SYMBOLIC STRUCTURE OF THE POST-SOVIET TRANSFORMATIONS IN LATVIA
AND EMIGRATION: AVOIDING SHAME AND STRIVING FOR HOPE AND
CONFIDENCE

by

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B.S., Latvian Culture Academy, 2005
M.S., Alberts Ludwigs University and Kwazulu-Natal University, 2008

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the case of emigration from Latvia towards the West after collapse of the Soviet Union. It takes the perspective of a particular cultural structure that came to dominate post-Soviet Latvia and adopts the vantage point of the state-society relationships this structure has cast. The central question of this study examines: what is the relationship between the cultural structure in post-Soviet Latvia and emigration towards the West? This study answers this question by contrasting Latvia's civil discourse with emigrants' and those who remain in Latvia personal narratives through the lens of cultural sociology that emphasizes the role of the symbolic realm, meaning making, and emotions. Research findings suggested that the post-Soviet cultural structure was dominated by "symbolic codes" (Alexander and Smith, 1993) or sharp divides such as West vs. East/Soviet, Right vs. Left, and Developed vs. Underdeveloped. Notably, symbolic codes of West, Right and Developed were constructed as "sacred" while their opposites were pushed out of "sacred" and ridiculed. These divides originated from such particular emotions as shame, confidence/pride and fear. Their meanings in the dominant transformation discourse and emotional origins were formative to the identity and modern state craft, and subjectivities in post-Soviet Latvia.

These sharp divides between what is "sacred" in a community and what is not, came with "unintended consequences" (Weber, 2002). These divides and how they shaped the transformation discourse trumpeted misguided notion of the West, post-Soviet Latvia so eagerly wanted to resemble and belong to. Given this distorted notion of the West, the ruling elite fashioned environment where people not only lost hope for their better future in Latvia but began to lose their self-confidence - an important emotion for one's "willingness to act" (Barbalet, 2004, p.83); and, as such, were more prone to emigration. Emigration for my respondents

provided the space where West and Left were experienced as compatible despite their construction as incompatible in post-Soviet Latvia. Amidst confidence over their better future in their receiving countries, this gave to emigrants also a feeling of comfort, sense of self-confidence and empowerment.

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Abbreviations

ALA – American Latvian Association

CEE – Central and Eastern European Countries

CIS – Commonwealth of Independent States

DPS – Democratic Party *Saimnieks* [Master]

EU – European Union

EFTA – European Free Trade Association

FDI – Foreign direct investment

IMF – International Monetary Fund

KGB – Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti (Комите́т госуда́рственной безопа́сности) or the main security agency for the Soviet Union Committee for State Security

LC – political party Latvijas Ceļš (Union Latvia's Way)

LTF – Popular Front of Latvia

LIZDA – The Trade Unions of Latvia's Education and Science Employees

LBAS – The Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia

LNNK – Latvian National Conservative Party

LSDSP/LDDP – Latvia's Socialdemocratic Workers Party and Latvia's Socialdemocratic Party

LZS – political party Peasant Union of Latvia

NATO – The North Atlantic Treaty Organization

OSCE – Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

TB – political party For Fatherland and Freedom

TPA – Political Union of Economists

TSP – National Harmony Party

UN – United Nations

USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

VEF – State electronic factory

WB – World Bank

WFFL – World Federation of Free Latvians

WTO – World Trade Organization

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This dissertation project started some time before I came to the USA to do my doctoral studies at Kansas State University (KSU) Sociology program. In 2008, as a master's student, I did my first in-depth interviews with Latvians who have emigrated to Ireland in post-Soviet era. This research was aided by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). Subsequently to my master studies, I worked at the Baltic Institute of Social Sciences in Riga, Latvia where I had a chance to participate in research funded by the State Research Program "National identity" and interviewed Latvians living in England. Thanks to all these opportunities, I had some decent material I could draw from as I began to develop my dissertation research plan at KSU.

I might have a different dissertation and maybe no dissertation at all if I was not granted a scholarship by the Fulbright Student Program which also chose my place of study in the USA in 2011. I am very grateful for the generous support of this program for my first year of PhD studies. At KSU I benefited immensely from the guidance and thorough theoretical knowledge of my chair Dr. L. Frank Weyher. He guided me throughout this challenging process of dissertation writing. Under his guidance, I began to look at emigration from post-Soviet Latvia towards the West somehow differently than I planned. He challenged and pushed me to look not only at the meaning making but how it relates to emotions, which according to neuroscientists are an important basis of our rationality. This was truly enriching and exciting for me. I am very grateful to my other three committee members for their generous support, guidance and advice

Preface

"Reality is not made up of insular chunks unambiguously separated from one another by sharp divides, but, rather, of vague, blurred – edge essences that often „spill over" into one another. It normally presents itself not in black and white, but, rather, in subtle shades of gray, with mental twilight zones as well as intermediate essences connecting entities. Segmenting it into discrete islands of meaning usually rests on some social convention, and most boundaries are, therefore, mere social artifacts. […] There is more than one way to carve discrete chunks out of a given continuum […]"
(Eviatar Zerubavel in Lyn Spillman (ed.), 2002, p.223)

For me these words of cultural sociologist Eviatar Zerubavel are fundamental in explaining the story of post-Soviet Latvia's transformations and the emigration of its people. Transformation discourse in post-Soviet Latvia has been structured around several sets of sharp divides, such as East and West, Right and Left, Developed and Underdeveloped, and others. These divides have their roots as far back in history as the Enlightenment, the French revolution, and, more recently, in the Cold War (e.g. Wolf, 1994; Eatwell, 1989; Gauchet 1997). Even though these are mere classifications they have had great consequence for our behavior throughout history. They are the specific forms of "sacred" and "profane" (Durkheim, 1995 [1912]), the specific "symbolic codes" that form a cultural system that "specif[ies] good and evil" (Alexander and Smith, 1993, p.196). As such these divides structure a particular discourse. Even though these divides have also been common in other societies, their emergence and importance in post-Soviet Latvia require explanation. This explanation is a key to further explore the post-Soviet transformations and thus mass emigration from Latvia towards the West, the major aim of this study. These transformation processes of mass emigration are explored from the perspective of these divides and the state-society relationships these divides have cast.

In this research, I seek to answer the following question: what is the relationship between the cultural structure in post-Soviet Latvia and emigration towards the West? This question leads me to explore the cultural structure that underlies the post-Soviet transformation discourse, as

well as the emotions that explain this structure and social life in Latvia more broadly. Durkheim (1995 [1912]) and Weyher (2012) pointed out that sharp divides that underlie a particular cultural structure originate also from "particular emotions".

I demonstrate that, in specific ways, these binary opposites not only defined the modern state craft in Latvia but also cast an ideal subject who was to reside in post-Soviet Latvia and the state-society relationships (Ch. 2, 3, 4). These findings emanate from the analysis of the cultural structure of the post-Soviet transformation discourse and lead further to a deeper understanding of lives and meaning making of those who have lived through the transformations and, more particularly, those who have decided to emigrate. Their stories and meaning making reveal that the ways in which their living was affected by the socioeconomic transformations must be understood in relation *to the cultural structure that dominated the post-Soviet public discourse in Latvia*. This dominant cultural structure in many cases also worked to alienate the people from their state and the state from its people (Ch.5, 6).

This approach to the study of emigration also intends to extend the dominant view on migrants as strictly rational decision makers who seek to improve their socioeconomic prospects, by demonstrating that emigration in the post-Soviet era has also been a tool to re-establish and restore self-confidence and regain hope and confidence in development/improvement. This does not mean that emigration did not come with some personal loss and disappointment, but overall emigration served as a mechanism of emotional stability and empowerment. In the process of answering my research question, I came to the conclusion that the dominant and unambiguous carving of the world by sharp divides in post-Soviet Latvia, despite the fact that reality is "made up […] of vague, blurred – edge essences that often "spill over" into one another" (Zerubavel in Spillman (ed.), 2002, p.223), created the structures for meaning making that ultimately worked to

alienate the state from the people, the people from their state, and often also, the people from one another (Ch.7). In what follows, I briefly lay out the structure of this work.

In Chapter 1, I introduce emigration from Latvia as a key phenomenon of my study, followed by a theoretical discussion of how I approach this phenomenon in my research. My theoretical discussion crosses the boundaries of several fields in sociology since I seek to merge views from migration scholarship, cultural, political, and to some extent development sociology. I also explain the notion of cultural autonomy in order to legitimize my theoretical framework in the eyes of those who prioritize socioeconomic explanations of social phenomena. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the methods I use for the data analysis. In Chapters 2 and 3, I explore the major divides that structured the post-Soviet transformations discourse, their emotional roots, and their meaning for modern state craft, the state-society relationship, and the construction of subject in Latvia. In Chapter 4, I explore the working of this cultural structure in the everyday conversations between the people and their state through an analysis of some major strike events in the 1990s. In Chapters 5 and 6, I answer my central question: What is the relationship between the cultural structure or symbolic codes and emigration? Using the exploration of the cultural structure that underlies the post-Soviet transformation discourse, I situate the stories and meaning making of those who have left and those who remain. This dissertation concludes with Chapter 7 in which some major conclusions are drawn with respect to the central research question and theory.

Chapter 1 - On Phenomenon, Theory and Method

In the last two decades, emigration from Latvia towards the West has reached the level of an exodus (Hazans, 2011; Hazans and Philips, 2011; Hazans, 2008; University of Latvia, 2007). This dissertation explores the case of emigration from Latvia towards the West after collapse of the Soviet Union. It takes the perspective of a particular cultural structure that came to dominate post-Soviet Latvia and adopts the vantage point of the state-society relationships this structure has cast. *In order to do so, I will contrast Latvian civil discourse with emigrants' personal narratives as viewed through the lens of cultural sociology in which the role of the symbolic realm, meaning making, and emotions* are emphasized (e.g., Collins, 1981; Alexander and Smith, 1993; Alexander, 2003; Weyher, 2012; Barbalet, 2004; Katz, 1997; Somers, 2008).

In order to understand the historical context, in which emigrants had to make sense of their lives, my dissertation will, first, look at the post-Soviet civil discourse and then at emigrants' narratives. The civil discourse illustrates the dominant and often competing ideas on which the state was rebuilt, how these ideas correspond to particular loyalties of the state towards the people and various other social organizations (e.g., national, global/international bodies), and how this has influenced *the conversation* (relationship) *between the state and the people*. I will argue that the conduct of the ruling elite (or the state) and the conduct of individual citizens have each been shaped by the same "symbolic codes" (Alexander and Smith, 1993), however, in very different ways. The ruling elite used conventional symbolic codes to justify their conduct under particular historical and emotional contexts. The ruling elites' usage of these symbolic codes further affects everyday life, opportunities and the meaning making of ordinary people. I will show that emigration takes place, not only as an economic phenomenon, but also as an emotional and cultural one.

The Latvian Emigration Phenomenon and Research Problem

In the post-Soviet era, two major emigration streams were common - emigration towards the East and emigration towards the West. Emigration towards the East was mostly return migration of people who immigrated to Latvia during the Soviet regime from other Soviet republics (Eglīte, 2006, p. 76, 78). Most returnees to the East were connected to Soviet military service and industries which were nationalized and ceased to operate after Latvia regained independence. Some returnees also left due to the restricted access to Latvian citizenship. Parallel to the emigration towards the East, emigration towards the West also began, gradually gaining the level of an exodus (see table no. 1[1] and table no.2[2]). In contrast to the emigration towards the East, these emigrants were not returning home but leaving their homes.

Groups of Countries/Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total	**45370**	**29729**	**59673**	**36447**	**25869**	**16512**	**12828**	**12333**	**8874**	**5898**
EU-28	1814	1207	1081	1456	1094	1271	1239	1259	1773	1493
.EU-15	0	0	0	915	731	869	924	959	1519	1245

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[1] Data in table no. 1 and table no.2 are collected differently. The data in table no.1 is based on local government data and 2011 census data. Local governments identified persons who checked-out of their administrative system due to a change of residence, including emigration abroad. Nevertheless, it was not compulsory for emigrants to check-out. Emigrants, when they leave their home towns, may not know the length of their stay abroad and whether their stay will be permanent; and thus they would not check-out of their home administrations. In 2011, the Central Statistics Bureau of Latvia carried out census survey, and for the first time included a question about emigration. As a result of this survey, the Central Statistics Bureau updated statistics on emigration from 1990 to 2010. The updated data contains both registered and unregistered migration. In the 2011 census according to the Cabinet of Ministers document Nr. 384 people were asked: "Since 1980 have you lived abroad for more than 12 months?"; "When was the last time you arrived in Latvia for a permanent stay?"; "In which country is located/was located your major job?". According to the information from Central Statistics Bureau (01.23.2014), additionally to census there was an emigration survey that asked two additional questions: "What was the year you emigrated?" and "In which country is your current permanent residence?" (information received from Central Statistics Bureau 01.02. - 01.24.2014 and The Cabinet of Ministers document Nr. 384).

[2] Data in table no. 1 and table no.2 are collected differently. The Central Statistics Bureau of Latvia have collected information about emigration in the period from 2000 to 2010 by combining data received from the local and national resident registers, emigrants' destination countries and the data from the Census Survey in 2011; this data includes both registered and unregistered migration (information received from the Central Statistics Bureau 01.02. - 01.24.2014, see Table no.2).

ES candidate countries[3]	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
EFTA[4]	0	0	0	2	2	4	13	17	23	23
Other countries	43556	28522	58592	34989	24773	15237	11575	11057	7078	4382
.USA	0	0	0	637	618	662	581	651	546	491
.Canada	0	0	0	36	72	50	58	106	168	113
.CIS countries[5]	26891	23430	54189	33255	23402	13946	10130	9672	5769	3275
..*Russia*	15904	13412	30863	22814	19972	11558	8159	7142	4498	2423
.former Soviet Union (undivided)	10225	1958	1519	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 1. Emigration statistics 1990 – 1999. Central Statistics Bureau of Latvia, 2014.

Groups of Countries/Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total	22911	24539	15837	15647	20167	17643	17019	15463	27045	38208	39651	30311	25163
EU-28	**7652**	**7338**	**6171**	**7957**	**11922**	**13013**	**11615**	**9797**	**19164**	**29340**	**30492**	**23810**	**20504**
.EU-15	6952	6510	5152	7067	11024	12408	11043	9251	18249	27798	28681	23025	20033
ES candidate countries	**6**	**10**	**30**	**26**	**18**	**27**	**14**	**18**	**64**	**68**	**81**	**19**	**20**
EFTA	**255**	**224**	**285**	**358**	**498**	**536**	**422**	**529**	**1047**	**1393**	**1406**	**2191**	**1712**
Other countries	**14998**	**16967**	**9351**	**7306**	**7729**	**4067**	**4968**	**5119**	**6770**	**7407**	**7672**	**4291**	**2927**
.CIS countries	10740	12563	6744	5460	5930	2860	3948	4018	5083	5224	4911	3758	2502

Table 2. Emigration statistics 2000 – 2012. Central Statistics Bureau of Latvia, 2014.

In the literature, various explanations have been offered to explain emigration from Latvia towards the West. The most common explanations for emigration are economic and structural based on factors such as unemployment and low income (The Commission of Strategic Analysis, 2006, Hazans & Philipp, 2011, p. 9, Hazans, 2011, p. 71, University of Latvia, 2007, table 4.6., table 4.18., p. 93, p. 114; Lulle, 2014). Better social welfare systems in receiving countries are also mentioned among the reasons (e.g. University of Latvia, 2007). Many respondents also pointed to better working conditions in their host country; for example, more

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[3] EU candidate countries - Turkey, Montenegro, the former Yugosslav Republic of Makedonia.
[4] EFTA-European Free Trade Association. Members of EFTA are Norway, Swizerland, Iseland and Lichtenstein.
[5] CIS countries - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Russia, The Republic of Moldova, Tadzhikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan.

flexible working hours, better employer attitudes, and more opportunities to earn official[6] income (particularly, The Commission of Strategic Analysis, 2006; University of Latvia, 2007). In addition to job opportunities, the opportunity to apply one's skills is also emphasized among the reasons for emigration (University of Latvia, 2007). Most of these studies are quantitative and their questionnaires are designed by assuming that emigration is economic and associated with labor market transformations (studies look at income, skills, education level, family size, age, etc.; e.g. The Commission of Strategic Analysis, 2006; University of Latvia, 2007). For example, the study by the Commission of Strategic Analysis (2006) is based on a questionnaire that combines quantitative questions with some open-ended questions or qualitative questions. The first two questions ask what kind of job a respondent did before leaving and what his/her salary was. These two questions are immediately followed by a question which asks what the main reasons of emigration are. However, the first two questions may have already swayed respondents to think about their answers in economic terms. Yet despite this potential bias respondents also mentioned "lack of opportunities, low support networks at the level of local and national government", "low support at the level of family and friends," and "the state's inability to provide overall national development vision that [subsequently] does not give a confidence for people that their well-being in Latvia will improve" (my translation, p.3, also p.12). Some respondents also mentioned, as their reason for emigration, difficult personal relationships (ibid). This study identifies these different reasons of emigration but does not explain them further.

In prior studies, based on in-depth interviews with emigrants in Ireland and England, I found that emigrants' narratives did not fit under economic categories alone (Ķešāne 2011a, Ķešāne 2011b). Emigrants' narratives suggest that emigration can also be seen as a strategy to

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[6] The informal economy is large in Latvia. According to the research done by Stocholm School of Economics (Riga branch) in 2011, the informal economy accounts for 38.1% of GDP in 2010.

make sense of and deal with the post-Soviet transformations, which include but are not limited to economic transformations. Significantly, some emigrants' narratives either explicitly or implicitly suggest resentment towards the state. Woolfson (2009) suggests but does not demonstrate that Latvian and Russian speakers use emigration as an exit strategy. The former group has been disappointed with the social and economic policies of the state; while the latter has been disappointed with these as well as the ethnic policies of the state. Yet there is also a study that contradicts Woolfson's argument on the ethnic policies of the state as important to account for the emigration. Sofya Aptekar (2009) in her qualitative comparative study on Russian speaking emigrants from the Baltic countries, which is based on 26 in-depth interviews and analysis of secondary sources, identifies that "in the case of Estonia, minorities migrate because of their experience as minorities, while in the cases of Latvia and Lithuania, they migrate primarily to escape low wages and irregular employment". She explains that opposite to the expected, Russian speakers in Latvia do not emigrate due to the ethnic tension because there "is the relative absence of ethnic tension on the interpersonal level, high levels of contact and intermarriage, and low overlap between stratification and ethnicity" (p.522).

A recent study by Latvian anthropologist Dzenovska (2012) on emigration discourse in Latvia and, particularly, how emigration transforms the everyday lives of those who have remained, suggests that emigration embodies a broader range of causes and motivations than just economic experiences. Even though her study primarily looks at how emigration has affected life in Latvia, she also states that even those who have remained in Latvia perceive that it is due to the state policies and practices that emigration is such a widespread phenomenon (p.152). As this study explores only emigration consequences, it does not explore in detail how exactly the state-society relationship might have affected emigration. None of the existing studies on Latvian or

Eastern European emigration explicitly explain the link between emigration and the state-society relationship. *My study will seek to do so by contrasting and comparing Latvian civil discourse with emigrants' narratives through the lens of cultural sociology, and, more specifically, by looking at the symbolic realm, processes of meaning making, and emotions* (e.g., Collins, 1981, Alexander, 2003).

Literature on Eastern European emigration, more generally, also sees migration mostly in economic terms[7]. Studies mostly talk about migrants' skills, education or human and social capital and employment etc. (e.g., Samorodov 1992; Brym, 1992; Sandu, 2005; Thaut, 2009; Nowak, 2011; Plaesu, 2011; Anniste, Tammaru, Pungas, and Paas, 2012; Ivlevs, 2013; Rakauskiene and Ranceva, 2013; Elsner, 2013a, 2013b). Most of these studies are quantitative (except Pleasu, 2011) or based on secondary sources[8]. One quantitative study explores how psychological motivation affects emigration. In a comparative study on emigration from Albania, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia among college students in the 1990s, Boneva, Frieze, Ferligoj, Jarošova, Pauknerova and Orgocka (1997) found that the propensity to migrate is strongest among young adults who are achievement and power motivated. In their study design, achievement motivation consists of such indicators as hard work, competitiveness, and one's power motivation or one's wish to have an impact over others and the world in general (pp.338, 344-45). They found that non-migrants had less achievement and power motivation than did migrants. They argue that "[m]otives reflect the underlying reason for behavior" (p.338). However, this study does not explore why these young achievement and power motivated adults with the greatest propensity to migrate did not see opportunities for achievement and

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[7] I have reviewed scholarly sources that were available through ProQuest and Sociological Abstract data base.
[8] By secondary sources here I mean scholarly literature, research reports by various organizations or statistical data.

opportunities for their contribution at home. Nor do they explain, why some young adults have greater achievement motivation than others.

Rationale for the Research

Existing migration explanations primarily associate emigration with development and structural transformations (e.g. Faist, 2008; Binford, 2003; Durand, Parrado and Massey, 1996; Grasmuck, Pessar, 1991; Massey et al., 1993), and more specifically economic and labor market transformations (e.g., Hammer et all, 1997; Massey et al., 1998; Massey et al., 1993), transnational social networks (e.g., Faist 2000; Massey et al. 1993; Grasmuck, Pessar, 1991), international relations (e.g., Held et al., 1999)[9], geography and culture (e.g., King, 1996; Hammer et al., 1997; Boyle, Halfacree, Robinson, 1998; Fielding, 1992), as well as individual socio-psychological motivation and culture (e.g.; Boyle, Halfacree, Robinson, a[10]; Fielding 1992). In what follows, I first survey this literature more generally, after which I will discuss how this literature may or may not contribute to the understanding of emigration from Latvia.

Scholars who look at the nexus between migration and development tend to see the causes of migration either through the lens of modernization theory or dependency and world system theory (see Garni, 2013, pp. 135-6). Proponents of both perspectives explain that emigration is a result of dislocation and disruption of local economies due to transformations of capitalism. World system and dependency theory, however, depicts these transformations as damaging and irreversible for ordinary people and therefore proponents view migration as an ever present strategy to deal with these transformations (e.g., Massey et al., 1993, pp.444-448,

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[9] In analyses from an international relations perspective, the causes emphasized include asylum migration or how such political events as violent conflicts, civil war and war, as well as prospects of persecution related to peoples' social, cultural or political identities force people to flee their homes (e.g., Held et al., 1999).
[10] Boyle, Halfacree, and Robinson (1998) could also be described as taking a humanist approach.

Binford, 2003). Scholars that work within modernization theory are more positive and see migration as both a temporary strategy to adjust to new transformations and a necessary mechanism to install development in sending countries (e.g., Durand, Parrado and Massey, 1996, Massey et al., 1998). At the more macro level proponents of neoclassical economics argue that migration is "caused by geographic differences in the supply of and demand for labor" (in Massey et al., 1993, p.433).

Broader structural factors and transformations are contextually important to account for migration but they do not account for emigration by themselves. Garni (2013) demonstrates that the state is an important agent that can design policies that either perpetuate migration or mitigate the need to emigrate. In her comparative study of two communities with different land tenure patterns, Garni (2013) explores relationships between migration, development and land tenure patterns in El Salvador and finds that "[t]he Salvadorian state's failure to promote" relationships "between agriculture and industry" contributed towards problematic development at the level of communities and perpetuated migration from these communities (p.149). Also, my former interviews with emigrants alluded to the importance of the state's role in creating an environment where people would not consider emigration.

Cumulative causation theory and network theory looks at reasons for the perpetuation of migration. In the cumulative causation theory of migration, it is proposed that once emigration starts it transforms local social and economic conditions in ways that emigration starts to perpetuate itself[11]. Garni (2010) emphasizes that "despite the explanatory promise of this theory, scholars have largely ignored it in favor of a social-network based explanation of perpetuated

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[11] Massey et al. (1993) discusses six mechanisms that are crucial to perpetuate emigration decisions – "distribution of income [relative deprivation], the distribution of land, the organization of agriculture, culture [of migration], the regional distribution of human capital, and the social meaning of work [social labeling]" (p.451).

migration" (p.318). Proponents of network theory propose that once emigrants start to settle abroad they encourage more migrants to come; previous emigrants provide newcomers with necessary information and resources to ease their migration/transition. Network theories basically held that more migration causes more migration. From my pilot studies, I see that the fact of other comrades already being abroad plays a very minor role in the decision to migrate. Networks may be important for the decision *where* to emigrate but not for the emigration decision itself.

At the micro level, neoclassical economics and the new economics of labor migration theories explain that emigration is a result of emigrants and their families' rational decision making in the context of economic and labor market transformations (e.g., Massey et al., 1993). Emigrants and their families are seen as rational decision makers who seek to improve their socioeconomic prospects. Similarly to neoclassical economics and the new economics of labor migration, cumulative causation theory, when discussing the initial causes of emigration, sees emigrants' meaning making processes in strictly rational terms (see Massey et al.1993). However, recent studies in neuroscience find that our rationality is related to our emotions and the opposition between rational and emotional is a false dichotomy[12]. If we exclude emotions from rational decision making processes our explanations are incomplete. Collins (1981) draws from Garfinkel and argues furthermore that much of our behavior is not guided by rational decision making; sometimes our behavior is not even guided by "meaningful cognitions", but instead by routines and tacit assumptions of what is normal (pp.990-4, p.997). In our everyday life we reproduce this normalcy and its routines through "interaction ritual chains" (Collins,

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[12] Turner and Stets (2005; p.21) in their book "The Sociology of Emotions" refer to neuroscientist Antonio Damasio (1994, 2003) and reveal that "[r]esearch on the neurology of emotions now demonstrates that the longstanding juxtaposition of emotion and rationality as a polar opposite is simply wrong" (p.21); and there is enough evidence that decision making is not possible without emotions (p. 22).

1981). If things go as expected we continue to gain confidence about our lives and our authorities, we do not question them and do not seek to change our routines. During individuals' lifetimes some conflict situations and misunderstandings may occur, creating feelings of uncertainty and fear (e.g., pp.994, 997)[13]. As a result of this, *individuals will seek to transform their routines and rituals in order to renew the state of confidence and security*. Counter to the rational-choice perspective popular in migration studies, this perspective then argues that individual behavior is rather guided by emotional 'calculations' and not rational calculations (e.g., p.994). In my study, the post-Soviet era was a period where new routines and interaction rituals had to be reestablished or built. The post-Soviet era in Latvia marked the transition from a totalitarian to a democratic state, from a command economy or state capitalism to a free market economy. Latvia had a democratic state system in the 1920s and, between the two world wars, eagerly traded with other countries; in that sense, this transition was not perceived as entirely new. Yet, in the post-Soviet era, the historical experience of the Latvian people and the global relations under which Latvia had to rebuild its democratic state system and integrate in the global market was different than between the two world wars and also required a new imagining of the modern state craft. How this imagining took place, how it affected the everyday life of the people, and how it was experienced and perceived by various groups of the society might have facilitated various conflict situations and tensions.

Counter to rational choice approaches, proponents of one branch of humanist approaches to migration explain that "potential migrants must be regarded first and foremost as individuals, with the decision on whether or not to migrate being irrevocably that of the individual" and researchers therefore should focus on migrants' "personal characteristics, such as beliefs,

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[13] Collins (1981) writes that people may "invoke conscious social concepts at particular times because the emotional dynamics of their lives motivate them to do so" (p.997).

aspirations and obligations" (in Boyle, Halfacree, Robinson, 1998, p.71). In this approach, however, psychological factors are given primacy over sociological[14]. Another branch of humanist approaches seeks to link migration and culture[15]. Proponents of this branch, on the one hand, emphasize the role of individual meaning making and emotions as important in migration (Fielding, 1992, pp. 205-206). They suggest that migrants' behavior is affected by normative referents of culture (Boyle, Halfacree, Robinson, 1998, p.81, p.73, Fielding, 1992, pp. 203-207). On the other hand, this humanist branch tends to focus on the consequences of migration and suggests studying the "varied cultural characteristics of different groups of migrants" (p.73) in relation to how migration contributes to the cultural changes in receiving and home countries (e.g., King, 1996, Boyle, Halfacree, and Robinson, 1998, p.73). Theories on geography and culture also overlap with the latter approach. In addition to migrations' effects on cultural change, they also explore how migration transforms rural and urban geographies (e.g., King, 1996). All the above mentioned approaches to migration differ from that of my study, which, in contrast, examines emigrants' meaning making as it relates to the cultural understandings and morals which were prevalent in the post-Soviet civil discourse.

My former interviews with Latvian emigrants suggest that none of these approaches quite explain the emigration phenomenon from Latvia. Fielding (1992) and Boyle et al. (1998) suggest an approach that looks at emotions and normative cultural referents in order to explain migration; this comes closest to my own approach as a useful conceptual tool to explain emigration from

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[14] Although "beliefs, aspirations and obligations" are characteristics of individuals they are also related to wider social milieu. Nevertheless, Boyle, Halfacree, and Robinson (1998) state that in this approach emphasize has been put on individual experiences and motivations, and not so much on how they have been affected by wider social milieu (p.71).

[15] Fielding (1992) and Boyle, Halfacree, and Robinson (1998) both admit that relationship between migration and culture is not very well accounted for and utilized in scholarly literature and work. The essay of Fielding (1992) offers theoretical propositions and his rationale for this approach. Boyle, Halfacree, Robinson (1998) overviews and structures existing research in this matter.

Latvia. However, they only suggest this theoretical direction but do not provide an elaborate theory I could apply, nor do they provide any empirical evidence or analysis of the relationship. Fielding (1992) and Boyle et al. (1998) also admit that the relationship between migration and culture is not very well accounted for and utilized in scholarly literature and work.

Across my former interviews, I saw that emigrants' narratives refer to certain normative ideals. These narratives and the emotions they invoke are linked to how emigrants experienced transformations and their subjectivities. In many cases respondents' emotions are related to the lack of confidence they feel towards the Latvian state which, in the emigrants' perception, has deviated from what people expected or what they saw to be "normal". In other cases, the dominant symbolic realm and the meanings emanating from it created circumstances where people lost self-confidence. Collins (1981) argues that, in fact, any social organization, at its core, consists of the creation and recreation of "cultural symbols and emotional energies" in micro situations (p.985). Collins (1981), drawing from Durkheim, suggests that we can view the communication between the state and its citizens as a ritual. This communicative ritual serves as a mechanism that helps to ensure moral solidarity (e.g., pp. 998-999). However, such communication is not always successful. For communication to be successful two things are important: (1) both parties need to "have similar conversational and cultural resources"; and (2) both parties "must also be able to sustain a common emotional tone" (p.999)[16]. In the context of post-Soviet Latvia this ritual of communication had to be reconstructed anew. For example, the civil discourse around protests by school teachers and farmers in the 1990s suggests that what

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[16] According to Collins (1981), the success of this communication depends "on what kinds of coalitions it invokes" (p.999). Collins (1981) argues that "conversational rituals can be either egalitarian or asymmetrical. Both types have stratifying implications. Egalitarian rituals are stratifying in that insiders are accepted and outsiders rejected; here stratification exists in the form of a coalition against excluded individuals, or possibly the domination of one coalition over another. Asymmetrical conversations, in which one individual sets the energy tones (and invokes the cultural reality) while the others are an audience, are internally stratified" (p.1001).

people expected from democratic relationships did not really match the practices of the ruling elite (see chapter 4). These protests show that people and the ruling elite carried different notions of what democratic conversation and practices meant, leading to increasing frustration among protesters. For the ruling elite, democratic relationships meant bureaucratically organized communication between people and the state and the protests did not fit with this understanding. For the people, democratic relations meant straightforward and open relationships. These contrasting understandings among the ruling elite and ordinary people contributed towards weakened solidarity. Emigration out of Latvia also suggests that the conversation between the state and its people was not successful. *This is the reason why I propose that to understand emigration we have to also scrutinize the civil discourse in the first decade of regained independence; the period when the new democratic routines of communication between the state and its citizens had to be (re)established.*

My former interviews with Latvian emigrants abroad suggest that emigration narratives resonate with cultural or meaning structures of the civil discourse. *Civil discourse here is understood as a representation of "conversation" among members of the state, including among the state elite, among various opinion holders and between the ruling elite and its citizens*. This conversation or communication mostly takes place in mass media (Alexander, 2006, p.5). Perspectives on migration and culture have not explicitly illustrated the relationships between cultural structures, civil discourse, and migration mechanisms. When cultural researchers study migration, they have *mostly* looked at how migration affects the boundaries of belonging (spatial, national, gender, ethnic, religious and cultural) and integration (see examples in Boyle, Halfacree, Robinson, 1998; Epstein and Gang, 2010). They have not looked at how meaning making more broadly affects identities and social action. *Thus, these studies do not capture*

culture as an overall practice of meaning and artifact making, but limit culture to certain characteristics. For example, when they analyze how national belonging changes in emigration they examine how people experience and practice specific aspects of their culture, particularly, their language, traditions and cuisine, in new environments. Some researchers look at emigrants' individual biographies, what they tell us about social context and individual meaning making (e.g., Vandsemb, 1995) but do not explicitly contrast and compare individual meaning making referents with the cultural and meaning structures prevalent in the civil discourse; therefore neglecting to demonstrate the link between cultural structures that underlie the civil discourse and emigration mechanisms. Thus, in order to account for emigration I will not just look at individual biographies and narratives but will also analyze how they are related to broader cultural or meaning structures of the civil discourse. Collins (1981) emphasizes that "[i]ndividuals within microsituations make macroreferences to other situations, as well as to abstract and reified social entities" (p.989). Similarly Steinmetz (1992) suggests that individuals are affected by collective occurrences even when they do not participate in them directly. They are affected because as members of a particular society they share the civil discourse.

Based on my pilot studies, I suggest that emigration from post-Soviet Latvia can be better understood if analyzed within the framework of cultural structures and emotions. Through the lens of cultural sociology, my study demonstrates that emigration mechanisms are also contingent upon the state-society relationship. The notion of "symbolic codes" (Alexander and Smith, 1993, also Sahlins, 1976) that underlie cultural structures, I propose, is a fruitful way to explain emigration from post-Soviet Latvia towards the West. The proponents of this perspective argue that social action as "motivated expressive behavior" is "organized by reference to

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symbolic patterns" (Alexander, 1988, p. 11)[17]. The narratives of both politicians and ordinary citizens alike are structured and/or influenced by these "symbolic codes" and their historically specific meanings[18]. Alexander and Smith (1993) also recognize that these codes are emotionally charged (p. 199, footnote no. 5). From this perspective then, the (re)formation of post-Soviet Latvia and its citizens can be accounted for or interpreted through the identification and explanation of such "symbolic codes" and the emotions associated with them. This kind of analysis will provide the cultural context – the context of ideas, experience and meanings – in which emigrants lived, referred to, and made sense of. Therefore, I ask: **What is the relationship between the "symbolic codes" that underlie the post-Soviet civil discourse and emigration in Latvia?**

Theoretical Framework: Symbolic Codes, Emotions, the State-Society Relationship, and Cultural Autonomy

Symbolic codes or the public discourse structure

"Symbolic codes" are structural elements of culture (Alexander and Smith, 1993, p. 155). These symbolic codes manifest themselves in public discourse. Alexander and Smith (1993) explain that "[t]he organized signifiers of discursive signs are idealized and symbolic; yet their referents are practical, potent, and "real"" (p.160). Kane (2000) also argues that "the locus of meaning, and therefore the conditions for meaning construction, is symbolic structures" (p.314) and we "can uncover meaning construction by analyzing the symbolic structures and practices of

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[17] This theoretical perspective on symbolic codes, their moral character and their effect over behavior is influenced by the work of Durkheim, particularly his "Elementary Forms of Religious Life" (see Alexander 1988).

[18] Some scholars argue that ""social reality" exists in the interaction between narrative and event, code and context; the social scientist must employ narrative means in order to uncover this interaction" (Jacobs, 1996, p.1243; Jacobs refers here to Sewell, 1992a, p.405).

narrative discourse" (p.311). According to these authors, narratives, such as stories, plots, etc., represent cultural structures (p. 156). Understanding of symbolic codes or sets that underlie discourses and narratives gives access to the interpretation of meanings and action. **Meanings and thus our behavior are shaped with respect to these symbolic codes**.

Alexander and Smith's (1993) study of American civil discourse reveals that opposing political elites use the same symbolic codes to legitimize their actions and gain support (e.g., p.165, p.180). They argue that in the American civil discourse the symbolic code of democratic/counter-democratic has been a powerful organizing referent. In post-Soviet Latvia and other Baltic countries, according to some scholars, the code of East/West can also be seen as a powerful referent for the actions of the elite (e.g., Mole, 2012, Eglitis, 2002). Cultural anthropologist and sociologist Sahlins (1976), in turn, points out that "the gross distinction" between "development and underdevelopment" has been crucial in Western societies (p.211) (see Table no.3).

The good or the positive side of a symbolic code	The evil or the negative side of a symbolic code
democratic	counter-democratic
development	underdevelopment
West	East

Table 3. Symbolic codes in literature: Alexander and Smith, 1993; Sahlins, 1974; Alexander, 2006; Mole, 2012, Eglitis, 2002.

The general premise of this type of analysis, according to Alexander and Smith, is that culture "regulates social structure in concrete, temporally defined event sequences" and that "symbolic codes" as elements of cultural structure carry certain "normative referents" or "specify

the good and the evil" (1993, pp. 159, 196)[19]. In developing this perspective, Alexander and Smith are influenced by Durkheim's notion of "sacred" and "profane" as a fundamental structure of morality or culture in any society (e.g., Durkheim 1995 [1912]). They further argue that symbolic codes are "charged by the "religious" symbology of the sacred and profane" (1993, p.157). Each "symbolic code" has two sides – the good and the evil side or the positive and the negative side (e.g., see examples in table no.3). Each code may thus correspond to multiple binary *sub*-structures (referents) that characterize the two opposing sides of the code. For example, the code of development/under-development in the dominant civil discourse may be characterized by such referents as consumerism/non-consumerism, international market/internal market. The code West/East may be characterized by such binary sub-referents as democratic/non-democratic, development/underdevelopment and freedom/suppression. We will see that in the post Soviet context, for example, actions of the elite as well as of ordinary people were generally oriented towards the positive sides of such codes, for example: West, Right, and Developed. These codes were derived from the ideals Latvia and the other Baltic and Eastern European countries strived for as they transited out from the Soviet era. These codes also formed the basis of modern state craft. In addition, these codes also had important temporal dimensions. The negative sides of these codes were associated with the Soviet past and thus had to be abandoned. The positive sides of the codes were associated with the future and thus had to be attained and maintained. Alexander and Smith (1993), in their study of American civil discourse, do not analyze the temporal dimension of codes. The temporal meaning of these codes in the post-Soviet context, however, seems to be significant as it captures the historical and emotional underpinnings of the codes.

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[19] Yet they also emphasize that "[c]ulture is linked to social structure through the institutionalization process" (p.159). Discourses are stabilized and legitimized through the institutional setting.

Alexander and Smith (1993) also specify that "[c]ivil society, at the social structural level, consists of actors, relationships between actors, and institutions" (p.161). In the civil discourse at each of those levels symbolic codes may have slightly different referents. For example, democratic actors in the civil discourse are referred to as autonomous, rational, and controlled as opposed to counter-democratic actors who are seen as dependent, irrational and generally how democratic actors are seen as opposed to non-democratic actors in the American civil discourse (p. 162). As discussed previously, the notion that the rational is opposed to the emotional is a false dichotomy; nevertheless, these distinctions, according to the Thomas theorem[20], are true in their consequences. At the next level, democratic relationships are referred to in the civil discourse as open, trusting and critical as opposed to counter-democratic relationships which are referred to as secret, suspicious and deferential (p.163). Finally, democratic institutions, in turn, are seen as rule regulated, lawful, inclusive and impersonal as opposed to counter-democratic institutions which are seen as arbitrary, power oriented, exclusive and personal (p.163). In my research on the post-Soviet transformation discourse in Latvia, I found that these codes and how they work at each of these levels in the civil discourse – at the level of institutions, relationships, and actors – have a 'trickle down' effect. For example, how the modern Latvian state (institutions) was imagined as a result of the West and Right codes also framed how the people (actors) were expected to be and behave.

Alexander and Smith (1993) study symbolic codes primarily at the level of (official) civil discourse but do not research how these codes affect ordinary people, their perceptions, behaviors, and feelings. As such, in this study I will analyze how symbolic codes work at both the level of civil discourse and at the level of individual life for ordinary people.

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[20] In the beginning of 20th century, sociologists W. I. Thomas and D. S. Thomas formulated that "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences."

Symbolic codes in individuals' narratives and civil discourse

Individual narrative as a cultural structure differs from the cultural structure of civil discourse (Alexander and Smith, 1999, pp.457-8). The civil discourse, however, overarches individual narratives. Furthermore, individuals' narratives draw from the same symbolic codes that inform the civil discourse. These codes define social action[21] in two ways: "they are internalized, and hence provide the foundation for a strong moral imperative" and "they constitute publicly available resources against which the actions of particular individual actors are typified and held morally accountable" (Alexander and Smith, 1993, p.196). In the case of my study, for example, emigrants are influenced by the fundamental cultural structure (symbolic codes) of the civil discourse in the way they frame their views and feelings about societal institutions, relationships and various actors, including themselves. Individuals are constantly exposed to the civil discourse in their everyday life through media and the public around them. Even though Alexander and Smith (1993), in their analysis, stay at the level of civil discourse, they suggest that the civil discourse "constitutes a general grammar from which historically specific traditions draw to create particular configurations of meanings, ideologies and beliefs" (p.166). Thus in practice, these codes do not necessarily carry the same referents/meanings across various contexts and societal groups. For example, when different people employ the symbolic code of development/underdevelopment, they may have different referents as to what development means to them. These different meanings may be a source for potential misunderstanding and conflict. For my study, it is crucial to understand the relationships between this dominant symbolic realm, the state-society relationship, and emigration.

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[21] Discourses and narratives are also social actions.

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Civil discourse and state-society relationships

This research will show that analysis of state-society relationships requires attention to aspects that lie outside typical analyses focused on institutions and national identity. *I will demonstrate that state-society relationships result also from cultural processes of meaning making, and the emotions that accompany them within specific symbolic realms* (e.g., Alexander, 2003; Somers, 2008; Epstein, 2010). State-society relationships have often been looked at from the perspective of citizenship (i.e., a legal institution of closure with a certain set of rights and duties), as well as of national identity or belonging. Citizenship provides attachment to the state at an institutional level, while national identity provides attachment to the state at an ideational level (e.g., Brubaker, 1994; Calhoun, 1998; Berezin, 2001; Marshall (2006 [1949]); Somers, 2008).

Mann (1993) and Tilly (1990) have discussed how citizenship institutions emerged historically in parallel to the idea of the nation state as a tool to tame masses weary of the ruling elite's war making and taxation. Brubaker (1994) has discussed the historical formation and negotiation of different principles according to which people across different Western societies get included (or, by the same token, excluded) in the citizenship of a particular country. He emphasized that this historical formation or negotiation is closely linked to the notion of nationhood and national identity since the defining of these principles requires a debate of "who is what?" (e.g. p. 16, 182). In Brubaker's (1992) view, "formal citizenship cannot be divorced from broader questions of substantive belonging" (p.289). A broad spectrum of scholarship has emerged to study issues of national identity and nationalism (e.g., Hobsbawn, 1992; Billig, 1995; Calhoun, 1997; Berezin, 2001; Anderson, 2006; Smith, 2010). Several authors have pointed out

that analytically cultural and political identities have different characters. Berezin (2001) argues that political identities, such as citizenship, are governed by interest and rationality while cultural identities "are based upon meanings – the meanings of religious practice, homeland, and group affiliation" (p. 85). Calhoun (1997), when discussing nationalism, similarly emphasizes that "[t]he discourse of nation is couched especially in terms of passion and identification" as opposed to that of state "phrased more in terms of reason and interest" (p.3). The idea of nation implies solidarity and social cohesion of the people belonging to it whilst the idea of the state is about political, economic and social stability. One explanation of why, in reality, there is an overlap between nation and state, national identity and citizenship, is that cultural identities have more capacity than political identities "to generate […] powerful public emotions and militancy" (Berezin, 2001, p. 85). Berezin argues that the democratic nation-state needed "the affective dimension of nationalism to support the nation-state" (p.85). This suggests that nationalism, particularly national sentiments and the national identity it evokes and contains, has been an important legitimizing force for the nation-state. Lawler, Thye and Yoon (2009) argue, in turn, that economic globalization and increased competition undermine the states' abilities to care for the collective good, security, and order, and this raises feelings of disappointment. In this context, "person-to-state ties [become] […] more instrumental and less affective" (p.150). In order to counteract a tendency where ties between the state and its citizenry and ties within the citizenry are weakened, national sentiments might be facilitated or even cultivated (ibid). In order to explain how that happens, they look at the state's structure and its role toward the citizenry.

Lawler, Thye and Yoon (2009) conceptualize the state as having a twofold structure with respect to its citizenry. The state (or state managers in reality) needs to provide "salience or

immediacy" for citizens and to serve as "a source of collective efficacy". The former means that the state is present in the life of individuals and the latter means that it has to ensure joint activity for its people which results in such common goods as "security, protection or social welfare" (p. 153-154). They argue that salience and "repeated experience of collective efficacy […] strengthens nationalist sentiments as long as citizens perceive a shared responsibility for the collective (nation-state) results and experience positive feelings as a result of the collective effort" (ibid, p.154, also 163). They also argue that the more value people attach to their national identity, the more dependent they tend to be on their state (p. 163). If the aforementioned conditions are fulfilled, people feel positive attachment to the state. On the other hand, they also emphasize that "if people have a greater sense of shared responsibility at the state level, the state's salience and efficacy should have stronger effect on nationalist sentiment" (p.163). Thus, shared responsibility and the state's role as a guardian are important conditions for national sentiments to flourish. However, we will see from Somers's (2008) analysis that the neoliberal framework conflicts with these notions. In the neoliberal framework or within market fundamentalism, individual responsibility is emphasized over a shared one, the demise of the welfare state further undermines the idea of collective efficacy, and, lastly, financial and economic globalization impedes collective efforts for attaining collective results in nations. From my analysis of the Latvia's transformation discourse, we will also see that in post-Soviet Latvia the "salience and immediacy" of the state for its citizens and even collective action itself were somehow ridiculed and marginalized as remnants of the Soviet past; instead privileging individual autonomy and the market. This stance permeated the modern state craft in Latvia and contributed to the weakening of the state-society relationship.

Other scholars have focused more on the institutional content of the citizenship. Marshall (2006 [1949]) in his classic study of British society discussed how the state historically and gradually guaranteed its citizens certain rights. He discussed how under the institutions of citizenship such rights as civil, political and social rights were included and the respective institutional means that guaranteed these rights developed. These rights, particularly, civil and social, were meant to balance inequalities created by the market (pp.36-37). Bendix (1973) employs Marshall's distinctions between civil, political and social rights to further extend his analysis of the emergence of citizenship institutions in other Western European societies. Later, other scholars have sought to discuss how citizenship, as a set of rights, has changed under globalization (Soysal, 1994) and marketization (Somers, 2008).

Soysal (1994) argues that national citizenship in times of high migration has been compromised by the international human rights regimes that emerged after WWII. Nation-states subject to these internationally recognized human rights regimes shall abide by them even if these regimes conflict with their national principles (pp.8, 157). Somers (2008) argues that the market intervenes between the state and citizens in ways that fundamentally transform the state-society relationship. She views citizenship as "a right to have rights" and argues that this right has been compromised by the market fundamentalism which increasingly views the market as natural and autonomous but other societal institutions as artificial; e.g. that, as a "natural" phenomenon, the market should be privileged (ch.1, p.54) As a result of this market fundamentalism, ordinary citizens and workers are often degraded; in the dominant civil discourse they are not seen and treated as "moral equals", they are denied the basic rights of livelihood and human dignity (pp.45-47, p.58). According to Somers, this market fundamentalism increasingly leads states to work to ensure the best market environment for

enterprises to flourish, while increasingly neglecting protections for, and the rights of, ordinary people. In Lawler, Thye and Yoon's (2009) terms, states then increasingly lack "saliency and immediacy" for their citizens. Ordinary people themselves are viewed by the state in market terms and, accordingly, are expected to utilize their various "capitals" to empower themselves autonomously (Somers, 2008, p.42). In this process, citizenship shifts from

[A] socially inclusionary citizenship to one of contractual morality" which means that "from a triadic balance of power, in which the social state protects citizens in civil society against full exposure to market, to one which citizenship collapses into a dyadic instrument of unbalanced power pitting an alliance of state and market against individuals – now bereft of both state protection and membership in civil society […]The extension of market principles into the polity transforms it into a market-driven state. The market ethic of contract displaces that of the social state, and translates the relationships between citizens and the state into one of contractual quid pro quo conditionality (pp.37, 40).

Thus while Marshall (2006 [1949]) saw citizenship rights, initially, as a tool to protect humans from market forces, Somers (2008) observes that, in the current era of market fundamentalism, the institution of citizenship has lost this capacity. Somers (2008) also argues that as a result of this dyadic relationship between state and market, civil society also suffers as its "ethics of inclusion, membership, solidarity and egalitarianism" are replaced with market values (p.41).

Somers often refers to Alexander (Somers, 2008 in e.g., pp. 30, 31, 33) and *throughout acknowledges that the symbolic order and how the world is viewed within the dominant civil discourse influences how we think and act, as well as what kind of citizenship and what kind of state-society relationships are possible*. She, in fact, includes the analysis of symbolic order as part of institutionalism, and, for her, "to call something an institution is simply to say it is rule-driven", since the symbolic order also sets certain moral rules (e.g. pp.55-56). Thus Somers argues not only that conventional institutional setting set the frame for state-society relationships but also the symbolic or cultural order we live in. At the level of concrete everyday experiences, people do not necessarily experience their relationships with their state through such notions as rights and national identity. Instead, I argue, they form their relationships with their state through

discourse, that is, through how the state or those who represent it talk and speak publicly and in everyday encounters, as well as the normative they convey to the people. In the context of my research, this conversation or interaction between the state and the people also sets the context of how people think of themselves, their home, and emigration.

Epstein (2010) discusses that discourse and "talking" are fundamental to "the dynamics of identity". In order to learn about the identity of the state or individuals, we have to observe and hear the discourse of each (p.341). Conventionally, the state has been perceived as a set of institutions and has been analyzed from this perceptive; recently, however, the state has been also seen as a "talking" state (Epstein, 2010, e.g., p.341, 344) – this is, the state that, through its representatives (such as the ruling elite, clerks, and so on), conveys a certain message to the people about the state, the people, and their future. Moreover, this message, given various experiences and convictions of individuals, triggers various feelings and attitudes, for example, such as pride, shame, anger and fear. People are subjects of the discourse (Lacan in Epstein, 2010, p.335) in the same way that they are subjects of the existing societal order and economic or political structure. In my research, I employ such insights to help me analyze the changing state-society relationships in post-Soviet Latvia and how these changes may relate to emigration.

Emotions

Alexander and Smith (1993) emphasize that in moments of "tension, unease, and crisis" or "liminality" the structure of culture and its underlying "symbolic codes" become the most visible (p. 166). They argue that in these moments of crisis, decisions are not purely rational; they are made "in terms of "arbitrary" or conventional symbolic codes" (p. 166). Why is this so? Durkheim (Dukheim 2001 [1912] in Weyher, 2012) and Weyher (2012) have answered this

question by arguing that the distinction between sacred and profane, the distinction symbolic codes also seek to make, are themselves the products of emotions (Weyher, 2012, p.370).

These are collective emotions that make humans to see the world as divided into sacred and profane, to see the world as "two […] incomparable worlds, even though nothing in sense experience seems likely to have suggested the idea of such a radical duality" (Durkheim 1995 [1912], p.39). Emotions explain the distinction between "sacred" and "profane" in two ways. On the one hand, different types of emotions are associated with "sacred" and "profane" (Weyher, 2012, p.372), whilst on the other, as Durkheim made clear, for members of a society, "[t]o touch" the sacred, "that is, to deny or question it – is forbidden" (Durkheim, 1995 [1912], p.215)[22]. Furthermore, if we deny or question the sacred, this leads to societal tensions. Weyher argues that it is for this reason that we can say that this classification itself is sacred (p.372).

Alexander and Smith (1993) adopted Durkheim's ideas for their theory of "symbolic codes". They argued that symbolic codes are binary sets that structure any discourse and "are charged by the "religious"[23] symbology of the sacred and profane" (p.157). However, it is not only the binary character of the code where one side in the collective representation is seen as sacred and other as profane, but, drawing from Weyher's (2012) reading of Durkheim, it is also the code itself which is sacred since it is fundamental (or formative) to structure the discourse of a particular society. In my research, I seek to explore not only the sacred and profane of the transformation discourse in post-Soviet Latvia but also the "particular emotions" that have

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[22] For example, Durkheim would say that "progress" is one such sacred. "Even today, great though the freedom we allow one another may be, it would be tantamount to sacrilege for a man wholly to deny progress or to reject the human ideal to which modern societies are attached. Even the people most enamored of free thinking tend to place one principle above discussion and regard it as untouchable, in other words, sacred..." (Durkheim, 1995 [1912], p.215)

[23] Weyher (2012) explains that ""religion itself, in Durkheim's hands, is defined so broadly that it enables the inclusion of much that would…not be seen as "religious" at all"(p.370).

sustained the distinction. We will see that such emotions as confidence, pride, fear, and shame were formative in shaping the post-Soviet transformation discourse and identities in Latvia.

Collins (1981) suggests that when conventional routines are challenged or do not work as expected, feelings of insecurity may be evoked. The transition from socialism to a free market economy can be seen as a prolonged moment of unease or "liminality". Some of the routines people acquired during the Soviet era did not work anymore, while some still did. Some routines had to be built anew and thus were up for grabs. According to Collins (1981) people will act to minimize insecurities associated with change and to re-establish feelings of security and confidence instead. In these situations people will be guided by the things in which they are confident. In that sense, people's actions, including the way they articulate themselves, help to uncover the underlying symbolic codes and meanings given by society.

Positive sides of the codes carry such emotions as confidence and pride. In the context of escaping Soviet history, the general public and the elite for the most part were convinced that orientation towards the West, development, and right government constituted the right path for the future. The positive sides of such codes served as nodes of confidence for future action[24].

Barbalet (2004) argues that

[c]onfidence [...] is an emotion of assured expectation which is not only the basis of but a positive encouragement to action [...]. The function of confidence, then, is to promote social action. It does so by virtue of its object, which is the future. (p.86)

Confidence is a "construction of belief" that is based on some substantial evidence from the past and present since the future is not yet known (2004, p.83). Pride is an important part of confidence. According to Barbalet "the [f]eeling of confidence arises in the subject of a relationship in which the participant receives acceptance and recognition" (2004, p.86). For this

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[24] At the institutional level these codes not only informed the civil discourse but also defined the identity of the Latvian state. Latvia had to become a democratic, free and developed country.

reason Barbalet saw pride as one manifestation of confidence (2004, p.87). Confidence varies from pride "by the fact that the object of pride is the actor's past behavior, whereas the object of confidence is the actor's prospective behavior" (2004, p.87). In Soviet and post-Soviet Latvia, for example, there was confidence that life in the West would be much better than under the Soviet regime and this affected how the future of post-Soviet Latvia was imagined and, more immediately, how everyday interactions and communication were to unfold. Every step towards integration in the Western community became an issue of pride.

Opposite to the emotion of confidence, according to Barbalet, are emotions of "uncertainty", "shame, and "shyness and modesty" that are "emotions of self-attention" which work to "enforce conformity" (1996, p.77). According to Katz (1997), the emotion of shame is one's imagining of the self relative to others and one's perception that this self is defective and thus risking one's belonging to a desired "sacred community" (p.232). We will see that in the post-Soviet era, the emotion of shame was associated with Latvia's Soviet past. This shame about the "Sovietness" or "Eastness" of Latvia and its people dominated the transformations discourse and everyday interactions more broadly. Sacralizing everything imagined as West and striving for it was a way to cope with this shame.

Within a post-Soviet context, feelings of confidence and shame were also mixed with feelings of fear about the future. The negative sides of the codes embodied fears of the alternative futures marked by the continuance of anti-democratic and suppressive regimes, underdevelopment, and thus possibly a return to the Soviet past. In Latvia, the possibility of a return to the Soviet past made the positive sides of the codes extremely sacred in the civil discourse. Barbalet (2004) argues that "fear is a prospect-based emotion, [in] that fear is displeasure about the prospect of an undesirable event" (p.155). Fear may be triggered when one

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feels insufficient power to influence his/her situation (p.153); and fear is common during periods of social change (p.155). Barbalet discusses that actors, in order to deal with fear, may employ flight-fight and/or containment strategies (pp.6, 154). In the former case, actors either withhold from circumstances that make them feel fearful or they rebel. In the latter case, actors seek to remove the source of fear (p.168). In post-Soviet Latvia, fear was directed both towards the past and towards the future. The ruling elite simultaneously feared Latvia's return to the Soviet past as well as its rejection by the West, and this influenced the dominant cultural structure that underlay the post-Soviet transformation discourse. Overall, I will show that how these particular emotions worked in post-Soviet Latvia, in its transformation discourse and in everyday interactions and communication, were crucial in accounting for the state-society relationship and emigration mechanisms.

A note on cultural autonomy

Several scholars have pointed out that the way we see the economy, politics and the social is shaped by cultural distinctions people historically have made[25]. Marshall Sahlins (1976) argues that "functional value is always relative to the given cultural scheme" and that "[t]he very form of social existence of material forces is determined by its integration in the cultural system" (p.206). He illustrates this through examples:

> [t]he material forces taken by themselves are lifeless. Their specific motions and determinate consequences can be stipulated only by progressively compounding them with the coordinates of the cultural order. Decompose the productive forces to their material specification alone; suppose an industrial technology, a population of men, and an environment. Nothing is thereby said about the specific properties of the goods that will be produced, or about the rate of production or the relations under which the process shall proceed. An industrial technology in itself does not dictate whether it will be run by men or by women, in the day or at night, by wage laborers or by collective owners, on Tuesday or on Sunday, for a profit or for a livelihood […]. The material forces become so under the aegis of culture. (pp. 207-8)

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[25] In that sense, the concrete distinction between the economy, politics, and the social which academia forces is also cultural.

Alexander (2003) further explains that social structures, including politics and economy, "have an inside" and that "[t]hey are not only external to actors but also internal to them. They are meaningful. These meanings are structured and socially produced" (p.4). Any analysis that focuses just on economic or political factors without analyzing cultural structure would thus lose some of its explanatory power. In addition, culture gives us moral guidance. We form our meanings with respect to what we see (or are socialized to see) as good or bad; what we see (or are socialized to see) as desirable or not. Culture structures this morality and gives meaning to life. In order to fully understand any phenomenon we have to see it from the perspective of culture and how it organizes social life. *Given these examples, I want to see how culture frames the state-society relationships in Latvia and, subsequently, how it shapes the emigration process.*

Cultural analysis also helps to uncover political, economic, and social hierarchies and power. Alexander (2003) argues that "only if cultural structures are understood in their full complexity and nuance can the true power and persistence of violence, domination, exclusion, and degradation be realistically understood" (p.7). He further emphasizes that it is very important to understand "who" produces these discourses, narratives and meanings, "why, and to what effect" (pp. 14, 21). In my study, I can better understand the meanings attached to the symbolic codes across various groups, if I clarify why these and not other meanings are important for each group.

From my former interviews, I saw that economic factors were important in people's emigration decision; however, as emigrants narrated their stories to tell what happened in their lives before emigration, it also became clear that seemingly economic determinants were informed by a wider cultural structure and related emotions. For example, as part of the development/ underdevelopment code in post-Soviet Latvia's civil discourse, the ruling elite saw

consumerism as a sign of development. Accordingly, the ruling elite expected that people should develop consumer identities. One's inability and lack of desire to consume was increasingly seen as a sign of backwardness and failure. In March 1997, the Prime Minister of Latvia gave an extensive, televised speech on what had been achieved in the previous year. This speech was also published in the major newspapers. In this speech, the Prime Minister clearly related consumerism, and particularly credit-consumerism, with development:

> Other issues about the last year: In this country, we have seen a sharp increase in the number of motorcars – this itself demonstrates that our standard of living rose; but it is even more important that more and more people buy cars on credit […] We [the ruling elite] have created a situation where banks will need to think where to put their money; finally it will be like in the rest of the world – that a bank works for people not opposite as it was formerly. Finally banks will be compelled to give normal loans for the people of Latvia. Loans for cars, apartments, heat insulation of roofs and construction of houses. Loans that are accessible to every tax payer are an important factor of individual welfare. I assign to it tremendous importance. If there will be loans for apartments and construction of houses, more children will be born (my translation, Šķēle, 1997, pp. 1.7).

Linking development with consumerism has long been a tradition in Western societies. One of the fathers of modernization theory Rostow ([1960] 1990) argued that the key for development is consumption[26]. Despite much scholarly criticism of this perspective, such ideas have been adopted by international institutions such as WB and IMF, and through these institutions these ideas were adopted by ruling elites across the globe; including post-Soviet Latvia. That consumerism is a desirable and welcome practice has been much emphasized in Latvian public discourse since the regaining of independence. One of my former respondents illustrates how the thinking promoted by such high authorities as the Prime Minister has been internalized by the people. This respondent noticed that others around him were developing consumer identities and tried to become a good consumer too, but failed. His narrative reveals

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[26] He argues that the highest stage of development is the age of high mass consumption. In his work *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Marxist Manifesto (1990 [1960])*, he argued that the Soviet Union was not able to achieve the same levels of development as advanced Western countries such as Canada, the U.S. and Germany because it did not allocate enough resources for consumer good production and did not generate enough consumers. His argument is problematic since the Soviet Union tried to establish itself as a non-market society and thus consumerism was not an issue.

how, across various situations he encountered (with friends, media, banks, etc.), he was encouraged and trained in consumerism[27].

