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Minority Reconsidered: Towards a Typology of Latvia's Russophone Identity

MĀRTIŅŠ KAPRĀNS & INTA MIERIŅA

Abstract

Latvia's Russophones are often seen as a consolidated ethno-linguistic unit. The goal of this essay is to test this assumption by exploring Russophones' in-group differentiation over an extended period of time. Conceptually, the essay combines social representation theory with the quadratic nexus model. By analysing cross-sectional survey data it is argued that citizenship of Latvia and generational belonging are two major factors that explain the deviation from the standard model of identification that is primarily imposed by Russia as a symbolic homeland. The essay also suggests that the standard model has experienced inconsistent support over the years and this has opened up space for identification with a more emancipated in-group representation.

ON 18 MARCH 2014, THE RUSSIAN PRESIDENT, VLADIMIR PUTIN, held a historical meeting in the Kremlin to mark the admission of Crimea to the Russian Federation. Addressing both chambers of the Federal Assembly, Putin outlined the major motives that morally justified the admission. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Putin argued, 'the Russian nation became one of the biggest, if not the biggest ethnic group in the world to be divided by borders'.¹ This lamentation, among other things, echoed the Kremlin's ambitions to assemble Russophone communities under the Russian World umbrella (see the Introduction to this Special Issue). The Russian World, as an ideological category, posits a naturally existing civilisational community that has evolved around the Russian language and culture, evoking a sense of a common past and shared traditional values that are at odds with decaying Western values (Feklyunina 2016). Specifically, Putin referred in his speech to Russian-speakers in the post-Soviet area, where the Kremlin has taken the most decisive steps towards re-appropriating and securitising the Russian world.

To be sure, individual post-Soviet 'nationalising states' (Brubaker 1996) with large Russophone minorities are indispensable discursive counterparts in terms of the Russian World. The ruling political elites of the Baltic states—especially after the Russia–Ukraine conflict escalated in 2014—have been particularly concerned with Russophones' allegiances and the Kremlin's intention to protect Russia's allegedly suppressed

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¹Address by President of the Russian Federation', 18 March 2014, available at: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603>, accessed 9 November 2018.

compatriots. This anxiety often objectifies Russophones as a solid community, overlooking internal fragmentation and multi-directionality of social or political identification among this group. Along with the discursive rivalry between Russia and Baltic elites, international actors (OSCE, EU, UN) and Western countries are also prone to use essentialist language, extrapolating the Russophones as an undifferentiated and constant group.

Ethnicity and nationalism scholars have challenged the primordialist political discourse on Russophone communities in the post-Soviet area (Laitin 1998; Cheskin 2016). Nevertheless, within scholarly debates, social changes and in-group diversity have too often remained a peripheral topic. Notwithstanding the significance of research on macro-level factors that shape Russophones' identity, the goal of this essay is to move further away from essentialist language. Instead, we explore the dynamics and in-group differentiation of Latvia's Russophones. Latvia has the largest Russophone community of the three Baltic states and is a country with a long history of ethnic issues, making this case particularly relevant.² Our findings suggest that citizenship and generational belonging are two major factors that explain the identity dynamics of Latvia's Russophones. However, their education, socio-economic background and regional affiliation condition these dynamics and advance in-group differentiation, thus defining distinct types of identity.

Russophone identity as a social representation

This essay follows Brubaker's (2004, p. 64) suggestion to study ethnicity, race and nation from a cognitive perspective that provides 'resources for avoiding analytical "groupism"—the tendency to treat ethnic groups as substantial entities'. Instead of taking 'group' as a basic analytical category, 'groupness' should be used as 'a contextually fluctuating conceptual variable' (Brubaker 2004, p. 11). Such a constructivist standpoint assumes that categorisation of people into a group, such as a Russophone minority, is primarily a discursive act whereby the social field is conceptually divided into imaginable and intelligible categories of 'us' and 'them', incumbents and challengers. Categorisation of others as well as self-categorisation produce competing definitions, frames and narratives of social and political reality (Turner *et al.* 1987). Yet, while inter-group discourses are more likely to provide explicit demarcation lines, intra-group differentiation is less noticed by the out-group and, arguably, is more tacit also for in-group members. This applies also to Russian-speakers in the post-Soviet area whose practices of identification with 'nationalising states' (such as, assimilation, integration, marginalisation) seem to be just below the surface (Laitin 1998, p. 127).

