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AUTHOR: RASMA KARKLINS, University of Illinois, Chicago

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1755 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
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PROJECT INFORMATION:

CONTRACTOR: University of Illinois

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Rasma Karklins

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Introduction

This paper focuses on the political consequences of three alternative language policies in Latvia, e.g. assimilation, pluralism, and separation. Each of the policies aims at forming a specific relationship between the ethnic and civic identities of population subgroups. I examine the assumptions of each policy and actual as well as potential outcomes in the context of the unusually dynamic and multifaceted ethnic processes in Latvia today. Latvia always has had an ethnically diverse population, but Soviet policies of "internationalization" through population transfers increased the number of non-Latvians in unprecedented ways. Proportionally, Latvia -- and Estonia -- have experienced by far the highest rate of immigration among all states in Europe and the ex-Soviet region. When regaining independence in 1991 Latvia inherited many Soviet era settlers who did not identify with it as a territorial state and civic community. Mostly Russian, these people never expected to find themselves "living abroad" in a non-Russian environment, yet after 1991 they in fact were living in a new state and with a Latvian community eager to regain nationhood. Crossing borders or otherwise coming into contact with persons of another ethnicity has long been seen as a crucial way of becoming aware of one's own identity, and identity change or adjustment has been a core issue for the Soviet era settlers in Latvia. In other words, they form a crucial case study for processes of ethnic and civic integration.

The writings of political scientists on ethnic and civic integration vary a great deal in their theoretical frameworks and assumptions. Arguments about the benefits of cultural assimilation and civic integration have dominated the field, yet innumerable empirical studies note the unexpected rise of minority nationalism in various parts of the world. This paper hopes to contribute to a narrowing of this gap between theory and practice. I argue that processes of ethnic and civic integration need to be conceptualized less simplistically, and that one needs to pay attention to contrasting, yet simultaneous processes and resulting distinctions among ethnic minority subgroups. It is misleading to think of an ethnic group such as Russians in Latvia as a single unit. Simply put, some Russians want to and do integrate into their new environment, while others do not, and some are even hostile. Ethnic processes can change if a new subgroup takes on a leading role.

I was reminded how misleading it is to think in terms of unitary ethnic groups and a single process of integration during my recent fieldwork in Latvia. Here one can only make sense of ethnic processes if one distinguishes between subgroups that integrate in various ways, or remain aloof. Methodologically this means that one needs to consider carefully the level of aggregation of data that one looks at, since otherwise differential processes can be overlooked. What's more, results vary if one defines groups in one way or another: thus, if one uses the "Russian-speakers" as an ethnic category which includes all Russian monolinguals, several ethnic subgroups disappear from the analysis. One fails to note two subgroups which -- albeit quite small (see Table 1, page 17) -- are pertinent for the analysis of assimilation, e.g. nominal Russians who have a native language other
Executive Summary:

Ethnic subgroups in Latvia integrate to varying degrees and society's acceptance of the status quo is a key to current ethnic peace. Latvia's government pursues a policy of cultural pluralism and the gradual civic integration of non-citizens, and significant ethnic subgroups favor this policy in words as well as deeds. Yet in addition, there is a small subgroup that assimilates into Latvian society -- mostly through intermarriage --, and subgroups of people who retain a separate identity in that they do not speak Latvian and have little interest in the Latvian state. While this may appear to give reason for concern, the unchallenged coexistence of various groups provides stability.

This paper examines links between ethnic and civic integration. I ask how various language policies affect the degree to which ethnic minorities identify with a particular state. Assimilation, pluralism, or language separation are the three main policies that can be pursued. In their ideal forms, each claims to promote civic integration, yet in practice each policy can backfire. I discuss how this occurs, and provide illustrations from Latvia. I find that various groups of people react in different ways and that in order to avoid conflict one does well to allow for a choice of language and civic identity.

Part of the paper focuses on civic involvement and naturalization. It has recently become evident that residents eligible to be naturalized are surprisingly reluctant to take Latvia's citizenship. In part this is due to a limited knowledge of Latvian, but low civic interest plays a role as well. So do certain disadvantages of Latvian citizenship such as service in Latvia's armed forces and limits on visa-free travel to Russia.

As concerns public policy, I conclude that it is very important to focus on civic education and programs explaining what the Republic of Latvia is all about. Although Latvians too are becoming more apathetic politically, the trend is especially problematic among non-Latvians and non-citizens.
spheres, such as schools, but let us also have a common language for joint activities, especially in civic life. The problem is that the policy outcome can differ from intent. While it is a common assumption that segregation backfires, some have argued that segmentation in certain spheres and levels can promote overall integration. Similarly, while it is a common assumption that assimilation or linguistic pluralism promote attitudinal integration, there are instances when these policies have backfired. The difficulty is in knowing when and how this is likely to occur.

Advocates of assimilation maintain that the culture of the dominant group should define the country’s identity; minority individuals -- as individuals -- are expected to gradually melt into it. One definition is that "Assimilation occurs when a group or entire society gradually adopt, or are forced into adopting, the customs, beliefs, folkways and lifestyles of a more dominant culture." Simply put, assimilation is the loss of one identity for the sake of another. For the purposes of this paper I define assimilation as change of language identity toward a new and exclusive language. It occurs rarely in one person's lifetime, and more typically is an inter-generational process. Over time, many minorities have been assimilated into a hegemonic language the world over.