But, of course, this was a reason, because it was what everybody did [meaning loans]. Initially you might not believe and hence hesitate, but then you are on a visit or you meet friends, acquaintances [and they say]: "I went yesterday [to the store], see what I have bought, I have borrowed – see, it is not a problem!" If not, then not – then maybe I also can do the same? At the end, of course, I am all in all guilty myself.

His narrative illustrates that he admits his own responsibility for his debts and the shame his faulty consumer behavior has created. In the post-Soviet era, the era of current market fundamentalism or neoliberal dominance, he internalized the need to think of himself as purely responsible for his own life and thus for his failures. His further narrative, however, shows some tension. Combined, his narrative illustrates that his individual conduct has been intrinsically linked with an internalization of the dominant public discourse.

[….] Disappointment in whom? In myself, who else is guilty if not myself, I am the guilty one. I am the one to be blamed, of course, but others took advantage of this situation, they took advantage of the fact that I did not know. […] **Did people take advantage of you in the labor market?** Not only in the labor market, in all these situations; we know that everybody could take a loan, everybody who wanted, nobody contemplated, all this was imposed on us – on TV, radio, by the government, they all repeated it; banks almost every day knocked at our door, they sent messages and emails, - take, take, things will just get better, the prices of property will rise, everything is right, borrow, borrow, borrow. No problems at all – borrow, it will be easy to give it back, with every day you will pay less. They told, I believed – it is my fault. Ha! I believed. I shall believe less. [my translation, MFK1]

In a context where consumerism was seen as good and desirable behavior, this emigrant left because of the collapse of his consumer identity. This does not mean that in emigrating he has kept aloof from consumerism. Circumstances in the new receiving country provided conditions under which he could develop a positive consumer identity more easily. This small example illustrates the dynamics and importance of culture.

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[27] Ritzer and Goodman (2001), drawing from Zygmunt Bauman, emphasize the notion of the "dangerous consumer". A "Dangerous consumer" is a modern cultural construct that applies to a person or a group of persons who do not consume enough and thus is a threat for the modern consumer society (p.140). In practice, this means that the dominant expectation in the society is that people are consumers; and, they are socialized to be consumers. In the context of socioeconomic deprivation, individuals may find it difficult to fulfill consumer identity. This may create feelings of shame and humiliation.

On concrete cultural autonomy

Kane (1991) underlines that for fruitful social analysis we have to analyze these cultural structures and meanings with respect to the broader social environment. She calls this "concrete cultural autonomy". Alexander and Smith (1993) in their analysis of American civil discourse tend to stay at the level of analytic cultural autonomy or, in other words, they do not locate cultural structures in "the whole of social life" (Kane, 1991, p. 54). Kane (1991), in her discussion of analytic vs. concrete autonomy, argues that when we deal with analytic autonomy we analyze narrative and text and "[t]his text, with its intrarelational logic of symbolic elements, patterns, and processes, is the structure of culture" (p.55). In contrast, the application of concrete autonomy provides an insight to how this cultural structure relates to other structures: "Whereas analytic autonomy of culture is sought apart from material life, concrete autonomy must be located within, and as part of, the whole of social life" (p.54). In social research, she explains, staying at the analytic level may impede our ability to see how this "structure is shared by members of the specific society", as well as "to determine the degree of its [culture's] causality" (p.58). For my study of Latvian emigration, it is thus crucial to understand and take into account broader historical and cultural transformations and see how they affect meaning making. Latvia's present is not only shaped by its Soviet past but also by the past and present of broader global transformations and how the Latvian state and society dealt with and perceived these transformations.

Method

Public discourse analysis

Scholars who study social phenomena from the perspective of culture discuss discourse and narrative as major tools for accessing meaning making (Sewel, 1992, Steinmetz, 1992, Jacobs, 1996, Alexander and Smith, 1993) and the symbolic structures that lie beneath these meaning making processes (Alexander, 2003, Alexander and Smith, 1993, Jacobs, 1996, Kane, 2000, Somers, 1992). In order to answer my central question about the relationship between symbolic codes and emigration, I analyze Latvian civil discourse and its structure in the first decade following the collapse of the Soviet Union as well as emigrants' narratives. Kubik (1994)[28] argues that discourse provides an inclusive way to study a particular society, given that any society "is discontinuous and diversified" (pp.12-13). Particularly, I looked at the civil discourse in the first decade following the collapse of the Soviet Union because it was during this period that the state chose its course of development and established its new identity. This was also the period when the new democratic relationships between the state and its citizens were formed and framed. For the analysis of this public discourse, I will focus on discourse in Latvian newspapers in the 1990s. Borrowing from Reiss (1982):

> [t]he term "discourse" refers to the way in which the material embodying sign processes is organized. Discourse can thus be characterized as the visible and describable praxis of what is called "thinking". For thinking is nothing but the organization of signs as an ongoing process. Signs themselves may be 'defined' provisionally as the non-discrete 'elements' composing the process towards meaningfulness that itself is both defined by and defining of what signs are […] or, more simply, a sign is a unit of meaning (undefined) that stands for some other meaningful and nonmeaningful unit (Reiss, 1982, pp.9-10)

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[28] Kubik, in his book *The Power of Symbols Against The Symbols of Power. The Rise of Solidarity and The Fall of State Socialism in Poland* (1994), relies on the analysis of public discourse to analyze the emergence of the Polish Solidarity Movement that led to the demise of socialism in Poland.

Thus, discourse organizes our thinking and becomes the architecture of our thinking. Discourse organizes "the inclusion and exclusion of statements"[29], "the choice of vocabulary or "basic units"", it is "a set of semiotic facts, that is, a set of human products that are to be interpreted" (Kubik, 1994, p.13). *Discourse* itself, according to Kubik not only operates as "linguistic facts (oral or written)" but also penetrates "among all human products" (p.13), or as Reiss argues above, it *permeates our thinking*. Yet *our thinking structures our behavior and feelings and vice versa*.

Alexander and Smith (1993) discussed "symbolic codes."[30] This approach, I believe, is an excellent tool to analyze discourse from the perspective of Kubik's "semiotic" sets and the basic units of discourse. Symbols that represent the patterns of our actions "are located in sets of binary relations" and "organized into discourses" (Alexander and Smith, pp.156-157). In their perspective, not only are "symbolic codes" the basic organizers of the discourse structure, meaning and our thinking, but, due to their duality, where one side is the opposite of the other, they also indicate discursive tensions. Or, in their words, discourses "perform a forceful evaluative task" since the discourse structure is binary. One side of the symbolic code is "sacred" while the other is "profane", one is admired while the other discarded (p.157), and it is such binary structures, the opposites, their difference that define meaning (ibid)[31]. As I sought to understand people's views of the future – i.e., what kind of Latvia, as well as what kind of relationships between people and their state – was foreseen back in the 1990s, the analysis of

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[29] Here Kubik (1994) also draws on Paul Q. Hirst who wrote that "discourse is conceived as forms of order and inclusion/exclusion of statements" (p.13)

[30] See the section "Symbolic codes or the public discourse structure" above.

[31] Their argument here goes against the value analysis that does not see negative or bad as an intricate part of any culture. With this approach they seek to demonstrate not only what was desired and admired in a particular culture but also what was spurned and avoided: "…negativity is part of culture and is symbolized every bit as elaborately as the good. Positive codes, indeed, can be understood only in relation to negative ones. […] Conflict and negation are coded and expected; repression, exclusion, and domination are part of the core of the evaluative system itself" (p.158).

public discourse from the perspective of these symbolic code structures was a useful tool. This allowed me to see how the emerging post-Soviet thinking and identities were structured, what the central cultural meanings were, what was expected and what was negated.

My analysis lies within the approaches of discourse analysis and phenomenology. According to Martínez-Ávila and Smiraglia (2013), these may be seen as complementary since the former has an interest to deconstruct while the latter has an interest to understand. This is "a desirable complement in which deconstructions gains effectiveness by understanding and individual understanding is better studied by the deconstruction of universal assumptions" (p.3). As such, this research explores not only the symbolic codes that structured the post-Soviet discourse and what they meant, but also where they came from and why they came to be so prominent in post-Soviet thinking[32]. My intention was to understand how these symbolic codes and their meanings affect the state-society relationship in Latvia more broadly and how this helps me to account for emigrant stories. My analysis is also systematic in the way I have chosen to examine certain periods in order to gain insight into the public discourse of post-Soviet Latvia. In what follows, I explain how I selected the newspapers and events to be analyzed.

For the analysis of civil discourse, I selected the two largest Latvian language newspapers (*Diena* and *Neatkarīgā Cīņa/from 1996 Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*) and the largest Russian language newspaper (*Панорама Латвии*) in the 1990s (for 1990 I have selected *Atmoda* and *Padomju*

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[32] See the discussion on the relationship between phenomenology and discourse analysis in Martínez-Ávila and Smiraglia "Revealing Perception: Discourse Analysis in a Phenomenological framework" (2013). They argue that "in […] combination of discourse analysis and phenomenology, "why" the lived experience of the individuals affects and causes them to perceive "what" in their knowing process would be part of the phenomenological approach. Meanwhile, the study of "how" the different discourses and strategies of control affect the perception and emergence of concepts in those individuals and the imposition of a dominant meaning in a universal system, would be products of the discourse analysis. The combination of both approaches […] help to gain insight on the overall process of revealing knowledge (especially established and official knowledge) as artificially construed by social factors and individually perceived according to the exposure to these factors."

Jaunatne)[33]. Selecting a range of newspapers serves as a tool to avoid the bias of favoring the discursive structure of one particular newspaper. Since it is not possible to study every single article in the post-Soviet era, the following rationale of selection was applied, influenced by Alexander and Smith's (1993) observation that in moments of "tension, unease, and crisis" or "liminality" the structure of culture and "symbolic codes" become the most visible (p. 166). Therefore, I firstly selected national elections as moments of "liminality" since my understanding is that the most "sacred" issues for Latvia's future were more likely to become apparent during these periods (see table no.4). During election periods, future alternatives of the state are negotiated through public debates; thus such periods help reveal the "symbolic codes" or deep cultural structures that underlie such debates and what they reveal about the identity of Latvia and the state-society relationship. Secondly, I turned my attention to particular protests that took place in the 1990s. Protest events, which involve the active participation of the people, are significant moments in history because they are times when views concerning aspects of the state or state practices are contested. While it is not possible in the scope of one dissertation to look at all of these events; I selected the largest and most repetitive protest events in the 1990s – protests by school teachers and farmers. Their repeated occurrence was significant in that this signaled ongoing problematic state-society relationships and continued disagreement over some state policies. I selected articles that present and describe these particular events, including interviews with politicians, involved actors, as well as columnist and editorial narratives. Paying attention to such actors as the leading political elite and commentators is necessary because these actors have the power to frame public thinking more generally. In my analysis, I examine how

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[33] Newspapers' circulation: In 1993, *Diena* between 69,300 and 103,600; *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* between 71,605 and 90,315; Panorama Latvii – not provided. In 1995, *Diena* between 52,030 and 91,900; *Neatkarīgā Cīņa/Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze* between 46,451 and 67,748; *Panorama Latvii* between 29,100 and 30,780. In 1998, *Diena* between 52,238 and 92,487; *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze* between 20,757 and 39,867; *Panorama Latvii* between 24,500 and 37,500.

the discourse is structured and what this discourse structure tells about the identity of Latvia and the state-society relationship. The following table (Table no.4) summarizes which years and months from the selected newspapers I used for my analysis[34]:

Events: years and months of a respective year	On social change in general/other protests			Elections			On farmers protests			On school teachers protests		
	NC	Diena	Панорама Латвии	NC	Diena	Панорама Латвии	NC	Diena	Панорама Латвии	NC	Diena	Панорама Латвии
				Since NC, Diena and Панорама Латвии came out since 1991 for 1990 I have selected instead *Atmoda* and *Latvijas Jaunatne*.								
1990[35]				1,2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3						
1991	10-12											
1992	10-12											
1993	10-12			3,4,5	3,4,5	3,4,5						
1994										11-12	11-12	11-12
1995				7,8,9	7,8,9	7,8,9						
1996	10									10	10	10
1997							3,4,5,6,7,9	3,4,5,6,7,9	3,4,5,6,7,9			
1998				7,8,9	7,8,9	7,8,9						
1999							5,6	5,6	5,6	10	10	10
2000							6,7	6,7	6,7			

Table 4. Selected periods for the newspaper analysis.

As part of my analysis, I also rely on secondary literature for additional insights into the social changes of post-Soviet Latvia. Not all the information necessary to account for the discourse structure in post-Soviet Latvia was available in the newspapers. In order to better

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[34] When I was collecting newspaper articles, I selected the articles that describe and analyze events, columnist, editorial and expert narratives, and most importantly interviews with politicians.

[35] In March, 1990, elections of the Supreme Council as the Supreme Soviet of the Latvian SSR took place. This council voted for Latvia's independence in May, 1990.

understand discursive structures, their emergence, their meaning, and thus their importance, it is also necessary to understand their historical embeddedness.

In-depth interviews

As members of Latvian society, emigrants' lives and meaning making are influenced and shaped by Latvian civil discourse and the symbolic structures it carries. Steinmetz (1992) explains that even in situations where individuals do not take part in major historical events directly, they and their lives are still affected by the collective discourse and narratives that frame these events (p.505). Durkheim argued that "man is double" since each individual is an individual being and a social being simultaneously (Durkheim, 1995 [1912], pp.15-16) – a social being since he/she is socialized in a certain moral code of the society and time he/she is part of. In this research, I am particularly interested in the relationship between this social being and the cultural or symbolic realm in post-Soviet Latvia that he/she is part of. In order to see how emigrants' narratives resonate or contrast with the cultural structures and meanings identified in the civil discourse, I conducted and analyze 30 in-depth interviews with Latvian emigrants in the USA and England and also draw from secondary data analysis based on the field work I completed in 2008 (Ireland) and 2010 (England), where I collected 29 in-depth interviews with Latvian emigrants (see Appendix 1). I selected the respondents for the current study by using online social networking services such as Draugiem.lv and Facebook.com, contacts from Latvian Associations and Latvian Language schools in receiving countries and snowball sampling. I tried to select respondents who also differed in their socio-demographic characteristics.

In the interviews, I wanted to learn not only about my respondent's emigration story but also about their biography and views more broadly since this is a crucial source of "sociological

imagination" (Mills, 2000 [1959]). When I asked specifically about their emigration experience, I did not ask my respondents for the causes of their migration decision directly; that is, "to identify the social contingencies of their behavior, or to represent the lived meaning of their experience" (Katz, 1999, p. 8). Instead, I asked my respondents to "describe" the situation they were in when they made their decision to leave (see Katz, 1999, p.8). I did not ask them to explain 'why' they decided to emigrate but rather to describe 'what happened' in their lives and in Latvia before they made their decision to emigrate and when they made this decision. By doing this, I hoped to receive broader accounts of their lives before emigration and to avoid the risk that the emigrants might reinterpret their stories from the perspective of today. The purpose of the in-depth interviews was to learn about the spectrum of experiences and meanings surrounding them and how these were framed by, and with respect to, the particular cultural structure of the transformation discourse. Apart from the emigration contexts, I wanted to explore their return intentions since earlier respondents' narratives had suggested that only by combining emigration contexts and return intentions could I give a full account of emigration mechanisms and the respondent's relation to their state (see Chapter 5).

In order to specify how the state-society relation exhibited in emigrants' narratives differed from that in the narratives of those who remained in Latvia, I carried out 20 additional interviews with people who still live in Latvia (a sort of control group). In order to avoid respondents' selection bias, I collected these interviews in seven different places dispersed all across Latvia (see Appendix 1). Furthermore, in each geographical location, I sought to select respondents who differed in their socio-demographic characteristics. As with the emigrant interviews, I was interested in their biography and viewpoint more broadly. Therefore, I asked them whether they had considered migration and, if so, what was happening at that time in their

lives; I also asked whether other members of their family had considered migration and, if so, what was happening at that time in their family members' lives.

To analyze the interview data, I used a thematic approach, common in qualitative research. For my particular case, this meant that within the data for each type of respondents – those who have left Latvia and those who remain – I was looking for common patterns or themes (Braun and Clark, 2006; Boyatzis, 1998).

A theme is a pattern found in the information that at the minimum describes and organizes possible observations or at the maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon (Boyatzis, 1998, p.vii)

Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasize that for qualitative analysis there are no hard set rules about "what proportion of your data set needs to display evidence of the theme for it to be considered a theme"; instead, what matters is if an identified theme "captures something important in relation to the overall research question" (p.82). Or, in other words, what counts as a theme is driven by the research question, theory, and the level of analysis – if it is semantic or latent, as well as its epistemology – or whether the analysis carries an essentialist or constructionist approach (pp.82, 84-85; also Boyatzis, 1998, p.vii). Semantic analysis is where "the themes are identified within the explicit or surface meanings of the data, and the analyst is not looking for anything beyond what a participant has said or what has been written" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.84); while latent analysis is where data are identified at the level of "the *underlying* ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations", and seeks to look at the 'why' of semantic meanings (italic in original, ibid). An epistemological approach guides the researcher in terms of how meanings are theorized:

[…] with an essentialist/realist approach, you can theorize motivation, experience, and meaning in a straightforward way, because a simple, largely unidirectional relationship is assumed between meaning and experience and language […] In contrast, from a constructionist perspective, meaning and experience are socially produced and reproduced, rather than inhering within the individual […] [Constructionist thematic analysis] seeks to theorize the sociocultural contexts, and structural conditions, that enable the individual accounts that are provided (p.85)

In my interview analysis, I used constructionist thematic analysis and examined meaning, not only at its semantic, but also at its latent level. For this research, the theoretical framework I have chosen emerges from the constructionist perspective, which also swayed my analysis in this particular direction.

Chapter 2 - Becoming Western and Developed: Sacredness and Emotions

One of the fathers of sociology, Emile Durkheim, argued that societies from very early times made some men and "things, including ideas," sacred while others profane (Durkheim, 1995 [1912], p. 214, 215). This distinction between "sacred" and "profane" evolves from Durkheim's sociology of knowledge and his recognition that our perception of reality is framed by categories that are handed down from society, which "translate states of collectivity" and "depend upon the way in which the collectivity is organized, upon its morphology, its religious, moral, and economic institutions, and so on" (Durkheim, p.15). These categories once created gain a life of their own or in Durkheim's terms they become "sui generis", they become independent collective representations or as Durkheim would say "social facts" that influence our thinking and behavior. This distinction between "sacred" and "profane" is thus "the first classification" of our understanding (Weyher, 2012, p. 370), and is "an essential component of the enactment of all other categories" (Rawls, 2004 in Weyher, 2012, pp.370-1)[36]. This distinction is absolute in the sense that sacred and profane always remain mutually exclusive, even though their particular content may change over time and across societies depending on collective practices, needs, emotions, as well as interaction with other societies (Weyher, p.371-2)[37]. In Weyher's reading of Durkheim, not only can various things be sacred or profane in a

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[36] Durkheim, in his study on "Elementary Forms of Religious Life", mentions such other "principal categories" as "time, space, genus, cause" (Durkheim, e.g. pp. 9, 10,18, 445).

[37] Weyher (2012) tries to resolve dilemma of how this distinction can be both absolute and transformative over time: "As soon as we recognize fully the socially, relationally, and contextually grounded bases of these distinctions, as well as of the experience of ''emotion,'' the problem disappears—the ''sacredness'' of a thing, work, or idea does not rest in the ''thing itself.'' Not only the heterogeneity between ''sacred'' and ''profane,'' but their very identification and distinction in the first place is something that exists contextually, both in and as a result of socio-relational practice only. Accordingly, even that which seems absolutely ''profane'' may take on a ''sacred''

particular society, there may be also various degrees of sacredness and profaneness, that is, some things may be more sacred than others (ibid).

It is necessary to emphasize, for the purpose of this study, that these fundamental categories of sacred and profane and others that emanate from them are not only "*social* in origin" but also "*emotional* […] in their origin and elaboration" and in their everyday recreation (Weyher, 2012, p.370, italic in original). There are "particular emotions" that made humans see the world as divided into sacred and profane, to see the world as comprised of "two…incompatible worlds" (Dukheim 2001 [1912] in Weyher, 2012, p.372). Weyher elaborates that "strong, specific" emotions are associated with the "sacred" while "calmer" ones are associated with the "profane" (p.372). Durkheim was also clear that, for members of a society, "[t]o touch" the sacred, "that is, to deny or question it – is forbidden" (Durkheim, 1995 [1912], p.215)[38]. But what if we deny? What if we question? Doing so leads to societal tensions and Weyher argues that, for this reason, we can say that this classification itself is sacred (p.372)

Alexander and Smith (1993) adopt Durkheim's ideas to inform their theory of "symbolic codes". They argue that symbolic codes are binary sets that structure any discourse and "are charged by the "religious"[39] symbology of the sacred and profane" (p.157). Alexander and Smith (1993) suggest that the very structure of a code makes likely some "conflict", "negation" and ambiguity (p.158). Ideas, thoughts, and practices that are labeled as belonging to the "profane" side of the code are negated, labeled deviant, and marginalized. However, it is not only the

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character under appropriate relational circumstances; and when it does the radical heterogeneity between it and that which remains profane, in that context, may still be maintained" (p.372).

[38] For example, Durkheim would say that, in modern societies, "progress" is one such sacred. "Even today, great though the freedom we allow one another may be, it would be tantamount to sacrilege for a man wholly to deny progress or to reject the human ideal to which modern societies are attached. Even the people most enamored of free thinking tend to place one principle above discussion and regard it as untouchable, in other words, sacred..." *(*Durkheim, 1995 [1912], p.215*)*

[39] Weyher (2012) explains that '"religion itself, in Durkheim's hands, is defined so broadly that it enables the inclusion of much that would…not be seen as "religious" at all"(p.370).

binary character of the code where one side in the collective representation is seen as sacred and other as profane but, drawing from Weyher's (2012) reading of Durkheim, it is also the code itself which is sacred since it is fundamental (or formative) in the way it structures the discourse of a particular society. Once we question something that is so fundamental it may trigger emotional tensions. Alexander and Smith (1993) applied their theory to study the civil discourse in the United States and found that in American civil discourse the symbolic code of democratic/counter-democratic has been a powerful organizing referent. This distinction itself was "sacred" as opposing political elites appeal to democratic codes to legitimize their actions and gain support (Alexander and Smith, 1993, e.g., p.165, p.180). In what follows in this and the subsequent chapter, I identify what "symbolic codes" were "sacred" in the transformation discourse of post-Soviet Latvia and what they reveal about the identity of post-Soviet Latvia. This is a crucial exercise in order to answer my central research question: What is the relationship between "symbolic codes" and emigration?

Throughout I will also argue that this cultural system, which consists of "symbolic codes" or symbolic classifications underlying our discourses and narratives, form identities. We can understand identity by asking two questions – who are we and who do we want to become? The first is a question of history and experience, while the second is a question of the future construction, of imagining and desire. Through the reconstruction of the underlying symbolic codes of public discourse, I argue that, in the case of Latvia, the dominant focus became what Latvia and its people should become, and the construction and imagining of this. To some extent this happened at the expense of what Latvia and its people were, in that their past identities were downplayed and stigmatized. Thus, the question I am seeking to answer in this and the subsequent chapters is: what are the symbolic codes that underlie public discourse in Latvia in

the 1990s, what meanings and emotions did they carry, and what do they tell us about Latvia's post-Soviet identities?

West as a Symbolic Code

The code of "West" (which contains its opposite "East") is a fundamental symbolic representation in post-Soviet Latvia. Several scholars have pointed out Latvia's orientation towards the West (e.g., Mole, 2012, also Lieven 1994, p. 305, Eglitis, 2002, Dreifelds, 1996). Eglitis (2002) discusses Latvia's return to "normality" after fifty years of the Soviet occupation. "Normality" and "return to normality" are central concepts in her work and designate an imagining of Latvia in the post-Soviet era. The content of this "normality" in post-Soviet Latvia, according to Eglitis, was dynamic and shifted among three of ideal-typical narratives – (spatial, temporal and evolutionary)[40]. The spatial narrative or "spatial normality…describ[ed] a narrative orientation that takes as its primary model of transformation the modern West" (p.16). The modern West was seen as the source of prosperity, progress, and security from Russian incursions and the construction of a modern capitalist economy was seen as an instrument to achieve this. The temporal narrative, in turn, "focus[ed] on restoration and re-creation of the institutions, norms, and values of the interwar period of independence" and prioritized "Latvianness and tradition" (p.17). Economic goals within this type were associated with "the interests of the primary nation" and not so much prosperity (ibid). Lastly, evolutionary normality emphasized "an evolutionary transformation of Soviet structures like the socialist economy and

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[40] According to her "[t]hese narratives have been elaborated and elevated in post-Communism and offer different foci, legitimating stories, and prescriptions for the (re)-construction of normality" (p.16)

citizenship regime" (p.18).[41] As such, this narrative stood not only for the political empowerment of Latvians, a stance prevalent in the temporal narrative, but also for the political empowerment of non-Latvians. This narrative also "highlight[ed] […] economic security of working people" (pp.18-19). All these narratives referred to the Soviet past – however, the first two neglected and disdained it while the latter sought a continuum with it. Through these ideal-types Eglitis analyzed how the Latvian people imagined "normality" through various social and historical events: social movements that led to independence; party programs and the symbols parties used in their posters for the first democratic elections in 1993; citizenship issues; shifting roles and norms of gender; and the transformation of space.

Mole (2012) looks at the historical and discursive transformations in the three Baltic States since their early history. For the Baltic States' transformation period, he, similarly to Eglitis, discusses social movements that led to independence, citizenship issues, as well as Latvia's foreign policy, specifically the withdrawal of the Soviet troops, the border agreement with Russia, Latvia's accession to the EU and NATO. He identified three significant or "hegemonic" discourses that defined Latvia in the post-Soviet era – the national discourse, "the hegemonic anti-Soviet/pro-Western discourse," and the security discourse (e.g., pp. 81, 103). According to Mole, the pro-Western discourse dominated Latvia's foreign relationships and, as a result, Latvia sought to integrate into the EU and NATO. These foreign policy goals were also seen as issues of security since, due to the presence of the Soviet army troops up to 1994, there was fear of a return to the Soviet past. The national discourse was important in defining citizenry in post-Soviet Latvia. National discourse contained ethnic tensions - people who immigrated

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[41] She also explains that there is a fourth ideal-typical narrative – a "reactionary narrative" but this was "not readily apparent in Latvia in the initial period of post-Communism" though it was "visible in some other post-Communist states like Russia and Ukraine" (p.19). The proponents of this narrative "advocate a return to the immediate Soviet past" (p.19).

during the Soviet times from the other Soviet republics were excluded from nationhood since they were associated with the "Soviet" and "Russian" as opposed to "Latvian" (e.g., pp.82-83). Similarly to Eglitis's (2003) narratives, these discourses were formed with respect to the Soviet past. Both Eglitis (2003) and Mole (2012) also allude that the Soviet, the Russian and the East were seen as synonymous and all together exclusive to the West - the spatial category where Latvia sought to belong (e.g., Mole, 2012, Eglitis, 2002).

Also, similarly to Eglitis (2002), political scientist Dreifelds (1996) discussed movements that led to independence, the first democratic elections, and the economic, political and citizenship transformations of the early 1990s. However, in contrast to Eglitis (2002), Dreifelds rationalized Latvia's Western orientation and Latvia's return "back to Europe, back to civilization" as an unquestionable move (p.70). Similarly, historian Lieven (1993) not only saw the Western model as a reference for Latvia's future being but also emphasized that, without the assistance of Western experts and institutions, transformations in Latvia would be sluggish (e.g., 301, concluding section). Thus, existing scholarship clearly identifies the reference to the West as symbolically meaningful in the post-Soviet transformations.

Respecting and taking into account their scholarship, I analyze the West code from the perspective of Durkheimian scholarship, *focusing on the public representations of the West as a symbolic code in post-Soviet Latvia*. By systematically looking at representations of this code in the 1990s, the period which I take as crucial to fully understand the structuring of Latvia's transformation discourse and the formation of Latvia's identity in the post-Soviet period, *I found that this code was "sacred" but ambiguous as it was not always perceived in the same way across the various circles of society; the sacredness of this code was based on such collective emotions as confidence, pride, shame and feelings of security. I also found that the sacredness of*

this code and the emotions beneath it framed the very social life and subjectivities in post-Soviet

Latvia.

Dominant Structure of West Code in post-Soviet Latvia

The West code became the leading code in the sense that it organized under itself such other meaningful codes for Latvia's post-Soviet identity as Right vs. Left[42], Liberal vs. Communist/Socialist, and Developed vs. Under-Developed.

West	East or anti-Western
Developed	Under-Developed, uncivilized
Democratic	Non-Democratic
Rational	Irrational
Responsible	Irresponsible
Right	Left
Liberal	Communist/Socialist
Liberal economy (free market, comparative advantage, private property)	Command economy (regulated economy, public property)

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[42] The code Right vs. Left, however, would become prominent itself and was a central code that organized not only Latvia's political identity but also modern state craft, and for this reason deserves to be discussed separately in the subsequent chapter. Right code together with the West code became the leading codes that organized identity of the post-Soviet Latvia.

Capitalism	Communism/Socialism or anti-capitalism/Imperialism
Activization of individual initiative/autonomy	Suppression of individual initiative
Security	Insecurity

Table 5. Dominant structure of the West code in post-Soviet Latvia.

Nevertheless this does not mean that this coding, and the collective representation of Latvia's identity and future being that it entailed, was not up for grabs. Although in *Diena*, the largest Latvian language newspaper at the time and one known to mirror the viewpoint of the leading political and economic elite[43][44] and Western oriented intellectuals, West was the key code, it was also frequently questioned in other media outlets, such as *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* (later *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*) and somewhat mocked in *Panorama Latvii*. However, gradually, even in the latter two newspapers, the West code would become a source of confidence and some security; yet, as we will see, for slightly differing reasons. Although my research centers on the cultural structure (codes), the meaning of the discourses, emotion and its working, I shall briefly set out the institutional context of Latvia's Western orientation.

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[43] A Journalist and Professor in Communication Science Anda Rožkalne quotes Communication Professor Ainārs Dimants on this. "Taču, kopš pēc privatizācijas 1992.gadā par izdevēju kļuva akciju sabiedrība "Diena", "Diena" pakāpeniski attīstījusies tā sauktās populārās, nevis kvalitatīvās preses virzienā, samazinot kvalitatīvās iezīmes informācijā un analīzē, zaudējot kritisku distanci dažādu sociāli politisku norišu uztverē, kļūstot galvenokārt par viena samērā šaura ekonomiski politiska grupējuma izdevumu, tā informācijas un ideju paudēju [After privatization in 1992, "Diena" gradually developed as a popular and not a qualitative periodical. It reduced its qualitative characteristics in terms of information and analysis, and lost its critical stance in its analysis of various sociopolitical events. It mainly became a newspaper of fairly narrow politico economic elite; and trumpeted ideas and information of this elite]". In http://luszf.blogspot.com/2006/01/urnlistikas-tendences-urnlistika.html One of my respondents, who happened to work at this newspapers in the 1990s, also confirmed that the ruling elite often visited this newspaper to provide information.

[44] In this case by dominant political elite I mean politicians who represent coalition government, and not the opposition.

Latvia's Institutional Integration into West

On May 4, 1990, when the Supreme Soviet of the Latvian SSR signed the "Declaration of the Restoration of the Independence of the Republic of Latvia", Latvia began its integration into various international and supranational institutions. In the collective imagining of post-Soviet Latvia, these institutions represented the West. Pabriks and Purs (2001) wrote that, on May 4, 1990, "Latvian authorities also declared that in their legislative activity they would be guided by the relevant documents adopted by the Council of Europe and the European Parliament" (p. 62). In 1991, Latvia together with the other two Baltic Countries – Lithuania and Estonia – received special guest status in the Council of Europe (Jundzis, 1998, p.356), the organization that supervised how "democratic order is established in the countries that were released from the totalitarian regimes" (my translation, Deksnis, 1998, p.81). Not only would Latvia follow the legislative activity of the Council of Europe and European Parliament but it would also receive technical assistance from European institutions to aid in the transformations following the collapse of the Soviet Union. On January 22, 1991, Hans Andreessen, a member of the board of European Commission, visited Latvia to evaluate what kind of technical assistance Latvia and other Baltic Countries needed in order to restructure their political economy (Deksnis, 1998, pp.301-302). In the fall of 1991, Latvia had begun its talks with the European Community regarding financial aid and assistance (e.g., Neatkarīgā Cīņa, 1991, November 13, p.1). Latvia also began integration into Europe's free trade area: "In 1992, Latvia started coming closer to the European Community […] On May 11, 1992 Latvia signed a treaty with the European Community on trade and cooperation, thus beginning its integration into Europe […]" (my translation, Jundzis, 1998, p.357). Additionally, the political elite and public media provided

evidence that reference to Europe became crucial in the discourse of restructuring that applied to the state institutions and the economy.

In an interview for the daily newspaper *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, the Foreign minister of the transition government, Jānis Jurkāns, would declare that Latvia's independence had only been achieved "formally", however, in order to achieve it for "real", the state of Latvia would need to resemble how institutions are structured in other European countries:

> […] we have to stabilize the state structure, organize executive power, ministries. This has to be done according to the European Standards, so when we will cooperate closely and truly with the partners in Europe Latvia will have an appropriate structure […] (my translation, Jurkāns, 1991, pp.1-2).

He also emphasized the role of foreign experts who served as active consultants to the ruling class on the necessary state restructuring:

> For example, these months in the Foreign ministry four high ranking foreign diplomats worked, they consulted with our people, helped to create a new structure of the ministry, showed the department directors how to develop regulations, schemes and mechanisms. […] Foreign specialists also helped to Latvian banks and other ministries (ibid).

In the first years subsequent to regained independence Latvia sought membership and integration, not only with European institutions, but also other international organizations. Daily newspapers revealed that in November, 1991, a Latvian delegation of politicians and diplomats, including Ivars Godmanis, the Prime Minister of Latvia's transition government, visited the U.S. to discuss Latvia's membership in such organizations as the IMF and WB (Zariņš, 1991, p.1). Around the same time, experts from the IMF and WB were in Latvia to research the country's economic and financial situation in order to suggest the steps Latvia must undergo to achieve membership of these organizations (Dārziņa, 1991, p.1). These foreign experts also analyzed what form of technical assistance was necessary to establish an independent Latvian Central Bank, to strengthen fiscal and monetary policy and to fix exchange rates "successfully" (ibid). Once the IMF was sure Latvia's political elite were willing to follow its and the WB's advice,

Latvia became a member of IMF on May 19, 1992[45], and a member of WB on August 11, 1992[46]. Subsequent to gaining membership, Latvia and other Baltic countries "began borrowing from it [IMF] and making extensive use of its [IMF] technical assistance and policy advice, and introduced their own currency" (Boughton, 2012, p.361, also p.367, graphs on p.366). The freshly independent Baltic States, including Latvia, found that resources necessary to develop their state bureaucracies and socioeconomic institutions were quite scarce following the collapse of the Soviet system. They saw their membership in such financial institutions as the IMF[47] as vital for their development[48]. In 1994, the IMF praised Latvia and other Baltic states for their successful implementation of IMF proposed stabilization and reform programs[49]. Through such interaction between Latvia's political elite and these foreign organizations and experts, Latvia's neoliberal political economy was formed. International Monetary Fund (September, 1995) issue confirmed this:

> in mid-1992, each of the Baltic countries adopted comprehensive stabilization and reform programs [and these] reform programs were built on common cornerstones. To realign domestic prices with world prices was the most urgent task. For this, all three programs incorporated rapid completion of price and trade liberalization […] and in their stabilization programs, fiscal policies were geared toward balanced budgets to prevent inflationary deficit financing (p. 1, 2).

From the mid-1990s onwards, further integration in Western institutions and markets took place. In 1994, Latvia signed a free trade agreement with the European Union that went into

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[45] List of Members and their accession to the IMF. http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/memdir/memdate.htm (accessed 6/19/2015).

[46] List of Member countries and accession to the WB. https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/leadership/members

[47] According to IMF, it is "best known as a financial institution that provides resources to member countries experiencing temporary balance of payments problems on the condition that the borrower undertake economic adjustment policies to address these difficulties" (p.2)
https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/pam/pam45/pdf/chap1.pdf

[48] One of the reasons why the Soviet Union collapsed was bankruptcy, triggered, for example, by such factors as heavy allocation of the state's resources to military; oil and gas embargo by Western Europe; and inefficient agricultural practices that did not supply enough food for its population and thus made it dependent on foreign imports (e.g., Kasekamp, 2008, Friedman, 1993).

[49] See the speech "Supporting Transition in Central and Eastern European Assessment and Lessons from the IMF's Five Years' Experience" by Michel Camdessus, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund Madrid, December 21, 1994. https://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/mds/1995/mds9502.htm (accessed 6/19/2015).

effect on January 1, 1995 (Deksnis, 1998, p.347). In 1995, Latvia signed the European Treaty, a treaty that was "ratified by the European Parliament on 15 November 1995 and entered into force in February 1998". This meant that Latvia became a candidate country for entrance into the EU together with some other Eastern and Central European Countries (Mole, 2012, p.152, Deksnis, p.347). Signing the European Treaty meant that Latvia had to gradually adjust its standards to fit the norms of the EU[50]. By 2004 Latvia fulfilled all necessary requirements and became a full member of the European Union[51].

Mole (2012) emphasized that both accession to the EU and NATO were seen as guaranteeing security for the Baltic States from Russia. In contrast, insecurity about this regained independence was particularly strong up to 1994, when the last Russian (formerly Soviet) army troops left the Baltic States (p.143). As long as the Soviet army troops were present, there was fear that Russia, as the successor of the former Soviet aggressor, might threaten the independence of the Baltic States. Even after the troops left some feelings of insecurity remained. This was due to Russia's resistance to the entrance of the Baltic States into NATO and its sluggishness in negotiating border agreements between itself and both Latvia and Estonia (Mole, 2012, ch.4). Mole (2012) explains that "Baltic attempts to gain accession to NATO began in earnest as soon as the three governments succeeded in ridding their territories of the Russian

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[50] Likums "Par 1995.gada 12.jūnijā Luksemburgā parakstīto Eiropas līgumu" [Law "On European treaty signed in Luxemburg in June 12, 1995"] http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=36721

[51] This tendency to "Westernize" or integrate in various international organizations was a powerful global trend that became aggravated after WWII when newly independent post-colonial countries across the globe sought to industrialize under Western guidance (e.g., Gerth and Mills, 1969, Robinson, 2003, McMichael, 2008). Another trend was "Europeanization" or increasing political and also economic integration of countries in Europe. Both "Westernization" and "Europeanization" were triggered by the need to balance the power with the nations which were in the communist sphere of influence and secure economic development (McMichael, 2008, Deksnis, 1998). After the collapse of the Soviet Union, it was difficult or almost impossible to be an independent nation state without affiliating with such organizations as UN, IMF, WB, NATO, and EU. The pre-WWII world that consisted of isolated nation states no longer existed; increasingly, due to the dominance of various international and supranational organizations, it was now a world dominated by decision making institutions that are above the nation states.

troops" (in 1993 in Lithuania and in 1994 in Latvia and Estonia) (p.148). Despite the Baltic countries eagerness to become NATO members, it was not until 2002 that they, subsequent to meeting the standards required for alliance, were invited to become members and only in 2004 did they acquire membership (pp.163-164).

This interaction with international and supranational institutions and their experts indicates that Latvia's *orientation towards* Europe and various global organizations had already taken place in practice before the first elections in 1993, where technically the people had a chance to decide what type of state and national shaping and development they were looking for. *While legally this "return to Europe" and the West was already institutionalized and underway in the first years subsequent to independence, this orientation nonetheless had to be constantly renewed in the discourses of the 1993, 1995, and 1998 elections. We will see that various actors continuously talked, thought and acted as if they were on their way to becoming "western" (and not only "European"). They talked, thought and acted as if every election contained a risk of deviating from the path of becoming "western". I will argue that this constant need to discursively prove Latvia's western belonging indicated not only that the West code was "sacred" in the post-Soviet transformation discourse but that it was central to the Latvia's post-Soviet identity.*

Discursive Construction of West Code as "Sacred"

To raise questions about Latvia's Western orientation was an issue of sensitivity. The predominant view was that what came from the West was more rational, more credible and better overall. Actors who questioned this Western orientation were not necessarily against this orientation but rather seeking to open up the debate of how and under what conditions Latvia's

belonging to West should be institutionalized. This played itself out differently in the three different newspapers. In the newspaper *Diena*, the major Latvian language newspaper at that time, the role of the West as a "sacred" code was stronger than in the other newspapers. In its publications, *Diena* tended to display a normative and almost totally one-sided stance that held that an orientation towards West was the only way for Latvia to be. In *Diena*, the West stood for liberal economy, development, wealth, free market, private property and investment, rationality, individual initiative, security and democracy. Latvia's belonging to the West in this newspaper was mostly seen in neoliberal terms[52]. In this newspaper, Latvia's belonging to West was consistently reiterated. Those who raised questions about the practices of Western institutions in Latvia or about the benefits of Latvia's integration into these institutions were seen as being against development, as irrational, anti-Western and pro-Russian. In the newspaper *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* (from 1996 *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*), the West code was initially viewed more critically and only became "sacred" slightly later. Latvia's Western orientation in this newspaper was not seen in strictly normative terms; it was supported when it was compatible with Latvia's national identity, internal needs, development of internal market and societal well-being. In 1995, the West, as represented by the European Union, became "sacred" and also in need of protection in this newspaper. The West was considered "sacred" because it represented solidarity and equality among the member states of the European Union and provided some security from the countries outside the European Union borders. The newspaper *Panorama Latvii* tended to view the West as having vested interests in Latvia and as exploitative towards ordinary people. However, by 1998 this had changed and the West became somewhat admired by *Panorama Latvii* due to its

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[52] This will become even more apparent in Chapter 3 where the Right and Left distinction is discussed.

association with human rights, inclusion and equality. Nonetheless, the dominant view that shaped Latvia's everyday life was represented by the newspaper *Diena*.

Diena. Guntis Valujevs, later a Foreign Relations Department Head at the Latvian Bank and a Head of the Office of the Latvian Bank, published an article in *Diena* where he reproached, even ridiculed politicians and journalists who asked questions about IMF practices in Latvia and those who urged caution regarding how the European Union's Maastricht Treaty might affect Latvia. He saw them as followers of Lenin's theory of imperialism and of dependency theory[53], and their arguments as irrational and anti-Western. Since it was common in Latvia to associate Russia with the Soviet past and anti-Western ideas, he tried to discredit those who asked questions about European institutions by saying that they resemble Russians who support anti-Western views:

> […] similar ideas have found rich soil in Latvia, and, by the way, also in Russia among those who support the anti-Western line (my translation, Valujevs, 1993a, p.2).

In his narrative "anti-Western" also meant "irrational". He insisted that the "Western" approach to development was rational, based on comparative advantage and free markets, the principles of liberal economy:

> Liberal economic theory states that the free market economy is of mutual advantage for countries with diverse development levels only if economically weaker countries choose rational economic methods, as well as practice *comparative advantage*. Furthermore elementary logics allows to conclude [justifies it with the inability of small countries to have self-sufficient economy, lack of capital and technology] that for small and economically weakly developed countries (including Latvia) free market solutions are not only suitable, but also necessary (ibid).

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[53] Guntis Valujevs compared the suspicions held by some people regarding the IMF and European institutional practices in Latvia with Lenin's theory of imperialism and dependency theory. From development sociology, the major argument of these theories is that the rich countries tend to exploit the poor countries for their own benefit. Guntis Valujevs quickly concluded that these theories were irrational because they were not able to explain the economic success of some Asian countries. In the process of labeling dependency theory irrational he also claimed that this theory had been implemented in practices and failed: *"…economic models which were based on dependency theory led to total collapse of economic and finance system"* (ibid). In his view, once economic models based on these theories failed in practice, respective countries were rescued by IMF proposed liberal economy. Even though his argument might sound convincing it was false on the grounds that dependency theory was designed to explain why some countries developed and why others did not and it was not constructed as an economic model which could be then implemented. Yet in a context where people had recently freed themselves from Soviet control, "Lenin's imperialism theory" sounds alarming.

According to his view, for example, agriculture was a traditional and irrational sector and thus had to be dismantled for Latvia to develop.

> the main avenue that leads to rational economy at the global level is a free market […] (ibid).

> When trying to find a rational approach to economy, we sometimes will find also some unwelcome truth – for example that the least comparative advantage lies in traditional and close to our heart economic sectors, for example, agriculture. It requires us to choose: are we going into the world with what we objectively can, or we try to squeeze in into already full market with what we subjectively want. In other words – are we going to play economic games according to conventional global rules, or we will impose our own rules. Third approach – we will play only in our pasture-ground, the approach many still find the most attractive, even though economic logic totally contradicts this approach (my translation, Valujevs, 1993b, p.2)

This contrasted sharply with the credo of the leading organization of the independence movement, Popular Front of Latvia (LTF), which at the end of the 1980s viewed agriculture as the primary sector of economy (Krūmiņš, 2011, pp.183-184)[54]. In the view of Valujevs, agriculture as a traditional sector did not fit with Latvia's future orientation towards the West.

Diena also published an article by Kārlis Eihenbaums, the Head of the Western European Department at the Foreign Ministry who emphasized that Latvia belongs to Western Europe, and to institutionalize this belonging Latvia should become a member of NATO and the Western European Union[55]. Participation in these organizations could guarantee security and sovereignty for the Baltic States from their former aggressor. For Kārlis Eihenbaums, membership in the Council of Europe was also seen as a crucial strategy to acquire a proper kind of democratic system in Latvia. He saw that Latvia's membership in the Council of Europe "would be a symbolic confirmation that democratic processes in Latvia go the right direction that our law corresponds to the international norms" (my translation, Eihenbaums, 1993, p.2). West in this case stood for democracy and lawfulness.

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[54] Krūmiņš (2011) identifies several reasons why agriculture was seen as a primary sector of economy: in the 1980s food shortage was common in the USSR and thus agriculture was seen as a way to ensure food sovereignty; people in Latvia were not satisfied with industrialization and its impacts, such as polluted environment, immigration from the other Soviet republics, shortages in apartments due to the immigration and food shortages; as well as "romantic memories about independent and developed Latvia in 1930s with flourishing agriculture" (my translation, p.186)

[55] With the European Union Treaty of Lisbon, Western European Union practice and institutions were integrated in Common Security and Defense policy.

In the election cycle of 1995, amidst an economic crisis triggered by several bank collapses that happened as a result of insufficient regulation of the banking sector by the state, several articles in the newspaper *Diena* discussed the situation of liberal economy in Latvia. The authors of these articles tried to re-legitimize Latvia's liberal economic orientation which, due to the economic crisis in society, was viewed with some suspicion. To regain the popularity of Latvia's liberal economic orientation, rationalizing was commonplace, the view being that instead of too much liberalism in Latvia there had been too little of it or it was not properly installed due to the Soviet heritage of thinking and acting. This stance was particularly common in the articles of political actors who represented the ruling party Latvia's Way (LC)[56], which, with the economic decline, was losing its popularity among the people:

> Sometimes it seems that critics of liberalism still do not understand that it is due to the command economy methods that USSR economic system collapsed. Does it mean that if we refuse these obviously ineffective methods we refuse regulation of economy at all? It is not so. I will remind you of the basic postulates of liberal economy. It is not abandonment of control and regulation in economy at all but instead it is regulation by using implicit means – mostly financial tools and law, stimulation of individual initiative, activity and entrepreneurship. Financial instruments (strong monetary and fiscal policy) were the basis for economic stabilization carried out by the government and Latvian Bank since 1993 […] (my translation, Osis, 1995, p.2)

In order to legitimize a liberal economy, some members of LC used scapegoating techniques by arguing that it is due to the people who still hold Soviet characteristics that liberalism cannot be properly installed in Latvia:

> The biggest problem with this tendency [that people begin to look suspiciously at liberalism] in Latvia is individuals' (ordinary people, state clerks and politicians) inability, unwillingness and lack of skill to carry out the true spirit of liberal reforms. It is because trivial values and personal interests still take precedence. Today it is said that liberalism has discredited itself in Latvia but it is not so. If we begin to act in the intertia of socialism, without initiative and responsibility, then it is the fault of the people themselves and not liberalism. Liberalism does not nurse illusions and understands this value system [liberal] gives hope and existence. Who else is the generator and implementer of reforms if not liberal man? Two other ideological tendencies are oriented towards maintenance (conservativism) and redistribution (socialism). But then I have to ask – has something already been created which is worth maintaining and provides enough to have something to redistribute? (my translation, Leiškalns, 1993, p.2)

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[56] It was established before the 5th Saeima elections in 1993 and united "well-known, popular politicians" who were active in the major independence movement organization the Popular Front and included also diaspora Latvians. Many members of the party were influential in the transition government and period. (Nissinen, 1999, e.g. p.130).

Liberalism and liberal economy were seen as a necessary orientation for Latvia to become part of the West and were understood in terms of individual initiative, responsibility, reforms and fiscal discipline, and, as such, were opposed to socialism, which was characterized by a lack of initiative and responsibility. For *Diena*, in 1995, liberal economic principles were represented by the Right-wing parties and ideas (and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3).

Neatkarīgā Cīņa. However, these representations in the newspaper *Diena* contrasted with some views in *Neatkarīgā Cīņa,* where Latvia's Western orientation was not necessarily seen in such a unequivocal way and allowed also for what Eglitis (2002) termed temporary and evolutionary narratives to be represented. This newspaper initially did not use the West code as strongly as *Diena* but rather discussed particular institutions that represented the West. In its interviews with the political elite, this newspaper questioned and sought to understand the role and working of such international institutions as the IMF and European institutions in Latvia. Before the 1993 elections, *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* included a much broader representation of political parties' views, including some that were fairly critical of Latvia's assertive orientation towards the West. There was a worry that, due to the great eagerness to integrate with various Western institutions, local needs and opportunities would go unnoticed or unutilized. For example, Visvaldis Lāms, a representative of the Democratic Center party (DCP)[57], urged the people to look critically at Latvia's eagerness to "resemble" Europe. Instead he proposed to look back at Latvia's history and be more open to overall world experience. He recalled the Latvian nationalism movement in the 19th century[58] and how important it had been for the leaders of this

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[57] The Democratic Center Party "came into being as a parliamentary faction within the Popular Front in February 1992. It was founded by former liberal communists who tried to fill the vacuum in the political centre, though without muh success." (Nissinen, 1999, p.146). For the 1995 elections, it was renamed the Democratic Party *Saimnieks (Democratic Party Master)*.

[58] This was a movement of young intelligence who shaped the idea of Latvia as an independent territory that needed to have sovereignty over its economic, cultural, and political decisions. They were particularly active in nurturing

movement to nurture the interests of Latvian people[59]. He feared that a tendency to follow European institutions was a strategy designed to solve internal problems uncritically without considering other alternatives[60]. Visvaldis Lācis, a founder of the party "Mūsu Zeme", similarly suggested that Latvia should first respond to its internal opportunities and necessities. He was also dissatisfied with the tendency of the leading political elite to look for the solutions of Latvia's internal issues outside Latvia. Instead he referred to Latvia's first period of independence in the 1920s[61] when the governmental elite made its decisions based on local needs and the internal market:

> It is not necessary to think too high about integration in Europe, but it is necessary to take care of (as it was proven in 1920s) the internal market, satisfaction of local needs. We lack hands, scythe, wheelbarrow, nails. Why are we not producing these? New farmers would be happy to buy them, and people would have jobs. (my translation, Lācis, 1993, pp.1-2)

This newspaper also published the views of The National Harmony Party that then and now has been seen as representing the interests of Russian speakers in Latvia. This party emphasized that, if it is in the interests of Latvia and its economy, it should keep political and commercial ties with the East as well as the West. This party urged for the civic integration of all inhabitants irrespective of their ethnic and national belonging. *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, thus, *initially did not have a strong normative stance towards Latvia's Western belonging but rather sought to represent various views on the alternatives of Latvia's future being*. Through this broader

Latvian language and culture. This movement also sought to liberate people from the German and Polish nobility. The leaders of this movement or the young intelligence were educated and gained experience in Dorpat, St.Petersburg and Moscow. This movement itself, however, was somehow influenced by the nationalism movement in Germany, romanticism, as well as ideas of equality (that came into the Baltics with the Moravian Brethren already in 18th century) and the Enlightenment as promoted by Garlieb Merkel (see Mole, 2012, Ch. 1). Even though this movement came from within and sought to empower Latvian people who were subject to serfdom and foreign rule, its very essence was stimulated by the social change taking place in Germany and France.

[59] See the previous footnote.

[60] He would say „*It seems that currently during the times of national awakening it is necessary to appreciate the one and half century old saying – to work for the folk! Unfortunately… We hear around: „Let's get into Europe's market" (also with the art), „Let's achieve the level of Europe", „Let's resemble the Europe" etc. Thus, we are not seeking the experience of the world, which may help to renew our traditions, but instead are almost getting into Europe by force."* (my translation, Lāms, 1993, p.2.)

[61] Latvia's first independence lasted from 1918 to 1940.

representation of views, it sought to understand and question the processes of social change Latvia was going through.

In 1994, a series of articles was published in *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* (e.g., Paeglis, 1994a; Paeglis 1994b; Paeglis 1994c) where the author questioned the IMF's role in economic development, suggesting that the IMF requirements in Latvia for economic restructuring so far had not brought expected economic improvements. In this series of articles, Paeglis was critical of the ruling elites for following the IMF's guidance and pointed out that, as a result of this guidance, instead of Latvia's internal market, it was foreign markets that, through imports, were stimulated. He challenged the notion that a free market and private investments were the primary boosters of economic development and suggested the important role of a protectionist state in markets. He gave an example of the USA, a major player in the IMF, which historically boosted its economic development through public and not private investments (Paeglis 1994b). As such, he tried to expose that, what in the dominant transformation discourse (as represented in the newspaper *Diena*) was represented as belonging to the East or the Soviet past, was, in fact, functional for the developed West itself[62]. This does not mean that this newspaper was inimical towards Latvia's integration into the various institutions that represented the West but instead tried to assess them critically.

However, as the 1995 elections approached some discursive tensions emerged in *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* indicating that Latvia's Western orientation was becoming "sacred" in this newspaper as well[63]. Latvia's Western orientation in *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, in a moment of tension,

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[62] He also gave an example of Bolivia that at the end of 1970s and in 1980s acted contrary to what the IMF suggested and thus was able to improve its economic development (Paeglis 1994c).

[63] Before the 1995 elections the symbolic code of West and its opposite was less strong. The major code that organized election discourse in 1995 was Right with its opposite Left (see Chapter 3). Yet how Right and Left were evoked in the public discourse demonstrated that this code was seen as a synonym code for West and East. Parties who were seen as representing right-wing in politics were also seen as parties that stood for Latvia's Western

seemed to be "sacred" for different reasons than in *Diena*, such as solidarity and equality among countries.

In 1995, Latvia signed the European Treaty. This meant that, subsequent to adjusting legislation to meet the norms of the EU[64], Latvia as well as other Eastern and Central European Countries would become candidates for entrance into the EU (Deksnis, 1998, p.347). Ivars Ķezbers, a leading member in the Democratic Party *Saimnieks*, in *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* urged for a debate about Latvia's seemingly unequivocal integration into the European Union (Ķezbers, 1995a, p.2, also an interview with him Ķezbers, 1995b, p.2). By doing this, he became associated with the East and was labeled as "irrational anti-capitalists" by *Neatkarīgā Cīņa's* one of the leading journalists Sandris Točs. Thus *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, the newspaper that was more prone to question Latvia's reliance on Western expertise in the previous election period in 1993 and was open to various points of views, would now rhetorically attack (Točs, 1995a, p.2; Točs, 1995b, p.2; Točs, 1995c, p.2) the Democratic Party *Saimnieks* and, in particular, one of its members Ivars Ķezbers when he published an article (Ķezbers, 1995a, p.2, also an interview with him Ķezbers, 1995b, p.2) where he raised questions about conditions Latvia was expected to fulfill in order to enter the EU.

Ivars Ķezbers did not argue that Latvia should not enter the European Union but, having read the *White Book*[65] document that listed some conditions Latvia was expected fulfill in order to enter the EU, he suggested that the Latvian political elite should consider how these conditions

orientation. Particularly, the European Union and NATO were seen as institutions Latvia should integrate into, in order to demonstrate its Western belonging.

[64] Likums "Par 1995.gada 12.jūnijā Luksemburgā parakstīto Eiropas līgumu" [Law "On European treaty signed in Luxemburg in June 12, 1995"] http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=36721

[65] Deksnis (1998) explained that the White Book established joint norms of common market and rules of how these norms shall be transferred in to the law of Eastern and Central European countries (p.359). He also pointed out that "compliance with these norms gave a confidence that the system of law in candidate countries worked according to Western level" (p.363).

may affect Latvia's agriculture, ethnic relations, and development more broadly. Sandris Točs immediately reprimanded him and others who held similar views categorizing them as "eastern", "anti-capitalist" and "irrational" (Točs, 1995b, p.2; Točs, 1995c, p.2). Although, in this moment of tension, Sandris Točs clearly draw from the deeply held dominant meanings of the West vs. East code, his further writing showed that he saw the West as "sacred" for different qualities than authors in newspaper *Diena*. Sandris Točs romanticized the EU as an institution that could not be "disadvantageous" to Latvia and its folk. For this particular journalist, the European Union was a solidarity and equality-based institution where the rich countries shared their funds with the poor countries, and thus was crucial for Latvia's development. He also saw the European Union as a guarantee for Latvia's security:

> But for small and poor countries, as Latvia is today, entrance to the EU can only be advantageous. Latvia's entrance to the EU is more disadvantageous for big and rich countries which will need to share their budget, give subsidies, which will need to take control of "political leadership"; and it is because one of the major principles of the EU is solidarity and it provides that development of the member states is coordinated, including the equalization of the living standard across all member states. And, common borders mean common security policy. (my translation, Točs, 1995c, p.2).

In contrast to *Diena*, which tended to understand the West in market terms, for this newspaper, Latvia's integration with the European Union came to be protected as "sacred" also because of its striving for solidarity and equality among member countries. Capitalism itself in *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, as can be seen via the journalist Sandris Točs, was understood in terms of solidarity and not competition[66]. Yet similarly to *Diena* those who questioned the conditions under which Latvia joined the West, and particularly the European Union, were seen as "irrational", "anti-capitalists", supportive of Latvia's Eastern orientation.

That this discursive tension and construction of the West as "sacred" happened in *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, the newspaper that in the previous period had sought to broaden debate on

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[66] This suggests that in newspaper *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* capitalism meant something else than in newspaper *Diena* where it was seen more in terms of markets and competition.

Latvia's future, showed some discursive convergence. This indicated that the space for the debate about the conditions under which Latvia would begin its integration in the EU was narrowing or "thinning"[67]. The dominant construction of the West code as opposed to the East code and, by the same token, the West code as standing for capitalism, development and rationality and so on and the East code as standing for anti-capitalism, underdevelopment and irrationality and so on (see Table. 5) did not allow for a more "thick" discussion on Latvia's future. It meant that discussions over Latvia's future were increasingly limited by "formal rationality" and not "substantial" one (Evans, 2002)[68], or, in other words, discussions over Latvia's future, in this case, were limited by the West code structure, which was perceived as "sacred" – and to question the "sacred" was forbidden. Even though we might observe that some meanings attached to the West code were slightly different in the two Latvian language newspapers[69], actors were not sensitive to these differences and instead appealed to the code at a more general level. For example, while the journalist Sandris Točs understood the EU in terms of solidarity and equality, he called those who questioned the conditions under which Latvia could enter in the EU "anti-capitalists", "irrational" and "eastern" and not as being against solidarity or equality. In that sense the dominant working of this code, in moments of tension, was reminiscent of post-Soviet propaganda about the West but with a reversed value-judgment.

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[67] Evans (2002), in his book *Playing God? Human Genetic Engineering and the Rationalization of Public Bioethical Debate*, analyzes the public debate on human genetic engineering from 1950s to early 1990s and found that this debate transformed from a "thick" to a "thin" debate. Or, more precisely, initially arguments in this debate were based on "substantive rationality" while becoming increasingly formal later. He applies Max Weber's theory on "many forms of rationality" and his observation that "with the rise of human action…formal rationality [works] at the expense of actions motivated by substantive rationality"(p.13). If the debate is based on substantive rationality, ultimate ends or values are discussed, and the means which correspond with them. If the debate is based on formal rationality, ends and values are assumed or predetermined and are simply ascribed "the most efficacious means" (ibid).

[68] Ibid. See the previous footnote.

[69] In *Diena* it was associated with liberal economy, development, free market, rationality, individual initiative, entrepreneurship and responsibility, while in *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* it was instead seen in terms of solidarity, equality and security.

