relationships and successfully integrate refugees into society?

Eastern Europeans on average are more opposed to immigration than the West. The research shows that Eastern Europeans perceive immigration negatively and show a strong desire to exclude immigrants (Loucky and Ho, 2012, p. 120). Although traditionally being an area of emigration, with migration and refugee flows to the "more developed and democratic west", the attitude towards immigrants in Eastern Europe is negative and immigrants are perceived as "the other 'other'" (Rovny, 2014, p. 637). Moreover, Eastern Europeans are "*strict gatekeepers",* supporting the strictest entry requirements (Green, 2007, p. 376). This is clearly the case in Latvia, for example.
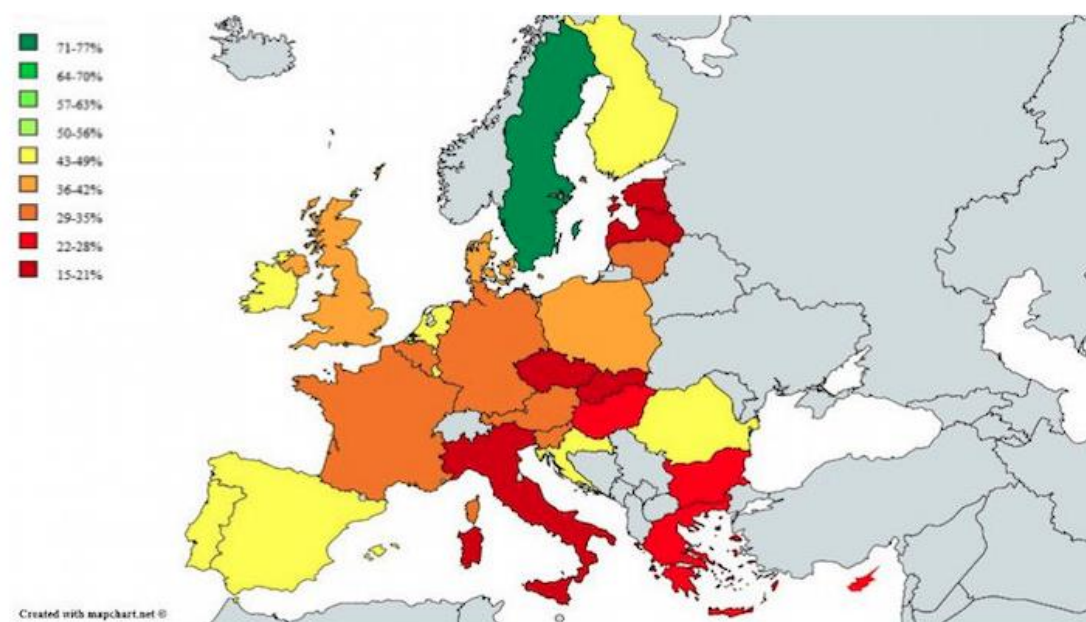
Figure 1: A map showing EU countries' attitude towards foreign immigration (Public Tableau, 2015).

As presented in Figure 1, all three Baltic States, especially Latvia and Estonia, show hostility to receiving refugees and immigrants. Although Lithuanians show less hostility than Estonians and Latvians, the attitude is less positive as, for instance, in Poland, the Netherlands, Ireland, Spain, and other countries. This research is not a comparative study, nevertheless, the fact that all three Baltic States share negative attitudes vis-à-vis receiving immigrants and refugees might be an indication that Sovietisation plays a role in societal attitudes today. Shifting from ideological to "nationalistic groupings" is more common in post-communist countries (Boswell, 2000, p. 551).

In its loosest sense, nationalism indicates ascribing special significance to nationality. Insecurities on a national level play a role in forming nationalistic views (Boswell, 2000). For example, the global financial crisis in 2008 and economic concerns that emerged in the affected countries increased anti-globalization mood in more insecure societies. Due to economic insecurity, new nationalism took different economic shapes: anti-immigration measures, resource nationalism, etc. (Roubini, 2014). Similarly, insecurities related to preservation of national identity and culture may lead to cultural racism and certain forms of nationalism.

In the case of Latvia, insecurity is also strongly related to proximity in space to Russia and its possible aggression, and number of Russians, who do not speak the Latvian language, in the country. Almost 30 per cent of Latvians hold the view that there is a potential security threat, and the capacity of national defence has worsened over the past years. It is mainly due to fear of Russia's aggression, and the worsening of Latvia-Russia's relationship (SKDS, 2014).

Insecurity, fear of invasion, fear of loss of pride, and fear or economic implications might influence Latvian attitude towards refugees and immigrants. Due to these special characteristics of Latvia and my knowledge of the Latvian language and familiarity with the environment, instead of comparative study I chose to conduct one-case introspective study with a time element and a current opinion-based source with two components.

The Attitude Of Latvian Society Towards Refugees And Asylum Seekers

"Latvia has the most negative attitude towards refugees in the whole Europe", claims Latvian Foreign Minister Edgards Rinkevics (Baltic Times, 2015). According to the Eurobarometer poll in 2014, among the citizens of the EU Member States, with 79% being against non-EU immigration, Latvians express the least favourable attitude towards immigration (p. 61). Although a survey among 22 countries revealed that in most countries there is a sharp distinction between the negative attitude towards immigrants and the willingness to receive refugees, Latvia and Slovenia were exceptions (Loucky and Ho, 2012, p. 120). In a recent study on the attitude of people in Latvia towards refugees, 69% of the respondents implied that Latvia should not receive refugees from the Middle East (LETA, 2015). Simply put, Latvian society has a negative mind-set vis-à-vis receiving refugees.

Nevertheless, as a EU Member State, Latvia will have to absorb and integrate refugees, would there be resistance in society or not. Only through mutual accommodation, that is active participation of society, successful refugee integration can be achieved. Therefore, the questions we desperately need answers for are: What leads to the negative attitude towards refugees in Latvian society? And: What are the challenges of successful refugee integration in Latvian society?

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Latvian perspective on migration: not neutral, but negative. During the discussion on the refugee quota in June 2015, *Saeima* (the Latvian Parliament) stood against the compulsory EU quota. The main argument of the anti-quota national position was the consequences of the Soviet occupation: the change in ethnic composition, which resulted in Latvians being a minority in seven major cities. The European Affairs Committee of Latvia also emphasized that only 62% of Latvian population are ethnic Latvians and, as a result of the Soviet occupation, immigration is still seen as weakening the possibilities to achieve better integration of society (Saeima, 2015). Hence, the officials suggest that Latvia's recent history – the Soviet occupation – might hinder successful refugee integration. The question I want to address is – *has Sovietisation influenced the negative attitude of Latvian society vis-à-vis refugees?*

To interpret the phenomena and gain deeper insight in regard to refugee integration and societal attitudes in Latvia, I decided to conduct open-ended interviews with Marija Golubeva, development director and policy analyst at *PROVIDUS, The Centre for Public Policy* and Ilmārs Mežs, head of *The International Office of Migration*. The thread of the discussions was that migration is seen as negative in Latvia. As Golubeva argues, although "migration is a neutral element" (..), "all migration there is [in Latvia], is in principle [seen as] bad but we are forced to accept it because of globalization, EU and other reasons. Partially, of course it is because there is a trauma from the past experience". Moreover, Mežs suggests, "in Soviet times all kinds of migration were distinctively negative – both mass immigration to Latvia and deportations of Latvians to Siberia. Therefore, all kinds of migration still have a negative note".

Said (1994) argues that using the past is often a strategy used to explain the present (p. 37). Latvian public space is "obsessed" with historicism, therefore discussions about the current refugee crisis go hand in hand with discussions regarding Soviet-era migration (Procevska, 2015, p. 2). Brigita Zepa, the chair of *The Baltic Institute of Social Sciences*, stresses that immigration questions in Latvia are especially sensitive already since the country regained its independence, when public discussions about forced immigration from the Soviet Union began (Lastovskis, 2015). Moreover, Aija Lulle, the chair of *The Centre for Diaspora and Migration Research*, adds that the trauma of the totalitarian regime Latvia was part of is still evident, in particular if society feels it as being "forced from above" (Ibid.), in other words - when it seems that

rules are enforced by (foreign) authorities. Concluding, Sovietisation has an impact on the negative attitudes of Latvian society vis-à-vis- refugees.

A possible link between the impact of Sovietisation and the negative attitude towards refugees nowadays has not been explored. Mainly that is due to the fact that in the preceding years the number of asylum seekers applying for asylum in Latvia has been low (Akule, 2015). The question did not raise as much political or societal debate as it does today since the world has been facing the increasing refugee crisis. Between 1998 and 2015 the refugee status was granted to 71 and the alternative status to 148 people. In total there have been 1768 applications for asylum between 1998 and 2015 (OCMA, 2015).

Having established that Sovietisation has an effect on the negative attitudes of Latvians towards refugees, the aim of this study is to investigate how this relationship unfolds. Therefore, the research question is *How has Sovietisation influenced the negative attitudes of Latvian society vis-à-vis refugees and asylum seekers?*

Structure Of The Thesis

The mechanisms through which Sovietisation might have influenced the negative attitudes of Latvians towards refugees and asylum seekers have not been studied yet. Thereof, this research is of inductive nature and consists of two levels. In the first phase of the research, by applying qualitative analysis, I develop hypotheses as to how Sovietisation might have affected negative attitudes. The second stage of the research, by applying quantitative analysis, investigates the current perceptions of the Latvian society in relation to the generated hypotheses.

The next chapter introduces the readers to the concept of Sovietisation, to a brief history of the Soviet period in Latvia and to the scene of post-independent Latvia. Based on interpreting observations, history and documents three hypotheses are developed. The third chapter explains the research methodology employed in this study. It discusses the research strategy and design, and research approaches and methods employed in both parts of the thesis. The chapter also elaborates on conceptualization of variables and population and sample for the quantitative part of the research. Finally, the third chapter discusses the limitations of the employed research methodology. Chapter four presents results of the quantitative part – self-administered questionnaire. In chapter five I discuss and interpret the survey results. This study concludes with

chapter five, which provides conclusions and suggestions for further research. Appendix A contains transcripts of the conducted interviews for the qualitative part, and Appendix B presents the survey employed for the quantitative part of the thesis.

Chapter 2: The Role Of Sovietisation In Forming The Negative Attitudes Vis-à-vis Refugees

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This research aims to study *How has Sovietisation influenced the negative attitudes of the Latvian society vis-à-vis refugees and asylum seekers?* The goal is to explore the impact of the historical context of current affairs, or to seek *how* history matters. This chapter presents qualitative analysis of the impact of Sovietisation on the negative attitudes towards refugees based on interpretations of history, documents, discourse and observations. The chapter concludes with three hypotheses deliberated from analytical interpretations of the historical context of Latvia.

History Matters Or The Potential Of Historical Institutionalism In Studying Latvian Society

Considering the possible causal importance of historical events in regard to the present, historical institutionalism has the potential to deepen theoretical understanding of Latvian society and thus the institutional context I intend to study. By looking at norms, rules and organizations that form the structure of human behaviour, historical institutionalism aims at promoting "predictable patterns" (Hall and Taylor, 1996, p. 242). Its underlying aim is to understand causal sequences, which may explain why and how Latvian society forms its negative attitude towards refugees and asylum seekers. Nevertheless, as Psathas (1968) argues, focusing only on behaviours that are "overt and manifested in concrete, directly observable acts is naïve to say the least". Studying the meaning behind people's acts and behaviour is the challenge to understanding social reality (p. 510).

If we regard the changes in national policies as a formal institution, perceptions, attitudes and therefore behaviour of actors, which lead to these policies, can be regarded as an informal institution. For example, policy decisions made in the post-independent Latvia could lead to negative perceptions towards refugees nowadays, where the negative attitude is being regarded as a norm, practice, or idea. This informal institution may prescribe certain opinions. Similar to the area of copyright, where, while domestic copyright laws are an example of a formal institution, *copyright* itself could be seen "as a norm, idea, or practice – an informal institution that describes *how* the market in creative works *should* be regulated" (Bannerman and Haggart, 2014, p. 9-13). Informal institutions act "as a script", telling people "how they should act in a given situation or issue area". In other words, laws and policies provide institutional context in which the industry operates shaping the preferences of actors (Ibid.).

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One of the mechanisms to study historical institutionalism is path-dependence. Initial conditions of the path-dependency sequence are the most crucial factor in the path-dependency sequence (Somers, 1998, p. 768). As Sewell's influential definition of path dependence explains, "what has happened at an earlier point in time will affect the possible outcomes of events occurring at a later point in time" (Mahoney, 2000, p. 510). In other words, existing prior to the start of the sequence, initial conditions "play some causal role in defining a broad range of historically possible outcomes" (Mahoney and Schensul, 2006, p. 460) and, although temporality is an "inevitable" element of the sequence (Smith, 1988, p. 2) and is of great influence to the sequence (Howlett, 2009, p. 2), initial conditions form the path-dependency sequence, therefore playing a causal role in the possible outcome.

Sovietisation as well as the breakup of the Soviet regime obviously affected Latvia's history, thereof influencing certain policy decisions as well as shaping certain perceptions and attitudes among the members of Latvian society. Open-ended interviews I conducted with M. Golubeva and I. Mežs lead to a conclusion that due to the Soviet occupation Latvians view migration as negative, which influences opinions on the current refugee crisis as well. Moreover, experts (B. Zepa, A. Lulle, O. Pravecka – as mentioned above) agree that the Soviet traumatic experience has left imprints on society's views vis-à-vis absorbing refugees in Latvia. Therefore, to answer the question I posed at the beginning of this chapter, I assume that *Sovietisation has an impact on the negative attitude of Latvian society towards receiving refugees in Latvia.*

Nonetheless, while clearly the past affects the future, this "minimalist" approach to the definition of path-dependency seems to be too vague, maybe even blatant – after all for every event, which occurs, there is a preceding history. As argued above, there is a connection between the negative perceptions and the historical context of Latvia, nevertheless, the link between the role of the Soviet occupation and the negative attitude towards refugees among people in Latvia has not been explored. What are the mechanisms through which Sovietisation affects the present Latvia (vis-à-vis refugee integration)? This research aims to explain the attitude of the Latvian people vis-à-vis refugees within a specific social and historical context - a setting that has a meaning system. How does the history matter in shaping society's perceptions and attitudes towards refugees? How could the historical context of Latvia foster our understanding of social reality today? With this study I aim to find possible mechanisms through which

Sovietisation has shaped the negative attitude towards refugees, which further serves the purpose of fostering understanding of how behaviours unfold (Niewman, 2014, p. 103-106).

Initial Conditions

Brief history of the Soviet period in Latvia. Despite Soviet Russia recognizing sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Latvia "voluntarily and forever" in 1920, it was occupied by the Soviet Army twice (1940 and 1944). On August 23, 1939 a secret treaty between the Foreign Ministers of the USSR and Germany was signed, leaving Latvia under the Soviet sphere of influence. When the WWII began in September 1939, territory of Latvia already "belonged" to the USSR. Following the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact signed in 1939, the Soviet Army entered Latvia in 1940, marking the beginning of the first Soviet occupation. In June 1941 first mass deportations in Latvia were executed by the Soviets and about 15,000 residents, mainly intellectuals and business owners, the groupings believed by the Soviet leadership to be the most threatening to Soviet communism, were deported (Ginkel, 2002, p. 418; Latvian National Archive, n.d., 14th of June 1941).

The first Soviet occupation did not last long, as it was cut short due to the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941. Shortly after the Soviet mass deportations took place, Germany entered Latvia. The Soviet occupation was replaced by the Nazi occupation in July 1941. After the terror and deportations persecuted by the Red Army, July 1941 or the beginning of the "German Times", appeared as liberation to Latvians. People had hopes that Germany would help restore the sovereignty of Latvia. The hopes soon vanished, as an independent Latvia was not part of Nazi Germany's plans.

The Soviet Army returned to Latvia in 1944-1945, marking the beginning of the second Soviet occupation, which lasted for more than 40 years until the independence of Latvia was restored in 1991. Latvian people experienced terror; open resistance to the occupational power was impossible (Stepens, 2007, p. 118), and nationally oriented sentiments or any other "signs" of anti-Soviet mood, would there be evidence or not, resulted in arrests, repressions and deportations (Ginkel, 2002, p. 418). Moreover, due to the politics of the USSR, the ethnic composition during the Soviet rule in Latvia changed drastically: the ethnic balance shifted from ethnic Latvians to Russians.

Sovietisation: Involuntary Assimilation To 'The Soviet Human Being'.

"I am neither a Lett nor a Russian. I am Soviet", in an interview to *Moscow News* in 1992 said A. Rubiks, the first secretary of the Latvian Communist Party, born in Latvia and Latvian by passport – a quote that clearly illustrates the idea of sovietisation.

After 1934, when Stalin declared *korenizatsiia* policy history, the national policy of the Soviet state increasingly became more directed at Russo-centrism. *Korenizatsiia* refers to "nativization" or "indigenization" of people. Originating from *korennoi narod* ("indigenous people" or "root population"), *korenizatsiia* was Bolsheviks' rhetoric that favoured indigenous people over "newly arrived elements" (Martin, 2001, p. 12). *Korenizatsiia* was a Soviet policy carried out in 1920s and 1930s promoting "non-Russian native elites in their respective republics as well as non-Russian languages and cultures, often at the expense of the Russians themselves" (Roberts, 2014, p. 36). The end of *korenizatsiia* had tragic consequences for the ethnic minorities in Latvia – political and physical repressions (Prizel, 1998, p. 188-189). Stalin realized that promoting national identities of the states in the Soviet territory would lead to contradictions and could evoke secessionist aspirations, hence sovietisation took a more standardized form where Russian culture was seen as the all-union standard (Weeks, 2010, p. 34), marking the beginning of the Sovietisation era.

The goal of the sovietisation policy was standardizing all the citizens of the USSR. By increased state intervention starting from education to the welfare state, it ambitiously aimed at a "total transformation of human existence"; in other words, sovietisation aimed at creating 'the Soviet human being', a common man without ethnic identity besides that of the Soviet (Weeks, 2010, p. 1-3). By intimidation and terror the Soviet regime attempted to change public psychology (Stradiņš, 2007, p. 446). Put it simply, by state intervention, sovietisation aimed at coercively standardizing individuals and everyday life.

"The uncompromising effort of the regime to transform the country into a typical Soviet bailiwick compounded the devastation of the war" (Latvia, 2015, p. 21). The totalitarian regime enforced a framework of "collective identity from above" and there was no other option for individuals than to accept his/her place (Kārkliņš and Zepa, 1996, p. 34). In other words, sovietisation presumed that all Soviet citizens in the Soviet territory (including Latvia) would adopt lifestyles drawn from Russian models (Weeks,

2010, p. 1) therefore assimilating to Russian culture. Assimilation is the willingness of minorities to adapt to the host culture by losing one's individual cultural identity and heritage (Berry, 2001). Assimilation should therefore be a voluntary choice. Nonetheless, the Soviet regime used coercive methods to assimilate Latvians to the identity of *the Soviet man;* thus, sovietisation can be best described as *involuntary assimilation.*

In efforts to sovietise or assimilate the Latvian population, the education in Latvia followed the patterns of the USSR. The teachers were trained to evoke Soviet upbringing (Koķe and Saleniece, 2015, p. 51). For instance, Latvian literature in schools was replaced by Soviet content, enforcing the Soviet values. Instead of portraying real life contradictions, the literature aimed at exemplary behaviour of the *Soviet man* (Abens, 2015, p. 177). People were taught what they were ought to think and do as Soviet human beings.

Any anti-Soviet sentiment or resistance, proven or not, would result in arrests, repressions and deportations (Ginkel, 2002, p. 418). The regime "unsparingly combatted" nationally minded citizens – the "enemies of the Soviet reign" (Stradiņš, 2007, p. 446). Most threatening social groups such as intellectuals, business owners, etc. were sent to exile in Siberia (Ginkel, 2002, p. 418). Mass deportations took place in June 1941 when 15.443 residents of Latvia were deported (Latvian National Archive, n.d., 14th of June 1941), and in March 1949 when over 42.000 people, mainly peasants, were deported to Siberia (MFA, 2014, p. 10). As Ginkel (2002) points out, repression of the Latvian population was an effort to sovietise the republic, later followed by a russification program (p. 418). Sovietisation dictated that any anti-Soviet sentiment, may there be evidence or not, would result in elimination.

Changes in the ethnic composition of Latvia. The Russian influx in the territory of Latvia was great: between 1941 and 1959 the Russian population in Latvia increased by 230% (Heleniak, 2006, p. 9). In 1989, right before the breakup of the USSR, the number of ethnic Latvians in Latvia shrunk from 62% in 1959 to 52% in 1989, and the Russian-speaking community in Latvia (all Slavic groups combined) increased from 31% to 42 %. There was "a very real fear that Latvians would become a minority in their own republic" (Ibid., p. 11).

"The State of Latvia was occupied and it was not possible to restrict immigration in any way", points out the *Guidelines on National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy* (2011, p. 7). In other words, during the Soviet occupation Latvia experienced involuntary immigration.

Two-community society: Latvians versus Russian-speakers. Ever since, the Latvian population forms a two-community society: 'Latvians' and 'Russian-speakers' (Muižnieks, Rozenvalds and Birka, 2013; Rodin, 2013; Makarovs and Boldāne, 2008; Cheskin, 2012). The Russian-speaking population refers to all Slavic groups (Russians, Poles, Ukrainians and Belarusians) residing in Latvia. Political (Integration Policy, 2011), academic (Muiznieks, Rozenvalds and Birka, 2013; Zepa and Kļave, 2011; Rozenvalds, 2010; Krūma, 2014; Rodin, 2013) and media (Latvijas Avīze, LSM, Ir) discourse refer to Slavic ethnic minorities in Latvia as the Russian-speaking community.