Assimilation is most likely to be counterproductive if it is involuntary; thus many more Basques are monolingual Spanish speakers than Catalans, yet the Basques are more militantly anti-Spanish, including the use of terrorism. (Of course this has reasons beyond assimilation, but nevertheless illustrates that assimilation is no panacea). Yet even in Catalonia, Francoist policies of assimilation were counterproductive. Similarly the literature about whether contact reduces or increases inter-group tension shows that under certain conditions contact can increase hostility. One example from the former USSR is that contact between Russians and upwardly mobile individual Central Asians increased conflict.

Pluralism starts with the assumption that assimilation is likely to lead to a backlash. It assumes that every group -- as a group -- wants to retain its identity, has the right to do so, and will fight to do so. To avoid the latter, and to create civic consensus, pluralists argue that, parallel with creating a joint identity, policy makers need to grant convincing guarantees for the retention of distinct identities as well. As expressed by one author, the logic is that, "Probably the only means of preserving cultural and consensus values, and the only means of integration in the long term, is through local autonomy in the short term. Separation promotes a sense of security from which there can be cooperative transactions between communities, leading finally to a higher degree of functional cooperation, if not integration." Pluralists face the problem that any ethnic differentiation can easily be perceived as negative discrimination. It is the art of pluralist politics to make sure that separate ethnic institutions, such as minority schools, preserve rather than undermine the rights of minorities. Ethnic accord is most likely to be preserved if such arrangements are voluntary and ethnic groups are autonomous within their own sphere.
than Russian, and "Latvians" who claim Russian as a native language. Also, one misses ethnic subgroups such as Poles, Jews, or Ukrainians, among whom many no longer know their traditional native languages (Table 1), but retain distinctive identities that are marked in various ways, be it by religion, historical memory, or ethnic group names.

In Latvia the retention of the nominal ethnic category ("nationality" in local parlance) has helped smaller minorities to retain and revive their distinct identities. Since this paper deals with civic integration, it is also helpful to recognize varying proportions of citizens among ethnic groups, for example the high percent of citizens among Latvian Gypsies (Table 2, page 18) who as members of a long-time historical minority are well integrated in terms of civic loyalty and language knowledge.5

My analysis shows that integration is not a single linear process. Although there are subgroups who do integrate more and more over time, others integrate only in part, or not at all. The variegated spectrum of integrative responses explains how an ethnic climate can change rather quickly, as it did, for example, in relatively well-integrated multiethnic Sarajevo. In such a situation an ethnic subgroup less intent on integration takes the political lead and tries to reverse previous processes. This is one more reason to be aware of ethnic subgroups with distinct perspectives.

In order to capture this complexity empirically, I shall first outline the theoretical outcomes of the three main policies of integration, e.g. assimilation, pluralism, and separation. In its pure form, each approach makes certain assumptions about changes in ethnic and civic diversity, but results may differ. I provide a typology of real and potential outcomes of the three policies. I also try to define integration by focusing on its structural, functional, and attitudinal dimensions. After clarifying my analytical categories, I use them to discuss contemporary ethnic processes in Latvia.

**Three Policies of Integration**

The expected outcome of assimilation, pluralism, and separation is in all cases integration. In this context the minimal definition of integration is the opposite of disintegration of state and society, e.g. policy makers aim at a reasonable degree of socio-political stability. More ambitious or visionary leaders try to go beyond that and to form a sense of community between diverse groups. In fact, citizens having a sense of shared belonging is a classic definition of a nation.6 No matter whether the goal is stability or a sense of belonging and shared values, the crucial question is how best to attain it. Do you attain a commonality of values — be they an acceptance of the status quo or a joint vision — by ethnic homogenization, or does some differentiation serve this goal?

The assimilationist answer is simple: everybody should switch to one dominant language, for example French, English, or Russian. The separatist answer is to say: let us each use our distinct language in separate environments, be it our own states, town administrations, or schools. The pluralists try to combine aspects of both policies: let us each retain our own language in certain
ethnic self-identification and thus "constructs" identities, yet the reverse can be true as well in that there are groups who claim to be identified in a specific way.

b) The legal identification of nationality, in the sense of citizenship, is a common practice the world over. In every country there are citizens, and non-citizens, be they foreigners in residence for a limited period or immigrants, refugees, etc. Being a citizen has legal consequences and includes specific rights as well as duties. Citizenship assumes a civic identification as well, but this is more appropriately referred to under attitudinal integration.

c) State institutions can be structured by ethnicity, language, religion, or else. Thus ethnic groups may have separate schools, army units, administrative councils, etc. Special ethnic units existed in the Czarist army and Soviet army in various periods up until the late 1940s. Sometimes separate courts accommodate distinct legal traditions, such as in the Ottoman empire by religion and in the USA in the case of special family courts for native peoples. Other separate state institutions can include social services, special political rights such as a constitutional veto power, or territorial autonomy. Structural separateness and autonomy may result from policy -- for example by granting minority schools -- or it can be the indirect result of spatial or economic differentiation. Either way, such arrangements can promote or undermine attitudinal integration, depending on their intent and effect. As noted, pluralists argue that structural separateness can promote integration, assimilationists that it does not.

d) Structural integration also refers to the spatial dispersion of ethnic groups, as they often are concentrated in certain villages, towns, neighborhoods, or regions. As noted, this often influences the emergence of ethnic institutional substructures.