If, during the Soviet era, the West was disparaged due to (exploitative) capitalism, minimal welfare state, consumer culture, emphasis on individual productivity and personal efficiency, bourgeoisie, and obsession with wealth (Avramov, 2012; David-Fox, 2003), now for almost the same reasons it was admired[70]. The Soviet propaganda, however, recognized that the West was more technologically advanced than the Soviets (ibid), a fact which has been important also in the post-Soviet reasoning about the West in Latvia. Becker (2002) points to the radical dichotomy between the West and the Soviet Union up to the late 1970s, according to which "what the Soviet Union was not – the United States – was perhaps most defining feature" (p.71). This situation changed only in 1987, when amidst economic adversities, Gorbachev reevaluated relationships with the United States. If in his early years of ruling Gorbachev saw the West as extremely Right, exploitative towards workers, technologically advanced at the expense of ordinary people, and as profit oriented amoral bourgeoisies, in 1988 Gorbachev already spoke about learning from the West's experience in economic development (Becker, 2002, pp.71-84). In his analysis of the Soviet media, Becker (2002) notices that suddenly the formerly demonized Western businessman was depicted as good and honest (p.86)[71]. Also Vail (1991) noticed that during Gorbachev's perestroika the West "swiftly transform[ed] from enemy into friend" and this transformative process "put everything [again] into black or white" (p.50). In post-Soviet Latvia, the general Soviet coding of the West remained in place but with reversed value. *Given this continuity with the Soviet propaganda, I suggest that the West code in post-Soviet Latvia, in*

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[70] Avramov (2012) shows that during Soviet times the dominant Soviet propaganda about the West changes only slightly. The core notions about the West remained the same as in the pre-World War II era; these notions are also discussed by David-Fox (2003). Soviet propaganda also saw the West as racist, exploitative and oppressive towards workers, characterized by high unemployment and wealth inequality, as well as corrupt, selfish and greedy, and favoring freedom understood in terms of anarchy, irrationalism, gangsterism and so on (see Avramov, 2012). Even though in the construction of the West code as „sacred" in *Diena* and *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* these latter notions about the West were not common, we will see in this dissertation that some of these issues would became phenomena common in post-Soviet Latvia itself (such as greed, workers' exploitation, and so on).

[71] Becker (2002) alludes, however, that this shift in Gorbachev's rhetoric did not mean that it was also accompanied by instant mutual trust between the West and Soviet Union (e.g., p.85).

that sense, did not allow for questions surrounding what the West really was and respectively what it meant to be the West. We will see that the next election cycle in 1998, and particularly how it was represented in the newspaper *Diena*, radicalized the East and the West opposition even more.

     Panorama Latvii. However, in the newspaper *Panorama Latvii*, where most of the readership was Latvia's Russian speaking population, this distinction between West and East was replicated only in very rare cases and with some irony. Anthropologists Fernandez and Huber (2001) explain that irony serves as a tool to demand recognition:

> […] the forgotten or the excluded may always in one way or another come back to reassert itself inadvertently or intentionally. Very often and perhaps most fundamentally, irony is a questioning of established categories of inclusion and exclusion, and the ironizer is he or she or that group who has been detrimentally categorized, and bound thereby to contest through irony the adequacy of such categories (p.9).

Irony also emerges where there is tension or "in situations of unequal power when discourses, interests, or cultures clash" (ibid, p.4). It is used when there is tension "between "platitudes" and "attitudes" in communicative interaction, the tension or conflict between what one feels socially obliged to say and do and what one may "really"[…] think and feel and desire to do" (p.11). Irony can also be used as a tool to criticize and to question cultural norms and expectations (p.3). In the discourse of *Panorama Latvii*, irony can be seen as a tool that demands recognition for those who have been excluded from citizenship and were categorized as not deserving to belong to the Republic of Latvia and also as a tool to emphasize perceived injustices and particularly to criticize the legal order of citizenship in post-Soviet Latvia.

     This newspaper had two major agendas on its table; one dealing with citizenship and democracy, the other with socioeconomic struggles. A large portion of Latvian residents, who immigrated to Latvia during Soviet times, were not granted citizenship of the Republic of Latvia

and thus had no rights to vote subsequent to independence[72]. According to the Supreme Council decision, only those who could show evidence that they had ties to the preoccupied Republic of Latvia could get citizenship and thus vote in the first democratic elections (Mole, 2012; Eglitis, 2002; Dreifelds, 1996). Mole (2012) argues that the reason for the exclusion of people who immigrated during the Soviet times was their discursive association with the Soviet and the Russian. This thinking and the legislation that accompanied it was part of the construction of Latvia's post-Soviet nationhood (see discussion on this in Mole, 2012 and also Eglitis, 2002). Access to Latvia as a political community initially was given only to those who were recognized as constituting the nation – these were ethnic Latvians and those who had ties to the preoccupied Republic of Latvia.[73] As a result people who immigrated to Latvia during the Soviet regime were initially excluded from citizenship and thus unable to participate in national elections. As such, in several articles, *Panorama Latvii* ironically reiterated how democratic Latvia was, given that almost a third of the population was not able to vote. The Latvia that had strived to become part of the "*democratic*" West was, in this newspaper, then seen as fairly undemocratic. In 1993 and in 1995, this newspaper did not appeal to the West code as "sacred" yet but it did question how Latvia's orientation towards the West was compatible with its undemocratic practices towards its people.

Socioeconomic issues were also on the agenda of this newspaper, particularly rising poverty, unemployment, inequality, and the socioeconomic struggles of ordinary people. In

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[72] The Decision of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Latvia „Par Latvijas Republikas Pilsoņu Tiesību atjaunošanu un naturalizācijas pamatnoteikumiem"[On the restoration of rights of the citizens of the Republic of Latvia and naturalization rules]. http://likumi.lv/ta/id/69914-par-latvijas-republikas-pilsonu-tiesibu-atjaunosanu-un-naturalizacijas-pamatnoteikumiem.

[73] In first democratic elections in June, 1993, thus "78.8 percent of such citizens were of Latvian origin"(Dreifelds, 1996, p.86). In 1989, 52% of the population of Latvia were of Latvian ethnic origin, 34% were of Russian ethnic origin, 4.5%, 2.3%, 3.4% were respectively of Belorussian, Polish and Ukrainian origin (ibid, p.147). In January, 1994, 54.2% of the population of Latvia were of Latvian ethnic origin, 33.1% were of Russian ethnic origin, 4.1%, 2.2%, 3.1% were respectively of Belorussian, Polish and Ukrainian origin (ibid, p.147).

addressing these issues this newspaper displayed some additional irony about the government's great reliance on Western institutions. Particularly, politicians were seen as deceiving themselves by believing that the West would solve Latvia's problems, since the West, according to the views of this newspaper, had economic interests in Latvia. They were seen as looking for cheap labor to increase their surplus value (my translation, Дмитриева, 1993, p.2). Or, "The West [was seen as] ready to trade its goods in Latvia and provide loans in order to gain profit. They [in the West] won't be willing to buy Latvian goods" (my translation, Ростовцев, 1993, p.2). This rather negative portrayal corresponded to Soviet coding in that the West was associated with workers' exploitation and exaggerated materialism and as taking material advantage of less developed countries (Avramov, 2012; David-Fox, 2003). So if the two Latvian language newspapers relied on a reverse-coding of Soviet propaganda and tended to see the West as good, then *Panorama Latvii*, in this case, remained consistent with the coding of Soviet propaganda. The West was not here seen as "sacred," but as inimical to Latvia's future.

This irony applied to Latvia's Western orientation did not mean that this newspaper leaned towards the East instead. With the help of irony, this newspaper rather sought to bring attention to the issues of citizenship and the socioeconomic rights of ordinary people. Even though this newspaper strongly supported the rights of so-called non-citizens to be able to access citizenship, when it came to socioeconomic issues, it spoke for all people. Nonetheless, by 1998, the overall discourse in this newspaper would become more welcoming towards Latvia's Western orientation. The legal discourse of European institutions also provided a chance for non-citizens to empower themselves.

In 1998, the parliamentary election period was satiated over a Citizenship Law debate to such an extent that the elections themselves became fairly secondary. In response to the

requirements by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), in June 1998 the parliament amended the citizenship law of 1994. Amendments to the new citizenship law waived quotas of naturalization, which formerly limited naturalization to few selected groups per year[74]. Amendments also gave citizenship rights to all children who were born in Latvia after August 21, 1991. This latter amendment was a major issue of concern as it meant that children born in Latvia after 1991 would not to have to prove their Latvian language skills, and thus was perceived as a threat to national identity. These two OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) requirements were recommendations based on the major goal of the organization, to prevent ethnic conflict.

In Latvia, OSCE became related to the EU and thus fulfillment of these requirements was seen as a must, if Latvia wanted to join the EU. Due to this link with the EU, even parties that favored a more stringent citizenship law in 1994 now argued against such stringent norms, thus suggesting that the reference for this decision was externalized. There was a fear that if Latvia did not follow the OSCE requirements its entrance to the EU might be impeded. The need for statehood in the line with Western standards came to overshadow the formerly problematic issue of the status of Russians who immigrated during the Soviet times and their access to citizenship. This reveals that what Eglitis (2002) called the spatial narrative gained dominance over the temporal narrative where the former referred to the West as the primary example of transformations, while the latter saw "Latvianness and tradition" as the key reference point. In the dominant transformation discourse, belonging to the "sacred community" of the West and the

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[74] The first citizenship law was enforced in 1994. This law made citizenship unavailable to people who had immigrated to Latvia during the Soviet time, and prescribed that these people could only get citizenship if they went through the naturalization procedure. Naturalization options however were limited to the size of 0.1% of the population per year. The international organization OSCE criticized Latvia for this limitation.

development it could potentially bring was no longer compatible with the previously desired cultural identities of Latvia.

__Diena.__ The political party "Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK" (TB/LNNK), which has been well known for its nationalistic stance, agreed that Latvia needed to integrate in the EU but equally did not agree with these amendments and organized a referendum that would take place together with the elections on October 3. In the referendum, people could give a vote either for or against the OSCE suggested amendments. Despite the fact that the initiators for the referendum, TB/LNNK, supported Latvia's European orientation, the newspaper *Diena* mostly problematized the Citizenship amendments as a question of Latvia's fundamental choice between its East or West orientation. A member of TB/LNNK, Aigars Jirgens argued in *Diena* that requirements for all prospective citizens to master the Latvian language were compatible with democracy and European identity:

> Amendments of the Citizenship law are in the hands of people, they can decide on the future model of our state – Latvian Latvija, where the rights of the primary nation[75] are not in threat and the Latvian language is kept in honor and dignity. This kind of Latvia will be also democratic and European (my translation, Jirgens, 1998, p.2).[76]

Major *Diena* commentators, in turn, Askolds Rodins and Aivars Ozoliņš would remind readers that these amendments were crucial for Latvia's geopolitical belonging: "*the choice is easy: between West and East*" (e.g., Rodins, 1998, p.2). Aivars Ozolinš saw the TB/LNNK initiative for the referendum as "caprice"" and "infantile", and as putting at risk Latvia's relationships with the West (Ozoliņš, 1998a, p.2). Aivars Ozoliņš saw this choice between West and East as a critical determinant of Latvia's destiny and urged that all parties, before elections, make a clear

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[75] In Latvian uses the word "pamatnācija" where the direct translation would be "basic nation". To me it seems he means the nation of majority.

[76] A similar view by the leader of TB/LNNK Māris Grīnblats was portrayed in *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, September 25, 1995, p.5.

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preference for whether they were for the amendments and thus a Western orientation, or against them and thus for an Eastern orientation:

> If a referendum will take place, the result of it will fundamentally influence the destiny of Latvia, and parties that seek to gain seats in the 7th Saeima and in the government will need to clearly announce to their electorate which direction they are going to turn their power wheel in the case of one or another result of referendum. This decision [referendum] eventually designates a choice in favor of West or East […] (my translation, Ozoliņš, 1998a, p.2).

In another article, Aivars Ozoliņš emphasized that there is only one right choice and it is the choice to vote for the amendments, thus positioning people who think otherwise as holding the wrong point of view (Ozoliņš, 1998b, p.2). Askolds Rodins also portrayed the OSCE required amendments as *inevitable* for Latvia's future. In his view, there was more confidence in the West than the East:

> Somewhere out of sight, stringently fenced, there remains the simple and cruel truth that Latvia cannot exist "for itself". It is both because Latvians are not many in terms of numbers (Germans are 50 times more and they do not even consider that Germany could exist without the EU) and also because of the geopolitical situation, because its neighboring forces that wish to see Latvia under its roof have not vanished. And the choice is simple: either out of good will – nobody drags us there [to the EU] by force – we join the Western world, accept its requirements, or we fall into the hands of our Eastern neighbor… (my translation, Rodins, 1998, p.2.)

He explained that the amendments, given existing circumstances in Latvia, were not a threat to Latvian identity and particularly Latvian language since those parents who would choose to apply for their children to have Latvian citizenship immediately would deny them the opportunity to have a free education in Russia[77]. He reiterated this, thus:

> And exactly because of this Latvians shall firstly think of their country; clearly distinguish between true allies, the ones that can have confidence in a difficult situation. And one shall remember that choice is easy: between the West and the East. (ibid).

Artis Pabriks, one of the founding members of People's Party, which won the 1998 election, not only saw that this referendum was a choice between Latvia's European (Western) or Russian (Eastern) belonging, but that it was also a choice for the "right" kind of development. The amendments debate was thus also rationalized as a choice between development and

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[77] Latvian Russian non-citizens at that time were able to access free education in Russia.

underdevelopment, where the agreement with the OSCE recommendations meant opportunities for Latvia's development. In *Diena*, Pabriks also implied that a vote against the amendments would show that Latvians are not thinking and behaving "European", that they do not have the proper kind of "mentality":

> In fact the results of referendum will define whether Latvia is going to keep the European approach to development, or is going to risk falling back in to the Russian sphere of interests.[…] If Latvians want to be respected as a nation of Europe, then they have to think, behave, and work as Europeans. Talks about decay in our own land resemble the groaning of the lazy about hunger. (my translation, Pabriks, 1998, p.17).

Nevertheless he was not explicit about what exactly "the European approach to development" and European thinking are. The "East" choice was very broadly associated with returning to Russia's sphere of interests and underdevelopment, a scenario, given the recent Soviet history, many feared.

Major journalists and commentators of *Diena* did not see the need to open "substantial" debate[78] in order to weigh the pros and cons of each choice in terms of the Citizenship Law amendments; instead they used the West code to narrow or rationalize debate as a choice between Latvia's Western vs. Eastern orientation, between security and insecurity, between confidence and uncertainty, between development and underdevelopment. Instead of discussing what, exactly, the Citizenship Law amendments would do for the society as a whole; debate was primarily focused on whether the issue of the amendments would put Latvia's Western orientation, which was, in this newspaper, mostly seen in market and security terms, at risk. This view that was so common in *Diena* was also dominant among the ruling elite. The concluding vote in referendum was for the OSCE proposed amendments, suggesting that the views of *Diena* and the ruling elite were the most influential.

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[78] See footnote 67.

Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze. In its representation of the Citizenships Law amendments *Neatkarīgā Rīga Avīze* was not as radical as *Diena* was. The newspaper did not portray the referendum as the fundamental choice between Latvia's East and West orientation and instead provided various viewpoints on this issue[79]. In doing this, *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze* was clearer for its readers on what this referendum was really about. Even though fairly strong support towards Latvia's entrance in the EU was common, many actors emphasized that Latvia, without fear, should be able to define the requirements for Latvian language to its prospective citizens. From the viewpoints presented, it seemed that this stance derived from a conviction and confidence in the European Union as a democratic institution. Similarly, as in previous election periods, there was a conviction that Latvia's European orientation should be compatible with Latvia's national interests. Māra Zālīte, a Latvian poet and writer, tried to unmask the fear that the European Union won't accept Latvia if, as a result of the referendum, the OSCE proposed amendments would be rejected. Based on the examples of other European member states, she was confident that Latvia's European and national interests were compatible:

> Without expressing direct distrust towards the citizens and without being able to deny that referendum as the highest form of democracy, I have to say that in this matter totalitarian tools are used – half truths, silencing of the issues, purposeful complication of the issue and lies. We would not be accepted in the European Union if we ask a prospective Latvian citizen to master Latvian language! If so then we swiftly shall exclude from the EU Germany, France, Sweden, Finland and all other countries since none of them permits that citizens do not master the state language. […] *Bad people* and even worse parties do not want to give poor and innocent children citizenship! […] With this the precedent is created – a privileged group of prospective candidates who shall not master the state language. (my translation, Zālīte, 1998, p.8).

She further emphasized that if Latvian society directly accepted all recommendations by OSCE it would lose some part of its Latvian identity:

> Latvian language as the last defining feature of Latvian nation falls. Bilingualism becomes real, with time the Latvian language will lose competition with Russian and English languages, and become the language of

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[79] This newspaper revealed some external pressure for the referendum vote. The State Secretary of Spanish Foreign Ministry urged to accept the amendments in order not to risk Latvia's entrance in the EU (Rutko & Trams, 1998, p.2). Similarly the US ambassador in Latvia urged to accept the amendments otherwise international society would lose trust in Latvia (Nesper, 1998, p.5).

kitchen. It won't be able to work as an integrating factor of society, and another language will be chosen for this purpose. (ibid)

Uldis Augulis, an assistant professor in Riga Technical University, pointed out that the issue of the referendum was radicalized to an hysterical extent (even though he did not refer to the newspaper *Diena* explicitly on this, from the context it was clear that he referred to this newspaper) and was critical towards those who represented it in such black and white terms:

> It is the last moment to slow down and contemplate – where are we really going, are we lost, but most importantly are we moving ahead according to our own will, or we are being pushed forward as some sheep herd.[…] Let's remember, when the discussions were held on the Citizenship Law during the 5th Saeima, some major experts on Latvia's foreign policy affirmed that Europe only requires a citizenship law, clear rules for naturalization, but everything else (the stringency of the norms) can be decided by ourselves. Now it turns out that it is not so […] The conformity of opinions among the Western ruling elite when they require amendments their own laws do not contain is suspicious. In fact, we are pressured to accept amendments which demolish the already shaky basis of the national state; and in return we are only offered vague promises that once we could be members of the European Union. This gives a reason to think about the agreement that has been made without our participation. (my translation, Augstkalns, 1998, p.5)

He also viewed the OSCE recommendations as representing a European point of view. Yet he indicated that these recommendations conflicted with the citizenship practices in the other EU member states and for this reason, if given as compulsory for Latvia, were suspicious and undemocratic towards Latvia.

This newspaper, slightly more often than *Diena*, represented the views of the members of TB/LNNK, the initiating party of the referendum. Members of TB/LNNK were concerned that the proposed amendments may somehow ruin Latvia's independence and sovereignty in decision making, as well as the Latvian language, Latvianness and the dominant status of Latvians in Latvia. Vilnis Zariņš, a PhD in philosophy and a member of TB/LNNK, argued in the newspaper *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze* that Latvia relied too much in its decision making on external advisors. He noted a critical parallel that, in the beginning of the 20th century, the Latvian elite was keen to follow Marxian ideas and now it "follows the EU overzealously" (Zariņš, 1998, p.5). The head of the TB/LNNK, Māris Grīnblats, in his interview for *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze* considered that Latvia should "move towards Europe" but it should do so by examining the requirements of

European institutions carefully. He argued that Latvia should have mechanisms to give citizenship to children only when it was clear they would master the Latvian language (Grīnblats, 1995, p.5). TB/LNNK, as the initiator of referendum, and their supporters demonstrated some fear of losing Latvia's sovereignty in decision making and the dominant status of Latvian culture in Latvia. In contrast, those who were for the amendments, and mostly were represented in *Diena*, demonstrated some fear of losing Latvia's Western belonging and the prospective benefits that might come with that, such as development, prosperity and security.

    Panorama Latvii. Representations in *Panorama Latvii* were also clearly in support of the amendments, but saw these amendments as an issue of human rights. For this newspaper acceptance of the amendments was tied to hope that non-citizens and their children would have better access to citizenship. The European Union and OSCE in this situation were seen as sites where human rights are highly respected. Thus, for this newspaper the EU and OSCE also eventually gave some confidence and security for peoples' well-being, specifically their political empowerment, in Latvia. If in *Diena* the West was primarily associated with development, prosperity and security, in *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze* with democracy and solidarity among the Western nations, then in this newspaper the West was associated with human rights, inclusion and equality[80]. Even though less common, *Panorama Latvii* also published articles indicating a sense of the West as "sacred". For example, in one article, Ludmila Solovjova (Людмила Соловьева) pointed out that if Latvia rejected the suggested amendments it would "dig a grave" for itself. If Latvia rejected the amendments, Europe and the USA would refuse relationships with Latvia potentially leading to Latvia's foreign isolation in a context where it had already

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[80] This observation corresponds to Alexander and Smith (1993) who found that opposing political elites use the same symbolic codes to legitimize their actions and gain support, but this symbolic code often has different meanings attached to it.

declined decent foreign relations with Russia. Latvia would then become more susceptible to falling back into the sphere of Russia's interests (Соловьева, 1998, p.4). Yet there are also articles in *Panorama Latvii* that spoke ironically about the views common in the newspaper *Diena*: instead of discussing how the amendments might influence societal relationships, the authors in *Diena* were portrayed as afraid of how they would look in the eyes of Western institutions (in this case OSCE). In *Panorama Latvii*, there was some laughter that the Latvian political elite and also many journalists were not relying on their own judgment but instead had framed their arguments with respect to external expectations (e.g., Залетаев, 1998, p.1). By a slight margin, the OSCE proposed amendments that were approved and remained in place.

As such, it is clear that there was some discursive convergence across all three newspapers – *the West gradually became "sacred" in the discourse of all newspapers. Even though in each of these newspapers the West was seen as sacred for different reasons, these nuances were not paid attention to by the wider public in Latvia. As a result, Latvia missed an opportunity to discuss what the West really was and, given the dominant will to see Latvia as identical to the West, an opportunity to initiate a more "substantial" and possibly more rewarding debate for the Latvian society on Latvia's future was also missed. Latvia's Western orientation in the dominant transformation discourse was, in moments of tension, portrayed in very general terms, often suggesting a continuum with the previous Soviet propaganda – only now West was good, while East bad*. As we will see in Chapter 5, which discusses the post-Soviet emigrants towards the West, many found that the dominant way of how the West was represented in post-Soviet Latvia was somehow different from what they actually experienced in the West. From the emigrants' experience, the West contained and practiced approaches which, in the dominant transformations discourse within Latvia, were seen as Eastern or Soviet.

On the one hand this convergence of the West code as "sacred" across all three newspapers can be seen as inevitable due to the parallel gradual institutionalization of this Western orientation. On the other hand, the dynamics of public discourse in the 1990s considered here raise questions of why Latvia's Western orientation in the dominant transformation discourse had to be constantly reassured if institutionally, as was discussed in the previous section, orientation towards the West had been already in place? Why did the public need to be "compelled" to see belonging to the West as "sacred"?[81] In what follows, I will argue that this was due to *collective emotions* such as confidence and pride, as well as shame and feelings of insecurity. Feelings of insecurity, as discussed previously, are examined in detail by Mole (2012). With the presence of Soviet troops up to 1994, and unresolved border agreements with Russia, integration in the EU and NATO provided feelings of security for the Baltic States from Russia - the successor of their former aggressor[82]. In next section, therefore, I will focus on the emotions of confidence, pride and shame and their formative role for the post-Soviet transformation of Latvian discourse and identity. My research shows that these emotions were as important in post-Soviet Latvia as the feelings of insecurity emphasized by Mole (2012).

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[81] In raising this question I am influenced by Weyher's emphasize that "the real question" for Durkheim as he is discussing the distinction between "sacred" and "profane" is "What compelled man to see the world as two heterogeneous and incompatible worlds, though nothing in palpable experience seems to have suggested the idea of such a radical duality?" (Durkheim in Weyher, 2012, p.372). And Weyher made this explicit that for Durkheim these are "particular *emotions*" (ibid, italic in original). See also the introduction of this chapter.

[82] See my summary of Mole's (2012) argument in the section "Symbolic code of West and East" and "Institutional Integration into West".

Different Mentality, Shame and Confidence or the Origins of the West Code as Sacred in post-Soviet Latvia

There was a notion that Latvians were essentially different than people across the border in the East. This difference was constructed through the notion of "mentality" and different "cultural types". Valdis Šteins, in his article in the newspaper *Diena*, "Where is Latvia? In Westerneurope or Easterneurope?" drew a clear geographical, cultural and historical border between East and West. He presented a map that divides Eastern Europe from Western Europe with a thick dark line. Latvia and the other Baltic countries are situated in Western Europe on this map but also border with Eastern Europe (see Figure 1). He legitimized this boundary as historically and culturally grounded. Latvia's Latin alphabet, the dominance of Lutheran religion and a "different" kind of "mentality" distinguished Latvia from the East. However, he did not explain how these two "mentalities," one in the East and one in the West, differed. For him, these historical and cultural differences had practical consequences and thus he insisted that these "fundamental" disparities between the nations of the West and East should be taken into account when forming foreign policy in Latvia:

The differentiation of Europe into its Wester and Easter parts started 1500 years ago, when the state of Roma divided in West Rome and East Rome or Byzantine. Sometimes Western Europe is also called Latin Europe (Latin alphabet). [..] Of course, the territory of Latvia was located very far from the state of Rome; however, in the process of historical development new territories constantly integrated in to Western and Eastern Europe. In various ways the boundary between the two is defined by political and religious division of Europe. The territory of Latvia was subject to the process of Latinization. In the 10th century, Russia adopted Orthodoxy from Byzantine and therefore its Hellenization process began; yet Slavic people lived in the territory of Byzantine also in the 6th and 7th century but Greeks, Armenians and Georgians even earlier. Slavic nations divided in Western Slavic and Eastern Slavic. The first cultural type is inseparably linked with Western Europe. Czech, Slovak, Slovenian and Polish people are inseparably linked with Western Europe; while Bulgarians, Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians are part of Eastern Europe. This historical boundary between Eastern and Western Europe is not only historical but also modern. Society in Western Europe, its values, its behavioral type, and cultural type is totally different from that of Eastern European. Look at how easy it is for Russians to understand Bulgarians, but how hard it is to understand Polish! Also, how easy Latvians understand Polish and Swedish people. […] the most precisely we can draw the boundary between Western and Eastern Europe according to religious criteria. Catholic and protestant nations are in Western Europe; while Greek orthodox nations in Eastern Europe […] Latvia does not need to fight for its return to Europe, Latvia has to fight for its return to Western Europe, since Latvia has never been a land of Eastern Europeans. For the foreign politics it will be very important in what international organizations and groups of countries we will integrate. (my translation, Šteins, 1993, p.2)

Figure 1. Boundary work: a border between Western and Eastern Europe.
(Šteins, 1993, p.2)

In this narration as well as in the overall post-Soviet discourse, the West and the actors it represented – the EU particularly, and the IMF and NATO – were often seen as one whole (remember the notion of "fundamental distinction between East and West"). The West was seen as profoundly different and better than the East, as having a different "cultural type" or holding a different "mentality". Said (2003 [1978]) explained that this notion of "types" and different "mentalities" came into the social sciences in the beginning of the twentieth century and the notion was cultivated that there were some ontological differences among various "mentalities" (p.259). Yurevich (2014) presents wide ranging definitions of "mentality" but, overall, "mentality" designates a particular mode of thinking. Lloyd (1990) pointed out the difficulty in "attribut[ing] a shared mentality to a group, let alone to a whole society" since there is no society with an "entirely uniform mental character" (p.5). Given increasingly greater division of labor, traveling, and communication, societies become more and more alike. Nevertheless, this notion of a group mentality has regularly been evoked in academia and everyday life as a "code" to draw boundaries between various groups. Kosser and Homann (1995) explain that such "mentality" is usually understood as a historically and socially shaped "psychological disposition" and it discursively "functions as a specific code of inclusion" and thus also exclusion. Also, in Štein's representation above the divide between West and East was very general and in that sense, indeed, it is very difficult to agree that there is one uniform East and one uniform West mentality[83]. Nevertheless, Štein's broad generalization which, as we could see from discourses across newspapers, also summarized well a general mode of thinking in post-Soviet Latvia and worked to establish a belief that there was some fundamental difference

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[83] Is West uniform? Is East uniform? The real answer would be no. But, that we think they each are uniform and opposing each other has some real consequences. As famous Thomas theorem defines "If man defines situations as real, they are real in their consequences". This distinction between East and West, when internalized by society, guides its perception, thinking and behavior. Or, in Durkheim's terms, it becomes a reality "sui generis".

between West and East. That this belief was there and resonated within society itself should be seen as formative to Latvia's post-Soviet identity[84]. Although I did not find any particular response to this article by Valdis Šteins, we saw in the former section that the dominant discourse structure resonated well with the distinction Šteins laid out. The distinction between West and East, particularly as reflected in the newspaper *Diena*, was constructed as fundamental. The West became "sacred" as opposed to the East which was not. And, Latvia was imagined and claimed to be a part of that "sacred" West. *This notion of distinct mentalities and the distinction between West and East that carried it, I argue, was based on the emotions of confidence, pride and shame.*

The West has become the reference point of proper knowledge, rationality, expertise, democracy, security, development, and the very source of confidence and pride for Latvia and its people. Sociologist Jack Barbalet explains confidence as "an emotion of assured expectation" and "a positive encouragement to action" or human agency (1996, p.76, also 1993, pp.231-232). The object of this emotion "is the future" (1993, p.232) but it is a future that, due to the presence of such emotions as confidence, "is brought into the present" (2004, p.87). The origins of this emotion are social rather than individual (1996, p.81). According to Barbalet "the [f]eeling of confidence arises in the subject of a relationship in which the participant receives acceptance and recognition" (2004, p.86). He also incorporates Randall Collins's concept of "emotional energy" and ideas from Thomas Scheff who relates these feelings of acceptance and recognition to the emotion of pride (2004, p.86). For Barbalet, "emotional energy" and "pride" are "confidence variants" (2004, p.87). Confidence differs from "emotional energy" because it is directed

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[84] Sociologist Zerubavel (1992) argues that this kind of sharp distinction forms "our sense of identity", we "experience ourselves" through "a form of mental differentiation that entails a fundamental distinction between us and the rest of the world" (p.13).

emotion towards its object, which is the future (2004, p.87). Confidence varies from pride "by the fact that the object of pride is the actor's past behavior, whereas the object of confidence is the actor's prospective behavior" (2004, p.87). Barbalet admits that confidence is rarely looked at as an emotion due to its "relatively low feeling state" and "high cognitive component" (p.81)[85]. Opposite the emotion of confidence, according to Barbalet, are emotions of "uncertainty", "shame, "shyness and modesty" that are all "emotions of self-attention" that can help "enforce conformity" (1996, p.77).

Parallel to the confidence that Latvia shall "return" to Europe and the West, there was also a notion that due to the Soviet occupation and Slavic immigration during the Soviet times and even earlier in history, Latvia's "Western mentality" was somehow distorted and polluted, and thus had to be rejuvenated in order for Latvia to become truly "Western". This feeling of distortion was grounded in the emotion of shame, an emotion that, like the emotion of confidence, emerges from the social environment (Katz, 1997, p.231). Shame is an emotion that

> is a *fearful* and *chaotic* sense of an *irresistible* and *eerie revelation to self*, of a *vulnerability* in one's *nature* that, by indicating one's *moral incompetence*, *isolates* and *humbles* one in the face of what one regards as a *sacred community* (ibid, p.232, italic in original).

Katz argues that "shame is an interpretative process or a way of seeing oneself from the standpoint of others" (p.352). Also in the case of Latvia, this emotion of shame was relational and formed when Latvia's political elite increased its encounters with Latvia's diaspora abroad and with foreign experts. Since the end of the 1980s, through their travels abroad and encounters with members of diaspora and foreign experts, the Latvian political elite not only gained confidence that Latvia would become part of the West, or in Katz's wording - part of "a sacred

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[85] According to Barbalet, confidence is an emotion because it has all the characteristics we generally attribute to emotions, such "feeling, sensation, and expression" (2004, p.84). The cognitive component of this emotion occurs as a result "of evaluation or appraisal of the situation in which the experience occurs in terms of its relevance to the subject, and also a dispositional element in which there is preparation of behavioral reactions to the situation the subject faces" (p.84-85).

community", but they also realized that they had to improve themselves to become truly Western.

The Latvian diaspora and its organizations abroad, the World Federation of Free Latvians (WFFL)[86] and the American Latvian Association (ALA), as well as independent diaspora's members in the USA and Europe, assisted in the independence movement at the end of the 1980s and in the 1990s when the Republic of Latvia was reestablished (Celle, 1998; Jundzis, 2010; Nissinen, 1999, Īvāns (eds.), 2001).[87] They helped to establish contacts with foreign countries, organizations and foreign experts. Celle (1998) recalls that at the end of the 1980s "ALA [American Latvian Association] and other organizations mobilized Latvian society across the globe, in order to involve Latvians abroad in attempts for the independence of Latvia through efforts to organize fundraising, to finance ever increasing cooperation" (my translation, p.440). Dainis Īvāns (2001), a leader of the chief independence movement organization, the Popular Front of Latvia (LTF), wrote that

> Western Latvians were the first teachers of diplomacy for LTF. In a short period of time with their help LTF did foreign relations "course work", they acquired the etiquette and protocol rituals not known by ordinary Soviet citizens (my translation, p.51).

We know that not only might Soviet "ordinary citizens" not have the needed diplomatic competency but also many citizens across the globe might lack such competencies since each of them had a different upbringing, location in the societal division of labor, different interests, and

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[86] WFFL members are Latvian associations in various countries: American Latvian Association, Latvian National Association in Canada, Latvian Association in Australia and New Zealand, Western European Latvian Association, South American Latvian Association. There are 14 members on the WFFL board. Five come from the American Latvian Association, three come from the Latvian Association in Australia and New Zealand, two come from the Latvian National Association in Canada, three come from the Western European Latvian Association and one comes from the South American Latvian Association (Celle, 1998, pp.413-414).

[87] Celle (1998) also explains that the WFFL worked actively since the 1970s to raise awareness in the governments of their receiving countries about the Soviet occupation in the Baltic States and Baltic States' eagerness to regain independence. For example, on June 14, 1982, President Reagan signed a Baltic Freedom Day resolution. Up to the independence, Congress would recognize this day as a sign that the USA does not support the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States (pp.417-418).

so on. Nevertheless, Īvāns attributed his lack of diplomatic competency to his "Sovietness" implying that diplomacy was not an attribute of the Soviet. He further explained that the Latvian diaspora in the USA helped organize visits for LTF leaders to the USA and to the White House[88]. Members of diaspora "defined the schedule of visits and chose the persons to meet", as well as prepared representatives of the LTF for these visits by providing information about the persons to be visited and made sure LTF representatives were dressed appropriately and knew the diplomatic protocol (ibid). Thus Latvia's "modern state craft" was cultivated in the interaction with Latvian diaspora abroad.

Bennich – Bjorkmann (2011) contended that a predecessor of independent Latvia's mainstream politics was Club 21 which was established at the end of the 1980s and united "actors belonging to all-embracing, progressive elite with integrative vision" (p.15). She emphasized that Club 21 had three goals: "to integrate society", to provide "basic input regarding Western ideas and experiences on democratic, economic and administrative issues" and to serve "as a national think-tank, gathering together like-minded, liberal and Western-oriented people" (p.15). Through her interviews with members of the Latvian political elite, she also found that "it was through Club 21 that those who were to form Latvia's modern and progressive party gained insight into modern state craft, as provided by the foreign experts invited to Club 21" (ibid). Due to their social networks, mastery of English and other foreign languages, these often were diaspora members who helped organize visits of various foreign experts (Nissinen, 1999, p.130).

Celle (1998) recalls that in 1990 and 1991 "WFFL intensively worked, so that Latvian politicians could establish extensive networks with the leaders of Western countries", including "the leaders of European governments" (p.442-444). According to Jundzis (2010), "in the first

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[88] One such visit to the White House took place in 1989.

half a year subsequent to the restoration of independence, with the help of the American Latvian Association (ALA) and other organizations abroad, the Foreign Minister of Latvia was able to establish contacts with 13 statesmen and organizations in West" (my translation, Jundzis, 2010, p.8). Ilmārs Rimšēvics (2001), a member of LTF, a Deputy Governor of Latvian Bank, and, since 2001, a Governor of Latvian Bank, recalls that diaspora members Juris Vīksniņš, Brunis Rubess, and Uldis Klauss helped to shape Latvia's banking and monetary system (see also Zeile, 2001). Juris Vīksniņš, a USA Federal Reserve bank councilor, initiated that Latvia's currency should be fixed to a IMF special drawing rights system while Brunis Rubess, a Harvard educated businessman, and Uldis Klauss, a Columbia University graduate and a head of banks in Germany and New York, assisted "in shaping the structure of Latvian Bank" (Rimšēvics, 2001, p.214, see also Zeile, 2001, p.209). Rimšēvics also recalls that in the spring of 1990 "a Chicago businessman Norberts Klaucēns brought to Riga a delegation of 20 USA entrepreneurs" who visited almost all successful entrepreneurs at that time, providing an opportunity for them to "become acquainted with *Western* business *thinking*" (p.213, italic added). Latvia's diaspora abroad thus worked as a "caring hand" for Latvia's new political and business elite in its journey to establish Latvia's political economy and business environment so it corresponded to the Western standard. Memories of the Latvian political elite show that they not only appreciated but also urged for this assistance and that the Latvian diaspora abroad were eager to help (see Īvāns (2001) (eds.)). It was due to these contacts that the leaders of the independence movement gained confidence about Latvia's sense of Western belonging. Īvāns (2001) in his memories of the formation of LTF explains that LTF's "Western orientation strengthened when the organization had been established for one year and when it established stronger contacts with the diaspora" (my translation, p.50). Yet it is significant that admiration of the West was not particular to LTF,

the organization leading the independence movement. Misiunas and Taagepera (1983, ch.5), in their study of the three Baltic States between 1940 and 1980, found that, for Soviet citizens, journeys to the West, including visits to their relatives, and direct contact with the people from the West had been possible since the late 1960s. As a result of these encounters, parallel to the Soviet disparaged propaganda, an admiration of the Western lifestyle, culture and goods began in the three Soviet republics. This admiration, however, could only exist in the private domain, since, for the Soviet regime, the West had to be kept at some distance in order to protect the Soviet "sacred community".

Memories of Latvia's diaspora members suggest that in their interaction with people in Latvia they felt pride about themselves and some feelings of superiority. They saw themselves as having different and to some extent better qualities and "mentality" than people in Latvia, a perspective they justified with their lived experience in the West. They saw themselves as more fair, true, and ruled by law. In contrast, they saw Latvians in Latvia as selfish, unruly, and unfair. Celle (1998), a diaspora member from the USA himself, wrote in his discussion of the role of diaspora in Latvia's independence and transition that:

> Political leadership among exiled Latvians and other diaspora members took part in Latvia's political life and looked for their place in that. They found that there was a huge rift between their mentality and employees[89] living in Latvia (my translation, Celle, 1998, p.435).

> The cultural and political traditions of Latvians in the West [diasporic Latvians] were shaped by fifty years of lived experience in the Western world. They wanted to establish an order in Latvia that was based on the rules of idealism, so that law, truth, and justice rules. In the post-Communist era, Latvians who were influenced by the East Byzantium tradition could not always break away from the routines and customs acquired in the outlawed Soviet systems' various stratums. Usually instead of idealism, selfish and personal reasoning about the control of power and its maximal utilization in capitalism ruled (my translation, Celle, 1998, p.435).[90]

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[89] From the context it seems he refers to governmental employees as employees.

[90] Also Deksnis (1998), in his book *Eiropas Apvienošanās…Integrācija un Suverenitāte [Europe Unites…Integration and Sovereignty]*, critically argued that since the 19th century Latvians have adopted the mentality of Slavic peoples and that somehow this seems to impede our development. He thinks that Estonia managed to 'purify' itself from this mentality better than Latvia (my translation, p.280).

This self-righteous and self-promotive attitude of diasporic Latvians, as well as the persistent presence of foreign experts in Latvia's state apparatus[91], I argue, might have promoted feelings of some inferiority, insecurity, and shame among Latvians in Latvia about their own knowledge, expertise and capabilities. These feelings might have also been aggravated by the initial hesitance of some Western countries, for example, such as France and Sweden, to recognize the independence of the Baltic States. These countries were hesitant about the disintegration of the Soviet Union and favored the independent status of the Baltic States in the USSR since this order was more predictable than the order which might come with the dissolution of the USSR (Kalniete, 2011). These historical and interactional contexts lead to the determination of Latvia's political elite to become recognized in the eyes of their Western peers. Indulis Bērziņs, a politician in the 1990s and Foreign Minister from 1999 to 2002, in his memories of Latvia's transition, would recall that Latvia's political elite constantly sought to integrate in various Western organizations to prove to itself and to the world that "we can be Western". He emphasized that only Ireland initially recognized Latvia's independence and thus "we had to prove every day" that Latvia was part of the West, furthermore he also admits that, given Latvia's geographical location, its borders with the successor of the former aggressor, "it was important how the West saw us"[92]. Recognition of Latvia in the eyes of the West was an issue of pride, confidence, and gave a feeling of security.

Interviews with the political elite in the daily newspapers in the early 1990s also suggest that feelings of both confidence and shame were significant and formative for the post-Soviet becoming of Latvia. Three years after independence was regained, among the leading political

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[91] I have discussed that in the transformation process Latvia received technical expertise that was provided by the European Comission and IMF.

[92] My notes from the conference "Deciding on Stateness…" that took place in Riga, May 8, 2015, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Latvia's independence.

elite there was an opinion that they did not yet possess the proper knowledge and expertise and thus should rely on the knowledge and expertise that comes from the West, either through their educational institutions or through international institutions that were based in European countries and the USA. For example, the transition government Prime Minister Ivars Godmanis suggested that the model of the new state institutions should be looked for outside Latvia itself – in the West or in the business sector. In response to a question from a *Diena* journalist, he acknowledged that in order to get rid of the Soviet Past within the state apparatus, the state needed leadership that was educated in West and came from business structures:

[A Journalist:]**Currently this apparatus has been an old Soviet time apparatus. Shall we get rid of it?** [The Prime Minister]: I hope for education. People who have education do not come to work in the government. They are going to commercial structures, they go to banks and other places. However, I don't think it is going to be so forever because in every business there is satiation. In the future, people who will be educated in the West could form a core of the government. The other option is people, who have proven themselves in business and want to come into politics. That kind of tendency is already there. (my translation, Godmanis, 1993, p.2)

This seems to imply that the *Diena* journalist believed that the Soviet experiences were incompatible with the present, and particularly that during the three years of transition lead by the Prime Minister the Soviet remnants were still present in the state apparatus. Having been reminded that his government still contained remnants of the Soviet past, the Prime Minister did not seek to refute this conviction but answered with a lack of confidence in the education system in Latvia to be able to breed the future leadership. He did not explain, however, what particular value the Western education system might have that the education system in Latvia did not have. By the same token the Prime Minister implied that he was not confident in his political peers who at that time were often not educated in the West nor came from the business sector. In the conclusion of the interview, the Prime Minister himself began to doubt his knowledge in

economics and did not show eagerness to continue his leadership[93]. This indicated that this confidence in the West worked together with feelings of shame and uncertainty about local knowledge, expertise, and practices, as well as people and institutions.

Also other government officials in their interviews demonstrated that they had great confidence in Western expertise and advice for the process of state restructuring. When the journalists of *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* eagerly questioned Finance Minister Elmārs Siliņš and the Secretary of Foreign Ministry Māris Gailis about the role and deeds of such international organizations as IMF, WB, and European Communities in Latvia, a practice not common among *Diena* journalists, the response contained cogent and externalized confidence. For example, the secretary of Foreign Ministry Māris Gailis, who would become a prime minister in the subsequent government, saw foreign expertise as knowing better how to "restructure swiftly and precisely our [Latvia's] economy":

> Foreign [Western] countries give us assistance with a particular purpose; and they give this assistance only in such a way they consider necessary and good for us. Firstly, it is technical assistance, the goal of which is to restructure swiftly and precisely our economy. [...] This has to help us get back on our feet faster (my translation, Gailis, 1993, pp.1-2)[94]

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[93] Also memories of other politicians who served in the 1990s confirm this externalization of confidence. In the conference "Deciding on Stateness…" that took place in Riga on May 8, 2015, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Latvia's independence, Roberts Zīle, an editor of the economic section of the Citizens' Congress of the Republic of Latvia newspaper "Citizen" and the political party LNNK newspaper "National Independence" in the first years subsequent to the independence and from 1995 elected to parliament where he worked as a member of the European Affairs committee and the Budget and Finance committee, would say that subsequent to the collapse of the Soviet system he needed to re-study economics according to the Western principles. He said that his former studies in economics in the University of Latvia were incompatible with the new requirements. Edmunds Krastiņš, the State Property Minister in 1993 and 1994, in the same conference, would emphasize as an issue the fact that on the day when the independence declaration was signed on May 4, 1990, there was no one who was educated in economics according to the Western standards.

[94] As I have already showed, very similarly two years back (1991) in an interview for the daily newspaper *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, the Foreign Minister of the transition government Jānis Jurkāns would declare that Latvia's independence had been achieved just "formally" and in order to achieve it for "real" the state of Latvia shall resemble how institutions are structured in other European countries: *".... we have to stabilize the state structure, organize executive power, ministries. This has to be done according to the European Standards, so when we will cooperate closely and truly with the partners in Europe also Latvia has an appropriate structure….."* (my translation, Jurkāns, 1991, pp.1-2). He did not explain what exactly he meant by "appropriate" structure. Yet very similarly he also displayed strong confidence that the West, or in this case European institutions, possessed state-of-the-art know-how. Thus this externalization of confidence had a clear pattern among the political elite.

When *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* journalists questioned the Finance Minister Elmār Siliņš over whether

the Finance Ministry calculated how Latvia would give back all the loans the state of Latvia

received from international institutions, the Minister looked for legitimization outside his own or

his institution's judgment. For him, the same institutions which gave these loans also helped to

calculate how to give them back:

> It [how to return loans] is not a decision of ministries, the government and the parliament – we calculate together with the International Monetary Fund. Funds for consumption and development are coordinated. Besides - money makes money. Now we are spending it, the loan of the World Bank is for seventeen years. […] Currently we are not in debt, and the contracts concluded are real. And, there are not many of them – from the World Bank 40 million dollars; from the European Communities, the parliament recently approved it, around 100 million dollars, with the possibility to get twice as much if we fulfill requirements, but Japanese promise around 35 million. Together it makes around 300 million dollars. International organizations recommend that our limit for debt can be 365 million dollars. (my translation, Siliņš, 1993, pp.1-2)

This did not necessarily mean that the Ministry of Finance did not have its own calculations, but

it demonstrated that the Minister felt more confident to share with the public that calculations are

done by Western experts as if this gave them more legitimacy. Interestingly, in his narrative on

the early transition of Baltic states, the historian Lieven (1993) describes the government elites

of the Latvian transition as "inexperienced", "Soviet", "irresponsible", and "paralyzed" as

opposed to the "prestigious" IMF assistance which was able to provide a "real" plan for

development (see pp.294-5):

> Probably only an outside agency, and one with the prestige and the money of the IMF, would have been able to bring this coherence to Latvian policy-making. Up to mid-1992, this had seemed in a state of the deepest confusion […] (p.295)

Although he emphasized that the political elites were somehow managing the situation better in

the other two Baltic States, such observations and the adjectives as Lieven used show that he

viewed the mode of thinking and behaving of Latvia's political elite as not even close to the one

the experts from the more "prestigious" IMF represented. The general perception was that there

was some kind of mental disparity between leaders brought up in Latvia and those from the

West. Furthermore, these perceptions, as they were implicitly and explicitly shared and

exchanged in the wider public, created feelings of shame and an even greater feeling that people in Latvia will need to change in order to become truly Western. I argue that both of these emotions – *confidence and shame – were related to the notion of different "mentalities" between East and West, and that how these emotions played out in daily interactions was key in the formation of Latvia's post-Soviet identity.* These perceptions also framed the political elite's notion of the post-Soviet subject.

In Latvian public discourse, it could be seen that political elites were ashamed of their people, and depicted them as having a "Soviet" mentality. People were mostly seen as continuing a kind of Soviet thinking, they were seen as lacking initiative, responsibility, reason; in short, as lacking the basic elements of a modern approach to life and that this would impede not only their own personal development but also the development and well-being of their state. Rather than recognizing and appreciating how the people struggled through the transformations Latvia experienced, they were constantly criticized. In his address to the readers of *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* in 1995, the Prime Minister Māris Gailis would point to the lack of individual initiative and responsibility of the people. He ascribed these traits to their Soviet experience, and expressed that it won't be easy to get over these traits:

When the independence of Latvia was renewed, we were left with a distorted economy that was mostly oriented towards Russia, and, unfortunately, we also had distorted social relations, as well as an almost total lack of individual initiative and responsibility. To get over this won't be easy, particularly now, when the situation in the country changes almost every day (my translation, Gailis, 1995, p.1).

Egils Levits, a Minister of Justice in 1994, and a Latvian ambassador to Austria, Switzerland and Hungary, pointed out to the newspaper *Diena* that the people in Latvia were incapable of adjusting their thinking to these structural transformations, they also lacked the thinking which was necessary for democracy:

it is apparent that structural reforms in Latvia have outpaced the understanding of society, whose thinking is based on Soviet or even older tradition (fairly precise on this is Māris Grīnblats, Diena, 15.VIII, 1995). Latvia's road since 1991 teaches us that stepping along the developmental stages requires not only appropriate political will

and action from the side of the state, but more skills and acquisition and understanding of new democratic values in broad stratums of society (my translation, Levits, 1995, p.2).

Thus the "typical" thinking of the Latvian people was seen as impeding Latvia's development. It was common to attribute Latvia's economic misfortunes to these presumed traits of the Latvian people. The people were also blamed for not being skillful enough to elect the proper kind of government. Thus Askolds Rodins, a commentator of *Diena*, blamed the people for not electing a parliament which was liberal enough for the 6th Saeima (1995 elections). He would attribute this to the electorate's lack of experience and resulting "irresponsibility":

> The electorate did not have an experience accumulated over years, and this determined their confusion, sort of credulity, and also political irresponsibility…" and „as long as we are going to have an irresponsible electorate we are also going to have irresponsible deputies (my translation, Rodins, 1998, p.2).

While the Latvian diaspora abroad saw the Latvian political elite as having an improper kind of "mentality" and lacking the properties for the modern state craft, the leading political elite, in turn, saw the people in Latvia as lacking the appropriate attributes to be proper citizens of the modern state, and thus, in the view of the elite, the state found it hard to transform. *Thus the political elite was neither proud of themselves since in their interaction with their peers in and from the West they felt somehow inferior; nor were they proud of the people in Latvia more broadly since they also were seen as having an inappropriate psychological disposition due to their Soviet experience.*

Amidst these views about people's lack of adequate properties, the newspapers *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* (later *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*) and *Panorama Latvii* also revealed that the life of ordinary Latvians was not in a state of normalcy. From the letters of readers and some articles it is very clear that people in Latvia struggled with their everyday life. They were forced to sell their belongings in order to survive and pay their bills, they sought to exchange their apartments for smaller ones, and some who were not able to pay their rents were kicked out of their apartments, people lost money to the banks (which under extreme liberalization lacked state

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control and went bankrupt), without any hope that it would be recovered, and so on. Thus regardless of the political rhetoric, people tried to exercise full responsibility and initiative over their lives amidst these drastic socioeconomic transformations but many times failed. *Panorama Latvii* went further to depict the life of the people who immigrated to Latvia during the Soviet times as part of the Soviet industrialization project, who, because of their unclear citizenship status, found it even harder to find socioeconomic security during the post-independence transitions. Instead of empathizing with the people and the socioeconomic hardship they experienced due to the transition, the leading political elite reprimanded them as exhibiting improper behavior and thinking. What accounts for this contradiction? On the one hand, it could be that the political elite used people's "Soviet-ness" as a scapegoat for the elite's failing to control the political and economic situation in a manner that was rewarding for the people. On the other hand, it could also be that the elite[95] strongly believed that their own "Sovietness" (and, by extension, that of the people) had something to do with the political and economic failings in Latvia, given that diaspora as well as foreign experts might have made them feel like this, whether explicitly or implicitly. From what can be seen from the public discourse and literature, political elites themselves in their interaction with diaspora and foreign experts felt that they lacked knowledge and qualities to fit in instantly in the "sacred community" of West. Thus they extended this notion of inadequate "mentality" further into their society. Ha-Joon Chang (2007 [2011]), an economic historian at Cambridge, found that global economic elites since the time of colonization have used this argument of different mentalities to pursue their interests. However, through historical examples of Germany and Japan, he argued that culture or "mentality" cannot be blamed in politico economic failings (see ch. 9). Economic failing usually is a result of the

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[95] Journalists also used this idea of "Sovietness" as a reason for individual as well as societal failings.

politico economic structure itself. *Yet drawing from Evans (2003) and his Weberian stance on rationality, we could say that the usage of the notion of different "mentalities", the West and the East/or the Soviet, was one way to rationalize economic failings in the post-Soviet era. Nevertheless, this notion that "mentality" in Latvia was somehow inadequate for the new post-Soviet order also worked to alienate people from their state.*

According to Scheff, shaming is devastating for any social bond. If one is not proud of what one has, he forms relationships of unease with it. Scheff (1990) offered that "a normal social bond involves what Goffman[96] terms "reciprocal ratification" of each of the parties by the other as "legitimate participants" in the relationship", that is, "reciprocal ratification of each other's participation involves both feelings and actions of legitimation" (p. 6-7). Successful communication that results in mutual understanding contributes to positive emotions. Negative emotions, which may arise from failure to understand each other, may delegitimize the other party. Delegitimization or no ratification by the other party may threaten the social bond. The threat to the social bond, according to Scheff, generates feelings of shame, such as humiliation, resentment, disgrace, etc. In fact, he argues that the social bond can be understood through just such particular emotions as pride and shame (Scheff, 1990, 1994, 2000, 2003):

A key aspect of the bond between persons and between groups is the emotion of pride and shame…pride generates and signals a secure bond, just as shame generates and signals a threatened bond. For this reason, these two emotions have a unique status relative to social relationships (Scheff, 1994, p. 3)

By not recognizing the people as they were, the political elite somehow delegitimized them. There was some neglect of what Latvia and its people who had lived through the Soviet times were. There was no pride about them. They were expected to transform in order to become something to be proud of. From the analysis of interviews with Latvian people who have

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[96] In Goffman's and Best's (2005) „Interaction Ritual: Essays in Face to Face Behavior", e.g. p. 34.

emigrated from Latvia in the post-Soviet era we will later see indications that through emigration they regained pride in themselves as they are.

Conclusions

The symbolic code of West vs. East framed Latvia's post-Soviet transformations and identity. "West" was the key reference code in the shaping of post-Soviet Latvia. West (as opposed to East or non-West) was predominantly seen, as represented by the newspaper *Diena*, as a source of appropriate development (as opposed to underdevelopment), capitalism (as opposed to socialism), rationality (as opposed to irrationality), democracy (as opposed to totalitarism), security (as opposed to insecurity), and so on. To be part of this West or "sacred community", as it was constructed in the dominant public discourse, was an issue of pride. The views of those who reprimanded the leading political elite for relying too much on external expertise and advice were delegitimized through rationalizing their views as endangering Latvia's Western belonging. Those who raised questions about the expertise and requirements of various international actors were generally labeled anti-Western, anti-capitalist, pro-Russian, irresponsible and so on. This clearly demonstrated the "sacred" character of this referential code of West. In this chapter, I also argue that the West in the dominant transformation discourse was, in moments of tension, portrayed in very general terms, often suggesting a continuum with Soviet propaganda – only now West was good, while East bad. Even though in the other two newspapers, *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* and *Panorama Latvii*, the West was seen as sacred due to the different reasons, such as solidarity, equality and inclusion, these nuances were not paid attention to by the wider public in Latvia, thus missing an opportunity to discuss what the West really was and, given the dominant will to see Latvia as identical to the West, also missing an opportunity

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to initiate a more "substantial" and possibly more rewarding debate for the Latvian society on Latvia's future.

We saw that elections in the 1990s not only entailed competition among various parties, something this dissertation does not aim to explore, but pre-election debates were also the site for the legitimization of Latvia's Western orientation and belonging or the site for constant reiteration of Latvia's post-Soviet identity as based on "the fundamental choice between East and West". This begged the question: what "compelled" people in Latvia to see the world as two "incompatible worlds"?

Great confidence in the West and its institutions, coupled with the notion of people in Latvia as not yet having the proper kind of "mentality" and properties to be truly "western" and the shame which came with that, as well as the feelings of insecurity about the interests of Russia in Latvia, were mechanisms that help to explain why, in the 1990s, there was a tendency to talk and think of Latvia and people in Latvia as merely on their way to becoming "Western". The notion of "different mentalities" and the emotions of confidence and shame which evolved from this notion particularly "compelled" elites and people in Latvia to see the world as divided in two "incompatible worlds". In the public discourse, not only was belonging to the West as a "sacred community" constantly reassured, but it was also continually reiterated that people in Latvia need to change in order to ensure that they and their country would fit in the "sacred community".

Among the leading political elite there was a powerful notion that various international (IMF, NATO, OSCE, etc.) and supranational organizations (the EU institutions) and Latvian diaspora abroad had more expertise and knowledge about political economy and thus they had to be followed and trusted. This interaction with Latvian diaspora abroad and foreign expertise

engendered the perception that Latvians will need to imbibe a different kind of mentality and thinking in order to become truly Western. This meant that everything that the assumed mentality of people in the post-Soviet Latvia was, which was seen as acquired from the East, the Soviet and even Byzantium, had to be abandoned; it was something to be ashamed of. This externalization of confidence also coincided with some demise of confidence among the national political elite. They had lost conviction about their own local knowledge and expertise. I say *some* demise of confidence because they also gained some pride and confidence when international experts and diaspora complimented them on what was achieved, when they saw that Latvia's Western belonging was institutionalizing. These perceptions on different mentalities and the emotions this engendered also framed the political elite's notion about the post-Soviet subject which was seen as irresponsible and lacking initiative and thus not someone to be proud of.

What Latvia was, its experience, thinking and knowledge, got somehow belittled. Rather than being proud of what Latvia and its people were, the political elite felt instead shame of them. Latvia's people were seen as not compatible with the new future Latvia embraced; they were expected to transform themselves and their thinking. Inconsistently enough, if the leading political elite shaped their perceptions in their interaction with Latvian diaspora in the West and foreign or Western expertise and thus suppressed their own judgment, they nonetheless required that each and everyone in society more generally must rely on him or herself, his or her own initiative. All this thinking and framing created conditions for alienation between the state and its people, as well as injured the self-confidence of those who tried hard to improve their well-being but, due to socioeconomic restructuring, were limited to achieve it. The social bond between the state and its people weakened. As I will argue later, emigration appeared to be the space or provided a social environment where Latvians could regain this self-confidence and self-esteem.

In the next chapter, we will see that the East/West code was also synonymous with a Left/Right code and thus those who raised questions about Latvia's cooperation with international and supra-national institutions were occasionally also seen as representing a Left-wing political identity. The analysis of the working of this code is important to understand further how the state and its people were desired in the post-Soviet state, what could be thought and what was stigmatized.

Chapter 3 - Constructing the Right and Left Distinction: the State, Market and Individual

The distinction between the political Right and Left is another code that structured the discourse of Latvia's post-Soviet transformations. The West code, in very broad economic, political and cultural terms, discursively formed Latvia's post-Soviet identity. This chapter looks at the Right vs. Left code which somehow, more specifically, defined Latvia's political identity and modern state craft in the post-Soviet era. This chapter demonstrates that the West and the Left code, and their dominant meaning in Latvia's post-Soviet transformation discourse, were constructed as incompatible. Furthermore, as we will see in Chapter 5, this constructed incompatibility has been decisive to the explanation of cultural mechanisms of the post-Soviet emigration from Latvia towards the West.

Right and Left in post-Soviet Latvia

Eglitis (2002) observed that for the 1993 elections "the electoral options offered to potential voters were often neatly categorized in terms of the Western spectrum of right and left by politicians and media both in and outside Latvia" (p.68). She also argued that the largest newspaper, *Diena*, tried to categorize parties in the 1993 pre-elections discourse according to these same Western categories but that "the terms failed to paint an accurate portrait of the politics of programs embraced by contending parties" (pp.68-69). By untangling the pre-election debates in the newspapers, not only in 1993, when the first democratic elections took place, but throughout the 1990s, I will show that this distinction between Right and Left permeated and structured the transformation discourse not only as a way to define the political identity of post-

Soviet Latvia but also to serve as a code that defined the boundaries of what ideas were "sacred"

and what where not; and thus what was permitted and what was not. For example: before the

people in Latvia elected the Supreme Council that would vote for the Declaration of

Independence on May 4, 1990 the distinction between Right and Left was rarely utilized in the

public space. Ivars Godmanis, one-time chair of the Popular Front and later the Prime Minister

for the transition government from 1990 to 1993, explained in newspaper *Atmoda*[97] that the

future economy of Latvia should be based on the principles of the Right and, in his view, the

Right meant "a proper private property":

> In terms of economy we shall be strongly right. This refers also to the countryside. We need a proper
> private property and that's it. Thus, I am not centrist at all. (my translation, Godmanis, 1990, p.2)

He further stated that he was against social democratic ideas which, in his view, represented

merely a transition from one type of socialism to another. Godmanis reasoned that for Latvia to

follow Sweden, a country that represented social democracy, Latvia should first accumulate

capital and, in his view, accumulation of capital was only possible through a Right-wing

approach to economy. He further praised capitalistic relationships which he saw as

"entrepreneurship relationships which [in Latvia] shall be facilitated with low taxation"[98]. A.