Currently, there are 61.6% of ethnic Latvians residing in Latvia. 25.8% or the biggest minority are Russians, while 7.8% are Poles, Belarusians and Ukrainians combined (CSB, 2015). Together the minorities form the Russian-speaking community: 30.2% of the entire population of Latvia.
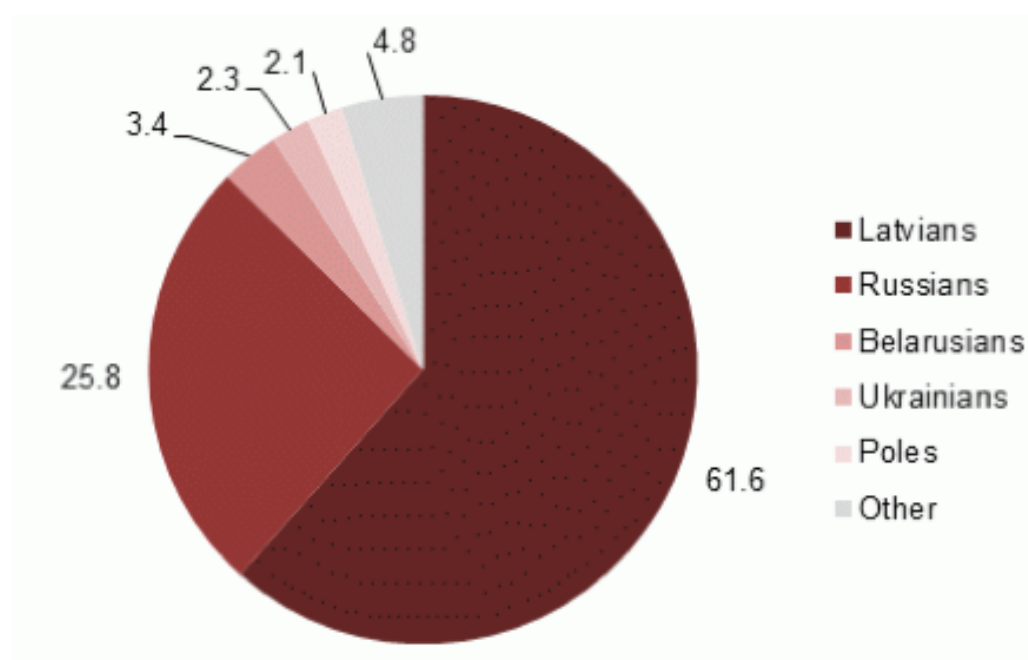
Figure 2. Ethnic composition of population of Latvia at the beginning of 2015 in per cent (Central Statistical Bureau, 2015).

Nationalistically oriented Latvians promote the high percentage of non-Latvians residing in Latvia ("Soviet-era immigrants") and the government's failure to truly integrate them into Latvian society as arguments for unwillingness to receive refugees. In its stance regarding refugees the "National Alliance" (a right-wing political party which, with 17 seats in Saeima, is the fourth largest party in the parliament) emphasizes the importance of Soviet-era immigration and its consequences on ethnic composition of Latvia, stressing that "the high number of immigrants considerately decreases Latvia's ability to integrate already *existing* migrants in the country" (Zīle, July 1, 2015, p. 3). Meanwhile, Edgars Rinkevics, the Foreign Minister of Latvia, claims that such arguments are valid only to domestic politicians and not for discussion outside Latvia. Yet, he adds that although it has not failed entirely, "we undeniably have problems with integration" (Rinkevics, August 4, 2015, p. 10).

"Something is probably wrong with the integration policy in our country. If people are not offered an identity, they find it themselves", indicated Linda Mūrniece, Latvian Interior Minister in 2009 (Baltic News Service, June 2009). Although the question of Soviet-era settlers' integration into Latvian society has always been at the surface, it escalated in 2009 when the Soviet War Memorial in Riga reached 100,000 visitors, indicating strong attachment of Russian speaking population in Latvia to the Russian Federation (Gruzina, 2011). Politicians and observers have argued however that partially Latvia itself is to blame for Russian-speakers' affiliation with Russia since a way to "truly integrate" Russian-speaking population into the nation-state of Latvia has not been found (Wezel, 2016, p. 11).

Tracing back the origins of the two-community society. Although the current Integration Policy (2011) recognizes the necessity to bring the society in Latvia together and diminish the "two-community society" by increasing a sense of belonging to Latvia (p. 9), it has not been entirely successful yet. While the ethnic majority focuses on restoring the nation-state, ethnic minorities in Latvia strive to achieve political equality and "democratic representation" (Rodin, 2013, p. 5). The Russian-speaking population feels political alienation and expresses a weak sense of belonging to Latvia,

identifying with Russia instead (Muiznieks, Rozenvalds and Birka, 2013, p. 288). Social inclusion policy aims at integration and fostering a sense of belonging, but the Russian-speaking minorities in Latvia have a weak sense of membership, which further challenges social cohesion.

The Russian population both inside and outside Russia form a single "mnemonic community" and shares "deep collective memory", using the same "cultural tools" (Wertsch, 2008, p. 139). As emphasized in the *Guidelines on National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy* (2011), there is widespread practice of assimilation "within the Russian-speaking environment" among the national minorities (p. 21). Focusing on the Russian language, even at the expense of sacrificing the national language, is the dominant tendency among Slavic groups in Latvia, argues the director of *Saeima* Citizenship, Migration and Social Cohesion Commission Ilmārs Latkovskis (2015). Simply put, Slavic minorities in Latvia identify with the Russian-speaking community, thus sharing the same collective memory and cultural tools, often different from those of Latvians.

Widespread opinion in politics and society is that Russian-speakers are *strangers* who do not wish to integrate in Latvian society. The *Guidelines on National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy* (2011) emphasize that a large proportion of the Russian-speaking population "do not wish to recognize Latvian culture as the unifying element of the Latvian cultural space and the Nation State of Latvia" (p. 21). At the same time, the post-independence Latvian policies (e.g. the citizenship policy as discussed below) were "at the root of the conflict between two ethno-linguistic communities in Latvia" (Dorodnova, 2003, p. 25).

Upon regaining independence, Latvian policies started to exclude the Russian minority in Latvia from political participation (Ginkel, 2013, p. 415), which further hindered the integration. Due to social and political inequality, Russian-speakers in Latvia feel discriminated (Altuhovs, 2013), and international institutions have criticized policy decisions leading to discrimination of minorities in Latvia. The UN has criticised Latvia for its discriminating language laws and intolerance in regard to Russian-speakers in the society (UNHCR, 2012, p. 2), while HCNM reported that for "many Latvian legislators (...) international human rights norms" do not seem suitable "for the unique situation in Latvia", therefore justifying "deviation form the general practice with regard to norms" (Dorodnova, 2003, p. 140). In other words, practicing ethno-

politics, Latvian legislators and politicians justify discriminating laws towards Russian-speakers in Latvia. Needless to say, restricting rights the Russian-speaking population once was entitled to "has been painfully received by the affected minorities" (Dorodnova, 2003, p. 142).

Preserving national identity by social exclusion? The story of noncitizens.

Like elsewhere in the world, the collapse of the USSR brought huge changes in Latvia and it was a nodal point in the development of two-community society. Not only distinct perceptions of the Second World War and the Soviet occupation between Latvians and Russian-speakers, but also the developments after re-establishing independence in 1991 played a crucial role in forming today's society.

A sizeable internal population of Latvia does not identify with the territorial state and the civic community. Many Soviet-era migrants never thought of "living abroad", nevertheless the breakup of the Soviet state and Latvia's independence brought a change: Soviet-era settlers were now residing in a new state (Kārkliņš and Zepa, 1996, p. 36).

Upon regaining its independence after the breakup of the Soviet Union, Latvia had two options: becoming a new state according to the state succession model and therefore adopting a new constitution, or opting for state continuity and thus claiming that the Soviet occupation was illegal and therefore Latvia never lost its statehood (Ziemele, 2005, p. 118). Latvia chose the latter option and its preference was supported by the international community (Latvijas arhīvistu biedrība, LR Ārlietu ministrija, Latvijas Valsts vestures arhīvs, 1999). Choosing for state continuity indicated that the Constitution of the period prior to occupation was revived. Attempting to preserve the freshly regained Latvian independence, the new citizenship law conferred citizenship only to people who "could trace their ancestry" to 1940 or the pre-Soviet Latvia (Cheskin, 2013, p. 290). In other words, only Latvians who were citizens prior to the Soviet occupation and their descendants were admitted as Latvian citizens (Thiele, 1999, p. 12). Since the politicians argued that the Soviet occupation was unlawful and the Latvian state presumed to exist (Ziemele, 2001, p. 233), only the *old* citizens (the restored citizens) could elect Parliament. Therefore, immigrants who moved to Latvia during the Soviet-era had an undetermined status (Krūma, 2014, p. 242), ignoring the

fact that many Russian-speakers were born and raised in Latvia and identified themselves with Latvia and did not feel as *aliens.*

Very soon after re-establishing the independence, hopes for "a democratic policy" of non-Latvians vanished, as "the stance on citizenship acquired a pronouncedly radical character". Based on the state continuity principle, the Supreme Council adopted the "Resolution on the Restoration of the Republic of Latvia Citizens' Rights and Fundamental Principles of Naturalization" in October 1991, granting the citizenship to pre-1940 citizens only (Dorodnova, 2003, p. 19).

To fulfil international obligations concerning integrating and reducing statelessness of 'non-Latvians' or post-war settlers, the state introduced a *non-citizenship* status*.* Citizens of the former Soviet Union not qualified for Latvian citizenship (due to them or their predecessors not being residents of Latvia in 1940) were awarded the status of non-citizens (Krūma, 2014, p. 242), thus about 740,000 residents of Latvia became non-citizens overnight (Muiznieks, Rozenvalds and Birka, 2013, p. 291).

According to the government, non-citizens of Latvia share similar privileges to those of the citizens of Latvia – they have the same social guarantees and they are granted the protection by the state in Latvia and abroad. Nevertheless, non-citizens do not have the right to vote and are not allowed to work in public service, or occupy a job position concerning national security (MFA, 2015, Pilsonības un valodas politika Latvijā, p. 7). As Muiznieks and his colleagues (2013) put it, by legal means the state secured that post-war settlers had very limited political influence (p. 291). In her study Zepa (2003) found that non-citizens feel like "nothing", "nobody" ("никто") in Latvia. Despite paying taxes just like any ordinary Latvian, they do not have the right to participate in the political process: such as voting and influencing the decisions of the ruling apparatus (p. 21). Although the government emphasizes that the non-citizenship status is temporary (MFA, 2015, Pilsonības un valodas politika Latvijā, p. 8), according to the latest population census, in 2011 14.2% of the Latvian population still held the non-citizenship status (CSB, 2011, p. 3).

The controversial citizenship law has had much pressure from the EU, the Council of Europe and OSCE, thus Latvia partially eased the process of naturalization. Still, to "increase the dominance of Latvian culture in the face of the country's large non-ethnic Latvian population", people wishing to become citizens must prove their

linguistic proficiency and knowledge of Latvian history (Latvia, 2015, p. 25). While in the 1990s main issues in political discourse regarding non-citizens were "voluntary repatriation" and "de-occupation", by 2001 issues of integration and naturalization appeared on the political agenda, slowly allowing inclusion of the minorities into the polity (e.g. the Naturalization Board, Ministry for Integration Affairs, the National Programme for the Latvian Language Training, the Integration Foundation) (Dvorodova, 2003, p. 135).

Traditionally, naturalization is viewed as an indicator of the feeling of belonging to the host country (Chow, 2007, p. 513). Nonetheless, as a result of psychological and linguistic barriers the motivation to undergo the naturalization process among non-citizens in Latvia is low (PMLP, 2011, p. 11). Naturalization rates are rapidly decreasing and fewer and fewer non-citizens choose to use "this tool for political participation and inclusion", with only one applicant in 2013 (Hanovs, 2016, p. 139). Among other scholars (Rodin, Cheskin, Golubeva), Muiznieks and his colleagues (2013) argue that social exclusion and the feeling of unfair treatment crucially affects the motivation of non-citizens to naturalize. As people who have lived in Latvia for years, some even born here, Russian-speakers do not feel that it is fair that they were not given citizenship of Latvia automatically, but have been and still are seen as Russian occupants (*krievu okupanti)* – a term often used in media and public discourse - instead. As the slogan of the campaign "Change the Law on Citizenship" (in 2012) shouts "we were born here and we require citizenship automatically" (Hanovs, 2016, p. 143). Ethno-political inequality has resulted in "modern ethnic stratification" (Rodin, 2013, p. 9) between Latvians and Russian-speakers.

Instead of working on an integration plan, post-Soviet Latvia rather emphasized the differences between ethnic Latvians and "the occupants" – the Russian-speaking population. Clearly, after years of longing for independence, policy making in post-independent Latvia was influenced by emotions and the wish to restore the nation state of Latvia, which explains the policy decisions and the negative attitude towards Soviet-era settlers after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It was obvious that the idea of integrating post-war "colonists" was principally unacceptable – first Latvia had restored the rights of people of the Latvian Republic and their descendants and hoped that immigrants would leave the country, which would return Latvia to its pre-war demographic proportions (Rozenvelds, 2010, p. 38). However, what public often fails to

notice is that many of the Russian-speakers were actually born and raised in Latvia and consider themselves as Latvians. Hence, the split in the community, fuelled by politics and popular discourse, has influenced Russian-speakers' sense of belonging to Latvia and led to increasing identification with Russia instead.

(Non)Integration Of Non-Latvians Or *What Went Wrong?*

Although there might have been a potential for successful integration of Russian-speakers in post-Soviet Latvia, after Latvia regained its independence no centralized integration policy was developed. Public opinion polls showed that a noticeable part of non-Latvians in Latvia supported Latvia's independency (Zepa, 1992, p. 22). In March 1991 all Latvian inhabitants had the chance to participate in a vote "Are you in favour of democratic and nationally-independent Republic of Latvia?" where 74% of eligible voters voted for, while 25% against. Although some authors view this as an example of "ethnic vote" - non-Latvians voting against the independence (Purins, 2002), Rozenvelds (2010) argues that, since the share of eligible voters was about 12% bigger than ethnic Latvians' share in the country, then "considerable part of non-Latvians" - about one quarter - voted for Latvia's independency (p. 39-40). Instead, the decision to re-establish citizenship to only the pre-1940 citizens of Latvia divided society into "insiders" and "outsiders", which began ethno-nationalism as the basis of ethno-politics Apine (2011, p. 4). The citizenship concept left about 700,000 people, who were not eligible for Latvian citizenship, in "the legal vacuum", politically excluding also those non-Latvians who voted for democratic and independent Republic of Latvia (Dorodnova, 2003, p. 19). In other words, directly after the breakup of the Soviet Union there might have been a window of opportunity to (at least partially) collide Latvian society. Nonetheless, ethno-nationalism took its stroll and the society was divided into citizens and non-citizens instead.

With initial aim of promoting voluntary return or repatriation of non-Latvians to their "ethnic homeland", in 1995 the Law on Repatriation came into force, moving the integration issue of non-Latvians even further away from the agenda (Rozenvelds, 2010, p. 42), fuelling the split in the society.

Political pressure on minorities, language and education were other rocks in the garden of a potentially united society. Russian language restrictions came into force in 1992 and 1993, provoking tensions among minorities (Dorodnova, 2003, p. 20). Despite

criticism of both domestic and foreign experts, in 1999 the State Language Law came into force, establishing that minority languages were equal to foreign languages, thus failing to establish norms of their usage in Latvia and, as Rozenvelds (2010) argues, set a "zero-sum game" – "the more Latvian language gets, the more others lose" (p. 43). Needless to say, still hoping that non-Latvians would return to their homelands, politicians were putting oil to the fire of a bi-communal society.

Only in the second half of the 1990s, when the government came to realize minorities were not leaving as hoped, and the pressure from the West made it clear that it will not be possible to further hinder naturalization of non-Latvians, the question of the relationship between the nation-state and a big part of the society arose (Rozenvelds, 2010, p. 44).

Integration as a one-way process? As elaborated in detail above, although understandable due to political priorities or restoring the nation-state and political culture of Latvia, opting for state continuity and therefore leaving 74,000 people (internal Soviet immigrants) stateless overnight has negatively affected the sense of belonging of Russian-speakers to the nation state of Latvia. Moreover, emphasis on "voluntary repatriation", referring to Soviet-era immigrants as "occupants", strict laws on naturalization and political pressure on minorities, language and education further increased the gap between ethnic Latvians and the Russian-speaking population in the country, hence facilitating the two-community society.

Political rhetoric emphasizes that the Russian-speaking population has the opportunity to integrate into Latvian society if they wish so – *Saeima* had developed means for minorities to integrate, nevertheless the minorities are rather reluctant to use the given opportunities to naturalize.

Monitoring of sittings and legislative initiatives of *Saeima* between 2007 and 2009 to analyse public speech of politicians that increase or decrease civic participation opportunities of society and certain groups, concluded that, despite the tendency to be more open to civic participation on rhetorical level, the majority of politicians are rather careless in regard to minority rights. Moreover, the vast majority of excluding discourse was directed at noncitizens and non-Latvians (Golubeva and Kažoka, 2009). Some politicians suggested that noncitizens and non-Latvians threaten the national identity of Latvia and, as I argued above, that it is mainly due to *their* lack of initiative that they

have not successfully integrated into Latvian society. P. Tabūns (fraction of TB/LNNK, *For Fatherland and Freedom*):

> "[…] What we, Latvians, have received by being tolerant, being humanness, human towards those people who came here as a result of occupation and stayed there? And they are hundreds or thousands. See, 370 thousand still. 370 thousand! It is almost as much as orthodox in Latvia – 400 thousand. *These people are still noncitizens. Not because we don't allow them to become citizens, but because they don't want to become citizens*, because they cannot speak Latvian and they don't want to learn. They don't respect this country, big part [of them] don't respect." (Ibid., p. 10).

It is such discourse that works as a mediator constructing social reality where part of the society views integration as a one-way process where the Other is responsible and society does not have to be involved in facilitating integration. As Foucault (2002) demonstrates in The Order of Things, political discourse, which is invisible to individuals in society, constrain their actions and motivate them to act in certain ways. Additionally, identity discourses "condition and constrain thought and action by legitimizing specific interpretations of the social world and delegitimizing certain others" (Mole, 2007, p. 278). Individuals in society associating with institutions can be carried out "anonymously by discourses or public narratives" (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000, p. 16). Hence, instead of describing social reality, discourse rather is "a medium through which reality is created and the material world is given meaning" (Wennerstein, 1999, p. 274).

As argued above, early laws and policies regarding Soviet-era settlers' integration have been heavily criticized as discriminating by international observers. Latvian integration policy documents tend to impose a set of values, "with an emphasis on the majority identity, and very little mention of the protection afforded to minority identities" (Muiznieks, Rozenvelds and Birka, 2013, p. 306). It is focusing on cultural and linguistic assimilation instead (Ibid.). Although integration is a two-way process, "the emphasis is on the tasks for minorities", and their "need to accept Latvian culture, understand history, be loyal, etc." (Rozenvelds, 2013, p. 55). By emphasizing the role of minorities in the integration process and presenting integration rather as the minorities' assimilation to Latvian cultural space, it seems that the government has failed to *teach* Latvian society that integration is a two-way process. Policies and

discourse, aimed at eliminating the consequences of Sovietisation, might have shaped the Latvian perception of integration. Instead of perceiving integration as a dynamic two-way process, where actively participating society plays a crucial role in successful integration, (Hypothesis One) *Refugee integration is viewed as a one-way process*.

"Small Leaks Sink Big Ships": *Latvianness* **As A Fence**

"We are small like Davids, but from time to time we are capable of destroying Goliaths" (2015), says cultural sociologist Dagmāra Beitnere – Le Galla about Latvian people. Seeing themselves as *Davids*, who are strong enough to fight *Goliaths* when necessary, best describes the Latvian sentiment regarding their national identity. As the saying goes: "Mazs cinītis gāž lielu vezumu" or "Small leaks sink big ships" (translation by Zusne, 2008, p. 16).

In the 1990s the restoration of disturbed political culture of the Latvian Republic was the "top priority" of the political elite (Hanovs, 2016, p. 136). While restoring national identity was the focus of the post-independent Latvia, the dimensions of national identity of Latvia started shifting in the l980s when the population started moving towards independence (Ginkel, 2013, p. 415). The "hidden nationalism", as Bergmanis and Zālīte put it, aimed at preserving the *true* identity of Latvians (2007, p. 499). To maintain the sense of Latvian identity under the Soviet rule, unofficial history resulted in "folklorisation" of Latvian history (Abens, 2015, p. 179), preserving the nation's collective memory: values "rooted in European tradition" incompatible with those of communist totalitarianism (Koķe and Saleniece, 2015, p. 51). Instead of moving towards a society of "Western liberal and inclusive individualism", most post-Soviet nations are moving "from closed Soviet society to another closed concept of ethnicized past", trying to re-establish the cultural past before the occupation (Grovs, 2008, p. 155).

Although restoration of the national identity has been at the centre of political and societal debate since the very first years Latvia regained its independence, I argue that the feeling in the society that national identity is threatened as been largely fuelled by the failure to integrate Soviet-era settlers and the split in the society. Had a successful integration policy been developed and implemented, the division in the society might have been much less visible and therefore concerns with the national identity would not play such a crucial role in today's politics. National identity is at the

centre of the Integration Policy for 2012-2018, where focus lays on the language, culture and identity (2011, p. 9). *Latvianness* or the efforts to maintain national identity seems to work as a protective mechanism towards the fear of russification.

National identity is the individual beliefs and the extent to which individuals consider themselves as members of the nation-state (Pye and Verba, 1965, p. 529), and it emphasises the distinctiveness and uniqueness of those who belong to the in-group (Triandafyllidou, 1999, p. 66). When in 1991 the Latvian citizenship policy divided the society into Latvians (citizens) and *occupants* (non-citizens), it suggested there are two communities - *insiders* and *outsiders*, admitting ethnic Latvians into the in-group and thus granting certain social status, while showing lack of tolerance to the out-group. Restricting the rights Russian-speakers once had enjoyed left a bitter feeling and affected their sense of belonging to the nation-state (Dorodnova, 2003, p. 143), burning down the bridge for Russian-speakers to identify with the nation-state of Latvia.

It seems to be a grotesque cycle – Latvia tried to establish its national identity by marginalizing the Russian-speaking minority, which caused a split in society and thus formed two-community society. After years of deliberately trying to provoke Soviet-era immigrants' voluntary repatriation to their "ethnic homeland" (Rozenvelds, 2010, p. 42), the government realized noncitizens were to stay in Latvia and means of dealing with (non)integration of minorities had to be established. Moreover, due to the pressure of the West, Latvian legislators and politicians were forced to soften the naturalization process and look into the integration issues.