2. Functional integration:

The important distinction between functional and attitudinal integration has been made by Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone in her path breaking work on Soviet nationality politics, pursued by me in an earlier study. Functional integration refers to ability to interact with others. For the purposes of this paper I define functional integration as facility in the state language. In order to function in the public sphere of a state with a dominant state language, one needs to know that language. In order to communicate, a common language is needed. What's more, the forming of a civic community requires dialogue and the exchange of information and ideas. In this regard there is a link between functional and civic integration.

Yet the learning of another group's language does not always increase sympathy or tolerance for that group. Much depends on the content of the communication and on how voluntary and harmonious the language learning process is. Functional integration may correlate with attitudinal integration, but does not have to. In our study we encounter individuals who know Latvian well and
Separatists reject any integration in the sense of homogenization and argue that one needs to focus on conflict avoidance. They maintain that there is less conflict if each group is entirely on its own. Policies of separation have several subforms. They have involved voluntary in- or out-migration as well as expulsions and genocide. The most prevalent form of separatism is territorial, typically framed in terms of national self-determination. The quest of nations for their own state, first in Europe, and then the colonial world, has been one of the strongest political forces of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, no matter how many new states emerge, most retain ethnic minorities. In the case of minority languages, a total of about eight thousand languages are spoken in the nearly two hundred states today. Thus separation may solve some ethnic issues, but certainly not all of them.

In Latvia official policy is pluralist, yet in practice we find that next to pluralist processes there is a limited degree of assimilation, and extensive ethnic segmentation. As these processes exist side by side, one needs to ask how strong each of them is, and whether they complement each other or create new tensions. This paper's preliminary answer is that the acceptance and accommodation of variegated ethnic groupings is a key to ethnic stability.

Three Dimensions of Integration

Integration has many dimensions. In this paper I differentiate between attitudinal, functional, and structural integration, and I ask about their relationship to each other. When people refer to the benefits of "integration" they most typically think of attitudinal integration, e.g. the contrast between harmony and conflict among groups, and between groups and the state. The question is, what type of structural and functional policies best promote it?

1. Nominal, legal, structural integration:
   a) Structural differentiation typically involves some form of nominal identification of subgroups, be it by reference to a group's name, the language that it speaks, or other criteria. The nominal differentiation between ethnic groups is deeply ingrained in Latvia as well as the surrounding region; typically people assume that whether one is a "Latvian," "Russian," "Pole" or "Gypsy" is a clear and immutable ascriptive given. While this differentiation is used in speech and daily interaction, the recording of nominal ethnic identities is a common administrative practice. In the history of the region, the Soviet practice of noting ethnicity ("nationality") in passports and other personal documents is not that unusual. Ethnic categories are also used in censuses and other population statistics (as practiced in the USA and other countries as well). This reinforces the tendency of people to identify themselves and others by ethnic group, race, or language, and therefore tends to be controversial. Some studies show how administrative identification precedes
language knowledge but a non-integrative attitude, even resentment of the new state they find themselves in; thirdly people who are eager to integrate into Latvian society and the state, yet know the language poorly; and lastly those who both do not know Latvian and reject the idea of integrating into the larger environment of Latvia.20

Some studies examine the politics of language, others focus on ethnic and civic integration, my task is to examine links between the two. How is one or the other language policy linked to civic integration, or alienation, apathy, and even enmity? As noted, each specific policy can succeed or backfire and to understand the dynamics of effects I first outline the theoretical outcomes in a systematic way. In outlining eight outcomes in Figure 1 (page 19), each cell shows one type of integrative constellation as well as examples from Latvia.

As cells 1, 2, and 3 illustrate, assimilation in all cases assumes homogenization of structural differences, such as by name or legal status. Cells 1 and 2 also assume homogenization of language, yet differ in that it goes hand in hand with attitudinal integration in one instance, but not in the other. Cell 3 notes an unusual case where formal assimilation fails to coincide with both linguistic and attitudinal assimilation.

The three outcomes typifying pluralist policies all show attitudinal integration, but differ in regard to structural differentiation ("No" in cells 4 and 6) as well as language assimilation ("No" in cells 5 and 6). Thus pluralist integration emphasizes common civic values and grants the possibility of structural and linguistic distinctiveness, although the optimal case is one where a common language exists (cell 4).

The two prototypes for separatist policies both show structural as well as attitudinal differentiation; in addition the classic separatist policy, cell 7, also shows a functional separateness. Yet this does not have to be the case, as noted before, individuals may know the language of the larger environment, yet may still wish to live separately.

Figure 1 outlines eight general subgroups in the Latvian ethnic landscape, to be followed by a more specific typology based on language facility. I list one prototype for each category of my typology for illustrative purposes. In practice one could give examples of other variants, the examples provided here are by no means the only possible ones.

1. Prototype: children from mixed marriages: Nominal assimilation is rare in Latvia, except for children from mixed families. Until age sixteen, a child from a mixed marriage is assigned the mother's nationality. At age sixteen, when acquiring its own passport, a teenager may choose the mother's or father's passport nationality. So far, the legal assimilation of inhabitants as citizens also has occurred primarily in mixed families, since children are automatically given Latvian citizenship if one parent is a citizen, and spouses of citizens are eligible for easier naturalization.