Prikulis, Assistant Professor at the University of Latvia, wrote that during the Soviet period "left

was good, right - wrong" (my translation, Prikulis, 1990, p.2.). [99] He tried to sway his readers to

shift these evaluations. Even though he thought that an equilibrium between Left and Right was

necessary for democracy, he also emphasized that countries such as England and even Sweden

sought to move away from Left ideas towards the Right, which, in his view, were liberal

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[97] A newspaper that was issued by the Popular Front, an organization that led the independence movement.
[98] Nevertheless, when a journalist asked if people would accept Right ideas easily since they have been socialized in Left ideas he admitted that the state still needed to care for the poor.
[99] Viktors Avotiņš emphasized that Latvia's Communist Party, the ultimate party during Soviet times, began dividing into a wing which was more right and a wing which was more left, where the latter sought to restore imperialism and colonialism (Latvijas Jaunatne, February, 2, 1990).

democratic and liberal, since in these countries there was "too much of socialism". Thus there was some implicit externalization in the imagining of Latvia's political identity. If other Western countries turned away from Left ideas then Latvia should also follow this trend. Thus, this distinction between Right and Left, according to Eglitis, might have "failed to paint an accurate portrait of the political programs", but, as I will demonstrate in this chapter, this distinction was formative to the post-Soviet transformation discourse and boundary work.

The Left vs. Right code operated on two levels in Latvian public debate. On the surface, this code had a strictly political character and primarily served to form Latvia's political identity; yet deeper analysis of its meaning and its relations to other discursive codes shows that this code also framed which convictions and ideas were acceptable and which were marginalized in Latvian's post-Soviet thinking. In this deeper sense, the code not only structured political discourse and political identities, but framed social life itself. As indicated in the previous chapter, some meanings of the Right and Left code were closely related to the West and East code. Egils Levits, one of the authors of Latvia's Independence Declaration in 1990, and subsequently the Minister of Justice from 1993 to 1994, and then later an ambassador in Austria, Hungary and Switzerland, in newspaper *Diena* represented the general pattern[100] of how this code appeared in the post-Soviet space, as well as how it related to other discursive structures, such as the West and East code and the Development and Underdevelopment code. Shortly before the 1995 Parliamentary elections he located the political field within three binary structures – Right and Left, West and East, and Progressive and Soviet. In his view, Right wing parties were Latvia's Way (LC), Peasants Union of Latvia (LZS), Latvian National Conservative Party (LNNK) and Fatherland and Freedom (TB) (Levits, 1995, p.2). He identified the Left wing

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[100] The way these discursive structures were related to each other in his statements may be seen as a cultural and evaluative "ideal" and, as such, guides an analysis of the dominant transformation discourse.

parties as: Political Union of Economists (TPA), National Harmony Party (TSP), Latvia's Social

Democratic Workers Party and Latvia's Social Democratic Party (LSDSP/LDDP), Democratic

Party *Saimnieks* (DPS), Union Party (Vienības partija), Equality (Līdztiesība) and "other small

groups". He explained that he understood this distinction in the same way as it was

conventionally understood in Europe: a key difference between the two wings was in terms of

economic and social policies. The Right-wing represented more market oriented approaches and

individual initiative, while the Left-wing emphasized the role of the state in economic regulation

and the redistribution of income. However, in contrast to the European experience, according to

Levits, the Right parties in Latvia were more nationally oriented than the Left parties.

> Right emphasizes the self-regulatory power of market economy, while Left trusts to the regulatory power of the state in economy. Corresponding are also principles in social policy: Right firstly seeks to develop *the self initiative*, while Left seeks to *redistribute income*. Right principles – and it is particular for Latvia, integrates more nationally oriented approach to the state than Left does. (my translation, Levits, 1995, p.2, *italic added*)

He also emphasized that all the Right-wing parties in Latvia "together constructed the civic wing

of Latvia's politics". Yet he did not explain what he meant by "the civic" and why the Left-wing

parties could not be "civic". Nevertheless, based on this relationship of the identity between the

Right-wing and the civic-wing, he further rationalized that the Right-wing parties were Western

oriented as opposed to the Left-wing parties, which tended to favor orientation towards both the

West and the East.

> All the civic wing parties clearly can be characterized as Western oriented parties. These parties want Latvia to become the member of the European Union […] Within the Left-wing situation is more complicated. Among these parties a view is common that Latvia should have both the Western and Eastern orientation. This in the very essence is neutrality thesis. However, I am very confident, that neutrality of Latvia is not possible and not desirable, since Latvia that is not strongly integrated and embedded in Western structures, and primarily in the European Union and NATO, sooner or later will inevitably slip into CIS [the Commonwealth of Independent States][101] movement (ibid.)

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[101] The Commonwealth of Independent States is a union of sovereign nation states that formerly were part of the Soviet Union. This union was established in 1991 and includes such countries as Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine. In 1993, CIS created "Economic Union to form common economic space grounded on free movement of goods, services, labour force, capital; to elaborate coordinated monetary, tax, price, customs, external economic policy; to bring

Levits reasoned that the binary structure of West and East mainly refers to parties' position in terms of foreign policy; yet he also indicated some "specific" circumstances in Latvia as a result of which Latvia's foreign policy "defines also internal societal and economic structure". He was not explicit on what he meant by "specific" circumstances in Latvia but, from his interview with the newspaper *Diena*, it seems that he was referring to Latvia's insecure relationships with its neighboring country Russia.

Even though Levits permitted that the Left-wing parties were not anti-Western, they favored relationships with the West and the East, his further reasoning, nevertheless, pointed out the Left-wing parties were relying on the Soviet experience as opposed to the Right-wing parties which were more progressive due to their Western orientation. He claimed that the Left-wing parties oriented themselves to the Soviet past, as opposed to the Right-wing parties that oriented themselves to a "*modern, western oriented*" future. Similarly, as we saw in the previous chapter, there is a notion that the Right is guided by the Western mode of thinking while the Left continues the Soviet mode of thinking.

> When we deal with the concrete problems today we can continue with the experience and thinking acquired under socialism, or we can consciously distance from it and seek new, progressive solutions, and in this search particularly use Western experience. Progressive approach is more open to modern, Western oriented solutions, while the Soviet approach tends to learn from the former experience […]. The most progressive solutions are carried out by *Latvia's Way*. More or less also LNNK and LZS try it [to be progressive]. Instead, *Saimnieks* emphasize "professionalism"; however, by analyzing closer the members and offered solutions of this party, we see that this "professionalism" mainly relies on Soviet experience. (Ibid.)

Yet he also admitted that some Left-wing parties, such as TSP and TPA, were more progressive than other Left-wing parties. Despite Levits admission that there might be some deviations in a sense that not all parties confirm to his rationalizing in terms of their Westerness (or Easterness), Progressiveness (or Sovietness) and Rightness (or Leftness) very neatly; this rationalizing, based on sharp and opposing distinctions, however, was fairly representative or typical of how the

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together methods of regulating economic activity and create favourable conditions for the development of direct production relations". See http://www.cisstat.com/eng/cis.htm

West and East and Right and Left distinctions were predominantly situated in the post-Soviet transformation discourse. Throughout this chapter we will see that in the dominant public reasoning, Right was identical to and continuous with West, Progressive, Developed, and Liberal, and in that sense "sacred" while the Left was identical to East, Soviet, Undeveloped, and Socialist/Communist, and in the context of post-Soviet Latvia "profane" (see Table no.6). Presented in this way, progress and development were clearly better than no progress and underdevelopment; and, importantly, West and Left were not compatible. *This typically strong association between West and Right added to the Right code emotions which were formative of the West code itself – confidence and pride, versus shame and fear. Confidence and security for a better future was with the Right code. The Left code, due to its association with the Soviet past and thus underdevelopment, gave feelings of insecurity, fear and shame.*

Right	Left
West	East/Anti-West/Russian
Progressive	Not-Progressive ("Soviet")
Development	Under-development
Self-initiative and entrepreneurship	Redistribution/Social Welfare
Market	State
A Free Market	Command economy/regulated economy
Private property	Public enterprises
Liberal/Capitalist	Socialist

Latvian	Non-Latvian Russian

Table 6. Dominant structure of the Right code in post-Soviet Latvia.

In order to further demonstrate the construction of Right as "sacred" in the 1990s, I shall also discuss the descriptive and evaluative dimensions of this distinction. Bobbio (1996) argued that Right and Left have both descriptive and evaluative dimensions (pp.35-36). The descriptive dimension looks at the meanings ascribed to Right and Left. The evaluative dimension assigns the values to the meanings. According to Bobbio, "the positive connotation of the one must imply the negative connotation of the other, precisely because the two terms describe an antithesis". He argued further that which was negative or positive "depends not on the descriptive meaning, but on the two opposing value-judgments which are made of the things described" (p.36). Within this axiology, if one receives a positive evaluation, the other, by the same token, will be a negative evaluation. Even though Bobbio argued that sociologists are primarily concerned with the descriptive dimension, for any research the evaluative dimension is as important. The coexistence of descriptive *and* evaluative dimensions of this distinction in this particular context helped shape what was seen as good and desirable, or "sacred", and what was not.

Political and social scientists have discussed how parties identify with either the Right or Left, and whether how they identify matches how they act (e.g., Miller and Klobucar, 2000; Tavis and Letki, 2009, see also discussion in Eatwell, 1989); they have looked at Right and Left as discursive tools in political exchange (White, 2011); and they have looked at how people identify in politics and how their political identities shift as a response to social change (see e.g. Evans and Whitefield, 1998). In this dissertation, I am primarily interested in tracing how the

distinction between Right and Left was represented in the public space, what meanings it conveyed, and thus what it told about Latvia's post-Soviet identity, modern state craft and social life more broadly. However, before I trace the working and meaning of Right and Left in the post-Soviet discourse, I will first briefly trace the historical and dynamic meaning of this code.

Historical Origins and Meaning of the Right vs. Left Code

As a crucial distinction of "political geography" and identity, Right and Left emerged during the French Revolution (Eatwell, 1989; Gauchet 1997) to designate "the seating patterns […] in the new National Assembly in which most of the nobility and clergy could be seen to take up the positions on the right" and those who "demanded a constitution and limitation of the King's power, occupied the left" (Eatwell, 1989, p.33). During the first Restoration those on the left side were seen as "the true champions of liberty", "spirited innovators", and standing for the principle of ""bourgeois" liberties", "whereas the "right" stood for tradition, hierarchy, and ascriptive social position" (in Gauchet, p.245). In an economic sense, the right stood for monopolies, while the left was more free market oriented (Eatwell, p.34). In a political sense, the right defended the absolute monarchy, while "the left [defended] a representative body elected by universal and equal suffrage" (ibid). Gauchet (1997) argued that in 1884 or by the second Restoration in France the picture was already different. Amidst the progression of industrialization, "the right promoted self-interest and entrepreneurial efficiency" and "the value of individual initiative and competition" (p.294-295). In contrast, "[t]he left emphasized the values of freedom of consciousness and individual choice.[...] In opposing ...emancipation of

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self-interests, the left insisted that self-interests must be subordinated to the will of all" (p.294-295)[102].

Eatwell (1989) explains that in 20th century Europe, as aristocracies were replaced with strong business classes, the Left became associated with socialism and the ideas of economic and social equality that would be ensured by the state. The Left then represented the interests of such groups as the workers and peasantry. Thus, if in the beginning of the 19th century the Left was associated with the bourgeoisie and opposed the old aristocracies, in 20th century Europe the Left was associated with exploited social classes and opposed the business elite. In both cases, however, the Left remained loyal to ideas of egalitarianism[103]. The Right instead increasingly supported the rising business elite, as well as some old aristocracies viewing markets as a solution to various social and economic issues (p.35). Eatwell, however, alludes that these opposing positions should be perceived rather as ideal types since even regimes which were seen as extreme left or extreme right utilized at least some of the principles of their "other". Eatwell explains that the Soviet Union implemented "former right-wing principles in the guise of the left!", while Fascism, a right-wing movement, utilized some left-wing principles (p.36). In the post-WWII era, there was an attempt to explain Right and Left oppositions in politics by using other political ideologies such as communism, socialism, liberalism, conservativism and

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[102] Yet Gauchet also argued that emergence of socialism split the left between "those who gave priority to political liberties and those who ascribed absolute necessity to social authority" or saw individual emancipation "in the framework of a clearly materialized primacy of the general interests" (p.294). The right also transformed and diversified "[b]etween libertarianism and conservativism, between the language of self interest and devotion to the spiritual, between the mobile power of money and the ideal of a landed community unified by ancestral loyalties and natural hierarchies, the internal tension of the right were no less significant than those on the left"(ibid). He also admits that these splits could diversify further.

[103] Nevertheless, the Left was not uniform across Europe. Some individuals, such as Lenin and the Bolsheviks, believed that socialism could only be achieved by revolution while others, such as the Fabians and Bernstein revisionists, believed that it could be achieved gradually (Eatwell, 1989, pp.34-36).

fascism[104], as well as to see Right and Left as an opposition between elitism and egalitarianism (pp.42-44). Lukes (1990) criticized Goldfarb who argued that with the end of Cold War there won't be any more difference between right and left, and between socialism and capitalism. Lukes (1990) insisted that in the ideal-typical sense two fundamental principles continue to distinguish Right from Left. The Left first remains loyal to "the republican ideal of equal citizenship" and, second, to the principle of rectification or "the progressive rectifying of involuntary disadvantage, and the continual seeking out of new kinds and new sources of inequality" to overcome (p.575). Lukes argued that, historically, the rectification principle started "with the franchise but then progressively encompassed constitutional rights, and later economic, social, cultural, gender-based, regional, and other forms of inequality" (ibid). This principle of rectification works not only across various types of inequality but also at the national and global scale. The Right, represented by various traditionalists, particularists, technocrats, libertarians and neoconservatives, instead seeks to "preserve hierarchies", "impose[s] a particular communal form on society" in order to "arrest the dynamics of rectification" and "equate[s] effective citizenship with ethnicity or nationality or religion" (p.576). The Right seeks to "devalue [the] public sphere and civil society" and, in a sense, "deny the very possibility" of the Left and rectification (ibid). Similarly, Bobbio (1996) in his study on the political thought of the distinction between Right and Left argued that the dividing line between the two (also as ideal-types) has involved both stances on egalitarianism. Left doctrine stands for a more egalitarian society, it "tends to play down the difference", while Right doctrine seeks to overstate differences (p.70). In practice, the Left seeks to encourage policies to minimize differences and

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[104] Communism and socialism respectively represented the extreme left and left, liberalism stood for the center, and conservativism and fascism, respectively, stood for the right and extreme right. Egalitarianism stood for the left and elitisms stood for the right.

to "make those who are unequal more equal, rather than utopian society in which all individuals are equal in every single thing" (p.71). In what follows, I will trace the meaning and working of the Right and Left distinction in post-Soviet Latvia, followed by a discussion of the wider implications of this discursive structure for social life in post-Soviet Latvia.

Dominant Construction of Right Code as "Sacred"

Construction of Right code as "sacred" in Diena: 1993 and 1995

In the 1993 pre-election cycle, construction of a clear distinction between Right, Left, and Centre in the public discourse began. A month before the first parliamentary elections subsequent to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the editorial board[105] of the newspaper *Diena* released a series of articles (Kandidātu programmmas....., 1993, May 13, May 18, May 20, May 25, for all p.2) which arranged all the parties according to their views on various economic issues (such as market philosophy, private property, distribution and welfare, taxes, social policy, unemployment and the role of the state in economics) and, according to their stance on these issues, classified each party as either Right, Left, or Centre. According to the authors, whose names were not given to the readers, the rationale for this classification was to "provide for their readers a demonstrative, objective, and trustful evaluation", so they could understand whether parties provided "serious, harmonious and coherent positions in all dimensions of their economic program" and whether "party programs represented right or left" views (my translation, Kandidātu programmes..., 1993, p.2). For this newspaper, the party programs were viewed as "serious" and "coherent" if they held a consistent view at least on five economic dimensions (see Table 7).

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[105] The true authors of these articles remain unrevealed.

These distinctions in the newspaper *Diena* carried both evaluative and descriptive dimensions. The evaluative dimension was strong in that all parties were located on a mathematical axis ranging from -3 to +3 where the left was located on the negative side of the axis while the right was on the positive side, leaving the centre in the middle or with a "0" value. An evaluative representation of Right, Left and Centre categories shifted in these articles depending on the dimension of analysis (for example, sometimes Centre was seen as located on 0, sometimes near 0 and sometimes between -1 and +1) (see Table 7). Bobbio (1996) argued that a centre can exist as an "included middle" or an "inclusive middle". If the centre category exists as an "included middle" it "relegate[s] the left and the right to the extreme margins of the political system" but in no way "invalidates the original antithesis" between Left and Right (p.5). The very "existence and raison d'être" of the included centre derives from this antithesis (ibid)[106]. Bobbio also argued that the included middle "does not eliminate" Left and Right "but draw[s] them apart" and "dispenses with the stark choice between left and right by providing an alternative" (p.7). In contrast, what he called an "inclusive middle" seeks to incorporate both opposites "in a higher synthesis […] therefore cancelling them out" (ibid). In terms of the Right, Left, and Centre representations in 1993 in the newspaper *Diena*, the centre functioned as included middle and not inclusive middle (see Table 7). Those in the Centre emphasized the stark contrast between Left and Right rather than cancelling them out. Even though an evaluative representation of the centre category shifted in these articles depending on the dimension of analysis, eventually, when the role of the state in economics was discussed, the Centre

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[106] Bobbio argues "what better proof could there be of the persistence of this dichotomy than the presence, even where there is pluralism, of a left wing which tends to perceive the centre as the right wing in disguise and a right wing which tend to perceive the same center as a cover for the left which does not wish to show its true collors" (p.7). In case of Latvia the centre was the category where the Right was hidden. For example, the party that won the 1993 election, Latvia's Way, was, within this classification, seen as centre but Nissinen's analysis (1999) depicts it to be a fairly Right-wing party. In the 1995 elections, Latvia's Way positioned itself as Right-wing party.

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distinction itself was cancelled out, leaving only Right and Left opposing each other (see Table 7). The role of the state in the economy was defined as either "important", where the state defined and controlled prices and wages and dominant sectors of economy - this represented the Left. Or, on the Right, the state only regulated the tax system, monetary policy, and protected private property and was not involved in the control of markets.

Representation of Right, Left and Center in newspaper Diena in 1993			
	Left	**Centre**	**Right**
Private property (Kandidātu programmas...(Privātīpašums), 1993, p.2) *For this dimension, the axis consists of "extreme left" which is denoted as -3. Centre which is denoted as 0. And, "extreme right" which is denoted as +3.*	Dominance of state property over private property and planned economy	Private and state property supported. Implementation of privatization.	Dominance of private property and private initiative
Market philosophy (Kandidātu programmas...(Tirgus filozofija), 1993, p.2) *For this dimension Left on the axis is seen as ranging from -3 to -2. Centre is denoted as located "near 0". And, Right is denoted as located from +1 to +3.*	Development of state monopolies, no willingness to foster competition	Monopolies that the state regulates with administrative methods, for example, with price control	Privatization of monopolies, competition as a tool to break up monopolies; increase of competition.
Distribution and welfare: taxes, social policy, and unemployment (Kandidātu programmas...(Sadale un labklājība), 1993, p.2) *For this dimension Left on the axis is seen as ranging from -3 to -2. Centre is denoted as located between -1 to +1. And, Right is denoted as located from +1 to +3.*	Progressive tax. Differentiated tax to various sectors of economy. Increase of taxes. The state cares for education, health, and social policy. The state guarantees minimal provisions for all. Employment is guaranteed for everybody.	Tax incentives seen as an instrument of various policies. The state cares only for the working poor, ill people and people with disabilities. Mixed insurance system. Unemployed shall receive some benefits. The state finances requalification	Same taxes for all ('equality'), decrease of taxes. Privatization of health sector. Establishing of private insurance system in social and health care. Individual shall care for himself. The state does not define minimal wage. The state

	Employer cannot easily fire employee. Social guarantees for all unemployed. Minimal wage shall be equal to subsistence wage.	programs of unemployed. Minimal wage corresponds to the capacities of the state budget.	shall not intervene in labor market. In the market economy, unemployment is functional.
The role of the state in economy (Kandidātu programmas...(Valsts loma lauksaimniecībā), 1993, p.2) *For this dimension the centre category disappears, leaving only Left and Right categories where one is located on the – part of the axis while the other on the + part of the axis.*	The role of the state in economy is important. The state defines prices, wages, etc. Direct state intervention in promising sectors of economy.	-	Economy shall rely on market forces. The state only regulates tax system and monetary policy, as well as protects private property.

Table 7. Representation of Right, Left and Center in newspaper Diena in 1993.

The descriptive dimension provided an explanation of what right, left and centre meant for the editorial board of this particular newspaper (see Table 7). These descriptions provided the readers' frames through which to understand the pre-election debate and the specific ideas promoted by the different political parties. The overall message was that Left parties supported strong state involvement in economic development and limited the power of market forces. Left parties regarded the state as responsible for redistribution of income, definition of minimal wage, and supportive of a progressive tax system. In some instances, some exaggerations were used: such as a conviction that Left parties stood for a state that limited competition. Given the recent Soviet experience, where for fifty years people were deprived of private property, overt competition was limited; to depict the Left in this way might not have been attractive. Left parties were also ascribed some very utopian ideas; for example, that the state shall guarantee employment to everyone. This latter characteristic, that the Left parties stood for full employment, corresponded to the Soviet propaganda, according to which the Soviet Union

provided "free healthcare and full employment" to its citizens as opposed to the USA (West) where unemployment was high and services expensive (Avramov, 2012, p.60). The Right, in turn, was presented as emphasizing the dominance of market forces, the privatization of public enterprises, competition, private initiative, low taxes for all, the non-intervention of the state in market - including that the state was not responsible for defining the minimal wage. Right parties also saw unemployment to be functional for the market. Overall the Right was depicted romantically as unleashing opportunities for individuals and private enterprises. Centre in this case supported a more mixed approach. It permitted the coexistence of private and state enterprises; the state provided social support only to some selected groups of society. The state, according to Centre parties, defined minimal wage according to the capacities of the state budget and not according to the basic needs or subsistence wage of the people.

In addition to these descriptions, parties were assigned numerical values. For example, a party might get a numerical value with respect to a particular economic dimension of -1.75. However, the principles by which parties' ideas on each economic dimension would determine their numerical value were not explained. Nevertheless, as presented to the public, these numeric values carried a certain evaluative weight. (Across the parties, each was clearly 'less' or 'more' than others) (see Figure 2 and Table 7). The very fact that the Right-wing parties were seen as positive and the Left-wing parties as negative, in the context of post-Soviet Latvia, carried some symbolic significance, an issue that became very apparent in the 1995 election cycle. In 1995 in *Diena*, the Centre category disappeared leaving Right and Left opposing each other as mutual opposites, where Right was good and Left was bad.

Kandidātu programmās par...				
	privatizāciju	tirgus filozofiju	sadali un labklājību	valsts lomu tautsaimniecībā
1. Tēvzemei un brīvībai	-0,69	0,4	-1	-1
2. Mūsu zeme	-0,35	N	-0,135	-1
3. Latvijas Liberālā partija	1,85	2,2	1,4	1,85
4. Latvijas Zemnieku savienība	1,1	-0,67	0,08	-1,05
5. Konservatīvie un zemnieki	0,5	N	0,55	0
6. Republikas platforma	-0,67	N	-0,2	-0,925
7. Liberālā alianse	2	1,95	1,125	1,775
8. LTF	0,05	0,33	0,25	0,48
9. Zaļais saraksts	0,2	1,35	-0,7	-1,08
10. Neatkarīgo savienība	-1,75	-1,45	-0,835	-1,85
11. LNNK	0,7	1,03	-0,87	-0,6
12. DCP	0,97	1,6	0,68	0,35
13. LSDSP	1,08	0,58	0,12	0,8
14. LDDP	-0,91	-0,28	-0,53	-1,04
15. Latvijas KDS	1,3	N	-0,53	N
16. Latvijas Vienības partija	0	N	-0,5	-0,5
17. Latvijas laime	N	N	N	N
18. Krievu nac. dem. saraksts	0,835	N	-0,45	-0,65
19. Saskaņa Latvijai	-0,63	-1,01	-0,525	-1,16
20. Saimnieciskās rosības līga	1,15	-0,075	0,4	1,03
21. Uzņēmība	0,33	N	-0,825	-0,675
22. Latvijas ceļš	1,35	1,6	0,8	1,03
23. Pretkomunistu apvienība	-1,4	N	N	N

- kreisa orientācija
+ labēja orientācija

N – programmā nekas nav teikts

Gan izvirzītā, gan šai programma   Tikai šai programmā

Figure 2. Numeric value ascription to political parties for 1993 elections in *Diena*. (Kandidātu programmas – balsotāju izvēle – Latvijas nākotne, Diena, 1993, May 25, p.2)

In the 1995 pre-election period, the newspaper *Diena* began to associate Right with West and development, as such all three were "sacred". To question the Right meant to argue against West and development. Ideas and policies, such as free markets, privatization of public enterprises, low taxes for entrepreneurs, a good environment for foreign direct investment, and the state's investment in infrastructure were seen as key factors leading to development[107]. Policy

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[107] Why exactly these policies were associated with development is also an important question, one that can also be answered within the framework of the discursive structures that permeated the post-Soviet transformation discourse. As we saw in the previous chapter, Latvia's economic, foreign, and eventually also internal policies where shaped by the expectations of the West. The West was represented by various European Union institutions, IMF, WB, etc.

principles that deviated from these were labeled "Left" and associated with the Soviet past. Similarly, as in 1993, in this period Right and Left also carried the visible evaluative semantics of "+" and "-".

As in the previous elections, *Diena* made a mathematical axis from -3 to +3 where Left parties were arranged on the negative part of the axis while Right parties were on the positive part of the axis. Similarly to the previous parliamentary election, also in this period, parties were evaluated according to their programs[108]. As a result of such evaluation, parties would get a concrete numeric value, e.g., -1 or 0.5 and location on the axis. As with last time, no explanation of how this value had been calculated was given. However, in contrast to the 1993 period, *this time the political spectrum had only Right and Left categories without a Centre*. This time slightly different economic dimensions were evaluated in order to classify each party as Right or Left, such as a party's stance towards private property, private initiative, social development, foreign trade, investments, as well as tariffs[109]. Generally Left was associated with state property and a planned economy, a strong social support system for citizens and regulated markets. Right, in turn, was associated with private initiative, private property, liberalism and "completely"[110]

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whose economic ideologies where framed by neoliberal economics, the principles of which are institutionalized in Washington Consensus.

[108] This time it was not specified that only economic programs were evaluated.

[109] With respect to private property „-3 stands for extremely Left approach with the complete dominance of the state property and planned economy, while +3 stands for extremely liberal approach to private initiative and the dominance of private property" (Labējie un kreisi Latvijā (Privātīpašums, privātā iniciatīva & valsts loma tautsaimniecībā), 1995, p.2). With respect to social development „extremely Left view means that the state shall care for the employment, health, education and retirement benefits of each individual, while Right views mean that the state does not have an obligation to care for the social provisions of their citizens" (Labējie un kreisie Latvijā (Sociālā attīstība), 1995, p.2). Only when it comes to the foreign trade dimension does explanation of mathematical ascriptions become more nuanced. Here +3 stands for „completely free" foreign trade, +2 to +1 stands for foreign trade that is partially regulated with import tariffs, while -3 stands for trade that is strictly limited with the state monopolies, -2 stands for the trade that is regulated only in separate sectors, and -1 to -2 stands for trade that is extensively state regulated with tariffs. Additionally Right parties openly welcome FDI (+3), while Left parties seek to limit and strictly control FDI (-3) (Labējie un kreisie Latvijā (Ārējā atvērtība&nodokļu politika), 1995, p.2).

[110] This adjective or quality is not my invention but was used so in public debate, emphasizing the contrast between Right and Left, between market guided and state controlled.

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free market ideas. Commentators in *Diena* would utilize these distinctions and their accompanying meanings.

Ainārs Dimants, a major commentator for *Diena*, was particularly eager to lobby for the Right parties. He criticized parties that supported labor unions, subsidies for peasants, or argued for the need to protect Latvia's agricultural market (Dimants, 1995a, p.2; Dimants, 1995b, p.2). In his view such support would not lead to "the rapid development of Latvia" (Dimants, 1995b, p.2). Closer to the elections he would argue that Estonia and Lithuania had elected Left governments and for this reason both would soon face a slowdown of their development. He was convinced by this and as such, tried to convince his readers that by choosing a Right oriented government Latvia could become the leader in economic growth among the Baltic countries (Dimants, 1995c, p.2). A few days before the elections his pre-election narrative was structured in the same way as Egils Levit's narrative[111] summarized in the beginning of the chapter. The choice between Right and Left was also the fundamental choice between West and East, between development and under-development, between liberalism and conservativism as opposed to socialism, as well as between security and insecurity, and social welfare and no welfare. He referred to the evaluative axis created by *Diena*, where Right was on the "+" side of the axis and Left on the "-" side of the axis, and argued that Right wing parties are

Liberal and conservative, national parties with the orientation toward the West, who are able to create a government with a unitary political orientation […]. Thus we have two groups of parties – Right and Left. Thus – by choosing one or other party, we can influence whether we are going to have a Right or Left government. Thus, when we choose, we shall remember that we need rapid development, and this can be ensured only by continuing with Right-wing reforms. This is the only factor that can guarantee also social welfare and security to Latvia. All the opposite are infeasible promises. (my translation, Dimants, 1995d, p.2)

As representatives of the coalition government, members of the Latvia's Way party which won the national elections in 1993, similarly and repeatedly insisted in *Diena* that Right

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[111] In fact, Ainārs Dimants did an interview with Levit's published on September 9 where Levit's expressed views presented in the beginning of this chapter where Right was identical to West and Development.

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wing policies were the right ones for development but due to societal pressures and Left parties,

they could not consistently implement these policies during the following two years. Edvīns

Inkēns, a deputy of the 5th Saeima and a member of Latvian Way, reiterated that only Right wing

approaches lead to economic development or, in his terms, "rapid economic liberalization":

> The experience of formerly poor European, American, and Asian countries confirms: economic development is ensured only by Right-wing policies – denationalization of enterprises, long-term investments of the state in infrastructure (roads, harbors, energy), decrease of taxes for entrepreneurs, establishment of good circumstances for foreign capital investments, transition to a system of health insurance and retirement foundations. Also the economic development of Latvia has no other alternative. […] If LC [Latvia's Way party] would implement more rapid economic liberalization, then, with the acceleration of economic development and living standards, the support for right wing politics would increase. However neither the government of Valids Birkavs, nor the government of Māris Gailis implemented consistent right-wing policies – both due to the pressure of society and due to Left-wing coalition partners (my translation, Inkēns, 1995, p.2)[112]

He was suggesting that only parliament, in which representatives of Right wing parties

dominated, could ensure that economic development takes place in Latvia. In contrast, Aigars

Jirgens, a member of Tēvzemei un Brīvībai party, insisted to replace this sharp dichotomy

between Right and Left with such categories as liberalism, socialism and conservatives (Jirgens,

1995, p.2). He tried to identify his party as conservative as opposed to social and liberal. Yet it

seemed, however, that he saw his party as an opposite to socialism and the conservative category

served as a way to differentiate his party as slightly different from the so-called Right or Liberal

parties.

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[112] Other members of this party would somehow argue that they are for liberalism but were not able to carry it out in a proper manner due to Left pressure and misunderstandings over its meaning. In this period, given the collapse of several private banks, rising unemployment, and poverty, *Diena* presented a debate whether liberalism in Latvia is in crisis (Diena, July 17, 1995, p.2; Diena, July 22, 1995, p.2; Diena, July 28, 1995, p.2; Diena, July 31, 1995, p.2). Within this debate, the overall conclusion was that liberalism was not in crisis in Latvia but that it was not yet properly implemented and that it was misunderstood. Some argued that it was due to the presence of Left ideas that liberalism was not properly implemented. Some argued that we had misunderstood liberalism as a total neglect of economic regulation. Uldis Osis, an economist, one of the founders of Latvia's Way party and a deputy in the 5th Saeima, said that liberalism was "not decline of regulation and control but regulation by implicit means – mostly with the help of finance instruments, by facilitating individual initiative, activity and enterprise" (Diena, July 28, 1995, p.2). This debate is important for this discussion as the dominant conviction was that it is the Right wing that stands for liberalism.

In very few cases, articles in *Diena* sought to challenge this distinction between Right

and Left in a way to accommodate ideas of redistribution and social responsibility, but these

attempts stayed marginal and relatively unnoticed. Ojārs Skudra, a member of Political Union of

Economists Tautsaimnieks party (TPA), for example, tried to explain that so-called "left" parties

such as his own were not against foreign direct investment, not against private property, not

against Latvia's Western orientation, as conventionally thought; their major difference was that

in terms of internal policy they highly valued "the principles of moral and social responsibility"

possible through a social market economy (Skudra, 1995, p.2). According to the dominant

narrative, strongly represented in *Diena*, a social market economy, however, would not be

compatible with Latvia's Western orientation and the kind of development it implied.

To strengthen support for the Right-wing parties among its readership, *Diena* also

published an article by Jeffrey Sachs, an economics professor from Harvard University, who

conveyed why Left was the wrong choice in the coming elections. Since Jeffrey Sachs was from

the West and from one of the most prestigious universities in the West, his opinion was seen as

having great power. In this article, Sachs admitted that people in other Eastern European

countries voted for Left parties because they had suffered from the economic reforms during the

transition period from the Soviet economy to a free market economy. In his view Left parties in

other Eastern European countries gained support especially from such vulnerable groups as

peasants and pensioners. He would further rhetorically and very generally argue that Left parties

were populists. In terms of their support for a generous social welfare system, he argued that

such "generous benefits" were characteristic of the Soviet model and ultimately caused the

collapse of the economic system (Sakss (*Sachs*), 1995, p.2). In his terms, to wish for a social

welfare state meant to impede development. Yet Jeffrey Sachs himself was a child of the Cold

War ideology within which the Right was "sacred" and the Left had to be dismantled since it was the ideology of the enemy. Harvard University's economics department, Sach's home, also represented neoliberal economic ideology which itself was seen as Right economics (Babb, 2001, ch.8). Far beyond Sachs, this trend to see Left and Right as "incompatible" was perpetuated through foreign expertise and the Latvian diaspora, such Western knowledge was deeply trusted by the ruling political elite and came to dominate political thought in post-Soviet Latvia (see the previous chapter and also the short note by Sommers, 2009, p.132). This "sacredness" of the Right was also aggravated by the Left's association with the Soviet past. Families of the Latvian diaspora abroad had to seek refuge from Latvia as a result of the Soviet occupation and for this reason still bore resentment towards the Soviet Leftist regime. People in Latvia more generally resented the Soviet occupation and thus were prone to reject ideas that were labeled "Left". However, in the other two newspapers the position looked somewhat different.

Challenging Right code in Neatkarīgā Cīņa and Panorama Latvii, 1993 and 1995

Before the 1993 elections, out of all three newspapers only *Diena* constructed descriptive and evaluative dimensions of the Right vs. Left distinctions in so pervasive a way. The other newspapers *rarely* evoked these distinctions. In *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, this distinction appeared only in some interviews with political party members or articles by political party members. For the most part in these cases, these terms were generally understood in terms similar to those of the newspaper *Diena*. For example, Edmunds Krastiņš, a deputy of the Supreme Council and a member of Latvia's Peasant Union party wrote to the editors of *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* to explain that the political spectrum can be divided into three categories: extremely liberal, a social market or

mixed economic model, and extremely left. According to this view, extremely liberal stood for the dominance of free markets and competition. The mixed model stood for temporary protectionism of agriculture and the internal market; and the extreme left stood for the strong involvement of the state in all sectors of economy and limitations of private property and initiatives (Krastiņš, 1993, p.2). In his terms, the idea of a social market implied that the market should not be dominated only by the interests of profit but also by some social concerns. He permitted more variations in terms of how parties can be classified and did not add to these categories an evaluative dimension.

In the 1995 election cycle, the newspaper *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* became more critical about this sharp distinction between Left and Right represented in *Diena*. Several articles in the newspaper *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* reprimanded their colleagues for the strong evaluative dimension of the Right and Left distinction presented in the newspaper *Diena*. Overall, *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* conveyed that a balance between Left and Right was needed in parliament. Sandris Točs, a commentator for *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, rebuked (Točs, 1995c, p.2; Točs, 1995d, p.2) the newspaper *Diena* for seeing Left wing as something negative and associating it with the Soviet past. He urged for a greater balance between both wings in the parliament (Točs, 1995d, p.2). "Left" in his writing was in quotes in order to emphasize that he saw this opposition as problematic and, to show it, he questioned the tendency to associate the Left with the Soviet past and Interfronte, a pro-Soviet movement in Latvia between 1989 and 1991:

According to Diena "Lefts" usually dream about returning in the bosom of CIS and revival of the Soviet command economy. […] Before the 5th elections to call somebody Left inevitably meant to destroy it, since society associated Left with odious communism and Interfronte[113] (my translation, Točs, 1995c, p.2).

The newspaper *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* also published various articles by authors who sought to explain how this distinction historically came into being; and espoused the view that for healthy

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[113] Interfront is a social movement that stood against Latvia's independence at the end of 1990s.

and democratic politics both wings were necessary recognizing that in Western social democracies both Left and Right coexisted[114]. In Chapter 2, we saw that, in 1995, the journalist Sandris Točs eagerly defended Latvia's European orientation. His stance on Right and Left ideas in politics suggests that, in this newspaper, Left and Right were not seen as identical to East and West. Rather than seeing Left as the opposite of West (since it was identical with East), several authors in *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* tried to render Left in terms more functional to Western democracies. Some authors who held this view in *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* represented parties, which, in *Diena*, were depicted as Left wing parties[115]. Yet at the same time, views that held dominance in *Diena* also appeared in *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*. Lapiņš, a member of Latvia's Way party, a party that won the 1993 elections and was ruling in 1995, conveyed that the Right wing was Western oriented, while the Left was suspicious about the West and thus preferred "a closed economy" for Latvia (Lapiņš, 1995, p.2). *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* thus provided an opportunity for a debate on Latvia's future where Left and West, and how they were interpreted in post-Soviet Latvia, could be seen as compatible. Nevertheless the dominant view, often held by the ruling elite and also held by *Diena* - where Left and West were constructed as incompatible - turned out to be more powerful.

Panorama Latvii seemed to do the reverse of what *Diena* did. Whereas *Diena* promoted the Right-wing parties, *Panorama Latvii* ridiculed them. For *Panorama Latvii*, in 1993, as seen in the previous chapter, the major interest in pre-election debate was how parties should address non-citizens and, more generally, also the welfare of citizens. In some instances, journalists in *Panorama Latvii* admitted that the parties popular among their readership were labeled as "Left" in the Latvian mass media (e.g., Щипцов, 1993, p.1). In other instances, *Panorama Latvii* would

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[114] Valdis Blūzma, a director of a Latvia's Institute of Free Market (Blūzma, 1995, p.2). Egīls Baldzēns, a member of LSDSP party (Baldzēns, 1995a, p.3; Baldzēns, 1995b, p.2).
[115] For example, Valdis Blūms was associated with Democratic Centre party. Egīls Baldzēns was associated with LSDSP party.

point out that Right parties in Latvia were extremely nationalistic and capitalistic and, in that sense, not very democratic in their orientation towards minorities and the working class (e.g., Сакулин, 1993, p.2). This newspaper, thus, saw Right in Latvia as incompatible with democracy – a position which was in stark contrast to that portrayed in *Diena*.

Journalists in *Panorama Latvii* utilized irony to bring out some inconsistencies in post-Soviet Latvia. Because many Russian speakers who immigrated during Soviet times were denied citizenship, journalists regarded current political leadership to be worse than that of the communists, since current leaders had disempowered some societal groups politically (e.g., Вежениекс, 1993, p.1). Thus the current leadership, which in *Diena* was seen as Right, liberal, Western oriented, democratic, and progressive, in *Panorama Latvii* was seen as suppressive. Thus, if in *Diena* Left ideas were somehow belittled as limiting initiative, freedom and competition, then in this newspaper these were rather Right ideas, which with the help of irony, were exposed as limiting the political freedom of some selected groups of society.

Also, in the 1995 elections cycle, *Panorama Latvii* remained loyal to its agenda advocating the rights to citizenship for those Russian speakers who immigrated to Latvia during Soviet times[116]. This newspaper very rarely evoked the distinction between Left and Right but when it did, it was mostly to challenge it, or to speak ironically about it. These distinctions, as in *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, were mostly presented in quotes. Journalists N. Beženieks (Вежениекс, 1995, p.2) published an article attacking Egils Levit's (Levits, 1995, p.2) classification of political parties in Latvia where Right and Left were seen as identical to the West and East and

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[116] Viktors Matjušenko (Матюшенок, 1995, p.2), for example, referred to the government as overwhelmed with "the governance impotence and radical irrationality" that saw as its major threat non-citizens while in fact from the perspective of people the major threat was the elite itself. Normunds Ozoliņas, a member of Līdztiesība, a so called Left party in Latvian language press, would challenge Left and Right distinctions in this press by saying that some Right parties in their economic programs pay attention to social welfare but, unfortunately, they only refer it to those who have Latvian citizenship (Озиш, Озолиньш, 1995, p.2)

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Development and Underdeveloped, which appeared in *Diena* on September 9, 1995 (and was presented in the beginning of this chapter). Beženieks referred to Edmund Burke, an Irish born political figure and philosopher, who argued that a good leader would not deny a society's former experience; instead a good leader would utilize existing experience and resources. For Beženieks this reference was an attempt to legitimize Left ideas as functional for a healthy society: In his view, Soviet experience was not necessarily useless. He was ironically comparing Levit's narrative to a traditional Latvian fairy-tale where "a lady had several kids: two wise but the third –socialist…"[117] By comparing Levit's rationalizing with traditional fairy-tales he implied that, for him, Levit's rationalizing is unsubstantiated. He did not agree that everything that comes from socialism is necessarily bad and in conflict with modern times. In his view, these were rather Right ideas, while their extremely "progressive orientation", nationalism, and anger at communists could impede Latvia's development or "melt Latvia". In his view, the stigmatization of the Left was not good for the overall well-being of society. *Panorama Latvii,* thus, saw Right as bad and not necessarily functional to modern democracies; while *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* saw prospects for both – Right and Left – in Latvia to be functional for modern democracy.

The pre-election debate in 1998 was satiated with discussion of the Citizenship law amendments. As we saw in the previous chapter, this debate was *primarily* structured by the West vs. East code where the West was seen as "sacred". In the debate over economic and social issues, however, the Right and Left distinction was not very pronounced and was occasionally replaced with a *liberal* and *socially oriented* distinction where the latter was interchangeably

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[117] Here in his irony he refers to the Latvian folktales which usually began that there was a father with three sons where two were smart but the third one silly. Usually at the end of these stories the silly son turns out to be the smartest and bravest.

called "sociķi" and "left". Thus the distinction would not be between Right and Left parties but between Liberal and Left parties[118]. In the Latvian context Right ideas were associated with Liberal ideas and in that sense the distinction between Liberal and Left parties was similar to the distinction between Right and Left parties[119]. In 1998, *Diena* favored the liberal approach, *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze* argued that both approaches (liberal and Left) were necessary for a healthy democracy, while *Panorama Latvii* openly favored the so-called "Left" parties and remained loyal in its support of Latvia's non-citizens and warned against the polarization of society across ethnic lines (Latvians-Russians), political identities (Right and Left) and value lines (Positive and Negative).

Despite the attempts by *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* and *Panorama Latvii* to challenge the Right vs. Left code, as represented in *Diena*, representations of this distinction in *Diena* remained dominant in the post-Soviet transformation discourse in Latvia. The Right was predominantly rationalized as good because it stood for private property, capital accumulation, and entrepreneurship. These Right ideas would become constructed as a source of development, social welfare, personal growth, and freedom. Left would be the opposite of Right, portrayed as impeding development, private initiative, market incentives and competition due to the strong state regulation of markets. In this dissertation I argue that viewing of West and Left as stark

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[118] NRA journalist Rolands Pētersons without favoring any side explains (Pētersons, 1998, p.2) that *sociķi* were for the welfare for all social groups, a regulatory role of the state, and the interests of workers. This wing supported both private and public enterprises, was against the privatization of large state enterprises that provided vital services, such as electricity and water, to the people. This wing was cautious about foreign investments and the monetary policy of the Latvian Bank. It stood for decrease of VAT and social tax. Liberals, instead, supported free competition and the withdrawal of the state from the market. They were for privatization, and a minimal role of the state. This wing favored foreign investment and supported stringent monetary and fiscal policy. The state, according to liberals, should invest in education and infrastructure since in this way it can create a good environment for entrepreneurs.

[119] In other contexts liberal ideas could be also associated with the Left. According to Gauchet (1997), in the beginning of the 19th century, Left was associated with liberalism and not Right (p.245). In the US context, the Democratic Party today is also associated with leftist and liberal ideas as opposed to more conservative and right ideas.

opposites and incompatible created an environment where people were more susceptible towards emigration.

West and Left Incompatibility in post-Soviet Latvia

Even though in post-Soviet Latvia there was a tendency to see Latvia's Western orientation as incompatible with Left ideas, there were Central and Eastern European Countries (CEE) where Left ideas were not discarded as belonging to the past and were utilized to form marketized economies that were embedded within broader society. A study of the transformations in the CEE countries suggests that the "most prevalent" ideas in the post-Soviet Baltics were those of "neoliberal market economics" or the Right ideas (Feldmann, 2001; see also Bohle and Greskovits, 2007; and Sommers, 2009). Bohle and Greskovits (2007) in their comparison of the Baltic States, Visegrad States, and Slovenia argue that the Baltic States were the most market radical or neoliberal and did not balance marketization and social protection, the latter understood both as social welfare and economic protectionism. The Visegrad countries retained social protection, but subjected it to market competitiveness; while "Slovenia's neocorporatist regime [was] characterized by a firmly institutionalized balance between marketization and both kinds of social protection, whereby business, labor, and other social groups [were] accepted as partners in shaping that balance" (pp.445-446). They identify various factors as to why the Baltic States differed from these other countries. They attributed this difference to the past legacies that urged the Baltic States to embrace more radical neoliberal reforms (see Table 8).

Reasons for each different type of capitalism	Slovenia/Neocorporatist capitalism	Visegrad states/embedded neoliberalism	Baltic states/radical neoliberalism
Legacies of the past	-Marketized economies in 1989 due to the "long experimentation with reform socialism" (p.446) -Inherited industries with skilled and highly skilled labor and could compete with its products with advanced countries.		-Economies were not yet marketized in 1989. Market reforms began only in 1991. -Inherited unskilled labor-intensive industries. -Large population of Russian speakers who immigrated during the Soviet times.
	-Under the Yugoslave federation developed relative autonomy, fairly participatory decision-making, and "produced managers, unionists, and bureaucrats who had the skills and were habituated to seeking accommodation between economic and social considerations" (p.452) -Ethnically fairly homogenous (p.452) -"Western oriented economy" (p.452)		
Perception about some of the past legacies	- As a former republic of the Yugoslave federation did not seek a radical break with its past but saw this past as an asset.	-Economic and market liberalization saw the state protection of ordinary people as an asset not a threat (p.454) -No clear division between the Left and Right (p.454). The Left principles of social protection seen as an asset in a situation of market shocks.	-Rush to distance themselves from the legacies of the Soviet past (p.450) -Soviet legacies: such as large Russian speaking population that immigrated during the Soviet times and strong market ties with Russia seen as a threat. As a result, identity politics and exclusionary democracy dominated (p.451).
Initial political choices in the post-Soviet era	-Good "coordination among social welfare, industrial, and macroeconomic policies" (p.448) -Good macroeconomic stability and well balanced public finance (p.448) -The Centre –left dominated (p.449)	- Mitigated market shocks for its industrial products with "protective regulation and tariffs, export zones, foreign trade and investment agencies, investment support funds, tax exemption regimes, and public development banks"(p.447) -"Alternation of right-wing and left-wing" (p.450)	-Market shocks were not mitigated with the similar vigor as in the Visegrad case. -Policies that facilitate inequality and social exclusion. "Low union density, decentralized uncoordinated wage bargaining and low coverage rates of collective agreements" (p.447) -Good macroeconomic stability and well balanced public finance (p.448)

			-Centre-right parties dominated (p.449) -Radical market reforms that seek to cut off ties with the East but stimulate with the West (p.451)
Advantages	-Easily attracted complex industry FDI	-Easily attracted complex industry FDI	- unable "to attract complex industry FDI" (p.458) -light industry investors did not invest in local facilities but "subcontract[ed] production to a multitude of small or medium-sized domestic firms"; these TNS also kept "wages low" and "work conditions unregulated" (p.461).

Table 8. Comparison of the past legacies and their influence on the transition in the Baltic States, the Visegrad States and Slovenia, Bohle and Greskovits (2007).

According to Bohle and Greskovits (2007), the Visegrad States and Slovenia started the transition with better conditions. In 1989, the Visegrad States and Slovenia had "relatively" better "marketized economies" in terms of "liberalization, privatization and market-oriented institution[s]" (p.446), fairly well "developed state institutions" (p.450)[120] and technologically more advanced industries with the human skills necessary to further develop these industries, thus allowing for these countries to look better in the eyes of FDI (p.447, 457). The Baltic States, according to the authors, inherited low-skilled and labor-intensive industries. Since the market reforms in the Baltic States started later than in the Visegrad States and Slovenia they found it harder to compete in terms of attracting FDI that could improve the competitiveness of the Baltic industries. The Baltic States had to "catch up" in order to be as competitive as the Visegrad States and Slovenia to attract FDI. Given the fact that the ruling elite already lacked self-confidence about what Latvia was and how people in Latvia were, I argue that the ruling elite

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[120] Some Visegrad countries began their economic integration in to the global economy already in 1960s and 1970s. Slovenia was part of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia and enjoyed some autonomy there.

might have eagerly implemented reforms that they were told would attract FDI (note: Bohle and Greskovits' observation that the Baltics sought to distance themselves from their Soviet legacies while the Visegrad states and Slovenia did not may also indicate some lack of self-confidence and shame about these Soviet legacies in the Baltic states). Latvia was more prone to "market radicalism" in comparison to Slovenia and the Visegrad states also due to its simultaneous shame about its Soviet legacies and greater confidence in Western expertise. It wanted to look good in the eyes of the Latvian diaspora in the West, foreign experts and donors in terms of its economic development, and thus eagerly followed their guidance and recommendations. The fact that Latvia's only advantage over Slovenia and the Visegrad states in terms of political choices in the post-Soviet era was Latvia's strong fiscal discipline and macroeconomic stability (Bohle and Greskovits 2007, p.448) was a result of persistently following foreign expertise and advice. Strong fiscal discipline and macroeconomic stability resulted from strictly following the Washington consensus[121] and Maastricht criteria[122]. The fact that social protection in comparison with Slovenia and the Visegrad states was not seen as well installed in Latvia (Bohle and Greskovits, 2007), by the same token, could be explained by the ruling elites' insecurity to act against the Washington consensus criteria that required the elimination of state protection. The ruling elites of Slovenia and the Visegrad states, due to their ability to see their past as an asset rather than a threat, were instead more able to accommodate the economic liberalization provisioned by the Washington consensus and Maastricht criteria with state protection, where the latter was seen as a necessary state policy in the situation of market shocks.

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[121] The Washington Consensus embodies the set of policies which represent neoliberal economic ideology (e.g., Evans and Sewell, 2013, p.37).

[122] The Maastricht criteria shall be followed if countries want to join the EU single currency euro. All these criteria are related to macroeconomics. They refer to inflation, budget deficit, national public debt, and interest rates. http://glossary.reuters.com/?title=Maastricht_Criteria

Bohle and Greskovits also argue that the successful integration of marketization and social protection in Slovenia might have resulted from the continuous dominance of a center-left government there. In the Visegrad States, the government shifted between centre-left and centre-right forms. Yet, in the Visegrad States, both – centre-left and centre-right – stood for a strong relationship between "welfare protectionism" and economic liberalization (pp.449-450, 454). Both in Slovenia and the Visegrad states, Left ideas were seen as compatible with their Western orientation. Even though Bohle and Greskovits (2007) indicate that in the Baltic States center-right governments dominated, they do not explain why these center-right governments tended to disregard social protection. From my former discussion in this chapter it is clear that, in Latvia at least, West and Left were not seen as compatible. Given that the West and Right codes and what they meant in post-Soviet Latvia were constructed as "sacred" and incompatible with the Left code, and given the emotional origins of the West code's sacredness in post-Soviet Latvia, I argue that social protection as a state policy was nearly impossible. The dominant public representations relegated social protection to the Left or the Soviet or the East and thus as an idea to marginalize and ridicule.

Right vs. Left as a symbolic code and its relationship of identity with such codes as West vs. East, Developed vs. Underdeveloped, thus, worked to formalize the dominant pre-election debate in post-Soviet Latvia. "Formal rationality" dominated over "substantive rationality" (Evans, 2003). The debate was not over *what specific kind* of development certain political or economic ideas may bring forward. The debate was shaped instead by sheer confidence that Right-wing policies, because of their association with the West code, would bring development while Left-wing policies would not. Right ideas were rationalized as standing for less state involvement, less protectionism, and a greater role for markets, while Left ideas were

rationalized as standing for more state involvement, more protectionism and less influence of markets. Development sociologists have also demonstrated that the neoliberal or Right wing arguments that less state involvement with less protectionism is a better state for societal well-being is too simplistic or formal (see particularly Evans, 1995 and also Chibber, 2003). More substantial issues are at stake. Instead of seeing the state in simple quantitative terms as "less state" or "more state", we need to ask "what kind" of state (Evans, 1995, p.10) and "what quality" and what "capacity" of state (in Chibber, 2003, pp.6-7) and for "what purpose". Both Evans (1995) and Chibber (2003) through the thorough analysis of South Korean, Indian, and also Evans' (1995) Brazilian cases demonstrated that if the state is "autonomous" and "embedded" it will be more successful in its development efforts. The autonomy of the state means that it has the capacity to discipline, guide, and support the business classes that work in those sectors that the state has deliberately defined as important for its national development. Embeddedness means that the state does not work for the interests of a particular business group or class but stands for the interests of society at large or of multiple groups, even the most vulnerable[123]. I argue that these discursive structures or codes, such as Right and Left but also West and East and Developed and Underdeveloped, limited the degree to which public elites in Latvia and possibly some other post-Soviet societies could discuss issues of national development in more substantive terms[124]. This limiting had further consequences for shaping the post-Soviet subject and society more broadly. Given this discursive structure and framing, it was difficult to talk about or wish for a more protectionist state or a state that considers

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[123] Even though the terms "autonomy" and "embeddedness" are brought forward by Evans (1995), Chibber (2003) also explains why India did not succeed in its development efforts emphasize both inability of the state to discipline its business classes as well as inability to take into account demands of labor.

[124] We can also say that these collective representations and codes that had dual character became realities "sui generis" or "social facts," in Durkheim's sense, that exert a coercive force upon us regarding the meaning and power ascribed to them by the society and history over some time.

redistribution of income as an important means to balance inequalities and ensure the overall well-being of society. Wilkinson and Pickett (2010) found that the less unequal a particular society is, the better various social indicators of that society are – such as physical and mental health, crime rates, education performance, social mobility and so on. As argued in the previous chapter, issues of socioeconomic well-being were, in Latvia, viewed as matters of individual responsibility and choosing within a market economy. The consumerism that came with marketization was also seen as requiring individual responsibility. The Latvian ruling elite saw consumerism as a sign of development. Consumerism as a desirable and welcome practice has been a common element in the public discourse since the regaining of independence. According to Right-wing ideas, thus, the state was seen as a facilitator and promoter of market forces and in that sense also consumerism. Given the cases of the other CEE and developing countries, social protection, understood in terms of economic protectionism and social welfare, as well as the capacity of states to discipline and control economic elite are important for national development. In the case of Latvia, these, however, were abandoned as relicts of the Soviet past.

Conclusions

In this chapter I argued that the Right and Left code not only worked as a discursive resource of political exchange, and a code upon which Latvia's political identity and modern state craft was constructed, but also framed and permeated social life itself. Readers of the largest Latvian daily newspaper, *Diena*, were socialized to see the political spectrum as divided in two "incompatible" parts where Right was "sacred" and Left was not. This "incompatibleness" emerged from the association of Right ideas with the West and Development. Due to this association, Right ideas were also invested with such emotions as

confidence and trust. In contrast, the Left was associated with the Soviet past and was invested with feelings of insecurity and shame. It was only in the newspaper *Diena* that Right and Left were continuously seen as incompatible, while the other two newspapers either tended to see Right and Left as functional and even necessary for modern democracy (in *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*) or ridiculed the Right as worse than the Left (*Panorama Latvii*). Nevertheless, the views in the latter two newspapers stayed marginal.

In the dominant transformation discourse, Left ideas were seen as standing for a state that limited market incentives, private property, private initiative, and competition. Right ideas stood for free market, private initiative and minimal state involvement in the market. For people in the post-Soviet era, ideas on both sides might have been appealing. Left ideas about the protectionist state might have resonated with many voters due to low living standards in the 1990s. Nevertheless, through the dominant admiration of Right ideas such Left ideas got marginalized. Right ideas were powerful since they provided a sense of freedom and of opportunities that were limited under the Soviet regime. For the Right, the state was primarily there for the market that was seen as a site where individuals could empower themselves. The Right was also associated with development and progress. Since the Enlightenment, people have been oriented towards progress and the future and, in that sense, the positioning of the Left as a relic of past worked to stigmatize Left ideas even further. As Durkheim said in 1915

> Even today, great though the freedom we allow one another may be, it would be tantamount to sacrilege for a man wholly to deny progress or to reject the human ideal to which modern societies are attached. Even the people most enamored of free thinking tend to place one principle above discussion and regard it as untouchable, in other words, sacred [...] (Durkheim, p.215)

In the post-Soviet era, to catch up with the developed world, in the dominant public discourse, was seen as the most urgent task for Latvia. According to the dominant description, to be with the Left meant to deny progress and development. This sharp divide between Right and

Left in the new democratic era worked to limit thinking that could otherwise have permitted ideas from both sides to be seen as mutually enriching. An evaluative dimension where, semantically, the Left was seen as "–" and the Right as "+", aggravated this incompatibility. People who generally wished for a protectionist state might then have felt uncomfortable supporting Left parties, since they did not seek to identify with the Soviet past, oppression of private initiative, competition, and market. It was either a distributive state or the market. Within this framing, the idea of a state that was concerned that the fruits of progress would be widely shared was a Leftist state and thus subject to marginalization. It was either private initiative or limited private initiative, and so on. Within this framing people were rendered to be subjects of the market and of consumerism rather than subjects of the state, subjects of competition rather than subjects of solidarity and distribution. However, in later chapters, I will try to show that not only among émigrés but also among those who remained in Latvia, a state that cares about social welfare and distribution has been meaningful. People I interviewed in Latvia felt reluctant to talk about the role of the welfare state while those who have emigrated were excited to talk about it. *I believe that the dominant meanings invested in the Right and Left distinction in post-Soviet Latvia stigmatized appreciation of the welfare state as a remnant of the Soviet past and its "mentality". Emigration experiences helped to remove this stigma – life in host countries proved to be compatible with private initiative, markets,* and *a protectionist state. This incompatibility between West and Left in Latvia, however, obscured opportunities to possibly shape Latvia into more developed state and also to shape Latvian society into one more socially and ethnically inclusive.*

Chapter 4 - Voice, Politics of Shaming and Social Bond: Protests by Schoolteachers and Farmers in Post-Soviet Latvia

In this and the subsequent chapters, I further explore how the structure of the transformation discourse or "symbolic codes" laid out in the former two chapters permeated social life. In this chapter particularly, I will demonstrate how the discussed discursive structure affected how the ruling elite handled socioeconomic discontent in post-Soviet Latvia. The transformation discourse in the 1990s suggested that the ruling elite had their confidence in Latvia's Western orientation and Right government. With regained independence popular sovereignty was seen as granted, and a 'better future' was formally rationalized as evolving from Latvia's Western orientation and Right policies (see ch. 2 and ch.3). The socioeconomic conditions of people in post-Soviet Latvia, nevertheless, worsened considerably. Various groups of citizens began to protest to urge action by the state to improve well-being and secure dignity. People generally asked for a social protection state, but the ruling elite in post-Soviet Latvia mostly saw these demands as incompatible with Latvia's Western orientation. To tame or silence the demands of protesting people, the ruling elite used a "politics of shaming" (Morris, 1992). This politics of shaming was based on the ideas encoded in the West and Right codes in post-Soviet Latvia.

As the Soviet Union collapsed, independence movements in Latvia fostered shared pride for the achieved independence. Regaining of independence could be seen as a moment of Durkheimian "collective effervescence", manifesting particularly in solidarity and pride. It was both a collective pride due to the great achievement of regained independence and an individual pride because each individual was part of this achievement. After 50 years of Soviet rule, which

did not recognize free voice and eventually struggled to provide even basic goods, people were also united in an ideal of popular sovereignty and the hope for a 'better future'. However, socioeconomic transformations in the post-Soviet era, and moreover how these were handled by the ruling elite, contorted initial feelings of pride and instead geared feelings of shame. In this chapter, I seek to untangle the working of the "symbolic codes" through an analysis of the public representations surrounding protests and strikes by school teachers and farmers in the first decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The dominant post-Soviet imagining and rationalization of transformations was restrained by the symbolic codes of West, Right and Developed, and rendered societal claims of the protesters incompatible with the imagined future by the ruling elite.