As a result of the efforts to restore the nation-state of Latvia and Latvian identity by marginalizing non-ethnic Latvians, minorities in Latvia show a weak sense of belonging to the state, and their motivation to naturalize continues to decrease. The split in the society and thus differing perceptions of history, politics and social reality have provoked political and intellectual elite in Latvia to rethink the importance of the role of national identity both in integration of noncitizens and in educating ethnic Latvians. Political rhetoric on the importance of maintaining national identity suggests that it is under threat (Golubeva and Kažoka, 2009).

Nevertheless, as Downs (1972) rightly argues, in most "crisis" public perception does not reflect actual changes in social reality, it rather reflects "the

operation of a systematic cycle of heightening public interest", and all major problems that have once gained national importance "may sporadically recapture public interest" (p. 39-41) as it appears to be in the case of refugee integration as well.

Figure 3. "Is this the future we want for Latvia?" (Lukjanovs, 2016).

Figure 4. Milda – a symbol of Latvian independence and freedom (Latvijas Eiro Monētas, 2014).

Figure 3 has been presented at one of the protests against refugees in Latvia and later was circulated on social media. The poster asks: "*Is this the future we want for Latvia?*". Figure 4 shows the original *Milda* – a symbol of Latvian independence and freedom. Originated from a local goddess that symbolizes love, freedom and friendship, Milda became a symbol of freedom and independence when to honour the Freedom fighters The Monument of Freedom in Riga was opened in 1935. In Figure 3, which gained quite some popularity in social media, the original Milda is replaced by someone, who is supposedly meant to represent immigrants (refugees), hence, sending a message that others *do not belong* in Latvia. The picture sends quite a strong message representing the importance of

national identity in belonging to Latvian culture as viewed by the eyes of some Latvians.

Similarly, the art piece by Juris Utāns "Jaunā zupas virtuve jeb nacionālās identitātes nāve" [*New soup kitchen, or the death of national identity*] (Figure 5) depicts the fear some people in Latvian society experience: that people with different races and cultures will replace Latvian society.

Figure 5. "Jaunā zupas virtuve jeb nacionālās identitātes nāve" [*New soup kitchen, or the death of national identity*] (Utāns, 2015).

Ginkel (2013) suggests that national identity is entwined with culture, therefore forming the preferences. Additionally, political leaders also frame the dimensions of national identity (p. 414). Indeed, striving to strengthen the national identity of a *small leak*, the primary goal of the *Guidelines on National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy* for 2012-2018 is "a strong and united nation of Latvia – a *national* and democratic community", where foundation lays on "the Latvian language, culture and national identity" (2011, p. 9). Latvians see Latvia as a nation state, where "the loss of identity can be a true tragedy" (Stranga, 2014, p. 14). To avoid the possible "tragedy" and thus strengthen the national identity of the *small leak*, the Integration policy suggests 'Latvianness' – a quality that differentiates the in-group from others. The

policy stresses that 'Latvianness' is "open and inclusive" for those who wish to join -
meaning that also people who are not born Latvians can "*consciously become*" Latvian.

Kas mēs esam [Who are we]? Defining Latvian identity. Since ancient times
Latvian identity in European cultural space is formed by Latvian and Libyan traditions,
Latvian wisdom, all-human and Christian values. According to the Constitution of Latvia
(1922), commitment to Latvia, Latvian language as the only language of the country,
freedom, equality, solidarity, justice, honesty, virtue of work and family are the
foundations of united society.

As set out in the *Guidelines on National Identity, Civil Society and Integration
Policy* adopted in 2011, national identity refers to a part of an individual's identity that
connects him/her to other people with similar cultural features. It implies the
uniqueness of the nation, not its superiority among other nations. The foundation of
national identity is language, values, social memory, cultural symbols and particular
behaviour, and it promotes one's affinity with a nation (p. 5-8). Moreover, one of the
dimensions of identity is a sense of belonging to a certain group (Kārkliņš and Zepa,
1996, p. 35), strongly emphasized also in the Guidelines.

The post-Soviet era or the transition to a democratic society allowed Latvians to
search for their identity "from below", opposite to coercively imposed Soviet identity
"from above" during the Soviet regime. This self-identification process nevertheless
generates certain strains for oneself and in relations with others (Kārkliņš and Zepa,
1996 p. 35), for example, the Russian-speaking community in Latvia, which is still often
referred to as *Russian occupants* in popular discourse.

Elements of the national identity*. Shared social memory.* Collective history
or, as put in the Guidelines, *shared social memory* is "an inviolable component" of
national identity of Latvia (Stranga, 2014, p 14).

Due to the imbalanced ethnic composition and differing perceptions of the
history within the society, the Latvian government envisages shared social memory as a
precondition for social integration (Guidelines on National Identity, Civil Society and
Integration Policy, 2011, p. 6). The policy reaffirms the official stand on the history and
searches for measures to teach Russian-speakers the "true historical facts" (p. 37),
reminding that different interpretations of history is one of Latvia's central social and

political problems. Nonetheless, as explained in the previous chapter, instead of
strengthening the society and trying to integrate non-Latvians into society and increase
their feelings of belonging to the nation-state, the controversial post-independent
politics of Latvia fuelled the split in the society. As a result, while some Russian speakers
identify with Latvia, many still look to "Mother Russia" (McGarry and O'Leary, 2013,
p.5).

Unique Latvian cultural space. The concept of Latvian culture space refers to
the Latvian language and environment, culture, social memory and the lifestyle
(including history, traditions, the attitude to nature, symbols, etc.), and it aims at
strengthening the national identity and sense of belonging to the country (Guidelines,
2011).

"Latvianness is the meaning of our country's existence", emphasizes Dace
Melbārde, the Latvian Minister of Culture (2014, p. 2), and culture plays integral role in
Latvianness. Brubaker (1996) argues that the notion of nation is "a category of practice",
where ethnic origin is the main instrument of belonging hence, common culture frames
it (p. 15). In the recent years, openly promoting Latvian culture, as the Latvian Institute
(2015a) puts it "traditional Latvianness" (p. 18), and patriotic feelings towards the
fatherland has reached its peak – it has become *modern* to be a nationally-minded
patriot of the country: starting from following old traditions like singing in a choir or
dancing the traditional dance to getting a tattoo of traditional Latvian symbols. For
example, traditionally in ancient Latvia, the jewellery was made from silver, bronze and
amber and the folk clothes from linen and wool. The tradition is regaining its popularity
nowadays with countless designers and jewellers reviving the tradition. "The
metamorphosis of Latvian folk dress has just begun!" (Latvian Institute, 2015a, p. 16). In
other words, it has become *popular* to honour the Latvianness.

Folkloric festivals and traditional holidays that were banned during the Soviet
rule are now celebrated again according to traditions (Gulyans, Bater and Stranga, 2015,
p. 28). More and more people celebrate traditional holidays according to the ancient
traditions (for example, celebrating the Midsummer festival – an ancient pagan
ceremony celebrating the summer solstice - accordingly: dressed in national costumes,
jumping over the bonfire and singing until the first Sunlight).

Folklore is the heart of Latvian culture. *Daina*, the Latvian folk makes that heart beat. *Daina* typically is four lines long and it either depicts stories about family, love, harvest and other important aspects of Latvian lives, or is related to myths (Latvia, 2015, p. 30). The folksongs carry ancient mystical symbolism, often referring to cosmological sun as a deeper symbol of the nation's future (Mulder, 2013, p. 6). The Cabinet of Dainas (6 volumes of folksongs published between 1984 and 1915) was inscribed on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register in 2001 (UNESCO, 2015).

Another very important cultural feature is singing: Latvians are a singing nation. Although banned under the Soviet rule, the official Song and Dance Celebration first took place in 1873 and still continues nowadays. To put it in the words of Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, former president of Latvia and ethnographer, the Song Festival embodies the singing tradition, which has been a "pillar of the Latvian nation before it became a nation" (2013). The Festival is protected by the *Song and Dance Celebration Law* with the purpose to "preserve, develop and pass on to future generations the tradition of the Song and Dance Celebration" ensuring its continuous process. The Dance and Song Celebration is viewed as an "integral part of Latvian national identity" and is proclaimed as "a masterpiece of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity" by the UN (Saeima, 2011). The Celebrations is a "grass-root and nationwide" tradition (Latvian Institute, 2015) and takes place once in five years and stages about 20.000 singers on one stage and as many people in the audience. Moreover, in between the Dance and Song Celebration the Ministry of Culture also organizes School Youth Song Celebration, gathering around 30.000 youth singers and dancers performing at a professional level.

Song is perceived as a value, which kept Latvian people together through difficult times, "paved the way to the independence" in 1918 and "preserved the Latvian culture and self-awareness during the occupation time". The Celebrations have been a part of "non-violent resistance at all times", starting despite the Tsarist regime in 1873 and continuing ever since (The Latvian Institute, 2015, Song Celebration).

Singing has a sentimental value to Latvian people. The Singing Revolution (1988-1990) is seen as the *sort* that eventually cut the Soviet rule. In spite of Soviet authorities' efforts to prohibit it, they could not prevent Latvians from singing, which resulted in the Awakening of the 1988 (Latvian Institute, 2015, Song Celebration).

Emerging from the singing tradition, the choir culture is a "cornerstone of Latvian culture and identity" (Latvian Institute, 2015, Choir Culture). Almost every

school has a choir and Latvian diaspora abroad are known to continue this tradition (for example, there are two Latvian choirs in The Netherlands, three in Germany, two in Belgium, one in Luxemburg and Switzerland, several in the US and Canada).

Finally, the special sentiment towards nature is something typically Latvian. The "cultural and psychological orientation of mind towards human life as an ancient part of nature" is typical to this corner of the world (Bunkse, 1992, p. 203). As mentioned in the *Guidelines* (2011), the unique Latvian cultural space includes the "attitude to nature" (p. 6): from picking mushrooms in fall to leaving carrots in the woods for rabbits and foxes on Christmas. Latvians gain strength not only by singing, but also by drawing inspiration from the landscape, particularly the forests and the Baltic Sea. The eccentric attitude to "open-ended" nature as opposed to "closed ideology of Marxism-Leninism" added to the conflict of values during the Soviet era (Bunkse, 1992, p. 203).

Concluding, "that feeling of safety we find by developing our self-awareness through Latvian culture and language is important for us", says the Minister of Culture, precisely describing the sentiment among Latvian people in regard to their national identity and culture (2014, p. 2). Efforts to Sovietise Latvian society during the Soviet-era lead to political efforts to restore national identity in the post-Soviet Latvia, which might influence the perception of national identity as being threatened. Hence, I argue that (Hypothesis Two): ***Latvian people perceive refugees as a threat to national identity***.

Cultural Racism

As discussed above, the efforts to preserve national identity in the post-independent Latvia marginalized the Russian-speaking population, which, fuelled by several political decisions – mainly failure to implement successful integration policy towards non-Latvians, led to a two-community society in Latvia nowadays.

Figure 6. "Love your race". Picture taken in Riga during one of the protests against receiving refugees in Latvia, (Lūka, 2015).

Current social integration policy recognizes the importance of integrating Russian-speakers into the Latvian society, largely due to the split in the society. The policy emphasizes the importance of increasing the sense of belonging to Latvia among the Russian-speaking population. Through several platforms such as Latvian language and unique cultural space and shared social memory, the concept of preserving national identity or Latvianness is at the centre of the social integration policy. Nevertheless, we have to consider the potential dangers of promoting the uniqueness of a certain culture. Folklorization of Latvian culture and placing Latvian cultural values above others has the potential danger of fuelling the feeling of being superior to other cultures. Moreover, it promotes preserving one's national identity by social exclusion. Since the Latvian language and unique cultural space, alongside with shared social memory, are the main pillars forming the national identity according to the current Integration Policy, preserving Latvian cultural identity or Latvianness thus is central to integration.

Regardless of the government coalitions, ethnic politics in Latvia have been implemented "rather consistently during the entire post-independence period" (Dorodnova, 2003, p. 20). In practice, the deliberate efforts to promote national identity and Latvianness as the "unifying foundation" – being "open and inclusive" to those who wish to join, after all those who were not born Latvians, "can consciously become

Latvians" (Integration Policy, 2011, p. 12) – do not seem to go hand in hand smoothly with the idea of integration as "openness and respect of the constituent nation for the uniqueness of national minorities and their right to maintain their distinctive identity" (Ibid., p. 7), but rather appear as assimilationist.

According to Berry (2001), assimilation is "the willingness to adapt to the host culture at the expense of losing one's cultural heritage and identity", presenting quite a different picture from that of integration. As the working definition of social integration implies, it is not "coerced assimilation", but a dynamic process "where all members participate in dialogue to achieve peaceful social relations" (UN, 2005, p. 1-2).

Nevertheless, the Guidelines on Social Integration depict integration rather as assimilation, where one's ability to accept Latvian cultural values is a measure for successful integration thus implying cultural discrimination towards other cultures. Due to assimilationist policies minorities in Latvia perceive their cultural identity to be threatened and thus experience a lower sense of belonging to Latvia (Muzinieks, Rozenvelds and Birka, 2013, p. 307). Although integration is a two-way process, "the emphasis is on the tasks for minorities": their "need to accept Latvian culture, understand history, be loyal, etc." (Rozenvelds, 2013, p. 55).

In all societies, from the most primitive to the most developed, people impose constraints upon themselves in order to give a structure to their relations with others. Under conditions of limited information and limited computational ability, constraints are destined to reduce the costs of human interaction as compared to a world without institutions (North, 1990, p. 36). In our daily interaction with others, whether within the family, in external social relations, or in business activities, the governing structure is overwhelmingly defined by codes of conduct, norms of behaviour, and conventions. These are informal constraints, which are essential for the sustainability of every society (Ibid.). That the informal constraints are important in themselves can be evidenced in that some formal rules (quotas) imposed on different societies (the EU member states) produce different outcomes (different attitude vis-à-vis the refugee crisis).

Where do informal constraints come from? They come from socially transmitted information and are part of the heritage that is called culture (North, 1990, p. 37). The way the mind processes information depends "upon the brain's ability to learn by being programmed with one or more elaborately structured natural languages that can code

for perceptual, attitudinal, and moral (behavioural) as well as factual information" (Johansson, 1988, p. 176). Culture can be defined as the "transmission from one generation to the next, via teaching and imitation, of knowledge, values, and other factors that influence behaviour" (Boyd and Richerson, 1985, p. 2). Culture establishes a language-based conceptual framework for encoding and interpreting the information that the senses are presenting to the brain (North, 1990, p. 37). Could (and how) ethno-centred politics, with the tendency to discriminate minority cultures be a potential cause to the negative attitude towards refugees in Latvia?

Ethno-Politics in Latvia: Ethnocentrism as Basis for Cultural Racism.
"Multiculturalism is best understood neither as a political doctrine with a programmatic content nor a philosophical school with a distinct theory of man's place in the world but as a perspective on or a way of viewing human life" (Kumar, 2011, p. 1). Nevertheless, one's perspectives are formed by the institutions that "as rules of the game, are incorporated in any society" (Shutyak and Cailie, p. 73). Instituting ethnic politics, focusing on preserving the national identity (arguably through social exclusion) has been the general line of politics in the post-independence Latvia (Dorodnova, 2003, p. 20), thus hindering acceptance of multiculturalism in society. Due to fragmentation caused by salient identity politics, individuals are encouraged to "define themselves in increasingly narrow ethnic or cultural terms", and policies with the goal of integrating minorities in fact "have only helped exacerbate this process" (Malik, 2015, p. 11). Malik concludes that entrenching "narrower visions of belongingness and identity" public policies in Belgium, France and the UK have created "a more fractured society" which has the potential power of turning "disaffection" into extremism (2015, p. 25). Multiculturalism is problematic "where cultures are restricted to those that can be identified in terms of their ethnic origin" as "it aims to preserve a heritage of cultural differences (…) given by a certain kind of history" (Hindess, 1992, p. 23), which applies to the case of Latvia.

Perceiving one's culture as superior lays at the heart of cultural discrimination. Moreover, discriminating or excluding others based on their culture lies at the heart of cultural racism. Although the first reaction to the concept of cultural racism might involve defensive feelings as the name itself implies the very notion of racism, it should

be viewed in the light of cultural discrimination and thus prejudices towards other cultures, perceiving one's culture as simply too different for the out-group to fit in.

Cultural exclusion, or cultural racism emphasizes the role of ethnicity and culture therefore denying open (that is, biological) racism (Ali, 2007, p. 95). By basing racism on a notion of cultures instead of races, Martin Barker (1981) coined the term new racism or *cultural racism*. It implies a view that some cultures are perceived as essentially different and impossible to assimilate. Similarly, Taguieff speaks about *le racisme differentialiste* – the necessity to respect the differences between cultures (as cited in Rathzel, 2002, p. 7). As evident in the case of Latvia, despite its pluralist reality, many people in Latvia still see a culturally homogenous society as a norm and an ideal to strive to. Cultural racism with its underlying view that culture and lifestyle of certain groups and nations simply are too different and therefore not compatible in one society plays a crucial role in forming the perceptions of the Latvian society. (Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, 2004, p. 16).

As I have presented previously, ethic polities have been a general line of politics in the post-independent Latvia and nationalism does not necessarily have a negative connotation to it, often being viewed as a form of patriotism instead. Since by emphasizing the central role of culture and ethnicity cultural racism denies the very notion of racism, many nationalists do not consider such reactions as racist. They will claim that the newcomers can join the in-group, provided that they share their language, skin colour or religion for example. Nevertheless, this sharing "more often than not" is impossible since the 'others' are perceived to be too different – "a completely other category" (Leyens, Cortes, Demoulin, Dovidio, Fiske, Gaunt, Paladino, Rodriguez-Perez, Rodriguez-Torres and Vaes, 2002, p. 714). A phenomenon Balibar (1991) calls "racism without races" – without common physical differences among people. Racism without races or cultural racism explains the idea that biological differences are gradually replaced by cultural differences and form the basis for "excluding or inferiorization" (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992, p. 14). Thereafter, as Balibar (1992) argues, 'racism without race' is not a new phenomenon – it is a prototype of anti-Semitism, where cultural aspects are the grounds to manifest certain characteristics of different societal groups, seeing these differences as "essentially insurmountable" (p. 21-23). In other words, by perceiving others as culturally *too different* to assimilate, and enlarge the in-group because of certain cultural elements,

members of society (often without being aware of that) have racial prejudices towards newcomers - a phenomenon of 'racism without race' or cultural racism, where cultural aspects are at the centre of discrimination.

As discussed above, public policies and political rhetoric vis-à-vis minority integration in post-independent Latvia, which emphasize the majority ethnicity and actively promote the role of *Latvianness* in successful integration and, hence, has lead to social exclusion of minorities could have fuelled cultural racism in Latvia. Therefore, I argue that (H3): *Formed by the efforts to diminish the consequences of Soviet occupation, with its discriminatory nature regarding the Russian-speaking minority, ethno-politics in Latvia lead to "cultural racism" in the Latvian society vis-à-vis refugees and asylum seekers.*

Why the notion of cultural racism? Although choosing to focus on cultural racism instead of referring to it as cultural prejudices or stereotyping might be criticized, I believe that the concept of cultural racism serves as more explanatory. Even more importantly, without being recognized, cultural racism cannot be dealt with properly. More often than not people are not aware of the fact that their prejudices based on cultural aspects are a form of racism. Research shows that being educated to become more aware of racism results in experiencing more responsibility to take actions to help correcting racism (Bornstein, Charles, Domingo, and Solis, 2011; Gurnah, 1984).

Similar to White racism where the White easily distance themselves from racism because they do not recognize their prejudice (Sleeter, 1995; Tatum, 1992), cultural racism often goes unrecognized. Most importantly, awareness encourages behavioural change and anti-racism action (Kernahan and Davis, 2007). In other words, to inspire behavioural change, it is crucial to become aware of one's racial biases. Indeed, traditionally it is perceived that racism does not exist in Latvia. Nevertheless Latvians see culturally homogenous society as a norm and racist views exist (Zellis, 2015). Due to the fact that biological racism is very rare in Latvia and because the Soviet politics advocated the idea that racism in the USSR does not exist, the view that racism exists only in Western countries and not in Latvia is prevalent (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2004, p. 34). The first step to a behavioural shift however is to recognize to what extent the

society is aware of their prejudices, therefore I argue that (H3a): *People in Latvia do not think that racism in Latvia exists.*

Summary

Based on interpretative analysis of documents, history, discourse and observations this chapter – the first part of this two-level study – concludes three hypotheses on the possible mechanisms through which Sovietisation might have influenced the negative attitudes of the Latvian society vis-à-vis refugees. Namely, due to policy-decisions and political rhetoric in post-independent Latvia, Latvians tend to perceive integration as a one-way process where the emphasis is laid on those needing to integrate, instead of a two-way dynamic process or mutual accommodation where active participation of society plays a crucial role; political emphasis on preserving the national identity of Latvia in efforts to diminish the consequences of Sovietisation increases the feeling that the national identity is threated by non-Latvians (hence, also refugees); and ethno-politics in Latvia consistently implemented in post-independent Latvia has lead to cultural "racism".

The next chapter elaborates on the methodology employed in this thesis: research strategy, design and methods. It also discusses limitations of the research approach.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Trying to pin-point the possible causes of the negative attitude towards refugees by observing the public space and social media, the most common lines of reasoning

were: economic implications (Latvia viewed as a country that is not financially stable yet, thus it cannot take such a burden as absorbing refugees), parallels with the Soviet occupation ("our fathers fought for our freedom and now this", "let's preserve our free state for our children" (Figure 7), "we already were occupied once", "we failed to integrate Russian-speakers, how could we possibly integrate refugees?", etc.) as well as Islamophobic views (threats of terrorism, depicting all Muslims as jihadists, etc.).

Figure 7. "Let's preserve our free state for our children" (LETA, 2015).

