POST-COMMUNIST TRANSFORMATION AND
SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE:
MARRIAGE AND THE RISE OF NON-MARITAL BIRTHS IN
LATVIA

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Abstract

How are the rapid rise in the proportion of non-marital births and the precipitous decline in marriage rates in the post-communist state of Latvia linked to the structural and cultural changes of the last decade? Are these social phenomena products of the economic dislocations of the post-communist free market? Is the increasing number of non-traditional family formations also contributing to the high level of material deprivation? Has post-communism also brought social and cultural changes that have contributed to these phenomena by changing perceptions about gender and family and transforming behavioral norms? This paper will begin to address these important questions by examining the sociodemographic changes that have taken place in Latvia and seeking answers in both theories of Western change and the particular social, economic, and historical conditions of the East. While this paper focuses on Latvia, the trends of which I speak are also present in neighboring states. Consequently, the conclusions reached might be considered in understanding regional trends as well.
Introduction

How are the rapid rise in the proportion of non-marital births and the precipitous decline in marriage rates in the post-communist state of Latvia linked to the structural and cultural changes of the last decade? Are these social phenomena products of the economic dislocations of the post-communist free market? Is the increasing number of non-traditional family formations also contributing to the high level of material deprivation? Has postcommunism also brought social and cultural changes that have contributed to these phenomena by changing perceptions about gender and family and transforming behavioral norms? This paper will begin to address these important questions by examining the sociodemographic changes that have taken place in Latvia and seeking answers in both theories of Western change and the particular social, economic, and historical conditions of the East. While this paper focuses on Latvia, the trends of which I speak are also present in neighboring states. Consequently, the conclusions reached might be considered in understanding regional trends as well.

Significance of the study

An understanding of the sociodemographic changes that have taken place in Latvia and the entire region is useful and important for several reasons. First, the relationship between the economic and sociocultural changes of postcommunism and changes in the family structure has not received much scholarly attention. While many of the region's states have expressed concern about dropping birth and marriage rates and a rising proportion of non-marital births, the hand-wringing about the end of the "traditional family" has fostered superficial legislative steps, such as making the marriage registration process more rigorous and the divorce process more lengthy. What is needed, however, is careful analytical scrutiny of the underlying causes of these fundamental changes. Recognizing the processes at work, whether they be economic or cultural, that contribute to sociodemographic change is vital for constructing effective social policies that support families, regardless of their composition.

Second, the broad material deprivation in post-communist states like Latvia represents a potential source of instability in states seeking to return to the community of democratic, market-oriented nations.
Though progress has been made in many areas, a substantial segment of the population has experienced a decline of fortune in the past decade: both statistical data on income and survey data reflecting inhabitants' perceptions of their well-being attest to this.

This is a serious issue because while the greatest threat to the region has often been seen as the destabilizing influence of either a resurgent or, alternatively, weak and desperate Russia, threats to state stability and success may also emerge from more subtle sources like the widespread material deprivation affecting large segments of post-communist populations. While this work does not focus on poverty as such, it does have the potential to contribute to a better understanding of poverty's effects and the way that the economic hardships of transformation and sociodemographic changes are linked. In the area of policy-making, in particular, a fuller understanding of the roots of serious social problems like poverty, which is especially common in families with children in Eastern Europe, is critical.

Data used in this study

Data for this study come from a variety of sources, both primary and secondary. Secondary data cited in the study consists largely of surveys and statistical data from academic and state sources in Latvia. Primary data come from a closed-ended questionnaire intended to provide basic background information on attitudes about family life and change and gender roles, and to supplement the few large-scale attitude surveys available. The questionnaire was quota-sampled to reflect the basic ethnic and regional composition of the country. It sampled women across age categories from under 19 to 49.

While the size of the sample (n=230) limits its generalizability, it provides useful data on women's attitudes and actions that may offer a basis for larger future studies. This primary data is supplemented and complemented by 41 in-depth interviews with women, which included some the same attitude questions, but focused on gathering life-course data, asking about courtship, marriage, divorce, childbearing, and other issues of family life. The two sets of data together offer a picture of both attitudes and practices of women across a variety of ages, regions, and ethnic groups.
My study focuses on women in particular because I am interested in an analysis that takes women as agents of change, not just objects of change, as women have largely been seen in works on Eastern Europe's transformation. The study shows, I believe, that women are not just the victims or objects of transformational processes (though they have suffered many of its ill effects like material deprivation disproportionately), but that they are instrumental actors in the drama that is postcommunism.

Part I: Dimensions of Sociodemographic Change

Marriage rates

Changes in the marriage rate in the last several decades in Latvia, the last decade in particular, have been substantial. Prior to 1990, the pace of change was slow. From 10.1 per 1000 in 1970, the crude marriage rate inched downward to 9.8 in 1980 and 8.8 in 1990. After 1990, however, the decline was precipitous and rapid. Immediately after Latvia's exit from the Soviet Union, change was apparent: as early as 1992 the rate had dropped to 7.2 per 1000. By 1995, the marriage rate was 4.4 per 1000, and a decade into Latvia's second independent republic, the rate appears to have bottomed out at just under 4 per 1000. There is no evidence at present that would suggest a rebound in the national rate is imminent and two Latvian demographers have suggested that with the "present intensity of registered marriages at least a half of women and men will never marry."

Marriage Rate in Latvia per 1000 Inhabitants (Crude Marriage Rate)
Non-marital fertility

The increase in non-marital fertility is comprised of both a rise in the absolute number of non-marital births and a steep increase in the proportion of all births that occur outside of marriage. This increase can be understood, on the one hand, as a product of the real growth of births outside of marriage. On the other hand, it is also a dimension of the demographic phenomenon of the fall in births within marriage. Fertility has fallen across the board. While the age-specific fertility rate per 1000 women 15-49 was 58.5 in 1990, by 1999, it had dropped to 32 per 1000, which, in fact represented a small rebound from the historical low of 30.4 registered in 1998. The total fertility rate, which represents the average number of children born to a woman during her lifetime, has fallen to under 1.2, well below a replacement-level fertility rate of 2.1.

The picture of changes in the proportion of non-marital births is a compelling one that begs explanation. Statistics show that the proportion of non-marital births remained at a relatively steady rate, with some slow upward movement, until the end of the 1980s. The rise accelerated considerably from the 1990s, reaching 40% in 2000, and does not appear to have leveled off yet.