Shame, Politics of Shaming and Social Bond

In the previous chapter I discussed how the ruling elite were ashamed of their and their people's Sovietness, as well as anything they regarded as Soviet or coming from Soviet times or from the East. This shaming further permeated the state-society relationship itself. In this chapter, we will see that in moments of tension, rule occurred through a politics of shaming. Even though there was a conviction that people in post-Soviet Latvia should be active participants in the making of their well-being and their state as they wished, when they did so through the means of protest and strike, the ruling elite sought to shame them for this behavior. It was not any particular institutions or norms that were utilized to discipline and socially control people, but emotion. According to Barbalet (2004), the utilization of emotion in discipline works

through "the actors' relations to self" or his own "self-assessment" (p.117)[125]. This self-assessment is induced by others within a society. Barbalet, in his review of various scholars (such as Scheff, Lewis, Smith, Cooley, Kemper, etc.) who have discussed the emotion of shame, suggests that shame emerges from our interactions when we observe our own actions and how we understand them to be perceived by others. From these interactions and the mechanisms we use to cope with them, various types of shame may emerge. For example, we may feel shame if we perceive that our conduct deviates from acceptable and conventional rules; to minimize this shame we would seek to avoid such conduct and in that sense conform to the societal expectation. However, shame may also create denial and rage at those who do not accept the self as he/she is, thus inducing a "denial of shame" (see in Barbalet, 2004, p.120). Perceived excess status in society and one's perception that he/she is not able to justify it may also generate shame which may further translate into anger and guilt (see Barbalet's discussion in ch.5). In this chapter, we will see how the ruling elite tried to trigger shame to tame certain behaviors and utilized a "politics of shaming". Bonnie Morris (1992), in her discussion on the creation of hierarchy among women, argues that a politics of shaming has been used to "separate "good" woman from "bad"" and, in that sense, controls which behavior in society is desirable and which not (p.203). For example, "Puritan colonists and other English immigrants to North America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries brought with them legal, moral, and religious codes of conduct severely limiting female behavior" (ibid). In post-Soviet Latvia, the ruling elite, through the politics of shaming, tried to frame protesting and striking as a bad behavior. I will argue that while this political practice of shaming might have triggered conformity among some, among

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[125] Here Barbalet engages in a discussion with Foucault who in his major works saw that disciplining is usually done by "external manipulations of subjects by means of power" that use "administrative and cognitive techniques" (p.116).

others it may instead have led to denial and rage. This discussion is important since Scheff (1990) argues that shame can affect social bonding within a society.

According to Scheff (1990) social relations are mediated by the emotions of shame and pride. Successful communication that results in mutual understanding contributes to positive emotions. Negative emotions, which may arise with mutual quandary, may delegitimize the other party. Delegitimization or no ratification by the other party may threaten the social bond. In fact, Scheff argues that the social bond can be understood just through such particular emotions as pride and shame (Scheff, 1990, 1994, 2000, 2003):

> A key aspect of the bond between persons and between groups is the emotion of pride and shame […] pride generates and signals a secure bond, just as shame generates and signals a threatened bond. For this reason, these two emotions have a unique status relative to social relationships (Scheff, 1994, p. 3)

In post-Soviet Latvia, the sacredness of the West code was parallel to shame over Latvia's Sovietness and thus equated to a lack of pride in how people in Latvia were perceived. In moments of tension, when people turned to the ruling elite to express their concerns and seek some protection, the ruling elite did not recognize their concerns and, therefore, did not acknowledge their efforts at living through such difficult times. Instead, the elite opted to shame such people for their behavior. Even though Latvia's regaining of independence generated strong feelings of pride, shame – as an associate of the West and Right codes and what they predominantly meant in post-Soviet Latvia – emerged as an important emotion of the post-Soviet transformations.

Collective Effort and Pride of the Independence Movement

Various social movements that sought to break away from Soviet rule helped the independence efforts (Kasekamp, 2008; Eglitis, 2002; Pabriks and Purs, 2001; Dreifelds, 1996; Karklins, 1994; Lieven, 1994). Some of these movements sought to revive Latvian traditions,

culture, and language. Some were inclusionary in that they stood against the environmental

degradation fostered by the Soviet industrialization project, and for universal human rights[126].

Above all, these movements primarily sought to challenge the Soviet order and open the space

for a more democratic society. For these movements, the dividing line was not so much between

various ethnic and social groups or people, but primarily between the people and the Soviet

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[126] At the end of the 1970s and in the beginning of the 1980s, "folk music ensembles and individual enthusiasts began to revive […] [Latvian] traditions" (Karklina, 1994, p. 69). The first ethnic groups to exhibit folklore activism were Livs but in 1976 a cultural group Skandinieki organized to embrace the Latvian population with its various ethnic groups. Skandinieki traveled all around the country trying to revive Latvian songs and traditions, becoming the first movement boosting Latvian self-esteem (Dreifelds, 1996, pp. 53-4). The Latvian Ministry of Culture tried to limit the activities of folk-culture groups due to the perception that ""beneath the song there lies something much more powerful"" (ibid). In the first years of the1980s, the self-esteem of oppressed Soviet subjects was revitalized through activities which sought to improve the environment. This movement chose to use the tactics of repairs and street sweeping. Nature had to be rescued from the dust of the oppressor. Karklina (1994) suggests that "the deep appreciation of nature" was the "core aspect of a constructive traditional Latvian identity" (p.69). According to Lieven (1994) environmental movements provided legitimate space for resistance in the Baltic republics because they "had a partially tolerated place in the Soviet (and especially Russian) scene" (p.220). The first such environmental activities sought to "repair [...] old churches and architectural monuments" (Dreifelds, 1996, p.54), as well as other community projects. These types of communal activities are called talkas. Under the supervision of "the Environmental Protection Club" more than hundred talkas were carried out in the 1980s (Karklina, 1994, p.69). In the context of these small grass-root activities, more manifest environmental claims were made. "On October 14, 1986, Dainis Īvāns and Artūrs Snips published their article in the newspaper *Literatūra un māksla*, criticizing proposed Soviet plans to build the Daugavpils hydroelectric station [HES]"(Eglitis, 2002, p.34). Due to the involvement of mass media, this claim received widespread resonance and support with the public, eventually preventing the construction of HES. Some scholars argue that there was a fear that "a hydroelectric dam on the Daugava river, the expansion of open-pit phosphate mining in north-eastern Estonia, and the construction of a third reactor at the Ignalina nuclear power plant in Lithuania" (Kasekamp, 2008, p. 161) will bring more immigrants from other Soviet Republics to work in these projects; and this might endanger already vulnerable Baltic identities (ibid.). In the case of Latvia, the Daugava river also had a strong symbolic meaning. It has been "well known to Latvians from songs like "Daugav' abas malas" (Shores of the Daugava) and the epic "Lāčplēsis." The Daugava is widely held to be Latvia's "river of destiny", and the [environmental] campaign drew from and appealed to this sense" (Eglitis, 2002, p. 36). In the summer of 1986, parallel to these pronounced environmental activities, the movement for human rights, Helsinki-86, emerged. This movement was established by three workers in the city of Liepāja. The purpose of this organization was "to raise the issue of Latvia's political past as an independent state and as a victim of Soviet oppression, which it [Helsinki-86 group] did by issuing statements and marking politically significant holidays at symbolic places" (Karklina, 1994, pp. 69-70). In June 14, 1987, a memorial day of mass deportations of 1941, several thousand demonstrators, particularly working-class youth, put flowers at the Freedom Monument in the capital city of Riga (e.g., Karklina, 1994, Dreifelds, 1996, Lieven, 1993). The Communist elite, as a response, tried to limit the activities of this organization by arresting its leaders (ibid). This event by Helsinki-86 sparked widespread resonance and gave courage for other explicit protest activities to emerge. This event "was followed by demonstrations on August 23, the anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact126, and November 18, the anniversary of Latvia's first declaration of independence" (Lieven, 1994, p. 221). For example, Helsinki-86 asked for the publication of the secret protocol – The Molotove-Ribbentrop pact. In 1988, the Environmental Protection Club "protest[ed] against the building of a metro rail system in the capital city of Riga", as well as "the pollution caused by the paper mill at Sloka, the pollution of the Bay of Riga", etc. (Eglitis, 2002, p. 42). All of these grassroots movements contributed to the empowerment of the society and gave a conviction that the true independence can be achieved.

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regime. Scholars emphasize that the independence of Latvia was possible not only because of Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnosts,* which encouraged freedom of speech among 'silenced' Soviet populations, but also because of social movements that sought to challenge the Soviet order (Kasekamp, 2008; Eglitis, 2002; Pabriks and Purs, 2001; Dreifelds, 1996; Karklins, 1994; Lieven, 1994). All of these movements prepared the ground for a "collective political subject" and solidarity to emerge (Dzenovska and Arenas, 2012). This solidarity was at its peak during the barricades against the Soviet military in 1991 (Dzenovska and Arenas, 2012).

In the spring of 1990 in all three Baltic countries, declarations of independence were signed. Soon after, Soviet military groups tried to seize power and prevent attempts at independence. In order to counter these military attacks and secure independence, Latvians came together in January 1991 to construct barricades around the most strategic buildings and roads in the capital city, and offered themselves as shields to military attacks. Dzenovska and Arenas (2012) argue that these barricades helped to articulate a "collective political subject." According to the authors, these barricades, both materially and discursively, established "an unprecedented solidarity which disrupted modern practices of governing that managed the population through difference, for example through differences between ethnic groups or between socioeconomic classes" (p.648). All social and ethnic groups at the barricades stood as one (Daugmalis in Dzenovska and Arenas, 2012, p.652). Independence was won together. In that sense, regaining independence was a moment of "collective effervescence" and "pride." It was both a collective "pride" due to the great achievement of regained independence, as well as an individual "pride" because each individual was a part of this achievement. This was a great opportunity, in the renewed Republic of Latvia, for collective efficacy and effervescence to be the basis for a united and empowered society.

Several scholars, nevertheless, have demonstrated an escalation of ethnic division in the public and political space immediately after independence was regained *de facto* in August 1991 (Lieven, 1994; Dreifelds, 1996, Eglitis, 2002, Bohle and Greskovits, 2007). Lieven (1994) points out that in the years prior to independence, the Popular Front of Latvia, an organization that consolidated independence movements, stood for multi-ethnic democracy and the equality of all people living in Latvia. In the fall of 1991, however, it already referred to Russian speakers who immigrated to Latvia during Soviet rule as "illegal immigrants" (p. 303). As we saw in the previous chapters, one explanation was that this was due to the symbolic structure that came to dominate the post-Soviet transformation discourse in Latvia. In the public space, the Soviet, the Russian, and the East were seen as synonymous and exclusive to the West to which Latvia sought to belong (see chapter 2, and Mole, 2012, Eglitis, 2002). This dichotomous thinking as a means of constructing a new Latvian identity discredited the Russian speaking community and facilitated some societal division along ethnic lines. Through these symbolic and discursive means the "collective political subject" began fragmenting along ethnic lines. In what follows, we will also see that this fragmenting, due to the sacredness of the West and Right codes and the politics of shaming, soon began occurring along other social lines as well.

Protests by Schoolteachers and Farmers in the 1990s

Socioeconomic Context and Protests

Deterioration of socioeconomic conditions in the 1990s raised discontent among various socioeconomic groups. The data indicate that people were not satisfied with the socioeconomic course of development. "Real wages decreased by 60 percent between September 1990 and September 1992 […]" (Dreifelds, 1996, p. 114). Throughout the 1990s the state defined

minimum wage remained significantly lower than the state defined subsistence level consumer basket (Central Statistical Bureau data, 2015)[127]. A survey (Nissinen, 1999, table 11.1, 11.2), showed that in 1991, 60% were happy with the direction Latvia had chosen; in November 1992, this number had dropped to only 31%. In 1991, 57% considered market economy the right choice; in 1992, the figure had dropped to 36%. Gassmann (2000), based on the Latvian Household Budget Survey 1996, reported that

> [m]ore than ten percent of the Latvian population is very poor, living with less than 24 LVL[128] per capita per months. According to the minimum wage poverty line, 40% of the population is poor, and 67% are poor, taking the value of the crisis subsistence minimum as a yardstick (p.5).

These data are not surprising given that Latvia, similarly to other Eastern European countries and developing countries, transitioned into a neoliberal, Right-wing state. Across the globe many countries that have embarked on a neoliberal path have experienced deteriorating socioeconomic conditions for some of their populations (see Robinson, 2003; Babb, 2004). In comparison with other Eastern European countries, the Baltic States developed into purely neoliberal states (Bohle and Greskovits, 2007, p.443). They were more market radical and less welfare-oriented than Slovenia and the Visegrad states (p.449). Bohle and Greskovits (2007) contend that one of the reasons for this was the absence of social protests in the Baltic States (ibid)[129]. Although I agree that Latvia became market radical which undermined social aspects of national development, in what follows *I will show that it was not due to a lack of social protests that the ruling elite found it somehow easier to install a Right-wing or neoliberal government; rather, it was due to the shaming and persistent individualization of social issues, a consequence of the vigorous admiration of the West and the Right codes and what they predominantly meant in post-Soviet Latvia.* As a mechanism to silence people who chose to protest, the ruling elite used "politics of

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[127] This discrepancy remained in place until the first decade of the second millennium.

[128] According to the 1996 equivalent in US dollars, this was 43 to 44 dollars. http://fxtop.com/

[129] For other reasons, see the discussion above in chapter 3.

shaming"[130], a "divide and rule" strategy, some threats, and heavily promoted individualism or individual solutions to what we would see as social issues.

In the 1990s, various groups utilized perceived opportunities for democracy and raised their concerns through street protests. In the new democratic context, people hoped that their 'voices' would be heard and mutual communication about their concerns with state representatives would take place. For example, in 1991, factory workers of VEF (a State electro-technical factory) expressed their concerns about declining wages, and farmers expressed their discontent about the lack of access to financial means to develop their farms (Lapsa, Metuzāls, Jančevska, 2008, p. 70-1). In November 1991, physicians protested for increased wages and improvement of widely deteriorating socioeconomic circumstances (Piketē pat mediķi, 1991, p. 1). In December 1994, medical personnel protested again to show their dissatisfaction with the government's health care budget, as well as low wages (Priedīte, 1994, p.2; Piketā pie Saeimas pulcējas mediķi, 1994, p. 1; Дмитриева, 1994, p.1). In 1994, teachers went on strike twice due to their low salaries and low funding for the school system (November and December editions of *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* and *Diena*, 1994). In 1994, people also protested against the privatization of telecommunication services (Mednis, 1994, p. 2). From 1996 to the present day, farmers and teachers have protested regularly (*Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, *Diena* and *Panorama Latvii*). Throughout the 1990s, people who were not granted citizenship used protest as a means to show their disappointment about their marginal status within society (Panorama Latvii). In the summer of 2000, when the meeting of the European Reconstruction Bank was held in Riga, farmers protested in order to express their concern about subsidies (Zepa and Kārkliņa, 2001, p. 341). "Medical personnel have been accelerating protests during the spring of 2001, one of the

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[130] Bonnie Morris (1992) discusses how "politics of shaming" has been used to silence women historically thus discouraging them from actions to empower themselves.

culminations being nationwide picketing activity engaged in by hundreds of nurses in Riga and other cities on March 8, 2001" (p. 342). All kind of social and ethnic groups participated in these protests.

For further analysis, I will look at protests by schoolteachers and farmers, because protests by these groups repeated throughout the first decade of independence. Schoolteachers' protests and farmers' protests also seemed to be the largest ones during the first decade. We will see that the ruling elite dealt with the rising discontent by utilizing shaming and emphasizing importance of the individual efforts as a means to silence people. The narratives of the ruling elite socialized people to think of protests as disruptive to Latvia's Western orientation, national development and other people. The ruling elite sought to silence people by inviting protesters to work hard (and not protest) and to not question the state's policies as a way to prosperity. The ruling elite rendered common social problems as issues caused by individual conduct. Further analysis will also show that the ruling elite were unwilling to engage in negotiations with the people and the associations that represented them.

Schoolteachers' protests

All of the following schoolteachers' strikes took place in the fall, coinciding with the beginning of the school year in Latvia and the Parliamentary budget debate for the following year. In August 1994, the Cabinet of Ministers and the Ministry of Education and Science made a decision to increase schoolteachers' salaries by the end of the year. To emphasize the worrisome socioeconomic conditions of schoolteachers on September 2, which is the second day of the academic year in Latvia, schoolteachers organized a warning strike. They voiced their concerns about deteriorating working conditions and low wages. Jakovs Pliners (Плинер), a

director of a college "Evrika" explained to a journalist the situation school teachers and schools were in:

> School teachers are humiliated economically – their salary is below the average in the country. Today they survive, or in other words, it is hard to put in words their situation. They need to buy books, go to theater, travel but their salary is not even enough for bread and utility fees. (my translation from Russian, Плинер, 1994, pp.1-2).

He also explained that the funding allocated to schools is so low that it is not even possible to buy books, or do necessary renovations, and that there are not enough teachers, including Latvian language teachers in Russian schools[131]. Despite this warning strike, salaries had not been increased by December and, according to the teachers, nor had any realistic offers been made by the government. In December, a strike was organized by The Trade Union of Latvia's Education and Science Employees (LIZDA)[132] which continued for over a week. In a letter to *Panorama Latvii*, school teachers from Secondary School No.80 emphasized that theirs was a "fight" not only for their own benefit but also for the benefit of their "common future." They made clear that this "fight" was so that a "civilized Latvia won't need to be ashamed in front of a civilized Europe" (Орлова, 1994, p.1). School teachers not only demanded that the government begin wage reform and allocate more funding to the school system but also that the state treat school teachers in ways that would be comparable to those in "civilized Europe". From the school teachers' perspective, living standards and their treatment in Latvia were not comparable to those in Europe. They felt that Latvia should resemble the West but, as will be argued, they had a different understanding from the ruling elite of what the state should do to make this

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[131] Similar issues were presented by one of the strike participants to a journalist from *Panorama Latvii* on December 7, p.1, 1994. This school teacher explained that older school teachers wanted to retire but the younger ones, due to their low incomes, no longer wanted to work for the school system. She explained that because the government only paid teachers' salaries, items, such as chalk, had to be paid for from their already low incomes; while even classroom renovations were paid for by money collected from parents. There was also a perceived fear that schools where the Russian language was used as a medium would suffer the most from such tight allocation of funding.

[132] An article in *Panorama Latvii* illustrates the scale of the strike. From Liepāja district out of 34 schools 30 schools participated in the strike (e.g., Федотов, 1994, p.1).

happen. The problems and issues school teachers identified were also a matter of pride since, due to their poor wages and funding, they were not able to devote themselves to the cultural and intellectual enrichment they regarded as crucial for their profession.

The schoolteachers' strike was also supported by people working in the field of culture and by medical employees. These groups also participated in the street protests, showing solidarity across various professional groups. The representatives of the Cabinet did not try to negotiate with the protesters, but instead tried to prevent further protests through shaming, threats and by pitting groups against one another.

On November 25 on the first page of *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, the second largest daily newspaper in Latvia at the time, the Press department of the Cabinet, led by the Prime Minister Māris Gailis from the majority party Latvijas Ceļš, issued an announcement: "The Cabinet knows and Understands the Problems in Education." Although the title of the announcement appears empathetic, the content of the article sounds more like a threat. Representatives of the Cabinet were not empathetic or understanding towards protesters, but instead rhetorically pitted various groups – such as pensioners, doctors, and the needy – against each other. The dominant view of the Cabinet's announcement was that the conditions of schoolteachers and their families could be improved only at the expense of other societal groups:

In order to economize 50 million lats, we have to revise social security, including pensions (it is planned to allocate [Ls 320 milj.], health care [Ls 45 milj.], state security [Ls 23 milj.], or legal security or internal security (Ls 59 milj.). Which finger to bite? Unfortunately, none of them will be less painful than the others. Should we cut child benefit, pensions or salaries of doctors? (my translation, Valdības preses dienesta paziņojums, 1994, p. 1)

Later in the announcement, another alternative to dealing with the limited budget is offered:

We can significantly increase expenses for education only when we achieve an increase in industrial output and improve tax collection (ibid).

This alternative shows that the funding to education was seen as dependent on the results in markets and state finance. Such a stance corresponded to Right-wing notions that were dominant

in Latvia; and, according to which, the state served as a facilitator of market forces, tax collector and regulator of the monetary system (see Chapter 3). This announcement ended by labeling prospective strikes as the key danger in this problematic budget situation. Teachers were invited to give up the strike and instead choose work as a strategy to improve their situation and the educational situation in general. This suggestion by the Cabinet disparaged the protesters, given that one of the major issues raised by schoolteachers was that they were working two shifts in order to provide for themselves and their families. The announcement to some extent humiliated the claimants who were already working hard:

> The Cabinet will do everything possible in order to find a solution for the imminent danger which could come out of a new strike of teachers. (…) [At the end of the announcement:] Strikes can only deconstruct. In order to build something – one has to work! (ibid)

Individual hard work was favored over the redistribution of funding that could have potentially ensured a decent living standard for the majority. Some leading politicians in media interviews showed arrogance and ignorance of the socioeconomic circumstances of the protesters. They threatened schoolteachers with the collapse of the national budget if they continued to strike. The leader of the leading political party, Latvijas Ceļš, Valdis Birkavs, in his response to the protesters in December, labeled them as "little men," implying that schoolteachers were not capable of understanding the overall socioeconomic and political situation as did the ruling elite:

> To fulfill the requirements of the teachers would mean to destroy the whole structure of the national budget. It creates more problems than it solves, but it does not worry a little man. (my translation)

Photographs on the first page on December 8 in newspaper *Panorama Latvii* showed school teachers with posters that responded to this humiliating statement: "Big man, you are not aware of your mission on behalf of your people!" and "Mr. Birkavs! How may a little man become big

with 45 lats per months[133]?" Even though the statement by Valdis Brikavs attempted to shame the people, these counter-statements reveal their rejection of this shame.

This "politics of shaming" was a strategy designed to suggest that what the ruling elite portrayed was good conduct while what the school teachers did was bad conduct. The ruling political elite depicted and regarded these claims upon the government and protesting as irrational and a matter of a bad conduct. I argue that this notion emerged from the West and Right code meanings. School teachers were expected to deal with their socioeconomic misfortunes by utilizing their own creativity and self-initiative and not demand help from their state. Additionally, it could be argued that the ruling elite may also have found these notions, and their publicity, rather convenient given that their leadership was not generating better socioeconomic circumstances for their people.

This narrative that shamed and threatened protesters was mostly characteristic of the ruling elite and not necessarily all politicians. Politicians from opposition parties who were not part of the Cabinet of Ministers showed support for the protesters. Opposition politicians warned the ruling elite that the 'voice' of the people signaled that the course of development Latvia had chosen was problematic. For example, in a political debate with other politicians, Mrs. Kreituse, a representative of the Democratic Party, stated that "[t]eachers, by protesting the Cabinet, have demonstrated that the economic policy of the government is wrong" (in Seleckis, 1994, pp.5-6). A former Minister of Human Rights additionally agreed that the treatment by the ruling elite of school teachers was humiliating and that he, as a deputy, was ashamed that his salary was four to five times greater than that of school teachers and academics (Лапидус, 1994, p.1).

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[133] At that time 1 LVL=1.93841 USD. See http://fxtop.com/en/historical-exchange-rates.php

Nevertheless, the dominant view among the ruling elite was that striking and protesting was not an acceptable way to communicate concerns.

Shortly after the December strike, on the eve of 1995, the Prime Minister Māris Gailis gave an interview to the largest newspaper, *Diena*. In the interview, he stated explicitly that the current socioeconomic situation resulted from the behavior of each member of society, thus absolving the state of its responsibility for the issues raised in the protests.

> In a period of one year, we have to achieve consciousness by the people that this is their state. They themselves through their action or inaction are responsible for national development of this state. I am most concerned about the alienation between the citizens and the state. What concerns me is that they [the citizens] just look on and judge whether it [the situation in the country] is going well or badly. Ok, they identify that it is not going well, and it is with good reason. However, if they won't participate, they won't achieve anything. Thus I always repeat – everything depends on you. If you will allow racketing[134] yourself, then it will remain like this. If you don't understand that taxpaying is a patriotic duty, then none of the state institutions will be able to collect anything (my translation, Gailis, 1994, p. 2).

In the interview, he preached for people's participation without acknowledging that in the months leading up to the interview several protests had taken place. In December 1994, not only schoolteachers and medical staff, but also large families, had participated in strikes, raising concerns about worsening socioeconomic conditions. Protestors were also demonstrating against the privatization of the largest telecom company, *Lattelecom*, a process which lacked transparency and accountability. During his interview, the Prime Minister did not acknowledge the December strikes, demonstrating that this was not the participation he was expecting from the people. His undermining of these protests also pointed to an estrangement between the ruling elite and the people[135]. He emphasized taxpaying as the most significant aspect of citizens' participation and patriotism. He limited the state-society relationship and the concept of patriotism to something as instrumental as taxpaying. His narrative also implicitly proposed that socioeconomic issues could be solved by encouraging citizens to pay taxes more diligently and,

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[134] By racketing, in this context the Minister means the combination of demeaning behavior and exploitation.

[135] The journalists tried to ask about the strikes but the Prime Minister was very formal and did not elaborate about them.

otherwise, by trying to solve things themselves. This shows some resonance with the Right code which, in post-Soviet Latvia, was imbued with such meanings as private initiative and low state involvement in socioeconomic matters or, more precisely, the view that the state primarily regulates the tax system, monetary policy and protects private property (see chapter 3 on Right and Left codes).

There is some evidence that this absolving stance of the ruling elite was alienating for the people. A teacher from Ogre, the fourth largest city of Latvia, wrote to the newspaper *Neatkarīgā Cīņa* about the December strike:

> During the strike on December 6, I wanted to submit a letter of claims from my collective. There was increased security by the police and the security service; at the same time there was silence in the Cabinet building […] I also could not submit our claims to Vaivads [the Minister of Education and Science]. A policeman explained to me that there is a request not to let anybody get to Vaivad. (my translation, in Seleckis, 1994, p. 6).

Her story shows the disconnection within the state-society relationship. Not only does her narrative indicate alienation, but also the humiliation and shame of the schoolteachers, who were contained by policemen with batons.

Letters of readers published by the newspapers showed that people held various views about the deeds of school teachers. It could be also seen that views of the readers resonated with those of the ruling elite. Some people disapproved of the strikes since they feared that allocation of additional public funding to education would decrease the funding for other societal groups, suggesting that pitting various societal groups against one another might have worked:

> If their claim for higher salaries will be approved, the national budget again will be in deficit. And the poor will suffer. Child benefits won't be increased; however for many it is the only income to survive. There is a need! Everyone needs. Don't pull off the already thin blanket for your own benefit. (my translation; a mother of three children in Kāpēc streiko *Latvijas skolotāji*, 1994, p. 3)

> I am 50 years old, I had worked in a school for more than 20 years. I do not support the strike of teachers. Their work load per day is 4 hours, and for that teachers earn more than 50 lats[136] per month. I, as a disabled person, receive 30 lats […] Teachers are not the last ones, other people in Latvia live even worse. (my translation, in *Seleckis*, 1994, p. 6).

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[136] Around 100 dollars.

Teachers want to improve their salary at the expense of other needy groups. A large part of society in the countryside live in even worse circumstances, some get just 10 lats per month, but they do not strike […] (my translation, in *Seleckis*, 1994, p. 6).

These statements by readers also point to attempts to engender among protesting schoolteachers feelings of impropriety about their behavior[137]. Yet these people did so out of their own fear of impoverishment and desperate need for some state protection. Others, similarly to the ruling elite, suggested finding individual solutions to the claims of school teachers. One pensioner suggested school teachers should cultivate the land in order to produce the food they needed, and not protest:

This summer I worked in an overgrown clover meadow, it was not mowed, not needed. Is it really easier to ask for help than to plant some potatoes? Before the war [meaning WWII] teachers in rural areas also cultivated their land – the summer break is pretty long. (my translation, a pensioner in Kāpēc streiko Latvijas skolotāji, 1994, p. 3)

The newspaper *Diena* paraphrased a leader of the charity organization Letija who said that "dill, chives and parsley cost a lot of money. Both for teachers and pupils it could be an excellent source of additional income. One has to know how to move and then one will have more money" (Smiļģe, 1994, p. 3) Thus also in some wider public protesting school teachers were seen as deviating from good conduct. Instead of protesting, they were expected to supplement their full time work with another activity that would cover their basic needs. To claim a decent living standard and funding from the government was seen as a shameful behavior. Notably these readers' statements only saw schoolteachers as demanding benefits for themselves while in fact the protesting was also about better funding for the school system more generally. Nevertheless, groups such as medical employees and people working in other fields of culture supported school teachers since they shared sectors that were equally low funded.

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[137] Also one informal conversation with one schoolteacher from a smaller parish suggested that she did not support strikes since in their small parish they all knew that other people earned even less, so to go for a strike and demand more in this situation was inappropriate.

Despite their wide resonance and support from these other sectors, schoolteachers' protests in 1994 did not bring about much change. In the fall of 1996, schoolteachers raised the same demands as they had during the 1994 strikes. In the beginning of October 1996, pedagogues, together with local government representatives, gathered near the parliament Saeima and asked for a revision of the national budget, an increase in their salaries, and funding for education in general. Unlike the 1994 protests, this time the Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia (LBAS) also got involved in the organization of the strikes and raised concerns about overall poverty in the country. Despite attempts to divide society, people kept together. On October 3, 1996 the board of LBAS[138] delivered an announcement to Saeima (Latvian Parliament)[139], saying:

> Unorganized national economy and calamities have influenced almost every family. Work places are decreasing, salaries remain low, pensions and social aid are below subsistence, while prices for goods and services are continuously increasing. There is a lack of funding for housing maintenance, health care, and education, and for one out of eight families – even for food. In the country, mortality rates double birthrates. The number of children who do not attend school is increasing. […] We have 89 thousand who are unemployed, and only a third of them receive unemployment aid. The average aid for unemployed people is Ls 31 or 59% of the crisis subsistence wage and 42% of the ordinary subsistence wage. (my translation, Olmanis, 1996, pp.1-2)

This announcement signaled to the government not only that the situation of the education system was problematic, but that the overall course of development was becoming very problematic as well. In this case development was understood in terms of social well-being of people which was in conflict with the neoliberal understanding of development evolving from the Right and West code and common among the ruling elite. On October 7, 1996, school teachers and other groups picketed in front of the parliament that reviewed the budget for 1997 in order to make sure their claims were considered in the national budget (Paparde, Zebris, 1996,

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[138] LBAS is a confederation uniting other trade unions. It has a long history and had been established already in 1869 in order to protect employees in weavers' workshops (Latvia as an independent republic was established in 1918), it existed throughout Soviet system and become an independent organization again after the collapse of the Soviet Union. LIZDA, the organization in charge of the strike in 1994, was established in 1990 to represent scientists and educators. It is a member of LBAS.

[139] Reprinted in newspaper *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, October 3, 1996, p. 1

p.1; Лапидус, 1996a, p.1). On December 10, 1996, parliament began to review for the second time the project for a fully balanced budget for 1997, LIZDA organized a protest asking for the government to increase wages in such public institutions as education, health, social care, culture, and art. In this protest, not only school teachers but also medical employees participated. The posters represented in the media carried statements that pointed to inequalities and a denial of the existing state of affairs: "Give as a normal life!", "For the folk that becomes extinct government is not needed!", or "My salary equals one dinner meal for a deputy!", "The government - in Europe, the people in poor man's shoes!"[140] The latter statements particularly indicated that the chosen conduct of the state was perceived as unjust towards most of the population. The current circumstances did not allow for people to believe that their everyday struggles would lead to a Western standard of living, much promoted and desired by the ruling elite. *Panorama Latvii* ironically commented that the Prime Minister Andris Šķēle was only concerned that the budget was fully balanced and not about the people (Лапидус, 1996b, p.1). Subsequent strikes in the following years signaled that the state-society dialogue had not been successful in achieving meaningful change.

The same scenario repeated itself in the fall of 1999. On October 1, 1999, the Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia (LBAS) organized a walk in the city center of Riga to draw attention to the policies concerning pensions, social reforms, deteriorating demographic indicators, and privatization. Trade unions of school teachers, as well as medical and power industry employees, were represented in the walk and several thousand people participated (Skrebele, 1999, pp. 1, 6). LBAS submitted a request for the government to increase minimum wages, introduce a progressive tax system, and decrease social inequality and poverty. Needless

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[140] See article on page 1, December 11, *Panorama Latvii*.

to say, all these requirements were in conflict with Right-wing ideas and Latvia's Western orientation as perceived and supported by the ruling elite. LBAS also requested that the government engage in social dialogue (ibid). On October 21, the trade union of school teachers, LIZDA, organized protests to demand salary increases and funding for school infrastructure.

The request by the LBAS for dialogue between the state and the schoolteachers' union did not bring the expected results in November, and thus on December 1, the day the parliament discussed the budget for 2000, a nationwide strike of schoolteachers and an additional protest of some medical employees took place again (Prokopova, 1999, p.1; Медики и учителя слились в общем пикете, 1999, p.1). Again the ruling elite settled the issue using a strategy of threat. The leader of the major coalition party, Tautas Partija (People's Party), Gundars Bērziņš, announced that schoolteachers would be required to work during the summer break without pay in order to make up for the days they were on strike. He also tried to pit schoolteachers against schoolteachers by saying that teachers would be rewarded for working diligently and not participating in strikes, thus clearly drawing a line between what he regarded as good and what he regarded as bad conduct. Following the strike, the newspaper *Diena* interviewed Astrīda Harbaceviča, the chair of LIZDA, who said that "[s]trikes are mainly about self-respect. Politicians need to open their eyes and understand that schoolteachers cannot live under the conditions they do now" (my translation, in Zirnis, 1999). By punishing protesting school teachers with work during the summer break, the government sought to injure this self-respect even more.

The response to the schoolteachers' strike provides evidence that such democratic mechanisms did not have the effect the demonstrators had hoped for. Although the people attempted to engage in dialogue with the state, the state (or ruling elite) was resistant to these

attempts. Its strategy was to disrupt their efforts to achieve change, instead shaming them by insisting they work diligently and avoid protesting. People's demands for social well-being, as well as protesting and striking itself were seen as disruptive to Latvia's Western orientation and national development. Similar processes will be explored in the subsequent discussion of farmers' strikes.

Farmers' protests

In the 1990s, farmers had also repeatedly raised concerns about national development and agricultural policy, and particularly issues such as protection of internal markets, state subsidies, and taxation. The Right or neoliberal economic policies that sought to significantly reduce state protection for agriculture and subject it to global market competition put Latvian farmers and farming more broadly, in jeopardy. At the very beginning of the 1990s, farmers did not voice their concerns actively because there was hope that the situation might improve. The ruling elite kept repeating that social change and development wouldn't take place instantly – that it needed some time.

It was in the spring of 1997 when the first protests by farmers took place. Farmers from Vidzeme's area initiated the first protest. They met on March 11, 1997 in order to list their claims to the government and parliament (Šteinfelde, 1997a, p.8). They submitted their claims and allowed a one month period for the government to respond. If no response was received within a month, they would organize a strike. The following claims were submitted to the government: 1) compensate farmers for inflation with the help of mechanisms such as subsidies, subventions, direct allocations, and others; 2) provide that subsidies to agriculture are not lower

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than 3% of the national budget; 3) provide loans at an interest rate[141] that is friendly to farmers; 4) control the increase of tariffs of such vital services as electricity; 5) ensure equality with respect to pension distribution; 7) compensate via tax farmers' payments for gas to cultivate the land; 8) in order to make politics more accountable, establish people's rights to re-call deputies in the election laws of parliament (see Vidzemes zemnieki iesniedz prasības Šķēlem, 1997, p.3).[142] Mostly the farmers demanded economic protection of farming, policies which, according to the dominant symbolic structure and what it meant in post-Soviet Latvia, were ridiculed as Leftist and belonging to the Soviet past.

One month after the claims were made, farmers of Vidzeme, led by a farmer named Andis Kāposts, announced that the state had not responded and their attempts at communication with state representatives had thus failed (Spandegs, 1997, p. 2). As promised, farmers organized a strike. In order to plan the strike, 300 farmers from 16 districts of Latvia met on April 18, 1997. In order to gain attention from state representatives, they agreed to block strategic roads with their agricultural machinery in various places in Latvia. Several hundred farmers with agricultural machinery gathered on April 30 in various places such as Ķekava, Skrīveri and on Vidzeme Highway to show their discontent as suggested on one of the posters: "Claim free market also for Latvian farmers!" (my translation, Шутенкова, 1997, p.2). What the ruling elite claimed to be a free market, was not perceived as such by these farmers. Some agricultural students and school pupils also participated in the strike, in order to support farmers and demonstrate their concerns over their future. The farmers were disappointed with the low attendance by state representatives, which, in turn, limited prospects for mutual communication

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[141] In 1997, the interest rates for loans in Latvian lats were around 20 to 25%.
[142] Around the same time, the Confederation of Latvian Farmers (LZS) also issued a letter to the Prime Minister Andris Šķēle raising their concerns over limiting circumstances under which farmers have to carry out their business (Krautmanis, 1997, p. 2).

(Krautmanis et. al., 1997, p. 2). Policemen, who were there to contain the strike (using the same tactics as in the schoolteachers' strike in 1994) were the primary representatives of the state (Ermansons, 1997, p. 1).

In a speech on May 4, the Memorial Day of the Declaration of Independence, the President of Latvia expressed disappointment about the lack of dialogue between farmers and state representatives:

> I do not understand at all how politicians can avoid seeing people, who after a long contemplation and hesitation have decided to strike, and how they can avoid listening to them. This is not even about whether the claims of these people are economically grounded and feasible. This is about whether the state feels that it has become distanced from society in the same way that society does. Patience while explaining *the laws of development* is the main characteristic of true politicians. The authority has to find its way to the soul and mind of Latvian folk (my translation, *italic added*, Ulmanis, 1997, p. 2).

> During Awakening[143], emotional experience was one of the most important resources for independence. Then and now, the way people relate to their state has been very individual. It cannot be artificially hastened. Everyone individually shapes his loyalty to his state – one does it faster, one more slowly. A free person in a free state can resign to do it [to form a relationship with the state] – yes, there are such rights judicially. However, are there such rights emotionally, humanly? Can our state afford to alienate so many people who live here? […] My wish on this day is – to strengthen the loyalty of the people to their state. The state has to overcome its distance from us […] (ibid).

The president, as the highest authority, recognized the alienation between citizens and the state. He admitted that politicians should do more to engage with the people, but he also expected the people to be more loyal towards their state. However, in practice, it seemed this loyalty only went in one direction. While the President required the state representatives to do more to explain "the laws of development" to the people, he also requested that the people trust their state more and question it less. He did not admit that the farmers' claims were well-founded and, instead, implied that the chosen "laws of development" were the right ones, and that they only needed to be explained more clearly to the public. The president, along the lines of the symbolic codes that organized the post-Soviet transformation discourse in Latvia, had confidence that the Right economics chosen by the ruling elite would lead to development.

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[143] The period of the independence movements at the end of the 1980s up to the regaining of independence, discussed in the beginning in the chapter, is, in common vernacular, often called Awakening.

To some extent, the President was also preaching for unilateral communication between the people and the state. According to the President, the state should be communicating with the citizens and the citizens should be loyal and accept what they had been told. This was not the communication the farmers preferred in a democratic society. Even though the ruling elite often referred to Latvia as a democratic country that was seeking to join the other democratic countries of the EU, from the ordinary person's perspective the state or the ruling elite did not practice such democracy very well. It had refused to listen and engage in any form of meaningful dialogue with the people.

In September 1997, several thousand farmers gathered in front of the Parliament Saeima to show their disappointment about the state's lack of intervention in the agricultural market (Šteinfelde, 1997b, p. 1, Федотов, 1997, p.1; Лапидус, 1997, p.1; «Сельский час» в Риге, 1997, p. 2)[144]. Posters on display asked questions such as: "Does the government stand for the people or for businessmen?"; "How shall a Latvian farmer – a beginner and poor, compete with the European farmer – one who is subsidized and experienced?", and made statements such as: "Election law shall permit people to fire Parliament members!"

In 1999, farmers went on strike again and asked for limitations to be placed on the import of pork, sugar, milk, and eggs. Farmers explained that they were not able to compete with the imported pork from countries such as Estonia, Netherlands, and Poland. This time farmers allied with the Federation of Latvian Farmers, Rural Support Association, Farmers Parliament, and The Association of Latvian Agriculture Limited Companies (Šteinfelde, 1999a, pp.1, 6). They expected and demanded economic protection of Latvia's agriculture against foreign imports.

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[144] Farmers voiced their concern about the lack of subsidies and low purchasing price for grain and milk. One farmer represented in the media complained that his milk was bought at 5 santims per liter while it sold in a store for 22 santims.

During the governmental meeting on May 11, farmers expected that some crucial decisions would be made, but this did not happen. They also expected that representatives at the meeting would examine their concerns and provide some real solutions. In the meeting, it was proposed that a Committee of Internal Market Protection was formed. Farmers found this proposition to be scanty (Šteinfelde, 1999b, p. 4) and decided to strike by blocking strategic roads, particularly routes used for importation. Some of the posters on the agricultural machinery used in the blocking stated "In Latvia with pastalas[145], in Europe with bare foot!" (Крумин, 1991, p.1) The reference to Europe is meaningful since farmers also perceived that it was due to the EU entrance requirements for Latvia that farmers found themselves incapable of competing with foreign imports. It did not mean that farmers were against Latvia's entrance into the EU but they expected their state to make sure that the entrance requirements did not harm Latvia's agriculture.

The Minister of Agriculture, Pēteris Salkazanovs, regarded the strike as necessary and publicly showed his support for protesters. He admitted that the farmers' grievances were well-founded; it was very hard for farmers to compete with foreign producers under the free trade agreements of the state when Latvia's internal market was not strong enough. Farmers' claims were also supported by the Chair of Parliament (Saeima), Gundars Bērziņš, who himself was a farmer.

> There are many strong and talented farmers who will participate in the strike; if they participate in such strikes, this is not a good sign for the government (my translation, in Šteinfelde and Kārkliņa, 1999, pp. 1, 4).

Other leading politicians such as the Minister of Finance, Ivars Godmanis, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Valdis Birkavs, and the Prime Minister, Vilis Krištopāns, did not support farmers' protests (Pētersons and Šteinfelde, 1999, pp. 1, 5; Zemnieki demonstrē spēku, 1999, pp.

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[145] Pastalas is very simple and traditional Latvian footwear.

1, 4). For them, the farmers' claims were in conflict with the national economic policies that were formed according Western expertise and Right-wing economic ideas discussed in the previous chapters. Instead of engaging in a productive dialogue with farmers, the Prime Minister used shaming, threat tactics, and pitted social groups against one another:

> I would like to say something about the unrest among farmers. The most aggressive farmers say that they will sit on the railroad and block the trains. I have to question whether these farmers have thought about those 18 thousand railway employees and their families who will suffer the most from railway stoppage. This stoppage will cost millions, and this might cause a salary decrease for railway employees and layoffs. Somebody will suffer for these damages and it won't be farmers but railway employees. This is destruction of the national economy, and, since I am the leader of the government, I have to say it (my translation, Krištopāns, 1999, p. 10).

In his narrative, the Prime Minister demonstrated that he refused to build a democratic dialogue among farmers, the state, and society at large. He refused to discuss any economic protection measures as the farmers demanded. Such substantial questions as 'what was the best solution to allow farmers to continue farming without going bankrupt and railway employees to continue their work simultaneously' were out of sight. The Prime Minister refused to publicly discuss scenarios that could be beneficial to society at large. When he chose divisive tactics rather than democratic dialogue, he demonstrated that decision-making in Latvia was closed to the public and was purely in the hands of the ruling elite. This practice was in stark contrast with the ideals of democracy encoded in the West code.

As a result of farmers' pressure, the Parliament eventually introduced a temporary law that would limit importation of pork for 200 days beginning June 1 (Pētersons un Šteinfelde, 1999, pp. 1, 5; Pētersons, 1999, p. 1). Foreign Ministry representatives were not satisfied with this decision and warned that these measures could worsen Latvia's relationships with the EU and Latvia's development prospects more generally (Bernere, 1999, pp.1,5)[146]. Latvia's relationships with the EU (the West) were seen as more "sacred" than the farmers' claims.

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[146] The Prime Minister of Estonia insisted that the new temporary provisions violated the Baltic Free Trade agreement (Ozola, 1999, p. 1).

Latvia's belonging to the West and the development it may bring was discursively prioritized

over the economic protection farmers demanded, which, due to its association with the Left code,

had to be dismantled. The West and the Left were not seen as compatible in post-Soviet Latvia.

The following quote from the Foreign Minister demonstrates that Latvia's "internal

environment" was largely shaped with respect to requirements set by foreign expertise. In an

interview that took place one week after the protests, the Foreign Minister, Valdis Birkavs,

stated:

> The foreign policy of Latvia fosters development; when clearly defining foreign policy goals, we also define what we have to achieve internally. Foreign policies have always helped to shape internal policy, so we would not need to invent the wheel anew. A pyramid was once published in *Neatkarīgajā* [the same newspaper *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze* he was doing the interview for] that shows Latvia's integration into various societal organizations **[are they really societal?]**. Three organizations were at the top of this pyramid – NATO, the European Union, and the World Trade Organization. At this point, we have not reached two of them. But, in order to integrate into these organizations, they do have some requirements. When we adjust these requirements to our needs, as well as negotiate some leniency in these requirements, in fact we organize our internal environment (my translation, Birkavs, 1999, p. 3).

In this interview the Foreign Minister also states that:

> farmers understand very well that Latvia has good land for agriculture, and they know that if the state follows the right policy, he [a farmer] will be able to produce not just for the internal market they want to protect now, but also for the world market. The question is which policy do we choose? Whether the one implemented by the poor countries that protected their internal markets but at the end of the day remained poor? The higher tariffs, the less developed country, because the consumer has to pay more…Free trade agreements increase competition, decrease the price for consumers, develop the country, and increase the welfare of the people, but this has to be applied properly (ibid).

The Foreign Minister's rhetoric was linguistically well-organized to convince readers that the

current state policies were right and farmers were wrong. He rationalized Latvia's Western

belonging as a strategy to bring development and well-being. However, to what extent were

NATO, the EU and the WTO working to meet societal needs? Was it true that poor countries that

protected their internal markets remained poor? The rhetoric was not well-grounded but, coming

from the Minister, was powerful in terms of its consequences. According to Harvey (2005),

neoliberal or Right economic ideology is based on the idea that "the social good will be

maximized by maximizing the reach and frequency of market transactions" and that all human

actions should become subject to "the domain of the market" (Harvey, 2005, p. 3). However, from the history of development we know that this does not necessarily hold true. Many developing countries that have opened themselves to free trade agreements and global markets have remained poor (see Robinson, 2003). Free trade agreements, low tariffs and competition *per se* do not guarantee development and improved well-being for all (e.g., Robinson, 2003; Evans, 1995; McMichael, 2008). Factors such as the role of the state, its capability to guide and foster some deliberately selected sectors of the national economy, and economic protection are also important for national development. Nevertheless, the strength of the West and the Right codes and what they meant in the post-Soviet transformation discourse did not allow for seeing the role of the state as a protector and manager of the national economy. The national economy was seen as subject to global market forces and regimes, while the state was seen as facilitator of those forces and regimes.

The Minister of Finance, Ivars Godmanis, also emphasized the importance of foreign relations for national development. He explicitly announced that no extra funding would be allocated to the needy Ministries (including the Ministry of Agriculture) because it would violate austerity measures required by international donors. This shows that the minister prioritized requirements by international experts over the needs of local people. Local knowledge and needs became secondary. When the Finance Minister argued that the state seeks to "adjust" requirements of international experts to "our needs" he did not elaborate what the common needs were. From the farmers' point of view, which was based on their everyday experience and knowledge, different measures needed to be taken by the state in order to develop Latvian agriculture and the national economy (for example, the previously mentioned import restrictions, subsidies, and control of tariffs for vital farmers' services). As discussed in the former chapter,

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development sociologists Evans (1995) and Chibber (2003) in their studies on South Korea, Japan, and India, and, for Evans (1995), also Brazil have demonstrated that, if properly applied, subsidies or state protection may, in fact, trigger development. Bohle and Greskovits (2007) in their comparative study on CEE countries also demonstrated that, for example, Slovenia applied economic protectionism without compromising its national development and integration in the EU. This kind of state intervention, however, in Latvia was predominantly ridiculed as impeding Latvia's Western orientation and seen as a remnant of the Leftist or Soviet past and thus had to be discarded. The West and the Left codes in the post-Soviet transformation discourse in Latvia were not compatible. For the ruling elite, Right or neoliberal economic ideas were rationalized as "sacred" and were not seen as compatible with state protectionism and thus with the claims of farmers.

On May 28, several thousand farmers from all around Latvia and equipped with agricultural machines again strategically blocked important national roads. Farmers were not satisfied with the temporary policy measures introduced after the previous strike (Šteinfelde, 1999c, p.5). Similarly to the previous protests, these were also supervised by the police force. After the strike, a newspaper published an article by the Prime Minister, Vilis Krištopans, "Thoughts after Farmers' Strike." The aim of this article was again to shame the farmers. Krištopans's rhetoric depicts farmers as unreliable partners in negotiations. In the article, he insists that the government "has kept its word" but that the farmers had not kept theirs. He depicts government representatives as reliable and eager to help: "despite this, the government and [he] as its leader will continue dialogue with farmers." Krištopan also sought to downplay the role of agriculture by saying that although it was an important sector, it was not the only one contributing to rural development; there were also such sectors as "fishing, logging,

entrepreneurship and craft, etc." (Krištopans, 1999, p. 2). This rhetoric again pits various sectoral groups against one another. Nevertheless, facts show that fish farmers were also unsatisfied with national policies. In June, fish farmers turned to the government's consultative bodies to report critical conditions of the fish farming sector. Fish farmers warned that they would block strategic ports in Liepāja and Ventspils if no governmental support was provided for this sector. According to fish farmers, the fish farming industry was in jeopardy because of low subsidies and widespread illegal fish farming.

The Prime Minister concluded his paper with another invitation to work hard: "[…] however, aside from hard every day work, I do not really see any other solution to how we could become wealthy in our country" (ibid). This might have been humiliating for farmers who, indeed, worked hard but with no results; something was clearly beyond their control. Instead of raising a substantial debate about what could be changed in the country's overall course of development, in order to improve the situations in various sectors of economy, the Prime Minister relegated farmers' misfortunes to a matter of their individual conduct. By prioritizing the efforts of the individual in providing a solution to social issues, the Prime Minister, and the ruling elite more broadly, neglected to address the need for the "public-minded" citizen. Brown (2005) discussed neoliberalism and how it manifested in the U.S. stating that "[a] fully realized neoliberal citizenry would be the opposite of public-minded; indeed, it would barely exist as a public. The body politic ceases to be a body but is rather a group of individual entrepreneurs and consumers" (p. 43). From the narratives surrounding schoolteachers' and farmers' strikes, we see that there were attempts to silence and disrupt collective resentment by trying to shame people for their behavior, pit various groups against each other and a demand to solve issues through

individual efforts. The symbolic codes that structured the transformation discourse emphasized individual conduct over collective efforts as a sign of people's modernity and Westerness.

On June 2, the parliament discussed a new policy initiative that would aim to gradually decrease import duties for all imports (Pētersons, 1999, p. 5). This legislative initiative indicated that all efforts by farmers were fruitless endeavors. In 2000, farmers protested again with the usual concerns[147]. In order to ensure that some results were achieved, farmers began an open-ended strike (Šteinfelde, 2000a, p.4). At the end of the first day of the strike farmers were not satisfied with the negotiations. After farmers had been on strike for 31 hours, the government promised to look for solutions which would satisfy their demands by August 1 (Šteinfelde, 2000b, pp. 1, 4). However, such governmental promises were again not fulfilled[148].

Conclusions

The post-Soviet transformation discourse trumpeted that Latvia's Western belonging was identical to national development, and that this development could be only achieved through Right-wing or neoliberal policies. The West and the Right codes were compatible as opposed to the West and the East/Left codes which were not. This coding and what it meant in post-Soviet Latvia structured the ruling elites' rationality in a highly formal way. This formal rationality not

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[147] This time farmers asked to the state representatives to compensate the excise duty for oil farmers used to cultivate the land; to set the minimum price for which crops could be bought from farmers; to ensure a national budget distribution where not less than 3% is given for agricultural subsidies; as well as to plan long term policy with respect to agriculture; to stop the privatization of the only horticulture secondary school Bulduri; to define the minimum purchase price of milk for agricultural processors not lower than 10 santims per liter; to protect internal markets; and to ensure appropriate infrastructure on border zones so that the quality of imported agricultural products is ensured. Besides these requirements farmers also asked to ensure democratic governance; to increase funding of local governments; to develop rules of intervention with respect to meat; to introduce subsidies per hectares cultivated; and to stop the privatizations of Latvenergo, the only energy provider in Latvia.

[148] Media reports that the situation was most critical for small scale farmers, who were the majority in the countryside and who had the least support (*Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze,* 2000, July 3, p. 2) This might be due to having less capital to develop their farming. Banks were more open to cooperate with farmers who had accumulated some capital already.

only failed to allow for a more substantial debate of what development really is and how to achieve it, it also failed to allow for the flexibility required to accommodate the claims of local populations. The government apparatus was geared towards the most "sacred" goal – integration into the global market and political institutions (the EU, IMF, NATO, WTO, etc.), which, in the dominant public imaginary, comprised the West. The conventional wisdom was two-fold: that Right government and integration in the Western institutions will lead to development. The perceptions of the ruling elite were shaped by the dominant description of the Right code in post-Soviet Latvia, and these held that the welfare and economic protectionism school teachers and farmers demanded was not compatible with Latvia's Western orientation and the developmental possibilities it implied. Facilitating markets and protectionist policies were seen as incompatible; despite the fact that some CEE countries have demonstrated that welfare and economic protectionism, development and integration in the EU can be compatible (see Bohle and Greskovits, 2007). School teachers as public employees were not subject to market laws and competition in terms of their wages. Nevertheless, through a politics of shaming and the public discourse surrounding the strikes, they were also hailed as subjects of the market.

This "politics of shaming" was relative to the ideas encoded in the symbolic codes of the West and Right that underlay the post-Soviet transformation discourse. People were ridiculed for their collective efforts and instead were required to focus on their own conduct and work hard (despite the fact that they already did so). Such protesting and striking was seen as disruptive to Latvia's Western orientation and national development, which was understood in strictly neoliberal terms. Additionally the ruling elite tried to convince protesters and strikers that their demands, if satisfied, would worsen the situation for other societal groups. By using these shaming tactics the ruling elite sought to stop protesting and striking.

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However, while the "politics of shaming" worked to 'silence' people and pitted them against one another, it also fostered resentment towards the ruling elite. Depictions of protests in newspapers and the pictures that accompanied these, indicate that this "politics of shaming" protesting school teachers and farmers also worked in another direction – it facilitated "a denial of shame" (Barbalet, 2004, p.120). Posters of protesters were in dialogue with the ruling elite's statements that humiliated them, rejecting and questioning these statements. In the following two chapters we will see that resentment towards the ruling elite has been very widespread among the people of Latvia. According to Barbalet (2004), the emotion of shame works in terms of "the actor's relation to the self". An individual, who becomes self-attentive and views his or her behavior as deviating from the collective or dominant expectations, will then likely feel ashamed of it. My informal conversation with a school teacher who remembered the school teachers' protests in the 1990s but did not participate in them, suggests that she did not feel comfortable enough to protest since she knew that in her little parish other people earned even less, so how could she demand more. If she demanded more, how would others who had even less feel? Through this feeling of discomfort she showed solidarity with those who were in even worse situations than she; but through such behavior she also forbade herself to demand change that had the potential to also be rewarding for other groups within society since the protests were not only to demand higher wages for teachers but also better funding of the school system as well as health and culture in general. This twofold reaction to public shaming might have facilitated some divide within society. Conformists began to look with disdain at those who kept protesting and vice versa thus leading to some mutual resentment.

This "politics of shaming", e.g., identifying protesters' activity as disruptive to national development and to other societal groups, and as being unreasonable, might also have worked to

influence the weakening of the social bond between the people and their state, and vice versa, and thus inducing some alienation. The discourse of the ruling elite indicated that they saw the protesters as villains who demanded the impossible and thus needed to be tamed. Protesters' claims mostly were taken as impracticable. A more substantial and democratic dialogue with protesters was not initiated. This approach of the ruling elite attempted to erode the very idea of "social" that is crucial in any democracy (e.g., Marchart, 2011). By depicting protests as disruptive to national development and other people's lives, and simply inviting every protester to work hard, the ruling elite intended to 'silence' them and to discourage collective action. The ruling elite's chosen "politics of shaming" and the denial of this shame among protesters did not bring "reciprocal ratification" or "feelings and actions of legitimation" (Scheff, 1990, pp.6-7). The protesters did not see the actions of the ruling elite as legitimate, whilst the ruling elite did not see the actions of the people as legitimate. As such politics of shaming and simultaneous mutual delegitimation, by each party on the other, worked to weaken the social bond. In the next two chapters, I will look at interviews with both émigrés and people who remained in Latvia. These reveal that people increasingly did not trust that their government cared what they thought or what their needs were. The government, instead, emphasized that they could only rely on themselves. This kind of disconnect might have been due to the public experience where the ruling elite did not recognize protesting and protesters' claims and regarded protesting as a matter of bad conduct.

Some statements of the ruling elite indicted a paradox. On the one hand, there was an expectation that people become active in defending their own rights and improving their own situation. On the other hand, once they did, they were tamed. It is difficult to explain why this happened in this way. It may have been due the realization that the Right policies the ruling elite

had implemented had not brought well-being to society, despite great confidence that they would. It may have also been to avoid acknowledging that their policy making was not having the effect they had anticipated and that they thus must also bear some responsibility for this. Instead they chose to deny their responsibility over the worsening socioeconomic circumstances through the continued prioritizing of individual efforts as the solution to societal issues. Collective protesting was powerful as it clearly pointed to the fact that it was not just one person in a town who felt unjustly treated but many, indicating some "public issues" as opposed to "private issues" (Mills, 2000 [1959])] which could not be solved individually. The ruling elite, however, avoided recognizing this. It could be suggested that by trying to 'silence' such collective behavior, the ruling elite sought to downgrade protest claims as 'public issues'. Or, this silencing of the collective voice was, in the perception of the ruling elite, a way to secure the "sacred" – Latvia's entrance in the EU and other Western institutions.

Nevertheless, protesting did not mean that protesters were against the common "sacred" or that protesters, by protesting and raising claims to the government, were against Latvia's Western belonging and development. Protesters rather had a different perspective of what should be done to develop and reach the European or the Western standard of living. In contrast to the ruling elite, which stigmatized economic protection and social welfare as inadequate for modern Latvia, protesters demanded that the state protect its people from poverty and help to strengthen their competitiveness in both local and global markets. Given these sharply different viewpoints on the role of the state, these moments of striking and protesting provided an opportunity to open deeper debate over national development that could have been rewarding to most of the population. However, this opportunity was missed. The ruling elite kept a strict and fairly general conviction that the Right economic principles, as these principles were predominantly

and generally perceived in the post-Soviet transformation discourse, would lead to development and Western belonging.

Chapter 5 - Emigration and (Self) Confidence: Development, the Role of the State and Perceived Inequality

This and the subsequent chapter seek to analyze the data in order to answer the central research question of this study, which is: "what is the relationship between symbolic codes and emigration?" As we saw in the first chapter, there have been various attempts to explain increased emigration from Latvia, mostly focusing on socioeconomic factors. In these two chapters, I examine cultural mechanisms of emigration where I understand culture to be the overall process of meaning making, but also extend this to include relevant emotions. The dominant structuring of the transformation discourse (symbolic codes) and meanings set the frame within which people could think about Latvia, its future and their lives. Durkheim (1995 [1912]) argued that collective representations or *sui generis* are different from individual representations; they "certainly [...] add something to" individual representations (p.15). The individual is not an isolated subject but he/she becomes what he or she is within society, within the moral and structural order set up collectively and historically. Durkheim saw this order as *sui generis,* as "external" and "coercive" to the individual (Durkheim (1982 [1895]), pp. 39-52, 144). Similarly, for the post-structuralist Lacan the individual becomes social through language or the symbolic order (see Epstein 2010, p.335). Lacan analytically distinguishes between "the discursive subject" and "the subject of desire". The latter refers to the "hyper-individualized", "to the raw, immediate dimension of being", it is also the bodily being before it gets "inscribed with meaning". The discursive subject, on the other hand, through language or the particular symbolic order and meanings, becomes intersubjective, related to others and society – the social

being (see Epstein 2010, p.335, ibid)[149]. The discursive subject is constituted by the language, meanings and codes. Epstein points out that "the human subject uncomfortably straddles these two realms, the immediate, preverbal realm of desire on the one hand, and the intersubjective, mediated realm of language where desire finds expression and the self is made on the others" (ibid). Identity in this case is possible through "the individual's inscription into the symbolic order, the process by which she [or he] becomes a discursive subject" (p.336). Thus, even though Lacan sets these two subjects apart analytically, in everyday life they coexist. Also, Durkheim has pointed out that;

> man is double. In him are two beings: an individual being that has its basis in the body and whose sphere of action is strictly limited by this fact, and a social being that represents within us the highest reality in the intellectual and moral realm that is knowable through observation: I mean society (1995 [1912], pp.15-16).