Due to the scope of this research and time limitations, it was impossible to closely study all lines of reasoning. The possible impact of Soviet occupation on the mind-set of Latvians appeared as particularly interesting and socially relevant as the topic has not been researched like e.g. Islamophobic perceptions or economic concerns as the basis for societal hostility to receive refugees have been (Altaf, 2015; Allen, 2010; Sheridan, 2006; Gottshcalk and Greenberg, 2008; Guido, Sapienza and Zingales, 2003; Burns and Gimpel, 2000). Hence, I intended to find out whether there is a relationship between Sovietisation and the negative attitudes of Latvian society. Thereof, I started my research with the question: *has Sovietisation influenced the negative attitude of Latvian society vis-à-vis refugees?*

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POSSIBLE CAUSES.

Several experts (Brigita Zepa, the chair of The Baltic Institute of Social Sciences;
Aija Lulle, the chair of The Centre for Diaspora and Migration Research; Olga Procevska,
board member of The Centre for the Cognitive Sciences and Semantics) have confirmed
that Sovietisation has an impact on the negative attitude towards refugees. To gain
further insights, I decided to conduct open-ended interviews with Marija Golubeva,
development director and policy analyst at PROVIDUS, The Centre for Public Policy and
Ilmārs Mežs, head of the International Office of Migration. The central thread of the
discussions was that due to the Soviet occupation, migration still has a negative
connotation in Latvian mind-sets. Hence, I assume, that there is a link between
Sovietisation and the negative attitudes of Latvian society vis-à-vis refugees.
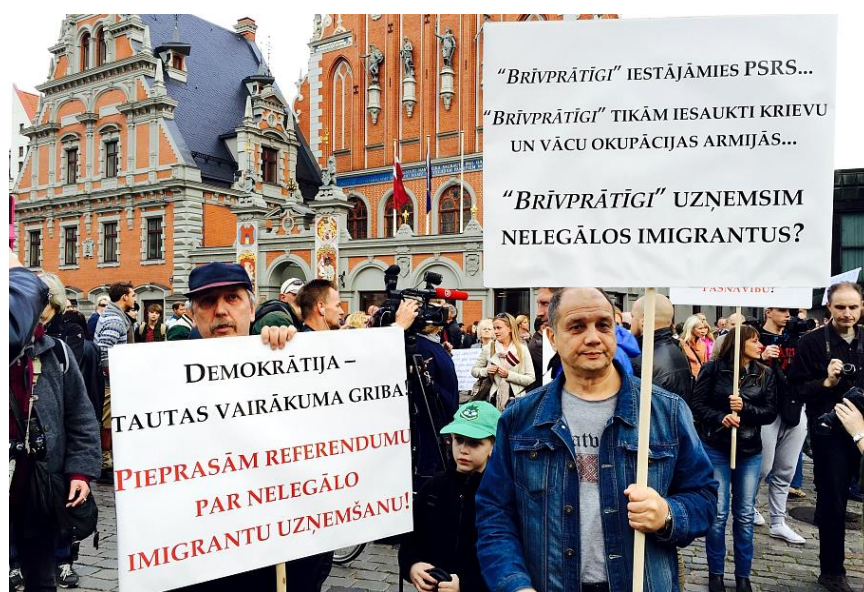

Figure 8. "'Voluntarily' joined the USSR…'Voluntarily' [we] were called in Russian and
German occupants' armies…'Voluntarily' will receive illegal immigrants?" (Otto, 2015).

Once I established that Sovietisation has an impact on societal attitudes towards
refugees, the research question: *How has the Sovietisation influenced the negative
attitudes of the Latvian society towards refugees?* was developed to study how this
relationship unfolds.

Research Strategy

To find mechanisms through which Sovietisation has influenced the negative
attitudes of Latvian society vis-à-vis refugees, I apply an inductive research strategy.
Inductive research begins with "detailed observations of the world", moving towards

ideas to identify empirical generalisation and "preliminary relationships" (Neuman, 2003, p. 51). As Bernard (2011) affirms, inductive research implies "the search for pattern from observation and the development of ideas – theories – for those patterns through series of hypotheses" (p. 7). In other words, at the beginning point of inductive research there is no theory. Instead, theory results from the research and hence is regarded as theory building.

The main focus of an inductive research strategy involves understanding dynamics, emergence, and robustness of the research question (Alexandridis, 2006, p. 20). Reasoning in inductive research is "bottom-up", in which "the researcher uses observations to build (…) a picture of phenomenon that is being studied" (Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle, 2010, p. 10). Simply put, theory emerges from observations and data.

Having established that there is a relationship between Sovietisation and the negative attitudes of Latvian people vis-à-vis refugees at the beginning of my research, the aim is to study how this relationship unfolds, that is through which mechanisms Sovietisation has influenced the negative attitudes. The challenge to understanding social reality is to study the meaning behind people's acts and behaviour. Focusing only on behaviours that are "overt and manifested in concrete, directly observable acts is naïve to say the least" (Psathas, 1968, p. 510). Hence, to study how the relationship between Sovietisation and the negative societal attitudes vis-à-vis refugees unfolds, an interpretivist approach is applied.

Interpretivism explains social reality as a structure people live, act and think within. It represents "pre-selected and pre-interpreted" constructs of how people experience their daily life, which determines "their behaviour by motivating it". Thus, the role of the social scientist is to study the "thought objects constructed by the common-sense thinking of men, living their daily life within the social world" (Schutz, 1962, p. 59). As Bryman (2012) explains, interpretivism is "an epistemological position that requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action" (p. 712). Accordingly, access to reality is understood through "social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, and instruments" (Myers, 2008, p. 38). In other words, an interpretivist approach seeks to explain why and how certain attitudes are shaped with the purpose of fostering understanding of how behaviours unfold (Niewman, 2014, p. 103-106).

Interpretivists seek accurate summaries of historical detail. They seek to place the events they describe in an intelligible context within which the meaning of actions becomes explicable (King et al., 1994, p. 36). The researcher thus aims to place the interpretations "into a social scientific frame" (Bryman, 2012, p. 31). Each person's subjective worldview shapes how he or she behaves over a particular issue. Hence, the goal is to discern others' reasoning and view of things, and therefore this research aims to explain the attitude of the Latvian people vis-à-vis refugees within a specific social and historical context - a setting that has a meaning system. (Nieuwman, 2014, p. 103-106).

Research Design

This research is divided in two phases. In the first stage of this study – by employing qualitative research methods based on literature and history, and interpretations of observations – I develop theoretical reflections. The second phase of this research concerns the present in regard to theoretical ideas developed in the first stage. Although I cannot statistically confirm the Sovietisation factor because, as explained in the paragraph on limitations, a scientific causal proof, based on a double blind random controlled experiment is impossible, by investigating the societal attitudes employing the measurements based on the hypotheses, I can test whether the hypotheses are refuted. The second part of this research therefore employs quantitative research methods that intend to complement the qualitative research findings. Combining qualitative and quantitative research techniques and methods in a single study is defined as mixed methods research – the third research paradigm in research (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 14-17).

Caracelli and Greene (1997) suggest that testing findings obtained with different "measuring instruments", and adding to the insights built on "the results of one method with another method" typically justify the use of mixed methods research (as cited in Harwell, 2010, p. 151). As Bryman (2012) argues, mixed methods allow generating hypotheses (using qualitative data) and then testing them (applying quantitative methods) "within a single project". Or, as the author puts it, "discover and confirm" (p. 634).

Creswell (2003) describes six research designs, or strategies of inquiry that employ mixed research methods. This study applies *sequential exploratory design*,

which suggests that quantitative data is used to complement qualitative results. A
sequential implementation requires data collection in two separate phases. In the first
phase the researcher explores a research question employing qualitative data. In the
next stage, built on the qualitative findings, the researcher collects and analyses
quantitative data (Plano Clark, 2005, p. 12; Table 1). Hence, while the qualitative part of
the research provides "a sense of purpose", the quantitative part provides "an account
of structures" (Bryman, 2012, p. 633).

Table 1 (adopted from Plano Clark, 2005, p. 51).

Sequential Mixed Methods Design Types by Design Criteria: Prototypical Variations

	Sequential Explanatory	Sequential Exploratory	Sequential Transformative
Priority	Unequal: Quantitative	Unequal: Qualitative	Unequal
Implementation	Sequential: Quantitative first	Sequential: Qualitative first	Sequential
Data Analysis	Connected	Connected	Connected
Stage of Integration	Interpretation	Interpretation	Interpretation
Advocacy Theoretical Perspective	Not present	Not present	Perspective guides study design
Notation	QUAN → qual	QUAL → quan	*Advocacy Lens* QUAN → qual or QUAL → quan

Note. Table contents adapted from Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, and Hanson (2003) and Hanson, Creswell, Plano Clark, Petska, and Creswell (in press).

Phase One: Qualitative Research Approach

Epistemological or interpretivist position emphasizes the importance of "understanding the social world through examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants" and as such is associated with qualitative research design (Bryman, 2012, p. 380). Qualitative research focuses on how participants perceive the world around them – how their experiences shape meaning, purpose, and reality of social life (Hiatt, 1986, p. 737). In qualitative research, by observing and analysing data, the researcher "captures and discovers meaning" once he or she has immersed in the data (Neuman, 2013, p. 8), thereof, rather than preceding it, in qualitative research theory is an outcome of an investigation (Bryman, 2012, p. 384).

After establishing my research question *How has Sovietisation influenced the negative attitude of Latvian society vis-à-vis refugees,* the next steps involve collection of relevant data and interpretation of the data to path theoretical work – developing

insights on how this relationship unfolds. Due to the qualitative nature of this research phase during data collection and interpretation, it is important to provide a "great deal of descriptive detail" of the setting that is being investigated. In other words, in qualitative research detailed description is crucial because details provide context "within which people's behaviour takes place" (Bryman, 2012, p. 401).

Moreover, in qualitative research life is viewed in terms of processes, where process refers to "a sequence of individual and collective events, actions and activities unfolding over time in context" (Pettigrew, 1997, p. 338), which then, applying the interpretivist approach, explains how individuals shape subjective worldviews (Niewman, 2014, p. 106).

Methods. The main research methods associated with qualitative research are participant observation, qualitative interviewing, focus groups, language-based approaches and analyses of texts and documents (Bryman, 2012, p. 382-383). To explore and interpret mechanisms through which Sovietisation has influenced the negative attitudes of Latvians towards refugees I used discourse, policies and documents' analysis. The advantage of studying documents is in its non-reactive technique where the information is not subjected to "possible distortion" resulting from the interaction between respondents and the researcher (Corbetta, 2003). Moreover, studying documents provides an opportunity to study the past (Denscombe, 1998).

The main policy document analysed throughout the study is the *Guidelines on National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy* (2011). Analysis of the policy sheds light on the direction in which Sovietisation might have influenced the society – change in ethnic composition, differing perceptions of the Soviet history among Latvian society, split in the society, and importance of national identity and the uniqueness of Latvian culture in minority integration. The impact of other documents such as *Law on Citizenship, Law on Repatriation, Law on Citizenship and Language* deepen the angle of this research. I interpret how certain policy decisions and political rhetoric, often based on policy decisions, in post-independent Latvia have shaped the worldview of the society. The goal of the research is to establish how Sovietisation has influenced the negative attitudes of Latvians towards refugees, therefore much emphasis is laid on the historical context of decision-making in post-independent Latvia regarding immigrants and minorities in Latvia.

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I analyse in detail the political reasoning behind post-independent Latvia's laws and policies (Law on Citizenship, Law on Voluntary Repatriation, Language Law, Guidelines on National Identity and Social Integration, etc.) and how the policy-decisions, along with the political rhetoric related to them, might have affected societal perceptions and attitudes. For example, I argue that the Law on Citizenship, which implies that all people who were not Latvian citizens prior to 1940 turned stateless overnight, created a gap within the society. The split was further fuelled by political rhetoric (e.g. "These [noncitizens] people are still noncitizens. Not because we don't allow them to become citizens, but because they don't want to become citizens."; referring to Soviet-era immigrants as "occupants") and other discriminatory policies such as minorities' language restrictions and assimilationist integration policies. The detailed description and interpretation of the data can be found in the preceding chapter. Analysis is conducted in a descriptive manner to guide the reader through the social reality as perceived by the Latvian society. To put it simply, I analyse and interpret how Sovietisation has shaped certain events and actions (policy decisions, political culture (e.g. ethno-politics), political and public discourse), which in turn has an influence on public perceptions and attitudes towards refugees today.

Qualitative research methods – analysis and interpretation of discourse, documents and events – lead me to the development of three hypotheses to answer my research question "How has Sovietisation influenced the negative attitudes of Latvian society vis-à-vis refugees?", namely: policies and discourse, aimed at eliminating the consequences of Sovietisation, might have shaped the Latvian perception of integration. Therefore, instead of perceiving integration as a dynamic two-way process, where actively participating society plays a crucial role in successful integration,

Hypothesis One: *Refugee integration is viewed as a one-way process.*

Efforts to Sovietise Latvian society during the Soviet-era lead to political efforts to restore national identity in the post-Soviet Latvia, which might influenced the perception of national identity as being threatened. Hence,

Hypothesis Two: *Latvian people perceive refugees as a threat to national identity.*

Formed by the efforts to diminish the consequences of Soviet occupation, with its discriminatory nature regarding the Russian-speaking minority, ethno-politics in Latvia might have lead to discriminating non-Latvian cultures in Latvia. Therefore,

Hypothesis Three*: There is "cultural racism" in the Latvian society vis-à-vis refugees and asylum seekers.*

The hypotheses' generation is based on my interpretations of historical events, political decisions and political discourse. Since the aim of this study is to find out how Sovietisation has influenced the negative attitudes of *Latvian society* vis-à-vis refugees, after developing the hypothesis on the possible mechanisms of the impact of Sovietisation on today's attitude, a sub-research question emerged. Does the Latvian society hold the same assumptions? Do Latvian people share these views? Is the society reflecting the fore-mentioned hypothesis? How can I confirm or deny these hypotheses? After building my ideas on theory during the first phase of this research, to establish credibility of my assumptions, it is crucial to test whether these assumptions are confirmed in Latvian society. Therefore, the second stage of this research concerns testing the hypotheses generated in the first phase of this research, or, as Bryman (2012) wisely puts it in relation to the mixed methods research, verify what has been discovered (p. 634).

Phase Two: Quantitative Research Approach

As the sequential exploratory design suggests, to complement qualitative findings gathered during the first stage of this study, the second phase employs quantitative research methods. Being the dominant approach in the field of social research (Bryman, 2012), quantitative research is a paradigm applied to test and evaluate given hypotheses (Johnson and Christensen, 2004; Alexandridis, 2006), aiming to describe relationship between the variables (Creswell, 2008). Moreover, quantitative research is concerned with explanation or "why things are the way they are" (Bryman, 2012, p. 175), thereof being the most suitable approach for this study.

A strategy often associated with quantitative research is cross-sectional or survey research design (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2008; Gall, Gall and Borg, 2005). By collecting data on "more than one case (…) at a single point in time", it aims at collecting data in connection with "two or more variables" to detect "patterns of association"

(Bryman, 2012, p. 58). In other words, survey design identifies trends in characteristics, attitudes and opinions of a group of people Creswell, 2008), which is the aim of this study and thus survey research design is employed to test the hypotheses generated during the first phase of this research.

Methods (research instrument). As a research instrument within the survey research design, I developed a self-administered questionnaire. As the name implies, by completing the questionnaire, respondents answer the questions themselves. Due to time limitations, a self-administered questionnaire is given the preference over structured interviews. Moreover, self-administered questionnaire excludes interviewer effects that might affect the answers due to the sensitiveness of the topic. Finally, a self-administered questionnaire is more convenient for the respondents since they can complete the questionnaire at the most convenient time and speed (Bryman, 2013, p. 232-243).

This research utilizes an empirically validated self-administered questionnaire with multiple-choice response items, Likert-type scale response items and one open question. Likert scales provide "a range of responses to a given question or statement" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 386), therefore Likert-type scales are "commonly used to measure attitude" (Jamieson, 2004, 1217). The Likert scale applied in this study, included five categories of response: strongly disagree – more disagree than agree – neither agree, nor disagree – more agree than disagree – strongly agree. At first I intended to use seven categories of response, but after piloting the questionnaire it was clear that respondents considered seven categories of response as too many ("confusing"), therefore I returned to five categories of response.

Variables and Indicators. Quantitative research is concerned with explanation or "why things are the way they are" (Bryman, 2012, p. 175). During the initial stage of this study it was established that almost 70% of people in Latvia are against receiving refugees in Latvia, and the aim of the research was to elaborate on potential reasons of the negative attitude. It was then established that, among other possible influencers, there is a link between Sovietisation and the negative attitudes towards refugees. Nonetheless, mechanisms through which Sovietisation might have influenced the

attitudes vis-à-vis refugees, had to be developed. Employing qualitative research methods, I generated three hypotheses that I intend to test using quantitative methods.

Through series of questions in a self-completing questionnaire I want to test the hypotheses regarding societal perceptions generated during the first phase of this research. To tap concepts that are less directly measurable, I employ several indicators in the questionnaire. Indicators stand for the concept and allow treating "the resulting quantitative information as if it were a measure" (Bryman, 2012, p. 164). In other words, indicators are employed as a measure of a concept.

The aim of the survey is to evaluate the present societal perceptions on refugees. Hence, to protect construct validity of this research, respondents are not informed that the statements in the questionnaire were developed based on my theoretical interpretations on the impact of Sovietisation on current attitudes of society. Knowing that the survey links the role of Sovietisation to societal perceptions might put respondents' into a certain mind-set and thus lead to bias, which in turn would decrease the validity of the results. Survey is introduced as a study on "Refugee Integration in Latvia".

Moreover, developing questions and statements that do not involve "Sovietisation" protects ecological validity of the results. As Cicourel (1982) argues, the researcher does not know if survey respondents "have the requisite knowledge to answer the question" (as cited in Bryman, 2012, p. 179). In other words, by asking questions directly related to Sovietisation, I cannot assume that respondents are equally aware of the concept. Furthermore, I cannot affirm the ways respondents perceive Sovietisation in relation to their everyday life. Hence, by designing questions directly linked to Sovietisation, I might be able to measure its impact in regard to the questions I have developed, yet results might not depict actual behaviour of respondents, therefore jeopardizing the ecological validity of the research (Ibid.).

As discussed in the previous paragraphs, to protect the validity of the research by minimizing respondents' bias, the survey questions do not reveal that the subject concerns the impact of Sovietisation on the negative attitudes towards refugees. The concepts applied in the hypotheses (integration as a one-way process, threat to national identity and the notion of cultural racism), are operationalized to evaluate the theoretical reflections. The following statements/questions have been devised to measure the attitude of Latvian society.

Hypothesis One: **Refugee integration is viewed as a one-way process**.

To evaluate if there is a tendency among Latvian society to view integration as a one-way process, where the main emphasis is put on refugee motivation to integrate, I developed a multiple-choice question:

- *In my opinion, whether refugees will be able to integrate into Latvian society mainly depends on: "personal attitude and motivation to integrate of refugees", "support of state and municipality", "support of the Latvian society", "I don't know", "other".*
The question concerns perceptions on what constitutes successful refugee integration. Furthermore, it depicts attitudes towards the role of refugee motivation and determination in successful integration process.

Hypothesis Two: **Latvian people perceive refugees as a threat to national identity**.

The following statements were devised to measure the relationship between feeling threat to national identity and refugees.

- *In my opinion, cultural diversity brought by minorities (refugees) enriches Latvian society, and [it] should be supported.*
At first, I developed two statements to compare Latvian attitudes towards cultural diversity of refugees and that of the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia. Nevertheless, during the pilot survey, Russian-speakers felt insulted by such a statement, therefore I excluded the statement referring to the Russian-speaking minority as potential threats to national identity.

Since, according to the Guidelines on National Identity and Social Integration, the main element of preserving national identity of Latvia is the uniqueness of its cultural space, the question indirectly relates to respondents' views on culture brought by the Other.

- *In my opinion, one can not only be born Latvian, but also become Latvian.*
According to the Guidelines on National Identity and Social Integration, those who are not born Latvians, can "consciously become" Latvian (2011, p. 7). With this question I want to test whether respondents share the same view. In other words, I incline to test how inclusive or exclusive Latvianness is.

- *Next to Latvian identity refugees should maintain their national identity.*
- *To be able to integrate in Latvian society refugees coming to Latvia should replace their national characteristics and culture with those of Latvian.*

Statements concern respondents' attitudes towards the national identity of refugees and the role of Latvian national identity in successful integration of refugees in Latvia.

- *People living in Latvia, who do not speak Latvian, threaten the national identity of Latvia, [and] Latvianness.*
- *Refugees in Latvia threaten the national identity of Latvia, [and] Latvianness.*

Initially the first statement was "Russian-speaking minority in Latvia threaten the national identity of Latvia, [and] Latvianness". It was meant to compare perceived threats to national identity due to the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia and refugees. However, during the pilot survey, the Russian-speakers, who participated, felt insulted by such a statement. "Russian-speaking minority" is therefore replaced with "people living in Latvia, who do not speak Latvian". The two statements allow comparison between "people living in Latvia, who do not speak Latvian" and "refugees" as related to feeling threat to the national identity.

Hypothesis Three: **There is "cultural racism" in the Latvian society vis-à-vis refugees and asylum seekers.**

To protect the validity of the research, due to the sensitiveness of the very word 'racism', I adopted indicators that would measure to what extent the notion of cultural racism exists in Latvian society.

- *In my opinion, it would be better if Latvian society would be homogenous and not multicultural.*
- *Latvia should try to become homogenous, [and] not multicultural country.*

As a result of ethnic politics in Latvia multiculturalism is problematic (Hindess, 1992, p. 23). The statements depict respondents' views in relation to accepting different cultures in Latvian society.

- *Culture and lifestyle in Latvia is too different from the culture in the Middle East, Africa and other regions that refugees represent, therefore [they are] not compatible in one society.*
- *In my opinion, Muslim refugees will not be able to integrate into Latvian society because of the different culture and values.*

The notion of cultural racism implies that people perceive some cultures as essentially different and thus incompatible to assimilate and integrate (Barker, 1981). The statements test if respondents perceive refugees as too different to assimilate and integrate into Latvian society.

