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Twenty years post-independence: The relevance of ethnic democracy and control theories in understanding contemporary Latvia

Master's thesis

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ABSTRACT

This thesis applies the model of ethnic democracy and control theory to Latvia with a view to better understanding the divergence in ethnic perceptions in contemporary Latvia. I will argue that the early processes of ethnic state-building sought to promote the culture, history and political right of the ethnic Latvian people to the Latvian territory at the expense of other ethnicities in independence era society via mechanisms of control, and in turn this has contributed to the shaping of how the respective ethnicities view their nation state today. Contextualising recent survey data which questions these perceptions, I will outline how these theories can explain how this divergence in different members of each ethnicity has emerged and offer insight as to how and why the ethnic differences are slowly crumbling in the minority ethnic youth, and in which areas lies promise for building a more united nation.

Keywords: Latvia, Democracy, Post-Soviet, Russian minority

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 left many former Soviet citizens, who had immigrated to other Soviet Socialist Republics during the Soviet period faced with an uncertain future. While some, as a result of the collapse, returned to the land of their birth, many had created a life in their now newly independent country and opted to stay. This perhaps was none-more evident than in Latvia, where the population make up of ethnic Latvians fell to just over 50% by the end of the Soviet period as a result of Soviet time migration and as of 2011 accounts for a fraction under 60% of the population (Latvijas Statistika, 2011).

Indeed in a number of cases, ethnically non-Latvian families have been living on the territory for generations, due to many opting to relocate to Latvia after its annexation into the Soviet Union prior to the Second World War. In the years that followed the collapse, struggles have emerged between the communities of Latvians and non-Latvians (which is dominated by ethnic Russians) in a number of social, economic and political contexts which have developed over the 22 years of independence. During this period, academic scholars have tirelessly attempted to study the unique situation in Latvia, and indeed the wider Baltic region, in order to provide context and understanding in light of its integration into Europe and Western institutions, its complicated and bloody past and its plight as an independent nation, reducing the rights and political aspirations of members of ethnic minorities communities in order to prioritise nation building processes favouring the titular ethnicity. While in theory, all members of society enjoy equal economic and social rights, politically there remains a question mark in some quarters.

Geoffrey Pridham concluded in his article '*Post-Soviet Latvia–A Consolidated or Defective Democracy?*' in the Journal of Baltic Studies that Latvia was neither a consolidated, nor defective democracy, remarking:

"The ethnic divide has also remained largely unresolved, party development problems have persisted and the public is still unconvinced by the actual democracy they see before them" (2009:465).

Using Pridham's article as a precursor, this thesis aims to understand the type of democracy which exists in Latvia in 2013 according to the various different ethnicities which live there. This will be achieved by shedding a similar light on Latvia as Priit Järve did on Estonia, using the ethnic democracy framework and determining whether Latvia meets the requirements set out by Sammy Smooha to constitute an ethnic democracy. In addition, the thesis will aim to understand how elements of a partial control system, as originally proposed by Ian Lustick, are also relevant to the development of modern day Latvian society (Lustick 1979, 1980; Smooha 2002; Järve 2000). The most recent in-depth study on social and political systems in Latvia and how they promote or discourage ethnic integration was conducted by a number of scholars under the editorship of Nils Muižnieks, providing adequate data to assess how control has developed and indeed its importance today. The focus of this thesis will then concentrate on these theories importance within the Latvian context as a mechanism of interpreting how the non-Latvian communities living in Latvia were managed as a means of reducing conflict and how this is reflected statistically as well as how they subsequently interpret their nation within a contemporary context. A theoretical assessment will attempt to distinguish the impact of the state's nationalising policy on the social welfare, economic mobility and political rights of the minorities within the frameworks which apply the concepts of 'ethnic democracy' and 'partial control'. Firstly, it is important to determine what kind of society exists in Latvia, whether the 'ethnic democracy' theory is itself applicable. Michele Commercio gives an overview of this argument in studies which she argued that Latvian political-elites had opened up the economic sector to be more inclusive, by encouraging ethnic minorities' participation in the private sector with a view to enabling stability of ethnic tensions in the country, and as a mechanism for eventually appeasing EU minority legislation during the country's accession to the EU a decade later. It is argued that by extending equal rights to all members of society, ethnic minorities as a by-product

do not feel as discriminated against, during this process however, elements of ethnic nation-building may continue, in a system referred to as partial control. Nevertheless, she also points out that full, active participation for minorities in this such a society is only limited largely to the private sector, whereas with regard to social and state / political affairs, the minorities tends to be excluded, as the security of the titular ethnic's livelihood is maintained (Commercio 2007, 2010).

Research Aim

A vast amount of research has been conducted regarding ethnic democracy on Latvia's neighbour Estonia, particularly by Priit Järve, who developed on Sammy Smooha's concept in order to better understand Estonian society. The application of this theory in a Latvian context is undeveloped in contrast to the volume of material on Estonia, though the subtle similarities shared by each nation provide significant justification to determine whether similar situations arise in Latvia, offering an effective opportunity to theoretically examine Latvia within this framework (Järve, 2000). The theoretical discussion will centre around democracy in a Latvian context, discussing various elements of theory on control methods, which are used by the Latvia elite to maintain a dominant ethnic Latvian presence in within the state. Following an investigation into the various nuances of control have been concluded and understood, they theory will be applied against both statistical data and public opinion research with a view to providing an overview of why residents of Latvia, both ethnic Latvians and non-ethnic Latvians are met with differing societal roles, and how these roles are represented statistically. Furthermore, Ammon Cheskin recently carried out in-depth identity based research into the minority ethnic responses to Latvia's nationalising state. This research provides an exciting opportunity to measure the differing ethnic perceptions held by the ethnic minorities, and how they interpret the system of government which they are under and the county they live in as a viable facilitator of their needs. Although identity issues are not the primary focus of the study; the relevance of Cheskin's indicates the lasting

effect of such democratic systems demonstrating where potential lies for contemporary Latvian society to move away from flawed models of democracy (Cheskin, 2012). The desired outcome of the thesis, is to explore the lasting societal effects the nationalisation polices have had on contemporary Latvian society, with a view to providing answers as to how to solve any consistent or lasting effects. The following literature review discusses why the study is relevant, and where it aims to locate itself within the already established frameworks and theories.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis of the thesis focuses on the idea that Latvian elites constructed a system of partial control over ethnic minorities by including them fully in some areas of society but only partially in others in order to maintain stability. The aim thus becomes determining the form of democracy present in Latvia and whether its roots in the early independence era are still reflected in various statistical data and the different interpretations of contemporary society the titular and non-titular ethnicities hold. I propose that in accordance with research carried out on Estonia, Latvian society will demonstrate sharp ethnic divisions as a result of nation building practices which occurred during and after the fall of the Soviet Union, that the ethnic democracy theory is relevant to independent Latvia, and that this coupled with control methods, which have adjusted over time as EU accession has become a realisation for Latvia, has left a fragmented society made up of juxtaposing ideals. The key points listed below are overall aim of the thesis, and will be developed into questions in the methodology section:

- The relevance of the theories to the ethnic-state building process and following EU accession.
- Detailed statistical data gathering which indicates how this relevance is characterised in modern society.

- The implications this has on the future development of Latvian society and areas in which the ethnic cleavages could seek to resolve intrinsic problems with the political system.

Structure

The thesis will be structured in a way which explores firstly casts a critical eye over the literature, discussing its relevancy in the context of the theoretical frameworks. The aim of the literature review is to justify the inclusion of certain texts and sources, as well as to signify the direction the thesis will take when exploring the theory. Following the literature review, a chapter dissecting the theoretical frameworks aims to explain why ethnic democracy theory and systems of partial control theory are relevant to Latvia. Additionally, discussion will be focused on similarities in this regards between Estonia and Latvia, where more research in these fields in an Estonian context has emerged. This theory will then be contextualised in context of contemporary Latvian society by incorporating the framework into various recent academic studies which examined levels of ethnic segregation within Latvia in various social fields. Following this, an analysis will be offered which seeks to determine the value of the theory analysing data collected in the most recent Human Development Reports on Latvia which focused on minority issues, in order to determine whether certain patterns emerge in how each minority locates itself socially within Latvia. Furthermore, recent academic statistical data focusing on Russian-speaking Latvians and their interpretation of the May 9 victory celebrations by carried out by Cheskin, provides a detailed overview of public opinion which casts enlightening indicators to the kind of society they represent. It is hoped that this will provide the thesis with a tight structure which looks for trends between theoretical concepts and collected statistical data. The analysis chapter will focus on bringing together these two aspects with a view to drawing conclusions from the research, with a particular nod to where further research would be required to provide more concrete answers. The conclusion will then summarise the findings as a whole before offering alternatives to any problems discussed, as well as reflection on limitations and which methods could have been carried out more effectively.

Limitations

Invariably, with any kind of research of this nature, a number of problems are usually encountered. Primarily in this instance, the biggest hurdle is the language barrier. While on the one hand I hold a satisfactory grasp of Russian, the same cannot be said for Latvian. From an academic and statistical standpoint, this is not such a big issue, as the wide number of texts published on the subject are in English, however, to develop a greater understanding, or to interpret the findings at a local level will obviously prove much more difficult. In this regard, the lack of knowledge of Latvian undoubtedly pushes one towards sources in the Russian language, and in light of this, it becomes absolutely critical to consider any agenda, politically based or otherwise that may accompany such sources. Furthermore, a number of sources on the topic are available only in Latvian, which severely limits the amount of material once can assess and include in the discussion, though in another respect, this provides a worthy opportunity to contribute to the material available in English.

Access to a wide variety of sources, on another level than just linguistic factors, may also prove problematic, though this for the most part is self-inflicted. The decision to base myself in Riga during the writing process will yield almost no regular access to academic institutions. However, the decision was taken with regards to the wide availability of academic sources available online, through both Glasgow and Tartu weighed up against the opportunity to live and work in Latvia, immersing in the culture with a view to possibly gaining a modicum of understanding and context with regards to the problems manifest within the country. In this respect, from a personal viewpoint, this experience may prove invaluable. This short period can potentially contribute immensely to the depth of understanding around how thing 'work' in Latvia, with the opinions and contributions of counterparts from both Latvian and Russian ethnicities, potentially providing sizable insight and context into the discussion. In light of this, a balancing act must will be have to be managed, as these views will not be formally represented within the text itself, though will be of great assistance when distinguishing and seeking potentially relevant social problems / misgivings held by the respective ethnicities which require further investigation in the empirical data and analysis sections.

Literature Review

A number of works were consulted in the conceptualisation process of this thesis; the literature review will endeavour to outline the importance of the significant texts which contributed to the thought process and justify their inclusion included. The theoretical arguments will be built around the existing knowledge surrounding the progress of Latvia into an independent state, the foundations of this process and the democratic transition of Latvia, providing an assessment and introduction to the popular forces, conflicts and political issues which have helped shape it in cooperation with the wider frameworks of ethnic democracy and control. There is a wealth of material on this subject in English; here we look to Smith (1996), Eglītis (2002) and Jubulis (2001) who outline this process in vast detail as well as the major factors at work which helped shape the Latvian state. Smith's application of ethnic democracy theory provides an excellent starting point to familiarise oneself with the concept and its application to Latvia in the initial phase of independence. One of the more recently published texts which was consulted in order to further develop and formulate ideas for the thesis was Andres Kasekapm's *A History of the Baltic States* (2012). Kasekamp offers an excellent summary of the political and policy developments in post-Soviet Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. This short final chapter analysis highlights the different routes taken by the Lithuanians who endowed all residents with citizenship in contrast to Latvia and Estonia who followed exclusionary policies for minority residents. Here the similarities between Estonia and Latvia and the issues they face in conjunction with one another became clearer. Given the body of material on Estonia currently available with respect to ethnic democracy and methods of control, a basis for comparison between Estonia and Latvia emerges, raising the important question of whether certain findings from academic research into these topics on Estonia would be applicable also to Latvia. This idea was later supported and further elaborated upon by Nils Muižnieks (2013) who further found that the level of social cohesion in Lithuania between ethnic Lithuanians and non-Lithuanians was much greater than that found in the other two Baltic States as a result of differing citizenship laws in the early independence era. Lithuania was much more liberal in this instance, handing citizenship to all residents

regardless, though it should be noted that the level of non-Lithuanian residents was significantly lower than those found in Latvia and Estonia. This was the decisive factor in attempting to address both Estonia and Latvia in a theoretical comparison exercise, with a view towards examining how each state differed in its approach.