Individual and social, desiring and discursive subject coexist in one. In other words, individuals are subjects to social environment they are part of; yet they also have some agency in terms of how they deal with this social environment. Given these observations by Lacan and Durkheim, I argue that the analysis of the individual stories of emigrants would not be complete without the former analysis of the public discourse of post-Soviet Latvia. I would not be able to understand my respondents' narratives without the analysis of the transformation discourse and the cultural codes and emotions that structure it. This is important because it helps me understand the deeper emotional, cultural or meaning mechanisms of emigration. The way in which the transition was predominantly imagined and perceived, influenced not only the identity of post-Soviet Latvia more broadly but also the individual identities of ordinary people who had to deal not only with new socioeconomic environments but also with new expectations and attitudes

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[149] In that sense Lacan is similar to Mead who argues that the subject is split between "I" and "me" where the former is the present or creative self, the self that acts spontaneously, while the later is the reflective, socialized self that acts according to the conventional norms and rules. Me is constituted by the established moral order, that is norms, laws, habits, meanings and so on.

towards them. What people were as opposed to how they were desired to be, as well as what people thought and perceived as opposed to what they were expected to think and perceive often affected people's emotional being. In the following section, I pursue an answer to the question; "what is the relationship between symbolic codes and emigration"?

Emigration Mechanisms and Meaning Making

Before I begin my analysis of the stories of those who have emigrated from Latvia in the decades subsequent to the collapse of the Soviet Union and those who remain, it is useful to explore specifically what emigration mechanisms are. Emigration decisions have conventionally been rationalized as the decision that leads to the emigration act while the things that explain this decision are seen as emigration mechanisms[150]. In order to account for emigration, researchers explore what happened in people's lives and their home countries before emigration. With regard to examining how strong their ties with their sending country are, I also ask, what was their plan upon emigrating, or, for how long did they plan to go? My respondents' answers to these questions together with their emigration experiences and stories gave me the conviction that the emigration decision does not end with the emigration act but extends into emigration itself. The more interviews I conducted, the more I understood that the emigration decision – for how long to stay - remains open, and in that sense emigration mechanisms cannot be fully accounted for by only looking at what happened before emigration. Most of my respondents either could not tell what their plan was at the time of their first emigration, since they did not know what to expect

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[150] For example, the micro theory of neoclassical economics views emigration decisions as based on rational cost-benefit calculations individuals make before their emigration based on given information about the destination country and associated expectations (Massey et. al. 1993, p.434); the new economics of labor migration theorists argue that it is not individuals but families that make this cost-benefit and risk calculation that may lead to the emigration of some members of the family (Massey et. al. 1993, p.436). See also my discussion on Chapter 1.

in their receiving country, or they planned to come to their respective receiving countries for a fairly short period of time, a half or one or two years and then see what happens. Furthermore, comparisons between their lived experience at home and abroad, as well as their family circumstances, were the key factors for a longer or shorter stay.

Through an analysis of their life stories and the aspects they emphasized, I was able to identify the factors they considered meaningful to their lives and emigration. Significantly, their meaning making resonated and was in dialogue with the transformation discourse and its structure in post-Soviet Latvia. The most striking similarities across the stories were issues of development and order, the role of the state and feelings of inequality. *I will argue that emigration for my respondents provided the space where "sacred" and "profane" and particularly West and Left were experienced as compatible despite their construction as incompatible in the post-Soviet space. Amidst confidence over their future, this gave them also a feeling of comfort, sense of self-confidence and empowerment.* In post-Soviet Latvia, for example, social protection and redistribution of income were disparaged as inadequate for modern and Western oriented citizens and seen as belonging to the Soviet past and leftist policies. People were expected to deal with all their social problems by themselves, predominantly by working hard. Having been socialized in this way of thinking, it is what most people did: they worked hard, rarely dared to ask for the state protection and, when they did ask, often found this act itself was perceived as inadequate. Often in these cases they were also treated insultingly or even humiliated. This entire situation – trying hard, but still failing combined with the predominant notions within the public discourse that each and everyone is an architect of his own destiny – worked to *trigger some shame* and *erode the self-confidence* of people, or in other words *worked to limit further willingness for action in Latvia*. Self-confidence

refers to one's "confidence in oneself" and is an emotion that is based on "self-understanding, which generally operates unself-consciously, or […] below the threshold of awareness" and ensures "a willingness to action" (Barbalet, 2004, p.83). Such emotions as shame, shyness and modesty are associated with low self-confidence, and are seen as limiting people's willingness for action (Barbalet, 2004, ch.4, p.86). Having experienced the dissonance between the cultural expectations and their lived experience in Latvia, people did not feel confident about themselves and about their future, and thus were not willing to act there anymore. As such, emigration was perceived as an attempt or a hope for a different life in the West, idealized so much by the ruling elite and so prevalent in the transformation discourse. In contrast, the lived experience in post-Soviet Latvia, for my respondents, simply provided a sense of hopelessness about their future prospects in Latvia alongside great uncertainty, an emotion that, according to Barbalet (1996, p.77), is the very opposite to the emotion of confidence.

Through the process of emigration, my respondents found that, once in their receiving countries and without changing the essence of who they were, their lives were much improved, they had more opportunities, and often felt protected by their receiving states, all of which led to a regaining of their self-confidence. Even though these receiving countries are also unequal societies and have also embarked upon neoliberal programs or Right economic thinking which sought to eliminate social welfare measures, *for emigrants, receiving countries seemed, in comparison to their home country, more Leftist than they were socialized to think in Latvia.* Irrespective of what they did, they felt protected against unfair and greedy employers, with adequate income, even when fairly low by the standards of the receiving societies, they were able to support themselves, their families, and fulfill their dreams. They also felt better protected in vulnerable situations and, most importantly, they regained confidence that there would be

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opportunities for a better future. If they left Latvia to journey abroad with some faith and hope that things will be better abroad, once abroad they established confidence for that. Barbalet (2004) argues that "confidence stands with trust and faith as an expression of belief differentiated by the amount of evidence on which it is based" (p.83). Faith is based on no or little evidence, trust is based on "inconclusive evidence, and confidence requires substantial evidence" (Hart in Barbalet, 2004, p.83). Emotionally, faith provides an uncertain expectation while confidence provides an assured one (Barbalet, pp.85-86). Hope, as Lazarus presents it (1999), is similar to faith in that hope is also a belief that something good will happens in one's life but "because the future is uncertain, we cannot know what is going to happen with any confidence" (p.654, also p.672). Before emigration my respondents could not be confident that life abroad would be better because they did not have sufficient experience and evidence to be sure. As such, it is more likely that the emigration decision was guided by faith and hope, emotions that also trigger action or, according to Lazarus (1999), particularly an ability to cope, but with insufficient evidence yet for a positive outcome. Yet most of my respondents, based on their lived experience in Latvia, were certain that they did not have sufficient evidence for a better future there.

The re-newed confidence in themselves found in their receiving states, and the lived experience it was based on, worked to make my respondents more resentful towards their sending or home state, which was seen as arrogant and careless about its citizens and as only having vested interests in people's taxpaying capabilities. Among my respondents who were abroad, receiving states increasingly became sites of confidence for their better future; while Latvia instead was seen as a site of great uncertainty. The examination, in this chapter, of the transformation discourse and of the symbolic codes that underlie it, coupled with an in-depth exploration of the emotions experienced by my respondents, contributes to a deeper

understanding of emigration that moves beyond simply rational and economic mechanisms. In what follows, I discuss emigrants' narratives in more detail.

Emigrants' Narratives or Regaining of (Self) Confidence

"Decay", responsibility and self-confidence

We saw in the previous chapters that in post-Soviet Latvia the discourse of the ruling elite prioritized or saw Latvia's return to the West as the most "sacred" issue as this return was imagined to be identical with development. The stories of my respondents, when I asked them about their time in Latvia before emigration, also suggested development was meaningful to them. However, in contrast to the ruling elite who were confident in development through Latvia's Western belonging, those who left experienced and perceived their life in Latvia before emigration as devoid of hope, in decay, crisis and chaos. In their memories, this decay began with the collapse of the Soviet Union. A young man in his late 30s, who came to an interview with his wife and a daughter and who had left Latvia in 2002, when I asked him what happened in Latvia before his emigration, said:

> In Latvia, <u>everything was fairly under decay</u>. The salary of my mother and father we had to live on…<u>nothing was really there</u>. My mother was a school teacher and my dad was a chauffeur. <u>There was nothing special and bright at that time</u>. <u>This was one of those reasons at that time</u>.

> **What are your memories of Latvia when you left?**

> There <u>was nothing bright</u> about it. [my translation, NHC1]

A woman in her early 60s who departed to Ireland at the beginning of the millennium provided a similar response. She elaborated that this void was a result of privatization led by the government. She perceived her emigration as forced, as being a "push out of Latvia". Her narrative also shows that emigration for her was a moral act since she opted to fulfill her mother role in order to give the best she could to her daughter:

That push, that push out of Latvia. I gave birth to my youngest daughter when I was forty and she finished a Secondary School, and then I understood that there's nothing she can do in Alūksne. There's nothing to do anywhere. She wanted to go to Turiba, to the university, to study tourism. And I thought—alright! I'll give her that opportunity! Just then all those opportunities opened and I plucked up my courage, left my husband, and came here […] it is when Godmanis[151] opened privatization, it is then when everything got looted. [Whispering:] I hate him up to this day. He would need […] [Speaks normally:] He totally does not understand; everybody who was there at the feed bank [meaning the state] gorged themselves. And this is it. And after that there was nothing in the countryside. It was just crying there. [my translation, HYAN]

Her memories contributed to a sense of void and to feelings of, uncertainty and hopelessness and thus, created resentment towards the Latvian state or ruling elite for its inability to manage the transformations in a way that was more sensitive to the people and their lives. Instead, she identified privatization as the process through which the ruling elite had gained access to assets and capital, in turn, guaranteeing their own wealth. Walder (2003) suggested that it was common in post-Communist societies for "the elite insiders" to gain great opportunities through markets and privatization. This resentment towards the state was a common feature of many of the stories and will be explored in more depth later when I discuss how people spoke about corruption, state protection, and more explicitly, the behavior of state officials and various statements made by the ruling elite they found humiliating.[152] This resentment towards the state was common also among the people who at the time of emigration were in their early twenties and empathized with the difficult situations their parents went through during the transformations. They did not feel comfortable that their parents, from their scarce resources, had to provide for them, and as such, migration was a way for them to deal with this discomfort by taking responsibility for themselves. Emigration for them had been a transition to adulthood (see an equivalent experience

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[151] Ivars Godmanis served as a Prime Minister of The Republic of Latvia from 1990 to 1993 and The Finance Minister from 1998 and 1999.
[152] It is not the aim of this dissertation to find out if such concerns about corruption and the ruling elite's working for its own interests can be fully substantiated. Yet it is important that this was common in the thinking of the people and meaningful to them, and thus guided their behavior.

of young Senegale's male boat migration in Hernandez-Carretero and Carling, 2012). A man in

his late thirties who initially came to the USA for three months and never returned explained:

> Up to emigration I was a burden to my parents […] and then I sit down and thought if I go back nothing particular will come out of me, I need to settle down myself somehow, in order for me to become a man, otherwise I would live like a jerk and be a burden to my mom. […] I understood that I do not need it. My father shouted on the phone that I have to come home but this was a first time in my life when I was disobedient and said that I won't come […]

> **Didn't you believe that things may get better in Latvia?**

> No. I do not have that belief [Wife: I have it.] Maxima event destroyed all this hope. I was very angry. [His wife: But also in London super market collapsed.] This is nothing that it collapsed in London. In Latvia nobody has done anything yet to bring justice and they would never do it. Latvia does not have a future; there is no point to talk about it even […] [my translation, NHC1]

This perceived decay before emigration had been so strong that up to this day this respondent

does not believe that a better future is possible in Latvia. His reference to the Maxima

supermarket collapse on November 21, 2013, where 54 people died, shows repeated resentments

regarding the state's inability to deal with the issues, in order that justice can be ensured. At the

time of interview in May, 2014 there were no charges brought against any of the culprits and this

gave my respondent the feeling that the system in Latvia was not protective towards the Latvian

people. His wife, who arrived in the USA for the purpose of family reunion, however, was less

critical about the situation in Latvia.

Some respondents pointed out in particular the shrinking industrial and agricultural

sectors of the economy, development of the informal sectors of economy, and "Europeanization"

as important contributors of the decline they perceived in Latvia. Hirschhausen and Hui (1998)

identify that the maximal slump of industrial output in Latvia from 1990 and 1996 was 68%

(p.16). They emphasize that monetarization, the process through which a monetary value is

added to goods that took place in 1992 in all former Soviet bloc countries, contributed to the

decline of industrial output in all the post-Soviet countries. Nevertheless, variations across these

countries were contingent upon how the ownership issues of factories were settled and how and

whether the owners decided to develop and keep the industries they serviced. Hirschhausen and Hui (1998) identified that in Latvia, initially, all factories became the property of the new Republic of Latvia following which they were put up for privatization which, up to 1996, was sluggish, leading to interruptions in industrial activity. Furthermore, agricultural output, the share of labor in agriculture, and productivity significantly decreased in the 1990s (Lerman et al. 2003). According to Lerman et al. (2003) it was "problably [due to] the elimination of subsidies and the dramatic worsening of the terms of trade of agriculture […] a reduction in demand as real income fell and disruption in support services as the central controls collapsed" (p.1000). Under the Soviet Union, the Baltic countries were the most successful in terms of agriculture due to high labor productivity or "the highest capital-to-labor ratio" (ibid, p.1005). This decline in industry and agriculture, in the post-Soviet era, affected how people perceived everyday life around them. Several respondents stated that their everyday life turned to decay when the factories they used to work in ceased to operate or when agricultural operations became more difficult due to lack of capital. Among them were also engineers and managers of the former Soviet factories who found that their skills were not appreciated by the new labor market since, having educated themselves during the Soviet times, they were considered too "old" or "Soviet" for the new market [e.g., LMNF, see for similar observations also in Lulle, 2014]. Unable to find a job in the post-Soviet labor market they left for job opportunities abroad, in order to provide for themselves and their families. This massive closing down of factories and the demise of agriculture was a significant factor contributing to a sense of void. A Russian speaking man in his mid 50s who left Latvia in 2003 when his small business – a small livestock slaughter house or meat processing business – ceased to operate since in his terms "farmers stopped to breed live-stock," gave the following observation on Latvia before his emigration. In his view, it was also

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due to the free trade agreement with the EU that local products were not able to or were limited

to compete with products from the rest of the world:

What happened in Latvia before you left?

Nothing happened there in Latvia. Only silent fading of economy happened at that moment. There were huge transformations related to the entrance in the EU. All our enterprises that somehow still managed to keep themselves above water could not compete. That they could not compete was related to the free trade with the EU, various norms, quotas, production requirement […] in other words, the moral side of this process was terrible.

Why?

Because often issues were decided with the help of corruption. It seemed, for example, that some companies benefited from Eurostandards, managing transition to Eurostandards […] and which firms will provide this transition […] [my translation from Russian, PKN8]

Moreover, in the perception of people who remained in Latvia, industry was also seen as crucial

for development and well-being. They emphasize that their towns have lost industries and with

industries they have lost people:

In fact, while living in Stende, I have felt one issue. In this place we could see most dramatically how industrial sector disappeared in Latvia. Stende was a city-town, and during the Soviet times it meant that it is the center of industry. We counted that there were something like 20 various enterprises. Now there is little left from all this. All big ones have disappeared at all. Only forestry and melioration has left. Train logistics, refrigerative plants that all disappeared. Nothing from this is here. Here we could strongly feel how people leave. At one moment I had this feeling…I went out on street, went home and told to my husband "I have the feeling I was in a care home of retired!" You hardly see any young people. [my translation, 4QWZ]

Another respondent, a woman in her early 40s, employed and additionally running a small

business as well as being very active in her community in the city of Jēkabpils, pointed out with

regret that her city has supermarkets where money can be spent but does not have factories

where people can work. My observation of this city also confirms that three large supermarkets

are located around the Kena Park that is situated in the very heart of the city.

What shall one do to stop emigration? Or, there is nothing to do?

No, simply in all Latvia and here in Jēkabpils we do not produce. We have money flows from Europe for road construction but we do not produce. We had a sugar factory – I understand, there were some requirements from Europe[153], but is it really so that the European money could not come to facilitate production. As soon as Latvia will

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[153] Latvia has produced sugar for export since 1920s but with the entrance in the EU larges sugar producing factories – "Jelgavas Cukurfabrika" un "Liepājas Cukurfabrika" were closed. Often sugar produced in these factories could not compete with subsidized imports. The EU paid compensations for these companies to stop production. These compensation allowed for the owners of these companies to fill up the top ranks of millionaire

produce we will develop… […] <u>What are we doing – buying and selling, buying and selling. But we do not produce.</u> We would need a sugar factory, we would have a market. At least in this region we would grow sugar beets. I remember how in my childhood we went to weed sugar beets.[…] We have so many forest and fields where we could do factories. <u>Until we won't have production, people won't return to Latvia</u>. Only with production one can earn. Why can't we do the same as in Norway and Denmark, why our entrepreneurs do not produce rose plants? Why can't we? In England, they can do these roses but we can't. [my translation, 3NDF]

Another respondent in her early fifties in the city of Rēzekne tells with regret that this too was a city of industry and factories but now hardly anything remains. She explained that the last of the previously powerful factories were closed at the beginning of the millennium, and with that emigration from Rēzekne began. She also observed that many people, particularly those in their 40s and 50s, left to go abroad unwillingly.

People often brought up regional inequalities and a critical stance towards the ruling elite who focused all the development in and around the capital city. A Russian speaking farmer whose farm was located in Latgale, the most deprived region in Latvia, who now lives in New York and left Latvia in 2000, said with regret that Latgale was marginalized among other regions by the state. It was common among respondents to point to regional inequalities and the social decay that came with those. There was an overall sense that development was taking place only in the capital and in the areas surrounding it. My respondents often blamed the ruling elite for this, and for their ignorance and indifference regarding what was happening beyond the capital city. A women in her late 40s explained that her husband found it difficult to continue his forestry business due to the overall decay of the countryside and, as a result, the emptying of people from these rural areas:

Let these people from Riga [the capital of Latvia] to come to the countryside, let them come to Sunākste.[…] what is happening in the countryside? Let these men [the ruling elite] come and see, what is happening there! My husband works in forestry, let them come and see that it is almost impossible to find workers. My husband has a forestry firm; it is either alcoholics or nobody – empty houses. This is crazy. It is easier to make

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lists in Latvia. http://www.delfi.lv/biznes/biznesa_vide/jelgavas-cukurfabrika-partrauks-cukura-razosanu.d?id=13848939; http://providus.lv/article/saldakas-nozares-rugtais-gals (accessed November, 2015).

the folk to become drunks; let them drink, so they die and as a result they [the state officials] don't need to pay pensions. [my translation, KLF1]

Many of those who remained indicated the presence of regional inequalities. They were critical that nowadays the only criterion for development was efficiency and profit:

> You see how it is: Riga [the capital] drags around itself everything, everything. One shall understand it […] but one of these entrepreneurs says – "Are you really thinking we are going to do something in the countryside?" In the capital they have everything – ports, roads, distribution networks, it is all advantageous to them. But are they thinking about people, about Latvia?!! They only think how to minimize expenses and increase the profit. On the one hand it shall be so, on the other hand – it should be reasonable. How big are we going to make this capital? [my translation, 2MNF]

According to the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, since 2000 Riga accounts for 53-57% of Latvia's overall GDP. From the chapter on the Right and Left code we saw that the state did not seek to be involved in the industrial and agricultural governance since the ruling elite considered that industrial and agricultural development should be subject to market laws and did not require the state involvement. We also saw that the modern state-craft was built on the premise that the distributive role of the state was a remnant of the Soviet past and should not be prioritized. This might be a cultural reason as to why regional disparities accelerated. In the dominant imagining of the modern Latvian state, the market rather that the state should put matters in the correct order.

In their narratives, several respondents contrasted this sense of void in post-Soviet Latvia with their memories of life during Soviet times. The Soviet era was seen as providing a sense of fullness and completeness since factories were operational, people organized local events and there was solidarity around various issues. A young women in her late thirties who left Latvia in 2000 recalls the Soviet times as her happiest times in Latvia:

> **What was Latvia before you left? How you remember it?**

> I always lived well in Latvia. I cannot tell that I wanted to run away from Latvia and that I was somehow bad there. I remember […] I absolutely cannot say anything bad about Latvia, I liked it in Latvia. I liked to live there, I liked the Soviet times there, since these were the happiest times of my life.

> **How so?**

I remember how happy I was in the Soviet times, when all factories worked, we went on excursions, we participated in a joint work for the community, it was good for everybody, we had hospitals, people were everywhere, I liked it, we had various events, parades and so on. [my translation, NSF2]

As they described their life in emigration, some emphasized a similar feeling of fullness and completeness as that which they had experienced during Soviet times. There was overall sense that the receiving societies were dynamic and in progress. A young man in his mid-30s, who lives in England with his wife and son, when I asked him how he saw his life in the receiving country, put his hand on his chest and responded sharply regarding how life in emigration compares with the life in the Soviet times:

I am the Soviet child. I grew up in the Soviet times, my parents raised me in the Soviet times, and I feel here the same, I feel very good. Similar. Here they have a normal kolhoz, okay here there are factories, but also in the Russian times it was so – there is an enterprise, it needs employees and one can get a job. Then you do your job and receive your salary which is not small. Also in the Soviet times salaries were good, one could live a normal life. Also here it is the same. It is all very simple. I love this simpleness. […] You have opportunities. Maybe you have to wait three or four weeks, and it depends from season, but you have opportunities. You only have to be willing to work, it is some kind of confidence here; it was also so at those times. [my translation, MFK1]

For some Latvian independence came not only with feelings of decay but also with those of deception and humiliation. Feelings of decay were accompanied by a feeling of betrayal and wrongdoing. A man in his late forties who left Latvia in 2005 told me that up to 1991 his life consisted of a normal routine, he worked in joinery and in construction, took care of his family consisting of a wife, two children and a blind mother but then he pointed to the sudden interruption of this normal routine:

Free Latvia began in 1991 and with it all crisis began. Something there and something here [meaning that he did not have a stable job anymore]. And then we had these terrible taxes, terrible. You earn one hundred lats and thirty you are taken away. I beg your pardon! And then all kind of private businesses began – one hundred for you, minimal wage goes officially and the rest goes under the table. You know this system! Everybody knows! […] In Latvia, how they duped me in that last year [before he left]. You work in one construction site. They give you one hundred even though we have earned much more. In next week, they give you one hundred and you already have minus 600 hundred. And eventually employer does not respond your calls anymore, and we don't know where he lives, so this stays up in air, so […]

How did you feel when you came to England?

I came with an idea that things will be better here. Since they dupe me I had some debts left in Latvia [my translation, P2LG]

This interruption of a normal routine and bouncing from one unfair employer to another all across Latvia, declining income, and sometimes no income at all, affected his family relationships. Under these employment conditions he was often unable to provide for his family as he wished to; this not only eroded his sense of pride and dignity but also led to divorce. He later explained, with a sense of pride, that he was able to cover his debts in Latvia from his salary in the receiving country within two weeks of finding a job and becoming employed once again. The first thing he asked me, though rhetorically, as we began our conversation, was – "Do you know how they talk about us here and how they talked about us in Latvia?" In Latvia his and other people's failures were seen as issues of their own wrongdoing while in England their employers saw them as diligent workers who deserved respect and appreciation; he emphasized the point that even in the public media in England, Eastern Europeans have often been depicted as diligent workers.

His story reveals that his life since the collapse of the Soviet Union had been in crisis, since he, as a construction worker, was repeatedly vulnerable to having his salary withheld by corrupt employers, compounded by high income-taxes and social-taxes from the state. This prolonged sense of crisis is consistent with Schevchenko's (2008) observation of Muscovites in the 1990s among whom the crisis was not perceived as "a sudden rupture" but "as a routine and unchanging condition" and "the only reality with which individuals have the social and cultural tools to deal" (p.2) She explained that for Muscovites in the post-Soviet era, crisis became part of their "identity, mode of living and self-imagining" (p.3). Yet it seems that among my respondents who have emigrated, this feeling of decay and crisis at some point became felt as limiting to their identity and self-imagining. To empower themselves sooner or later they had to break out of this mode of living. Sometimes, as I observed how confident my respondents who

have emigrated were, I contemplated that remaining in receiving countries was tempting because of the realization that a different mode of living and self-imagining to that of decay or crisis was possible.

Several other respondents emphasized how relieved they were in their receiving countries that they could have salaries which were not paid "under the table", were paid regularly and as agreed. One respondent stated that payment "under the table" in Latvia made her feel that she was "illegal in her own country" [CHMD]. In Latvia, where opportunities for work were limited my respondents did not have the courage to ask for legal pay from their employers and thus lived with feelings of humiliation. The case of one of my respondents who remained in Latvia indicated that this was a still an ongoing phenomenon. One of my respondents in Latvia who had never been abroad litigated with a former employer who did not pay his salary and taxes. His case explains how difficult it can be to go against an unfair employer in Latvia. He explained that when he wanted to litigate, his relatives and colleagues tried to discourage him since the employer was a deputy in the city he now lives in, and they did not want to have difficult relationships within their community.

What are you doing now?

I am waiting. I am litigating. <u>I worked for half a year and they did not pay salary to me, and then I litigated.</u> The judgment came on the 26th of June saying that I have to be paid all I deserve. But this employer he ignores, he does not pay […]

Why do you think people are treated in this way?

<u>Because we Latvians are that kind of people</u>. <u>We will be patient.</u> I tell to my aunt – I have to submit claim in the court, she says "why are you going to do it? He is a fellow deputy. Let it be. Why do we need it?" But why not if situation is on my side? Then I told her – here is the judgment. Then she says – "What if you would lose?" But how can I loose, if they do not have any documents, if I have never signed that I had a salary for half a year, and they even did not come to the court proceedings.

Did you connect with other people who had the similar case?

Yes. But they say "what can I do? I am from here! If I will submit claim in the court, I won't get a job here anymore. [my translation, 7XCV]

During the interview he also explained that if an opportunity opened he would emigrate immediately.

The above case illustrates an interesting situation of post-Soviet realities. On the one hand, many of those whom I interviewed in Latvia emphasized to me that everything depends on oneself (for a more elaborate discussion, see Chapter 6) even in cases where I clearly saw from their narratives that their life had been shaped by the social and cultural environment they were in. Yet when one was ready to carry out this responsibility, to revolt and claim justice as occurred during the protests (Chapter 4) and in the case of my respondent who decided to litigate against the dishonest employer, there were attempts to silence people, to make people submit to their misfortunes. It was not only the ruling elite (as discussed in previous chapters, particularly the chapter on strikes) that promoted hard work over protesting, but also one's own people that tried to hold others back from seeking justice. This entire situation has worked not only to dis-empower people but, at the same time, to make them feel responsible for their helplessness.

The ruling elite during the transformations repeated constantly that only by working hard would one live a better life. Several of my respondents found that this was not necessarily true. This sense of dissonance about life in Latvia was common among many emigrants who explained that, before leaving Latvia, they did have a job or even several jobs, they worked hard, but at some point they realized that they were devoid of energy and unable to provide for themselves and their families. Not only emotionally but also physically they lost hope that their efforts would lead to meaningful and positive change for them and their families in Latvia. Emigration was an attempt to search for a space where one could regain some sense of dignity and self-confidence, to ensure the best for their family. A mother of five who left shortly after Latvia's entrance to the EU explained [ABC1] that whilst in Latvia she worked in a second-hand

store during the day and in a baking business at night. Despite working such long hours, she felt

so guilty that she still could not take proper care of her children and she was unhappy to see

herself in a mirror due to her tiredness. In England, she worked no more than 8 hours per day and

was able to take care of her children, cook for them, spend time with them, as well as take care

of herself. Another woman in her early fifties, who immigrated to Latvia from Belarus during

the Soviet times and then married there, left Latvia for the USA in 2002. She explained that she

left in order to accumulate capital for an apartment that she, her husband, and two children could

reside in after they had to move from their previous apartment. Unfortunately, rapid economic

transformations in Latvia did not allow her to complete this plan successfully, splitting her

family:

How your journey to the USA did begin?

Initially the story was that I worked in a textile factory "Zasulauka manufaktūra". And after the separation, the factories with the Soviet scale were the first ones to be closed. **It was in the capital city?** Yes, in Riga "Zasulauka manufaktūra". They immediately shut down because they were of the Soviet scale: the raw material and goods. And it meant that we were left without a job. It concerned everybody, it was a mass issue. But I found a job….I found a job as a seller. And, I worked there. But <u>then denationalization of homes began</u>. We lived in Pārdaugava. It was an old house, and the owners showed up who claimed it is their house. It was big apartment with three rooms, and we had to pay utilities. <u>My husband then had a job and then did not have, we had two children […]</u> <u>And so, this denationalization brought fear, we wrote to various governmental institutions but felt that the owner has</u> <u>all kind of rights, but we did not have any rights over this apartment. And I became fearful that eventually we can</u> <u>stay on the street or something…</u>We also did not have any rights to privatize this apartment. We could not buy out this apartment. And, we then decided that we shall go to earn some money to buy a different apartment. It was easier to do it for me, since my husband could not be able to live in a family [in the USA, initially she worked as a nanny]… So we did a tourist visa, and I came here. But things did not go as fast as we expected, because there was inflation in Latvia, apartment prices increased swiftly, I was not able to earn so much, in order to buy an apartment, so quickly prices went up. [my translation from Russian, KNZ7]

In 2014, whilst still in the USA, she managed to buy a one room apartment in Riga on loan, her

son remained in Latvia but her daughter, after having spent some time in the USA, now lived in a

Southern European country. Her husband passed away in Latvia from a devastating disease.

Similarly, several men I interviewed left Latvia to be able to fulfill the expected breadwinner

role, to be able to afford more for their families. Through emigration they found that the striking

difference of salaries between Latvia and their receiving country gave them greater confidence about their manhood.

Most respondents finalized their emigration decision only after they saw how life in their receiving countries unfolded. For them it was the sense of order, progress and justice in dealing with their business, work and welfare that contrasted so strongly with what they had experienced at home. A manager in his late thirties, who worked with million dollar projects and had been away from Latvia for 17 years at the time of interview, kept mentioning that in London he had a sense of continuous progress that he truly enjoys. His biography was proof of this since, from being an unskilled worker, with his dedication, hard work and education, he became a manager of large-scale, billion-dollar construction projects. When I asked him about opportunities for the same progress in Latvia he was negative and responded that such progress as that which he had experienced in his receiving country would only be possible in Latvia if "[he] would be ready to do things which are not right. In Latvia right is everything, which is wrong". He spoke particularly about corruption and fraud, and confirmed he experienced this in Latvia himself. In contrast, the sense that he did not have to experience this in London gave him a feeling of freedom. At some point in the interview, as he was explaining why he thinks his life in his receiving country gave a greater sense of freedom, he suddenly said: "People are simply freer here since in Latvia a brother will deceive his brother; you simply do not have any other solution. There [in Latvia] you shall deceive if you want to live". In his view, heavy competition amidst a desperate need to survive has changed people in Latvia. Everybody thinks only about his own well-being and interests whilst the fact that he was able to move upwards in London without being corrupt and deceptive gave him the sense of pride. This sense of progress was also accompanied by feelings of order and stability, which came from his everyday experience and a

sense that the whole system in the receiving country, from public transport maps and schedules to tax officers and reimbursement, worked very clearly and predictably.

This sense of order, fairness, progress and predictability for the respondents gave a strong feeling of confidence that they were needed, that they would be able to fulfill their dreams and responsibilities towards their family. Life in their receiving countries permitted them to embrace what they perceived as development and progress whereas, by contrast, life in Latvia was considered a life in limbo - a limbo that was too long to be acceptable. Due to their everyday struggles, any belief in the promise of development that came from the Latvian ruling elite waned swiftly.

Some respondents in their mid to late 30s also mentioned that their parents had encouraged them to go and study abroad since they believed that in the West they would have a "better life" and education. By the same token, their parents then did not have confidence in opportunities for their offspring in their home country. Among Russian speakers, this was aggravated by feelings of less privilege in Latvia. A young woman in her early thirties who graduated with a Masters degree in International Relations abroad and, at the time of the interview, worked in one of the most prestigious universities in London, explained that she left Latvia in 2005 to study abroad because her parents urged her and because there was an overall feeling that she, as a Russian speaker, would never be given the same chance in her profession as native Latvians. In the post-Soviet era, as we have seen in the previous chapters, everything Russian was associated with everything Soviet and thus a subject of marginalization. There were also a few young adults, who at the time of their first emigration were in their twenties or early

thirties, who also emphasized that emigration fulfilled their urge for more opportunities, experience and better education, all of which they found to be limited in Latvia.

Resenting the sending state

In the previous section, several of my respondents, as they spoke about perceived decay and crisis in Latvia, referred to the state and/or ruling elite. Emigrants fairly often brought up the role of the state as meaningful to them. For some it was resentment towards their sending state and their experience of it before they left. However, others, in turn, through their experience abroad and the opportunity to compare their sending and receiving states, have begun to see their home state, how it should "think" and "act", with a different perspective. Even though emigrants left Latvia in order to take responsibility over their own lives or their families and hopefully to overcome the emotional and socioeconomic discomfort they felt in Latvia, the Latvian state and how it worked (or didn't) was something that still mattered to them. A woman in her late 40s, who arrived in the USA in 2005 and opened her own business in the New York City area, explained to me that she felt humiliated in Latvia by the political leadership because she was a single mother with four children.

Did you arrive together with your children? No. I came alone and children arrived later. My daughter likes it but sons do not like it here. **How so?** I don't know. **Do they consider returning?** I am not confident that they will be able to live in Latvia because after I had been here for two years myself I did not want to return. **How so?** Before I had left Latvia I already did not like all this politics there. **What exactly was it what you did not like in that politics?** Even the fact that I was alone with four children […] The government did not care that my husband did not pay alimony, that a women shall do everything alone. All this together…they tell to me that I shall come to Latvia, but I don't want to, I only go there because my mother is still there. I don't know maybe I also do not like the discourteousness of people in Latvia. It is common sense that a Latvian will eat Latvian.

Did you go and complain about these alimonies somewhere, in a local government or so? If I am not mistaken now, a first lady of our President Ulmanis told about large families: that these parents should have thought before they made these children. I was completely shocked by this. So, how can you go and ask social benefits after this. If you have been already labeled inferior of the inferior, you understand. And, I am sure this interview was there and I was shocked by it. How the first lady can say something like this? **This is almost like the highest official in this country says this.** Yes. And, because one has four, five, seven children is not worse than the one who has one child. I did not ask for any benefits at all. I had some five accountancy jobs. [my translation, KNZ9]

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After feeling that the first lady had humiliated her for being a mother of many, due to a sense of pride she acted to avoid a situation where she would have to ask for help from the government. This respondent explained proudly that she worked as an accountant for five companies and was paid enough to provide for her family in Latvia. She revealed that she had always felt this urge to leave Latvia and find a place where she could discover a sense of "freedom"; and that life in America had given her that sense. When I asked her to explain what gives her this sense of freedom in America, she responded that it may be due to the "greater opportunities" but that it was difficult to explain and emphasized that "I simply came here and felt good, you understand". Further on in the interview she explained that she always experienced her visits to Latvia as something "cold" and "dull" while her return to the USA as something "sunny". In my interpretation, this was because of the humiliation and stigma she felt she faced as a single mother in Latvia.

There were several other respondents who described being directly humiliated by the state clerks in Latvia. For example, a woman in her late forties who worked as a cook in Latvia and had a fairly decent salary for Latvia lost her job and then applied for unemployment benefits, a benefit everybody is supposed be able to claim when they are searching for new job opportunities. In the State Social Insurance Agency she was angrily approached with a question by a clerk "You had such a big salary? Couldn't you save up something?" With tears in her eyes she explained to me that she had already felt humiliated asking for this benefit since she had never done so before, but that she needed this temporary assistance (as well as had a right to it) as she had to support three of her children in their studies in the capital city. This remark by the clerk humiliated her even more. As such stories repeated, it was clear that the way the state acts,

thinks and what it says (or does not do, does not think and does not) through the leadership, ruling elite and bureaucrats are hugely significant to my respondents.

Among my respondents there were parents who, in order to provide for their families, left Latvia and thus for some time were not able to be with their children and, as such, were reproachful towards the state that was not able to create conditions under which they could have stayed. A well educated woman in her early fifties who graduated with excellence said that her life came to chaos and decay in the 1990s as her craft was not appreciated anymore in the post-Soviet era and that she had tried to work hard to reeducate herself and to adjust to the new labor market requirements in order to care for her family. Similarly to others, during the post-Soviet transformations and the difficult times these brought, she divorced her husband, formerly a very successful master craftsman, who withdrew from society due to alcoholism. In 2010, she was not able to provide for her family anymore and went to Spain[154] and then to England. She explained to me how she felt when she was not able to attend her daughter's high school graduation due to her emigration:

[When still in Latvia] I signed one contract but they paid me according to something else. And, I worked without holidays and was not able to care for my two children who were still studying. And then I met one acquaintance and she offered me the chance to come to Spain to help her husband. And, I went. I left everything. I left my children. My daughter had her graduation, and I cried so much: [She looked past me as she recalled her experience:] I stand there on the balcony in Spain, damn, and tell to my daughter on phone, how she should wear her shoes, so they do not rub, so she should be able to go to her graduation [cries]. In that moment – if I would be given…I would go to the government and I would shoot them down. In that moment, I thought I would shoot them down because it was my child who was alone in that graduation – but they, they were not there where I was. They were not there.

Do you mean the ruling elite?

Yes I think the ruling elite. Yes there was this moment in my life. In that moment, so wonderful…can you imagine? I stand there, not far from there is all these beautiful places[155], and I stand there, I stand there as if….I send this money, it is not much, I sent it there and my child goes to her graduation, her socks slide in these shoes and I tell her on phone – put the plaster, it will slide less to you….Can you imagine? I felt so, just give me a job to wash toilets [in Latvia] but please pay for that. [my translation, P3WI]

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[154] The name of a country changed to ensure anonymity.
[155] She gave names of beautiful towns but for the reasons of anonymity I am not revealing them.

A Russian-speaking woman in her fifties, born and raised in Latvia, explained to me that "the state firstly needs to think of its people, of its citizens". She left Latvia at the end of the 1980s to follow her husband who was in the Soviet army, but then they divorced and, in 1991, she returned back to her homeland where she found that she was rejected by the Latvian state. As she was abroad the Republic of Latvia had replaced the Soviet Latvian Republic and the former no longer treated her as its subject but, instead, as an outsider. She spent six very dramatic years of her life in court proceedings, depicted in several articles in the newspaper *Panorama Latvii* she had brought along to the interview, to receive her non-citizen passport which was followed by a naturalization procedure in order to receive full citizenship. Despite these events and feelings of rejections, she said that at the time she was confident that she would never ever again leave her homeland. Nevertheless, exploitation at work, pay under the table and sometimes no pay at all, lead to hopelessness and great uncertainty, and slowly destroyed not only her commitment to never leave Latvia again but also her self-confidence. Eventually, in 2004, she became susceptible to her friends' offer to go and work abroad. She compared her life in England and Latvia and explained that in Latvia the state does not work to protect its people from such issues as exploitation and unpaid work:

The state firstly needs to think of its people, of its citizens. Firstly, it shall not belittle its citizens, it shall not only think of itself, but protect them [citizens]. For example, where shall we turn when our salaries are not paid, yes, there was nobody I could turn to, since everybody the same, you understand. To go somewhere and say - my salary has not been paid, do you think the government would care? Here in England if you would go and say, what would happen with this employer? At us [in Latvia] it was only in progress. Yes? It would be great if they would listen and protect. So that we would be socially protected, so we could know that the government is with us. Here [in England] we do not want to sit, we work, but we know that if somebody would not treat us well, we only need to complain, and then they would get reprimanded. They will get into prison. But how they could do it with people in our Latvia? So, this protection of people, yes!? […] We do, and we truly work. If we work, we work from all our heart and we do. But it turns out we are not respected for that [in Latvia]. It is so, you understand. [my translation from Russian, N1TG]

We see from these examples that how the state or its representatives treat people, and what they say to people, *matters* for how people relate to their lives, their state and how they

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feel. Conventionally, the state has been perceived primarily as a set of institutions; however, recently the state has also been seen as a "talking" state (Epstein, 2010, e.g., p.341, 344); that is, the state that, through its representatives, such as ruling elite, bureaucrats and so on, communicates and interacts with people. In the previous chapters we saw that the state representatives, due to the sacredness of the West and Right codes, increasingly regarded and treated common social problems as individual issues for which individuals held responsibility. The possibility of state protection was not seen as compatible with the West code, and people who demanded state protection were seen as carrying a Soviet mentality which was not compatible with a modern citizen seeking to Westernize. As such, these notions worked to distance the state from its people because they implied shame about how people in post-Soviet Latvia were.

It is important to mention that institutions that could provide social protection to the people (e.g., State Employment Service, State Labor Inspectorate, and State Social Insurance Agency) were there, but the way the dominant public discourse worked and the state talked to its people conveyed a message to the people that stigmatized the role of these institutions as well as the individuals who sought to use them. When people went to these institutions, they frequently found that these institutions were not there to protect them but to humiliate them, or they found that their help was more symbolic than real. For example, one of my respondents who claimed services at the State Employment Agency as he was looking for a job before he left to go abroad explained that he was offered to work in a swamp for two lats[156] per day which he said hardly covered his transport fees to and back from the swamp and a sandwich for lunch; it did not give him a chance to provide for his family. In this extreme case, it was then the state itself which

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[156] Approximately 4 dollars.

participated in promotion of inadequate pay of their citizens. So this respondent, as well as several others who got similar offers, did not see a point to look for help from this or other state agencies.

Respondents, in turn, pointed out how welcoming and respectful towards their clients tax officers and clerks in their receiving countries were, as opposed to their home country where they were seen as not helpful, impolite and insulting towards their clients. For them this welcoming attitude has been meaningful since it raised their self-confidence and they felt that they were appreciated and needed for their receiving societies. A young woman in her late thirties who had been abroad for eighteen years and at the time of the interview lived in London explained:

> Here [in England] if you go to some state office – maybe here is more bureaucracy, maybe things take slightly longer but it has never been so that I cannot get the information, that somebody would yell at me and say – „this is not so here!". Here they try to explain you, so that I can understand. Here it is almost like for fools – everything is given to you, you live, so it is easy for you. [my translation, U1YT]

Another of my respondents compared how he felt at the tax office in Latvia and in Ireland:

> I can't imagine some tax collector in Latvia, for example, standing up, shaking my hand, and saying „Thanks!" Here [in Ireland] if you go to fill out your documents, you don't feel like you have done something wrong. [In Latvia,] Truth is always in favor of the government. Here [in Ireland] it's completely opposite – you are the one… [my translation, LMNF]

Almost every emigrant mentioned impoliteness as a social phenomenon that characterized communication with state representatives as well as communication with other Latvian colleagues at home and in emigration. Respondents described how, when they visited their home country, they could not stay there for more than two weeks since they felt a sense of "nausea" due to the impoliteness they experienced there. Very generally, impoliteness in language, according to Locher and Bousfield (2008), "is a behavior that is face-aggravating in a particular context" (p.3). It involves behavior where "social actors negotiate their position vis-à-vis each other" (p.5). Impoliteness also involves some power relations as an act of impoliteness

may "restrict the actions of the target" (p.9). To me it seems that impoliteness in the post-Soviet space emerged as a particular phenomenon due the collective shaming of everything Soviet, alongside a rushing towards the "sacred" or "Western", and an inability and unwillingness to come to terms with the Soviet past. Public ridiculing of everything Soviet meant that generations of people who lived, were raised and educated in Soviet times were denied. What they were no longer counted as good; they were expected to suddenly become different, modern. This collective shame somehow trickled down to every individual whose very identities were constituted by the Soviet past – all those who were raised and socialized in the Soviet realities. In addition to this shaming, people were rendered subjects of an abstract market competition where only the fittest survive, and, I think, it was within this context, where issues of self-confidence, humiliation, survival and competition intersected, that impoliteness arose. If one has been humiliated, why would he/she be polite and smiling to others?! If I feel so awful why should I make others feel pleasant?! Those who left and had been abroad for some time, however, had found places to live where they did not feel ashamed about who they were, where they were accepted and respected and thus able to treat others with respect and acceptance too:

How would you characterize your life in England? Here life is very easy. Except tiny issues as now when I am looking for the new apartment and when I had to organize my surgery. Overall I feel there is not too much stress.

Did it feel that in Latvia there was the lack of lightness of being? Attitude of people – completely different. In Latvia everybody runs – one has to accomplish everything otherwise there will be the end of the world if you won't. If you have not done it yesterday then it is over. It is also that in Latvia it was too often at my work that I faced a situation that something had to be done yesterday. But you could tell me that one week ago! Here they tell me in advance when something is going to happen or I have to accomplish something. In Latvia, everybody is in rush and there is always a deadline. I don't know – I think it is mainly attitude of people […] [my translation, B4LA]

She further explained that this might also be related to income. In England, due to higher earnings, people could be more relaxed; while, in Latvia, people were always struggling for

survival and thus in stressful circumstances. For some respondents, politeness and respectful

relationships were a criterion of "civilization" they did not find in Latvia:

> The first and the major motive [for emigration] was money, but then I saw this other world[157], how people actually should live, at what level and quality towns should be, what the quality of services should be, and this kindness, this mutual politeness in relationships…I understood that in Latvia, we are very far from this all, and that life is not so long to wait until the civilization arrives in Latvia. [my translation, FKFC]

During some interviews I also noticed that among some respondents it was still difficult to gain

this mutual trust from their nationals abroad. Sometimes my respondents still looked with some

suspicion at each other and stressed that their best friends were from other nationalities.

At the same time, there were other respondents who did not say that they had experienced

direct humiliation from state representatives before they left Latvia, but, since their return

decision remained open, they were actively observing and comparing life between their receiving

and home countries. Regardless, there was an overall sense that the Latvian state treated its

ordinary people unfairly. It was a common perception among respondents that, due to the heavy

taxation of employees, the state only wanted money from the people:

> I don't like very much this attitude in Latvia – they [the ruling elite] only have one goal, to take our money. They don't have anything else to steal from and now they say – please, come back. We want to steal also from you…. [...] They only need tax payers. [my translation, NHC1]

In previous chapters, I discussed that the dominant discourse in terms of modern state

craft prescribed taxpaying as one of the most crucial and patriotic duties of citizens; and the

ruling elite was committed to this idea. A few years back (between 2008 and 2011) there was a

debate in the Latvian Parliament arguing that Latvian nationals abroad, who left in the post-

Soviet era, should pay to the state the income tax difference from their earned income abroad[158].

Many respondents were unhappy about this initiative, and it was often referred to in the

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[157] Before she came to Ireland she was working for several months in Guernsey in greenhouses.
[158] For example, income tax in Latvia alone for employees has been very high, between 23-25%. In their receiving countries they pay in income tax 20% (England) and 14% (Germany). The ruling elite came with the initiative that people who work abroad should pay the difference in the Latvian budget.

interviews. The conditions in Latvia had forced the respondents out of their country in order to find better opportunities elsewhere yet, rather than trying to improve conditions in Latvia, the state or ruling elite instead attempted to further exploit and punish those who had left the country through such proposals.

Some people held an ironic attitude about the ruling elite in Latvia and identified that being part of the political field in Latvia was the only way for upward mobility. The ruling elite in Latvia were mostly seen as caring only about their own benefits, interests and well-being. I suggest that, in this case, irony was a vehicle through which feelings of alienation between citizens and their state could be brought out; this highlights that the interests of the ruling elite had departed from the needs and interests of the ordinary people. My respondents acknowledged that, in their receiving states, the ruling elite might also be corrupt and care more about their own interests; however, they said, this was less noticeable and thus troubled them less.

Feelings of inequality

Another theme that was meaningful to my respondents as they spoke about their emigration and life abroad related to experiences with, perceptions of and feelings about inequality. I will start this section with an excerpt from one of my interviews with a young man in his late 30s who left Latvia at the beginning of 2000, first to Ireland and later to England. He explained to me that, firstly, it was curiosity and the urge for new opportunities that guided his emigration. He came from a family of a school teacher and, even though, according to his narration, he and his brother never lacked anything, he recalled that during his university years amidst the excitement of student life he had to live fairly modestly and worked nights since their mother did not have enough income to cover all their needs. Throughout the interview he

mentioned several times that life in Latvia during this period might have been as good as it was in emigration; yet when I asked why he did not return he explained that he had tried at some point but he was not confident he would be able to find a spouse in Latvia who did not evaluate their partner according to their consumer ability and income. It appears that one's ability to consume in post-Soviet Latvia has been an important source for feelings of inequality.

He explained further (as did other respondents) that in his early visits to Latvia he was aware that people in Latvia were overwhelmed by consuming the right brands, and that this had become a point of reference by which to judge people[159]. Veblen (1899) described this as "conspicuous consumption". He proposed that conspicuous consumption, primarily an attribute of the upper and wealthy classes, had been imitated by the middle and lower classes as a means for the latter to gain "reputability" or a relatively better status in society (pp.64-70). In other words, conspicuous consumption served as a way to display one's success and achievement to others. Today Veblen has been criticized with the argument that conspicuous consumption not only has a "trickle down" effect from the upper classes but that "pacesetters for consumption may also be those at the bottom of the hierarchy"; that people show their wealth in more subtle ways than consumption; and that consumer behavior is shaped by lifestyle and not so much social class (in Trigg, 2001, p.99). In post-Soviet Latvia, conspicuous consumption was not necessarily triggered by the higher classes, but, consistent with Veblen, consumption preferences were defined by social interactions with others.

Keller (2005) writes that during Soviet times in the Baltic States, when consumption was limited, the selling and buying of Western goods, as an individualistic counter-act to Soviet

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[159] Another respondent who left Latvia in the beginning of 1990s for the USA because her family encouraged her, believed she would have a better grasp of what she wanted to do in her life and possibly a better education abroad. She explained that she always felt uncomfortable upon her return to Latvia as her friends were not so much interested in her but in what she wore, what kind of brands she had.

culture, happened 'under the table'. In the post-Soviet era, however, increased abundance of Western goods conflicted with a scarcity of income; and thus desired Western goods were difficult to access. In post-Soviet Estonia, she observed that conspicuous consumption was a quality of consumers who "desperately wish[ed] to emphasize their membership of [the] civilized West" (p.78). Koroteyeva and Makarova (1998) also found that in Uzbekistan conspicuous consumption was common during the Soviet era. Conspicuous consumption, they observed, was particularly encouraged in Uzbekistan during Brezhnev's era (1964–1982). In circumstances where consumption was limited, access to it "indicat[ed] one's relation to power" and thus communicated prestige to others (p.581). Western goods, due to their scarcity, were desirable and regarded as a sign of development[160]. Eglitis (2010) discusses relationships between class and consumption in post-Soviet Latvia and argues that "positions in socioeconomic hierarchy", amidst an absence of "critical class discourse", has been "made apparent in their relationship to the means of consumption" (p.426)[161]. Given my own observations, I conclud that in post-Soviet Latvia conspicuous consumption resulted from both the past legacies, discussed above, and the post-Soviet socioeconomic and cultural situation more broadly. Due to a deficit of Western goods during Soviet times, there was an enhanced desire for them in the post-Soviet era. An abundance of Western goods, in the post-Soviet era, however, combined with poverty (people often could not afford Western goods). Additionally, the ruling elite and public discourse more broadly encouraged consumerism as an indicator of development

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[160] If initially they were common mostly in homes of those in power and with some status in society, such as "high party and Soviet officials" and "the intelligencia from local nationalities", later they became common also among ordinary people and with that lost some of their prestige (Koroteyeva and Makarov, 1998, p.583).

[161] Based on her analysis of a comparison between the Soviet posters and advertisement banners on the streets in the post-Soviet era she argues that if during the Soviet era consumption was belittled in favor of hard work, then in post-Soviet era these poster invited for leisure, consumption and enjoyment of life (see Eglitis in pp.435-439). She argues that hard work was not seen as a means to improve one's status (p.435). This latter argument I cannot agree with as, throughout my dissertation my data emphasize the dominance of the hard work ethics in the post-Soviet era.

and prosperity. Eventually then, those who wore the 'right' kind of Western brands were seen as better off and as more successful than those who did not. Nevertheless, for those in Latvia who engaged in conspicuous consumption, this was not only a way to perform a perceived status relative to others in society. By the same token, it was also a way to hide their socioeconomic deprivation and feelings of inferiority relative to others. This respondent, who had spent fifteen years abroad, where such pretentions did not seem to have such significance in social relationships, found this attitude or expectation towards brand consumption in Latvia an inconvenience; for him, the expectation of conspicuous consumption he experienced in Latvia seemed humiliating as it unnecessarily emphasized pretentious socioeconomic disparities among people.

This respondent also identified the role of the state in income redistribution as a key feature of social welfare programs in his receiving country. This respondent has a young daughter and, at the time of interview, he was the only one employed since his wife, a non-Latvian, temporarily stayed home with the daughter. During the interview, when I asked him what an ideal state should be, he responded:

There are two options. There are people who earn money and people who pay money. For instance, employer and employee. Employer wants higher profit while employee higher salary. Most of the people are employees. One out of 20 maybe is an employer. Employers are fairly greedy; they will be more ambitious towards employee. Employees will earn less. My opinion, I am not an economist, but if the state would say…for example, "I am an employer, I earn 1000, I have sold my goods, paid employees and I have 300 left for profit". Thus the profit is 30% of 1000 - a fairly big amount. I know that many rich employers earn huge amounts of money. I also know that in Latvia there are employers who put high profit margins for their goods, even 200%. I think the state should define that they cannot earn more than 10% of all profit, for example, if you have a million of profit you can have only 10% of it. The rest they would need to pay in higher salaries to employees and decrease the profit margin for goods. It should not be that one receives 10 and the other 10,000. This is a huge gap. And, what is it? [Laughing in discomfort.] This is a communism. All are equal.

[In order to minimize the discomfort he exhibited about his own idea, I told him:] **This should not be necessarily so. You think in terms of solidarity.** Yes, and why not?! [Pleased, for my support.] [my translation, C3ER]

His narrative was very revealing and also puzzling in that, despite the fact that he was in England, clearly not a communist country, and that his family temporarily benefited from the

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English welfare state, which covered their apartment fees as his wife was not able to work, he still considered it a stigma that he desired the state of Latvia to care about the redistribution of income and inequality. His spontaneous self wished for the Latvian state to take on the redistribution of income and protection of employees against unfair employers but his socialized self ridiculed this idea (here, I mean his laughing in discomfort about his own idea). As discussed in previous chapters, in particular the chapter on Right vs. Left codes, to desire state protection and equality in post-Soviet Latvia was linked to the Left and thus a stigma. Latvia's Western orientation was not compatible with a protectionist state since that was associated with the Soviet past. As such, although he desired for a more protective state, he also felt that this was an inappropriate desire and thus displayed discomfort. Yet he did not consider the social welfare he was receiving in England to be a stigma. He talked with excitement about the temporary protection from the receiving state in relation to their offspring; however, he did not think in the same terms about Latvia.

Inequality issues were meaningful for many other respondents, not because they felt envy towards those who had more but because this sense of inequality was accompanied by a sense of injustice. Inequality had compromised their self-confidence as it had altered social relationships, creating space for privilege and elitism. According to Dorling (2015), injustice is grounded in the belief that "elitism is efficient, exclusion is necessary, prejudice is natural, greed is good and despair is inevitable" (p.2). Inequality in this relationship is both a perpetuator and a result of further injustice (p.13). The relationship between inequality and elitism in respondents' stories came up often. In their view, elitism and greed in Latvia had created a system where those better off sought to satisfy their greed, eventually limiting opportunities for the rest and rendering them socially and economically vulnerable.

One of my respondents, a man in his mid-fifties, who left Latvia in 2005, uttered as I was explaining what the Consent Form was, "nothing is yet right in Latvia and that is why so many people are leaving". To my immediate question of "what do you think is not right in Latvia" he responded very broadly. He discussed inequality as a global phenomena and also as a characteristic of his receiving country. He referred to Marx and how the riches will eventually fail. He also referred to the English football league where, in some cases, a contract can pay certain players approximately £30,000,000 per year and then he asked rhetorically; "irrespective of his talent, capabilities and training, is he working so much more as the best in some other field which is not football?" Slightly confused as to how this broad reasoning specifically applied to Latvia, I asked if this problem of riches also occurred in Latvia. He responded:

> The problem in Latvia is that when Latvia achieved independence <u>all capital was taken by former nomenclature</u>. <u>Part of that nomenclature went into business; they also came to barricades for freedom, for independence</u>. All former nomenclature, including KGB and all other institutions, took all capital[162]. <u>And similarly to other European countries we went to the point where people did not want to go and be slaves for a sandwich anymore. They already were slaves in the Soviet Union. Then he was a slave for the Soviet system and now he is a slave for the entrepreneurs of independent Latvia</u>. And these entrepreneurs are the same which used to be kings also during the Soviet times. […] And those who do not want to work for a sandwich they leave. [my translation, W2UQ]

It was only later in the interview that I would understand that in his personal career he had also experienced injustice. In the mid 1990s, he worked in a restaurant where the ruling elite met for dinner, and heard how they anticipated the bank collapse in 1994-1995, where many people lost the only little capital they had, but these elite publicly performed "know-nothing" when banks began to collapse. Later, as a trade manager he agreed to work for a company where his salary

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[162] Mostly this taking of capital was possible due to the privatization policies. Political elite, where some came from the former Soviet nomenclature, had primary access and knowledge about privatization content and procedures, so they could utilize this information, in order to increase their capital. Even though this is not part of the broader discussion in this dissertation since I don't have access to such data for Latvia, the opportunity to accumulate capital over some time has been seen as a crucial factor engendering inequalities. Oliver and Shapiro (2006) in their book "*Black Wealth, White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Inequality*" in the context of the USA argued that historically depriving racial minorities from access to capital has worked to increase socioeconomic inequality between blacks and whites. And since this has persistently happened through a longer time period such socioeconomic inequalities are hard to reverse.

was tied to his turnover. He was eager to work well to improve his salary but, eventually, as the amount of salary increased due to his efforts, the owner was no longer willing to pay what they agreed upon. Another company or *holding* he joined subsequently went bankrupt due to financial conflict among the owners. Having this experience and considering that, at that time, he was in his late 40s, he had no hope of good job opportunities in Latvia anymore and began his work experience abroad, initially in Norway and now in England as a contract worker. I intended to ask how England differs from Latvia since it was also unequal. Without managing to ask the question, this respondent himself pointed out the difference between the two by referring to the role of the state that, in his perception, in the receiving country protected people if they were vulnerable. Many other respondents considered their receiving countries as more socially responsible.

One of my respondents who at the time of interview had been abroad for 17 years explained that he could not live in Latvia anymore since the system was "unfair" there; in his view, this unfairness was a result of the Soviet system where people learned to cheat[163]. When I asked him what kind of system he would like to have in Latvia to be willing to live there, he suggested that the eradication of elitism and the unethical conduct of the political elite would be needed:

> It has to provide fair conditions; I would say this system should be just.
>
> **What shall be the basis for this just system?**
>
> Well. One needs to change the thinking of people, generations, everything…from A to Z. And, particularly it refers to the government. They do not think for the people. They shall think how to ensure employment, think for the good of people, foster their welfare, but not think about their own welfare disrespecting everything else. [my translation, E8CV]

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[163] Whether these are really remnants of the Soviet past that now affect the system in Latvia, while a view expressed among respondents who often experienced and felt this as unjust, is a question for a separate study and won't be addressed here.

This response was similar to the view of the Latvian diaspora, discussed in Chapter 2, in which the previous mode of thinking was seen as an explanation why the system in Latvia was not just. Even though he was not explicit in specifically blaming the Soviet mode of thinking, he said that there was something wrong with previous generations and people and this was why the system was not working for the common good.