Non-Marital Births as a Proportion of All Births in Latvia

Notably, the increase in the number and proportion of non-marital births cannot be characterized as a "teen" phenomenon, though teenaged women are among those giving birth outside of marriage and in this age group (13-19) the majority of births are non-marital: in 2000, for instance, fully 70.7% of all births to women this age were outside of marriage. In the next age category, 20-24, the proportion of non-marital births was 47.9% and in the age group 25-29, it was 33.2%.
There are, of course, important questions about the relationship status of the parents of children born outside of marriage. Are they largely being born into families in which parents cohabit but do not marry, a relationship form that has gained popularity in Latvia in the last decade? Or are they born to mothers who live apart from but maintain a relationship with the fathers of the children? Are some also born to what are called "lone mothers" in Latvia, that is, women who are for all intents and purposes the sole parent to the child? Data on this issue is rather poor, but some facts are known. For instance, according to the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, in about one-third of non-marital birth cases, no father is specified on the certificate of birth. While it is not fully clear that this data can be interpreted in any single way, it does suggest that in these cases at least, the mother is likely to be the sole active provider. Further, Family and Fertility Survey data suggest that cohabiting partners are more likely to split than their married counterparts, increasing the probability of single parenthood for mothers in such relationships. 4

Regional similarities and differences

While the changes in Latvia and neighboring Estonia are the most radical in the post-communist space, the decline in marriage is clearly a regional trend. In Hungary, for instance, the marriage rate per 1000 slipped from 6.4 in 1990 to 4.8 in 1996. Over the same period in Ukraine, the rate fell from 9.3 to 6.0, in the Czech Republic from 8.8 to 5.2, in Russia from 8.9 to 5.9, and in Bulgaria from 6.7 to 4.3.

The proportion of non-marital births has also risen across the region: for instance, from 1990 to 1995, it rose from 13.2% to 20.7% in Hungary, 12.4% to 25.8% in Bulgaria, and 14.6% to 21.4% in the Russian Federation. Even in Lithuania, a strongly Catholic state, the rate has risen, though it has remained low compared to the other Baltic countries. 5

Though the degree of change is clearly variable across the region, the existence of a trend away from early and widespread marriage and childbearing nearly exclusively inside of marriage is apparent in the post-communist space. While regional variations may be dependent on culture and religion, among other factors, I believe that there are commonalities in the explanations for change, particularly since the
entire region has seen the effects of economic dislocations and has experienced normative changes wrought by westernization.

Part II: Perspectives on Changes in Family and Society

The changes we see are not accidental and they are not random. They represent new phenomena with complex sociological antecedents ranging from problems of new capitalist economic organization to the newly available gender and sexual values and norms of the West. In this paper, I explore possible explanations for changes, basing them in theses about comparable changes in the West but modifying those approaches to take into account the particularities and peculiarities of the post-communist context.

Sociocultural perspectives

In seeking to explain the dramatic processes of change described above, it is useful to consider the sociocultural context. That is, one needs to ask if there have been normative changes in society regarding ideas about family, family formation, and gender roles. The linkage of normative change and family and gender role change comes in many guises in existing literature. Some of this literature focuses on changes in individual attitudes and desires regarding self-fulfillment. That is, “family decline,” in the form of late or no marriage, low and non-marital fertility, and widespread divorce and cohabitation, is attributed to shifts toward a Western culture of individualism and consumption. In the West, normative changes have also been associated with social movements like the women’s movement. Some theorists have suggested that women’s increasing economic independence helped foster the women’s movement, which itself, by changing norms and values regarding female autonomy and opportunity, accelerated family change. Economics appear as a factor, but changes in norms and values speed the transition.

In the case at hand, I suggest that we need to consider the possibility of the availability of new values and norms and to keep in mind that some existing normative beliefs and pressures will also carry over. It is the amalgamation of these two that seems important, not just the existence of new values and norms.
Normative changes

The sources of new values and norms in Latvia are likely to be found in the spread of Western culture and its accompanying “resocialization” and the influence of the close and closely watched Scandinavian neighbors. With respect to changing norms, several issues are worth highlighting.

Scandinavia, which exerts a powerful influence on its Baltic neighbors and represents in a tangible sense “modernity” for Latvians, is a region characterized by high non-marital birth rates and high levels of cohabitation.

In 1994, the rate of marriage per 1000 population was 3.9 in Sweden, 4.9 in Finland, 4.8 in Norway, and 6.8 in Denmark. The rate of marriage was 4.5 per 1000 in Latvia that year, though Latvia “caught up” with its Swedish neighbor by 1996, when it too registered a rate of 3.9 per 1000. In a country where “modernization” is one important goal in society, one should not imagine that that notion would only attach to political and economic structures. Further, in both Norway and Sweden, non-marital births exceed 50% and in Denmark, the proportion is just under that. The Scandinavian influence may explain some part of the fact that Latvia has the second-highest proportion of non-marital births in the region (Estonia is first).

The results of the 1995 Latvian Family and Fertility Study (n=4200) suggest fairly liberal attitudes toward non-marital childbearing and some evidence of negative attitudes toward marriage. In response to the statement, “If a woman wants to have a child as a single parent and she does not want to have a stable relationship with a man she should be able to have the child,” fully 78.8% of female respondents answered in the affirmative, as did 66.8% of male respondents.

Strikingly, however, there was a divergence of opinions between males and females in the youngest cohorts surveyed: while 86.3% of females 18-19 years of age agreed with the statement, only 55.1% of males of the same age did. Similarly, 77.5% female respondents in the 20-24 year age category agreed, compared to 58% of males. Interestingly, contrary to what one might expect, male attitudes on
this question became more liberal with age and the most conservative responses were concentrated among the younger respondents.

On the other hand, despite the attitude of many that women should not raise children outside a stable relationship with a man, younger male respondents expressed negative attitudes toward marriage more often than other groups. Nearly a quarter of male respondents 18-19 years of age and nearly 19% of male respondents age 20-24 agreed with the statement assertion that “Marriage is an outdated institution.” For comparison, just 13.7% of the youngest females and 16.7% of female respondents 20-24 years of age agreed.