The size of this subgroup is difficult to gage. The proportion of Latvians engaging in inter ethnic marriages stayed rather consistently between the 18 to 20% range between 1975-1994. In
identify with the Latvian people and with Latvia as a state, and others who refuse to use the language or denigrate Latvia as a state.

My focus on language facility does not mean that I reject the significance of other dimensions of functional integration. Typically these also refer to communication and flows of interaction, for example social and economic habits and skills. The role of contact and communication for integration in modern national states has been thoroughly argued in the work of numerous social scientists, especially Karl Deutsch.18

3. **Attitudinal integration:**

I define attitudinal integration as the emotional attachment to an ethnic or civic community, as a sense of being part of that community and valuing it to the extent that it affects behavior. Thus esteem for an ethnic or civic culture typically goes hand in hand with liking to interact with it, and supporting its interests. Specific attitudes and preferences affect habits and actions. Attitudes and behaviors can change over time, and sometimes crucial events such as the collapse of the USSR can transform perceptions quickly.

There are many nuances to civic integration; it may focus more on the state as a territorial unit, or as a system of government with a certain history, or as a "homeland" that triggers certain emotions.19 Depending on the dimension that is emphasized, identification with a civic nation may or may not exclude sympathies for another state. Dual loyalties pose little problem if both states are democracies and have had historically friendly relations, but they do pose a problem when different political regimes and historical hostility are involved. Thus the recent history of Soviet occupation makes it impossible for an individual to support both a democratic Republic of Latvia and the restoration of the Soviet Union.

Of the many dimensions of civic integration, those referring to pride in one's country, or attachments to a homeland, are probably most easily acquired. Simple things such as sports can play a role in promoting emotional identification with a country and one assumes that victories of Latvia's hockey players -- both Latvians and Russians -- have played a positive role in this regard.

**Eight Outcomes: Typology Derived from Latvian Case**

I obtained some insights for this paper from talking to educators and others working with language policy. Some comments were highly suggestive about paths of research that need to be pursued. While I had already begun to think about the pitfalls of aggregating survey data about entire ethnic groups, the need to differentiate between subgroups of people and between functional and attitudinal integration was poignantly stated by an educator who had been giving Latvian language tests to teachers in Russian language schools. She reported noting several types of people: first those with a good language knowledge as well as a good integrative attitude; secondly people with a good
7. Of the separatist variants of ethnic subgroups the first prototype involves inhabitants of Latvia who have registered as Russian citizens and retain close ties to the Russian Federation and do not wish to assimilate to Latvian culture, society, or politics. This group includes retired Soviet military officers given "special pensioners" status under the 1994 treaty on troop withdrawal, and their family members.

8. Prototype: Latvian Jews or Germans who emigrate to their historical homelands often know the Latvian language and are relatively well-integrated in other ways, yet leave Latvia for overriding motives tied to their particular identity. This example illustrates that declining to integrate in a local civic community does not have to have a hostile edge.

9. Logically, there is no ninth prototype in this typology. This implies that the cell remains empty. Alternatively one could think of a subgroup of "identity nihilists," particularly in the attitudinal sense, e.g. these are people who do not identify with any particular state or civic value and annoy social scientists by saying "don't know" or give no answer at all to survey questions. As other scholars looking at survey data from the post-Soviet region have noted as well, the "do not know" and "no answer" category often is exceptionally strong. This is an important phenomenon that deserves more careful study.

How many people fall into each subgroup listed in the typology in figure 1? The answer depends very much on the way that one operationalizes each variable. I shall give more empirical data below, but it should be emphasized that the size of groups can vary under changing conditions. In fact, that is what public policy is about, as governments try to increase the groups with the most integrative characteristics. Latvia's official policy is to strengthen the pluralist prototype (cell 4) by, for example, making monolingual Russians bilingual rather than assimilating them. Another priority has been to avoid confrontation with subgroups who wish to remain separate from the Latvian community and state.

The Latvian Case: Recent Developments in Subgroup Formation

My study focuses on links between minority language policies and civic integration. I use various empirical materials to measure ongoing processes and their meaning. Here I shall refer to data on language facility and use, applications for naturalization, and survey data on ethnic and civic attitudes.

In order to assess the extent of integration, one needs to define the unit with which the minority is to integrate. In our case legal integration refers to having or acquiring citizenship of the Republic of Latvia, nominal integration means being "Latvian," functional integration means knowing Latvian. Civic integration implies identification with Latvia as one's "homeland" and an independent parliamentary republic.
Choice of nominal ethnicity by teenagers has differed over time and has been influenced by politics as well as socio-demographic factors; roughly speaking slightly more than half of the children from mixed Latvian-Russian and Latvian-minority marriages have chosen to "assimilate" nominally. One may assume that such a decision typically reflects an assimilation of cultural and civic values, but there can be exceptions, who would then fall into the next category.

2. The prototype of individuals who are unassimilated attitudinally despite structural and functional integration is that of Alfreds Rubiks and other pro-Soviet members of former CPSU: a relatively small, but formerly powerful group of Latvians who are citizens and know the language, yet identify with the former Soviet Union and a communist international cause.