Specifically, our socio-cognitive perspective is embedded in social representation theory (SRT). Social representation is a dynamic system of shared values, ideas and practices that people manifest when communicating about social objects. Such an object can be any phenomenon that 'startles us out of a passive state' (Moscovici 1988, p. 235), such as, race, disease, technological innovations (Moscovici 2000; Marková 2005).

²The Russian-speaking population in Latvia is approximately 37% (CSB 2013).

An ethnic group is also a social object that is framed and problematised by ethnicity entrepreneurs and political actors. They play a crucial role in constructing a shared sense of groupness through everyday language and mundane activities. This sense crystallises in an in-group social representation. That is to say, ethnic identity, as with other forms of collective identity, is a social representation, providing 'a system of knowledge about oneself, about others and about the social context which is constructed and negotiated within social relations' (Andreouli & Chrysoschoou 2015, p. 312). If the identity of an ethnic group can be defined as a shared opinion about objects that construct this group, then such a group should primarily be seen as an opinion-based group. The existence of a shared opinion, as McGarty (2006, p. 41) insists, implies the existence of related behavioural norms about which the opinion-based group members might reasonably be expected to reach consensus. Nevertheless, the ethnic group's self-representation is never fully consensual: it is exposed to in-group dialogicity, tensions and differentiation. Thus, social representations demonstrate 'a functional consensus' (Wagner & Hayes 2005, p. 222) that is embedded in a dominant opinion. The weakening of such an opinion increases in-group differentiation and may support the rise of other opinion-based groups within an ethnic community.

Structurally, social representations revolve around conceptual 'themata' (source ideas, image concepts) that express essential and generic properties of particular social objects. For example, the social representation of a mixed-race population in Britain, as Aspinall (2015) argues, results from the core idea of a burgeoning population and the 'fastest-growing ethnic group' that will dominate most or all other minority groups. Moscovici has noted that conceptual themata reveal themselves through various methodological themes which function as pragmatic manifestations and interpretive keys. While conceptual themata are deeply rooted in a particular culture, methodological themes are less rigid and more exposed to dynamics.

Conceptual themata also play a crucial role in forming the identity of an ethnic minority. As the figurative kernel of how the minority is socially represented, they become its clearest distinguishing feature in the identification process (Moscovici 2011, p. 455). The figurative kernel of Russophone identity has two main components. The first categorises Russophones as a unique community in their own right. Russia's cultural space nurtures this sense of community and conditions diasporic awareness and long-distance nationalism. The second component frames Russian-speakers as a minority, which suggests special relations with their country of residence, presupposing hierarchical relations with the Latvian state and ethnic Latvians. This triggers a sense of alienation, insecurity and increasing disaffection with the political institutions of Latvian democracy (Agarin 2013). Arguably, both components form what we call in this essay the standard model of Latvia's Russophone identity. This model has dominated the media and political discourse in Latvia.

The standard model of Latvia's Russophone identity is based on a hegemonic in-group representation. Moscovici (1988, p. 221) characterises hegemonic representation as uniform and coercive by nature, and as implicitly prevailing in all symbolic and affective practices of a group. Hegemonic representation in a democratic public sphere is often challenged by a polemic representation that should be 'viewed in the context of an opposition or struggle between groups and often expressed in terms of a dialogue with

imagined interlocutor' (Moscovici 1988, p. 221). Polemic representation is related to an alternative opinion-based group within Russophone communities. In Latvia, this group is occasionally associated with a rather ambiguous concept of 'European Russians'.³ The figurative kernel of the European Russians' in-group representation to some extent emulates or resembles the hegemonic in-group representation of Latvians as the titular ethnic group: for instance, European Russians are critical towards the policies of the Kremlin and support historical narratives that dominate among ethnic Latvians. Given the imperative of the standard model, the European Russians can be seen as the symbolic traitors of Latvia's Russian-speaking minority.