On the whole, however, marriage still appears as an expected and awaited part of one’s life course. In a 1996 study, for instance, over 72% of respondents agreed that “On the whole, married people are happier than unmarried people.” That there is concern about marriage becoming a less common part of the life course is highlighted in my own study. Despite the fact that about half of respondents’ held the view that “a woman can live a full and happy life without marriage,” four-fifths also agreed that “the government should do more to promote marriage among young people.”

While the small respondent pool in this study limits its generalizability, one may conclude that there is some trepidation in society, as there has been in other societies experiencing family change, about the decline in marriage. In Eastern Europe, where the communist state exercised stringent control over social life for decades, it may also not be surprising that the government is seen by these respondents as having the capacity and responsibility to deal with this perceived social problem.

While these data suggest that marriage retains its importance as a central societal institution, a 1996 study of 1204 men and women in Latvia offers the qualifying point that marriage for its own sake is not highly regarded: fewer than a quarter of respondents agreed with the statement, “It is better to have an unsuccessful marriage than to have no marriage at all.” My own work reflects this sentiment as well: nearly four-fifths of respondents rejected the notion that marriage for its own sake is a value, disagreeing with the statement that “it is better for a woman to marry a man who is not her ideal than to not marry at all.”
Because earlier data of a comparable nature are scarce, it is difficult to gauge changes. There is, however, anecdotal evidence to suggest that there was previously greater societal pressure to marry and even that the normative context conferred greater status on divorced than on never-married women. In response to a question about whether she had felt any pressure to get married at the time that she entered into her first serious partnership, a 40-year-old divorced interviewee commented that “there was a belief that you had to get married because that was in the ’80s” and another, a 36-year-old who married at 19 stated that “such a view [that young people had to marry] was dominant in 1983.” A respondent who married for the first time in the 1970s also suggested that “the idea prevailed [that one had to marry] just after the first kiss! The pressure from parents [was] ‘that’s not good’ – without marriage!” This respondent also evaluated positively changes in norms of behavior, noting that “My children have not found it necessary to enter into unconsidered marriages.”

**Family formation and cohabitation**

Statistics, though not comprehensive in Latvia, suggest that cohabitation has become more possible and popular in the past decade. It has become more possible because the severe housing shortage characteristic of the Soviet era has eased (and one need no longer be married to get an apartment separate from one’s parents). But why has it become more popular? There are several possible answers to this question. First, as noted earlier, there may be the perception that it represents “modernity,” in as much as it is widely practiced in the West, in particular in the Scandinavian countries. A 22-year-old Latvian, noted that she felt no pressure to marry when she began cohabiting at 18 because “by that time matrimony was not modern, civil marriage [cohabitation] was modern.”

The idea that marriage as an institution has lessened meaning in people’s lives is also reflected in the responses of over 40% of participants in my survey, who suggested that a cohabiting couple would not have reason to legalize their relationship status. It is interesting to note, however, that many of those who agreed with this statement still supported the idea that the government should act to increase marriages.
Second, cohabitation may be perceived as an alternative, temporary or permanent, to a legal marital commitment. The responses of cohabiting women in my study to the question of why they have not married show various dimensions of this “alternative” and, while not generalizable, show an interesting difference among younger cohabiters, who regard the status as temporary, and older cohabiters, who regard it as permanent.

- “Because of a shortage of money. We would like to have a grand wedding, for that one needs quite a bit of money.” (Latvian, 21, not working, in Riga)
- “[We have not married] purely for material reasons. But the ‘big day’ is being planned.” (Russian student, 22, in an unspecified city)
- “[I don’t want to marry] so that I don’t lose a certain independence and so that the relationship is not spoiled by the ‘private property’ motive.” (Latvian secretary, 56, in Riga)
- “We are both in middle age and, if things are good, why change them?... I never want to marry again. I feel independent.” (Latvian homemaker, 40, in Jurmala)

It is also relatively clear that there are few moral barriers to cohabitation remaining. The young Russian respondent cited above even suggested that not only are there no social or moral qualms about cohabitation, but that “there is even the idea that before official marriage it would be good for partners to live together in order to see what living together is before taking the step towards responsibility,” a point supported by a 1996 study in which fully 82.3% of respondents agreed that “a couple who intends to marry would benefit from living together first.”

Old norms

As noted earlier, it is important to consider changes in values and norms. There is, for instance, less pressure to marry than in the past and cohabitation has become an acceptable form of intimate partnership. In order to more fully understand the sociodemographic changes of the past decade, however, it is also imperative to consider which values and norms have not changed substantially. In other words, if we are going to link a behavior, like an increase in non-marital births, with normative structures in society, we need to identify both new and old norms and values that are present.

What, then, are old norms and values that may be pertinent to understanding sociodemographic changes in Latvian society? I suggest that there are powerful persistent norms and expectations regarding
"womanhood" and what it takes to be a "complete woman." Most notable for our purposes is this deeply rooted belief: a woman's life is incomplete without a child. A woman's choosing not to marry and choosing not to have a child are very different choices in this respect.

There is evidence showing support for the idea that bearing and raising a child is central to a woman's life. My own work highlights this important point as well. The choice (or circumstance) of not marrying is not seen as synonymous with losing the option of bearing a child and the majority of women who participated in both the survey (n=230) and the interview (n=41) portions of my study responded positively to the idea that "it is better for a woman to have a child outside of marriage than to live her life without a child."

By contrast, the respondents were nearly evenly split on the question of whether a woman could "live a full and happy life without marriage." While a few responded to the question of non-marital childbearing by saying that "this is an individual choice," and another stated that she personally "would not wish to have a child without a father," negative responses were in the minority. One respondent noted that she was not sure because "the child then has a difficult life. But maybe it is better for the woman."

"It is better for a woman to have a child outside of marriage than to live her life without a child."

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Among the comments prompted by this theme were the following:

- "Regardless of the circumstances, it is better to become a mother [than not to have a child]." (married Latvian, unemployed, 35, in Riga)
- "I personally think that she can have one child [outside marriage]." (married Russian university lecturer, 49, in an unspecified city)
- "It is better to have a child outside of marriage [than not to have one at all]. Without children life is worth nothing." (divorced Latvian farmer, 43, in an unspecified rural town)
- "Yes, definitely yes, because then at least something good has been accomplished in life – a child has been raised." (married Latvian farmer, 48, in an unspecified rural town)
- "A woman must definitely become a mother, if that's possible." (cohabiting Latvian, not working, 27, in Riga)
The majority of responses did not indicate moral qualms about a woman choosing to have a child outside of a serious partnership, an opinion that showed no variation by age.