Thus we can see that inequality and injustice, as related to elitism, privilege and also greed, were meaningful for respondents as they spoke about their life in Latvia and their emigration. Wilkinson and Pickett (2010), in their influential book, "*The Spirit Level. Why Equality is Better for Everyone*," explain that "[a]lthough individuals do not have an income distribution, they do have a relative income, social status or class position in a wider society" and thus as individuals they are sensitive to how society is set up (p.31). They argue that "individual psychology and societal inequality relate to each other like lock and key" (p.33). In their view, it is due to increased inequalities that people have more anxieties, social insecurities, damaged self-esteem, and so on. Also, Dorling (2015) points out that inequality and injustice lead to depression, anxiety and feelings of inferiority (p.9). Even though I did not have a chance to interview my respondents in Latvia before their emigration, one thing I noticed in the majority of my respondents was that they shine. They were proud, excited and glad to show that they were better off in their receiving countries. Pride, according to Barbalet (2004), is a manifestation of confidence and, by the same token, self-confidence; like confidence, pride emerges in situations where one is accepted and recognized (pp.86- 87). My respondents' stories revealed that their employers and colleagues admired them. Several of my respondents, and particularly males, pointed out that their employers in their receiving country came to them, clapped them on their shoulder and said thanks for their good work. In Latvia, this happened much less so; owners, in

fact, occasionally utilized their power to humiliate their employees (see further discussion in the next chapter); thus, often inducing feelings of humiliation and shame among their employees, emotions that are opposite to the emotions of pride and confidence (Barbalet, 1996, p.77). Respondents proudly emphasized that even newspapers in receiving countries occasionally praised their good work, a gesture they never felt in Latvia.[164] In their receiving countries, they felt they were paid fairer wages and their conscience was free since they did not have to cheat to get things through. Their advisers treated them as equals and respected their time and potency. Such conditions and treatment made them feel relatively equal to the majority of other citizens in their receiving country. A woman who worked as a cleaner in hotels explained:

> I don't have any problems here with anybody. <u>Even though my work is hard, I feel here like at home</u>. I come to work with happiness, I am happy to see my colleagues. <u>There is nobody who would like to argue and curse</u>. My supervisor comes and asks, - "Dace[165], would you like me to give you two more rooms to clean, do you have time?" Since my family is not waiting for me, why not. [my translation, KLF1]

She also received additional pay for taking on those extra rooms. Some respondents, explicitly and implicitly, pointed out that in Latvia they were treated as inferior, they often had more and more to do but that did not translate into higher wages. The better treatment my respondents experienced in their receiving countries gave them an overall sense of equal standing and of justice, and eventually it gave them confidence in themselves, for their present and future.

Inequality in Latvia seems to be accompanied by a worsening of interpersonal relationships and a tendency to look down at those who are lower in the socioeconomic and skills ladder, making them feel inferior and humiliated. Even though my respondents also mentioned

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[164] Even though I have not done any systematic study on this, I have noticed that the Latvian public media and people more broadly mostly emphasize that employees are not productive enough, they are seen as fastidious and not willing to work for a minimal wage. Very rarely would anyone seek to analyze what it means to live on minimal wage. Very rarely would anyone discuss how it feels to work full time and still not be able to cover basic needs. Yet such conditions lead to feelings of inferiority and humiliation that do not contribute to the well-being of people.

[165] This name is changed to secure anonymity of my respondents.

cases where they or their acquaintances were not treated well in a receiving country[166], this did

not seem to be the general trend. Most often, when I heard about those cases, these were related

to my respondents' or their acquaintances' initial stay abroad until they learned about their rights

and improved their ability with the receiving country's language. My respondents also indicated

that due to the broader options in receiving countries' labor markets they could easily transfer to

some other job.

My respondents, as they discussed their experience in Latvia, tended to emphasize

hierarchical difference not only in the context of the workplace but also in the context of

everyday life. From my respondents' experience daily interpersonal relationships in their

receiving countries were also positively rewarded while these were not always seen in the same

terms in their country of origin.

> There is one thing in Latvia, why I don't like to live in Latvia. I was in Riga, I was in a bar and ordered a drink for myself. And one could not smoke in that bar. In order to smoke, one should go outside. At the same time I see that one guy in a white suit, white trousers, white socks, all in white sits at the bar counter and smokes. I call at a barmen and say that it seems we can smoke over here. He responds that not, we cannot smoke in the bar. I say to him "But see there is a man smoking!" He responded that if somebody would call a police they would get punished for allowing smoking in the bar. They told "if you want, you can smoke but you risk being punished!" But do you understand that in this public place they do not respect me as a human being. They allow…okay, he [refers to the guy who is all in white] has a standing in society, or, he has money, or he is a bandit, or an influential entrepreneur… If he can sit there and this public institution does not respect me as another client, when I sit there and all that smoke comes to me. And they do not do anything about it. Do you understand? See, this is what I don't like in Latvia. Do you understand? That some kind of elitism is forming…And there it is not as here in Ireland where everybody is equal. A millionaire can come to you and clap on your shoulder. Do you understand that it is like this here? In Latvia, as soon as you have a little bit more money you are in your heights. You are up in the sky flying; you are not walking on the ground anymore. This [wealth and status] somehow demoralizes these people. [my translation, PNDJ]

Wilkinson and Pickett (2010) argue that inequality makes us sensitive to a "socially

evaluative threat" as well as the "increase [in] the importance of social status" (pp.42-43).

"Instead of accepting each other as equals on the basis of our common humanity as we might in

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[166] This was particularly common among respondents who arrived before the EU accession when an invitation from a prospective employer was necessary and the respondent did not yet have proper knowledge of the English language. This situation made them more vulnerable to unfair treatment. Those who had this experience, however, improved their language skills and found better employers. I have cases where people in their late 30s and 40s started as mushroom pickers and car washers in Ireland, but in few years would become managers in hospitality and logistics businesses.

more equal settings, getting the measure of each other becomes more important as status differences widen" (p.43). Even though the story of this respondent shows that he himself perceived the situation as unfair, stories of other respondents and my own observations in post-Soviet Latvia indicate that "getting the measure of each other" - based on such indicators as clothing, style, education, network of acquaintances and pecuniary circumstances - has played a great role. I had a young respondent in his mid-30s who said his wife left him because at some point he began to earn less and although he was still able to cover basic expenses he did not have the proper socioeconomic status in her eyes; he indicated she was from a family of higher socioeconomic status. His wife then divorced him. Wanting to improve his situation, he decided to emigrate and at the time of interview worked successfully in the finance industry in London. However, in post-Soviet Latvia, one's material well-being and respective societal displays of status, often acquired through conspicuous consumption, have become important indicators of one's success.

Additionally, respondents who remained in Latvia also indicated social interactions where perceived status differences mattered. A respondent who had never emigrated herself but saw emigration as a viable alternative in a situation of need and despair, spoke about her friends who emigrated before 2005. Drawing from their experience, she compared how people were treated in Latvia with how they were treated in England:

> They are blue collar workers there [in England], they work in green houses, nobody there gives them any problems, they do their agreed work and on weekends they sit in a car and go with their family to the ocean to rest. Nobody there looks at them as foreigners, nobody cares if they have more or less money. Here [in Latvia] you go to the city of Jūrmala [a beach town and an area where riches reside] and people would look at you and judge if you can afford to rent this or that. Unfortunately we have this sorting of people.

> **This is interesting as I have heard about it already**.

> Exactly so. When you go into a cafe and if you see that this is a cafe with stars then you immediately see that they look at you. They even ask – "do you know that you have to tip here?" But I know very well that I shall tip, do not emphasize it, do not point out that I am from the country. I understand that for a barmen it is better if some foreigner comes in but, please, do not make me feel bad about myself […] [my translation, 3NDF]

Wilkinson and Pickett (2010) also argue that inequality influences our trust levels more than unemployment, inflation and economic growth (p.55). I have observed that my respondents did not trust their government and parliament in Latvia. There was a strong conviction among respondents that the ruling elite in Latvia did not think about the people but, instead, privileged their own interests and well-being. Some respondents emphasized that the political elite lived in such a different socioeconomic environment that they were no longer able to understand or relate to ordinary people, and it was for this reason that people did not trust them or their ability to improve conditions in Latvia so that less people would emigrate. For example, when I asked one of my respondents, a young mother educated in international politics who at the time of interview in the fall of 2010 was only two months into her emigration[167], whether people had tried to protest about factors they were not satisfied with in Latvia, she responded that there was no trust that things would change.

> Well, there is no motivation. How much we can…For example, in the news portal TVNet an article shows up where deputies of the parliament think that public transport costs 20 cents. How can you trust these people if for a long time there is already a different price.[...] How can you trust this?! [my translation, CKF1]

These subjective experiences and views are important since people act upon them.

Inequality thus has been an important mechanism of emigration and not only in a strictly economic sense (as a pure inequality of income) but because of how inequality affects social and emotional aspects of people's interactions. Inequality may engender feelings of inferiority, shame, and humiliation, which may further affect people's hope for a better future and well-being. Inequality, elitism and privilege were in that sense disempowering for many in Latvia. How we relate to each other in situations of inequality and how we feel about ourselves affects how we act and what decisions we make. It is not only income *per se* which matters for

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[167] As I did my new fieldwork for this dissertation in 2014, I learned that she and her family still remains abroad where they have bought a family property, suggesting that they were not planning to return to Latvia in the coming future.

emigration but income relative to others situated in a broader framework of social and interpersonal relationships. It is not only the rational calculations that neoclassical economists see as a key mechanism of emigration, but also feelings about oneself in social and interpersonal relationships that help to explain emigration. Particular feelings, such as shame and uncertainty as opposed to faith, hope and confidence, according to Barbalet (1996, 2004), either facilitate or impede our "willingness to act" in a particular environment. Once low income is accompanied by inequality and a sense of injustice, and even a sense of inferiority, shame, and humiliation, hope and confidence for a better future becomes fragile. Life in their receiving countries provided conditions where, despite certain inequalities, my respondents did not feel as inferior or underprivileged as they had at home, a key factor contributing to their self-confidence.

Conclusions

In conclusion, besides a perceived decay, lack of opportunities, low income, inequality, and resentment towards their home state, feelings of no hope, deception, shame, and humiliation have been important catalysts for emigration. These feelings were significant since, in Latvia, they eroded the respondents' self-confidence, a crucial emotion to ensure one's "willingness to act" (Barbalet, 2004). More broadly, their lived experience in Latvia did not give them certainty and hope for better future in Latvia. In these circumstances, my respondents chose a different location for hope - the more developed Western countries, idealized heavily in the post-Soviet transformation discourse.

A cultural explanation as to why people experienced their lives in Latvia the way they did, why they sensed injustice and lost their self-confidence, I argue, lies within the symbolic structure of post-Soviet Latvia's transformation discourse. According to this discursive structure,

everything Western and Right was admired, while everything associated with the Soviet past and Left was ridiculed. This resulted in a meaning environment where it was a stigma to consider state protection or to demand any help from the state (even in situations where the respective institutions were in place). This meaning structure also guided the ways the state, and particularly people who represent this state, acted – the ways the first lady, the ruling elite, and bureaucrats and so on talked and interacted with citizens – as well as guided ordinary daily interactions more broadly. Thus, this same meaning environment also affected social relationships in other spheres of life, including at work place.

According to the structure and meaning of the dominant discourse, the best state was the state that relied on market forces to solve issues of poverty and underdevelopment. By the same token, individual initiative, particularly entrepreneurial behavior, was admired. People were expected to work to solve individual misfortunes and not expect anything from the state. The best citizens in post-Soviet Latvia, according to the dominant transformation discourse structure, were the citizens that took full responsibility over their misfortunes and did not expect any help from the state. Yet despite people's efforts to work hard, they did not succeed and did not perceive their life in Latvia as successful, good or full of opportunities. People often were taken advantage of, as well as humiliated by dishonest employers. Their efforts during the difficult transformation times were also not recognized by the state, which, instead, often rhetorically insulted them both for their occasional failings as well as for more ordinary factors (for example, having a large family). Even though people lost the willingness to act in Latvia, in a way they still fulfilled the role of a good citizen; they took full responsibility for themselves and their families through emigration, hoping to break away from the discomfort and limitations they experienced in Latvia or simply, particularly among younger people, to gain experience and

fulfill their dreams. As their life stories reveal, *for my respondents emigration provided the space where what were seen as "sacred" and "profane" in Latvia, particularly the West and the Left which had been constructed as incompatible within the post-Soviet era, were instead experienced as compatible. This gave them feelings of comfort and a sense of self-confidence.* In their receiving countries, my respondents felt better protected in situations of vulnerability. What they experienced and saw in their receiving countries gave them confidence that there would be better opportunities, and thus some empowerment and self improvement. *In their receiving countries, my respondents experienced development and order, which the post-Soviet transformation discourse in Latvia and the ruling elite constantly promised, but, in the perception of respondents, failed to ensure, fairly instantl*y.

Even though the respondents' emigration decision was mostly incomplete at the time of emigration, apart from the better income, the more respectful environment in which employees and employer, emigrants and their receiving state, were more accepting of each other, contributed to boosting their self-confidence which had been lost in Latvia and thus prolonged their emigration decision. A young woman who left Latvia to Ireland in 2001 explained:

In Latvia, I was thinking that something's wrong with me. It gave me such an inferiority complex…And then I came here and I have a completely different outlook. I am a worthy person! [my translation, CHMD]

My respondents' self-confidence increased as they were accepted for who they were. In their perception, they were treated as equal to other residents of their receiving country. This more democratic environment also gave them a sense of empowerment, of freedom, of opportunities, and thus the confidence to prolong their stay abroad. However, in what follows, I turn to how those who remained Latvia talked about emigration and their lives in Latvia.

Chapter 6 - The Fine Line between Emigration and Remaining at Home

In the previous chapter, I focused mostly on the narratives of emigrants and what they emphasized as meaningful to them when they spoke about their emigration. Yet in order to better understand the relationship between the symbolic codes and emigration towards the West from post-Soviet Latvia, in this chapter I focus on the narratives of those who have remained in Latvia. What might the stories of those who remain in Latvia further inform me about emigration? Do their narratives and what they emphasize as meaningful differ from those of emigrants? Is there anything particular about their lives and their approach to life that allows them to remain?

Most of the respondents who remain in Latvia have some experience with emigration and emigration decisions either through their own considerations or via their relatives and acquaintances' experiences. All of the respondents that I interviewed in Latvia had some close relatives or acquaintances abroad. Some said that they would have left Latvia too if they were younger and had mastered foreign languages. Emigration, most often, was considered or tried in moments of some chaos or insecurity about the future, as a hope for some kind of improvement of their lives. These were moments when people had lost their former job and were not successful in finding a new one, moments when people had a job but found it hard to survive thus making it difficult for them to fulfill their responsibility towards family, moments when their relationships failed, as well as moments of subjective feelings for the need of a 'better' life or, as one respondent stated, when she and her husband wanted "something better" from their lives. Some respondents found it emotionally difficult to talk about their experiences with emigration decisions in their families, indicating that it was not a welcome experience. Very few

insisted that they never thought about emigration and would never leave their home country to live and work abroad.

Overall, most of my respondents' cases show that *there is a fine line between being in emigration and remaining at home*. To give one example, a man in his mid 40s who was born in Grozny but moved to Latvia at the age of 10 without speaking the Latvian language told how his life and career unfolded in the 1990s. He worked as a fire-fighter, as a policeman, and then switched to a private security business for night clubs. In the beginning of the 2000s, a club he worked for closed, he had divorced his wife and left her all their property, his relationship with his girlfriend was not working out as expected, and, amidst this uncertainty and with no capital, he left for England by bus to start a 'better' life. Yet he and others on the same journey were rejected by the immigration service with no rights to return to England for half a year. He explained that this was a crucial moment that differentiated him from those who emigrated. He suggested that if he could have gained entry to England, he would most probably have stayed there.

If that time you got in there, you would stay there?

Yes, definitely. I did not think I have other option. [my translation, 2PQW]

However, with no capital to attempt another journey, he had to return to Latvia and work in order to improve his life. The beginning was hard for him as he had no place to stay and was reduced to sleeping on a couch at his work place. He found two jobs, got involved with night clubs again until slowly and gradually he built up his own firm organizing various entertainment shows in Latvia and abroad. His story reveals that it took hard work, some patience, but also modesty to empower himself.

Even though there is this fine line between emigration and remaining at home, there are particular mechanisms which may have helped my respondents stay home. The major difference

between those who remained and those who left is that those who remained revealed different virtues and beliefs in their narratives, such as modesty and frugality, patience, adaptation, and acceptance. For my respondents who remained, alongside the emotion of hope, these virtues were crucial in order to avoid thoughts of emigration. Those who remained in Latvia often emphasized individual autonomy and responsibility, ideas encoded in the West and Right codes and highly admired in the post-Soviet transformation discourse, in dealing with their own lives. Like those who emigrated, they resented their state but were also more accepting of it; they saw it as the mirror of society and, in that sense, tended to feel they shared responsibility for what their state had become. Based on the discussion of "learned helplessness" (Maier and Seligman, 1976; Abramson, Seligman and Teasdel, 1978), the post-Soviet transformation discourse and the emotion of hope, I will argue that among those who remained in Latvia, the belief in individual autonomy gives hope for better future. In contrast, those who emigrated did so under circumstances where they saw that neither relying on their home state nor relying on themselves in their home state brought expected improvements; they chose to change external conditions, hoping that under different circumstances things might change. In emigration, they have had enough evidence to establish confidence in their receiving state for their better future abroad.

Modesty and Frugality

Most of the respondents whom I interviewed in Latvia talked and practiced modesty. Scholarship on modesty in sociology or even anthropology seems to be scarce. Studies in ethics and psychology, however, have paid attention to modesty. Driver (1999) argues that modesty is "a disposition to underestimate self-worth in some respect" (p.827). She argues that there is also

a dimension of ignorance to it since "a person who is modest stops problems from arising in social situations" (p.828). She further explains:

> People in general have a tendency to rank and estimate worth relative to others, and this tendency is destructive. The modest person is one who does not spend a lot of time ranking, who does not feel the need to do so, and thus remains ignorant to the full extent of self-worth (to a limited extent). The analogy with beauty is helpful. The modest person has a charm similar to the unaffected person. Someone who doesn't compare his appearance to those around him, and, even better, seems unaware of it, seems less likely to provoke an envy response in others (p.828)

In that sense she argues that modesty is related to ignorance. A modest person tends to disregard rankings. Woodcock (2008) argues that Driver's definition of modesty assumes that one's estimation of self-worth is not correct; and she does not explain the social dimensions of modesty (pp.1-2). According to Woodcock:

> Modesty is a valuable disposition for moral agents to possess because it alleviates some of the jealousy, bitterness and other caustic emotions that arise in social contexts where the comparative merits of agents are publicly acknowledged. It serves as a delicate social function by discouraging unhealthy forms of competitive ranking, and it promotes harmony among agents who perceive themselves to be unequal with respect to their natural talents and accomplishments (pp.2-3).

Even though I do respect Driver's and Woodcock's explanations, I also see their explanations as partial since they assume that a modest person has a fairly good standing relative to others and practices modesty as a way to eliminate jealousy and envy towards him- or herself. Woodcock in particular points out that by practicing modesty a person mitigates competition and discomfort with others. Allhow (2010), in turn, emphasizes that modesty is a virtue that is not necessarily aimed at others, as Driver and Woodcock have argued, but "resist[s] temptation" and makes one's "life better" (p.181-183). Allhow is particularly interested in understanding the benefits of modesty as a virtue and emphasizes that:

> the goodness of modesty must be found not entirely in terms of social effects but rather at least partially in the way in which modesty benefits the possessor independent of any external consequences.[…] The immodest person must constantly waste time trying to cast himself in a more favorable light (even to himself). He must seek opportunities to facilitate this and be on the watch for them to occur.(p.183).

My conversations with people who remained in Latvia also show that they talk and practice modesty in order to avoid temptation and the discontent that may arise from not being able to

fulfill certain expectations, roles, and desires. Most of these impediments, however, seem to be related to market values, consumption, or the economic environment more broadly. In many cases, this modesty is adjacent to frugality, understood here as a restraint from expectations and desires that involve some luxury and leisure. In post-Soviet Latvia, talking and practicing modesty has been a vehicle by which to deal with daily discontent and limitations, related to the lack of opportunities and other socioeconomic issues. My respondents practice and talk modesty, and particularly modest living, not only to comfort themselves but also to acquiesce with what is possible to them under given conditions and what they have. In difficult circumstances, for example the continuous need to be frugal, my respondents did not complain or whine about it, but sought to find ways to redefine their situation as satisfactory and under their control. If they complained and showed constant dissatisfaction with their situation, they might consider emigration as a solution for this discontent. Modesty as a virtue, among my respondents, helps to resist expectations and the desire for a better life, as well as helps to suspend thoughts of emigration. Modesty is a virtue used to find satisfaction in what one has and can afford as opposed to the search for happiness outside what one has or can afford. Modesty also involves patience or an ability to be content that improvements in life happen gradually. In accordance with Driver (1999), modesty also involves the attempt to be careless about how practicing modesty would affect one's status in the eyes of others. For example, during times of market radicalism, where citizens are expected to be active consumers, frugality is not accepted and expected. Modesty, in this case, is not an easy virtue to possess but it can be rewarding as it helps to bypass the cultural expectations embedded in market radicalism. I asked a young mother of two in her late thirties who studied history and theology for her BA degree if she ever considered emigration. She responded:

But for what purpose? <u>I can work and get forward here – I can be a seller or a shop manager</u>. To be away would mean a big discomfort. I can earn as much to pay for our apartment and travel and that's it. […]

How it is to live in your[168] city?

All is good for us, I cannot cry. Okay, <u>I understand that now we have very low child benefits, that we have some family crisis, and we have some debt for heating</u>, <u>but it is not so that we don't have anything. We live according to what we can afford and according to our own judgment</u>. For example, my kid had a two year anniversary, <u>we did not have a birthday party, but we would better travel to Riga [the capital] to zoo, and that is how we decided</u>.   [my translation, 8PJF]

Despite her good education, she was content to be a seller or a shop manager. According to the Central Statistical Bureau retail has been one of the largest sectors of employment in Latvia in the last decades, so it has been very common that people who have an education in fields unrelated to retail became absorbed into this sector. Despite her family debt on utility fees and her limited budget, she did not complain, did not show any resentment, but emphasized instead that they lived according to what they had. This respondent also showed a strong sense of autonomy as she emphasized that her family lived according to their own judgment and decision. Besides being frugal, she possessed the virtue of modesty that helped her to sweep aside feelings of discontent and despair by redefining situations as being in their own control. Another woman, in her fifties who held a managerial position in a public institution and whose own son with his family left to Ireland, contemplated the reason she herself was not abroad; this was due to her skill in practicing modesty and frugality which her son, who had left, might have not been able to do:

What is the reason of this bitterness [before she tells to me that there is some kind of bitterness about how the things have developed in Latvia as I ask her how it is to live in Latvia]?

What are some events, contexts that cause this bitterness?

For example, that emigration, for example, this voluntary emigration. I have raised my children similarly but one of my children left to Ireland. But this is because of material reasons…From the early days he has been dedicated to work; he has never been a person that wants to live from some kind of benefits. With his dedication he has found his niche there […] That aim [for him] of course was to live so one does not need to pinch and scrape. But he works a lot and decently, and his salary keeps up. […] <u>I think we have been raised differently, to save something,</u>

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[168] In the actual interview, instead of "your city" I used the name of the city she lives in but for anonymity reasons I am not disclosing it now.

to live economically. <u>They</u> [meaning his son and other émigrés] <u>want to live now</u>. But I do not think that they are the slaves of the money or something. [my translation, 6ZBT]

This woman reasoned that people who left to go abroad were more demanding and indulging towards their life. They were not willing to wait for their well-being to improve in Latvia. She pointed out that she had been raised differently, "to live economically". Even though this respondent explicitly indicated frugality as a virtue that she, as opposed to her son, possessed, her narrative did not show any resentment towards the need to be frugal, suggesting that modest living was normal for her. Her son was raised during the period of radical marketization where one's ability to consume was an important indicator of success. Given her son's particular social environment, frugality and modest living might not have been considered appropriate virtues any longer, thus urging him to search for opportunities where he could satisfy his particular expectations of life. The Latvian political scientist Bleiere (2015) studies Soviet policy and the virtues that кадрс (cadrs; the Soviet state higher level employees) were officially obliged to possess in order to be employed in the Soviet apparatus. She found that modesty was one of the most important virtues required for кадрс, it was a collective value during Soviet times. Although the narrative of this respondent suggested that a modest upbringing was part of her childhood during the Soviet times, my observations of other respondents suggest that modesty has been a crucial virtue not because it was praised during the Soviet times but because it worked as a mechanism to avoid discontent and thus possibly also emigration decisions.

Some combination of modesty and frugality was common for respondents who had debts accumulated, not due to spending on conspicuous consumption, but for basic needs – for example, to supplement a period of low income or to cover medical expenses, food, or to buy an apartment, or for farmers to improve their farming technology and expand their businesses. A woman in her early fifties expressed the conviction that "everybody these days in Latvia has a

loan" [4KGT][169]. A musician in his late 40s explained that most of his income was used to cover the debt on his apartment. He indicated that he had moments when he felt emigration might be an option in order to improve his material well-being but so far he had always managed to overcome these moments even though this meant he had to compromise his status:

Have you ever had a moment in your life you have considered emigration?

Yes, I have thought about it. I have heard that guys go there for some months and earn the money for all the year.

What prevents you from going?

I don't know. I somehow believe that I can find some solution here. <u>After all, I can work as a cobbler or so, anything, until the things go back to normal again.</u> [my translation, 4NFK]

Thus, he was accepting of the notion that he might have to accept a job that compromised his status, e.g., from well-known musician to cobbler. Driver (1999) suggests that a modest person tends to be unconcerned about ranking and status. Another respondent, however, explained that for her and her husband, who needed to compromise his status in a situation of disadvantage, this did not come easy. Nevertheless, to provide for their family they had no choice. In this case, there was a forced need to be modest.

My respondent's husband was a music teacher in the 1990s but since his income was very low he switched to a managerial position that he later lost in 2007. Their extended family helped them temporarily with income but since it was difficult to find a job in his field, he considered emigration but eventually rejected this idea due to the worsening of his health. With tears in her eyes, my respondent told how she and her husband felt uncomfortable and shameful when her husband decided to go to the capital to play the saxophone (as he was also a professional saxophone player) on the streets, in order to have some income. She recalled this feeling of discomfort and shame:

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[169] Another issue that suggests there was a flourishing of various non-bank credit givers in Latvia.

Now everything is ok but that time we did not feel so….It is not like a young person goes and does it. But then <u>we both had to compromise our self-confidence</u>. And then he called and said that "You know, I saw one of my students today, he looked at me but did not come to me but I saw that he gave some money to his partner and asked her to bring it to me". That guy was also a musician and he most probably understood how hard it is for my husband. [my translation, 4QWZ]

In contrast to cases of voluntary modesty, for my respondent and her husband, it was not so easy to disregard others' opinions. Yet they had no choice and had learned to deal with these situations. She further explained how this discomfort and shame mixed with an excitement that the money he earned helped their family budget, including the repayment of loans. Yet soon people learned her husband was without a job and he got an offer to work in a music related field that he is still in. As she completed this story, this respondent stated "*This line between going and staying is very narrow, this is why I try to give an education for my son that will help him to be better off even if he decides he has to go [meaning emigrate].*"

Among those who have stayed, modesty and frugality often come also with some patience. An eloquent livestock farmer whom I visited at his farm explained that he got his plot of land in 1989. He requested it upon graduation from the University of Agriculture but it was only after 15 years that he began to feel that his farm began to develop and profit:

Did you have a sense of confidence at that time [I ask him this question to know if in 1989 when he requested the land he was confident about possibility to develop a successful farm]**?**

No, it was…It was…As my father-in-law said "Well, we will work, five years will be hard and then maybe ten more years will be hard". <u>But Europe in fact came in only in 2004, and the truth is that only then we began to develop somehow.</u> It was due to the European subsidies - you fulfill those requirements, and they pay you salary. I feel so that it is my salary what they pay me for my work <u>since what I do and earn myself I cannot consider a salary since I have to put that all back in my farm</u>. With European money- the more you put in, the more <u>promise</u> [and not confidence] that something will come back.

So you are saying that this breakthrough in your farm was in 2004?

Only so. Up to that time <u>it was only survival</u> since if you would look at my turnover at that time it was no way I could develop. Irrespective of how small these subsidies from Europe are but the truth is we were able to develop only once we entered in the EU. [my translation, 9KNW]

As such, he had waited 15 years to see some improvements in his farm. When I asked him later if, in circumstances of struggling through hardships for survival, he had considered emigration,

he responded negatively and indicated a modest and frugal living as a means to keep away emigration thoughts. He insisted that if one has land one can survive on subsistence farming. Several other respondents, not in the business of agriculture, also had gardens where they grew basic vegetables to supplement their food baskets during summer and early fall. It often seemed that subsistence farming was an important support for family budgets as it minimized expenses for food. Yet my respondents did not emphasize gardening in these terms and tended to consider their gardening as their hobby and a way to relax.

This farmer also revealed that, for him, living on loans was the only way to access the necessary capital for development. He admitted that living on loans was a risky business but he also explained that there was no other alternative. He also suggested that the developments that came to his farm after Latvia's entrance in the EU could not be taken for granted. There were times when he borrowed from his wife, who worked in a private dairy company, to cover loan repayments. Yet he was positive about all these arrangements and considered that there were some agricultural sectors where having a loan was more risky. He mentioned dairy farming, where milk prices fluctuate hugely, as an example. He had a friend who emigrated at the beginning of the 2000s after a drop in milk prices led to a fall in his friend's income and an inability to cover his loans. Thus, it was my respondent's luck to be in an agricultural sector which was much less susceptible to price fluctuations in the market. Another farmer I interviewed who produced grains also confirmed that he would not be able to develop his farm without loans; but he complained that grain prices in the world market fluctuate a lot, and so he had little control over his income. He explained that in 2014 the grain price was so low he feared he would not be able to sustain his farming practice anymore; while prices in 2015 gave him hope that things would improve.

Another example summarizes well the working of modesty and frugality in the emigration decision. A woman in her late 40s who was raised in a Russian speaking family and graduated from the Russian language school but married a Latvian spouse and now speaks perfect Latvian explained that she and her husband, several years ago, went to work abroad. Both had decent jobs in Latvia but as she spoke about her life before emigration she emphasized that "they wanted something more"; and this "something more" was mainly related to their desire for new consumer durables and some exotic travel, encouraged and admired in the public transformation discourse. However, in sharp contrast to many of my emigrant respondents, their life and employment in England were not successful. They were underpaid and had to live in shared apartments. Abroad, my respondent lived in worse conditions than she had at home and thus she and her husband returned to Latvia fairly swiftly. She explained repeatedly that now she appreciated everything she had and refrained from desiring more than she could afford:

And we both with my husband were abroad in England. We tried to find happiness there. […] We have apartment, we have everything, but, you understand, we wanted better car, a newer model washing machine, we had all, but one always wants something better.

One always can better.

Something better! To travel to Egypt – I have never been there! I wanted it. Somehow we have all, we do not lack anything, but you want all this, and I thought – we go for half a year and earn, and then we will come back. Nothing turned out like this. We could not earn even as much to be able to travel back home. We even did not have money for our way back home. Such a stupid situation. […] I came home and I understood, that the values I had before England have dramatically changed. I did not need anything of that anymore. I still have the same old washing machine. I sold my car before going to England, so I obviously had to get the other one upon return. But in general – we have all we need. And now, I do not know what shall happen so I would decide to emigrate.[…] A months back we contemplated with my husband that every human being is given as much as he deserves. If you get above that, you have to pay for it. If for example God is generous and suddenly I win 100,000, what do you think, where would I be on Sunday? In a church?

Maybe not. Maybe in a supermarket.

Riga Plaza. [Laughs] I would be there too.

Or in Egypt?

Yes, or in Egypt. This is the thing. To wait something more…I have always these thoughts – would I be happier if I had a newer car. My washing machine works, why do I want the different one? I have all. A very good apartment. What else? I have a great husband, I feel fulfilled like a mother, a wife, and as a mother-in-law. I have an

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amazing daughter-in-law. What is lacking? Government. But government is our mirror. Government is the way we are. We would need to pray for this government but we curse it. [my translation, 3NDQ]

Thus instead of complaining about her inability to consume what she desired she sought to appreciate and be content about everything she had. Her narrative illustrated the fine line or the situation of liminality between living in emigration and at home. The temptation for "something better in life", which she and her husband had sought to satisfy through emigration, was mitigated by frugality and modesty. Yet her story allowed for another possibility, too. If her and her husband's employment in England had been successful and had allowed them to indulge in everything they desired, they might not be back in Latvia now and would not need to talk and practice frugality and modesty. Her narrative also provides an introduction to the next section of this chapter on how those who remain relate to their government. The respondents who remain in Latvia are more modest in their demands, less critical and more accepting of their government in comparison with those who have emigrated and remain abroad.

Talking and practicing modesty, frugality and some patience, among my respondents, helped to retain life satisfaction in Latvia. If my respondents did not talk about and practice modesty, they might have found the conditions they lived in much more limiting than they do now. Significantly, these virtues gave them a sense of control over their lives. Yet these same virtues were not visible among those who have emigrated. This does not mean that they did not possess them, but rather that the circumstances they were in did not require their application. Those who emigrated found that what they desired, they could have and that they were able to do more than ever before in their lives – these were crucial reasons why a life in emigration was so tempting and a return more difficult. Among those who emigrated and whose emigration seemed to be successful, I observed some relief that they did not need to practice modesty and stringent savings anymore. Those things they desired were finally accessible to them:

For example, when I go to store here [in England], when I see something, I can buy it. <u>It is not like in Latvia, you look at it, it made my mouth water – but then you turn around and leave</u>. If I afforded to buy something in Latvia, then for all the months I could not buy anything else. Here it is not like this.[my translation, ABC1]

My respondents often excitedly described how life in emigration has allowed them to travel abroad, as well as fulfill hobbies they did not dare to think about in Latvia. For example, I have a respondent who travels to almost every F1 race. Another travels with his family on weekends to European cities where important football matches take place. Women described their travels to Greece, Italy, the Canary Islands and even Trinidad and Tobago. Some devoted their free time to photography, a fairly expensive hobby. Among my respondents in Latvia, I heard about such travels less often. And often those who did travel did so to visit relatives or friends who live and work abroad. Some, who mentioned travels abroad, emphasized that they did it on fairly tight family budgets or through some programs. For example, the Latvian Farmer Association organized some trips to other EU countries to learn their best practices and encouraged farmers to participate by paying decreased travel fees. The hobbies of those who remained in Latvia were also different – such as gardening, participation in Community Theater, local travels. Yet I do not think that my respondents abroad were conspicuous consumers. Simply their incomes allowed them to do what they liked and to have what they wished for but had been deprived of in Latvia. On the one hand, it seemed to me, they did not utilize consumption to show their status relative to others but rather as a manifestation of a freedom they had found limited in Latvia. On the other hand, it also seemed they were proud that they could live according to how people in the West were typically imagined living. In this latter sense, their consumption and leisure was relative to an imagined Western standard of living and, in that sense, they felt they were truly becoming Western.

Adaptation, Acceptance and Hope: the State vs. Individual

Similarly, as my respondents talk about and practice modesty, they also talk about and practice adaptation and some acceptance. Respondents who remained in Latvia, like those who have emigrated, tend to express bitterness, disappointment and some resentment about social change, including the massive rise of emigration that occurred in Latvia over the last twenty five years. Among those who remain, feelings that things have not gone right in Latvia were common. However, they also admitted that they have constantly adapted to the new environment and hoped that things will improve. A woman in her fifties who considered emigrating in 1990s ultimately decided against it because she had no mastery of foreign languages combined with her husband's conviction that hard work on their farm would help them to provide for themselves. She decided to acquire a degree in Library Science in the 1990s and now has worked for many years in a public institution in a small community while her husband continues to farm. Despite this, she said to me:

> Take whatever sector you wish – <u>everything [in Latvia] is slightly wrong</u>. Not the way it would need to be. It is not that people and their needs are the reference for law, norms or some rules; but, <u>firstly we have rules and then people shall adjust after</u>.

> **One shall adjust to the provisions?**

> Yes, and not otherwise. It is not so that the law is for people, but that <u>people are for the law</u>. […] [my translation, 3PNG]

Other respondents similarly indentified the continuous need to adapt and change their ways of thinking. A poet in his mid 40s (whose observations on post-Soviet Latvia are such that they deserve to have a separate chapter devoted to them but within the scope of this dissertation this is not possible) worked for one of the largest Latvian newspapers in the 1990s, as well as in the advertising business. He expressed that he has changed his thinking within the last twenty five years maybe five times, eventually concluding that, in a paradoxical way, what we consider Soviet mentality and an extreme Western mentality coexist, and that maybe they are one. He was

also convinced that what we consider Western capitalism and materialism was represented "more glaringly in Latvia than in the West itself". Given the narratives of my respondents who have emigrated, this truly seems to be the case: What was imagined as Western capitalism in post-Soviet Latvia did not exist so much in the West itself. For example, my respondents abroad found that West and Left were actually compatible, or, in other words, that it was not a stigma to think about and compliment the welfare programs of their receiving countries. In some instances, my respondents abroad were less concerned about wearing particular Western brands which seemed to be much more important in post-Soviet Latvia.

> **You mentioned yesterday that you had to switch your thinking something like five times? What is the context for that? What were these turning points?**

> Those big issues where linked to what happened in Latvia. Some of them coincided to what happened in the world. Some were related to aging and changes in my life. That first, of course, classic, was the Soviet education. You have been raised as the Soviet product but then you arrive in the environment which is not Soviet anymore where relationships are somehow completely different. It was so only externally. In the Soviet times, it was clear that there was some kind of official story and then the real story. I once went to the news portal editorial[170] board [in the 1990s] with the cake and the director laughed at me – "This is the old school, the Soviet man!" And, this was not normal.[…] I simply tried to create relationships, this was more from me as a rural man – who brings along a present for the host. It is not necessarily Soviet. […] Yet suddenly I felt with my cake uncomfortable. […] Then in university we had to study Scandinavian media culture and free press, they gave us this knowledge, so we could work in the press run by oligarchs. This gradually happened so at that time. […] When I came to the newspaper[171], we had courses for reporters that reeducated us again. So, on the Soviet journalism they put on the free press, and then on all this the new owner of the newspaper said: "Forget about it! Forget also this! We will have different principles!" But in practice we found out that there were even other principles. So eventually I had this feeling – that, on the one side, it was the same as we have used to it in the Soviet times, - that we said one thing, but did another. Now we have had the same, but in the different package… [my translation, 1PNF]

This respondent, as an idealist, was disappointed in what he experienced in the media particularly and post-Soviet Latvia more broadly. Similarly to others, throughout interview, he expressed hope that there were prospects for social changes that would be more rewarding for people. He, again similarly to many other respondents, derived this hope from a strong sense of individual autonomy and efforts as the driver of social change: "I can be disappointed in this state, but I understand, that it is me […]" [1PNF]

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[170] He mentioned a name of the news portal and its director but to keep anonymity I am not disclosing them.
[171] He mentioned the name of one of the largest newspapers at that time but to keep his anonymity I am not disclosing it.

Those who remain in Latvia, similarly to those who have left, showed some resentment and distrust towards their state but they differed from those who have left in that they were conciliatory about it. They tended to combine this resentment with hope and conviction that individual efforts are meaningful to bring about some change. Among those who remained, it was very common to hear that the state was the mirror of the people. If people would change, the state would change too. As one of my respondents was speaking about her life in 1990s, she recalled that

It seemed that with the independence we would have fairly peaceful life – one should only rely on himself and he would have all. But then it was not so. Fairly swiftly came the transition related realization, that we ourselves shall do something and that nobody else will do instead of us…[she immediately interrupted this thought and said] and yet those who were more swift and knew about everything what would come…the major thing was information, to get it; those who got the information knew what they should do in terms of privatization and did everything, and the others did not understand [3PNG].

Initially this respondent indicated that how she and her family were doing was an issue of their own making. Yet she also confronted herself by immediately inserting that some people in the 1990s had privileged access to information and thus better opportunities for empowerment. In particular, she referred to the privatization process: people who worked at state and local government institutions and their relatives, in her view, had better access to information to master the privatization processes and thus to accumulate some capital[172].

Another respondent, a women in her 40s with education and work experience in law, who moved from the capital to a small town as a strategy to improve her relationship with her husband (though this eventually failed), and who raised her two children alone and worked in local government services, pointed out that she had several difficult moments where she considered emigration. These were situations where low income, debt obligations and some

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[172] During the interview she pointed out that her son had worked for several years in Norway but despite his good income there decided to return since his wife preferred to live in Latvia. Now he struggles with regular income but still remains in Latvia.

despair combined. Nevertheless, she always convinced herself to stay true to her beliefs that the Latvian education system, its natural environment, and the more limited exposure to consumerism in the countryside (in her village there were only two tiny stores where one could buy basic food items) were better for her children. She admitted that even at the time of interview she struggled to provide for her family and to allocate funds for the studies she needed to pursue in order to keep her job. She presented herself as optimistic and looked for solutions and various projects she could carry on in addition to her job. She emphasized that things did not go very well in Latvia but suggested that this was a result of the behavior of all its inhabitants. Differently from those who had emigrated, she did not hurry to suggest that it was only because of the actions of some governing elite that things went off the rails. In her view, it was the people and their selfish actions that adversely affected national development in Latvia:

>At us everything happens somehow completely wrongly, aslant [she refers it to the national policy planning particularly]. I think, this thinking is somehow short term. Today it is good, but after me anything even floods.

>**Do you think all of us think in this way?** Mostly, and from this all the big consists, since there is no abstract state that exists somewhere. It does not come from the planet Mars. We ourselves are this state. And for example – all this money that came in, how expediently or not it has been utilized.

>**Do you mean the EU funding?** Also the EU funding. For example, - the road construction, did it happen systematically and in an organized and sustainable manner or did it happen by raking; I don't know, for example, Liepaja Special Economic Zone rakes in for itself, while free ports rake in for themselves. Okay, these are the big ones, yes. But this development…It almost seems to me, that purposefully…that mostly we only have the capital city and then few populated areas, and the rest it seems is the question of time – how long it is going to exist. [my translation, 4LKF]

There were several other respondents who were critical that things did not develop very well in Latvia but also held the conviction that each and everyone's individual efforts could change this situation. These respondents wanted to be critical about perceived injustices in Latvia – about inequalities, including inadequate regional welfare systems, corruption, the business and political nexus, and so on. But they also mitigated this criticism by reiterating that it was only they themselves, the ordinary people, who with their own hard work and initiative could change

their state and country for the better. A woman in her early 40s, who held a job in local government but also ran her small event-organizing business, articulated this paradox:

> Our hundred heads [all parliamentarians] – <u>I beg my pardon, they can do all kind of shit and they would not have anything for it</u>. And they do not let any young people in, since they understand that they can earn their thousands there. They even earn with release benefits, they earn on everything. They all have five to six companies. We won't have any order, until we won't organize the head… the fish rots from the head. We cannot ask from ordinary people that they stay here and are patriots, I can be my city patriot, I stand and fall for it but if at some point my employer, the local government, would say sorry we don't have money, we cut your load to half, of course, I would pack my luggage, my children are grown up now, and I would leave. I would not seek for the work in the capital; I won't drive back and forth and suffer tiredness from it. […] <u>We shall be aware that only we can make Latvia better</u>. In the local government elections, in the national elections; if we ourselves won't do anything and won't go to that election and would say – ah, there is nothing we could change; what permits us to become a member of this or that party? All right, <u>we all can criticize, we can stand on platforms and shout but, okay, do something too</u>! If we would start to do something, things will change. [my translation, 3NDF]

Despite this realization that people were not able to control what happened in Latvia over the last two decades and thus had no choice but to accept it (or to leave), my respondents in Latvia still held a belief that their own or individual efforts more broadly were critical to inducing positive change. How to explain this paradox? In what follows, I will argue that there are three mutually related explanations that account for this. *Firstly*, the symbolic structure of the transformation discourse encouraged people to think that individual efforts and initiatives matter and lead to transformations; while complaints and strikes are destructive to national development (see Chapters 2-4). This does not mean, however, that my respondents have accepted this thought out of pure complicity. Having lost any hope in the state's ability to bring improvements, they still kept some hope in themselves and the people around them.

Secondly, this first issue seemed to work together with what psychologists call "learned helplessness". According to Maier and Seligman (1976), learned helplessness means that "when events are uncontrollable the organism learns that its behavior and outcomes are independent and that this learning produces the motivational, cognitive and emotional effects of uncontrollability" (p.3). Given situations where people repeatedly saw that independent of their own efforts national development in Latvia was not taking place according to their expectations, due to

corruption, the privilege of some groups, greed and so on, they discarded any great expectations of their state. They tended to accept the state as it was, maintaining hope only in their own efforts. How so? Abramson, Seligman and Teasdel (1978) explain that there is a distinction between *personal* and *universal* learned *helplessness*[173]. Personal learned helplessness refers to "[s]ituations in which subjects believe they cannot solve solvable problems" and thus they think there is something wrong with them that explains why things are not working as expected; while universal helplessness refers to "situations in which subjects believe that neither they, nor relevant others, can solve the problem", meaning that there are some factors beyond individual agency that are uncontrollable (p.54). In other words, "[u]niversally helpless individuals make external attributions for failures, whereas personally helpless individuals make internal attributions" (ibid). In a situation of "universal helplessness" person's desired outcomes are "independent of all his responses as well as responses of other people" (p.52). In this research I can observe this in the relationship between people and their home state. In this case, irrespective of what a person did to improve his well-being under conditions managed by his state this person failed. As a result, an individual might have developed "universal helplessnes" towards his better life prospects in Latvia.

Among those who remain, I observed universal learned helplessness manifested through critique and resentment towards ruling and business elites (as both are often seen as mutually related) and how they have handled the post-Soviet transformations. At this level, there was no hope that things might change for the better. My respondents' lived experience in post-Soviet Latvia over 25 years gave them considerable evidence that they could not rely on their ruling

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[173] This distinction results from the situations where a person who feels helpless "asks why he is helpless" (p.50). This question leads to consider if this is because of a person itself that his expected outcomes fail or is it also because of some circumstances beyond that person. (see discussion in p.52).

elite. My respondents in Latvia, however, did not have issues with personal helplessness as they strongly believed in the idea of individual autonomy, or, in other words, they believed that their individual efforts could bring the social change and improvements they were expecting. [174] This lack of private helplessness as opposed to universal helplessness was not only related to the dominant post-Soviet transformation discourse which socialized people to believe in individual effortsbut also to an emotion of hope. Thus, *thirdly*, my respondents' actions and reasoning was based on emotions of hope, which resided not in their state or the ruling elite but in themselves and in their closest kin. Lazarus (1999) discussed that

> To hope is to believe that something positive, which does not presently apply to one's life, could still materialize, and so we yearn for it. Although desire (or motivation) is an essential feature, hope is much more than this because it requires the belief in the possibility of a favorable outcome, which gives hope a cognitive aspect and distinguishes it from the concept of motivation, per se. (p.653)

Lazarus further argues that "a fundamental condition of hope is that our current life circumstances are unsatisfactory", there is some feeling of deprivation or despair; and, in this situation hope gives an intuitive belief rather than a confidence that "a change for the better" is possible (p.654). The emotion of hope, according to Lazarus, is important in coping processes; it gives motivation for coping (p.667). Those who remained in Latvia were not satisfied with how the state ruled and with the consequences of this for the well-being of ordinary people. They also realized that they could not really control this. Nevertheless, they were not entirely without hope. They still believed that they themselves, and the people closest to them could improve their own, as well as the overall situation in Latvia. The following reflects this:

> […] and then you understand, that everything changes in life, the government changes, but we stay. And, when we have to develop these human relationships, and when we do not comply with political pressure, then, in fact, it is completely irrelevant, what kind of regime or party rules. What is important is that you do your work. Maybe you adjust sometimes…yet I think also that in those times [Soviet times] people thought and did the same

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[174] It also seems that in the case of post-Soviet Latvia there is a relationship between universal and personal helplessness as it is also through the working of dominant discourse (external to individuals) that individuals have developed strong bielief in individual autonomy and thus are more resistant to personal helplessness.

things as they do now. Okay, maybe some kind of slogan has changed, maybe the color of flowers is different, and songs are different […] [my translation, 4QWZ]

This example shows that my respondents cope with unsatisfactory circumstances at the national level by dealing with their lives at a more immediate scale and at a more intimate level. In this case, it is the quality of relationships with the closest circle of friends and acquaintances that matters for the good life. Hope for a better future in Latvia, in this case, resides with one's closest people and oneself. This particular example clearly illustrates how the state-society relationship becomes irrelevant. This respondent emphasized that she attempted to distance herself from the national political issues since she had no trust that her political participation would bring any change at the national level[175]. This belief in individual autonomy and a focus on those closest gave those who remained a more circumscribed motivation to act and thus a hope for better living outcomes in Latvia. As such, this was an important mechanism to defer the emigration decision. If my respondents had not believed in their own, as well as their kinfolk's, ability to control their own well-being and situation in their country more broadly, they would have been at risk of personal helplessness and loss of hope for a better outcome in Latvia. This would have been dangerous for individuals and people more broadly since, according to Abramson, Seligman, and Teasdel (1978), this fosters a lack of self-esteem and depression.

Lazarus (1999) also argues that both "acceptance and hope require a coping effort to achieve and are, in effect, intertwined and probably powered by the same or similar processes" (p.655). Excerpts from my respondents' narratives in this chapter and, especially, in the following citation illustrate this virtue of acceptance well. With one of my respondents, a

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[175] She refers with regret to the last national elections in 2014 where a parliamentarian Solvita Āboliņa was not among 100 parliamentarians elected by the people but eventually she got the seat by pushing out another of her party members. My respondent refered to this case as an example of why she has no trust that people's political participation matters.

musician in his late forties, I noticed this virtue of acceptance when he told that, as a musician,

he had some empty months when he played and earned less; for my own curiosity I asked:

Which are these empty months?

Really it is September and January. It is September because then we need to buy clothes and books for the children, and the weather is so that one is between outside and inside. People should adjust that now that life will mainly take place inside. The major issue is the beginning of school and the state does not help – one needs books, clothes, and that all adds up to budgets.

Do you have this feeling that the state is not helping?

Yes, that involvement is very minimal. I do not believe in our state. But this is the kind of situation we have and everybody has to get used to it.

What do you think, when and how did it start, this lack of trust in the state?

I think that it started within Soviet times. The state lied to us and we lied to the state.

But wasn't there an opportunity, with independence that people could shape state society relationships which are based on mutual trust?

That is the point that in the 1990s everything went to rack and ruin.

What happened?

Many stole. As they say, the one who is the bigger porcupine digs out more. If you are not that kind of person, then …. you don't have anything. We are not that kind of people who will go and steal, or fight with these bourgeoisies, it is, how it is…

Do you think people would need to go against these bourgeoisies?

Well, we would need to but who will go and do it? It is not going well, but it is also not bad enough to go and change something radically. There is also a fear of losing what we already have. For example, in this context with Russia and so on. [my translation, 4NFK]

In his daily life, he focused on his own deeds to improve his own well-being; while with respect

to the ruling elite and his critique of it, he practiced acceptance because there was little hope that

revolt might help; or, as he put it, "everybody has [gotten] used to it [that the state is not very

helpful]". In Chapter 4, on the school teachers' and farmers' strikes, we saw that striking and

protesting did not help much to change the ruling elite's perspective. This respondent's reasoning

was also framed by his feelings of insecurity arising from Russia's 2014 military intervention in

Ukraine. He feared that people's demands for radical change could worsen the situation further

in Latvia. This view comes as no surprise, since the dominant transformation discourse has trained people to be fearful of Russia as Latvia's most apparent enemy.

It was only in very rare cases that my respondents expressed resentment towards the ruling elite and perceived injustices with the open demand for change without acquiescence. This only happened in cases when respondents were very self-confident and when their closest family members were in emigration for a longer time or as circular migrants, or in cases where people themselves have traveled a lot. A man in his late 50s who, at the time of interview, was unemployed due to the closing of the rural school[176] (where he worked as a teacher) and participating in the State Employment Agency program that promoted individual entrepreneurship, explained that, sadly, one of his sons and a daughter had emigrated to England. He also explained that his wife was a circular migrant who went for two months every year to work in England in the flower industry. He slightly increased his voice as he explained that

> she [his wife] works [in Latvia] in a child care center…can you imagine, she who has all this education[177], she goes there [to England] – picks flowers, and after she buys herself a dress; here [in Latvia] when she works in a child care center she lifts, lifts, she lifts many people. Within this state they say we need this and that but why nobody sees that this woman, damn it, lifts seventy kilogram children into a wheel chair. And when one says – please, pay a bit more, then, of course, nothing. I worked here as a school teacher and earned 200 lats per load. At that time our ruling elites earned something like 600 to 700 hundred. Ok, that is understandable! How many years have passed by – a school teacher has the same salary, maybe he has a little increase. But how much have those who earned 700 then? They have around three thousand. Where is the justice? […]Before the elections they come to agitate here, and they don't want to see me anymore since my first question to them was – would you like to live on my income? I would definitely like to live on yours. [Laughs ironically.] I know they don't like these questions, but why not – we are equal and I have all rights to ask. [my translation, 2MNF]

Having his wife's and children's experience of working and living abroad, he was more critical towards the order of things in Latvia, and the ruling elite's inability to appreciate the work of all

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[176] Due to the decline of overall national population and particularly the decline of population in rural communities in the last decades, more and more public schools are being closed and reorganized, distributing the remaining pupils to the nearby schools in relatively more populated areas.
http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/statistika/petijumi/02.pdf
[177] His wife used to be a medical nurse and worked in the town they live in. With the austerity measures many medical practices in rural areas were closed or made available rarely, and staff reduced. In order to improve her conditions on the job market, after this reduction, she began to study psychology and pedagogy together with her husband in one of the regional universities. My respondent tells with excitement that he graduated when he turned fifty.

state employees materially. He himself during the interview expressed that if he were younger he would not live in Latvia anymore. Yet I also saw that he was resilient to emigration due to his good standing within his community. He was an active participant and volunteer in local events, he played in the Community Theater. To cover for his temporary unemployment, before his entrepreneurship project began, he gardened and occasionally baked bread that he sold in his and surrounding communities to have some spare cash.

Importantly, however, given the central question of my research, I ask, *how can these simultaneous feelings of universal helplessness and individual autonomy help to explain emigration*? *How do those who emigrated differ from those who are left in this matter?* There are some similarities and some differences between the two. It seems that among both groups universal helplessness, which manifests itself in a lack of belief in the home state, was common. Neither group had hope and trust in their state or the ruling elite to improve national development in Latvia so that it was rewarding to society more broadly. However, in contrast to those who remain, those who have emigrated *not only chose to rely on themselves* (in the sense that the emigration decision was an autonomous way to improve limitations experienced in Latvia), *but also to deal with universal helplessness by shifting their hope for a better future from Latvia to their receiving countries*. As we saw in the previous chapter, if initially people went abroad with some hope that life would be better there, hope that was based on evidence from people around them and the transformation discourse that idealized the West, in emigration they in turn established confidence that life in their receiving country was indeed much better accompanied by increasing self-confidence. Given rising self-confidence among my respondents who have emigrated, it also seems that back at home some of my respondents began to experience personal helplessness or situations where they saw that their individual efforts and

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hard work, despite how much these were admired in the dominant transformation discourse, did not bring expected improvements. They therefore began to see themselves as a major reason for their failings. In this latter situation, some of the hope found in stories of those who have left in combination with a more widespread critique of the ruling elite might have helped them to escape depression by choosing emigration as a solution.

More on Individual Autonomy and Hard Work Ethics: "…every man is the architect of his own fortune"

The idea that, irrespective of wider social structure and circumstances, individuals are "the architects of [their] own fortune" was very common amongst my respondents in Latvia. It was strongest amongst those who had been successful in their work and businesses and did not recognize that their success was not only of their own making but came from the social environment and capital they might have had. This belief in individual autonomy seemed to be critical for how social relationships under particular circumstances unfolded. Those who perceived themselves as successful in their deeds were validly proud of themselves but they also failed to empathize with those who were worse off. Amongst respondents who strongly held this belief in individuals as architects of their own fortunes and who were critical of those who found it hard to deal with their lives, were mostly those who emphasized that they have never considered emigration.

One of my respondents, a self-confident man in his late 30s who had become a successful entrepreneur and ran his own joinery business, indicated that he had never considered emigration and said that "he will be the one who will switch off the lights in the airport and await for first ones to return [from emigration]". In the 1990s, in his last year of professional college he did an

internship in Scandinavia where he had an opportunity to observe and experience Scandinavian work organization in a joinery factory. In this factory, everything took place within a stringent work schedule, very efficiently and with strong quality control. Having been raised in a hardworking family where his father, in Soviet times, besides managerial work, had his own honey business, he found this Scandinavian approach familiar to him. Every minute of time was used very efficiently. Soon, upon his return, he began to work in his hometown joinery firm as a manager where, as he told me, he immediately laid off the workers since they did not possess the proper kind of work ethic for the new capitalist environment. He related this impropriety to their Sovietness:

> [After my experience in Sweden:] I was nineteen, the entire world was open to me, I had some experience behind me – why not? I applied for that job – and all was well. I got to work with people who were from the Soviet times. There were entrepreneurs who had privatized that joinery but they did not have time to deal with the production process. They were looking for somebody who could organize all the work. In the first two weeks, I laid off the entire collective.

> **Why?**

> They did not want to work; they did not have an attitude. I could not understand – how is it? They thought that I am too young that there is no point in listening to me. They thought that firstly they shall have some vodka, and only then they would work […] Then I found a new team and everything was all right for some time. [3FKP]

He reasoned that alcoholism was a relic of the Soviet times encouraged by situations where, irrespective of the work one did, everybody had the same income, leading to the undervaluation of work time. In his view, alcoholism often did not lead to savings, so necessary to empower oneself. He argued that he was able to establish his business because he did not use his income in Sweden for entertainment but saved it as the base capital for his own joinery. Thus, in his view two different work mentalities collided – his more Western oriented one and the Soviet one his employees possessed. His reasoning was indifferent to the structural and socialization experiences of his former employees. He was raised in a well-off family with a hard working and very organized father, an opportunity many others might not have. He also had an opportunity to

do internship in Scandinavia when it was rarity and to save some capital. In turn, alcoholism itself may signal some unresolved social issues people were not able to deal with[178].

His reasoning that there existed two different types of work ethic was challenged by some other respondents who expressed their belief that during Soviet times people were harder working and that it was only in the post-Soviet era that people became spoiled and wasted their time on social media, consumption, and entertainment [4QWZ]. Nevertheless, from my observations this view that people who were socialized in the Soviet work ethic were worse employees than the younger generation is common in post-Soviet Latvia. I had respondents among emigrants who were rejected in the post-Soviet labor market at the age of forty and fifty because their skills were seen as not compatible with the new environment. Yet despite this rejection in Latvia, they have been able to move upwards in their careers in their receiving countries.

A grain farmer in his early 60s who never considered emigration and whom I interviewed on the phone as he refused to meet me but was eager to talk, held unsympathetic views towards the people who had emigrated. When I told him that my research also dealt with emigration, he was quick to judge that those who had left held a "slave attitude". In his perception, emigrants did not have sufficient initiative and were thus not able to organize their lives. He immediately reasoned that this might be related to Soviet times where, in his view, everything was decided for the people from above; he thus related their "slave attitude" to their Sovietness. He promoted himself by saying that he managed to escape this "slave attitude" since his father, during Soviet times, worked as a meat carrier to markets; and, he strongly believed that exposure to this market

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[178] Causes of alcoholism are related to "excessive feelings of guilt, anxiety, inadequacy and the like" (Bacon, 1957, p.179) which themselves are embedded in various social and socialization issues, such as inability to take a proper role within society, "dependency conflict", stress, repression, self-imposed guilt, unfulfilled social expectations, pressure and others (McCord and McCord, 1960, p.84, Bacon, 1957, p.178).

environment had given him a different perspective on the world. He was also quick to admit that it was better that emigrants stayed in England since, in Latvia, life would require them to have a hard work ethic. He then assumed that people who have left have chosen a life of leisure, and that this unwillingness to work hard might be a peculiar characteristic of emigrants. Thus, this respondent echoed the post-Soviet transformation discourse of the 1990s drawing a sharp divide between the Soviet mode of thinking and the post-Soviet mode or Western mode of thinking.

Among respondents who practiced frugality and modesty and lived under seemingly tight socioeconomic conditions, I occasionally also heard views that if those who emigrated worked as hard in Latvia as they did in their receiving countries they would have done better in Latvia. Sometimes even respondents who themselves lived under tight socioeconomic conditions were very critical of unemployed people in Latvia and saw them lazy, unmotivated and "written-off". Since they managed to put their lives in order under tight socioeconomic conditions, they expected that others should be able to do so as well. This inability to put one's life in order was related to their Sovietness and thus was not respected.

> I think people have been spoilt – they want everything, but they do not want to work. This is simply something related to the Soviet Union, and this has remained so, that due to the kolkhoz experience, simply, *haļava*, *haļava* to live. They do not want to work. They do not want to work but live, yes. Okay, everybody wants to live, but they do not want to work. It is a big issue with finding workers. I had problems finding good employees […] My heart cannot take how people work these days, I simply shall cry. If we want something to happen, we need to work. I have known this since my childhood – work, work, work and again more work. [my translation, 8PJF]

These views, however, are inconsistent with the narratives of those who have left and who did have one or more jobs in Latvia yet were still not able to provide for themselves and their families; they are not consistent with the narratives of those who worked but were underpaid or those who were not able to find a job; as well as with the narratives of those who simply felt humiliated in Latvia for what they were. More generally, those who held such negative views of emigrants, as well as of less successful people in Latvia, neglected the various social, cultural and emotional reasons that some people chose emigration. This lack of intersubjectivity or

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mutual understanding amongst people in Latvia, I believe, contributed to their mutual alienation and, often, disrespectful attitude towards one another.

A story of a woman in her early forties, who did consider emigration but eventually chose not to emigrate, reveals how social and emotional factors can drive emigration. She was humiliated emotionally and materially at her workplace as a result of which she was unemployed for some time and considered emigration. She entered a professional school in computer technology in 1988 [Soviet times] graduating from the school in 1992 [independent Latvia]. As she graduated the Soviet Computing Centers disintegrated, however through an acquaintanceship she began to work in a company in the fishing industry. The company went through major transformations and divisions in the 1990s and she had to change with it: initially she worked as an economist, then as a human resources specialist, then as an administrator and then as a wage accountant. Along the way she reeducated herself to fit into her new positions and their respective requirements. As she put it, these were "terrible times of chaos". As she was waiting for her first child to be born, the company transformed even further and she lost her job. She began to work as an accountant for a private firm but with regret explained that this was humiliating as they did not pay her what they had agreed upon.