3. The prototype for people who are assimilated nominally and legally, but not functionally and attitudinally is provided by the "zero-option" proposal on naturalization raised after the restoration of Latvia's independence. A group of Russian politicians proposed that Latvia extend citizenship administratively to all inhabitants without regard to language knowledge or civic identification.

4. The most non-conflictual prototype for pluralist integration is provided by most members of historical minorities who -- albeit citizens -- emphasize their nominal and cultural/structural distinction, yet know Latvian and identify with Latvia in civic terms. Latvian Poles, Jews, and Gypsies have stood out in this regard, as has a subgroup of long-term Russian inhabitants. The credo of these groupings, according to Chairman of the Association of Cultural Societies of Latvia is to "integrate but not assimilate." The proliferation since 1990 of special minority schools -- especially for Latvian Poles -- is a prime expression of this view.

5. The prototype of people who are assimilated nominally and attitudinally, but not functionally, is that of Latvian repatriates from Russia coming from deportee families. Forcibly deported from Latvia in the early period of Soviet occupation, many people were killed in Stalin's gulag, but others survived in a hostile and alien environment that often led to Russian linguistic assimilation, but no attitudinal integration.

6. The intriguing prototype of a group of people who are attitudinally well-integrated, yet speak only their own language and retain a separate existence is that of the Russian Old Believers in Eastern Latvia. Similar to the Amish communities in the USA and elsewhere, these are people who insist on their own separate life based on religious and cultural conviction, yet do not challenge civic authorities. Traditionally, these people have lived in distinct rural communities. Modernization and Soviet rule has disrupted the cohesion of this group, but remnants persist. One reflection of this group in contemporary Latvia involves army recruits who speak only Russian. More than 20% of draftees do not speak Latvian and cannot fill out official forms at time of enrollment in army. Another article reports that in a prison guard unit in Jekabpils made up of recruits, 55% do not speak Latvian.
not expected to learn non-Russian languages. Census data illustrate the resulting linguistic imbalance: In 1989, 68 percent of Latvians were fluent in Russian, but only 21 percent of Russians knew Latvian. The trend was for Russian to become increasingly dominant, especially in public life. Reversing this trend was one of the most pressing issues on the agenda of the national liberation movement. In 1997 the linguistic trend has been reversed, but linguistic normalization is in the beginning stages only. In the context of this paper one needs to note that Russian monolingualism has hindered the social and political integration of Soviet era settlers.

In my analysis I use two surveys conducted by the Baltic Data House in February and March 1997, commissioned by the United Nations Development Program office in Riga. The survey was designed to be representative of the entire population of Latvia; among respondents there are 1,141 Latvians, 628 Russians, 224 people from other ethnic groups. All responses are self-evaluations, for example how well respondents speak Latvian, what their native language is, of what ethnic group ("nationality") they are.

As the surveys show (Figure 3), less than half of the non-Latvian respondents speak Latvian well. There is an evident correlation with age, respondents falling into age group 15-24 years old are the ones who most often state that they speak Latvian fluently or with minor difficulty. The same surveys show that a majority (68%) of respondents would like to improve their knowledge of Latvian. Interestingly, the motives are primarily instrumental in nature, most respondents state that knowing Latvian is a necessity of daily life (27%), or is needed for studies or career (22%). In an earlier survey fielded in June 1996, 3% stated that they would like to improve their knowledge of Latvian in order to qualify for citizenship, but this percentage had declined to 0% by spring 1997. There are no other signs of civic motives for language learning, nor, for that matter, of motives related to interest in Latvian culture or community life. In sum, most reasons cited for why one should learn Latvian are pragmatic.

Other surveys confirm that a majority of non-Latvian respondents voice attitudes in support of learning Latvian. For example Laitin's survey undertaken in 1995 shows 70% saying that all residents of Latvia should be fluent in Latvian and 95% saying that it should be a required subject in schools. Very similar data emerged from Druviete's study, also undertaken in 1995. As noted, there is in fact a generational improvement in the level of language knowledge, yet even among the youngest age group, 46% speak only "a little" Latvian, and 12% none at all (Figure 4). While this is a self-evaluation of language knowledge that may be imprecise, similar data emerge from language exams taken in Russian schools.

Civic Interest and Involvement

If we look at civic interest through the prism of the questions asked in the March 1997 survey, we note that non-citizens have a significantly lower interest in the local elections (37%) than citizens
In measuring these dimensions, I first look at data from a survey conducted by the Baltic Data House in March 1997 and depict them in a conceptual scheme similar to the typology presented in Figure 1. The operational measures for Figure 2 (page 20) are: 1. Structural integration: Is respondent a citizen, yes/no 2. Functional integration: does respondent speak Latvian well, or relatively well: yes/no 3. For civic attitudinal integration I use a question asked in March 1997 as to whether respondents were interested in the local elections held at that time, yes/no. The results are shown in Figure 2.

As can be seen, the largest percentage is in cell #7 that represents a separatist subgroup, namely non-citizens who do not speak Latvian and have no election interest. These people stand aloof from Latvia's broader society and politics. The next largest group (#6) differs in that it has an interest in the local elections, e.g. it's civic interest is such that I categorized it as part of pluralist policies, yet it is a borderline category since the lack of language facility could be seen as a separatist intent. The other interpretation is that this group of people may wish to learn Latvian, but have not had an opportunity to do so. If so, then respondents falling into this group would represent candidates for being more integrated over time, e.g. switching to pluralist type (subgroup #4), or even to assimilationist subgroup # 1 of people who, after learning Latvian, could become citizens.