While my study was comparatively small, these data are consistent with findings of larger random-sample surveys, which also have shown that few women (though more men) are opposed to non-marital motherhood as a choice. In my study, it was material rather than moral obstacles that emerged as an issue for some respondents.

- “If she has adequate material circumstances, then a woman must become a mother.” (married Latvian typographer, 37, in an unspecified Latvian town)
- “If material circumstances permit it, she can become a mother, but if not, it is better to be without a child.” (married Latvian teacher, 33, in Carnikava)

Changes in norms do not mean that negative attitudes towards unwed mothers have fully disappeared, however, and several interviewees talked about their sense that there are still negative moral sanctions. A 36-year-old rural dweller suggested that “there are [negative attitudes]. They are talked about behind their backs. Perhaps it is not so in the cities though.” Interestingly, while some respondents attributed more conservative attitudes to rural communities, the fall in marriage and the rise in non-marital births have been greater in those areas than in the cities.

Societal pressure on women to become mothers, which is not uncharacteristic in most societies, is perhaps sharpened by the perceived demographic crisis in Latvia. Latvia’s women have some of the lowest fertility rates in the world and the age structure is top heavy (pensioners are expected to make up a quarter of the population by 2020). A young mother of one in Riga commented that there is pressure to bear children and “that is associated with the very low birth rate.” The state has adopted (largely ineffective) pro-natalist measures such as increases in child allowances (still widely perceived to be paltry) and the introduction of a somewhat more substantial one-time birth grant. One older Latvian respondent humorously suggested that she did not believe there was societal pressure for a woman to become a mother, “except from demographers, who think that women need to bear children who can support the pensioners.”
Another factor that passes on into post-communism is this: both Soviet and Latvian history are replete with images of strong, independent women. This may affect the normative context by supporting the widespread idea that women are fully capable of child-raising without a man. In the words of one Latvian woman in response to a question about what difficulties are encountered by single mothers, “if she is well-situated materially, there are none...”

The social history of the twentieth-century in Latvia, as elsewhere in Eastern Europe, is populated with women who cared for, raised, and protected children without a male head of household. Few families in the region are without such women. The Second World War and its attendant battleground losses, political deportations and executions, and refugee movements out of the East, created a situation in which there was a substantial “scarcity” of men. The effects of male losses echoed for decades across the USSR, reflected in a gender imbalance across much of the Eurasian continent. After the war, in the USSR as a whole, one-third of households were female-headed. In Latvia, 15 years after the Second World War, the female to male ratio was still badly unbalanced: for the population as a whole it was 1278:1000. Among those in the 30-34 age category, it was 1427:1000 and among those 35-39, it was 1597:1000. Consequently, many children were raised in female-headed families and some were born into them as well.

In the context of female autonomy and independence, women’s history of attachment to the labor force is also important. Most women of working age participated in paid labor in the Soviet period; work for the able-bodied was largely compulsory. As well, however, while the Soviet period saw the mass movement of Latvia’s women into the paid labor force, women’s history of active participation in the economy clearly predates this experience. In the heavily agricultural economy of the pre-World War II period, many women worked alongside their men on farms and in fields for the good of the home economy. Women’s history of active participation in the economy in this region is long, though they have not always received due credit in society or history.
In light of all this, it seems a reasonable supposition that women are not widely seen, and do not see themselves, as dependent or weak or incapable. In fact, folk culture and women’s words seem to suggest the reverse: that is, women are more capable and stronger than men. In the words of a Russian folk wisdom, *Women can do everything and men can do the rest.*

Consider, in this context, as well, the words of women in my study:

- “...men are rarely independent.” (unmarried Russian student, 25-29, in Riga)
- “Women are more educated and focused, men, unfortunately, have become more infantile.” (married Russian saleswoman, 25-29, in Riga)
- “Rural men ages 25-35 (40) have no desire to grow with the times...” (married Latvian homemaker, 35-39, in rural Madonas district)
- “[It is difficult to find an appropriate man to marry because of] male alcoholism, chronic unfaithfulness, irresponsibility, inability to take on the responsibility of a family, cowardliness, weakness, weak character, lack of attention to women’s interests and emotions, stupidity, failure to adapt to changes.” (unmarried Latvian economist, 25-29, in rural Dobele)

Interview responses also addressed the issue of female autonomy. Asked an open-ended question about changes in women’s status in the past decade, several women stated that “women have become more autonomous.” In fact, the notion that women have weathered the crises and dislocations of the last decade better than men seems to have emerged as something of a common wisdom in Latvia. Though much work has come out in the West suggesting that women have been victims more than beneficiaries of social, political, and economic changes, some women argue that they have been empowered by change: “Women are more free to make decisions about their own lives – there is greater freedom of choice. Private business, private property. Society’s views have become more open. Women have greater courage to do, to choose” (cohabiting Latvian secretary, 29, in Ventspils).

*The unfinished revolution*

Women’s sense that they are strong, that they have opportunities, and that they want and are ready to reach for fuller equality recalls Arlie Hochschild’s notion of the “unfinished revolution,” which she put forth in a 1990 book on American families, *The Second Shift*. The “unfinished revolution” encompasses the idea that while women’s attitudes have changed and women have become more
autonomous psychologically and financially, men and workplaces have lagged behind in both attitudes and practices.