The initial framework of ethnic democracy was an instrument to more accurately represent the type of democracy found in Israel was put forward by Sammy Smooha in 1989, before he later reassessed the structure in light of the theory being applied elsewhere (Smooha: 2002), notably to Estonia by Priit Järve (2000). Therefore, this re-assessment of the theory can also be tested to discover suitability of the model in a contemporary Latvian context, as it seems to present a suitable base for comparison in co-ordinance with Järve's findings on Estonia, given that the countries are neighbours and have shared a common history for the duration of the 20th Century. The development of the theory has already occurred in the context of a Baltic nation, demonstrating its relevancy in this instance. Despite, as mentioned, Graham Smith initially put forward the case for ethnic democracy in Latvia and Estonia as early as 1996, this came at a time when the citizenship laws were very different and not yet liberalised, the regimes, crucially, were still in a period of transition. While Smith's contribution to the theoretical background details the citizenship question, whilst applying the initial theoretical framework to the societies of this period, this thesis aims to explore contemporary Latvian society, in which has had almost 20 years of progression since the article was published. As the number of non-Latvians who have acquired citizenship due to changes in legislation since 1996 has increased the models of ethnic democracy and control theory become important in dealing with the question as to how Latvian state has continued the state building process in light of this. This in turn led me to estimate that these theories are more valid now than they were during the transition period due to the fact that citizenship acquisition has become an easier realisation for non-Latvians in the years that have followed, yet modern day Latvia has been face with the new challenge of maintaining its initial nation-building project. Järve's study into ethnic democracy in Estonia dissected the rhetoric in the Estonian constitution as a mechanism for demonstrating the characteristic of nation building which is inherent in Estonian

society, these nation building ideas and concepts are also prevalent in the Latvian constitution, therefore an experiment in a similar vain to Järve's will be entertained.

Of course, central to the discussion of is Lustick's theory of control is the ways in which this control is implemented; there are a number of scholars and articles which theorise the concept of Ethnic Democracy and link its roots to control methods. Looking at countries such as Israel and Estonia, a number of works have been published which discuss how such systems are developed and how control is maintained by Hallik and Pettai (2002), Smooha, Järve and Commercio (2007; 2010) to name a select few. Despite points of contention between the scholars (further discussed in chapter II), sufficient and coherent theoretical arguments exist within the disciplines to apply the concepts on a satisfactory level. While Commercio's work seems at times to lack in detail, the basic arguments are ones which can be explored in more detail. Undoubtedly one of the key turning points in contemporary Latvian history was the initial rejection into European bodies. Using this as a turning point, I will put forward a theoretical argument as to how the control theories were subsequently adopted to keep in line with the state-building process. Here a number of scholars have been addressed which look specifically at regulation within different social fields such as citizenship, education and politics, and further investigation into those fields from a control theory perspective will aim to demonstrate how these methods can still be applied today. The most recent publication which covers a variety of these topics in immense detail was *How Integrated is Latvian Society* under the editorship of Nils Muižnieks (2011). This provides a comprehensive study into the various facets of Latvian society which can be examined from a control perspective. How, for example, various laws and indeed decisions were implemented, which when examined in the context of control theory, one can see how social institutions were managed with the intention of maintaining certain levels of more subtle control, which simultaneously appeased both ethnic Latvians and the wider European Community's regulatory bodies.

Consequently, the thesis aims to examine the legitimacy of ethnic democracy theory and theory of control to Latvia and their consequences. The initial literature indicated that the number of non-Latvians at the collapse of the Soviet Union was so great that it needed to be 'managed' and indeed was, openly, before EU accession.

However, as will be noted, this became markedly more subtle in the years that followed; therefore this study will aim to examine how the ethnic divide is currently represented and how this is linked to the theoretical arguments. Miller (1999) and Schopflin's (2000) ideas on what constitutes a nation state have also been implemented, to test how closely Latvia follows contemporary conceptions or whether the control methods indeed prevent this process from occurring.

To carry out the empirical research, two key texts have been identified, firstly the Human Development Report of 2010/11 which explores the differences in opinion held by different ethnic members of Latvian society. Secondly, Ammon Cheskin's study into the unofficial May 9th celebrations which are held annually in Riga, which statistically breaks down opinions held by ethnic Russians on the Soviet narrative of history in immense detail, and whether it is still relevant in modern Latvia. The thesis aims to re-contextualise Latvia within these frameworks in explain why the ethnic problem has not been resolved by applying the theories of ethnic democracy and control within the context of the EU accession process and demonstrate that the ethnic divide is still relevant in the modern era as a result of this.

CHAPTER II – THEORETICAL DISCUSSION

The theoretical discussion focusses on the concepts both ethnic democracy and mechanisms of control methods, investigating their respective relevance to modern Latvian society. Indeed, one only has to look as far as the nation building process in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union to understand that the seed were sown for an ethnic democracy or control society to exist. Restricting citizenship and solidifying the dominance of ethnic Latvians by engaging in a large-scale nation building process, the path was laid out for a society which had the potential for conflict (Eglītis, 2002; Pabriks & Purs, 2001). The theoretical arguments which follow will aim to conceptualise why this hasn't happened. Given the respective development of Smooha's ethnic democracy theory and Järve's application to Estonia as well as Commercio's application of partial control theory to Latvia, I will demonstrate the ideas offer a compelling level of justification to better understand and interpret contemporary modern Latvia society. Of course, by demonstrating a competent level of relevance, a case can be put forward to better comprehend modern Latvia using contemporary statistical data, and the responses of different ethnicities to their political surroundings (this process will be carried out in chapter IV). In contrast, concepts such as ethnocracy in the Baltics as developed by Yiftachel and Ghanem do not seem as fitting, firstly given the ethnic Latvians status as natives on the land, coupled with the fact that the territory has not sought expansion or has a *large* diaspora which has the ability to intervene in international affairs, all considered key features of an ethnocracy according to the authors. Furthermore, accession into the EU has rendered human rights violations almost impossible as Latvia now has to comply with EU law regarding minority citizens alluded to in their conclusion on Estonia: *"Several other states—such as Israel, Estonia and Slovakia—[are] attempting to keep afloat both their links with the western democratic world, with the democratization this entails, and concurrently preserve the control of the dominant ethnic group"* (2004:672). Indeed, it seems

reasonable to suggest that ethnocracy theory would be a loosely fitting, extreme interpretation of Latvian society; even if as suggested, efforts to preserve domestic control are key features.

Consequently, exploring the ethnic democracy theory in coordination with methods of control demonstrates a wider scope for interpretation and development in the Latvian context. Therefore the theoretical discussion will explore these two theories, given the problems Latvia has had in the past with regards to minorities and citizenship issues, with a hope to going some way to explaining how the country has dealt with the minority question, whilst maintaining its ethnically focused nation building in a way which manages conflict, and what prospects the nation has for the future in terms if this model is indeed applicable.

Ethnic democracy

Sammy Smooha conceptualises ethnic democracy as a form of democracy which can manifest in particular nations where ideological ethnic nationalism seeks to promote the existence of one ethnic population sharing common decent, culture and language to that nation, and which historically has been inhabited (or claimed to be so) by the aforementioned ethnic group. Furthermore, Smooha adds that this ethnic nation, as opposed to the citizenry shape the various laws and policies of the state, as a mechanism for benefiting the survival and cultural expression this ethnic majority. Typically, he continues, such nations are also inhabited by non-members of the ethnic group, where citizenship and nationality are considered separate, and unlike Western civic nations or liberal democracy, the non-members of the titular ethnic group have little or no role in state affairs. Moreover, despite the political system being democratic, the non-members of ethnicity are seen as a threat to the ethnic nation's survival and integrity, and thus the titular ethnicity seeks to grant permanent residents equal rights (human, civil, political, cultural and social) as a mechanism of reducing conflict. Ethnic minorities are also granted collective rights allowing them

to struggle for equality without facing repercussions from the state. As a result of this, the democracy falls short of traditional Western standards, with Smooha further pointing out that there is an "*inherent contradiction between ethnic ascendance and civic equality*" (2002: 478). Therefore the ethnic minority is unable to recognise fully with the state, finding it impossible to identify itself as part of the collective nation.

As a measure of ethnic democracy, Smooha listed ten conditions of ethnic democracy, identifying these elements as merely a tool which could be used empirically to asses and analyse the reality:

- *The core ethnic nation constitutes a solid numerical majority.*
- *The non-core population constitutes a significant minority.*
- *The core ethnic nation has a commitment to democracy.*
- *The core ethnic nation is an indigenous group.*
- *The non-core groups are immigrant.*
- *The non-core group is divided into more than one ethnic group.*
- *The core ethnic nation has a sizeable, supportive Diaspora.*
- *The homelands of the non-core groups are involved.*
- *There is international involvement.*
- *Transition from a non-democratic ethnic state has taken place.*
  (Smooha, quoted in Järve, 2000:4).

When addressing the ten conditions of ethnic democracy in Estonia, Järve found that Estonian society featured the majority of these conditions set by Smooha. In Latvia, like Estonia, history dictates that many of the pre-requisite conditions are met. In his book on the history of the Baltic States, Andres Kasekamp briefly summarises the various processes and politics during the final moments of Soviet occupation of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia towards the gaining of independence, with ethnic, indigenous Latvians now and indeed throughout the Soviet occupation, constituting a solid majority, who are in committed to the democratic process (this includes a relatively small but supportive group of Latvians who emigrated abroad) following the transition from non-democratic Soviet control. Though it should be noted that previously there was no ethnic element during the Soviet regime, instead, there was a process of *russification* which occurred, undoubtedly explaining the subsequent effort to re-nationalisation domestic politics in the immediate post-Soviet era. The

vast majority of the non-core group are ethnic Russian, who were historically found on the Latvian territory, though only came in large numbers after 1940 in search of a higher standard of living which the Baltic states offered (Kasekamp: 2012). These Russians additionally still receive elements of political support from Russia (with ethnic Russians in Latvia forming the largest Russian community outside of Russia), even as recently as this August, a Russian political scientist Mikhail Aleksandrov commented that Russia should feel justified in invading the Baltics, should the West intervene in Syria (Postimees, 2013), This is just one example demonstrating the fact that still contentious issues remain unresolved and the political hang-ups still exist. International involvement has come in the form of the prerequisites of gaining EU accession, where various EU bodies discussed Latvia's treatment of ethnic minorities, (Pridham, 2009). Therefore, it becomes clear that Latvia satisfies all bar one of the conditions for an ethnic democracy system to exist, as Latvia does not fully meet the final point with regards to the Soviet regime being 'ethnic'.

The re-assessment previously alluded to, was partially considered as a result of Järve's application of the original ethnic democracy theory to Estonia. Here, he identified a core set of features of Smooha's ethnic democracy model, which are:

- *Ethnic nationalism installs a single core ethnic nation in the state.*
- *The state separates membership in the single core ethnic nation from citizenship.*
- *The state is owned and ruled by the core ethnic nation.*
- *The state mobilises the core ethnic nation.*
- *Non-core groups are accorded incomplete individual and collective rights.*
- *The state allows non-core groups to conduct parliamentary and extra-parliamentary struggle for change.*
- *The state perceives non-core groups as a threat.*
- *The state imposes some control on non-core groups.*
  (Smooha, quoted in Järve, 2000: 3-4)

As a large number of Estonian and indeed Latvian residents have not acquired citizenship, the ethnic democracy model is considered controversial when applied to in this instance, however by developing Smooha's model, Järve expanded the definition into two categories – "*strong definition of ethnic democracy*" and "*weak definition of ethnic democracy*" (2000:5). Here, in the strong definition,

which is preferred by Smooha, citizenship is granted fully, to all residents, whereas in the weak definition there is partial exclusion to citizenship, though it should be noted that the systems are in place for all non-residents of Latvia to acquire citizenship and the benefits it brings. According to the 2011 Latvian census there are 295,122 or 14.26% of the population who are classed as non-citizens (or stateless residents) living in Latvia (Latvijas Statistika, 2011). Therefore, despite Latvia viewing itself as a democracy, there is ground for claims that it is in fact a non-democracy, as not all residents have equal access to democratic functions of the state. Despite this, as previously alluded to, acquisition of citizenship is open to all permanent residents, regardless of ethnicity, and this will be discussed further, in the context of control systems in the following section.