Interestingly the third largest subgroup again falls under the separatist label, e.g. these are people who are integrated functionally in that they speak Latvian, but are non-citizens with no election interest. Would their civic interest rise if they were able to integrate legally, e.g. become citizens, or would they remain uninterested? There is some evidence that the latter is more likely, since subgroup #2 is relatively big as well and other data below suggest a generally high level of civic apathy.

There are three more subgroups that do express civic interest, among these the assimilationist category # 1 and pluralist category # 4 are the most well-adjusted. The people falling into subgroup # 4 are most likely to integrate fully and become citizens in the next few years, since they have the formal prerequisites of knowing the language and having a civic interest. Subgroup # 5 is a promising target for language learning programs. In contrast subgroup #3 reflects a politically apathetic group of citizens who do not speak Latvian and one can thus say that legal integration has failed to go hand in hand with linguistic or civic integration.

In order to assess further the implications of the eight integrative outcomes and possible future trends it is important to step back a bit and examine what we know about the indicators used.

Language Facility and Use:

It is one of the legacies of Soviet nationality policy that less than half of the non-Latvians know Latvian well, or relatively well (Figure 3, page 21). Soviet language policy encouraged one-sided bilingualism, meaning that everyone was to be fluent in Russian, but Russian speakers were
Naturalization Processes

After much debate and controversy the parliament of Latvia passed a Law on Naturalization in August 1994. It foresees a gradual naturalization of non-Latvian residents, beginning with the younger age groups. By spring 1997 it became evident that many fewer people were applying for citizenship than expected; thus only ca. 5% of those eligible in 1995 and 1996 in fact applied and these mostly were spouses of citizens. Of those 16-20 year olds who were eligible to be naturalized in 1996 only 1.7% applied, e.g. 560 of 33,327. Those who did apply typically had little difficulty getting naturalized: 92% passed the language exam on the first try, and 87% passed the history and civics exam. Not a single complaint has been filed about irregularities in the naturalization procedures.

The low rate of applications for naturalization has surprised local as well as foreign observers, since the heated debate about citizenship issues has suggested a high level of interest. As illustrated below, survey data too indicate that many wish to acquire Latvian citizenship, but now we see a huge gap between such statements and actual behavior. Few explanations are evident at this stage, but they could be related to gaps between intent and behavior, to not knowing Latvian and being unable to pass the civics test, to a generally low level of civic interest, and to naturalization having few advantages and even having some disadvantages.

Some insights are provided by a survey undertaken by the Naturalization Board in December 1995 and January 1996 in 18 Russian language schools in various regions of Latvia. A total of 2,761 respondents filled out written questionnaires distributed in class in Russian language schools. The survey focused on fifteen to nineteen year olds as they fell into the group being eligible for naturalization in 1996. Of the respondents, 48.3% were citizens already and therefore did not answer most questions. Of the non-citizens, 63% state that they wish to acquire citizenship of Latvia, 11% do not, and 25% have not thought about it. Reasons why citizenship is not aspired to reveal an apathetic group (29%) that gives no reply at all, 28% "see no need," 27% "do not want to lose opportunity to visit former Soviet republics without visa" 23% "do not wish to serve in army of Latvia" (actually this percentage should be doubled since girls are not liable to be drafted), 22% "wish to emigrate", 16% "wish to obtain citizenship of another state" (the total is more that 100% as multiple answers were possible). Thus next to a general lack of interest or preference for another affiliation, visa-free travel to CIS countries and not having to serve in the Latvian army are leading disincentives for naturalization. These same factors have been mentioned in the local Russian press, together with complaints that the naturalization procedure is too cumbersome.

Of those who say that they want Latvia’s citizenship (Table 6, page 25) most mention pragmatic reasons of wishing to make a life and career in Latvia, and having equal rights. A relatively large group (39%) mentions having a sense of Latvia as their homeland, but only 3% mention the wish to vote, again indicating relatively low civic interest.
While this is understandable since non-citizens couldn't vote (although proposals about extending voting rights in local elections have been debated), Table 3 (page 22) suggests that the overall structure of civic interest of non-Latvian citizens and non-citizens is very similar when one asks about taxation and crime fighting, yet differ a little on the rights and duties of citizens, and differ significantly once one asks about relations with Russia and naturalization. While the latter again is to be expected, the higher interest in relations with Russia suggests stronger ties to it, and, by extension, possibly less of a civic focus on Latvia, as I shall argue below when discussing the surprisingly low level of applications for naturalization.

Table 3 also shows that compared to other issues, the level of interest in the history of Latvia's constitution is low both among citizens and non-citizens. This suggests low interest in prima facie civic issues. In addition, it is related to language knowledge, since Table 4 (page 23) shows that people able to read in Latvian are more interested in this issue. Latvian policy-makers would be well advised to publish more Russian language literature on constitutional topics.