In my study, the vast majority of female respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statements that “men and women should share equally the work of raising children” and “men and women should share housework equally.” But nearly three-quarters rejected the notion that “men in Latvia today usually share house and childcare duties equally.” Comments regarding male attitudes and practices were often pointedly negative:

- “...patriarchal attitudes are cultivated – the place of women/mothers is in the home and ensuring the man’s comfort, but Latvia’s women (most of them, I think) are too independent to give in to these demands if they don’t wish to.” (unmarried Latvian researcher, 36, in Riga)
- “There are few good partners [for women] – men are spoiled: they are accustomed to the idea that in a family women prepare the meals, clean the flat, watch the kids, etc., they have to be forced to help around the house. Many are degraded, lazy — they work only when forced to – few do so with pleasure.” (cohabiting Latvian secretary, 29, in Ventspils)
- “Most men are spoiled and wish to be cared for like helpless children.” (cohabiting Latvian secretary, 45-49, in Riga)

Studies on time budgets in Latvia reflect the attitude of most respondents that men do not share equally in home or child-related tasks. A 1996 study in Latvia found that in married-couple families with children, women spent nearly 5 times more time on child care than their male partners and women spent over 35 hours per week on domestic work compared to men’s 16 hours. On the whole, employed women spent nearly 29 hours on average per week engaging in household and family care, while male partners contributed about 16 hours. In this study, men also spent more hours (an average of just under 5) working a paid job and had more hours (over 6) of leisure time.\textsuperscript{12}

A study conducted on male reproductive health (but including other topics as well), found that, indeed, the “attitude of both Latvian and Russian-speaking men regarding family life is clearly patriarchal – the man is the breadwinner, a woman’s priority is the home: ‘The man is the master who needs to take care of the family budget and everything else.’ If a woman wants to, she can work, but domestic tasks are still hers to accomplish: ‘A man must bring in money, a woman is responsible for the home.’ Such attitudes were present in all [focus] groups.”\textsuperscript{13}
The focus groups, notably, reflected the views of younger men: all participants were between the ages of 16 and 28. Interestingly, data suggest that patriarchal attitudes about family life are present in most groups in society, with the exception of younger female cohorts. A 1996 study on gender and family found, for instance, that in Latvia fully 83% of male and 57% female respondents accepted or partly accepted the idea that the man should be the breadwinner and the woman the keeper of the home. Among women under 25, however, the proportion fully accepting this proposition was under 20%.

The "unfinished revolution" is pertinent to women’s status and choices in Latvia today. Many women feel autonomous and independent and ambitious. In many cases, however, male (and employer) attitudes and practices have not kept pace: are some female “revolutionaries” exercising their agency by rejecting men whose attitudes are conservative? It is difficult to say with certainty, as human motivations both toward and away from marriage are complex, but it seems safe to say that many younger women detect a mismatch of attitudes and some may be opting out of marriage — as one divorced 36-year-old respondent said, she would like to marry again, “but not with just any jerk.”

Economic Factors

While sociodemographic changes have not generated a great deal of scholarly work in the West, some writing has emerged about the possible link between changes in the family and the economic transformation to capitalism. For instance, Marina Adler’s 1997 article in the *Journal of Marriage and the Family* focuses on East German declines in marriage and fertility. She argues that “in the insecure economic times following German unification, East German women are likely to regard the responsibility of getting married and having children as a risky, long-term commitment they are reluctant to enter.”

Clearly, the economic factor is powerfully central in solving the equation of sociodemographic change: the economic changes, opportunities, and dislocations of the past decade have been enormous. However, I believe that Adler’s linkage between economic insecurity and marriage change says too little and assumes too much. Is it, for instance, the case that women are rejecting the responsibility of marriage? Or are they rejecting men as unmariageable? Beyond that, why, if the insecure economic
environment is a paramount issue are births outside of marriage increasing in both number and proportion? That would seem to be contrary to the simple economic rationality implicit in her idea.

An economically-focused explanation that is potentially fruitful for thinking about the growth in non-marital births and the decline of marriage is one that looks particularly at men's economic position in society. That is because while women's being out of the workforce might render them desirable or at least acceptable partners, men's being out of the workforce never makes them more desirable. I suggest that if one wants to think about decreased marriage and increased non-marital births in the new economic context, one needs to consider the notion of male marriageability.

We might begin with sociologist William Julius Wilson's ideas about male marriageability, which he talks about in several of his books, including *The Truly Disadvantaged* and *When Work Disappears*.

For Wilson, male marriageability, or lack thereof, is key to understanding the low rates of marriage and the high levels of non-marital childbearing in urban black populations in the United States. In *The Truly Disadvantaged*, for instance, he argues that the sharp rise in black male joblessness since 1970 is key to explaining the rise in the rate of single-parent families; in the inner city, where unemployment rates are high, we would, thus, expect to find (and do find) the highest rates of single-parent households.

This is the product of a context, arguably, in which the notion of "male breadwinner" as head of household cannot be sustained. In *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*, Wilson offers the following characterization of the situation:

For many single mothers in the inner city, nonmarriage makes more sense as a family formation strategy than does marriage. Single mothers who perceive the fathers of their children as unreliable or as having limited financial means will often – rationally – choose single parenthood. From the point of view of day-to-day survival, single parenthood reduces the emotional burden and shields them from the type of exploitation that often accompanies the sharing of both living arrangements and limited resources.

Wilson is not arguing that many women would not prefer a marital relationship. Rather, he is suggesting that marriage for its own sake is not a value. Women seek men who are marriageable but because of joblessness and disproportionate incarceration and mortality rates, few such men are available.
The results that follow are low rates of marriage and high rates of non-marital childbearing. While Wilson recognizes the possibility that the cultural norms of the urban context are not inimical to out-of-wedlock childbearing, he rejects purely normative explanations for these social phenomena, citing, instead, what he believes to be the more powerful factors linked to the economic context of post-industrial America.

In the Eastern European context, male marriageability is potentially an important factor in explaining the declines in marriage and the rise in non-marital births. In fact, there was broad agreement among respondents in the survey and the in-depth interviews that women who would like to marry do not have an easy time finding an "appropriate" mate. While the results are not generalizable, they are suggestive.

"These days it is difficult for a young woman to find an appropriate man to marry."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to more fully understand the issues that underlie this attitude, one needs to ask, what does it mean for a man to be "marriageable" in the context of Eastern Europe and Latvia in particular? Why is it that so many women believe that "marriageable men are very, very, very, very few" (married Latvian doctor, 45-49, in Balzi)?

Following Wilson, I would suggest that a marriageable man is one who is employed. In fact, there are important similarities between the post-communist Eastern European context and the post-industrial inner city. In the United States, the shift from a manufacturing-based industrial economy to an information- and service-based post-industrial economy has reduced work opportunities for less-educated men in particular; hence, the "disappearance" of work in the American inner city. Similarly, the post-communist shakeout of the "excess" employment of the Soviet full-employment economy has meant economic dislocation unprecedented in earlier decades. In Latvia, which was a middle link in the Soviet
chain of production, finishing raw materials from other Soviet republics for consumption or use still elsewhere, areas reliant on manufacturing plants for employment have been especially hard hit.