Notably, in contrast to Estonia, the Latvian constitution does not adopt quite the same level of obvious ethnic state building rhetoric as found in the Estonian constitution, despite independent Latvia adopting similar nationalising policies as those found in Estonia, with numerous contested issues regarding citizenship in its modern independence era. Originally quotas were set on the number of non-citizens who could acquire citizenship per year, before this was abolished and the system was liberalised, demonstrating one of the early methods the take took to restrict minority efforts to be party of the early state-building process. This in turn helped solidify ethnic Latvian dominance of state and economic affairs (Smith, 1996; Jubilis, 2001). Whereas on the one hand Järve acknowledges the statements in the Estonian constitution which he explains that the preamble of the constitution distinguishes between ethnic Estonians and Estonian citizens, which preservation of language and culture a key highlight (Järve, 2000). In spite of this, is not so evident in the Latvian constitution where rhetoric with ethnic connotations is harder to come across. Järve similarly distinguishes various points from the Estonian constitution which focus on the preservation Estonian culture, mostly through linguistic mechanisms:

- *Art. 6 The official language of Estonia shall be Estonian.*
- *Art. 36 […] Every Estonian shall have the right to settle in Estonia.*
- *Art. 37 […] All persons shall have the right to instruction in Estonian.*

- *Art. 51 [...] All persons shall have the right to address state or local*
- *government authorities in Estonian, and to receive answers in*
- *Estonian.*
- *Art. 52 The official language of state and local government authorities shall be Estonian.*

Interestingly, the Latvian constitution shares a small number of similarities, albeit more subtle:

- *3. The territory of the State of Latvia, within the borders established by international agreements, consists of Vidzeme, Latgale, Kurzeme and Zemgale.*
- *4. The Latvian language is the official language in the Republic of Latvia. The national flag of Latvia shall be red with a band of white.*
- *21. The Saeima shall establish rules of order to provide for its internal operations and order. The working language of the Saeima is the Latvian language.*
- *101. [...] The working language of local governments is the Latvian language*
- *104. Everyone has the right to address submissions to State or local government institutions and to receive a materially responsive reply. Everyone has the right to receive a reply in the Latvian language.*

Evidently, the preservation and use of the Latvian language takes precedence above all else, regardless of whether it is the first language of citizens or non-citizens alike. This poses potential problems (most likely for non-citizens who have not taken passed the language exam) with regards to those ethnic minorities who have politically based issues, they do not have the rights to receive a reply in any language other than Latvian. Smooha argues *"the point of departure of ethnic democracy is the prevalence of ethnic nationalism that asserts an absolute, exclusive and indivisible right of an "ethnic nation" to a given country"* (quoted in Jarve, 2000:8), so if one were to assess the five points listed above, one could conclude that an ethnic language and cultural symbol (flag) is a within those four regions of Latvia is central feature, with political matter being dealt with exclusively in that language.

With language being a driving mechanism of the state affairs, and indeed passing a language exam being acting as a barrier to full citizenship, the question

remains as to how different members of society are viewed. Interestingly, the constitution indeed defines the inhabitants of Latvia in three separate ways, if we use Smooha's argument that "*The state accepts the claim of ethnic nationalism that the ethnic nation is the single core ethnic nation and makes a strict distinction between it and other groups*" (quoted in Jarve, 2000:8), one can understand this distinction better. Firstly, the constitution uses the terms 'people', 'citizens' and 'everyone', with each being accorded different rights. For example:

- *2. The sovereign power of the State of Latvia is vested in the people of Latvia.*
- *90. Everyone has the right to know about his or her rights.*
- *101. Every citizen of Latvia has the right, as provided for by law, to participate in the work of the State and of local government, and to hold a position in the civil service. Local governments shall be elected by Latvian citizens and citizens of the European Union who permanently reside in Latvia. Every citizen of the European Union who permanently resides in Latvia has the right, as provided by law, to participate in the work of local governments. The working language of local governments is the Latvian language.*

If we delve into this idea further, that the 'people', or are as is defined in the Russian version of the constitution 'narod', which incidentally carries with it certain connotations regarding shared homeland, culture, language and history, it demonstrates a more exclusive meaning. 'Citizen' (Russian: 'grazhdan') and 'everyone' (Russian: 'kazhdyj' [chelovek]) on the other hand are more understandable. Clearly this demonstrates a distinction on three levels, citizens are therefore perhaps not considered 'Latvians' in the truest sense, though are granted equal rights, and while the rights of 'everyone' are represented and clearly stated, they obviously don't enjoy the same level of rights as citizens. Thus the constitution conforms to Smooha's idea that the state makes the distinction between the groups. Furthermore, while not so clearly defined in the English version, 'people' is rarely used only, but critically in the following article:

- *18. The Saeima itself shall review the qualifications of its members.*

  A person elected to the Saeima shall acquire the mandate of a Member of the Saeima if such person gives the following solemn promise:

  "I, upon assuming the duties of a Member of the Saeima, before the people of Latvia, do swear (solemnly promise) to be loyal to Latvia, to strengthen its sovereignty and the Latvian language as the only official language, to defend Latvia as an independent and democratic State, and to fulfil my duties honestly and conscientiously. I undertake to observe the Constitution and laws of Latvia."

Again the Latvian language is highlighted as the single language, which, given the context of the speech, the 'people of Latvia' could justifiably be considered in an exclusive context. Furthermore, the term 'qualifications' carries uncertain connotations with regard to what sort of qualifications are necessary and it should also be noted that on the official website of the Latvian government, the constitution is only available in Latvian and English.

While evidence from the constitution and indeed the political systems and various laws established in the nineties suggests that Latvian society meets the weak definition of ethnic democracy, further questions arise as to how relevant this idea is today, and what are the effects this has had in the further 20 years of development? The next section will discuss systems of control, to establish in more detail how and why the process occurred. The ethnic democracy theory is more of a framework, which will be later addressed in analysis and conclusion chapters in response to what kind of democracy exists in Latvia. Indeed, evidence discussed above suggests further investigation is required to establish how this is reflected in a contemporary context.

Systems of control in Latvia

Of course, to establish an ethnic democracy, elements of control must be in place to sustain such a system as a mechanism of reducing conflict, therefore ethnic democracy and control systems are inherently linked. The following paragraphs will discuss partial control theory with a view to dissecting how this was implemented in Latvia and why, by exploring and understanding this process in more detail within the wider theoretical framework of control systems. In order to theorise relative stability in plural or deeply divided societies, Ian Lustick investigated the methods of controlling the minority population and thus regulating potential conflict. In his essay, *'Stability in Deeply Divided Societies'*, Lustick examined other possible ways of politically managing and restricting large groups of ethnic minorities without ceding power to ethnic elites via the consociationalism approach which had previously been used to describe the political systems noticeable in places such as Belgium and Holland Whereas consociationalism focused on the balance of power being shared out by elites of various conflicting groups, control theory focuses on how power is dominated by a superordinate segment of society which maintains stability by placing political restrictions on the subordinate segment(s) (Lustick, 1979; Commercio, 2007; 2010) Therefore, no power sharing occurs, group elites do not reach compromises, as found in a consociationalist society, resulting in the freedom of the dominant group to exercise its own policies to meet its own desires, or in the case of Latvia - nationalist political aims. This was highlighted by Commercio who clarified "…*the fundamental premise of consociational democracy is the missing link in […] Latvia, where elites work assiduously to avoid power sharing with the representatives of national minorities"* (Commercio, 2010:156).

Ian Lustick initially developed the theory of control within the context of Zionism and the level of social, political and economic exclusion induced on ethnic Arabs in Israel. Within this context he drew attention to how certain historical can events influence the adoption of control based politics, pointing to the of Jews' mistreatment and marginalisation at the hands of Arabs in the Middle East over centuries as a result for implementing such political systems in Israel. Further elaborating, he describes how learning from such marginalisation can serve as a

mechanism for successfully implementing elements of control within a particular society as a means of reducing ethnic conflict. One of the key themes regarding Lustick's idea of control is how it is not a result of either culturist or rationalist explanation, but rather an intentional process which he explained is operationalised in three ways: segmentation, dependence and co-option. Segmentation arises in the breaking down into society to initiate a divide, establishing a superordinate group and a subordinate. Following on from this the subordinate group begins to depend on the superordinate group to depend on the superordinate, for example in the after segmentation has been realised via political means, the resources divide between the super and subordinate groups leaves the subordinate group in a weaker position as they have restricted access to resources and thus must depend on the superordinate for assistance (dependence). Finally, co-option demonstrates the relationship where the superordinate group enables limited access to decision making process for the subordinate (Lustick, 1980). In the Latvian instance, this is understood via the naturalisation programmes, i.e. achieving citizen status and learning Latvian. Lustick further devised a set of criteria to determine levels of control within a society, which can be identified via these four points:

- *In what ways do particular social, cultural or economic circumstances support certain types of control techniques, but make others more difficult or costly to implement?*
- *In what ways might the content of superordinate group ideology or the organising principles of superordinate group institutions affect the type of control techniques adopted or rejected?*
- *Do different mixes of control techniques contain different possibilities for evolutionary or revolutionary change?*
- *Specifically, do different mixes of control techniques contain different strategic opportunities to subordinate group members desirous of breaking the control relationship and, if so, what can analysis of these opportunities reveal about the costs and benefits associated with different modes of resistance in the context of different types of control relationships?*
(Lustick: 1979: 343)

The following discussion will focus around how the four points above relate to Latvia, focusing on the how the methods, level and indeed aims of the desired

control methods have been adjusted accordingly over the course of the modern independence era. In addition Hallik and Pettai noted in their case study of Estonia that:

> *"Estonia will not necessarily identify the exact same level of control as Lustick documented for the Jews vis-a-vis Israeli Arabs during the 1970s. On the contrary, by using the term `control' our point is to show how the concept can be used as a tool for empirical analysis. In this respect, we argue that `control' must not be viewed as a static regime, but a variable condition within any context of unbalanced ethno-political relations."* (Hallik & Pettai, 2002:507)

This idea has also been adopted for this study, Lustick's framework will be used analytically to examine the ethically based control mechanisms evident in Latvia, rather than as something that strictly seeks to represent similarities between Israel and Latvia. It should also be noted at this point that within this framework of control theory exists the idea of partial control, where the dominant majority share control of the economic sector whilst maintaining dominance in the political sector. This is emphasised by no or limited collective rights being extended to the minorities in both the educational and cultural sector, highlighting room for manoeuvre within the framework (Commercio, 2010). Once again focusing on Estonia, this theory was implemented by Hallik and Pettai, who argued that the Estonian political communities control over the non-Estonian minority in the early independence explains the high level of stability in the country. They describe how the restrictive citizenship policy was used by native Estonians as a mechanism of establishing political supremacy and closing off the public sector to non-Estonians, demonstrating segmentations of the non-Estonian community. Expanding on this, they state that these policies forced the key minority leaders to complete the state's integration program (co-option), forcing political as well as economic dependence on native Estonians in order to progress (Hallik & Pettai, 2002); this point however is questioned by Commercio in the Latvian context, who instead insists that non-native ethnicities of Latvia are not entirely economically dependent on the majority. She argues this by demonstrating the relative success Russians have had in the Latvian private sector as a result of being ousted from the public sector, where she

argues "*their native language remains a primary means of communication*" (2007:89).

Referring back to the initial seizure of political control via Latvian nationalist elites during the climax of the Soviet era, Smith identifies the strict citizenship policies that dominated the newly independent political scene. Indeed, these policies locked out the previously dominant Russian minority from independence politics. The citizenship policy, Latvian language policy, (which determined Latvian as the only official state language, thus providing a key stumbling block to non-speakers in public institutions, state affairs and governance) and the re-implementation of a Latvian constitution in which nationalistic ideals were emphasised provided legitimacy for ethnic Latvian's to seize their homeland back at the expense of the previously dominant ethnic Russians. Crucially, the citizenship legislation was passed before the June 1993 election, which in turn provided the platform for Latvia's Way and other nationalist parties to solidify control and implement policies designed to strengthen the core nation's grip on power. This in turn presented a number of difficulties for non-Latvian's to break into the public sphere and initiate changes as all other languages were declared foreign. While access to citizenship was provided, requiring the passing of a history and language test, there was a 'window' system which limited the number of applicants per year, thus ensuring there would not be a huge number of minority residents applying for citizenship (Smith, 1996; Jubilis, 2001; Pabriks & Purs, 2001).

Exploring in more detail just one of the issues that emerged in Latvia during the early period, particularly that related to social welfare, became among the issues of contention when the independence movement took shape. Latvia, for example automatically didn't recognise Soviet citizens unless they could prove that they were descended from those who were citizens of Latvia prior to the Soviet annexations of 1940. This of course meant that certain privileges and what were formerly rights during the Soviet era. One particular issue of contention during this immediate aftermath of the Soviet Collapse was that retired non-citizen Soviet armed forces who locked out of access to collecting their pensions until Latvia signed an agreement with the Russian Federation who would then pay their pensions as well as other various social benefits. These along with other members of Soviet secret-

service or other Soviet governmental bodies, are still excluded from naturalization today (Chandler, 2011). This is heavily linked in with the theories of control outlined by Lustick as it demonstrates a highly politicised social barrier placed on an aged population who could justifiably be considered part of the 'occupying regime' which subjected Latvia to communism during the latter part of the 20th Century. This one example highlights the tensions of the early independence era, and the historical narratives at work in defining policy. Perhaps one could ascertain from this particular example, that the new Latvian state was intent on trying to push away certain elements from Latvia, to make use of the re-partition agreements initially in place with the Russian Federation, a clear indicator of the early segmentation process. In the closing conclusion, Smith noted:

> *"As a particular regime of conflict regulation, it has provided an important basis for accommodating the insecurities of the core nations and of managing ethnic conflict. Its longevity as a model of ethnic conflict management, however, is far from certain and it will increasingly come into competition with two very different contenders. On the one hand, the transition to a liberal democracy will depend upon the ease with which the settler communities become citizens of the body politic"* (Smith, 1996:212).