- *In my opinion, racism in Latvia does not exist.*

The statement allows investigating the level of awareness of the existence of (cultural) racism in Latvia. Due to the fact that biological racism is almost impossible in Latvia and because the Soviet politics advocated the idea that racism in the USSR does not exist, the view that racism exists only in Western countries and not in Latvia is prevalent (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2004, p. 34). The first step to a behavioural shift however is to recognize to what extent the society is aware of their prejudices, hence, I developed the statement to study if people in Latvia are aware of the existence of racism.

Population and Sample. For the survey to be representative of Latvian society, participants must be of various genders, ages and professional occupations. Due to time and costs' restrains the sampling technique used in this research is convenience sampling. The survey was distributed both on paper and online to various organizations in Latvia – both in the public and the private sector.

To increase the generalizability of the survey I initially aimed to collect 200 responses. Two organizations preferred filling in the survey on paper and the rest completed the survey online. The paper surveys were sent back to me, so I could combine the results of both paper and online surveys. Over the two-week period that was given to complete the survey, I collected a total of 262 responses. During the analysis, I encountered a potential bias: 81 per cent of the respondents held a degree in higher education, which might affect the representativeness of the entire Latvian population. Moreover, convenience sampling presents some limitations to generalizability (Bryman, 2012, p. 201).

To increase the validity and the reliability of the survey, it was also distributed among the users of social media platform www.draugiem.lv, which is an equivalent of Facebook in Latvia. The sampling technique applied is random sampling with an element of quota sampling. Quota sampling refers to a sample "that reflects a population in terms of the relative proportions of people in different categories": age groups, gender, ethnicity, etc. (Bryman, 2012, p. 202), while the random sampling technique offers the opportunity to all societal members to participate in the study, thus increasing the probability of the research (Johnson and Christensen, 2004). Unfortunately, due to time and costs' constraints it was impossible to employ full quota sampling where all society groups would be equally represented. Nevertheless, to avoid demographic bias of the participants, various age groups and genders were selected prior to distributing the survey and a total of 180 random respondents were selected (figure 9).

Izlase					
Vecums	**Dzimums**	**Reģions**	**Kliki pašreiz**	**Kliki vajadzīgie**	**Auditorija** ⓘ
no 15 līdz 25	Vīrieši	Visa Latvija	20	20	67 375
no 15 līdz 25	Sievietes	Visa Latvija	20	20	74 222
no 26 līdz 35	Vīrieši	Visa Latvija	20	20	75 468
no 26 līdz 35	Sievietes	Visa Latvija	20	20	88 726
no 36 līdz 50	Sievietes	Visa Latvija	20	20	93 569
no 36 līdz 50	Vīrieši	Visa Latvija	20	20	58 804
no 51 līdz 65	Vīrieši	Visa Latvija	20	20	21 565
no 51 līdz 65	Sievietes	Visa Latvija	20	20	54 641
no 66 līdz 100	Vīrieši	Visa Latvija	10	10	4 388
no 66 līdz 100	Sievietes	Visa Latvija	10	10	10 307
		Kopā	180	180	

Figure 9. Data on survey 2 respondents.

Limitations

There are several limitations that must be taken into consideration when evaluating the findings of this study. The research paradigm applied in this research - interpretivism – faces criticism on the subjective nature of this research approach (Bryman, 2012; Dudovskiy, 2016). Generalization of data is challenging as it is heavily

influenced by "personal viewpoint and values" (Dudovkiy, 2016, p. 8). During the first phase of this study, by employing qualitative research methods, I built possible mechanisms through which Sovietisation might have influenced the negative attitude of Latvian society vis-à-vis refugees and asylum seekers. Due to the time and scope limitations, it is not possible to tap all concepts of Sovietisation that might have an impact on the negative societal attitude (for example, societal perceptions on economic implications due to the Soviet occupation). The disadvantage of interpretivist and inductive research approaches is that researchers cannot isolate their experiences and thus cannot be fully objective bystanders (Harwell, 2011, p. 149). In other words, the hypotheses generated are based on my interpretations and therefore might be influenced by my personal stance and values.

As with most qualitative research, in-depth descriptions and analysis in the first phase of this study are based on my personal interpretations, hence, limiting the generalizability of this study. There is a possibility that another researcher studying the impact of Sovietisation on the negative attitudes of Latvians towards refugees would find different patterns. Nonetheless, to increase the reliability of the research, the second phase of this study concerns testing the hypotheses generated based on qualitative methodology in the first stage therefore increasing the generalizability and reliability of the research.

The second phase of this study – evaluating theoretical reflections generated during the first stage of the research – employs cross-sectional research design. Cross-section research design is associated with weak internal validity. It rather produces associations than findings "from which causal inferences can be unambiguously made" (Bryman, 2012, p. 60). In other words, cross-sectional design might not accurately present causality, but rather presents associations.

The main limitation of the quantitative phase of this research is that the impact of Sovietisation on the negative attitudes towards refugees, or the Sovietisation factor, cannot be statistically confirmed. To prove that survey findings are explained by Sovietisation would require a pre-Soviet time survey, which could be compared with a post-Soviet time survey to establish what the views would have been in a hypothetical case that another Latvia with *another* history would have a different public opinion. Such scientific causal proof, based on a double blind random controlled experiment is impossible. The survey results can prove the resistance to receiving refugees and

evaluate if the hypotheses generated during the first phase of this research are refuted or not. It cannot however, establish the Sovietisation factor as the historical data are lacking.

Creating a self-administered questionnaire involves developing measurements and indicators, and selecting a population sample. When developing measurements, the researcher assumes that all respondents interpret the terms similarly. Nevertheless, as Cicourel (1964) affirms, often respondents "simply do not interpret" the key terms similarly (p. 108). Although concepts such as *national identity*, *integration*, *Latvianness* and *multiculturalism* are widely used, there is a risk that respondents do not interpret these terms the same. Moreover, even though respondents prefer to share accurate information, there might be a lack of self-awareness to do so (Gall, Gall and Borg, 2005; as cited in Bryman, 2012, p. 78).

There is a major criticism on the generalizability of convenience sampling. Failure to randomize a sample might result in biased data (Bryman, 2012; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). External validity becomes questionable when non-random methods of sampling are employed (Bryman, 2012, p. 61). In efforts to decrease threats to external validity and generalizability I generated another (online) survey, where participants were selected randomly. Combining the results of the two questionnaires increases the generalizability as well as external validity and reliability of the results.

Refugee integration is a subject that has sparked much discussion in Latvia. As such, it is a sensitive topic to many and therefore respondents might choose to conceive certain information.

Summary

This chapter guides the reader through the research methodology. Following the inductive research strategy, this study employs interpretivist research approach. Applying mixed methods research, the study follows the sequential research design and hence has two levels. Qualitative findings based on analytical interpretations of the first phase of this thesis are complemented by quantitative analysis of a self-administered questionnaire. The chapter elaborates on research methods employed in both stages of the study: qualitative and quantitative. It further discusses the limitations associated with the research methodology of this thesis.

Chapter 4: Quantitative Results

This chapter presents the results of the two surveys conducted to test the perceptions and attitudes of Latvians towards refugees in relation to the previously generated hypotheses.

Descriptive Data: Survey One

The survey was distributed among employees of several public and private organizations in Latvia. A total of 262 responses were collected. In total there are 24 questions in the survey. The first questions are of demographic nature (age, gender and professional occupation), while the remainder of the questions are related to the hypotheses generated at the first phase of this research. The last question is an open-ended question.

Data on Demographics: *Gender of respondents.*

Table 2

Gender Distribution Survey 1
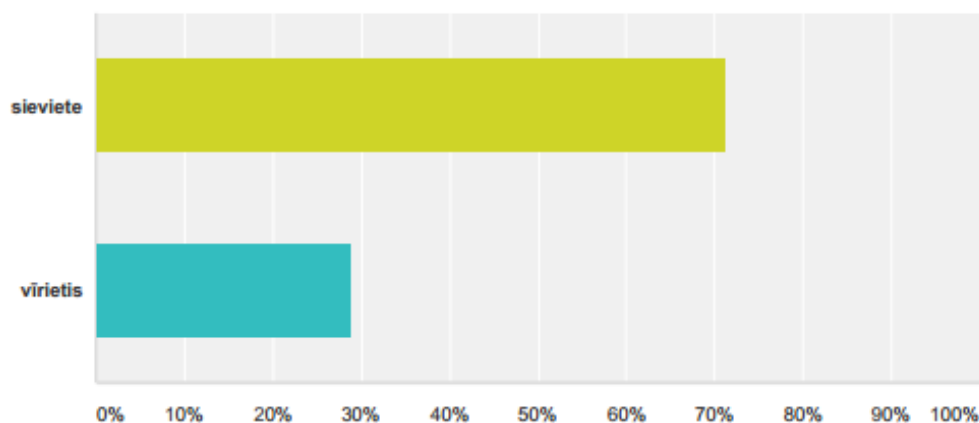
As presented in Table 2, 71% of the respondents are women (*sieviete*) and 29% man (*vīrietis*).

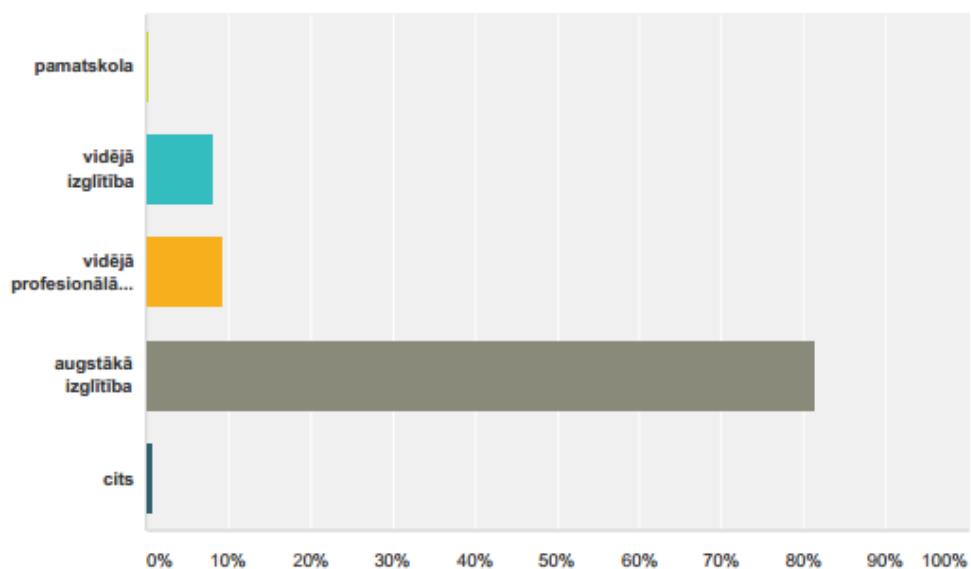### Age of respondents.

Table 3

Age Of Respondents Survey 1
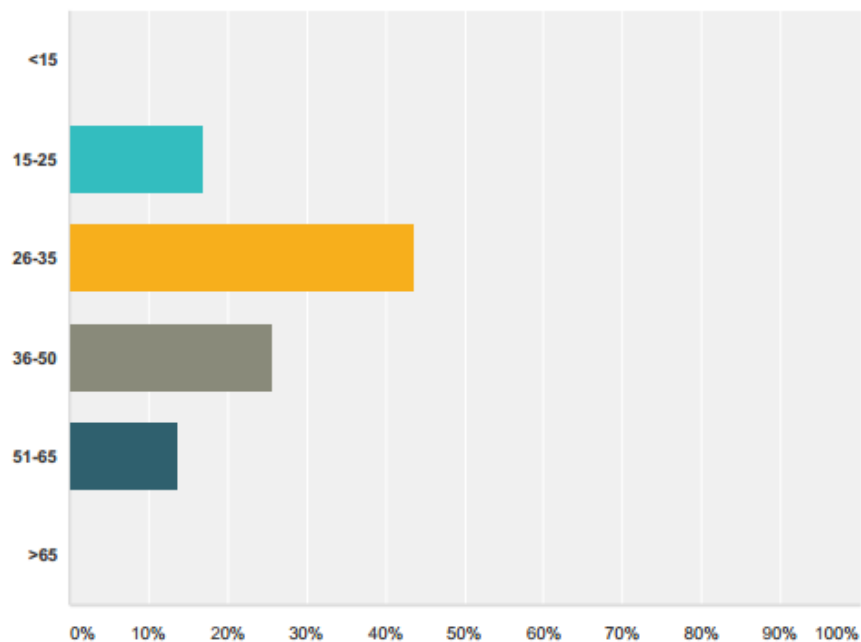
As presented in Table 3, 17% of the respondents are between the age 15 and 25, 44% between 26 and 45, 26% between 36 and 50, and 14% between the age 51 and 65.

Level of education of respondents.

Table 4

Level Of Education Survey 1

As presented in Table 4, less than 1% of the respondents hold only primary education (*pamatskola*), 8% hold secondary education (*vidējā izglītība*), 9% hold professional secondary education (*vidējā profesionālā izglītība*), 81% hold higher education (*augstākā izglītība*) and less than 1% of the respondents indicated that they hold a different (*cits*) different level of education.
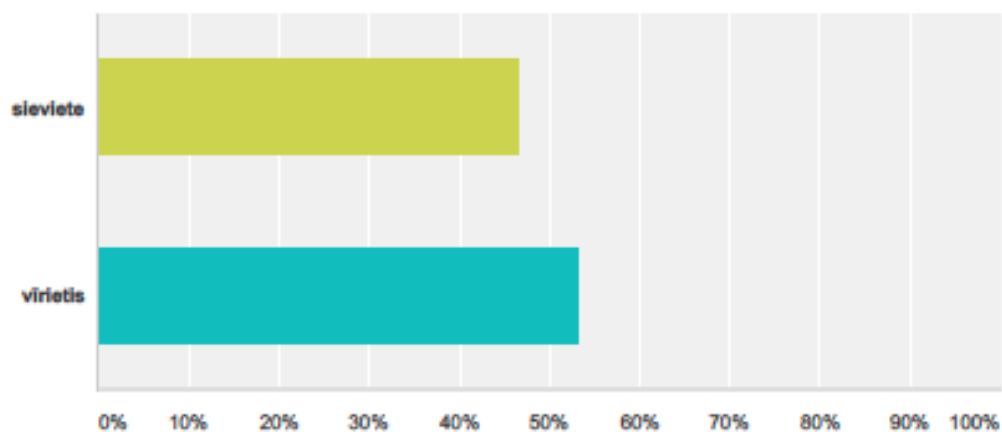
Descriptive Data: Survey Two

Applying the random sampling technique, a total of 180 respondents in various age and gender groups were selected.

Data on Demographics: *Gender of respondents.*

Table 5

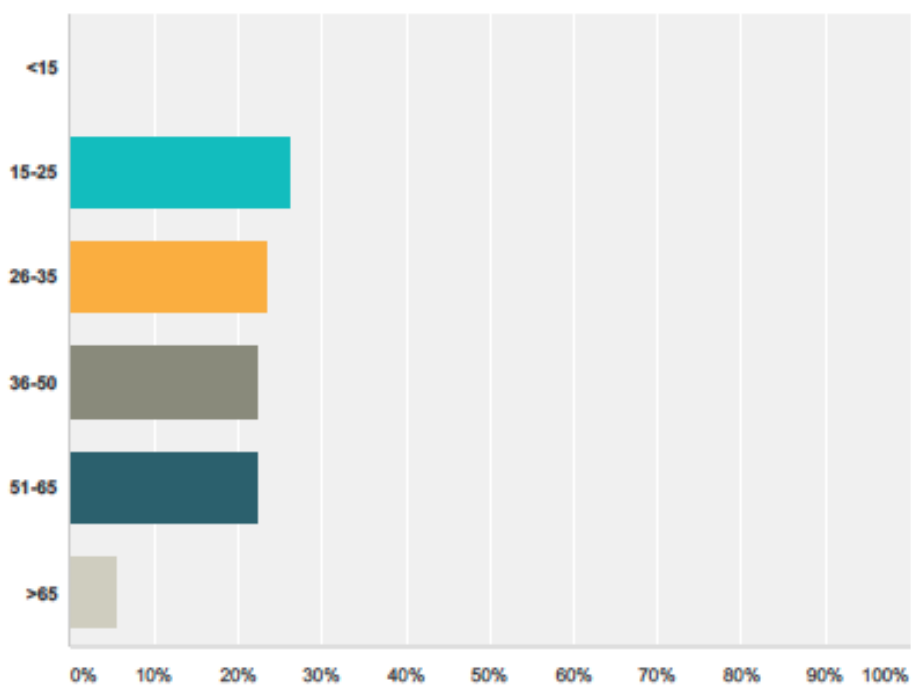*Gender Distribution Survey 2*

As presented in Table 5, 45% of the respondents are women (*sieviete*) and 54% are man (*vīrietis*).

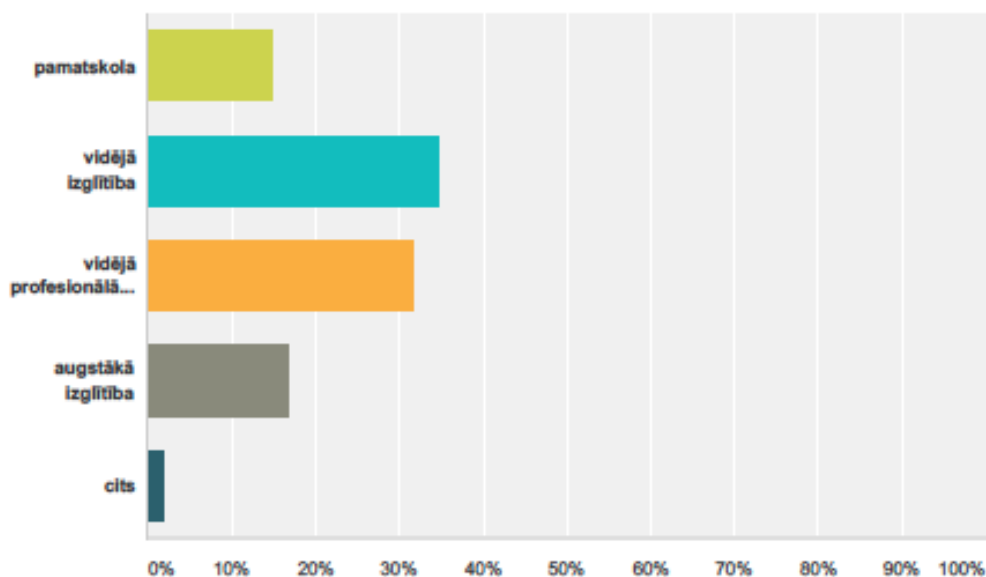***Age of respondents.***

Table 6

Age Of Respondents Survey 2

As presented in Table 6, 26% of the respondents are in the age group between 15 and 25; 23% between 36 and 35; 22% between 36 and 50; 22% between 51 and 65; and 6% of the respondents are over 65 years of age.

Level of education of respondents.

Table 7

Level Of Education Survey 2

As presented in Table 7, 15% of the respondents hold primary education (*pamatskola*), 35% secondary education (*vidējā izglītība*), 32% professional education (*vidējā profesionālā izglītība*), 17% hold higher education (*ausgtākā izglītība*) and 2% of the respondents indicate "other" (*cits*) as their level of education.

Overall Results

Refugee integration into Latvian society.

- *Whether refugees will be able to integrate into Latvian society mainly depends on:*

Table 8

Main Factors Hindering Refugee Integration In Latvia (Survey 1)
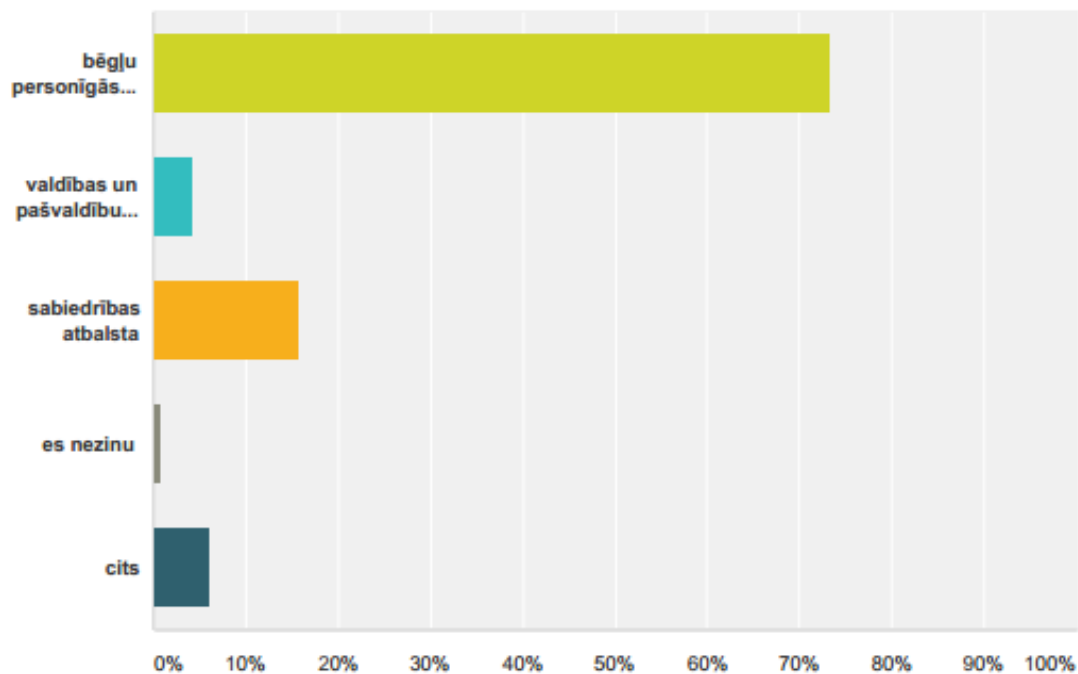
Table 9

Main Factors Hindering Refugee Integration In Latvia (Survey 2)
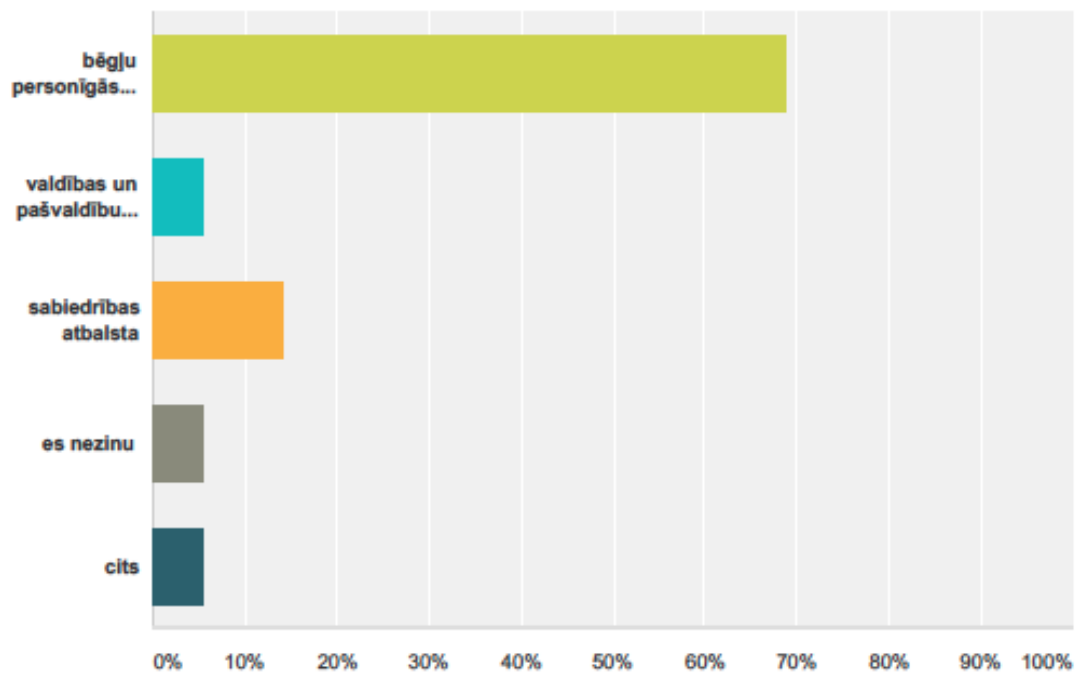
As presented in tables 8 and 9, respondents suggest that the main factor upon which successful refugee integration depends, is *the attitude and efforts of refugees themselves* (*bēgļu personīgās attiekmes un centieniem integrēties*), while considerably less respondents think that successful integration would be impossible without *support of the Latvian state and the municipality* (*valdības un pašvaldības atblasta*) and *support of the society* (*sabiedrības atbalsta*).