In a sense, then, Latvia has entered a “post-industrial” economy, the shape of which has some important similarities to the American post-industrial context, which is defined not only by a declining manufacturing sector, but by a growing number of service-oriented jobs. From 1993 to 1998 in Latvia, manufacturing jobs dropped from 29% to 24% of the total, while service jobs increased their share from 52% to 58%.

Significantly, manufacturing has traditionally been a male domain, while service jobs, many in areas like health care, retail sales, and food service, have tended to go to women.

Across the country, rates of official unemployment are quite variable: in Riga, for instance, they have stayed relatively low, while in some towns and rural areas, they have been very high. In 1999, the average rate of unemployment in Riga was 5.3%. By contrast, in Rezekne and Liepaja, the rate was around 15%. In the Rezeknes district, which includes both the city and its surrounding areas, the official rate was 28.3%. Riga and Rezekne represent, in this instance, the extremes in the official rate: many of the rural areas and small towns tended to cluster around rates of 8-14%.

From 1990 through 1997, the number of persons working the formal economy fell, as many Soviet-era work sites closed or sloughed off excess workers. From 1992 to 1993, for instance, the number of registered unemployed grew from 31,284 to 76,744. By 1996, it had reached 94,806. Economist Zigrida Gosa writes that “...the number of male workers fell even faster [than the number of female workers]. In 1997, compared with 1992, the number of working men fell by 148,000 or 21.9%, while the number of working women fell by 109,000 or 17.6%.” The number of workers in the economy began to grow again after that, but dropped again in 1998, due in part to the serious financial crisis in neighboring Russia, which is a major trading partner for Latvia.

There are often substantial differences between official rates based on registered unemployed persons and estimates, compiled by the Ministry of Welfare and others, that take into account those outside of the labor market who have not registered with the state or have given up their fruitless searches for work. For instance, in 1997, the official unemployment rate was around 7%, while Ministry of
Welfare data pegged the rate at over 14%. Both official and labor force survey data should be used cautiously, though, because while both mirror a situation in which there are serious issues of unemployment, many people may also work in the unofficial economy. In few instances, however, does this kind of work, which may include selling flowers on the street, chopping timber illegally, or lending a hand on a small private farm, provide more than a paltry income.

Data show that unemployment rates have tended to be somewhat higher for women: nationally, 57% of the unemployed are women, but there are regional variations and in a few areas, women are advantaged. However, men’s labor force attachment is associated with marriageability in a way that women’s is not. Consequently, it is male unemployment that more profoundly affects that marriage situation in the country, especially if it is concentrated in the “marrying” age groups.

The following chart, based on data from the Ministry of Welfare and the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia gives some sense of the situation in 1997, when the marriage rate had fallen to a low of 3.9 per 1000.

**Unemployment by age, gender, and area in 1997**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Rural Males</th>
<th>Rural Females</th>
<th>Urban Males</th>
<th>Urban Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>37.13%</td>
<td>23.91%</td>
<td>12.16%</td>
<td>49.56%</td>
<td>43.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>20.96%</td>
<td>6.63%</td>
<td>16.15%</td>
<td>23.98%</td>
<td>26.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>14.44%</td>
<td>6.40%</td>
<td>9.72%</td>
<td>16.15%</td>
<td>17.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>14.45%</td>
<td>6.32%</td>
<td>10.86%</td>
<td>14.82%</td>
<td>19.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>14.79%</td>
<td>6.54%</td>
<td>6.58%</td>
<td>16.04%</td>
<td>20.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>12.35%</td>
<td>5.60%</td>
<td>7.58%</td>
<td>15.49%</td>
<td>13.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>14.94%</td>
<td>8.66%</td>
<td>5.54%</td>
<td>22.43%</td>
<td>19.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>14.86%</td>
<td>7.70%</td>
<td>7.51%</td>
<td>15.35%</td>
<td>12.58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Labor Force Survey, Central Statistical Bureau

Striking in this chart is the low rate of unemployment in rural areas compared to urban areas: by some estimates, the urban unemployed constitute about 82% all the country’s unemployed. The economic activity level of the rural population is boosted by the fact that agriculture provides work opportunities. Important to note, however, is the fact that rural poverty is also very high: a study published by the Ministry of Welfare suggests that the proportion of households falling beneath the minimum wage poverty line in rural areas is about 42% for Russians, 46% for Latvians, and 50% for other ethnic
This suggests that economic activity and economic security are by no means invariably partnered. A researcher at Daugavpils Pedagogical Institute, which is located in an area hard hit by the transition, has suggested that the problem is not that there are no jobs, but that "there are no good jobs," a problem that is especially acute for young people.

Especially pertinent for the study at hand, is the male rate of economic activity: urban male unemployment is critically high among males 20-24, and though it drops in the next age group, it remains above 16%. For rural males it is lower but this "activity" may mask a situation of underemployment, as the data on poverty seem to suggest.

To reiterate the point, a male who is unemployed or even underemployed is not "marriageable" from a female point of view and, in the post-communist context, where unemployment and underemployment are high, this can make finding a marriage partner a challenge. Women who agreed that "these days it is difficult for a young woman to find an appropriate man to marry," highlighted the problem quite consistently:

- "In Latvian society there are not enough marriageable men who could manage to take care of a wife and family." (cohabiting Latvian, 19, in Riga)
- "It is difficult because a normal family needs certain circumstances – employment, an apartment, if one is studying – then financing [for that] – but men who can offer this are too few that women can be selective." (married Latvian farmer, 48, in rural Ventspils district)
- "Men cannot afford to have a family." (unmarried Russian, under 19, in Riga)
- "A woman needs a man who would take care of her, not vice versa." (cohabiting Ukrainian sales administrator, 25-29, in Sigulda)
- "A man needs to be intelligent and needs to be able to ensure for his family a good atmosphere and good material circumstances." (married Latvian teacher, 45-49, in rural Kekava)

While this study addresses the issue from a female-perspective, it would be interesting to examine the economics issue from a male perspective. Do men with poor economic prospects prefer not to marry or would they like to marry regardless of financial condition? Do they think it is difficult to find a woman who is supportive of a partner with a low living standard? What economic or other constraints or advantages do they see in marriage in the post-communist context? Some studies, while not comprehensive, give some insight into these issues: for instance, in the study on male health cited earlier.
participants embraced the idea of the male as breadwinner: "The man is the head of household who needs to be able to ensure the family budget and everything else" and "Men should bring in the money, women are responsible for the house." According to the study, there was broad agreement on these points. If it is the case that most men accept the "breadwinner" role as a defining quality of maleness then, certainly, unemployment and underemployment must be playing a central, if not fully clear, role in the decline of traditional partnering arrangements from the male side as well.