The state school system was also shook-up initially, before a unified education system was introduced in the late 1990s, and the prominence of dual-stream school emerged. This is where the education is standardised but taught in both languages, with parents selecting which 'stream' to send their child too (Zepa, 2010). Russian schools are also available, but through the private sector, therefore restricting access to those who do not have the funds available for private education (Commercio, 2010). Zepa further concluded however that the results and academic attainment in these dual stream schools were lower than that of urban institutions, and while access to a more integrated Latvian and Russian institution is available, issues arise with minority representation in the translated textbooks:

> *"Latvian language books create a monoculture information space without minorities…Minority themes are mainly mentioned in those sections which specifically deal with minority themes (ethnic composition of the population, citizenship, the naturalisation process), but not in other sections. Minority representatives are not used as*

illustrations of loyalty towards the country, demonstrations of civic participation and other positive example. These roles are reserved for ethnic Latvians" (Zepa, 2010).

This demonstrates a two-way process, on the one hand co-option, where this idea of an integrated school system appeases critics (especially the European Community) and provides levels of integration, though through more informal methods the superordinate – subordinate roles are still maintained, along with the segmentation of the different ethnic minorities. Zepa further identified that while overall results were low, the level of the Russian ethnic minorities gradually fell behind that of ethnic Latvia in the period 2004 to 2007, most markedly in topics such as history.

However, re-addressing the economic issues, Commercio discovered that the level of dependence discovered in discovered by Hallik and Pettai in Estonia did not occur in Latvia, as the in-formal networks that established between ethnic-Russians in Latvia allowed them to become entrepreneur in the private-sector, this is demonstrated by the numbers of Latvians leaving Latvia via repatriation programmes sharply decreasing following 1994. This was due in part to a larger Russian presence in Latvia than in Estonia, therefore such opportunities arose more easily, furthermore, whereas Hallik and Pettai argue that the non-titular Estonians found problems keeping and finding jobs in via both formal and informal discrimination, the extensive networks in Latvia provided an escape from the dependence mechanism and the opportunity to develop and maintain existence in Russian orientated private firms. In addition to this, Commercio discovered that most Russians chose to repatriate to Russia as a result of nationalisation policies, as opposed to economic reasons or a lack of prospects (Commercio, 2010, Hallik & Pettai, 2002). Though it is important to note here that the relative lack of security and social benefits offered in the private sector or informal work, therefore it can be ascertained that while the situation was not as bleak for non-titular minorities in Latvia as it was in Estonia, there was at least a small level of dependence placed on the non-titular minorities, should they seek additional benefits and security.

As time as naturally progressed in Latvia, the goals of the country's leadership have also shifted, and with this, the management of the ethnic minorities. Setting designs on becoming members of the European political community forced a

change in approach to the type of control mechanisms adopted, and while the initial phase of independence saw more divisive methods adopted, as a means of solidifying power, more openly excluding minorities from public life, this now was forced to change. Delayed membership into the Council of Europe and the EU played a decisive role in this change, and a re-think on minority policies, crucially a decision to adopt a language law into the private sector was not passed on to parliament, another key element in influencing successful European accession (Sasse, 2002). This is where the power balance shifted, and a new element of co-option was brought in as a result of EU intervention as Ilze Brands Kehris explains. Firstly, while the citizenship legislation was liberalised, a members of non-ethnic groups who were connected to the Soviet power structure of secret service (KGB) were still exempt for naturalization (an estimated 1-3% of the population). Furthermore, the standards for acquiring citizenship were set at a much higher level than those found in other European countries, coming with a pricing structure which also affected ease of access. Whilst Latvia on this hand co-operated with EU migrant policy, the focus arguably shifted towards informal mechanisms of control, as a result of this there was a slight increase in applications for naturalization prior to and during EU accession, but this quickly fell again to record low levels only a few years later (Kehris, 2010). This indicates that how Latvia appeases both its political desires and state-building desires, developing methods of control which aim to satisfy both aims. While the 'window' system for naturalization was abolished, other, more subtle mechanisms of control were adopted in order to prevent mass-scale naturalization.

While discussing naturalization levels, Kehris also noted that post-financial crisis in 2009, large numbers of non-citizens took up Russian citizenship (while remaining residents of Latvia), was for the first time at a similar level to those who took up Latvian. She argued that this was less a sense of belonging to the state, but rather a greater sense of belonging at a local level. She goes on to explain how over the years, political participation has improved, despite being limited to citizens, especially at local level, where participation is allowed for residents, not just citizens. Though she also explains how the political systems is overly dominated by the ethnic cleavage, with parties mainly appealing to majority or minority voters,

with minority representatives maintaining a visable presence within government. Despite the fact they often bring minority related issues to debate, the proposals on the other hand are often voted down, though in contrast, this minority of electorates, she continues, has the power to block proposal which could hamper minorities (Kehris, 2010).

So while access to the political arena has improved for non-titular ethnicities (one only has to look at the election of Russian Nils Ušakovs as Mayor of Riga), politics is still primarily dominated by an ethnic cleavage. Daunis Aures demonstrates that after the socio-economic crisis of 2008, the ethnic Latvia vote began to split between voting for centre-right and right-wing parties vested in the battle on corruption and those which were championed by oligarchs respectively. The Russian vote however mainly remained to those championing the rights of non-titular ethnicities from the more leftist perspective (Aures, 2013). Here we can see how the global market crash and crises has had an outside influence on the elite hierarchy within Latvian politics and provided the minority ethnicities with a bigger chance of initiating change through the political channels. While the historical issues still take a driving state within national politics, the further integration of Latvia into global markets and bodies has demonstrated and element of potential for those minorities to challenge and potentially break the levels of control which were more prevalent before Latvia was deeper under the watch of European minority rights groups. Methods of control have been changed accordingly, in order to conform with EU wide regulation, however, with strict methods increasingly difficult to implement, and successive governments adopting more subtle approaches, the question of how this is represented in society today, and whether there is any potential for change to emerge from this is one which should be addressed.

A word on national identity and a sense of belonging

Before proceeding, it is important to outline why national identity and sense of belonging is important to the co-operative development of a society, as well as why

the control methods discussed above were put into practice to build and preserve an ethnically orientated Latvian state. As this thesis aims to dissect the different social, cultural and political outlooks of different ethnicities housed within Latvian society and why these occur, an understanding of what it means to belong to a nation state can provide insight on where problems can be tackled. David Miller's argued that national identity is the cement that holds a particular society together and, as he claims, must come from the inside as opposed to the outside (Miller, 1999). In spite of this one could also argue, that when certain members from a society are excluded via certain structural mechanisms, this sense of belonging is liable to be affected, thus forcing the individual to look elsewhere for a sense of 'belonging'. Furthermore, Miller outlines a shared historical continuity and common cultural values as key element to this sense of belonging. (Miller, 1999) As we can see in the case of Latvia, the state building process has seen the Latvia interpretation of history take precedence, therefore serving as a detriment to those ethnicities that are not exclusively part of that history, or indeed belong to another ethnic group which participated in marginalising Latvia – i.e. those that came during the Soviet occupation, which is considered a national tragedy and a vital shared experience which binds ethnic Latvians (Eglītis, 2002). To support this argument, George Schopflin outlines the development of Central and Eastern European identity in contrast to that found in the West, where one of the key defining features in identity construction was breaking away from culturally dominant empires and thusly these nations have historically struggled for their own unique sense of identity which has played a role in the ethnic sense of belonging and nation building process. Additionally, he attributes this to a lack of a strong civil society, stating that the driving force behind small nations is the strict conviction in the survival and existence of their unique culture, which places ethnicity at the centre of societal development (Schopflin, 2000). Of course, as the discussion has outlined, such ideas resonate with the ethnic Latvian people and are representative of the philosophies which justify enacting a level of control over non-titular ethnicities as a means of preserving and developing their existence in the modern era.

The theoretical discussion has indicated that both theories demonstrate a significant level of relevance with regard to independence era Latvian society.

Following this, the need to explore further in order to uncover the differences between the ethnicities current social status, views and interpretation of their surroundings is evident. The focus thus becomes what point contemporary Latvian society has subsequently arrived at as a result of the early decisions taken by a nationalist government and the state building process, how this intrinsic control relationship between the state and non-Latvians has developed over time, and whether the effects which are visible today which demonstrate any room for consolidation. The methodology section will outline how this will aim to be achieved.

CHAPTER III – METHODOLOGY

As demonstrated in the theoretical chapter, Latvian society shares a number of similarities with Estonian society; therefore there is a case that both theoretical approaches are relevant and can be experimented with in a Latvian context. The methodology section consequently aims to demonstrate how the process will be carried out, detailing the questions that will be posed in order to deeper explore the theoretical relevance within the contemporary context. To achieve this, recently published sources were gathered which focus on the different ethnicities interpretations of the society in which they live. The most recent copy of the Latvia Human Development Report which focuses on breakdown the contemporary mood of the ethnic divides in Latvia, thus giving a good indication of the current dissatisfactions with society in where the country may be headed in the near future according to members of different ethnic groups.. Furthermore, a recent public opinion survey on issues affecting minority issues were carried out by Ammon Cheskin, which focuses on the ethnically Russian centric celebration of the Soviet victory over the Soviet Union. The methodology thus determines that the data collection will primarily consist of statistical data gathering with an element of comparison between the different ethnic communities as a means of highlighting how certain interpretations are represented in each respectively.

The empirical data will attempt to establish an overarching but accurate indication of the differences in ethnic understanding found in contemporary Latvia, ranging from social make-up of how each group interprets and copes with this difference. Perhaps the most significant resource is the Human Development Report of 2010/2011 published by the United Nations Development Program which engaged in large scale research specifically examining the ethnic divide in Latvia, ethnically breaking down outlooks and interpretations of the state, history and the sense of belonging to the culture of Latvian society. This research is an excellent

resource in assessing the theoretical arguments because it is one example of the most up to date, in-depth studies of the issues surrounding ethnicity using a large cross-section of members from all corners of society. The inclusion of this research was to establish an understanding of where the key ethnic differences lie, with a view to examining where there is potential for reconciliation between the respective ethnicities. As outlined in the theoretical chapter, various control methods have been adopted with a view to continue the support of an ethno-centric state as opposed to a multi ethnic state, therefore it will be interesting to see how this is reflected in the data in order to understand what impact this has had on an interpretative level. Offering comparisons of topics such as importance of language and political party affiliation, this text offers many variables which can be assessed within the framework and context of the prescribed theoretical arguments.

In addition to this, Ammon Cheskin looked closely into the unofficial May 9 celebrations of the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany, which are annually held by the Russian-speaking community in Riga. During this he carried out surveys posing a number of questions to the members of the community who attended the celebrations. While this research does not deal with issues of ethnicity in particular, it looks closely at the interpretations of those non-Latvians and the relevance of Soviet historical narrative (a narrative which has become redundant in modern Latvian society with regard to the state), broken down by age. As many young people have spent the vast majority of their lives living in independent Latvia, this opens up an intriguing opportunity to examine how the ethnic state-building process has impacted on the views of the county's minority youth, and whether there is any trends which emerge demonstrating a change, or indeed whether the level of segregation from ethnic Latvian spheres has caused the Russian minority to hold onto these value. It should be noted however, that the attendees of this event, as Cheskin acknowledges are those which have stronger affiliation with their Russian heritage, therefore the key indicator in this source is how the event and surrounding narrative are interpreted by different age groups, this will in turn indicate whether the young have re-considered the weight of the Soviet narrative, in co-ordination with learning about and understanding the Latvia version of history from a young age, and having not lived through it.

The findings of the empirical research link directly to the theoretical frameworks as they indicate in a clear and broad fashion the desires of the different ethnicities, and how each, as a group, view various facets of Latvian life. The expression and reflection of these views have undoubtedly been tainted by over twenty years of conflicting interest. Therefore in order to gain a deeper understanding in relation to the theoretical discussion, the following questions have been devised as a means of interpreting the data more specifically, to simply try to contextualise, as outlined in the introduction, why the public don't believe the democracy they see they before them as a result of control and the argument that there is ground to still claim Latvia is an ethnic democracy.[1]

1) Is the weak interpretation of the ethnic democracy model applicable to Latvia, and if so, how is this demonstrated by the empirical data?

2) What, if any, features of a partial control society are reflected in the empirical data, how significant is history in the views of titular and non-titular ethnicities?

3) In what areas is there potential for reconciliation between ethnic Latvians and non-Latvians?