Cultural diversity in Latvia.

- In my opinion, cultural diversity brought by minorities (refugees) enriches Latvia and should be supported.

In both surveys the majority of the respondents disagree with the statement that cultural diversity in Latvia should be supported (with 64% in survey 1 and 71% in survey 2). In both surveys less than 20% of the respondents agree that cultural diversity in Latvia should be supported.

- *In my opinion, it would be better if Latvian society would be homogenous, [and] not multicultural.*

Table 10

Latvia As A Homogenous Society Survey 1
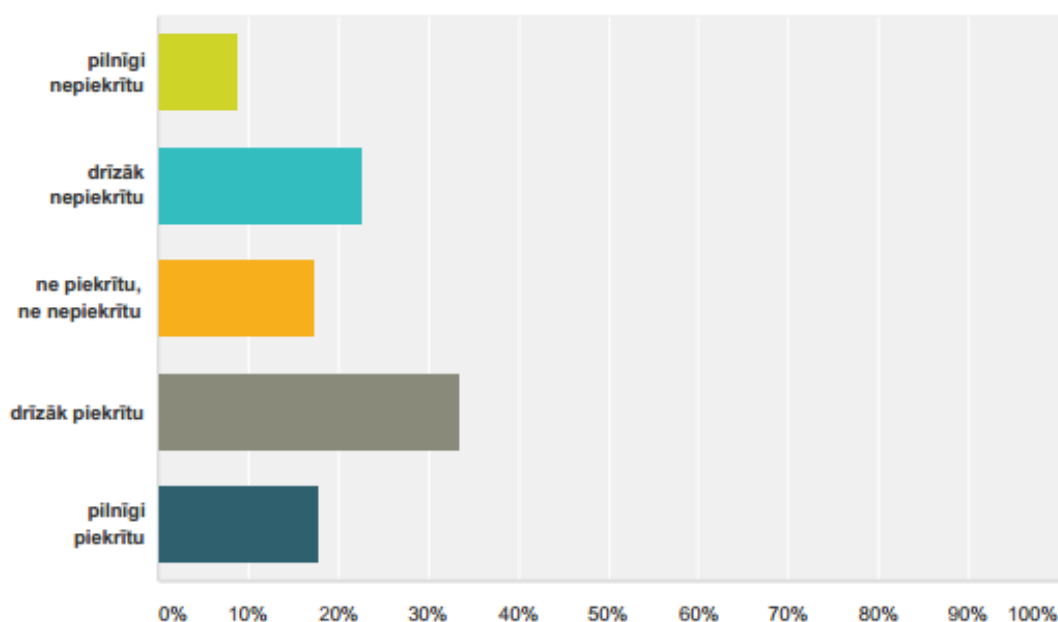
Table 11

Latvia As A Homogenous Society Survey 2
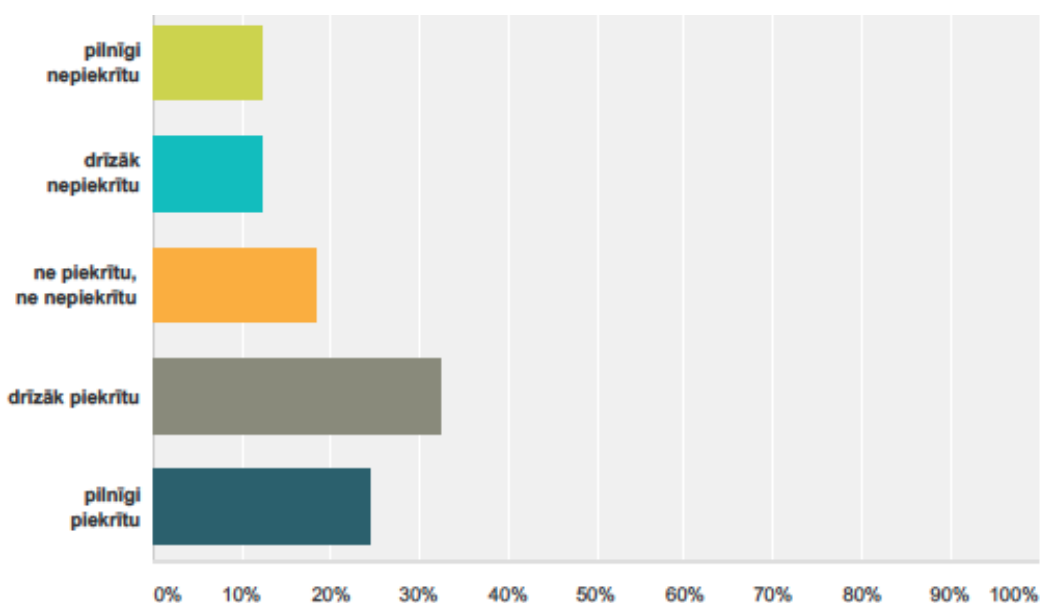
As visualized in table 10 and 11, the majority of the respondents agree with the statement that Latvia should be a homogenous country (survey 1 – 51% and survey 2 – 57%).

- *Latvian culture and lifestyle are too different from the culture of the Middle East, Africa and other regions therefore not compatible in one society.*

Table 12

Culture Of Latvia Vs. Culture Of Others Survey 1
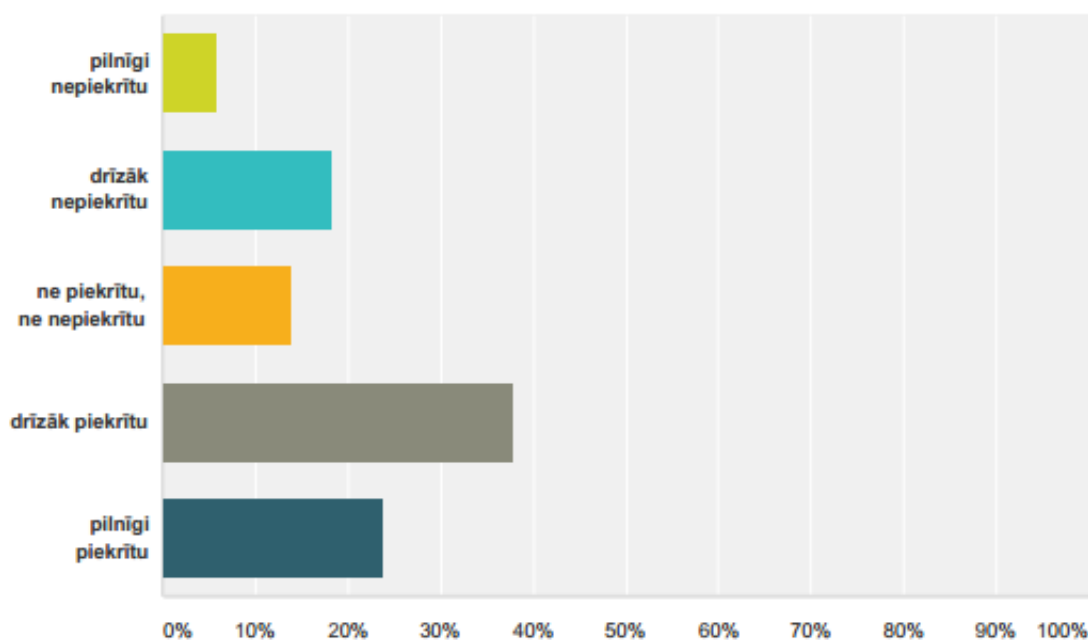
Table 13

Culture Of Latvia Vs. Culture Of Others Survey 2
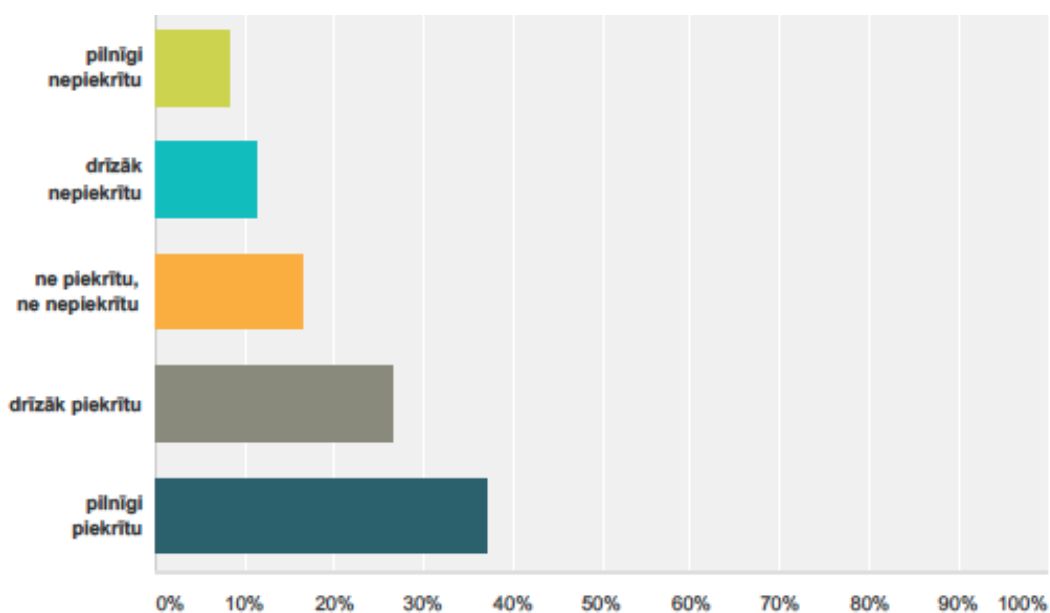
As presented in tables 12 and 13, the majority of the respondents (64% in both survey 1 and 2) agree that Latvian culture and the cultures of refugees are not compatible in one society.

- *In my opinion, there is no racism in Latvia.*

Although there is difference the percentage of the respondents in both surveys (61% in survey 1 and 46% in survey 2), the majority of the respondents in both surveys disagree

that racism in Latvia does not exist. Nevertheless, a large group of the respondents (22% and 33% respectively) think that there is no racism in Latvia.

- *I think that Muslim refugees will not be able to integrate into Latvian society because of differing values.*

Table 14

Muslim Refugees In Latvia Survey 1

Table 15

Muslim Refugees In Latvia Survey 2

Q14 Uzskatu, ka musulmaņu bēgļi nespēs integrēties Latvijas sabiedrībā atšķirīgās kultūras un vērtību dēļ.

Answered: 96   Skipped: 11

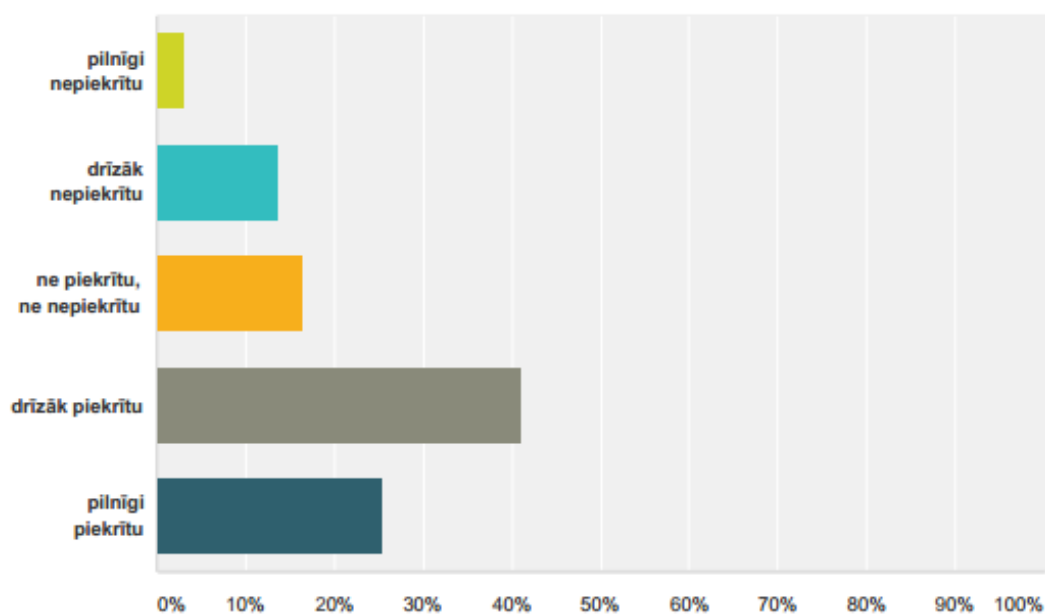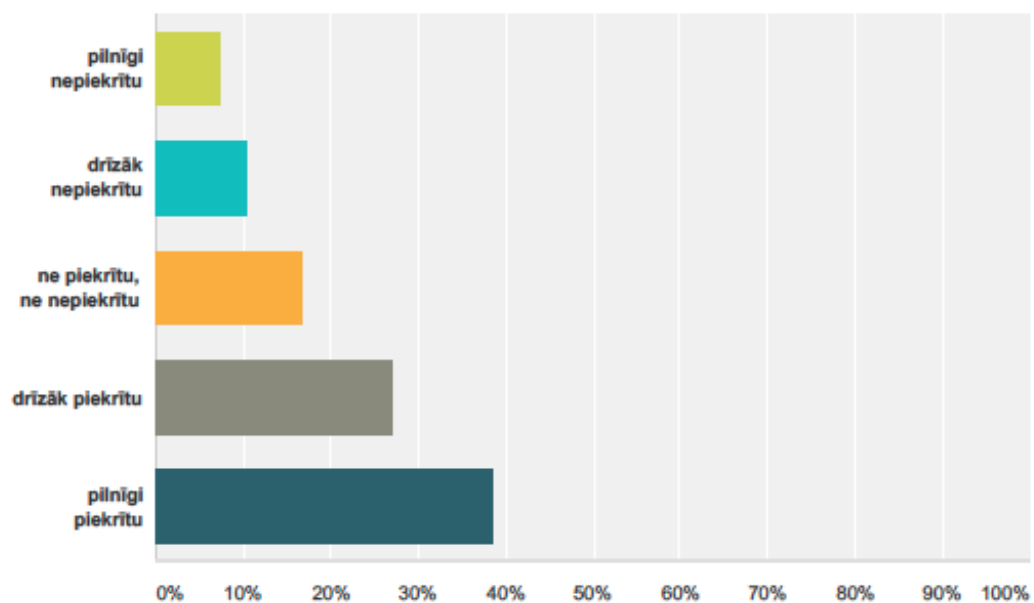As visualised in tables 14 and 15, the majority of the respondents (66% in both surveys) think that Muslim refugees will not be able to integrate into Latvian society due to differing culture and values.

- *In my opinion, one can not only be born Latvian, but also become Latvian.*

In both surveys the majority of the respondents agree or partially agree that one can consciously become Latvian even if he/she was not born in Latvia (58% in survey 1 and 47% in survey 2). Nonetheless, one third of the respondents (30% and 33% respectively) disagrees with the statement thus implying that only indigenous Latvians are entitled to *Latvianness.*

National identity.

- *Next to Latvian identity refugees should maintain their national identity.*

Despite the large difference in the percentage of the respondents in both surveys (65% in survey 1 and 42% in survey 2), the majority of the respondents agree or partially agree that refugees should maintain their national identity next to that of Latvian. 15% of the respondents in survey 1 and 23% of the respondents in survey 2 disagree or partially disagree that refugees should maintain their national identity when coming to Latvia.

- *To be able to integrate in Latvian society refugees coming to Latvia should replace their national characteristics and culture with those of Latvian.*

Table 16

National Characteristics Of Refugees Survey 1
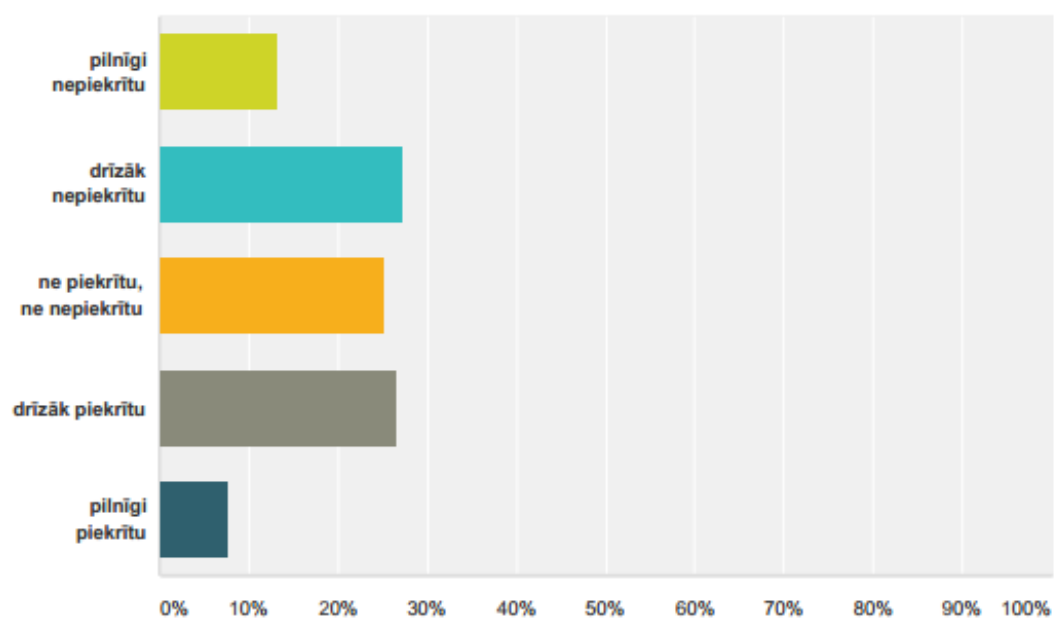
Table 17

National Characteristics Of Refugees Survey 2
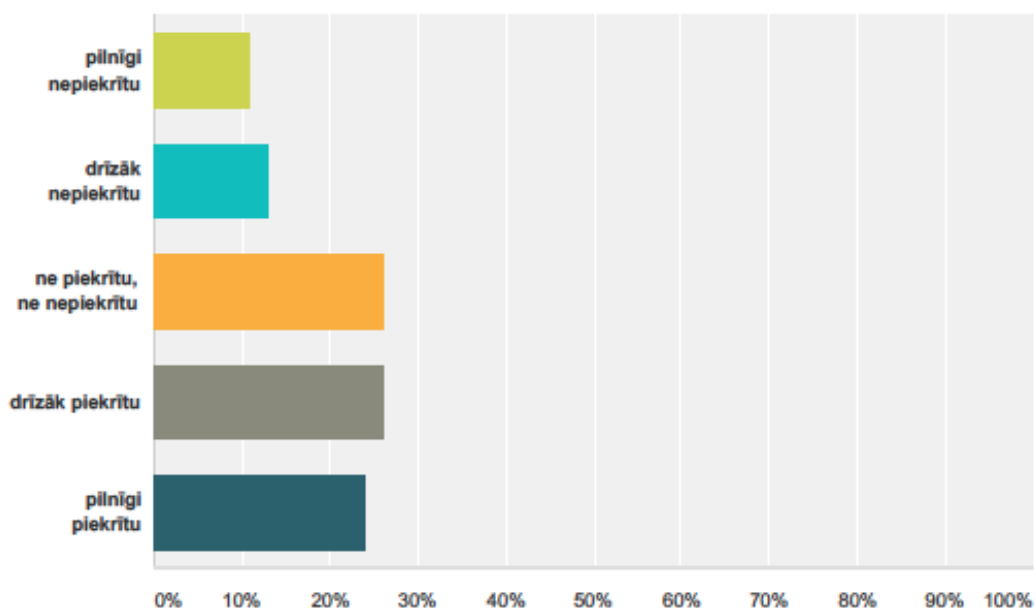
As visualized in tables 16 and 17, the two surveys do not present consistency in responses. In survey one 40% of the respondents disagree or partially disagree that refugees should replace their national identity with that of Latvian, while in survey 2 only 24% disagree with the statement. Similarly, in survey 1 35% agree or partially agree that refugees should replace their national identity and culture with Latvian cultural values, while in survey 2 51% of the respondents share this view.