Civic identity may be affected by links to another state, in the case of Soviet-era settlers, links to former USSR, and now Russia. A group focusing its identity on a state other than the one it lives in is more properly called a diaspora rather than minority. Ronald Suny has argued that a diaspora is 'transnational other within a nation state' and not a nationality on its own right. He speculates that the overriding incentives for the Russian diaspora is to covet their links to the Russian Federation. This is so for at least a subgroup of Russians in Latvia. As illustrated below a wish to retain close ties with Russia is a prime reason for avoiding naturalization, and one a part of the Russian residents of Latvia retain a Russia centered cultural and political identity.

One illustration of the latter is provided by surveys. Thus when asked in December 1990 "Do you consider yourselves primarily a citizen of the Soviet Union or a citizen of the republic in which you live?" 52% said that they considered themselves citizens of the Soviet Union. 36% said that they considered themselves citizens of Latvia (another 15% said it was difficult to say). Other data too indicate that non-Latvians have been less clear in identifying with the Republic of Latvia than have been Latvians, although the gap has been narrowing. When asked both in 1991 and 1994 to state their attitude towards Latvia hypothetically joining Russia at some time in the future, the group saying that they hope that this will happen remains relatively stable (17.7 vs. 16%), but the group rejecting the thought has grown considerably at the expense of the previously large "difficult to answer" category (Table 5, page 24). Nevertheless, the ratio of respondents who "can't say" is still very large, illustrating uncertainty of views toward Latvia's sovereignty. It is interesting to note that the percentage of Latvians expressing uncertainty is larger as well.
ties to Russia, the Soviet-era settlers in Latvia are sensitive to developments there. Radical shifts toward more dictatorial domestic or foreign policies could shift the ethnic balance in Latvia toward more separatist tendencies, but the exploration of such a scenario is the topic of further research.

As concerns Latvian public policy, I conclude that it is very important to focus on civic education and programs explaining what the Republic of Latvia is all about. Although Latvians too are becoming more apathetic politically, the trend is especially problematic among non-Latvians and non-citizens, since it hampers efforts at civic integration. It is troubling to see a large group of civic nihilists among young people in Latvia. The low application rate for naturalization is just one indication of this overall trend.
Another survey of non-citizen shows similar results. Of respondents in the Gulbene region (N= 520) most (71%) say that they wish to obtain citizenship, yet some mention that they feel no immediate need for it. Others are uncertain about the stability of the political situation and many state that they should get citizenship automatically on the basis of having worked in Latvia, and that they resent the process of naturalization as being demeaning. Of those who do not wish to apply for citizenship the largest group (35%) do not wish to forego visa-free travel to Russia and other CIS states. 38

Conclusions

Ethnopolitical alignments change from one situation to another,39 and the most recent theories emphasize the contextuality of ethnicity as well as the constructed nature of ethnic identity. The intense processes of identity formation in Latvia support this theory, yet it is ironic that this happens in a region where the prevalent popular view of ethnicity is that it is an objective given that cannot change. In fact, there is relatively little assimilation, but non-Latvians slowly become increasingly bilingual and more importantly, shift their civic identification to one that focuses on Latvia. Yet parallel to this process of ethnic and civic integration, one also notes significant groups that wish to remain separate or are apathetic.

The coexistence of several subgroups and parallel policies is confusing when one first starts to analyze ethnic processes in Latvia and one needs to beware of inadvertently focusing too much on one or another. Current government policy emphasizes cultural pluralism and the gradual civic integration of non-citizens, and it is thus tempting to assume that this indeed is the prevalent trend. Yet our data show that there are also continuing strong separatist tendencies, including a surprisingly strong reluctance to take Latvia’s citizenship. In addition there is a weak, yet persistent process of assimilation and integration through mixed marriages. While the same may be true for other countries, in Latvia today clearly there are divergent yet simultaneous ethnic trends affecting specific subgroups of the minority population.

In light of the three concurrent ethnic processes the main question is not how much integration there is overall, but rather which one of the ethnic subgroups dominates or could become more dominant in the future. Currently there is a stable status quo accepted by most players. As for the future, my tentative answer is that the small subgroup that assimilates is likely to grow, but at a very slow pace. The pluralistic groups who, while retaining their distinct identities, increasingly speak Latvian and accept Latvia as their state, are of medium size and are likely to expand at a slow pace as well. The separatist groups on their part are likely to decrease slowly, in part due to continuing emigration, especially of young people seeking careers in Russia, and also due to some of its many elderly representatives dying. In sum, major and sudden shifts in ethnic or civic identification are unlikely, except if a radical change occurs in the international context. Due to its traditionally strong
Table 2
Population of Latvia by Ethnicity and Citizenship, April 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ETHNICITY</th>
<th>N THOUSANDS</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>CITIZENS OF LATVIA THOUSANDS</th>
<th>% OF ETHNIC GROUP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2475.5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1774.4</td>
<td>71.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvians</td>
<td>1398.5</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>1386.7</td>
<td>99.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russians</td>
<td>752.4</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>290.2</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poles</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>62.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byelorussians</td>
<td>105.6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuanians</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gypsies</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>90.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jews</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>44.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainians</td>
<td>69.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonians</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>49.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germans</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: Population Registration Office of Republic of Latvia, April 24, 1997
Table 1
Native Language by Nationality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Native Language</th>
<th>Native Language</th>
<th>Native Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Latvian</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvians (N = 1142)</td>
<td>97.2%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russians (N = 628)</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>98.9%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (N = 224)</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>55.8%</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Figure 2