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[1] *Originally there was a plan to further investigate the data gathered by elaborating on the issues discovered via a series of interviews which would have sought to add a greater contextual basis for the patterns discovered. However, unfortunately, the level of Russian and indeed Latvian I hold was not sufficient to carry out this process effectively; therefore this will be addressed in the conclusion as a way to further carry out research with regard to control mechanisms and the concept of ethnic democracy.*

CHAPTER IV – EMPERICAL DATA

To further expand the understanding of Latvian society in the context of the proposed theories, the empirical data is a vital component of statistically examining contemporary Latvian society to fully contextualise the relevance of said theories as a means of determining whether the results show patterns consistent with ethnic democracy and control theory. As discussed in the methodology, this was carried out by means of capturing the broader picture by incorporating useful statistical data into the discussion, which can later be analysed in conjunction with the theoretical arguments. The process was carried out by collecting current data from a small range of recently published sources from which focused primarily on the different responses and interpretations of Latvia's various ethnicities as to how they view certain issues which are exclusive to Latvian society. The empirical data therefore is central to understanding the theoretical arguments developed in chapter II with a view to further establishing certain patterns which suggest whether there is any indication that there is potential for areas of co-operation between the different ethnicities.

2010/2011 Latvian Human Development Report

The most recently published edition of the Human Development Report of Latvia carried out in co-ordination with the United Nations Development Programme focuses heavily on minority issues. The resource provides a wealth of related empirical data which will be assessed in the analysis chapter in co-ordination with

the theoretical arguments. Firstly the issue of ethnic nationalism is addressed as this is central to the theoretical arguments that Latvia has structured its social development around the nation-building ethos of Latvia being a state for ethnic Latvians. The first table has been broken down by ethnicity, in order to give a clear outline of any patterns which may emerge (fig 1.1).

Nationality	All people in Latvia must speak Latvian	I like the colours of the Latvian flag	Foundation for Unity: Latvian language and culture	I am touched by the national anthem	I would prefer a Latvia populated only by Latvians
All	84.7	80.9	71.8	58.5	28.8
Latvians	93.1	87.2	89.1	71.3	43.9
Russians	72.2	71.5	46.0	39.3	7.8
Others	76.0	74.5	54.5	46.3	9.1

Figure 1.1: Attitudes towards ethnic nationalism values by nationality (% of each group saying «fully agree» or «mostly agree») (United Nations Development Programme, 2011:28)

As displayed above, there is a slight consensus between ethnic groups that all people must speak Latvian, with ethnic Latvians overwhelmingly agreeing (93.1%), though a high number of Russians, almost three in four agreed with this sentiment (72.2%), from a total of 84.7% of all people who agreed. This demonstrates that the Latvian language is considered fairly important by all members of society, further backed up by the idea that the vast majority of all ethnicities like the colours of the Latvian flag, with 87.2% of Latvians agreeing compared to 71.5% of Russians and 74.5% of other ethnicities, therefore the difference, again, is not so wide between the two nationalities. However, when pressed as to whether Latvian language and culture was a foundation for unity in Latvia, this statement was widely rejected by the ethnic Russian population (46.0% agreed), with almost nine in ten of Latvians agreeing (89.1%). Similar differences were also replicated when asked if the respondent was touched by the national anthem, again the majority of Latvians agreed (71.3%), whereas only 39.3% of Russians shared similar feelings. This theme is replicated further throughout, with following questions regarding extreme ethnic nationalism values, 36.4% of all Latvian respondents agreed that people of other ethnicities cannot belong to Latvia compared to 20.4% of Russians, furthermore 43.9% of Latvians agreed that they would prefer if Latvia was only populated by Latvians, with less than one in ten Russians sharing this sentiment (7.8%). While of course, it

is clear that less that the majority of Latvians agree with the final two questions, there is a marked difference in opinion between the ethnicities. Ideas of ethnic nationalism undoubtedly strike a chord with Latvians much less so than other ethnicities, supporting the idea that ethnic foundations are a good basis for a nation. Interestingly these results also highlight the minor difference between those from the Russian minority and the other ethnicities. The data suggests while the other minorities views are closer to that of the Russians than of the Latvians, they are always located within the middle of the two dominant ethnicities. This perhaps indicates the strength of cultural preservations of the Russian minority as a result of its numbers and its ability to maintain a greater presence of its culture, in opposed to the minorities who do not have such wide support networks in place to effectively maintain their sense of external cultural belonging.

Related to ethnic nationalism and serving as one of the foundations of contemporary ethnic Latvian identity construction, the question regarding collective myths and the role of the Soviet Union was used posed in order to establish how significant these myths remain in contemporary Latvia (fig 1.2). Two statements addressing the different historical myths were posed to the different ethnicities, they were "*The standard of living in Latvia would be higher if the country had remained independent in 1940, as Finland did*" and "*It was only thanks to help from other Soviet nations that Latvia achieved a high level of economics and culture*". Each ethnicity was asked whether how they agreed with each statement. Similarly to the results from ethnic nationalism ethnic Latvians showed agreement with the first statement (59.5%) and widely disagreed with the second statement (21.7% fully or mostly agreed). In contrast Russians responded in disagreement with the first statement (29.7 % fully or mostly agreed) and agreed with the second statement. Again the other ethnicities demonstrated a middle level of agreement, placing closer to the Russians than the ethnic Latvians, but once again indicating that there is a degree of difference between each community and they hold, fairly closely, their respective collective ethnic myths.

Nationality	The standard of living in Latvia would be higher if the country had remained independent in 1940, as Finland did.	It was only thanks to the help from other Soviet nations that Latvia achieved a high level of economics and culture
All	47.5	36.8
Latvians	59.5	21.7
Russians	29.7	58.3
Others	34.6	55.4

Figure 1.2: Attitudes towards collective myths by nationality (% of each group saying «fully agree» or «mostly agree») (United Nations Human Development, 2011:30).

Related to the collective myths and to the theoretical arguments is the idea that there is a threat to the titular language and that culture is under threat as a result of the high levels of non-titular ethnicities sharing the territory. The table below (fig 1.3) outlines the levels of danger perceived by each ethnicity with regards to the languages of Latvian and Russian and their respective cultures. Continuing the trend, a slight majority of Latvians (55.9%) consider their language and culture to be threatened, while only 11.1% consider Russian to be in danger.

Nationality	Existence of Latvian language, culture endangered	Existence of Russian language, culture endangered
All	39.8	20.0
Latvians	55.9	11.1
Russians	16.6	34.2
Others	21.7	26.0

Figure 1.3: The views of the residents of Latvia about threats to the existence of Latvian/Russian language and culture in Latvia by nationality (% of relevant group) (United Nations Human Development, 2011:33).

This of course can be viewed in relation to the Russian language holding a major presence within Latvia. Interestingly only 34.2% of ethnic Russians consider Russian to be in danger, indicating that the majority perhaps feel they have a level of freedom to continue to use their language despite the efforts made to close Russian out of state and public affairs.

With the question of citizenship being central to the theory of control, the following table looks at pride in being a resident of Latvia, the following two examples of data are directly related to being a part of Latvia, broken down by ethnicity (fig 1.4) and citizenship status (fig 1.5). Firstly, the number of Latvians which were proud of their country was 70.5%, with 21.9% being not proud, this was contrasted by only 44.4% of Russians being proud and a slightly lower number of

42.9% being not proud. This was similarly replicated with regards to citizenship where 63.7% of citizens were proud of their country, with 27.6% answering that they were not proud, though it is important to remember that this includes the many members of ethnic minorities who make up the citizen population. Alternatively just over four in ten non-citizens (41.4%) were proud of Latvia, where as a slightly higher number (45.8%) were not were not. This indicates that while the majority of ethnic Latvians are proud of their country, less than half of ethnic Russians are, indicating although there is quite a divide in opinion this seems to be somewhat tempered by citizenship status, where slightly more non-citizens from the group are not proud to be part of Latvia. This gives a small indication, it seems, that acquiring citizenship, on some level demonstrates a measure of pride in one's country, as given the results undoubtedly those ethnic minorities who have acquired citizenship subsequently feel more pride in their country.

Nationality	Proud («very proud» or «mostly proud»)	Not Proud («not particularly proud» or «not proud at all»)	Difficult to say
All	59.9	30.7	9.4
Latvians	70.5	21.9	7.6
Russians	44.4	42.9	12.6
Others	48.2	42.3	9.5

Figure 1.4: Pride in being a resident of Latvia by nationality (% of relevant group) (United Nations Human Development, 2011:31).

Nationality	Proud («very proud» or «mostly proud»)	Not Proud («not particularly proud» or «not proud at all»)	Difficult to say
Latvian citizens	63.7	26.7	8.7
Non-citizens	41.4	45.8	12.8

Figure 1.5: Pride in one's country by citizenship (% of relevant group) (United Nations Human Development, 2011:33).

Once again related to citizenship and the common ideas of being a member of the Latvian community and coinciding with issues which address those regarding who makes up the people of Latvia, the following questions focussed on who each ethnicity regarded as the people who made up Latvia (fig 1.6) and secondly, who should not be allowed to become citizens (fig 1.7). With regard to who makes up members of Latvia, though importantly this was not directed with the connotation of the word 'nation', ethnic Latvians were fairly liberal with their interpretations, with

just over one half (52.7%) of Latvians agreeing that all residents of Latvia make up the people of Latvia, 65.1% agreed that someone who has at least one Latvian parent, 67.7% believed all those who were born in Latvia made up the people of Latvia. Furthermore, 75.6% believed that all who speak Latvian and live in Latvia made up the people of Latvia, 72.9% agreed all Latvian residents with a sense of belonging, 81.1% agreed that all Latvian citizens and 97.9% believed that Latvians made up Latvia. In contrast the Russian community was overall more positive about every answer, with at least four out of five responding yes to every question, bar the issue of language, where 79.9% of Russians believed all those who speak Latvian and live in Latvia made up the people of Latvia, thus indicating again that language plays a slightly more decisive role, in determining who belongs to Latvia and in their interpretation, language is not regarded as much as requirement, compared to the other issues. Once again the other ethnicities responded in a manner which co-ordinated with previously outlined trends, though crucially they saw a sense of community and Latvian language as slightly more important than the dominant ethnicities.

Nationality	Latvians	All Latvian citizens	All Latvian residents with a sense of belonging to the community	All who speak Latvian	All who were born in Latvia	All who have at least one person who is Latvian	All residents of Latvia
All	95.8	86.5	80.5	77.5	76.3	72.4	66.0
Latvians	97.9	81.1	72.3	75.6	67.7	65.1	52.7
Russians	93.7	94.4	90.6	79.9	89.6	83.9	85.9
Others	90.9	92.1	91.5	80.7	83.2	78.3	78.7

Figure 1.6: Views of Latvians and members of other nationalities about who makes up the people of Latvia (% of each nationality; the answer «yes») (United Nations Human Development, 2011:36).

Nationality, citizenship	Those who wish to preserve their culture	Non-Latvians	People from other countries	Members of former repressive organisations	Those to whom Latvia's interests are unimportant	Those who ignore Latvian law
All	13.6	15.6	27.1	55.3	63.4	63.9
Latvians	18.5	21.9	35.9	70.7	76.3	71.4
Russians	7.0	8.1	14.5	32.0	44.1	54.7
Others	6.5	3.7	15.9	40.7	50.6	50.1

Figure 1.7: The views of Latvia's residents on who should not be allowed to become a citizen of the country by nationality and citizenship (% of the relevant group; the answer «should be banned» (United Nations Human Development, 2011: 36).

Continuing and focusing on who should not be allowed to become a citizen of Latvia (questioning those who hold citizenship), there was again a level of discord between the views shared by each ethnicity, with Latvians voicing a greater deal of concern over those they viewed as undesirable for their nation. While in general, the majority is not against other people being banned from becoming citizens of their nation, they are strongly in favour of those who are members of former repressive organisation being banned from citizenship (70.7%) and those to whom Latvia's interests are unimportant (76.3%). In contrast to this, Russians and other ethnicities share much more liberal views in this regard, particularly to non-Latvians (Russians 8.1%, others 3.7%) and people from other countries (Russians 14.5%, others 15.9%), and while a larger proportion are against members of former repressive organisations (Russians 32%, others 40.7%) and those to whom Latvia's interests are unimportant (Russians 44.1%, others 50.6%), there is still a considerable gulf between their views and that of the ethnic Latvians. Firmly affirming the stricter boundaries ethnic Latvians consider for one to become part of the Latvian citizenry.