In order to avoid a self-sufficient dichotomy between hegemonic and polemic representations, Moscovici has also conceptually outlined a third type, which he calls emancipated representations. The latter have 'a complimentary function inasmuch as they result from exchanging and sharing a set of interpretations and symbols' (Moscovici 1988, p. 221). The source of emancipated representation is what SRT calls cognitive polyphasia, which implies that 'different and incompatible cognitive styles and forms of knowledge can coexist within one social group and can be employed by one and the same individual' (Voelklein & Howarth 2005, p. 434). Since in-group representation involves diverse stances, cognitive polyphasia illustrates 'the expression of multiple identities, the forging of cognitive solidarities, and importantly, communication between cognitive systems as the motor that adjusts, corrects and transforms knowledge' (Jovchelovitch 2012, p. 444).

An emancipated in-group representation emerges from coordinated and spontaneous attempts to redefine problematised group identities (Philogène 2001; Kaprāns 2016b). Thus, emancipated representation indicates group dynamics, revealing how a previous identity project, based on hegemonic representation, is redefined by a new in-group representation. Latvian Russophones' integration into the local culture and European framework, while maintaining rather strong ties with Russian culture, challenges the standard model of Russophone identity and alludes to the existence of emancipated representation (Laitin 2003; Cheskin 2012, 2016, pp. 103–28; Birka 2016; Lulle & Jurkane-Hobein 2017). Simultaneously, the often unnoticed socio-national banal integration in everyday life that, as Ekmanis (2017) argues, happens beyond the conflictual elite-led discourse in Latvia, also contributes to emancipation from the standard model. Yet the awareness of mixed belonging can both challenge and reinforce the standard model. The inherent conditionality of emancipated representation is reinforced by Latvia's democracy, which embraces 'a not fully consistent combination of elements of ethnic and liberal republican approaches' (Ijabs 2016, p. 288). Moreover, the combination of structural conditions makes some acculturation strategies more relevant than others. Zepa (2006) has argued that Latvia's Russophones support integration, assimilation or fusion as the main acculturation approaches; less often they choose separation or marginalisation.⁴ To be sure, the dominant acculturation strategies change the standard model in different ways. Nevertheless, we still have little

³See, for instance, the Facebook group *EuroRussians*, available at: https://www.facebook.com/groups/502687036498024/?ref=br_rs, accessed 29 November 2018.

⁴These strategies are largely derived from John Berry's (2001) theory. See also the Introduction to this Special Issue.

knowledge about socio-demographic factors that might foster this emancipation over a longer period of time. Scholars allude to generational changes (Laizāne *et al.* 2015; Cheskin 2016) as the main impetus for Russophone in-group dynamics, but the role of other socio-demographic predictors is insufficiently explored and discussed.

The standard model of Russophone identity manifests itself through three major methodological themes that have evolved in Latvia since the 1990s (Muižnieks 2008; Kaprāns 2014). The first is discrimination against Russian-speakers. This is the most persistent theme, which argues that titulars support linguistic inequality and the socio-political isolation of non-citizens. The awareness of discrimination legitimises the Russophones' self-marginalisation strategy *vis-à-vis* the imagined titulars, thus maintaining 'the distinctness of the two groups while allowing "Russian-speakers" to retain their internal unity' (Cheskin 2016, p. 100).