Education and marriageability

In my study, quite a few women attributed problems with finding a male partner to men being "uneducated" and "uncultured." Together with employment, education should be seen as a factor that increases (or in its absence, decreases) male marriageability. In the West, women have only recently begun to catch up with and surpass male educational attainment: in the United States, young women now earn more high school and bachelor's degrees, though men continue to get more professional education.

In many countries of Eastern Europe, however, women's educational attainment has been greater for several generations. In Latvia, for instance, an educational gap favoring women opens in the middle age groups. In the 45-54 age group, 20.8% of women have a higher education, compared to 18.6% of men. In the next age group, 35-44, the male proportion remains virtually unchanged, but the female proportion grows to 22.9%. More strikingly, though, in the next group, ages 25-34, the female proportion dips slightly, but the male proportion falls by more than 5 percentage points: in this group, close to 20% of women have higher education, but only 13.2% of men do.

In the post-communist period, the gap has continued to grow in younger age categories and women are increasingly leaving men behind in educational attainment, as women graduate from high school and continue on to higher education at growing and disproportionate rates. Overall, there has been a rise in the number of early school leavers; this may be attributed at least in part to the independent Latvian state's decision drop the mandatory high school education (through 12th grade) of the Soviet period in the 1991 Education Law.
Data show that after 1991, a growing number of young people left school after finishing the required 9 grades. The rising tide of early school leaving is especially apparent in rural areas where, according to the 1999 data, 30.7% of people ages 21-25 ended their education before completing high school. Significantly for the study at hand, young men are far more likely than their female counterparts to leave school early: 1999 data, for instance, indicates that while 12% of males ages 16-17 left school, only 5.1% of females did the same. Further, while 66% of all males 20-21 had completed their education, less than half—45.4% of women—did not continue on. This is apparent in the strong majority women hold among those pursuing university degrees: for every 100 men studying, there are 160 female students.

The gap in education emerged in my study as an important factor in male marriageability. The following represent a sampling of comments on this issue:

- "...a woman is more educated and she does not need any 'spare furniture' (a man) with outdated views." (unmarried Latvian doctor, 25-29, in Riga)
- "[Many men have] a low level of education and are uncultured." (unmarried Latvian, 25-29, in urban Rezekne)
- "There are few educated, intelligent, strong men (I don't mean physically strong)." (unmarried Latvian florist, 19-24, in Riga)

In Latvia, as in the West, highly educated women are not likely to partner with men who have much less education. They may not wish to do so or, as one unmarried, educated, rural Latvian woman in her late twenties suggested, there may not even be the option: "...it is difficult, almost impossible, to find an appropriate man to marry, especially in the countryside. Many people still marry as soon as they reach 20 years of age, but those women who choose to get an education and a good job are stuck because after that only those [men] who no one else wants are left...." While this study did not address the point, it is also worth noting that some men may not be comfortable partnering with a woman who is substantially more educated either.

Male education levels have an additional interesting dimension that may be pertinent to the issue of male marriageability. That is, quite a few women suggested that educated men are too busy with their ambitions and careers to have an interest in a family commitment.
• “1) An educated woman has a difficult time finding a man with a comparable education. 2) Educated men think more about their careers and don’t want to take responsibility for relations which would limit his freedom.” (twice-married Latvian teacher, 30-34, in rural Ogres district)

• “Men are very busy with their careers, there is no time to think about establishing a family. But if they are not thinking about a career, then it is a rare man who can take care of his family.” (married Latvian teacher, 30-34, in Carnikava)

The comment of an unmarried Russian student from Daugavpils seems to capture this issue nicely: she suggested that it was difficult for a young woman to find an appropriate man to marry because “many of them are either irresponsible or too busy.”

Alcohol and male marriageability

Beyond the critical issues of employment and education, marriageability should be defined in the context of Latvia as someone who does not abuse alcohol. This social pathology, notably, has always been a problem in Latvia: interesting evidence of this is to be found in the folk culture of Latvia, specifically, in the *dainas*, short poems that have are an integral part of Latvian culture and history. In a collection of *dainas*, entitled *What young girls need to know*, the following poems (humorously) underscore this point:

*For whom, sister, do you make this bed,*  
*For whom this white sheet lay down?*  
*The barfly will come home*  
*With his muddy feet.*

*I wrapped up the front feet*  
*Of my dear husband,*  
*So he would not lose his teeth,*  
*Ambling to the pub.*

In these and similar *dainas*, the story, usually told in a tongue-in-cheek way, is of an unfortunate wife saddled with a drunken husband. While the poems are often funny, they reflect a serious issue with deep roots in culture and society.

The problem of alcohol abuse has become acute, especially in economically-depressed areas. It is not uncommon to see people asleep or wandering aimlessly along the roadside, drunk in the morning,
or getting drunk in public parks or rail stations. Some people who cannot afford commercial alcoholic beverages make their own local version of moonshine. Alcohol, always part of the culture of both celebration and mourning in Latvia, has become, arguably, a part of quotidian experience for too many.