- *People living in Latvia, who do not speak Latvian, threaten the national identity of Latvia, [and] Latvianness.*

The majority of the respondents in both surveys tend to agree (65% in survey 1 and 63% in survey 2) that people who live in Latvia, but do not speak the language threaten the national identity of Latvia.

- *Refugees in Latvia threaten the national identity of Latvia, [and] Latvianness*.

Although there is inconsistency in both surveys in the number of respondents who agree/disagree with the statement, the majority of the respondents agree or partially agree (42% in survey 1 and 59% in survey 2) that refugees in Latvia threaten the national identity of Latvia. At the same time 38% (survey 1) and 22% (survey) disagree or partially disagree with the statement.

Qualitative Question of the Survey. The last survey question is an open-ended question of qualitative nature.

- *Should Latvia receive more or fewer refugees? Why?*

A total of 274 responses were collected. I concluded the coding process with seven general codes and twelve specific codes. Along with a description of what the codes involve, these codes are presented in Table 18. Since this is the only qualitative question in the survey, the coding is conducted manually. Although the question is based on the topic and intends to gain deeper insights as to the argumentation and lines of reasoning why Latvia should/should not receive refugees, for the coding process I have not created pre-set or priori codes. Instead, the responses are coded inductively – creating new codes for sentences and words emerging from responses. The following paragraphs explain the general codes and the corresponding specific codes and description along with anonymous exemplary quotes.

Table 18

Why Latvia Should (Not) Receive More Refugees

General Codes	Specific codes	Description
Economic implications	*Financial instability of Latvia*	Latvia perceived as too underdeveloped economically to be able to afford refugee reception
	Unemployment	The job market is tough in Latvia, and many Latvians are unemployed; Refugees will not have the chance to find a job
	Government's inability to support its indigenous population	Many societal members are on the verge of poverty: the low pensions and salaries of Latvians; due to economic concerns poorly developed infrastructure

VIEWS ON IMMIGRATION IN LATVIA. AN EXPLORATION OF OPINIONS AND SOME POSSIBLE CAUSES.

Threats to security	*Terrorism*	Perception of refugees as possible terrorists
	Rape	Perception of refugees as rapists, and people who seek for unrest (especially due to recent media coverage)
Culture & religion		Concerns about the different cultural and religious values of refugees
Threats to the national identity of Latvia	*The population of Latvia as too small to take in* different *people*	Perception of refugees as a threat to the indigenous people because Latvian population is too small
	Failure to integrate Soviet-era migrants	Concerns about the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia and failure to integrate them properly
Refugees' motivation	*Concerns about refugee motivation to flee*	Perception of refugees as not *real* refugees, but economic migrants instead
	Unwillingness of refugees to work and integrate	Perception of refugees who seek the *easy life* and hence their unwillingness to find employment and integrate
Intake capacity	*Obligation as a EU member state*	As the other countries in the EU, Latvia has to fulfil its obligations; and all member states should receive according to their internal capacity
	Selection process	Concerns about the transparency of refugees' selection process
	Capacity of Latvia	Lack of infrastructure/integration policies/societal support

Characteristics of refugees		Concerns about the characteristics of refugees (e.g. educational level) and their motivation to live in Latvia.
Other	*Emigrated Latvians; need to find solutions in the war zones*	

The following paragraphs present descriptions of general codes and examples of specific codes.

Economic Implications. The most reappearing argument of unwillingness to receive refugees in Latvia, were financial instability of Latvia and economic implications: a total of 64 responses were related to the concerns regarding economic stability of Latvia in relation to receiving refugees. I could distinguish between three lines of reasoning within the economic implications' argument: 'Financial instability of Latvia', 'Unemployment', and 'Latvian government's inability to support its indigenous population'. The latter is the most common argument – there are too many people in Latvia needing support of the state, hence, by receiving refugees Latvia would fail to help the indigenous people in need.

Financial instability of Latvia.
"Less, the economic status of Latvia is not appropriate for it [refugee reception]."
"Less, of course. Tax payers will have to maintain [refugees]. [Our] own life conditions are critical."

Unemployment.
"Less. We ourselves don't have jobs, let alone speaking of ensuring jobs for them [refugees]."
"Less. Because we ourselves are unemployed."

Government's inability to supports its indigenous population.

"[We should receive] as many as we can afford so, by helping them, [we] wouldn't discriminate the poor in [Latvian] society by ensuring better living conditions [to refugees] than to the indigenous people."

"Less, let [the Latvian government] first take care of its own people and then think about people from other nations."

"Less, because Latvia cannot even take care of its own people (retired, students, new mothers, etc.)".

Threats to security. Along with concerns about the differing cultural and religious traditions of refugees, threat to security is the second most common argument against refugee reception in Latvia.

Terrorism threats.

"I think less. Because the most people, the bigger the chance that not only refugees, but also terrorists will arrive."

"Should not take any refugees because then there is a chance of terrorist act."

Rape and unrest.

"Should not receive at all, because these refugees are criminals. They attach, kill and rape."

"Don't need them here [it] will be like abroad [they will] rape women etc."

Culture and religion.

"Although I am not strictly AGAINST, I do think that it is dangerous to mix drastically different cultures and religions, that refugees should be received from countries with similar culture, religious views, etc. Respectively, if we talk about Syrian refugees, in my opinion, Latvia should not receive them in masses, nonetheless, if they would be, for example, refugees from Finland or Denmark, then refugee reception, integration process (…) would be much easier, less concerning…"

Threats to the national identity of Latvia. Another pattern developing from the responses is the concern about the national identity of Latvia. Respondents perceive Latvia as a small country with decreasing population, which cannot *afford* to receive

strangers. Moreover, some respondents refer to the issue of integrating already existing "migrants" – the Russian-speaking minority.

National identity.

"Less. LV's [Latvia] identity already is on the path of a runaway train."

"As less as possible because we Latvians are already very few left."

"Definitely less because in that way [by receiving refugees] we Latvians that remain pure Latvians become less and less, until we can vanish entirely."

Existing migrants.

"In Latvia Latvians are less than three-quarters and that endangers the existence of the nation, thus [we] cannot afford to make these proportions even more dramatic."

"Should not receive. Historically Latvia already has enough immigrants."

"Better less, so those who are received don't try to become predominant towards Latvians as it currently is with Russians."

"Because Latvia is full of economic migrants Russians. The highest indicator in the European Union, if [I am] not mistaking. Why send more to a small country?"

Motivation of refugees. Common argument against refugee reception in Latvia concerns their motivation to flee from their home countries. More often than not, refugees are perceived as economic migrants in search for a better life.

Motivation to flee.

"I don't want refugees who are looking for a better life, because I guess I do not entirely believe that the majority [of them] really need help because of life threats."

"It all depends on the refugee status – if he really flees war, or simply is lazy and looks for a country that will pay him for being a refugee. Depends on his intentions."

"Less. Only those who want to integrate, work. Not only happiness and benefits' searchers."

Unwillingness to work and integrate.

"Less, because anyway it is clear that these so-called refugees know their rights

very well, but do not want to take responsibilities. The majority of refuges are not refugees, but happiness searchers who successfully use the situation."

"Should receive less refugees because they don't respect our culture, values. Only demand, because [they] think that the EU "owes" them."

Intake capacity. Part of respondents explain their unwillingness to receive refugees with the limited capacity of Latvia in receiving refugees. The main arguments concern the (un)preparedness of the society, lack of infrastructure and integration policies. Moreover, some respondents are concerned with the transparency of the selection process. Nonetheless, a considerable part of respondents agree that Latvia should receive as many refugees as the EU implies and that, as a EU member state, Latvia has to fulfil its obligations.

Obligation as a EU member state.

"[We] must fulfil European directives if [we are] taking European money. It's our fault."

"Should receive more refugees because, first, it is ethical task – help those who are in misery, without shelter and safe asylum, second, it is a question of the unity of the EU, and, third, Latvian people could learn a lot themselves: become more kind-hearted and more open-minded. "

Selection process.

"Should receive, the question is how many and who? In my opinion, this selection, if it could be called this way, today is one of the most complicated processes."

Capacity of Latvia.

"Number of refugees depends of possibilities to integrate them and offer them maximally good conditions. Unfortunately Latvia, where an Eastern state's conservative way of thinking still rules, on the background of other EU countries, where multiculturalism is part of the country itself and acceptable to inhabitants, cannot ensure such comfortable environment for integration. Respectively, that influences refugees' willingness to search for asylum here, because, in my opinion, Latvian society

adapts to such situation, but very slow if compared to societies of other countries. That is influenced by the way of thinking, and by media agendas."

Characteristics of refugees.

"I am concerned not with the number of refugees to be received, but more with their lifestyle. If educated people, who are threatened and endangered in their homeland, are received then the number can be higher. However, if refugees mainly arrive in Latvia due to economic motivations (or even worse – are fanatic Muslims who want to fulfil some sort of religious "missions" and turn Latvians to Islam) then the amount should be minimal."

"In my opinion, [it] must start with those who want to come here and live. We have too many stereotypes and wrong information about how refugees are and what to expect from them. If refugees, who come to Latvia, will want to be here themselves, they won't have problems with integration. In any way [I] know quite many foreign citizens who have adopted much better and integrated in society much more successful, and know Latvian language much more than 70-year old Slavic ladies. BUT, of course, these people are not refugees and are not from African or Arabic countries. I think, that the problem is not in that. If both sides (immigrants and "receivers") can communicate, let more [refugees] come."

Summary

This chapter presents (raw) results of the two self-administered questionnaires. The chapter starts with data on demographics of both surveys, and then presents the results related to the three hypotheses. Finally, the chapter presents descriptions and examples of the qualitative element of the survey – respondents' views on why should (or should not) Latvia receive more refugees.

Chapter 5: Analysis Of Results And Discussion

This chapter interprets the quantitative results of the survey presented in the previous chapter. It discusses whether the hypotheses generated during the first stage of the study are validated.

Integration As A One-Way Process

Policies and discourse, aimed at eliminating the consequences of Sovietisation, might have shaped the Latvian perception of integration. Instead of perceiving integration as a dynamic two-way process, where actively participating society plays a crucial role in successful integration, (Hypothesis One): ***Refugee integration is viewed as a one-way process***.

To evaluate the attitudes in relation to the first hypothesis, respondents were asked to indicate what are the main factors upon which successful refugee integration depend. The vast majority of the respondents (73% in survey 1 and 69% in survey 2) affirm that the main factor of successful refugee integration is their willingness to integrate, with little emphasis on the role of the society in the integration process.

As elaborated in detail in Chapter 2, political rhetoric and policy-decisions aimed at decreasing the rights of the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia (or, as often referred to, "Russian occupants") emphasize the majority identity, and focus on cultural and linguistic assimilation rather than on facilitating the process of integration (Muiznieks, Rozenvelds and Birka, 2013, p. 306). While integration is a two-way process where mutual accommodation and active participation of society are of crucial importance, Latvian integration policy focuses on the role of minorities and *their* need to accept Latvian culture, history and values. I argue that due to the assimilationist integration policy and political discourse that complements the national position on integrating minorities in Latvia, Latvian society perceives integration as a one-way process where emphasis is put on the role of those *needing* to integrate. With around 70% of respondents affirming that the main factor influencing successful refugee integration is *their* motivation and attitude, the results do not invalidate my assumptions about the effect of Sovietisation on perceiving integration as a one-way process.

National Identity Of Latvia

Efforts to Sovietise Latvian society during the Soviet-era lead to political efforts to restore national identity in the post-Soviet Latvia, which might influence the perception of national identity as being threatened. Hence, (Hypothesis Two)*: Latvian people perceive refugees as a threat to national identity.*

In Chapter 2 I interpret how the historical context of post-independent Latvia has shaped today's focus on the importance of preserving the national identity. In short, after the collapse of the Soviet Union the main priority of politicians in now-independent Latvia was restoring the political culture in Latvia. Opting for state continuity and thus deeming Sovietisation illegal entitled that all inhabitants of Latvia who did not reside in Latvia prior to 1940 were regarded as noncitizens, leaving about 74,000 people stateless overnight. The Latvian citizenship policy divided the society into *insiders* and *outsiders:* citizens and noncitizens, Latvians and Russians. In the following years the Law on Repatriation urged Soviet-era immigrants to "voluntary" return to their ethnic homeland, the Language Law restricted the use of minority languages and years after the breakup of the Soviet Union, the Russian-speaking minority is still regarded as unwanted. Restricting the rights Russian-speakers once had enjoyed left a bitter feeling and affected their sense of belonging to the nation-state (Dorodnova, 2003, p. 143), burning down the bridge for Russian-speakers to identify with the nation-state of Latvia.

The change in ethnic balance further fuelled by the gap in the society and differing perceptions of history among ethnic Latvians and the Russian-speakers explain the focus on preserving national identity nowadays. National identity is at the centre of the Integration Policy for 2012-2018, where focus lays on the language, culture and identity (2011, p. 9). *Latvianness* or the efforts to maintain national identity seems to work as a protective mechanism towards the fear of russification.

As a result of the ethno-politics in Latvia minorities show a weak sense of belonging to the state, and motivation to naturalize continues decreasing. The split in the society and differing perceptions of history, politics and social reality have provoked political and intellectual elite in Latvia to rethink the importance of the role of national identity both in integration of noncitizens and in educating ethnic Latvians. Political rhetoric on the importance of maintaining national identity

suggests that it is under threat (Golubeva and Kažoka, 2009), and *Latvianness* has become a protective mechanism of Latvian society not only against the Russian-speaking minority, but also to any newcomers, including refugees.

Analysis of Results. To compare views as to what extent inability to speak Latvian (referring to the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia) and refugees *themselves* are perceived as a threat to national identity, two statements are presented: *People living in Latvia, who do not speak Latvian, threaten the national identity of Latvia, [and] Latvianness* and *Refugees in Latvia threaten the national identity of Latvia, [and] Latvianness.*

The vast majority of the respondents (65% in both survey 1 and survey 2) perceive people who live in Latvia, but do not speak Latvian, as a threat to the national identity of Latvia. With regard to perceiving refugees as a threat to national identity, although there was a difference in the number of respondents when comparing both questionnaires, the majority of the respondents (42% in survey 1 and 59% in survey 2) agree that refugees threaten the national identity of Latvia. Nevertheless, as survey 1 suggests, there is a very slight difference between respondents agreeing and disagreeing with the statement (42% and 38% respectively). On the other hand, survey 2 affirms that 59% of the respondents perceive refugees as a threat to the national identity of Latvia, while only 22% disagree or partially disagree with the statement.

I interpret the inconsistency of the results in both surveys as related to the level of education of respondents. Eighty-one percent of respondents in survey 1 hold a degree in higher education, while in survey 2 only 17% of respondents do. Nonetheless, establishing a causal relationship between the level of education of respondents and perceiving refugees as a threat to national identity requires further research.

Concluding, even though there is inconsistency between both surveys, the majority of respondents regard refugees as a possible threat to national identity. Nonetheless, the percentage of respondents who perceive people living in Latvia but not speaking the language as a threat to national identity is much higher than that of the perception that refugees threaten the national identity. Moreover, in survey 1 the number of respondents who perceive refugees as threatening the national identity agree with the statement is almost as high as that of respondents

not perceiving refugees as a threat to national identity, which implies that the statement is confirmed only partially. The results imply that people residing in Latvia without having mastered the Latvian language (for example, large part of the Russian-speaking minority) are perceived as a threat to the national identity at a larger extent than refugees.

To increase the validity of the findings on whether refugees should maintain their national identity and characteristics next to those of Latvian, I presented two reverse statements in the questionnaire: *Next to Latvian identity refugees should maintain their national identity* and *To be able to integrate in Latvian society refugees coming to Latvia should replace their national characteristics and culture with those of Latvian*. Nevertheless, there was inconsistency in responses when comparing the two statements.

A majority of the respondents agree with the first statement: that refugees should maintain their national identity next to that of Latvian identity. While quite a large part of the respondents (15% in survey 1 and 23% in survey 2) claim that refugees should give up their national identity and dissolve into Latvian national identity once becoming inhabitants of Latvia, the fact that the majority of respondents are open to accept ethnic characteristics of refugees presents a potential to successful refugee integration.

The views on whether refugees should replace their national identity and cultural characteristics with those of Latvian differ in the two surveys. While in survey 1 more respondents disagree or partially disagree that refugees should leave their national characteristics behind when moving to Latvia, in survey 2 more than half of the respondents agree or partially agree that to successfully integrate, refugees should dissolve into Latvianness. Albeit the results present slight inconsistency, the fact that more than one-third of the respondents in survey 1 and half of the respondents in survey 2 suggest that refugees should replace their national identity and culture with Latvian national characteristics should be taken into consideration.

Finally, the majority of the respondents regard Latvianness as inclusive, agreeing that one can become Latvian not only by birth. Yet, while a large part of respondents view the concept of Latvianness as inclusive just as the official policy suggests, one-third of the respondents regard it as exclusive, implying that only

indigenous Latvians can be *true* Latvians, which indicates that a big part of society does not agree with the official policy vis-à-vis integration and do not regard Latvianness as inclusive.

Concerns about preserving national identity emerged as a reoccurring theme in the answers to the open-ended question on whether Latvia should receive more or less refugees. The responses indicate that Latvians perceive the Latvian population as too small ("very few Latvians left", "we can vanish entirely") to receive non-Latvians into society because that puts the national identity under threat ("Latvian identity already is on the path of a runaway train"). Furthermore, some respondents affirm that, because of the large Russian-speaking minority in Latvia ("Latvia already has enough immigrants", "Latvia is full of economic migrants Russians"), refugees should not be received to "make these proportions even more dramatic" and so that refugees would not try to dominate Latvians "as it currently is with Russians".

Concluding, the overall results indicate that to a certain extent Latvians perceive refugees as a threat to national identity. Nonetheless, while it is alarming that one third of the respondents are inclined to think that refugees should give up their national characteristics and replace them with those of Latvian, the majority of the respondents suggest that refugees should maintain their national identity and cultural characteristics next to those of Latvian, which gives a hopeful prospect vis-à-vis the refugee integration in Latvia. Similarly, although it is alarming that one-third of the respondents regard Latvianness as exclusive therefore contradicting the national stance on integration, the majority suggests that one can also become Latvian even if he/she was not born in Latvia. The results indicate that although to an extent refugees are perceived as a threat to national identity, the vast majority of the respondents perceive people living in Latvia but not mastering the Latvian language as a threat to national identity to a much larger extent than refugees *themselves*. Interpreting, it appears that in the eyes of Latvians the Russian-speaking minority threatens national identity to a larger extent than refugees. Hence, it is not necessarily that *refugees* are perceived as a threat, but rather linked to the Russian-speakers in Latvia who have not successfully integrated. This indicates the potential role of Sovietisation in perceiving refugees as a threat to the Latvian identity – because part of the Russian "immigrants" have

not mastered the language and have not successfully integrated, refugees also might be perceived as a potential threat to the national identity. The survey interviewees confirm the hypothesis that refugees are perceived as threatening the national identity of Latvia.

Cultural Racism

In the first phase of my research I argue how discriminatory ethno-politics towards the Russian-speaking minority in post-independent Latvia, often criticized by the international institutions, created the soil for cultural racism in Latvia. While denying open (biological) racism, cultural racism emphasizes the role of ethnicity and culture (Ali, 2007, p. 95) and excludes minorities based on their culture. Perceiving others as culturally too different to assimilate and integrate lays at the very heart of the notion of cultural racism.

Formed by the efforts to diminish the consequences of Soviet occupation, with its discriminatory nature regarding the Russian-speaking minority, ethno-politics in Latvia might have lead to discrimination of non-Latvian cultures in Latvia. Therefore, (Hypothesis Three)*: **There is "cultural racism" in the Latvian society vis-à-vis refugees and asylum seekers.**

Analysis of Results. The majority of the respondents (64% in survey 1 and 71% in survey 2) do not think that cultural diversity brought by minorities enriches culture in Latvia and as such should be supported, which indicates that discriminatory perceptions towards those from other cultures exist among Latvian society. Only less than one-fifth of the respondents agree that culture brought by minorities (and refugees) should be supported.

Cultural racism emphasizes that some cultures are too different to assimilate and therefore not compatible in one society (Balibar, 1992, p. 21). Sixty-six percent of the respondents (in both surveys) think that due to differing culture and values Muslim refugees will not be able to integrate into Latvian society. Moreover, the majority of the respondents (64% in both surveys) agree or partially agree that Latvian culture and lifestyle are too different from the culture of refugees and therefore living in one society would not be possible confirming the existence of cultural racism in Latvian society.

Cultural differences are the second most common line of reasoning against receiving more refugees often reoccurring in responses to the open-ended question in the survey. Respondents often suggest that Latvia should receive refugees of a similar culture ("refugees should be received from countries with similar culture", "we should only receive Christians", "Latvia should receive refugees whose culture is close to that of ours", "through strict selection process we should only receive refugees who are willing to assimilate to Latvian cultural nuances").

More than half of the surveys' respondents suggest that Latvia should strive to become a homogenous, and not multicultural, country. With an underlying perception that culture and lifestyle of some groups and nations are simply too different, cultural racism therefore implies that different cultures are not compatible in one society (Baltic Institute of Social Sciences, 2004, p. 16). Hence, claims that Latvian society should be homogenous rather than multicultural confirm the existence of cultural racism in Latvia.

Finally, I argue that, despite its pluralist reality, cultural racism in Latvia exists. Nonetheless, because biological racism in Latvia is almost impossible and Soviet politics advocated the idea that racism does not exist in Soviet Union, the perception that racism exists only in Western countries and not in Latvia is prevalent. Since the first step in behaviour change is the recognition of prejudices, I wanted to test whether the Latvian society is aware of the existence of (cultural) racism in Latvia. Nevertheless, the hypothesis that *People in Latvia do not think that racism in Latvia exists* is rejected as the majority of respondents in both surveys admit the existence of racism in Latvia.

In conclusion, the survey results clearly confirm that the notion of cultural racism in Latvia exists. As a consequence of Sovietisation, Latvian authorities aim to protect and promote the Latvian language and culture, and the increasing laws and penalties regarding the language and culture might hinder inter-ethnic relationships (Council of Europe, 2013, p. 23). Survey findings confirm that the respondents perceive the differing culture and values of refugees as a factor hindering the possibility of successful integration into Latvian society and suggest that Latvia should strive to become a homogenous country. Hence, even though I cannot directly confirm the link between Sovietisation and cultural racism in Latvia, the poll results do not refute the hypothesis that cultural racism in Latvia developed as a consequence of the Soviet occupation.