Finally, data was gathered which identified each ethnicity's sense of territorial belonging, broken down into a number of continuously expansive categories. This data revealed that all three groups felt a strong, largely undividable sense of belonging to their neighbourhood (Latvians 75.1%, Russians 71.1%, Others 78.1%) and city (Latvians 82%, Russians 79.2% Others 87.0%) (fig 1.8). This initially indicates that all ethnicities overwhelming sense of connection to their local area, though the region was less conclusive with a slightly smaller of Latvians feeling connected (69.7%), but more so than the ethnic Russians (60.3%). In spite of this, a sense of belonging to Latvia as a territory was more highly represented across all

ethnicities, and the most relatable amongst ethnic Latvians (82.8%). Furthermore, a relatively low number of ethnic Russians felt a sense of territorial belonging to Russia (32.9%), indicating that the idea of Russia as a territory which the ethnicity belongs to is not strong in comparison to others, but more so than the Baltic states (20.2%) or Europe as a whole (20.6%), though a sense of belonging to the latter two territories was expressed similarly by all ethnicities. Clearly while ethnic Latvians indicate almost zero sense of belonging to Russia (3.6%), there are a number of similarities in the data, which suggests, particularly at local level there is a largely unified feeling between all ethnicities. However, the level of local attachment felt across all members of society, indicating that while there is elements of difference in a national or even wider global context, the local level offers a place for which greater integration and community initiatives can be effective.

Nationality	Parish, Neighbourhood	City	Region	Latvia	Russia	Baltic States	Europe
All	74.0	81.9	66.8	78.3	14.8	20.2	20.6
Latvians	75.1	82.8	69.7	82.8	3.6	19.9	21.2
Russians	71.0	79.2	60.3	71.9	32.9	20.2	20.6
Others	78.1	87.0	64.7	73.3	21.9	21.9	17.1

Figure 1.8: The sense of territorial belonging by nationality (% of each ethnic group expressing a deep sense of belonging or a sense of belonging to a specific territory) (United Nations Human Development, 2011:24).

Civic values

Interestingly, when broken down by ethnicity there were major examples of common ground between ethnic Latvians and non-ethnic Latvians with regards to what constitutes values of a civil society (fig 2.1). For example, high numbers of ethnic Latvians, Russians and others believed that certain values were either important or very important, with regard to observing laws and regulations, from a total of 87.1% which responded positively, 87.7% were ethnic Latvian, 86.6% were ethnic Russian and 85.7% were other ethnicity, demonstrating a strong base for co-

operation between the different ethnicities. Obviously an assumption can be made that there is a strong base of respect for the law and regulation within Latvia across all ethnicities, which provides a positive platform for future developments of ethnic issues within a legal framework. Importance of paying taxes was agreed upon by 77.0% of the overall population with the 76.6% of Latvians, 76.7% of Russians and 80.0% of others responding respectively, again indicating the importance placed within the structural mechanism of the state for continuing social development, regardless of whether the state is viewed in a positive light or not by different ethnicities, all members of society agree on the importance of taxation and the benefit it can bring through social means. Furthermore, voting in elections was positively responded to by 78.9% of the overall population with the ethnic breakdown showing 79.3% of Latvians, 79.6% of Russians and 74.4% of Others also agreeing, once again highlighting the basic value of democracy is equally comprehended in large numbers between all members of society. Despite levels of ethnic discord, this suggests that people are not completely disenfranchised by the democratic procedure, which also provides a strong base for future co-operation.

Being a good citizen	Observing laws, regulations	Paying taxes	Voting in elections	Actively opposing corruption	Staying in Latvia despite the economic crisis
All	87.1	77.0	78.9	70.4	39.5
Latvians	87.7	76.6	79.3	73.5	40.1
Russians	86.6	76.7	79.6	64.8	39.2
Others	85.7	80.0	74.4	70.5	39.0

Figure 2.1: Attitudes toward civic values by nationality. (% of each group which stated they «fully agree» or «mostly agree»)(United Nations Human Development, 2011:25).

Staying in Latvia despite the economic crisis, while not overwhelmingly important to all respondents, saw only a 1.1% difference covering all ethnicities, from an overall positive response of only 39.5%. Again indicating a trend of agreement between the different ethnicities, even if this doesn't reflect overly well on perhaps the level of actual attachment to the Latvian state which was discussed above. Though however, the most majorly slight difference when this was question was put into the context of citizens abroad voting in elections where there was a slightly higher 7.5% difference in opinion between Latvians and Russians (74.0%

and 66.5%). Similar trends of wider difference were accorded to different ethnicities when actively opposing corruption was discussed, with ethnic Latvians (73.5%) showing slightly more inclination that ethnic Russians (64.8%), with other ethnicities (70.5%) falling between the two. This, more than any other example perhaps provides an indication as to the state of politics in Latvia, as has been previously discussed, the ethnic cleavage does maintain an overwhelming presence in contemporary Latvian politics.

Cheskin's democratisation of history

The research of Ammon Cheskin in his essay *History, conflicting collective memories, and national identities: how Latvian's Russian–speakers are learning to remember* was incorporated into this study as it focuses on Russian-speakers' interpretations of the Second World War and crucially demonstrates the different interpretations held by different age groups, therefore one can ascertain how this has changed over time and consequently whether the views on the younger generation have been affected by the nation-building efforts of post-impendence Latvia. This research will be vital in indicating whether the Soviet narrative still has any value amongst the younger generation, and as we have already seen, Latvians and minorities still views still clash on a number of issues as discussed above, however, given the Latvian historical narrative which has been central to the construction of Latvian identity, the results of this study provide a deeper insight into where there may be areas for reconciliation. As Cheskin points out, the Latvian narrative views both Soviet and Nazi occupiers as equally horrific and brutal regimes, which have been central to the modern discourse of Latvian history and identity construction, whereas, the Russian-speaking community widely rejects the label of occupiers and view the Soviet as saviours of Europe from the evils of fascism. Cheskin sought to challenge these two rigidly fixed and opposing historical constructs, arguing that there was evidence that a process of democratisation of history was occurring (Cheskin, 2012). Below his findings will be discussed with a view to conceptualising

and bringing to the analysis a unique approach which demonstrates how important the interpretations of history are towards reconciling the differences between Latvia's ethnic groups.

The questions posed by Cheskin were designed to test the "top-down" influence of the Latvian memory myth against the "bottom-up" memory myths of parents and grandparents and whether there was a new space in between which would show and understanding of both. Furthermore, Cheskin uses clever language, which may or may not be deemed acceptable by the respondents in order to from the questions. For example the when using the different labels of "annexation" and "occupation" the results indicated that those questioned aged 18-25 displayed much more acceptance of the word "annexations" as opposed to "occupation". As the chart (see fig 3.1) indicates there is also a sizable difference between the different ages.
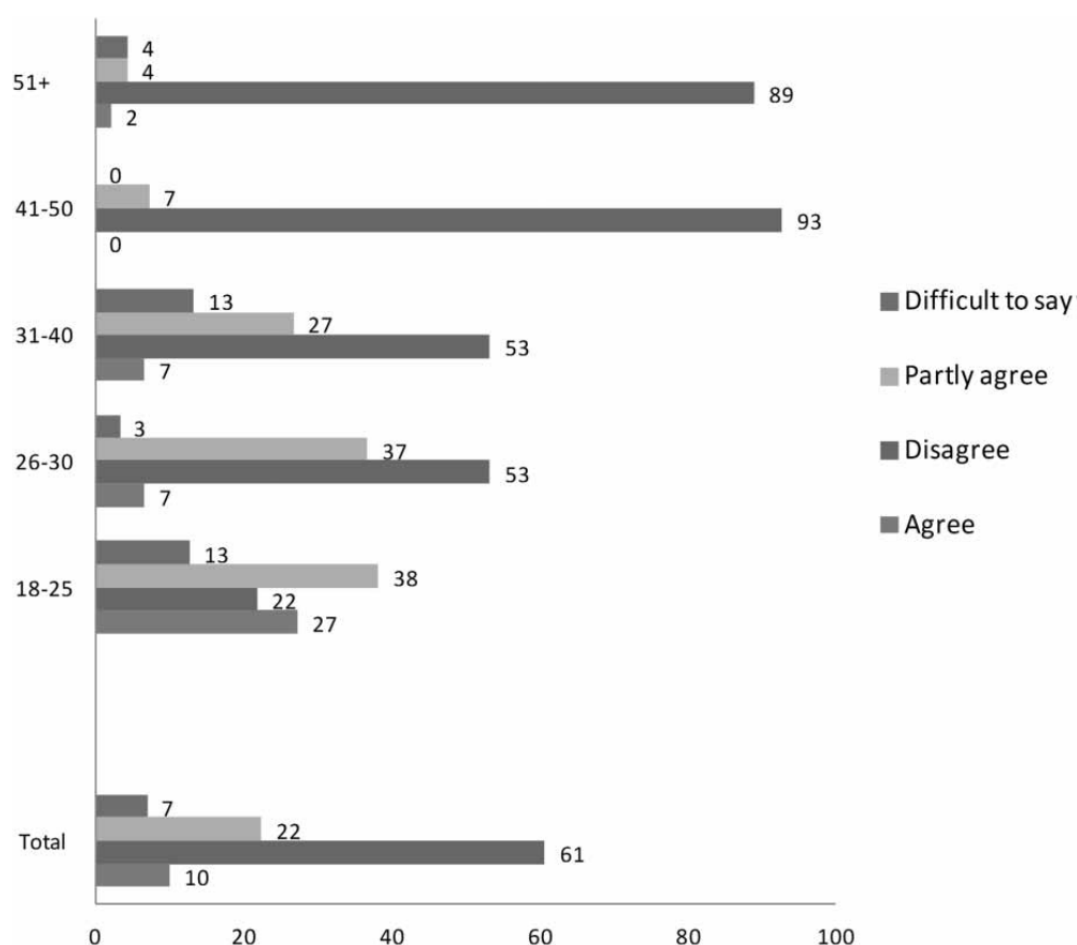

Figure 3.1: In response to the question: "Latvia was forcefully annexed by the Soviet army against the will of its inhabitants (by age group and %) (Cheskin, 2012:571).

Comparing this with the following graph (see fig 4.2) we can see how the respondents reacted to the idea of occupation. A clear split is evident between the older and younger generation, with only 36% fully accepting the idea that Latvia was occupied by the Soviet Union out of an overall average of 61%. Additionally, a further 27% of 18-25 year olds accepted that Latvia was forcefully annexed into the Soviet Union in contrast to an overall average of just 10%. Evidently there is a striking difference in the views between the new generation and those who
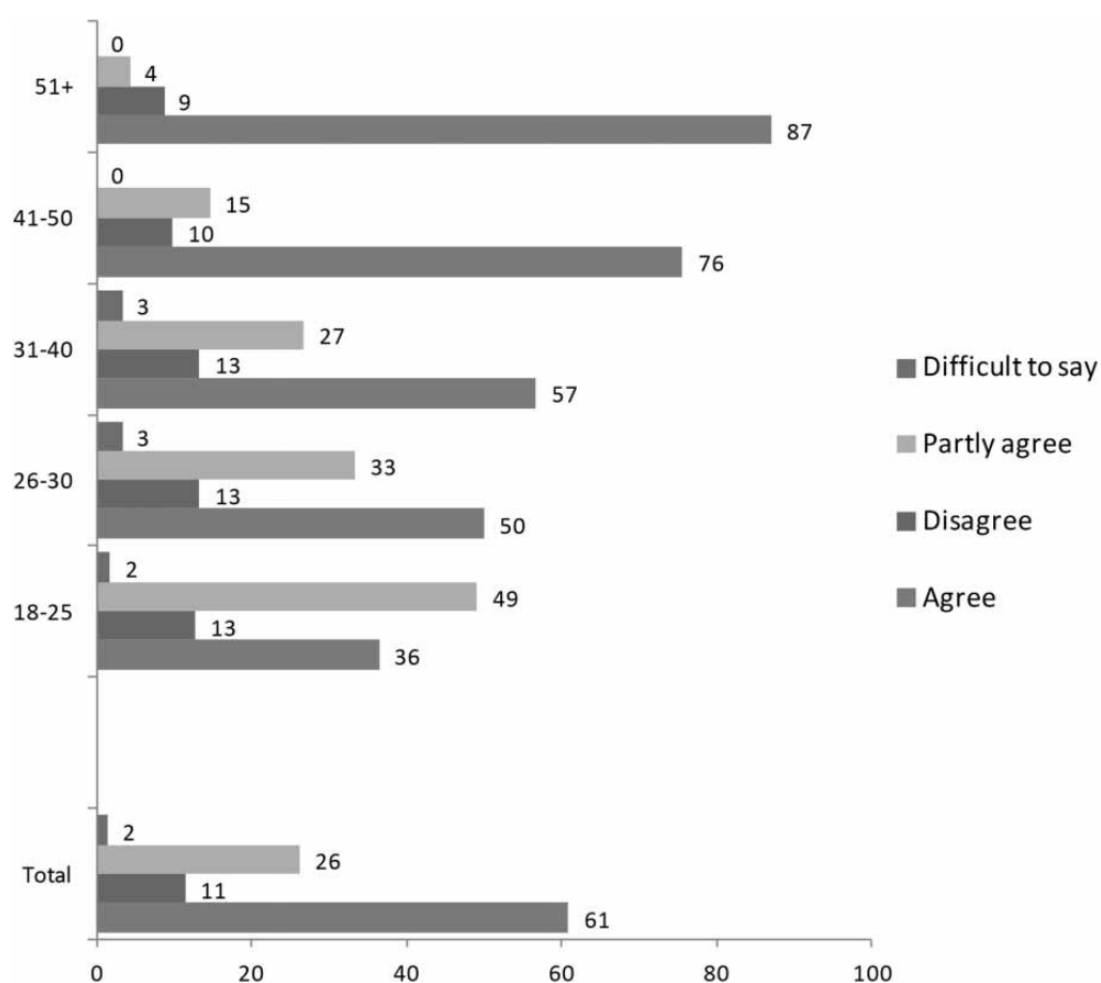