They pay you something for that work, my child was three months old, they gave you some money in hand [not what was agreed upon]. You become completely sad. It makes you feel unworthy.

This situation made you feel unworthy?

Yes, yes. He [an employer] gave me some money out of propriety but there were some people around. I thought – he had given me what we agreed upon. Then I got in my car and saw – it was only some 70 lats.

It should have been more?

Yes. Over one hundred. Each penny was a lot to me. Then eventually I told him that I am not going to do his accountancy for the next year. This is impudence. He knew I was in despair but he paid so little.

It is humiliating.

Yes, very humiliating. At that time, he knew, when a person has power he can manipulate. Manipulate for cheap. [my translation, 7WTU]

Thus my respondent chose to retain her self-esteem and not facilitate her further exploitation even if it meant unemployment for some time. She further explained that then she worked as an accountant for seven years in a chain store but, as more and more stores opened, her workload kept increasing and it became difficult for her to deal with that and care for her family, and so she left to work in another private company where she had known the employer before. She explained that she was very diligent and in accountancy paid great attention to every number and calculation but that this employer, despite her diligence, found tiny issues to criticize her for. Despite her good income she could not bear this emotional terror and quit the job. She explained the emotional load this job carried:

> I came home, I went into the kitchen, I have two daughters, <u>I came in and I cried - everything I had kept in during the day came out.</u> My children looked at me. They were teenagers. "Mommy, do not go to that job anymore". <u>But I could not do this; my husband at that time had a lower income, now it is much better.</u> He worked in two jobs – in the police and in construction, in order to make ends meet. [my translation, 7WTU]

Eventually she chose to quit this job, even though her employer tried to convince her to stay, and she was unemployed for a longer time, and considered emigration to Germany since in her childhood her grandmother told her how great German people were. Eventually she realized she would not be able to separate from her family with whom she was very involved. She applied for a job with the State Employment Agency's "one hundred lat" program, a social security or workfare program in which a person received 100 lats (now 142 Euro) per month for doing some job given by local government. This program carried a negative connotation in Latvia since people tended to think that only the dregs of society worked in this program. However, through this program, and by networking and her own dedication she eventually got a job in a public health center as an accountant. She had worked there for several years at the time of interview and was very happy and confident about her job. Her work related experiences were very similar to some other stories I heard amongst those who had left, as well as among those who remained.

In this case, only a fine line distinguished her and her family's experience from that of those who left. Had she been willing to separate from her family for some time to try out emigration to Germany, she might now be an emigrant.

These situations, which are grounded in a lack of empathy or willingness to understand others, influence societal relationships more broadly. They work to alienate people from each other. In Latvia, this alienation is related to the cultural or symbolic structure of the transformation discourse. This discourse has emphasized individual autonomy over collective efforts and has facilitated judgment of those who were not successful at some points in their lives as lacking individual autonomy. This notion of individual autonomy and individuals as architects of their own fortune has been particularly appealing amongst those who regarded themselves as successful and materially well-off. Given their own success and achievements, such people considered this conviction of individual autonomy as well-founded and expected it to be manifested in the same way in other people. Due to the strong admiration of the idea of individual autonomy, some people, including entrepreneurs, became insensitive to social environments that can either help foster individual autonomy or, alternatively, restrain it.

Narratives of those who remain also signal that entrepreneurs have been highly praised in the post-Soviet era, since, according to the dominant transformation discourse, they were seen as embodying Western approaches to life and thus as liberal and market oriented. They have been valorized for providing employment for others, as well as boosting Latvia's GDP. Without neglecting the importance of entrepreneurship for society, I conclude that this idolatry also worked to obscure situations where entrepreneurs have mistreated their employees, making them more prone to the emigration decision as we saw in this and the previous chapter.

Conclusions

There is a fine line between emigration and remaining at home. Nevertheless, there are some mechanisms which help to explain why some stay and others leave. The major difference between those who remain and those who have left is that those who remain in their narratives showed different virtues and beliefs, such as modesty and frugality, patience, adaptation, and acceptance. These virtues together with the emotion of hope have been crucial to them in avoiding emigration. Those who remain in Latvia often also pronounced a belief in individual autonomy and responsibility, ideas which were deeply encoded in the West and Right codes and highly admired in the post-Soviet transformation discourse, in explaining their own life courses. However, similarly to those who have left, those who remain in Latvia were fairly critical about their ruling elite, yet they tended to endure this criticism with hope that individual efforts and hard work could transform their country for better. Belief in individual efforts and hard work seemed to be very empowering amongst my respondents because it opened the space for improvement in situations where no improvements seemed possible. Based on the discussion of "learned helplessness" (Maier and Seligman, 1976; Abramson, Seligman and Teasdel, 1978), the post-Soviet transformation discourse, and the emotion of hope, I showed that among those who remain in Latvia there was no hope that the state might do something to improve their lives but there was great hope in individual autonomy as a solution to individual and societal issues. Or, drawing from learned helplessness theory those who remain in Latvia have developed *universal helplessness* but through belief in individual autonomy have resisted developing *personal helplessness*. Those who emigrated responded to situations where they saw that neither relying on their home state nor relying on themselves in their home country brought the culturally expected improvements by choosing to change external conditions, hoping that this shift might

change their lives for the better. In other words, those who emigrated had also developed universal helplessness in Latvia but decided to deal with it by emigration. In emigration, as we saw in the previous chapter, my respondents established confidence through circumstances in their receiving country which were more empowering than those at home, thus prolonging their emigration decision and residence abroad.

The strong belief in individual autonomy and hard work as opposed to structural factors for people's success, in post-Soviet Latvia, also worked to alienate people from one another. Those who regarded themselves as achievers and successful found it difficult to empathize with those who struggled with their lives. This alienation and lack of mutual understanding, caused by the ideas encoded in the post-Soviet transformation discourse, together, help explain the factors that have led to continuous emigration from Latvia.

Chapter 7 - Conclusions: Historically Specific Generalizations

This research examines the symbolic realm as one of the important contexts to account for emigration towards the West from post-Soviet Latvia. In this chapter, some historically specific generalizations from this research that respond to the key question – "what is the relationship between the symbolic codes and emigration in post-Soviet Latvia?" – are presented. In addressing this question, I have tried to demonstrate that it is not only economic mechanisms that account for emigration, but also cultural and socio-emotional ones. The post-Soviet symbolic realm worked to create the framework for meaning making that, under particular circumstances, compromised people's confidence in themselves and in their state. This symbolic realm has also contributed to the increasing alienation between citizens and their state and amongst citizens.

The post-Soviet cultural structure was predominantly informed by such symbolic codes or binary opposites as: West vs. East/Soviet, Developed vs. Underdeveloped, and Right vs. Left. These divides and what they meant in the dominant transformation discourse in Latvia were formative to identity and modern state craft, as well as subjectivities. Sociologist Zerubavel (1993) argues that these kinds of distinctions form "our sense of identity", we "experience ourselves" through "a form of mental differentiation that entails a fundamental distinction between us and the rest of the world" (p.13). The Latvian state, in the post-Soviet era, was imagined and constructed as a Western and market oriented, democratic, developed and Right state. This not only defined Latvia's foreign policy goals, but including the most sacred aspects such as Latvia's integration into the EU, NATO, the WTO and other institutions that represented the West. All other spheres that were under state control – for example, education, medicine, and agricultural policy – were subordinate with respect to these most sacred goals.

This divisive symbolic structure framed Latvia's post-Soviet transformation debate as based on formal rationality (Evans, 2002). In such debate, ends and values are "predetermined or assumed," in contrast to substantive rationality where they are open for debate (Evans, 2002, p.13). This formal rationality permeated the discourse of the largest newspaper, *Diena*, and the ruling elite's decision making in post-Soviet Latvia. In this dominant frame, the world was seen as divided into two incompatible opposites. Those who sought to initiate a more substantive debate over Latvia's future development, to understand and discuss, for example, what the requirements for entrance into the EU were and what that might mean for Latvia, were immediately seen as deviant or representing the East/Soviet/Russian, Underdeveloped and Left (Chapter 2). This clearly demonstrated the "sacred" character of this referential code of West. These sharp mental divides, these sharp lines between what is "sacred" in a community and what is not, came with some "unintended consequences"[179]. In the dominant transformation discourse, as represented in the newspaper *Diena*, the West and Right were mostly seen in neoliberal terms and stood for liberal economy, development, wealth, free markets, private property and investment, rationality, individual initiative, security and democracy. In the newspapers *Neatkarīgā Cīņa/Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze* and *Panorama Latvii*, the West was often seen as sacred for different reasons, such as representing solidarity, equality and inclusion; nevertheless, these nuances were not acknowledged in wider public debate resulting in a missed opportunity to discuss what the West really was, and, given the dominant will to see Latvia as identical to the West, also a missed opportunity to initiate a more "substantial" and possibly more rewarding debate for Latvian society about Latvia's future. These fairly general "mental differentiations",

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[179] Weber, in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, discusses how the Calvinist ethics of hard work, self-discipline and modesty were formative to "the spirit of capitalism" and led to the capitalist development. This relationship between the Calvinist ethics and capitalist development, however, was "unintended" and happened as a result of the spread of the Calvinist ethics and ideas within wider society (Weber, 2002).

that often suggested a continuum with the Soviet propaganda but in reverse (as now the West was good, while the East was bad), might have cut off opportunities for state practices that could have been more rewarding and empowering for the society as a whole and thus prevented large flows of emigration towards the West.

In post-Soviet Latvia, this symbolic realm and the formal rationality that evolved with it emerged from historically specific conditions and emotions. The world was dominantly seen as divided into two incompatible opposites due to emotions such as shame and fear versus pride and confidence. The ruling elite's statements, interactions and memories about the transformation period invoked shame about the Soviet experience. The Soviet experience was seen as radically different from the one people in the West have had. This shame was dealt with by trumpeting great confidence towards the West and everything, e.g., ideas, advice and guidance, which came from it. Belonging to the "sacred community" of the West was associated with security, progress and prosperity. Every step that brought Latvia closer to the West was received with great pride whiles every occurrence that impeded this movement - with shame and fear. Shame for the ruling elite derived from their perceived inadequacy to be part of the West, while the source of the fear was a return to the Soviet past or Russia's influence. This symbolic realm and the emotions that underlie it further trickled down to inform state-society and societal relationships more broadly.

The symbolic structure of the transformation discourse defined the state-society relationship since it prescribed the ideal post-Soviet subject. He/she had to be autonomous, responsible for his own misfortunes and conduct his life in ways that limited as much as possible his need for state protection. To demand some state protection was seen as shameful behavior. The state, in turn, was seen as a major facilitator of the market driven environment, competition and opportunities (see Chapter 3). The protectionist state, was, as a result of the dominant formal

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rationality, associated with the Left and East codes and was seen as limiting market and private initiative and competition. Or put simply, the Left principles were viewed as incompatible with the West orientation. By the same token, individuals were predominantly seen as subjects of the market which presented many opportunities for self improvement and empowerment. According to the dominant symbolic structure, each and everyone was invited to see himself as "an architect of his own destiny". Even though it is an empowering idea and one highly dominant in post-Soviet Latvia, major social thinkers such as Durkheim, among others (such as Mead and Lacan), have indicated that "man is [always] double", he is an individual and social being at the same time; and social being means that he and his freedom are also limited by the morals and structures of a particular society (Durkheim 1995 [1912], pp.15-16). That these ideas about the ideal post-Soviet citizen were so domineering came with some consequences. This thinking entwined the state-society and societal relationships and worked to alienate people from one another and their state, and in some cases humiliated them and eroded their self-confidence. The chapter focusing on discourse around protests and strikes (Chapter 4) demonstrated that this new desired subject was looked at with suspicion if engaged in collective behavior to demand some state understanding and protection since that kind of behavior was portrayed by the ruling elite as destructive to national development, and as against Latvia's Western orientation. A politics of shaming and pitting various groups against one another was utilized to stop collective action for state understanding and justice.

Concepts of the ideal post-Soviet citizen that evolved from the dominant symbolic coding also created certain hierarchies of who would be protected and promoted by the state. In this context, entrepreneurial or business types as key representative of the market, irrespective of the ethics of their conduct, emerged as the new heroes of post-Soviet times. Even protesting public

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workers (some of whom worked overtime to improve their and their families' well-being) were frequently expected to supplement their low incomes with some side business activities and to not demand anything from the state (see Chapter 4). This admiration of entrepreneurial activity also prevented the state from paying sufficient attention to instances where entrepreneurs or employers, out of their greed or simply guided by the capitalist logic of profit and efficiency, treated their employees badly by not paying them as agreed or not paying them at all for the work that has been done (e.g., Chapters 5 and 6). This does not necessarily include all entrepreneurs or employers in Latvia; many perform their work with high ethical standards. If such ethical entrepreneurs were not there, many more people would have left. There are also small and medium size entrepreneurs who, given their limited capital and harsh competition with large enterprises and services locally and from abroad, also struggle to retain some ethical integrity under harsh market conditions and the state tax system. Nevertheless, this symbolic realm created an environment in which many were encouraged to be unfair towards their employees so "entrepreneurship" might flourish.

This symbolic realm recast state-society relationships and relationships amongst people, and as such affected emigration mechanisms. The chapter on those who left to live and work in Western countries in the post-Soviet era (Chapter 5), showed that, within Latvia, people who sought some justice and state protection in their situations of vulnerability were often humiliated and/or seen as deviant not only by respective state representatives but also by the wider public. This reveals some interesting post-Soviet realities. On the one hand, the public discourse invited people to think that everything depends on oneself even in cases where the "sociological

imagination"[180] points towards the important role of a particular social environment. Yet in situations where people were ready to revolt and claim justice as during protests (Chapter 4), or against unfair employers (Chapter 5), there were attempts to silence people, to make people submit to these perceived disadvantages. Given this expectation for individual autonomy and very limited state support, people were prone to seek individual approaches to empower themselves further. For some, emigration was exactly that – an individual solution to empower oneself and to regain self-confidence (Chapter 5).

Emigrants' individual or family decisions to leave were framed around a sense of hopelessness that meaningful change in Latvia could be achieved. Lived experience in Latvia during the transformations and constant disappointment in the ruling elite as not able, or willing, to protect its people did not give sufficient evidence to hope for any visible improvements in Latvia. For some, life in Latvia seemed like living in limbo, where one tried hard but still failed, thus beginning to *erode one's self-confidence or "willingness to act"* (Barbalet, 2004). Emigration then was a way to restore this self-confidence by changing one's space to one in which hope could reside. Western countries, so admired and promoted in the post-Soviet transformation discourse, became such a space for hope. Hope, according to Lazarus (1999), is more powerful than motivation since it gives "the belief in the possibility of a favorable outcome" (p.653). Life in emigration, among my respondents, provided enough evidence to establish confidence that a better future could be found abroad. Confidence, as we have seen, differs from hope since it is "an emotion of assured expectation" useful for "overcoming the uncertainty of engaging an unknowable future" (Barbalet, 1996, p.76, also 1993, pp.231-232,

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[180] According to C. Wright Mills, "[t]he sociological imagination enables its possessor to understand the larger historical scene in terms of its meaning for the inner life and the external career of a variety of individuals" (Mills, 2000[1959], p.5)

2004, p.4) and, in that sense, is more definitive with respect to the future than hope. It can also be easier to lose hope than confidence. Those who remained in Latvia were also fairly hopeless about their state's ability to improve people's well-being, and they also sought individual approaches to empower themselves. Yet in contrast to those who had left, they redefined themselves as an integral part of their state and hoped that their individual efforts and initiatives, along with those of the people closest to them, would improve not only their individual lives but would also change their state for better. In other words, using a distinction between *personal* and *universal* learned *helplessness* (Abramson, Seligman and Teasdel (1978), I argue (in Chapter 6) that among both groups – those who emigrated and those who remained – universal helplessness, which manifests itself in a lack of belief in the home state, was common. Neither group had hope and trust in their state or the ruling elite to improve national development in Latvia so that it would be rewarding to society more broadly. Differently from those who remained, however, those who have emigrated chose *not only to rely on themselves* (in the sense that the emigration decision was an autonomous way to improve limitations experienced in Latvia), *but also to deal with universal helplessness by shifting hope for a better future from Latvia to their receiving countries*.

Those who remained in Latvia also identified in their narratives virtues such as modesty, frugality, patience, acceptance, and adaptation. All these virtues, together with hope in individual efforts, helped to keep away emigration thoughts (Chapter 6)[181]. I contend that once hope in individual efforts and such virtues as modesty, frugality, patience, and acceptance is gone, those respondents who remain in Latvia may also become prone towards emigration.

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[181] Thus both those who have left and those who remained have exercised individual autonomy. Yet those who have remained tended to emphasize it much more than those who have left.

Since the regaining of independence the dominant transformation discourse has consistently reiterated that, through integration into the West, Latvia would, in time, embrace development that would be empowering to the society as a whole. The stories of my respondents abroad show that, at the level of their everyday lives they had, alternatively, lived, perceived and experienced their lives while still in Latvia as being in decay or crisis. The opportunities, progress and prospects for a better and more fulfilling life, as a result, were looked for in the West itself[182]. Lived experience abroad gave them confidence that the improvements, not only material but also socio-emotional, that they often lacked in Latvia were nonetheless accessible and achievable relatively quickly abroad.[183] Even though material security and prospects are important, they are only meaningful because, in a society dominated by the market and its values, they allow individuals to fulfill modern expectations towards family, the self, and the society more broadly. The ability to fulfill these expectations while abroad contributed towards emigrants' *self-confidence which is crucial for one's "willingness to act"* (Barbalet, 2004). Also some respondents who did not emphasize that they perceived their life in Latvia before emigration as in decay still declared their desire for greater opportunities, experience, and some social change as important motivators for emigration, thus indicating that there were some limitations for their self and thus self-confidence at home.

Many of my respondents found life in emigration appealing because what was dominantly constructed as incompatible at home, particularly the meanings and principles encoded in the West and the Left codes, were perceived and experienced not only as compatible but even as

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[182] The West here included the living standards, opportunities, and principles that it represented in post-Soviet Latvian imagining about the West (but which were not yet experienced in Latvia despite Latvia's orientation to become a part of the West).
[183] Some respondents have mentioned that when they first arrived in the receiving societies they often did low-skilled and service jobs but they also saw that once they mastered the language and got acquainted with the social environment they had more prospects to improve their status – which many did, and for this reason many have remained abroad.

desirable in their receiving societies. Some found in their receiving states a newfound sense of completeness due to the immense employment opportunities receiving states could offer. Some found that the receiving states' attitudes towards ordinary people were more supportive, protective and understanding. In their communications with government officials and bureaucrats in their receiving countries, my respondents felt that they were suitably acknowledged and that the state was there to protect all people against unfair treatment at work (not only entrepreneurs) and to show support for their families and health. This formed an environment in which some reciprocal legitimacy between the émigrés from Latvia and the receiving state could form; giving space for positive emotions including increased self-confidence, and thus improved social bonds (Scheff 1990, 1994). In Latvia, many felt humiliated in their communications with the state and its representatives. Several respondents did not seek any justice or help at state institutions when they experienced unfair treatment at work because they did not believe anything would be done and because, according to the dominant symbolic structure, seeking the state protection also carried a negative stigma.

Despite the fact that receiving societies were also stratified and unequal, many respondents felt that people in the receiving societies live and feel better because these states were more respectful and socially responsible than at home. The receiving state's institutions and bureaucrats did not 'talk' to its subjects in ways that were humiliating. Through this respectful "talking", receiving states were perceived as providing "salience and immediacy" for the people, a crucial foundation for the strengthening of state-society ties (see Chapter 1, Lawler, Thye and Yoon, 2009; Epstein, 2010). Once this immediacy of the state to its citizens is eroded the state-society relationships may weaken. Even though Harvey (2005) and Somers (2008) would argue that England and the USA within the last decades have been fairly market radical or neoliberal

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and that this has compromised state-society relationships there, *relative to my respondents experience at home* emigrants found and perceived these receiving states to be more socially caring. The receiving states were perceived as *relatively* better at balancing inequalities. This perception could be both rooted in the fact that the defined minimal wage was relatively higher in the receiving societies than at home, giving greater self-esteem to my respondents in terms of what they could earn even when in low skilled employment and allowing them to better fulfill expectations towards their families and self. This perception of receiving states as socially responsible, particularly in the case of England and Ireland, was also associated with their social welfare systems, which were experienced as better relative to those at home. In such contexts, my respondents became less conscious of their social status relative to others (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010) which manifested in more positive daily interactions at work and in public life: respondents often referred to these interactions as filled with respect, tolerance and positive attitudes.

Lawler, Thye and Yoon (2009) also argue that the state should act as "a source of collective efficacy", as this results in such common goods as "security, protection or social welfare" (p. 153-154). Yet the dominant structure of the transformation discourse relegated the collective to the profane and instead emphasized individual autonomy. In post-Soviet Latvia, instead of collective subjects that were able to think in terms of a common good, the dominant transformation discourse structured subjects as individuals who were required to look after themselves under conditions of market fundamentalism. This led not only to the weakening of state-society ties in post-Soviet Latvia, but to the weakening of people-to-people ties as well. This created environments in which impoliteness and intolerance towards each other in everyday communications became the norm. For example, the divisive discursive structure, where wishing

for a more protective state in post-Soviet Latvia was seen as incompatible with modern autonomous subjectivity, often led to denouncing those who have left. In Latvia, they were seen as lacking autonomy, as people with a "slave attitude" or Soviet mentality. Such views were based on the false assumption that those who leave don't want to work hard and instead only want to benefit from their receiving country's welfare systems.

Eventually the state in post-Soviet Latvia was neither able to foster this collective efficacy, nor provide a sense of immediacy for its people. Yet according to Lawler, Thye and Yoon (2009), these two things are crucial for national identity formation (e.g., p.154, 163). In other words, it will be very hard for any state to strengthen national identity amongst its people, whether at home or abroad, without first ensuring collective efficacy and salience for its people.

In contrast, the perceived sense of compatibility of West and Left in the receiving societies also meant that my respondents abroad felt accepted for who they were. It was good enough to be an employee and not necessary to be an entrepreneur. My respondents were able to integrate into Western labor markets despite the fact that their skills back at home were often seen as "Soviet" and thus as too old and useless for the post-Soviet labor market. In their receiving countries, they were even desired and appreciated by their employers for their hard work and dedication; they, in turn, appreciated that they were paid fairer wages and that their rights as laborers were relatively better respected and protected. This gave them a sense of pride, which, according to Scheff (1994), is an important formative emotion for positive social ties. This not only helped emigrants to leave behind such emotions as humiliation and shame but it also gave them a sense of self-worth, a sense that they and their time were respected, that they were needed and appreciated within their receiving states.

To some, these conclusions might read as a romanticization of life in receiving countries, where everything is good as opposed to life at home where everything is bad. This view on life in emigration and receiving countries as better is relative to the prior emotional state and experience of my respondents. Collins (1981) contends that if things go as expected people tend to be confident about their lives and do not question authorities as much (e.g., pp.994, 997). So this is what seems to be going on in emigration here. In fact, my respondents have also gone through various hardships in their receiving societies which challenge this good and bad dichotomy between receiving states and their home state. We also saw that respondents, who remained at home under the current circumstances, saw their home country, Latvia, as the only site of a good life. Yet generally my respondents' experiences showed that they did not prefer to remain abroad for purely accidental reasons. My respondents reported some common tendencies when describing what appealed to them about their receiving states. Relative to their lived experience at home they found that they could establish a greater sense of self worth and realize their life goals better after emigrating. This research does not seek to say that Latvia then becomes irrelevant for those who remain abroad. Latvia will always be their home country. They speak the language, cook Latvian cuisine, visit Latvia regularly to visit their relatives and friends and maintain property, etc.

Some theoretical retrospect

This study shows that the mechanisms that account for emigration from post-Soviet Latvia towards the West, at both macro and micro levels, are not only rooted in 'rational' calculations but that this rationality itself is based on culture and socio-emotional calculations. Many migration theories at the macro level scrutinize particular politico/economic structures as

causal to emigration (e.g., Massey et al., 1993, pp.433, 444-448, Binford, 2003; Durand, Parrado and Massey, 1996, Massey et al., 1998) but tend to disregard[184] observations by scholars who contend that these structures themselves correspond to, and often are rooted in, certain ideas, morals and emotions (e.g., Durkheim, 1995 [1912]; Sahlins,1976; Collin, 1981; Alexander and Smith, 1993; Alexander, 2003; Somers, 2008; Moisi, 2009; Weyher, 2012). At the individual level, neoclassical economics and new economics of labor migration theories explain that emigration is a result of emigrants and their families' rational decision making in the context of economic and labor market transformations (e.g., Massey et al., 1993). These theories tend to see emigrants' decision making in strictly rational (as opposed to irrational) terms, disregarding the roots of that rationality. Alternatively there are studies that look at individual narratives and biographies of emigrants without contrasting and comparing them with the dominant cultural structures in which they live (see Boyle, Halfacree, Robinson, 1998, p.71; Vandsemb, 1995). In that sense, they look at the social being of individuals through individual biographies and narratives but they do not explore the meaning environment that affects one's social being.

This research shows that often the emigration decision and the mechanisms that guide it are embedded in wider cultural understandings of what is considered 'normal' in a particular society, expectations between this society and the state and the evolving expectations between the self and others, and towards the self. I have demonstrated that not only post-Soviet transformations but also emigration mechanisms and decisions have been framed by certain notions of 'normality' (Collins, 1981, pp.990-4, p.997). The historical construction of this

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[184] I am aware that this has been a result of increasingly greater division of labor across academic disciplines. This research, however, shows that greater specialization also comes with some cost as it becomes easier to disregard some important aspects of societal development.

'normality' derives from some specific emotions – such as shame, confidence, pride, and fear – whilst achieving this 'normality' also proves to be an emotional process.

The dominant symbolic structure of the post-Soviet transformation discourse and what has been "sacred" and "profane" within it, disclose what was generally perceived as 'normal' in post-Soviet Latvia. Lived experience and perceptions of ordinary people instead came into conflict with this dominant conception of 'normality'. This discrepancy impeded the establishment of positive mutual understanding and communication between the people and their state (Collins, e.g., pp. 998-999), creating conditions where some people could not see opportunities or hope for any meaningful change at home[185]. They chose another country as a space where hope for a better future seemed to reside.

This research also shows the importance and power of culture and its autonomy for sociological investigation. Through the exposition of the dominant transformation discourse and its structuring of symbolic codes, I have been able to show that economic and political developments were, as Sahlins (1976) would say, relative to the dominant symbolic realm. This symbolic realm filled economic and political structures with the meaning and morality that shaped the social environment within which individuals had to make sense of them (see also Alexander, 2003). This cultural or symbolic realm, according to my study, then is also the *primary* site of revision and reconsideration if there is a wish to prevent further emigration from Latvia.

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[185] Constantly declining trust levels regarding the state is also an indication of this. From 2003 to 2013 the level of trust in the government declined from 46% to 20% (Seimuskane, Vorslava, 2013). A recent survey shows that 61% of Latvian emigrants in England, on a scale from 0 to 10, expressed that they have 0 trust in their government (Kaprāns, 2015, p.118).

Some recommendations evolving from the central research question

This research demonstrates that if the governing elite in Latvia intend to stop emigration, some ad-hoc policy alone won't lead to fundamental change since it is clear that how things have unfolded within the last 25 years in Latvia has been relative to the dominant symbolic realm, which affected how the lines between what is acceptable or promoted and what is marginalized have been drawn.

- According to this research, to achieve some meaningful changes or revisions within the established symbolic realm in the post-Soviet era, in terms of what is "sacred" and "profane", it will be necessary to understand that

    - By prioritizing mostly market driven solutions to societal problems (such as poverty, unemployment and emigration) over state driven solutions, since the latter carry stigmas associated with the Soviet past, it has been difficult for the Latvian state to put societal well-being at the center of state governance. Markets work according to a logic of profit and economic efficiency and not necessarily for the overall well-being of society. Yet the dominant transformation discourse structure invoked a belief that success in markets will trickle down and eventually also ensure societal well-being. One could argue that these ideas were also dominant in the receiving societies. Yet, we have to remember that in receiving societies many people were able to establish some wealth that they could utilize in situations of vulnerability, as well as the fact that some receiving states were also able to create state institutions that have proven "salience and immediacy" for their people well before market fundamentalism came to dominate in the 1980s. Under the Soviet regime, most people in Latvia were impeded from accumulating personal wealth, including property. The Latvian welfare system was established in the 1990s in times of market fundamentalism or neoliberalism, and thus remained marginalized and stigmatized.

        In order to achieve some change, the dichotomy between 'the market' (as evolved from the West code) and 'the protectionist state' (as evolved from the

East code) has to be challenged. They have to be seen as compatible. The state should be there not only to serve the markets and large enterprises (e.g., by drafting strategies and policies on how to attract more FDI, by ensuring that the Latvian labor force remain cheap, as well as by rescuing some "strategically"[186] important banks and firms during crisis), but also to imagine ways of achieving that this does not compromise the well-being of people. Or, put simply, to find ways of reclaiming the power of the state for the people or at the least to debate again what the role of the state should be.

- The principles inscribed in the West and Left codes should be seen as genuinely compatible. The Left ideas should not be seen as impeding Latvia's Western identity but rather as functional to it. The balance of diverse ideas within society helps to create a more democratic environment. If, from the beginning of the 1990s the Left ideas, and what they meant in Latvia (Chapter 3), were not stigmatized as remnants of the Soviet past but instead seen as functional to Latvia's democratic future there might have been less inequality and less emigration. It is only now, when the EU has required that Latvia, which has been one of the worst performing EU countries in terms of Gini indicators, deal with its growing inequality, that this issue has become particularly pertinent. The current issue of inequality, thus, can also be defined by the "sacred" character of the West and the great confidence expressed towards the West's (in this case, the EU's) requirements for Latvia. In political debates now, some *ad-hoc* and formal solutions for dealing with inequality are considered, which is to say, mainly to look better in the eyes of the EU. A genuine interest in, and the importance of, addressing inequalities for the well-being of the society[187] still seems marginal for the governing elite in relation to issues such as growth, facilitation of entrepreneurship, export, etc. State actions that could address these inequalities are associated with the ideas encoded in the Left, and thus generally viewed as unimportant, if not suspicious or even dangerous.

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[186] For example, in 1999 the state invested in the capital of Riga's Commerce bank and in 2008 invested 300 million in the capital of Parex bank.

[187] Here i have to emphasize that as the opposite to this inequality I do not mean equality but simply less inequality.

- Even though individual autonomy is an important virtue, my observations suggest that it is something everybody possesses. The question is, how is this autonomy to be realized under given circumstances? An idea of individual autonomy and its promotion seems rather convenient for states wishing to distance themselves from the solving of social problems. In order for the state to form positive ties with its people, to make them feel that the state is there for them, the state would rather need to know and learn about how the general public is living and feeling and what it finds problematic, and subsequently work on these issues. This would be a more engaged approach of the state towards its people than the current normative one. Also, "individual autonomy" should not be prioritized over "collective efficacy" because it is also through a state's ability to ensure "collective efficacy" that the common good and societal well-being can be ensured (Lawler, Thye and Yoon, 2009).

- This symbolic realm has also contributed towards the creation of an environment in which only entrepreneurs and those who are highly skilled but who have not gained their skills during Soviet times (e.g., preferably, those educated in the West) are appreciated. Those who do not fit into these categories are seen as less worthy, thus injuring their self-confidence. As a result, there is a great temptation amongst emigrants to remain in emigration because, in their receiving countries, they feel both socio-emotionally and materially appreciated for who they were. They find themselves needed in receiving countries' labor markets irrespective of their skill level and education and, in that sense, gained more self-confidence as well as confidence in their future. Latvian society needs all kind of people with all kind of skills and their work and dedication are crucial for the well-being of society. A society in which only the highly skilled and entrepreneurs are appreciated won't succeed without the rest of the people who provide the underpinning but essential services and labor on which such success is built. Each and everyone's time and efforts matter. The state should 'talk' to and about and treat its people in ways that promote their importance to their state.

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Ķezbers, I. (1995a, August 29). Kur ir Baltā grāmata? [Where is the White book?] *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, p.2.

Ķezbers, I. (1995b, September 8). Interviewed by A. Jakubāns & Ē. Hānbergs. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, pp.1-2.

Lācis, V. (1993, April 24). Interviewed by A. Jakubāns and Ē.Hānbergs. *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, pp.1-2

Lāms, V. (1993, April 16). Kultūras nozīme nācijas izdzīvošanā [The meaning of culture for nation's survival]. *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, Democratic Center party addition "Thoughts", p.2

Leiškalns, K. (1993, July 31). Liberālisms ir ceļš uz saglabātajām vērtībām [Liberalisms is a way towards secured values]. *Diena*, p.2.

Levits, E. (1995, August 22). Pārdomas par to 21.augustu [Reflections on August 21] . *Diena*, p.2

Nesper, L. (1998, September 28). Interview with the USA ambassador in Latvia Larry Nesper.

Interviewed by A. Jakubāns & Ē. Hānbergs. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, p.5.

Osis, U. (1993, July 28). Vai liberāļi sagrāva Latvijas ekonomiku? [Did liberals destroy Latvia's economy?] *Diena,* p.2.

Ozola, E. (1998, Augusts 2). Attiecības ar Krieviju vēl nemainīsies [Relationships with Russia will not change yet]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, p.2.

Ozoliņš, A. (1998a, Augusts 19). Nervozā eiforija [Nervous Euphoria]. *Diena*, p.2.

Ozoliņš, A. (1998b, Augusts 22). Skaidra valoda jārunā skaidri [Clear language shall be spoken clearly]. *Diena*, p.2.

Pabriks, A. (1998, Septembris 29). Es esmu izšķīries, bet Tu, Latvieti, padomā! [I have decided but you, Latvian, think about it!]. *Diena*, p.17.

Paeglis, I. (1994a, November 7). Mīti Starptautiskā valūtas fonda stilā [Myths in the style of International Monetary Fund]. *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, p.2.

Paeglis, I. (1994b, November 9). Mīti Starptautiskā valūtas fonda stilā [Myths in the style of International Monetary Fund]. *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, p.2.

Paeglis, I. (1994c, November 10). Mīti Starptautiskā valūtas fonda stilā [Myths in the style of International Monetary Fund]. *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, p.2.

Pētersons, R. (1998, September 1). Ceļinieki biedē nacionāļus [Latvia's Way members scare nationalists]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, p.2.

Rodins, A. (1998, August 15). Par savu valsti, pret parakstīšanos [For our state, against signing [for referendum]]. *Diena,* p.2.

Rodins, A. (1998, August 5). Termiņš beidzies, saraksti iesniegti [Due date is over, lists are submitted]. *Diena*, p.2.

Rutko, A., Trams, T. (1998, July 11). Pasaule biksta Latviju [The World pokes Latvia].

Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze, p.2.

Siliņš, E. (1993, March 19). Interviewed by A. Jakubāns & Ē. Hānbergs. *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, pp.1-2

Skudra, O. (1995, August 17). Tautsaimnieku sociālais liberālisms Latvijā [Social liberalism in

Latvia by *Tautsaimnieki*]. *Diena*, p.2.

Šteins, V. (1993, May 13). Kur atrodas Latvija? Rietumeiropā vai Austrumeiropā? [Where is Latvia? In Western or Eastern Europe?] *Diena*, p.2.

Točs, S. (1995a, July 25). *Saimnieks* gatavs vēlēšanu cīniņam [*Saimnieks* is ready for the election battle]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, p.2

Točs, S. (1995b, August 31). *Saimnieks* biedē ar Eiropas Savienību? [*Saimnieks* scares with the European Union?]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, p.2.

Točs, S. (1995c, September 6). Eiropas Savienība Latvijai nevar būt "neizdevīga" [European Union cannot be "disadvantegous" to Latvia]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, p.2.

Valujevs, G. (1993a, April 1). Racionāla ekonomika un siliueti miglā I [Rational economy and silhouettes in fog I]. *Diena*, p.2

Valujevs, G. (1993b, April 2). Racionāla ekonomika un siliueti miglā II [Rational economy and silhouettes in fog II]. *Diena*, p.2

Zariņš, E. (1991, November 2). Graudus ASV dos [The USA is going to give grains]. *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, p.1

Zariņš, V. (1998, August 11). Mūsu tautas valstiskuma apziņa [The statehood consciousness of our people]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, p.5.

Zālīte, M. (1998, August 8). Tas šoreiz jāizlemj Latvijas pilsoņiem [This time this should be decided by the citizens of Latvia]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, p.8.

Дмитриева, Л. (1993, May 15). Январская зарплата была последней [A salary in January was the last one]. *Панорама Латвии*, p.2

Ростовцев, А. (1993, April 28).Выборы-93:поговорим о платформах. Економика под запретом? [Elections-1993: let's talk about programs. Economy forbidden?] *Панорама Латвии*, p.2

Соловьева, Л. (1998, August 15). Что имеем – не храним, или Словесная дуэль по поводу «ключей от нефтяного рая» [What we have, we cannot secure, or verbal duel on „keys to oil paradise"]. *Панорама Латвии*, p.4

Залетаев, С. (1998, August 18). Без «шума и пыли» не получается [Without "noise and dust" not working]. *Панорама Латвии*, pp.1-4

Chapter 3

Baldzēns, E. (1995, July 31). Sociālisms vai antikvāra prece! [Socialism or antiquity!] *Neatkarīgā cīņa*, p.3.

Baldzēns, E. (1995, July 4). LC reformu blefs [Latvia's Way reform bluff]. *Diena*, p.2.

Blūzma, V. (1995, July 1). Glābiet Romu, barbari nāk! [Save Rome, barbarians are coming!] *Neatkarīgā cīņa*, p.2.

Dimants, A. (1995a, July 8). Kreisā LSDSP aklais kreisums [The blind leftism of the left LSDSP]. *Diena*, p.2.

Dimants, A. (1995b, July 10). LZS labā un kreisā kāja aizvien neiet kopā. [Right and left legs of LZS still don't fit together]. *Diena*, p.2.

Dimants, A. (1995c,September 16). Uz priekšu Latvija! [Go ahead Latvia!] *Diena*, p.2.

Dimants, A. (1995d,September 30). Valdības vēlēšanas [Elections of the government]. *Diena*, p.2.

Godmanis, I. (1990, January 16). Interview with Ivars Godmanis (by D.Balode). *Atmoda*, p.2.

Indāns, I., Krūma, K. (1998, Augusts 26). Pilsonības politika partiju priekšvēlēšanu programmās [Citizenship politics in the preelection programs of parties]. *Diena,* p.2

Inkēns, E. (1995, August 4). Latvijai – labēju valdību [Right government for Latvia!]. *Diena*, p.2.

Jirgens, A. (1995, July 1). Ir jābūt labākām pārmaiņām [One needs better changes]. *Diena*, p.2.

Kandidātu programmas-balsotāju izvēle-Latvijas nākotne (Privātīpašums) [Party programs-people's choice-the future of Latvia (Private property)] (1993, May 13). *Diena*, p.2

Kandidātu programmas-balsotāju izvēle-Latvijas nākotne (Sadale un labklājība) [Party programs-people's choice-the future of Latvia (Redistribution and Welfare)] (1993, May 20). *Diena*, p.2

Kandidātu programmas-balsotāju izvēle-Latvijas nākotne (Tirgus filozofija) [Party programs-people's choice-the future of Latvia (Market philosophy)] (1993, May 18). *Diena*, p.2

Kandidātu programmas-balsotāju izvēle-Latvijas nākotne (Valsts loma tautsaimniecībā) [Party programs-people's choice-the future of Latvia (The role of the state in economy)] (1993, May 25). *Diena*, p.2

Krastiņš, E. (1993, May 18). Lauksaimniecības vieta [Position of Agriculture]. *Neatkarīgā Cīņa, pielikums „Brīvā Zeme"*, p.2.

Labējie un kreisie Latvijā (Ārējā atvērtība & nodokļu politika) [Right and Left in Latvia (Openess to the world& tax policy)]. (1995, September 26). *Diena*, p.2.

Labējie un kreisie Latvijā (Naudas politika) [Right and Left in Latvia (Monetary policy)]. (1995, September 27). *Diena*, p.2.

Labējie un kreisie Latvijā (Privātīpašums, privātā iniciatīva & valsts loma tautsaimniecībā) [Right and left in Latvia (Private property, private initiative & the role of the state in economy)]. (1995, September 22). *Diena*, p.2.

Labējie un kreisie Latvijā (Sociālā attīstība) [Right and left in Latvia (Social development)]. (1995, September 23). *Diena*, p.2.

Lapiņš, A. (1995, July 10). Kas jūs esat – demokrātiskie saimnieki? [Democratic masters – who are you?] *Neatkarīgā cīņa*, p.2

Levits, E. (1995, September 9). Interview with Egils Levits (by A.Dimants). *Diena*, p.2

Pētersons, R. (1998, August 17). Partijas sola dažādus labumus [Parties promise various goodies]. *Neatkarīgā rīta avīze*, p.2.

Prikulis, A. (1990, March 12). Bērnišķīgā kreisuma slimība Latvijas politiskajā atmodā [Childish illness of leftism in the political awakening in Latvia]. *Latvijas Jaunatne*, p.2.

Sakss, Dž. (1995, July 10). Priekšrocību dāvāšanas politika [Politics of granting priviledge]. *Diena*, p.2.

Točs, S. (1995c, July 6). Kreisie un labējie nav „sliktie" un „labie" [Left and Right is not "bad" and "good"]. *Neatkarīgā cīņa*, p.2

Točs, S. (1995d, July 14). Kamēr tauta neparādīs savu spēku, vara būs bezkaunīga….. [Until people won't show their strength, authority will be impudent….] *Neatkarīgā cīņa*, p.2.

Матюшенок, В. (1995, September 2). Может быть, боязнь. В лучшем случае – заблуждение [Maybe anxiety. In the best case – delusion.]. *Панорама Латвии*, p.2.

Озиш, И., Озолиньш, Н. (1995, September 29). Интервью с Илга Озиш и Нормунд Озолиньш (интервьюют В.Дубровский). Защитить права каждово…[Interview with Ilga Oziš and Normunds Ozoliņš (interviewed by V.Dubrovskij). Protection of every one's rights…] *Панорама Латвии*, p.2.

Сакулин, В. (1993, May 4). С языком на ты [To be familiar with language]. *Панорама Латвии*, p.2.

Щипцов, О. (1993, May 15). Выборы-93: прогноз политика. Согласен на «согласие» [Elections-1993: forecast for politics.] *Панорама Латвии*, p.1.

Вежениекс, Н. (1993, April 29). От диалога лицом к лицу к обмену мнениями на расстоянии? [From face-to-face dialogue to exchange of views from distance?] *Панорама Латвии*, p.1-3.

Вежениекс, Н. (1995, September 26). Где-хозяева, а где – чиновники [Where is entrepreneur, where is civil servant]. *Панорама Латвии*, p.2.

Chapter 4

Bernere, L. (1999, May 27). Cūkgaļas problēmām gaida pamatojumu [The pork problem is

waiting for an explanation]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, pp.1,5.

Birkavs, V. (1999, June 7). Interview with Valdi Birkavu (interviewed by Māris Krautmanis). Latvijas ārpolitika ir attīstības veicinātāja.[Latvian foreign policy fosters development.] *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, p.3

Ermansons, E. (1997, May 6). Zemnieki turpinās protesta akcijas [Farmers continue protests].

Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze, p.1.

Gailis, M. (1994, December 29). Interview with Māris Gailis (interviewed by Sarmīte Ēlerte un Aivars Ozoliņš). Cilvēkiem ir jāsaprot, kas ir viņu valsts [People shall understand what their state is]. *Diena*, p.2

Kāpēc streiko Latvijas skolotāji [Why teachers in Latvia go on strike (various letters from readers)?]. (1994, December 9). *Diena*, p.3.

Krautmanis et al. (1997, May 2). Zemnieki ne pa jokam sadumpojušies [Farmers are seriously angry]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, p.2.

Krautmanis, M. (1997, April 9). Zemnieki kategoriski lūdz palīdzību valdībai [Farmers flatly request help from the government]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, p.2.

Krištopans, V. (1999, June 10). Pārdomas pēc zemnieku streika [Reflections after the farmer's strike]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, p.2.

Krištopāns, V. (1999, May 19). Interview with Vili Krištopānu (interviewed by Ilona Klinšāne and Aldis Bērziņš). Mani aizstāv tie, kas uzskata – zagt nedrīkst [I am protected by those who believe that one cannot steal]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, p.10.

Mednis, Dz. (1994, Decembris 22). Tauta grib skaidrību un taisnību Lattelecom lietā [People want clarity and justice of the Lattelecom case]. *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, p.1.

Olmanis, A. (1996, October 3). Brīvo arodbiedrību savienības valdes atklāta vēstule Saeimai par iedzīvotāju sociālo stāvokli un budžeta projektu 1997.gadam [Free Trade Union Confederation's open letter to the Parliament about social situation of people and the state budget for 1997]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, pp.1-2

Ozola, E. (1999, June 1). Baltiešiem būs jāvienojas par cūkgaļas tirgu [The Baltic nations shall reach agreement on pork market]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze,* pp.1-2

Paparde, I., Zebris, O. (1996, October 8). Protestē pret budžetu '97 [Protesting against the state budget for 1997]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, p.1.

Pētersons, R. (1999, June 4). Jauns cūku tracis nav aiz kalniem [A new pork conflict is not far away]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, p.5.

Pētersons, R. (1999, May 28). Latvijas cūkgaļa tiks aizsargāta [Latvian pork will be protected]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, p.1.

Pētersons, R., Šteinfelde, I. (1999, May 21). Saeima steidz atbalstīt cūkgaļas aizsardzību [Parliament rushes to protect pork]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, pp.1-5.

Piketā pie Saeimas pulcējas mediķi [Medics gather for picket in front of the Parliament]. (1994, December 9). *Diena*, p.1

Piketē pat mediķi [Even physicians protest]. (1991, Novembris 14). *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, p.1

Priedīte, A. (1994, Decembris 23). Par streiku lems 3.janvārī [Decision to strike will be made on January 3]. *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, p.2.

Prokopova, E. (1999, December 2). Pedagogi nemaina prasības un šogad protestē pēdējo reizi [School teachears are not changing their demands and protest for the last time this year]. Diena, p.1.

Seleckis, V. (1994, December 3). Skolotāju streiks – nokdauns valdībai [Teachers' strike – knock down to the government] (interview with Ilzi Mētru, Juri Liepiņu, Skaidrīti Milleri, Regīnu Zaltani, Māri Upenu, Ilgu Gravu-Kreitusi, Dzintaru Ābiķi, Māri Grīnblatu). *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, pp.5-6.

Seleckis, V. (1994, December 9). Mēs prasām cieņu pret sevi [We request respect (various letters from readers)]. *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, p.6.

Skrebele, G. (1999, October 2). Lietus neizjauc protesta gājienu [Rain does not disturb the protest walk]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, pp.1-6.

Smiļģe, S. (1994, December 7). Lai skolu bēniņus pārbūvē par siltumnīcām un skolotāji audzē dillītes un lociņus [Attics of schools shall be redesigned as greenhouses and teachers shall grow dill and chives]. *Diena*, p.3.

Spandegs, U. (1997, April 10). Politiķi sola, bet nedod [Politicians give promises but do not deliver them]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, p.2

Šteinfelde, I. (1994, December 3). Briest skolotāju streiks [School teachers' strike ripens (various letters from readers)]. *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, p.8.

Šteinfelde, I. (1997a, March 12). Zemnieki draud streikot [Farmers threaten to strike]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, p.8.

Šteinfelde, I. (1997b, Setpember 11). Zemnieki šo to panākuši [Farmers have achieved something]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, p.1

Šteinfelde, I. (1999a, May 7). Lauku padome gatava aizsargāt iekšējo tirgu [Rural council ready to protect internal market]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, pp.1-6

Šteinfelde, I. (1999b, May 13). Zemniekus neapmierina valdības darbs [Farmers are not satisfied with the government]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, p.5.

Šteinfelde, I. (1999c, May 27). Zemnieki dumposies neatkarīgi no Saeimas lēmuma [Independenty of the Parliament decision, farmers are going to riot]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, p.5.

Šteinfelde, I. (2000a, June 30). Zemnieki protestē līdz konkrētai valdības rīcībai [Farmers are going to protest until they see expected actions by the government]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, p.4.

Šteinfelde, I.(2000b, July 7). Zemnieki dodas mājās [Farmers go home]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, pp.1-4.

Šteinfelde, I., Kārkliņa, I. (1999, May 19). Zemnieki plāno rīkot protesta akcijas 28.maijā [Farmers are planning to do a protest on May 28]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, pp.1-4.

Ulmanis, G. (1997, May 5). Drošu nākotni katram un valstij [Secured future for every one and

the state]. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, p.2.

Valdības preses dienesta paziņojums [Announcement of The Press Department of the Cabinet] (1994, November 25, p.1) Valdība zina un saprot izglītības sistēmas grūtības [The government knows and understands difficulties in the education system]. *Neatkarīgā Cīņa*, p.1

Vidzemes zemnieki iesniedz prasības Šķēlem [Farmers of Vidzeme submit their claims to Šķēle] (1997, March 18). *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, p.3.

Zemnieki demonstrē spēku [Farmers demonstrate their power] (1999, May 29). *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, pp.1-4.

Zirnis, E. (1999, December 4). Harbacevičas dzīves skola [Experience of Harbaceviča]. In electronic *Diena*, http://www.diena.lv/arhivs/harbacevicas-dzives-skolas-10575228

Дмитриева,Л. (1994, December 27). Педагоги.Врвчи. Кто за ними? [School teachers. Doctors. Who is after them?] *Панорама Латвии*, p.1.

Крумин, А. (1999, May 29). Крестьяне с большой дороги…долго не уходили [Farmers and the big road…they did not go away for long]. *Панорама Латвии*, p. 1.

Лапидус, Е. (1994, December 9). Подайте на образование…[Apply for education…]*Панорама Латвии*, p. 1.

Лапидус, Е. (1996a, October 8). Кого согреет бездефицитный бюджет? [Who will burn due to the balanced budget?] *Панорама Латвии*, p. 1.

Лапидус, Е. (1996b, December 11). Бюджетные треволнения по заданной схеме [Budget worries according to the defined scheme]. *Панорама Латвии*, p. 1.

Лапидус, Э. (1997, September 12). Есть хотите? Да, да, да! Ну, летите…[Do you want to eat? Yes, yes, yes! Ok, then fly….] *Панорама Латвии*, p. 1.

Медики и учителя слились в общем пикете [Physicians and school teachers unite for a common protest] (1999, December 2). *Панорама Латвии*, p. 1.

Орлова, Н. (1994, December 7). Когда зарплата сравнялась с квартплатой [When your salary equals your fees for your apartment]. *Панорама Латвии*, p. 1.

Плинер, Я. (1994, August 31). Интервью с Якову Плинеру (интервьюют Л. Дмитриевой). Школ меньше, а забот прибавляется [Interview with Jakob Plīner by L.Dmitriev. Fewer schools but more worries]. *Панорама Латвии*, pp. 1-2.

Федотов, А. (1994, December 6). Когда учителями работают трактористы, то дальше ехать некуда [When tractor drivers work as school teachers, then this is the end]. *Панорама Латвии*, p. 1.

Федотов, А. (1997, September 11). Смычка Сейма и деревни….[Connection between the Parliament and countryside…] *Панорама Латвии*, p. 1.

«Сельский час» в Риге ["Rural hour" in Riga]. (1997, September 12). *Панорама Латвии*, p.2.

Шутенкова, А. (1997, May 2). Пикеты на дорогах [Protests on roads]. *Панорама Латвии*, p. 1.

Appendix A - Interview codes

Interviews with emigrants collected between May 2014 and March 2015

USA: New York, Brooklyn, New Jersey (2014)	
Mid to late 30s; male; left Latvia in 2002; was a student at the time of emigration; runs his own business in transport logistics	NHC1
Mid to late 30s; female; left Latvia in 2009 to join as a spouse to NHC1; degree in Law; worked in a state agency; raises daughter and studies English	NFC5
Mid 40s; male; left Latvia in 2003; degree in acting; worked in a culture industry at the time of emigration; works in the transport logistics field	KFC3
Mid to late 30s; female; left Latvia in 2000; was a student in pedagogy at the time of emigration; works in health care industry	NSF2
51; female; left Latvia in 1999; arrived in the USA in the late 1990s; holds degree in higher mathematics; had her own fashion business at the time of emigration; works in accountancy	LPF4
Early 50s; female; left Latvia in 2002; worked in a factory and later in a shop; works as nanny; Russian speaker	KNZ7
Late 30s; male; left Latvia in 2002; worked in advertisement industry as a designer; works as an independent designer	ZFK6
Mid 50s; male; left Latvia in 2003; degree in sport science; run his own meat processing business at the time of emigration; works in construction; Russian speaker	PKN8
Mid 40s; female; left Latvia in 2005; was an accountant at the time of emigration; runs two family businesses	KNZ9
Mid 30s; female; left Latvia in 2000; was a student at the time of emigration; works as a Latvian language teacher and studies at a university for MA	KLU1
Mid 40s; female; left Latvia in 1999; had various jobs at the time of emigration; works as a caretaker	NCF2
Mid 40s: female; left Latvia in 2009; in Latvia, worked in a tourism business; works as a teacher in a school	PKS1
England: London, Wakefield (2014-2015)	
Mid 30s, female, arrived in England in 2005, completed her BA in politics in Latvia, currently works at a University	Z1KN
Late 40s, male, arrived in England in 2006, at the time of emigration did not have a stable job in Latvia, at the time of interview works in construction	P2LG
Late 40s, female, arrived in England in 2005, worked at a fish factory in Latvia, at the time of interview works at waste recovery firm	R3AS
Early 50s, male, left Latvia in 2005, worked as a manager in Latvia, at the time of interview works in construction	W2UQ
Mid 30s, female, left Latvia in 2005, was a student and	Y2ER

worked at a teleshop in Latvia, at the time of interview works as a finance assistant	
Mid 30s, female, left Latvia in 2003, worked in an information office in Latvia, at the time of interview on a leave for child care	P3BT
Late 30s, female, left Latvia in 1997, worked in a casino in Latvia, at the time of interview works in a casino	U1YT
Late 30s, male, left Latvia in 1998, at the time of interview works as a high level manager in construction	E8CV
Early 40s, male, left Latvia in 2002, a head of a store, works as a supervisor in a logistics	B9IU
54, female, left Latvia in 2005, worked in a bakery, works at a cleaning business in England	N1TG
Mid to late 30s, male, left Latvia in 2001, was a student and worked during nights in Latvia, works in a car retail	C3ER
Late 30s, male, firstly left Latvia in 2001 for a year and then in 2009, worked in a banking sector in Latvia, works in a finance sector in London	X4TY
35, female, left Latvia in 2009, worked in a bank, works in a bank	Z9EQ
Mid 30s, male, left Latvia in 2000 first for a half year and then again in 2009, worked in show management in Latvia, studies film in London	U3QU
38, female, left Latvia in 1995 to study in the USA, currently works in fashion industry in London	Y7EW
Late 40s, female, left Latvia in 2010, was a shop manager in Latvia, works at a home care service	P3WI
Mid 50s, male, arrived in Scotland in 2009, worked in advertisement industry in Latvia, works in advertisement industry in London	K5TY
Mid 30s, female, arrived in England in 2012, worked at a university in Latvia, works in IT sector in London	B4LA

Interviews with those who remain collected between July 2014 and November 2015, interviews were done in Kurmene (3), Stende (2), Ventspils (3), Smiltene (4), Jēkabpils and surrounding area (4), Rēzekne (3), Riga (1)

Mid 50s, female, works at a public institutions	3PNG
Early 40s, female, works at a local government services	4LKF
Mid 50s, male, at the time of interview unemployed but about to begin a project related to independent entrepreneurship	2MNF
Mid 40s, male, at the time of interview works at a NGO and as an electrician	1PNF
42, female, at the time of interview works as an accountant in a health center	7WTU
Mid 50s, female, at the time of interview works at a public institutions	6ZBT
38, male, at the time of interview run his own business with several employees	3FKP
Mid 50s, male, at the time of interview works as a tractor operator	8NKZ
Mid 40s, male, musician	4NFK

Mid 40s, female, at the time of interview runs a pharmacy	3BDU
Early 60s, male, a farmer	8DFG
Early 50s, male, a farmer	9KNW
42, female, at the time of interview works in a public institutions and runs her own business	3NDF
Mid 40s, male, at the time of interview unemployed	7XCV
Mid 40s, female, at the time of interview runs her independent beauty parlor	3NDQ
Early 50ties, female, at the time of interview works in a museum	4QWZ
45, male, at the time of interview runs his own show and event organizing business	2PQW
Mid to late 30s, female, at the time of interview on a leave for child care	8PJF
Mid 30s, female, at the time of interview employee at a state agency	7NSE
51, female, at the time of interview works in telecommunication field	4KGT

Secondary source: interviews with emigrants collected in 2008 and 2010

Ireland (2008)	
65 year-old woman; Limerik; working in Ireland as a florist for 8 years; used to be an accountant in Latvia	HYAN
48 year-old woman; Limerik; at the moment working as a pharmacist; used to be a biology and Latvian language teacher in Latvia	SLRH
40 year-old man; Tallagh; has been in Ireland for 6 years; currently works as a truck driver; used to be a truck driver in Latvia. In the interview also his two other Latvian friends participate – a women who works in a McDonalds and a man who is also a truck driver.	PONH
the spouse of a 40 year-old truck driver; in some places she answers instead of him; he used to be a driver in Latvia, and currently also works as a driver	NGPR
a friend of a 40 year-old truck driver; has been in Ireland for 6 years; currently works as a truck driver	PFCP
32 year-old woman; Sword; has been in Ireland for 7 years; at the moment partly works in a restaurant and raises her 8 year-old daughter; used to be a bank clerk in Latvia	DPNK
42 year-old man; Lucan; has been in Ireland for 7 years; currently works as a logistic manager; used to be a head engineer in a fishing plant in Latvia	LMNF
48 year-old woman; Wicklow; has been in Ireland for 7 years; used to be a Latvian language teacher in Latvia; currently works as a supervisor in a hotel	MLCF
47 year-old woman; Rush; has worked in Ireland for 5 years; currently as a worker in a fruit warehouse; used to work as a nurse and a shop-assistant in Latvia	LOGC
32 year-old woman; Dublin; has been in Ireland for 7 years; now works as a manager in hotel; used to work as a shop-assistant in Latvia; B.A. in theology	CHMD

31 year-old man; Limerik; has been in Ireland for 7 years; currently works in a flower delivery company; B.A. in economics.	FDHD
46 year-old woman; Limerik; has been in Ireland for around 5 years; currently works in factory; used to have a family vegetable business in Latvia	CPHZ
32 year-old man; Limerik; has been in Ireland for 7 years; currently is unemployed; used to perform agricultural work in Sweden and the USA	PNDJ
43 year-old woman; Bray; has been in Ireland for 6 years; currently works as a florist; also used to work as florist in Latvia	FCLM
42 year-old man; Shannon; has been seven years in Ireland; currently works in a factory that produces airplane generators; used to be a store manager in Latvia; BA in Engineering. In the interview also his wife participates.	PPNN
30 year-old woman; Dublin; currently works as a nurse; used to work for a veterinary company in Latvia; now a certified nurse and raises he two children	KKPC
34 year old woman; Sword; has been 6 years in Ireland; currently unemployed and does informal job – does laundry for others and looks after children; used to be an instructor in a musketry club in Latvia	FKFC
57 year-old woman; Dublin; has been in Ireland for 7 years; works in a sausage packaging factory; used to be an accountant in Latvia	NDPF
48 year-old woman; Bray; has been in Ireland for 7 years; currently cleans houses; used to be a director of Library in Latvia	KNCC
50 year-old man: Balbriggan; has been in Ireland for 7 years; currently works on a bulldozer; used to be a stocker in Latvia	USLP
England (2010)	
49 year-old woman; London; has been in England for 5 years; currently works as apartment cleaner; used to work in a store and bakery in Latvia	ABC1
27 year-old husband and wife; Wakefield; has been in England for 1 months; currently husband works in a warehouse and the wife stays home with a baby that is about to become one year; both used to be store managers in Latvia; one has B.A. in international relations and other B.A. in accounting;	CKF1
34 year-old man; Wakefield: has been in England for one year and half; currently works in a warehouse; in Latvia used to work in a wood mill and did open his own business in that field; Secondary Education	MFK1
49 year-old woman; London; has been in England for five months; currently works as a housemaid in a hotel; used to be a cook in Latvia	KLF1
29 year-old girl; London; has been in London for five years; currently works in a bank as a clerk; used to be a school teacher in Latvia; BA in Teaching	CPN1
39 year-old woman; London; has been in England for seven years; currently works as a financial investigator	URL1

in a company; used to work in forestry in Latvia	
Around mid 40s male; London; at the time of interview has been in London for 2 years; works there as an assistant of a cook; owned a beauty saloon with his wife in Latvia	NFCD
51 year-old man; Wakefield: has been in England for 5 years; currently works in a warehouse; used to be a bus driver in Latvia	USN1