**Eight Integrative Outcomes, Focus on Local Elections**

Non-Latvians, Total N = 393 = 100%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assimilation</th>
<th>Pluralism</th>
<th>Separation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1  
Citizens  
Speak Latvian  
Election interest  
11.2% (N = 44) | 4  
Non-citizens  
Speak Latvian  
Election interest  
6.3% (N = 25) | 7  
Non-citizens  
Do not speak Latvian  
No election interest  
27.5% (N = 108) |
| 2  
Citizens  
Speak Latvian  
No election interest  
9.2% (N = 36) | 5  
Citizens  
Do not speak Latvian  
Election interest  
6.1% (N = 24) | 8  
Non-citizens  
Speak Latvian  
No election interest  
13.7% (N = 54) |
| 3  
Citizens  
Do not speak Latvian  
No election interest  
7.4 (N = 29) | 6  
Non-citizens  
Do not speak Latvian  
Election interest  
18.6% (N = 73) | Empty Cell |

*Suggestion by some that Non-citizens be allowed to participate*

**Data Source:** *Survey by Baltic Data House, March 1997*
Figure 1

Eight Integrative Outcomes, Prototypes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assimilation</th>
<th>Pluralism</th>
<th>Separation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example: Children from mixed marriages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assimilation</th>
<th>Pluralism</th>
<th>Separation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example: Historical Minorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assimilation</th>
<th>Pluralism</th>
<th>Separation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example: Latvian "Soviets"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assimilation</th>
<th>Pluralism</th>
<th>Separation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Empty Cell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example: Latvian gulag survivors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assimilation</th>
<th>Pluralism</th>
<th>Separation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Empty Cell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example: Jews or Germans who emigrate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assimilation</th>
<th>Pluralism</th>
<th>Separation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Empty Cell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example: "Zero option" naturalization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assimilation</th>
<th>Pluralism</th>
<th>Separation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: Yes/No = nominal and/or legal homogenization
Yes/No = functional knowledge of dominant language
Yes/No = attitudinal identification with civic community
Figure 3

Knowledge of Spoken Latvian, by Age Groups

(% of Non-Latvians, N = 852)

Source: Baltic Data House, Feb. & Mar. 1997, survey commissioned by UNDP
Table 3
Political Interest of Non-Latvians, Citizens as Compared to Non-Citizens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERESTED IN:</th>
<th>CITIZENS N = 134</th>
<th>NON-CITIZENS N = 262</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Taxes Are Used</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime-fighting</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights Issues</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of Constitution</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relations with Russia</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rights and Duties of Citizen</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturalization Issues</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: Baltic Data House, March 1997
Table 4
Political Interest of Non-Latvians, Citizens and Non-Citizens, by Language Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERESTED IN:</th>
<th>CITIZENS WHO READ LATVIAN N = 91</th>
<th>CITIZENS WHO DO NOT READ LATVIAN N = 43</th>
<th>NON-CITIZENS WHO READ LATVIAN N = 112</th>
<th>NON-CITIZENS WHO DO NOT READ LATVIAN N = 150</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Taxes Are Used</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime-fighting</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights Issues</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of Constitution</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relations with Russia</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rights and Duties of Citizen</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturalization Issues</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: Baltic Data House, March 1997
Table 5
Opinions About the Future Status of Latvia (%)

“What is your attitude towards the prospect of Latvia joining Russia at some time in the future?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I hope this will happen sooner or later</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I hope this will never happen again</td>
<td>91.0</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some other answer</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t say, difficult to answer</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6
Reasons for Naturalization Wish
Fourteen to Nineteen Year Olds
in Russian Language Schools
(N = 860, multiple answers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Live in Latvia and wish to continue living here</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think of Latvia as my homeland</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important for my future career</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wish to have all the rights of a member of Latvia’s society</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wish to participate in elections</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore this issue further, but the Gypsies of Latvia deserve to be studied in depth as an example of a small, yet very well-integrated minority. Why this is so is even more interesting in light of the comparatively problematic status of Gypsies in other parts of East Central Europe.
10. Summary of literature in Bochner, 15-16.
19. More details in Karklins, 1994, ch.3
27. For elaboration see Rasma Karklins "Language Policy in Latvia," forthcoming.

26


34. After extensive debate, Latvia adopted a citizenship law on August 11, 1994. It foresees that naturalization starts with ethnic Latvians and Livs, all Estonians and Lithuanians who have lived in Latvia at least five years; graduates of Latvian-language high schools who have lived in Latvia at least five years; spouses of Latvian citizens for at least ten years who have lived in Latvia at least five years, and some other groups. General naturalization began on January 1, 1996. Consideration is first given to people born in Latvia, and to younger age groups. Applicants for citizenship must have spent at least five years in Latvia after 4 May 1990, know the Latvian language, history, and Constitution; have a legal source of income, and pledge an oath of loyalty to the Republic of Latvia. Some categories of persons cannot be naturalized, for example individuals who have served in the KGB or have used anti-constitutional means to campaign against Latvia's independence or democracy.


36. For a general description of the survey and findings see *Izglītība un Kultūra*, 23 May 1996, pp. 11-12.

37. For example *Narodnaya Gazeta*, 15 February 1996.

38. Board of Naturalization, internal report on survey, September 1996.