Figure 3.2: In response to the question: "It is not right to talk of Soviet 'occupation'. There was no Soviet occupation" (by age group and %) (Cheskin, 2012:568).

are older, which is represented further throughout the empirical data. For example, the Soviet memory myth is focused around the view that the Soviet Union's arrival in Latvia after the Nazi's was a liberation movement, one to free Latvia from the

Nazi oppressors. Looking in more detail (see fig 3.3), it seems once again similar trends are discovered amongst the younger generation who are less likely to fully accept the idea that the Soviets were liberators. While only 7% disagreed that the USSR liberated Latvia, more were inclined to partly agree than their elders (20%) and 71% agreed, in contrast to an average agreement of 82%. While the difference is by no means large, it is seems rather significant, especially compared to the older generation of 51% who resolutely agreed (91%) or partly agreed (9%).
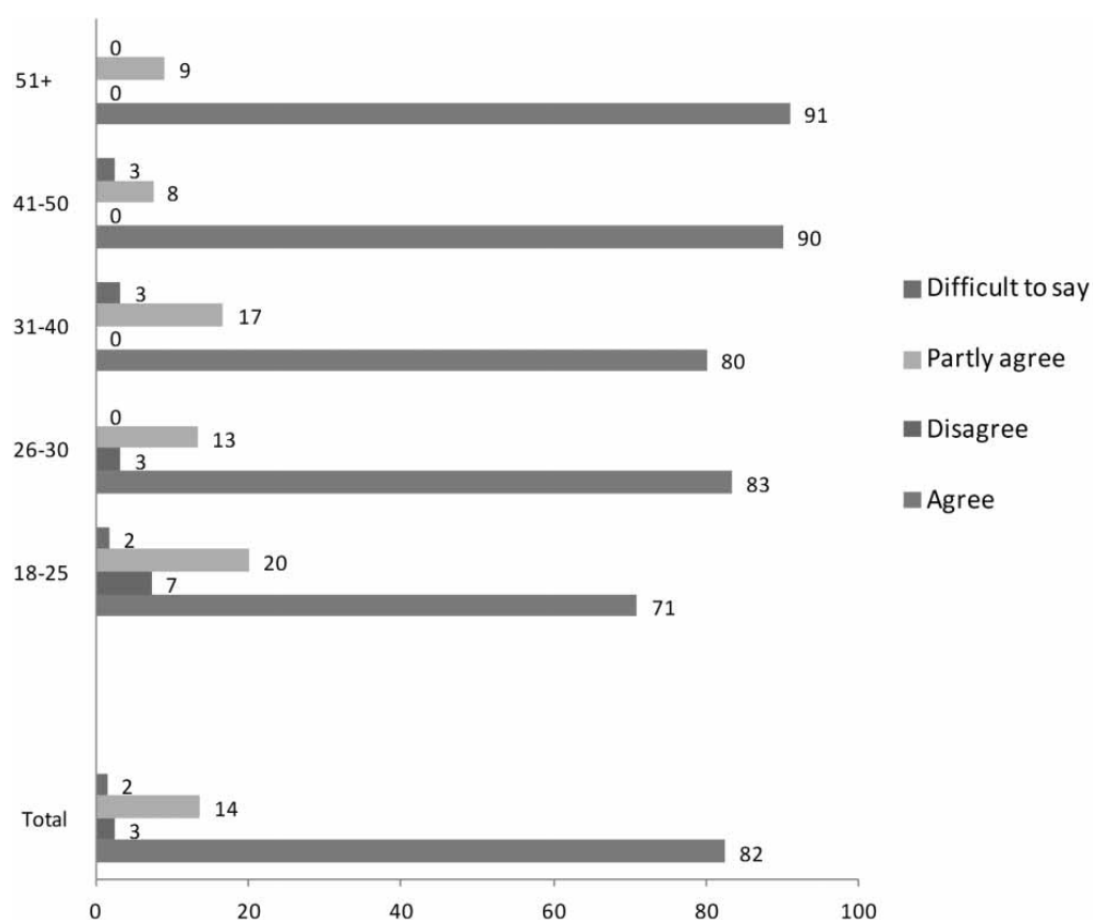

Figure 3.3: In response to the question: "In 1944 Latvia was liberated by Soviet troops" (by age group and %) (Cheskin, 2012:570).

Perhaps though, one of the more significant results of Cheskin's study was related to the question was with regards to alternative views of history. The question *"History is never straightforward. For this reason I can come to terms with the fact that different people have different interpretations of the Second World War and its consequences"* (Cheskin, 2012:574) clearly indicated that the younger generation were more open to alternative views of history and demonstrated a level of empathy

not demonstrated by the older generation (see fig 3.4). In this example 96% agreed (87%) or partly agreed (9%) with the statement with only 4% disagreeing, compared
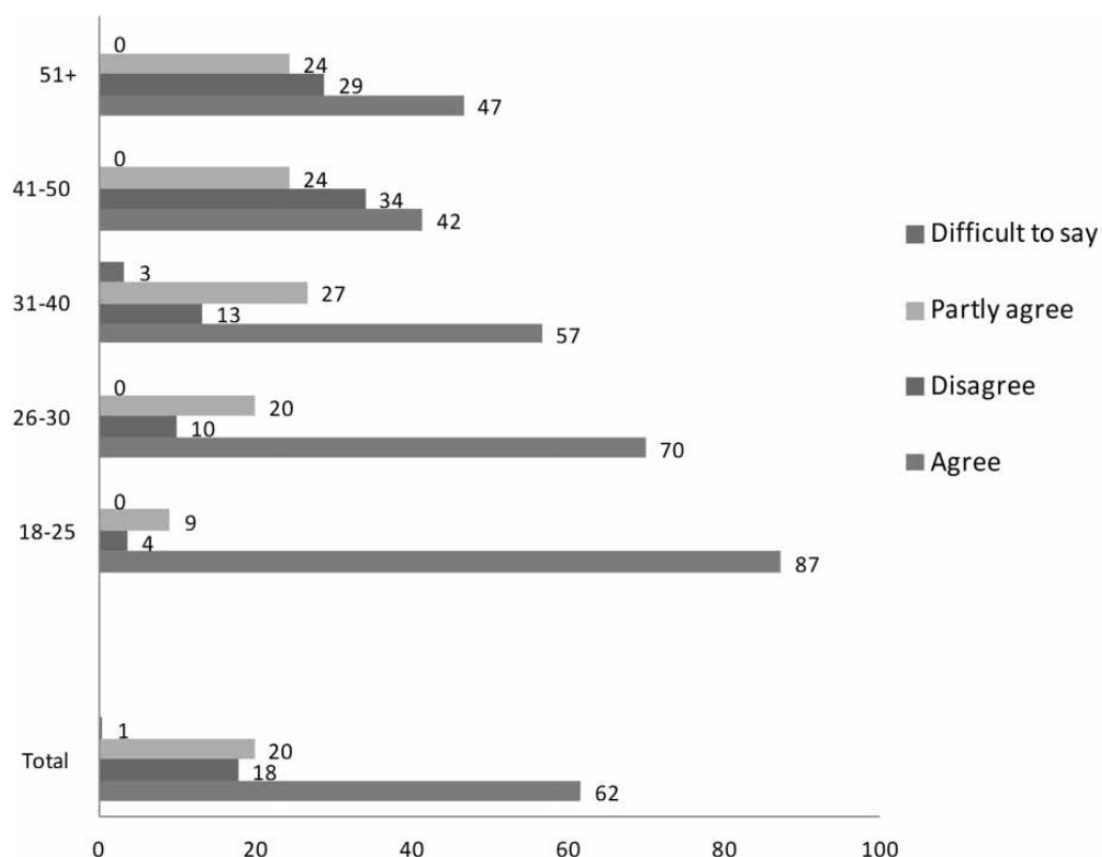

Figure 3.4: In response to the question: "History is never straightforward. For this reason I can come to terms with the fact that different people have different interpretations of the Second World War and its consequences" (by age group and %) (Cheskin, 2012:575).

to an average of 18% who disagreed overall. Still, the numbers that completely agreed demonstrates a level of empathy which is much higher than that of the older generation, and provides a number of opportunities for building upon on such sentiment in positive ways. This was also strongly reflected in answer to the question "May 9 is a symbolic say when non-Latvians can voice their dissatisfaction with the unfairness of the state" (fig 3.5) where not one single member of the 18-25 age group full agreed with the statement and only 29% partially agreed, contrast this to the 65% which agreed with the statement from the +51 age bracket. One could argue in some way that this demonstrates a mature level of understanding between politics and history, suggesting the May 9 celebration is a celebration of cultural history, but not an opportunity to cause political tension.

Age group	Agree	Disagree	Partly agree	Difficult to say
18-25	0	70	29	1
26-30	3	77	6	0
31-40	23	40	23	13
41-50	44	34	12	10
51+	64	22	11	2
Total	27	48	19	10

Fig 3.5: In response to the question: "May 9 is a symbolic day when non-Latvians can voice their dissatisfaction with the unfairness of the state (% of respondents) (Cheskin, 2012:583)

While many of the results of Cheskin's study didn't show quite as much difference in responses between the age groups, this selected sample provides an intriguing insight into how the views have changed during the independence period, highlighting the impact this era of politics has had in some way affecting the views of the country's minority ethnic youth. While of course, one can see there are still elements of dissatisfaction and protest against the Latvian historical myth, the argument can be made that there is a subtle shifting, almost reinterpretation occurring in the minds of the minority ethnic youth as they come to terms with the two opposing historical narratives. These results will be analysed along with the discussed theoretical arguments in the analysis chapter, with a view to determining whether they indicate potential for a change of approach from a top-down perspective.

CHAPTER V – ANALYSIS

The primary objective of the analysis chapter is to contextualise the gathered data within the framework of the theoretical discussion, offering detailed answers to the questions outlined in the methodology. The dissection of the data collected is crucial to drawing conclusions and identifying areas where further research could provide more detailed answers. Here an attempt to describe the role and presence ethnic democracy and control theory maintains in contemporary Latvian society will be offered, as a means of justifying the approach used, using underlying the ideas in order to grasp better comprehension of the data collected and establish how the various ethnicities interpret the society they live in.

1) Is the weak interpretation of the ethnic democracy model applicable to Latvia, and if so, how is this demonstrated by the empirical data?

The empirical data has highlighted a wide degree of discord between the interpretations of the different ethnicities as to how they view Latvia. In general, ethnic Latvians draw a number of boundaries around what constitutes membership, participation and life in Latvian society which are stricter than those of their minority counterparts. Their views largely conform to the ethnic democracy theory and furthermore, the ethnic-nation principles which were established in the early state building process, centred on language, history and culture, manifest as a direct result of ethnic mobilisation. On the contrary, as the other ethnicities do not share these traditions, they view membership of Latvia in more liberal terms. This highlights the importance ethnic Latvians place on their cultural traditions to full membership of their state, and that those who do not conform are viewed as outsiders. For example, when viewing language as a primary function of the ethnic

nations, 93.1% of all ethnic Latvian agreed that all people in Latvia must speak Latvian. This overwhelming number highlights the strength of the core ethnic values which have been implemented post-independence. Nine out of ten ethnic Latvian also viewed the Latvian language and culture as a foundation for unity, again demonstrating the core principles at which they would like their state to be built upon. Relating back to the theoretical arguments, this outlines the ethnic Latvians view that there core principles which Smooha argued *"the point of departure of ethnic democracy is the prevalence of ethnic nationalism that asserts an absolute, exclusive and indivisible right of an "ethnic nation" to a given country"* (quoted in Jarve, 2000:8). Therefore it can be determined that the majority view of the ethnic Latvia population is that the guiding principles of being a member of Latvia, is constructed around fundamentally ethnic principles. So while the majority expressed these core desires, a further 43.9% of ethnic Latvians argued that they would prefer Latvia to be only populated by Latvians. Although this is by no means a solid majority, the idea of the exclusive, ethnic nation is a view which is held by a significant number of ethnic Latvians, again reinforcing the nationalistic principles on which society rests and how citizenship or residence, may not be considered a means of access to the titular group.