Summary

This chapter analyses the results of the survey and interprets them in relation to the hypotheses generated during the first phase of the thesis. It concludes that, although the Sovietisation factor related to the negative attitudes of the Latvian society towards refugees cannot be statistically confirmed, none of the hypotheses are invalidated.

Chapter 6: Conclusions And Suggestions For Further Research

This research aimed to explore why Latvian society is so negative towards receiving immigrants and refugees, and how Sovietisation might have influenced the negative attitudes of Latvian society vis-à-vis refugees. The study is divided in two parts and thus has two levels. Employing a mixed methods research approach, the first phase is a qualitative analysis of the impact of Sovietisation based on history, documents, literature and interpretations of observations. The goal of the second stage of the research was to study present societal perceptions as related to the theoretical reflections generated in the first phase of the research. Even though it is impossible to statistically confirm the Sovietisation factor in forming the negative attitudes, investigating them by employing measurements based on the hypotheses I developed allows testing if the hypotheses are validated or refuted.

History matters: how has the historical context of Latvia influenced the negative attitudes vis-à-vis refugees nowadays? While national policies are formal institutions, perceptions and attitudes of actors (society) can be regarded as informal institutions. Acting as "a script" informal institutions prescribe certain opinions and therefore create ideas and norms (Bannerman and Haggart, 2014). Laws, policy decisions and the following political discourse in post-independent Latvia have generated certain norms in Latvian society.

Involuntary immigration during the Soviet occupation resulted in changes in the ethnic composition of the population of Latvia. Currently 30.2% of the Latvian population is the Russian-speaking minority. Differing perceptions on the Soviet history and failure to successfully integrate the minority has formed a two-community society. The analysis of political discourse and documents concludes that, while the discriminating language laws and intolerance towards the Russian-speaking population in Latvia fuels the split in the society and weakens the sense of belonging of minorities to the nation-state of Latvia, it is perceived in Latvia that it is mainly due to *their* lack of initiative that the Russian-speakers have not successfully integrated into Latvian society. Latvian integration policy focuses on cultural and linguistic assimilation, and emphasizes the tasks of minorities in the integration process, therefore failing to mirror

the integration as a dynamic two-way process. Moreover, political rhetoric tends to fuel such perceptions. Regarding integration as a one-way process in this case is a norm – an informal institution – that has developed due to the historical context of Latvia. Although I cannot prove it with my historical research, Sovietisation may play a role in perceiving integration as a one-way process. The second phase of my research affirms that integration is not seen as a two-way dynamic process, and it suggests that Sovietisation might be a factor in forming such views. Namely, Sovietisation might be a factor why Latvians perceive integration rather as a one-way process instead of a dynamic two-way process where the role of an actively participating society is of crucial importance. The survey results do not prove that such views exist due to Sovietisation, but it confirms that integration is perceived as a one-way process, where successful refugee integration depends on *their* willingness and motivation to integrate, and not on the role of an actively participating society or government and municipality efforts.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the top priority in post-independent Latvia was to restore its pre-Soviet political culture and national identity. Efforts to preserve the national identity of Latvia combined with ethno-politics in Latvia might have influenced society's perception of national identity as being threatened by *Others* e.g. the Russian-speaking minority and refugees. This survey confirms that interviewees perceive refugees as a threat to the national identity of Latvia. What is noteworthy however is that inhabitants of Latvia who do not speak the Latvian language (part of the Russian-speaking minority) are perceived as threatening the national identity to a much larger extent than refugees in general. Furthermore, the qualitative part of the survey made clear that part of respondents link Sovietisation and refugees, mainly referring to threats to the existence of the Latvian nation because of the large Russian-speaking minority which is often perceived as *historical immigrants*.

It appears that Latvians do not necessarily perceive receiving refugees *in itself* as a threat to national identity, but they do when linking refugees to those Russian-speakers who have not successfully integrated in Latvian society. Although I cannot statistically confirm the Sovietisation factor and to what extent it plays a role in forming such views, my research confirms that refugees are perceived as a threat to the national identity of Latvia.

With its deliberate efforts to promote national identity and Latvianness as the unifying foundation, ethnic politics in Latvia have been implemented quite consistently

during the post-independence period. In societies like Latvia where cultures are identified based on their ethnic origin multiculturalism is problematic. Cultural exclusion stresses the role of ethnicity and culture and, by basing discrimination on a notion of cultures instead of races, perceiving Latvian culture as superior lays at the heart of cultural racism. The survey findings confirm that cultural racism in Latvia exists to a large extent, and Latvian society holds discriminatory views towards members of other cultures and refugees. As in the case of the previous hypotheses, even though I cannot confirm the link between Sovietisation and cultural racism in Latvian society, the survey results do confirm that cultural racism towards immigrants and refugees in Latvia exists. Emerging from the quantitative part of this research, I conclude that the main factor hindering successful refugee integration in Latvia is the presence of cultural racism in Latvia.

Finally, the first step to behavioural change is awareness of the existence of racism in Latvian society. Opposite to my assumptions, the survey results indicate that people in Latvia are aware that racism in Latvia exists.

Further Research

Considering the societal relevance of the topic on successful refugee integration, there are many prospects for further investigation. Those are related both to the impact of Sovietisation on the negative attitudes and other factors that might hinder the society's tolerance towards refugees.

First of all, to increase the content validity of the research on the Sovietisation factor in forming the negative attitudes vis-à-vis refugees, all indicators of Sovietisation should be studied. Due to time and scope limitations, I developed three plausible mechanisms through which Sovietisation might have influenced the attitudes. Other possible implications of Sovietisation are worth further investigation.

Secondly, although my hypotheses on the role of Sovietisation in forming negative attitudes were not invalidated with the surveys, the Sovietisation factor in perceiving integration as a one-way process, viewing refugees as a threat to national identity and the notion of cultural racism cannot be statistically confirmed. Nevertheless, my research affirms that these views exist in Latvian society. Hence, studying other possible influencers that might lead to such perceptions would be of great value. For instance, to what extent the notion of cultural racism in Latvia is

affected by Islamophobic views? Would the Latvian society be more culturally biased towards Muslim refugees than towards Christian refugees coming from the same country?

Additionally, in relation to the existing cultural bias in Latvia other potential influencers leading to cultural discrimination require deeper research. Negative attitudes towards different races can also be formed by the psychological wish to prefer well-known (Devine, 1989, p. 6). Furthermore, the group position theory (Blumer, 1959), the stratification beliefs model (Feldman, 1988; Huber and Form, 1973), the self-interest model (Keugel and Smith, 1986) and other theories also suggest how prejudices can shape societal hostility in receiving other cultures. Further research on how these and similar models apply to Latvian society could bring fruitful findings.

Thirdly, in some of the survey questions there is inconsistency between the respondents of the two surveys. Based on the demographics of both surveys, I interpret that the differing opinions might be based on the level of education of the respondents. To confirm this assumption, deeper investigation on differing attitudes based on the level of education of individuals is necessary. Moreover, a comparison between the opinions on refugee integration of the Russian-speaking population in Latvia and ethnic Latvians could bring interesting and socially relevant findings.

Fourthly, in the quantitative part of the survey I discovered several factors that play a role in hostility of the Latvian society towards refugee reception. The most reoccurring theme was economic implications, and concerns regarding the financial instability and therefore *unreadiness* of Latvia to receive refugees. The arguments involve the lack of infrastructure necessary to integrate refugees and the level of poverty among Latvians. It seems that many Latvians are not against refugees in particular, instead their attitude is negative due to feeling abandoned and discriminated by the Latvian authorities since many Latvians do not have decent means for survival (low pensions, children benefits, etc.), so it seems unfair to help *others*. An underlying clash of economic interests can serve as basis for conflict (Kluegel and Smith, 1986, p. 18-19). Furthermore, it appears that a large part of Latvian society perceives refugees as economic immigrants who simply search for a better life, instead of refugees who flee due to life threatening circumstances in their home countries. Studying closely how these factors influence the negative attitudes towards refugees would bring new insights in relation to successful refugee integration in Latvian society.

Finally, the specific characteristics of Latvia and my knowledge of the Latvian language and environment urged me to conduct one-case introspective study. Nonetheless, bearing in mind the specific national characteristics of Latvian society this study reveals, conducting a comparative research between the three Baltic States on perceptions towards immigrants and refugees would be valuable.

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Appendix I

Interview With Marija Golubeva, Development Director And Policy Analyst At *PROVIDUS, The Centre For Public Policy*

Q: *How would you describe the mission of PROVIDUS? What are the main tasks and aims of PROVIDUS?*

A: PROVIDUS is a think-tank. We are an NGO thus we are neither state established, nor private. We are a union (biedrība). We are an independent think-tank thus we are trying to form, in our view, independent research and evaluation about different policies, not basing our work on certain interests of parties. We are mainly doing so thanks to European Commission funds – not only, but that is the main source of support.

Q: *What is the role of PROVIDUS regarding the refugee question?*

A: We are starting to look at this question. We have developed a migration programme what is something completely new – although we have worked with questions regarding migration before, we haven't had a specific migration programme yet. It was more like separate researches or participation in international researches, but it has never been as an independent thematic programme. Now, since this question is becoming very topical to Latvia – not only regarding the refugees but also migration policies in general – we have decided to establish a specific migration programme.

Q: *Wonderful. Are you also working with questions regarding integration?*

A: Yes…actually we worked more specifically with integration questions in past. Now we are also looking at questions regarding migration policy since they are closely linked. Currently Latvia takes more part in European discussion about the migration issues and policies; therefore it is topical. By the way, we are also looking at Latvians

abroad. We are about to start a project about Latvians in Ireland, where [in the project] also Polish and Lithuanians will take part. The common goal is to research their political participation there, on the ground: are they participating in local elections, what is their capacity to candidate in local elections.

Q: *Speaking of integration, how would you define it? What is integration in your opinion?*

A: This is a good question. There is a variety of definitions and I certainly would not like to emphasise one of them and present it as mine, but I think it is the attitude and actions of the society and state institutions regarding groups that structurally are a little outside the mainstream. Either as a result of migration, that is people who have never been a part of this society or, if we are speaking about the third generation migrants, those are people who for different structural inequality reasons have not fully integrated in this mainstream yet. Nevertheless, by no means I look at integration as the state policy alone.

Q: *What in your opinion are the most important ingredients for successful integration?*

A: Good question. I think it is a lot nevertheless the attitude of the society plays a very important role because, in my opinion, a successful integration policy cannot exist without supportive attitude of the society. Therefore, inclusive societal attitude is one [of the ingredients]. Of course, Latvia has to work on this a lot.

Second, yes, a successful state policy which means goal-oriented, with SMART indicators that are not general but very concrete – with concrete goals, with concrete assigned resources that correspond with the real scale of the goals, etc. And, in my opinion, [attention should be paid to] also gathering successful practice and eradicating bad practice is something that not always happens in reality.

Q: *It makes me think about…you said that the attitude of the society is very important, and also the policy. What, in your opinion, is the attitude of Latvian society at the moment?*

A: We know that at the moment in regard to refugees about 80% [of Latvians] are against, it is not really positive. But, on the other hand, I think that Latvian society knows very little about this question and therefore it is still very possible to change this

attitude by simply telling more and showing a bigger picture which is not what we always do.

Q: *I guess you partially already answered this but how do you think – why the attitude of the society is so negative?*

A: Narrow experience of communication. People have not often faced people from war-thorn countries; they receive all their information from media that is very sensational. Because media do not like to present very analytical, broad view but rather what brings the most "clicks" – that is the goal and you can see that. There are many articles published in Latvia about that media shows news badly. I would not like to go in depth in this question but unfortunately I agree that in this sense media play a limiting role. Instead of presenting full information, the most 'juicy' pieces – sensational – either people are organizing pogroms (grautiņi) or fighting with each other [are presented].

Q: *You said earlier that most likely the attitude of the society could change if it was better informed, if there was more objective information available.*

A: Anyhow, there will be more information. First of all, considering that people, when they come to Latvia, will be here. They will communicate with the locals, they will live and work here, etc. This experience can be either positive or negative. Depending on our initial policy – we can whether continue the bad story or we can have a comparatively positive story. By communicating, people will see the reality – that not all of these people are uneducated, that maybe a big part [of them] are educated, that they have not arrived only because of the benefits but that majority of them also want to work, etc. Those are the things that currently are ranked based purely on the media agenda, that will maybe be ranked differently if people will communicate. I do not think that we can rely only on that. We definitely should – both the society and media – treat this more responsibly: what we are telling.

Q: *Speaking of integration policy, how would you evaluate the current integration policy of Latvia regarding refugees and migrants in general?*

A: In general, it exists but it is very rudimental. In a sense that Latvia does not see itself as a target country and therefore there is no - in that in-depth sense if Latvia would see itself as a target country. There is no policy regarding which groups of people

we would like to attract, it is not even said that we would like to attract people. In reality, looking at the demographic situation, we can see that we will not be able to, most likely, not attract [people] but we do not dare to say that we are attracting [people]. Therefore, it follows that all migration that there is, is in principle bad but we are forced to accept it because of globalization, EU and other reasons. Partially, of course, it is because there is a trauma from the past experience. On the other hand, nobody from the perspective of political leadership has ever drawn a line and said: OK, back then we did not make decisions regarding our country and the migration policy but now we are. And, despite that we ourselves make the decisions now, it doesn't mean that everything concerning migration is bad and we will never touch it again. Because migration is a neutral element. It can be bad, [it can be] good, depending on what is happening and how we do it, etc. This, in my opinion, requires certain courage and from the political leadership perspective I do not see it happening.

Q: *What, in your opinion, lacks in the current integration policy?*

A: In my opinion, especially now, looking at the indicative plan about the refugee integration... I have participated in two meetings of working group...but of course (...) there are representatives of all state institutions, plus two or three representatives of the civic society. Of course, each opinion has a relatively small influence. What I liked about it there, it was more or less thought about how these people will have to work somewhere and there is a need to think about the working permits, need to think about re-qualification possibilities, etc. That is positive. What is negative is that mainly the starting behaviour is that we have to tell them this and that, what they cannot do, that the winter is cold (...). I even wrote an article about that in Satori because I think it is very even typical. We are after all thinking that these people will not be able to work right away, we think that those are the people who beat their wives and cripple their children therefore at the beginning we will tell them that it is not allowed in Latvia. But, for example, there is no word about the structure of economy in that starting introduction. Respectively, we will not tell them what fields there are in Latvia and in which fields we need people, but that it is not allowed to beat your wife. We certainly are already projecting the expectations towards them. And I see this approach often when I face the representatives of public administration.

Also, for example, the Ministry of Culture are those who after all in a big sense are responsible for integration policy in this country although in my opinion…I hope that this will move from this ministry elsewhere, maybe to the Ministry of Welfare or maybe elsewhere. I hope it will not stay for long [at the Ministry of Culture]. But there the attitude is that we only talk about the cultural integration, for example social memory. We do not talk about integration as a process that requires also that the new members of society appear (parādās) somewhere and that they participate. When there was a try with the data to prove that Latvia has one of the lowest, maybe the lowest, ranking regarding the participation of migrants…because (…) are very limited and we don't have NGOs. We do not have any NGO that represent specifically migrants as migrants, like their interests. Then the answer is – yes, this is not so important; we will organize integration courses of Latvian language and culture programme. And, of course, there is an entire industry with organizations that regularly do this and that are happy that there is money and we are doing this. It does not increase any sort of participation. Of course languages courses are a must but it does not replace the element of participation. And trying to prove that countries that are most successful with this are those that sub-grant the organizations, the communities to do something themselves. They attract 'their own kind' (savējos) and for example make an NGO and it is interesting for them and they do that, and represent their interests. "No, this is not valid for us"…for example, Portugal in this manner and few other countries. "No, we are not going to do this because they do not want to do anything, it will be only waste of money" and these statements, of course, are based on the feeling. They are not based on some good practice or research, they are simply…a person who works, thinks No, they are not going to participate. Thereafter, we will not do this, it is useless and thus we do not do that. if we were looking more at what works elsewhere, maybe it is worth at least to pilot and look – maybe it is not going to work in Latvia but maybe the opposite – it will work out because we have quite a lot of migrants. We have people from mostly Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, from few other countries – Kazakhstan, etc., China, we have these people. They live, they pay taxes, they either by reunification with family or by investing or mainly because of employment or studies get to Latvia. It is strange that we do not have any NGOs that represent the interests of migrants. But this is not considered as a legitimate goal. And I think it is only one, I am not saying it is the only important topic in migration, integration policy, but we see that state institutions do not

look at this question this way. They look through another prism, which is a defined programme when Sarmite Elerte was a minister: that everything is [achieved] through cultural integration.

Q: *It is interesting…why would you prefer that the responsibility for integration policy moves from the Ministry of Culture to elsewhere?*

A: I think it must go with migration policy, first of all. Our migration policy, Ministry of Interior is responsible for that. For integration policy, the Ministry of Culture. I do not see these two processes as very separate.

Second of all, because the Ministry of Culture has the tendency to over-emphasize the role of culture, moreover the role of very classical form of culture. In a sense that if they [migrants] will learn to sign Latvian songs, they will be integrated. If they will not do that, they will not be integrated. Or for example…or that that they will not participate in any of the public organizations, will not participate in elections, also when naturalized, that is not important. The most important is that they are integrated culturally (chuckles). I think to change this attitude…I know that in The Netherlands there is quite strong also – this attitude – that the most important is the…to get to know the Dutch history, let's say the great history, culture, etc. but that is the reaction in Europe to over-optimistic multiculturalism politics that was popular time ago. But this also is not a solution. I think the solution is nevertheless participation and that people are involved in all structures through which the society functions. And, if they are not involved in these structures, they remain marginalized and that is not our goal, in my opinion. At least, based on the European understanding about integration politics, it is not our goal.

Q: *Speaking of public attitude, you think that there is a difference between for example people in Riga and those in regions?*

A: Not really…I think of course people in Riga, there are more people who are willing to consider that there are plusses from migration, if compared to regions. People in regions have less understanding. For example when speaking to some of the mayors of towns, I had a feeling that…they only think about – that if few refugees will be sent to their district, then in which language will they speak to them. This is what they think about. About problems…this is where it ends. Even though theoretically, even in 'Mucenieki' after the language courses theoretically there should be some basics and

that person will be able to say something. And most likely, living in that town, he will more or less learn, especially if he will continue to go to the courses. This issue is not as fundamental to stop there and not see other issues. For example, housing, job, have not been mentioned as something important. The initial language barrier was mentioned which, in my opinion, shows that people do not orientate in this topic and they are not really enlightened. I hope that when this programme will start working in reality, when some good practices will be gathered from other countries, we will also go for example to the union of municipalities and offer that we would love to talk to the mayors of towns and directors of municipalities about how this works elsewhere so it is not that people are scared and think that the world ends with this. There is this one barrier and we cannot do anything anymore.

Q: *How, in your opinion, the public could be educated?*

A: I think that after all everybody who has the chance to reach media and participate in broadcasts and write something, etc. should treat this issue as responsible as possible. Because I think that largely many experts who better stay silent – let's say they speak once and that's it – their contribution is limited. While people who want to create noise all the time – that everything is bad and that we will be over-flooded, they are communicating all the time. Sometimes very effectively. That also, I think, creates that imbalance.

Q: *Thank you, I guess. Would you like to add something?*

A: No. I think, frankly said, this is more based on my observations about what is going on and not that much on research, we have just started. When we have researched something, let's say within few months, I think I would have more to say. At this moment it is more based on what I have seen – this plan, I have worked on developing of the plan, and read the media and that basically is it.

Q: *No, in my opinion this was really helpful. Thank you very much. I assume I will get back to you within the coming months. Thanks again!*

Appendix II

Interview With Ilmārs Mežs, Head Of *The International Office of Migration*

Q: *Why, in your opinion, majority of Latvian society has a negative attitude towards reception of migrants and refugees in Latvia? What are the reasons for fear?*

A: For many generations Latvia has been isolated from the rest of the world and until 90s an inhabitant of another continent was something unseen and strange for most Latvians. Furthermore, prospective refugees will come from countries (Syria, Eritrea) that we know almost nothing about. Most of us cannot sympathize with the suffering of these people – because we aren't really informed about it. I think that people would show more sympathizing attitude if the first 500 quote refugees would come from closer and more understandable countries – for example Ukraine; in that case attitude would be more positive. In addition to that, in Latvian media selective information about the negative aspects regarding refugees is dominating; but [there is] almost nothing [mentioned] that there is also something positive. I think that after the first hundred [refugees] will arrive, when Latvians will make sure that those are regular people – like us – this negative attitude will lower. Nevertheless, I notice that more and more people discuss the reception rules, but more seldom that [we] must not receive [refugees].

Q: *More generally speaking, how would you define integration and what is your opinion on the integration policy of Latvia?*

A: Latvian integration policy in practice has not been piloted in relation to refugees. Until this moment integration policy focuses on Soviet-era migrants and it was implemented only partially and as campaigns. Moreover, until separated Russian schools exist, it is naïve to hope that by implementing some "integration event" all opinion and information difference collected during 50 years will suddenly disappear. Integration occurs the best in army, National Guard, Youth Guards – where in common struggles Latvians and Russians understand that the differences are insignificant, but there is more in common. Integration is immigrants' inclusion in society by learning the language, traditions, etc.

Q: *In public space refugees are often compared with Soviet-era immigrants. What, in your opinion, is the effect of sovietisation on the openness of Latvian society in regards to receiving asylum seekers?*

A: I think there is indirect effect because in Soviet times all kind of migration was very negative – both mass immigration to Latvia and deportations of Latvian to Siberia. Therefore all kind of migration still has a negative note. Additionally to that, I can agree with the opinion that Latvia hasn't really solved the integration of Soviet-era immigrants, [and] this question will still require much time. Therefore it is difficult to be optimistic that with the new migrant volume integration process will be implemented with much better results this time. On the other hand, the number of USSR-era immigrants however is not considered as an argument why the Latvian quota would be smaller – economically they have integrated well – there are no employment and income differences [between Latvians and Soviet-era immigrants].