Consider some of the responses of women to the marriageability question noted earlier:

- "Men are alcoholics and drug addicts." (unmarried Russian student, under 19, in Riga)
- "The majority of Latvian men have a great desire for alcohol." (separated Latvian café employee, 30-34, in Riga)
- "The majority of men are dishonest, alcoholics, non-workers, and such." (unmarried Latvian student, under 19, in rural Ogres district)
- "Men cannot take care of themselves, never mind taking on responsibility for a family... Today's young men are accustomed to being accountable only to themselves, without any ties this is easier. Alcohol, dependence on drugs, partying 'don't allow' [men] to establish families. Important as well is material insecurity." (cohabiting Latvian bureaucrat, 19-24, in urban Aluksne)

The alcohol abuse factor in shifting demographic behaviors can also be linked back to the unemployment issues discussed earlier. Data on alcohol abuse is far from comprehensive, but qualitative studies, anecdotal evidence, and state data on per capita alcohol consumption together give some sense of the gravity of the problem. A Ministry of Welfare study on issues of poverty in Latvia suggested that "Alcohol abuse is one of the most central themes in these family interviews. Alcoholism is associated with many other phenomena, for instance, unemployment (both as a cause and consequence), road and work accidents, death of the family breadwinner, poverty and homelessness, bad family relations and abandoned children. Women suffer from alcoholism, as men do, though they do so less commonly [than men] and alcoholism has taken over whole areas where the possibilities for finding work have disappeared." 30

Alcohol use begins early and is widespread among youth: a 1999 study by the Narcology Center found high levels of alcohol use and increased alcohol abuse among adolescents, but boys in particular. Most respondents indicated that they had used alcohol for the first time before they were 14 years of age, though very few used it to the point of inebriation that early. By 14, however, fully a quarter of boys and a fifth of girls said that they had gotten drunk. 31 Among those 15-16 years of age, 88% had used alcohol in the past year and 54% indicated that they drank to the point of inebriation, up from 43% in a 1995
study. Not coincidentally, Latvia’s inhabitants consume more hard liquor per capita than any of their European neighbors, save the Russians.

Marriageability and sociodemographic change

The concept of marriageability is important because, I believe, it provides a complement to the argument more often advanced in society to understand family change: that is, that social mores have been “westernized” or, in a more ideological vein, that morals have declined. It also offers a more nuanced approach to the explanation that economic crisis has led to sociodemographic change. While economic changes and displacements are have been widely implicated in the changes, the precise nature of the relationship between crisis and change has been little explored. The findings here may offer a fruitful direction for future study of the issues.

Issues of family, economy, and public policy

The central concern of this project has been to draw together the post-communist sociodemographic phenomena of declining marriage and rising non-marital childbearing and the economic dislocations and sociocultural changes that have accompanied transformations in the region. Data on Latvian and regional trends make clear the fact that substantial changes in marriage and childbearing patterns have taken place in the past decade. Theoretical and empirical evidence cited in this study suggests that these patterns are influenced by a combination of a normative context that melds new, “modern” norms with older ideas about women and family, and an economic context with reduced prospects for some segments of the population, particularly less-educated men.

Employment and underemployment, consequently, emerge as central to an understanding of family change. Unemployed males surely make poor mates from a female perspective and even a male with employment makes a bad marriage prospect if his earnings are very low. Earnings data, while compromised by the fact that a lot of unreported income changes hands, clearly suggests that earnings across the board are low for both men and women and for workers in all sectors of the economy.
While the best educated workers are most likely to do well for themselves and their families, even their wages are paltry when one considers that the cost of living in Latvia is, with the exception of housing costs, comparable to many Western states. While this is a serious issue, and certainly one reason that economic deprivation by all measures is high in Latvia, it has been used by the government as a selling point to foreign investors. Indeed, on its website, the Latvian Development Agency (www.lda.gov.lv) boasts that the “wages of skilled professionals in Latvia’s IT sector are significantly below those in Western Europe and very competitive with those of Central and Eastern Europe... At the end of 1998 the average monthly wage in Latvia was $238, more than 10 times lower than in Finland and over 20 times lower than in Germany... The average monthly salary of a software engineer is just over $400, making one tenth the rate for a comparable post in the United States.” While Latvia is understandably eager to join the community of nations by becoming a link in the global economy, the “selling” of its workers as a low-wage labor pool should be recognized as having both benefits and consequences.

In a context where marriageability is compromised by economic dislocation and its attendant ills, it is not surprising, following Wilson’s reasoning, that we find fewer stable partnerships and more non-marital births (both within and outside of partnerships). From women’s perspective, taking on the responsibility of a poor husband is not a rational proposition, particularly as the normative pressures toward marriage fade in younger generations. As norms still seem to elevate women as mothers, however, not marrying (whether by choice or circumstance) does not close the door to childbearing.

The rise in single mothers raises, then, the important issue of female unemployment and underemployment. While this study has focused on male employment issues, female employment issues become especially salient in a context where more men, who have historically provided economic support (full or partial) for women, are “unmarriageable.” Women, like men, have been hit by the economic dislocations of post-communism. For women, the economic problems associated with the transformation of the economy may be manifested in multiple ways: first, though the deprivations of unemployment and low-wage work and, second, through the destabilization of the family and its protective functions. That
is, while male economic insecurity may be driving the drop in marriage and the rise in non-marital childbearing, these phenomena increase the risk that women will become caught or will remain in a web of poverty: single mothers with children are the most vulnerable and poorest segment of the population in Latvia and many surrounding states.

Material deprivation in families with children, but especially one-parent families, is a serious issue. A study published by the Ministry of Welfare in 1999 estimated that while a married couple with one child had an average per capita household income equal to 105% of the crisis subsistence minimum, a single mother with one child had an average per capita household income of only 93.1% of the crisis subsistence minimum. For a single mother with two children, this fell to 65%.

It is clear that while the end of communism has brought tremendous benefits to Eastern Europe in the form of democratic governments and elections, free speech, and unprecedented economic opportunities, it has also wrought serious social problems and economic dislocations. This paper has sought to highlight some of those problems. Family change in itself, however, should not be construed as a social problem. Rather, it should be understood as a mirror of changes in society. The problems that stand out in this account are economic deprivation, limited opportunities, and crises in employment. This paper has sought to show how the tentacles of these problems reach into other spheres, such as the family, and to illustrate some of the important dynamics underlying the dramatic changes witnessed in this micro-unit of post-communist society.
Endnotes


3 Data based on the 2000 census provided to the author by the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia.


9 Ibid., 12.

10 Ibid., 13.


14 IT Century cite


17 When Work Disappears. 104-5


26 Ibid.

27 Ibid. Notably, in spite of this educational gap, males still earn more on average than their female counterparts: as in the United States, women earn about 75% of the male wage.


31 Data prepared for the author by A. Gailitis of the Narcology Center (Narkologijas centrs) in Riga, July 2001.