In accordance with the ethnic democracy idea of grouping members of a state into different categories, such as citizens and non-citizens as directed by the state legislation, and what defines the idea of a 'single-core nation', 52.7% of ethnic Latvians agreed that all residents make up the people of Latvia. This contrasts heavily with the ethnic Russians, of whom 85.9% argue all residents make up the people of Latvia. A struggle is evident here, with just under half of ethnic Latvians believing that being a resident does not constitute membership into the 'people who make up Latvia' definition, but the other half (a slight majority) are accepting of that claim. Therefore a slight correlation emerges, between the theoretical argument and how the titular ethnicities view those who are non-members of the citizenry. Though this is not overly conclusive, as according the theory of ethnic democracy, the state views the non-ethnic citizenry as non-members of the ethnic nation. While the degrees of separation have been discussed with regards to the constitution, and how the language clearly defines three different categories of members who make up the

Latvian nations (people – cultural, historical contexts, citizens and residents), 81.1% of ethnic Latvians agreed that all Latvian citizens made up the people of Latvia, and two thirds believed that this applied to people who were born here. Hence a solid majority believe it is possible to be a 'person' of Latvia without strictly being ethnic Latvian. So while the theory is applicable at a constitutional level, the population are less conclusive in presenting similar views.

The weak definition of ethnic democracy therefore is troublesome to apply to contemporary Latvia as a system which reinforces ethnic Latvians views. Undoubtedly language and culture play a dominant role in expressing how ethnic Latvians view their nation and who should be a part of it as a result of state influence in the early democratic period. These values are still widely held, however, ethnic Latvians show a degree of open-mindedness when expressing views with regards to those who make up the people of the nation. Further study into how these views have developed over the course of the independence period would unquestionably shed more light on ethnic Latvian attitude to what constitutes members of the Latvian nation, whether this has been affected, for instance, as Latvia has integrated into the European Community and received an influx of foreign investors and visitors. Whilst the theory is by no means conclusive in all areas, it appears in the broader spectrum, that ethnic Latvians are fairly accepting of minorities, so long as they learn the language and view the Latvian culture as a foundation for unity, two foundations of the ethnic democracy principles.

2) What, if any, features of a partial control society are reflected in the empirical data, how significant a role does history play in forming the views of titular and non-titular ethnicities?

As identified in the theoretical discussion, the methods of control which have manifest in post-Soviet Latvia have changed as time as progressed. With European legislation coming into force, many areas of state bureaucracy have on the whole been liberalised, despite arguably more subtle levels of control materialising. Citizenship is still a divisive issue amongst the population, with non-citizens expressing the biggest discontent claiming to not being proud to be part of Latvia

(45.8%). This suggests that non-citizen status still has a detrimental role on the quality of life in Latvia, though on the contrary, almost one half of non-citizens suggest they are proud to be a part of Latvia, which in turn invites questions as to whether these people are comfortable maintaining an existence outside the designated citizenship framework. This also begs the question as to whether this sense of belonging is derived from the success in the economic sector, which Commercio highlighted as a positive for the Russian minority, where they are free to communicate and operate using their native tongue (Commercio, 2010). Or indeed, whether EU era liberalisation and more freedom to travel around has impacted on these views. Undeniably, further research is required in this specific area to determine whether this is the case, however the results perhaps are not as negative in this light as may be expected, considering the number of rights non-citizens lack in comparison to other members of society.

The preservation of national culture and language is an important factor for implementing control, as described in the theoretical section; this was maintained by the state in a number of areas, such as public life, administration and the schooling system as a way of maintaining its existence in lieu of pressures from large ethnic minorities to maintain their own. This fear for its existence was thus justified in order to establish its dominance within society, and the empirical data shows, more than have of ethnic Latvians believe their language and culture is still under threat, in contrast to just 34.2% of ethnic Russians who believe their own language and culture is under threat. These results are interesting and demonstrate control mechanisms at work in a number of ways; firstly because a majority of ethnic Latvians still maintain their language is under threat, despite being protected by state laws, there is still an element of fear surrounding its potential disappearance (though it should be noted that this also could be partially as a result of EU integration and the increasing presence of the English language and Western culture, not just fear towards the Russian language and culture). Secondly, it signifies that ethnic Russians do not feel their language is significantly under threat, highlighting a primary feature of control theory which allows non-ethnic members of the state to operate outside the formal structures of society using their own language and developing their own culture as a mechanism of reducing conflict.

Delving within the citizenship framework, results indicated that ethnic Latvians showed overwhelming support for the ideas with regard to those for whom Latvia's interests are unimportant should be banned from becoming citizens. This determines who and what ethnic Latvians constitute as undesirable elements within the nation, and how they would seek to exclude them for citizen based society. While Latvia's interests are obviously important to ethnic Latvians, the state-building rhetoric is clearly visible; those who have Latvia's interests at heart are welcome to join the citizenry, where as those that do not, should not be allowed. The state already legislates against those who were members of former repressive organisations, such as the KGB, preventing them from becoming citizens (a move supported by 70.7% of the ethnic population). This indicates that control over who can and can't become citizens based on historical reasons is still finds popular support amongst the ethnic Latvians.

The idea of a historical narrative is central to the identity construction and serves as a founding feature of the ethnic state, and as discussed above, it still maintains a lawful presence in determining who can and cannot be eligible for citizenship. Therefore one facet to understanding control mechanisms is related to the historical narrative, and how each ethnic community interprets its own history despite being subject to a singular, state directed one. The empirical data in this respect demonstrates that the each ethnicity widely conforms to its respective ethnically based interpretations of history. For example, the majority of both Russian and other minority ethnicities do not agree that the standard of living would be higher in Latvia, had it remained independent during the Second World War, furthermore agreeing that it is only a result of the Soviet Union that Latvia achieved a high level of economics and culture. These statements are interpreted oppositely by the vast number of ethnic Latvians, signifying the state's role in promoting historical narratives, which is connected exclusively to the titular ethnic group and identity construction. These strong differences in historical and cultural interpretation were also evident in Cheskin's study, where the majority of older-aged Russian speakers were much more supportive of a Russian centric ideology. Moreover, the older generation was generally more supportive of viewing the May 9 celebrations as an opportunity for voicing discontent against the government. This

difference in views across age perhaps indicates where the crux of discontent can be located within the ethnic communities, as they were younger and of working age when living through the most difficult times of transition. This early period, as discussed, was when the most openly ethnocentric elements of state building were present in society, the restrictive citizenship policies, consequently further study into this area would determine whether those older members of the ethnic communities suffered more during this period, and are still harbouring levels of discontent established during that time.

3) In what areas is there potential for reconciliation between ethnic Latvians and non-Latvians?

As outlined, the conflicting views are represented in a manner which still places great emphasis on the early period of nation-building. However, this may be very slowly changing with time as demonstrated by the younger generation in Cheskin's research who have started to show signs of comprehending conflicting historical memories. Unlike their elders, the younger generation show greater reluctance towards holding concretely one-sided views with regard to history. They exhibited more openness to interpretation, and that fact that the different communities share different views on certain historical events, in this case, the Second World War. As Cheskin discovered, 87% of 18-25 year old Russian speakers agreed that history was not straight forward, in contrast to just 47% of the 51+ age group. Indeed more research would be needed to determine how and why this has occurred and whether this comprehension is exclusive only to the minority groups. For instance, do young ethnic Latvians also share similar views regarding historical memory, or is this a result of the top-down pressures encountered by the Russian-speaking youth, which contrast the bottom-up pressures in home life. As Zepa outlined, the Latvian schooling system does not represent minorities within educational and academic texts in a similarly positive light of civic participation and loyalty as it does the titular ethnicity (Zepa, 2010) How much significance do this pay to whether this is merely a question of conformity to the titular ethnic interpretation or whether it symbolises a genuine wider understanding of the multi-faceted society?

One of the fundamental areas in which the broad cross-section of all members of society found universal agreement upon was on attitudes to what constitutes civic society. The empirical data showed that ideas such as observing laws, paying taxes and voting in elections were important duties of a nation's citizens. While only four in ten of all members of society equally agreed that it was important to stay in Latvia, despite the economic crisis, it is evident that there is a solid base of mutually shared ideals on which the nation can continue to build upon. Much of the focus of the early independence period state building has been centred upon the construction of an ethnocentric state for the expression of the ethnic Latvian nation, largely to the detriment of its many minorities; however there is an opportunity evident for a shift in direction, towards a consolidated multi-ethnic democratic state. This is indeed exemplified by the fact that all ethnicities share a sense of a strong sense of belonging to their immediate local surroundings, be it the local neighbourhood or city in which they live. Moreover, this sense of belonging is replicated (though marginally slightly less so by minority respondents) when speaking about Latvia as a whole, signifying the territorially deep roots and interest the population has both at a local and national level. A bringing together of multi-ethnic groups focused on implementing civic-based initiatives at local level has potential to grow in Latvia, given the wide-ranging support and belief in these values. Alternatively, an incorporation of civic-nation based ideals into the wider framework of government policy, would likely be well responded too by all members of society. This indicates that the idea of a civic-nation centred on issues which are not ethnically exclusive remains a viable path which could be accepted, if Latvia is to move more closely towards democratic consolidation.

CHAPTER VI – CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has attempted to outline the value of the ethnic democracy and control frameworks towards the study of contemporary independent Latvian society, with the results indicating a degree of relevance. The lack of ethnic cohesion between ethnic Latvians on non-ethnic Latvian has been well documented in various studies in the past, through a manner of various approaches. Adopting this approach has aimed to highlight how this has occurred as well as outlining prospects for future change through the interpretations of the nation's population. While it seems on a wider level there is little cohesion between the different ethnicities, there are a number of areas, particularly with reference to the concept of civil society, where the different ethnicities share a unified outlook.

The study has outlined how the early state-building policies adopted by the early independence era state, which via methods of control promoted the ethnic Latvians above the minorities into a superordinate position. The independent Latvian state was constructed on ethnic foundations where non-members of the titular group were politically segregated and fragmented via residency and citizenship laws in order to prevent them from challenging the dominance of titular ethnicity. As a result of these control methods which were adopted to promote the ethnic Latvian nation, a consequently negative effect on ethnic cohesion has manifested, which has contributed heavily to how these different ethnicities interpret their immediate surroundings in the contemporary era. Ethnic Latvians still hold wildly ethnocentric views when prescribing their understandings on what constitutes modern-day Latvia. Yet, while superordinate and subordinate ethnicities largely maintain opposing views on a number of issues related to the nation state, there is a degree of evidence that this may be slowly changing in the attitudes of the younger generation of minorities.

While this study has also attempted to outline an overview of the process and the differences found at an all-encompassing societal level, future study could go

more in depth with regards to the more subtle control methods which were adopted during the European accession period. Additionally, future studies could explore further the views held by those born after the independence era. Twenty years have now passed since then, and as Cheskin's study demonstrated, the minority youth appear to be more open to ethnic Latvian ideas as they manoeuvre between the top-down narrative of the state and the bottom-up narrative of their heritage. The question thus arises whether this change is also evident in the ethnic Latvian youth, are they more liable to understanding the realities of their ethnic neighbours. Furthermore, ideas of what constitutes a civil society and strong feelings of connection to one's immediate surroundings are uniformly shared in Latvia, regardless of ethnicity. Could this civil awareness perhaps provide a solid foundation for greater levels of multi-ethnic cohesion?

Overall, the foundations of the ethnocentric nation and systems of control developed in nineties are still relevant today, as they have contributed towards shaping the range of outlooks represented within contemporary Latvian society. Undeniably, further exploration is required into the relationship which relates ethnicity and/or non-citizenship status and economic status, as it is my view that a number of these marginalised groups which maintain a comfortable existence outside of formal state-regulated structures are content in Latvia, given the relative lack of widespread dissatisfaction, particularly amongst non-citizens, at being a member of the Latvian state.

Finally, though this study has perhaps been overly broad, not succeeding in the strict sense of determining what kind of democracy exists in Latvia and how the population views the democracy they see before them, it has indicated a number of areas where future study could be of academic value. I also believe that the missing element of data collection through interviews severely hampered the overall potential, process and results of this study, though I understand that without a sufficient grasp of a foreign language, such complex matters cannot be comprehended in a way which adequately contributes to the final product. Despite this, it is my opinion that there is a high degree of potential for Latvia to move towards a consolidated democracy, and that the various members and ethnicities of contemporary Latvian society, in spite of the acknowledged historical difficulties

and differences currently present, the population shares a variety of unified outlooks which could bode well for the future development of the nation.

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