The second theme is that of unique historical experience and social memory. The protection of the only 'true' historical narrative about World War II, in which the Soviet Union/Russia is seen as the main liberator from Nazism, vividly illustrates the individual, social and (geo)political relevance of history in the formation of Russophone minority identity (Muižnieks 2011). It should be also noted that the international legitimisation of Latvia's memory politics (Muižnieks 2011; Rostoks 2011; Mälksoo 2014) has strengthened the role of counter-memory in Russophone identity formation, thus reinforcing the standard model. Scholars, however, argue that Russophones' social memory demonstrates considerable generational differences, suggesting that younger cohorts hold more democratic views with regard to controversial historical periods (Cheskin 2016, pp. 129–48; Kaprāns 2016a; Kaprāns & Saulītis 2017).

The third methodological theme focuses on Latvia as a failed state and also addresses both dimensions—unique community and minority—of the Russophones' figurative kernel. On the one hand, the failed state theme undermines Latvia's post-Soviet accomplishments, blaming the ruling, nationally minded elite for almost all social and economic problems (such as, collapse of the Soviet industry, emigration, depopulation). The failed state narrative also glorifies the Soviet regime and post-Soviet Russia in contrast to Latvia's shortcomings. This logic suggests that Latvia has taken inappropriate geopolitical decisions by distancing itself from Russia and relying too much on Western organisations such as the European Union (EU) or NATO. Thus the standard model juxtaposes Russia not only to Latvia, but also to the West in general and more recently also to the European liberal order by associating the latter with hypocrisy and moral decay and by insisting that Russophones are primarily part of the 'Russian World' rather than the Western world or Europe (Kudors & Pelns 2015, pp. 234–36). Moreover, as Cianetti and Nakai (2017, p. 276) argue, Russophone activists in Latvia and Estonia no longer have great expectations that the EU 'will be able to "do something" about minority issues such as non-citizenship'; these attitudinal changes on a larger scale were noticed already before Latvia joined the EU (Kļave 2005).

There are different actors that are interested in securing the role of the standard model in Latvia. The most prominent and resourceful amongst them is Russia, which uses various tools of public diplomacy and state-controlled media to maintain the discrimination, history and failed state themes as a frame of reference for Latvia's Russophones. Moreover, fostering the standard model is intended to strengthen the moral authority of Russia and diasporic belonging to Russia (Muižnieks 2008; Pelns

2010, pp. 139–92; Jemberga *et al.* 2015; Kudors 2015; Kudors & Pelnens 2015). Latvia's political parties also take part in reproducing the standard model. While parties popular among ethnic Latvians have imposed (though not necessarily consistently) a nationalising agenda, the so-called pro-Russian parties have responded to this by exploiting the themes of the standard model. Such a political constellation has institutionalised party competition on an ethno-linguistic basis, whereby the parties elected to parliament by Russian-speakers have always remained in opposition (Nakai 2014). However, the pro-Russian party 'Harmony' (*Saskaņa*), as well as some more liberal Latvian parties, have generally refrained in recent years from defining Russophones in terms of the standard model, thus arguably setting the stage for more emancipated identity projects. In recognising current shifts towards greater integration (Ekmanis 2017),⁵ one should remember that while Russophones have been included in Latvian society, they are still juxtaposed to Latvians as an ethno-cultural category. This has resulted in what Dzenovska (2018, pp. 44–50) calls 'inclusive othering', which is at the heart of the Latvian national regime of values. Arguably, mutual othering is a decisive factor in terms of retaining the structural relevance of the standard model.

Methodology

In this essay, we focus on how the standard model of Latvia's Russophone identity is reflected in public opinion among Russophones and how it has changed over an extended period, expanding or contracting the socio-cognitive space for emancipated or polemic in-group representations. In particular, we look at the role of socio-demographic factors in differentiating Russophones' in-group representation.

The analytical strategy for pursuing our research goals is to explore Russophones' attitude toward interrelated actors that Brubaker and other scholars have conceptualised as the nationalising state (Latvia), external homeland (Russia) and international organisations (Brubaker 1996; Smith 2002; Pettai 2006; Cheskin 2016). We assume that the Russophones' attitude toward these actors reflects relevant sociological information not only about the respective actor, but also about the Russophones' in-group representation. Given our analytical strategy and interest in the deviation from what we term the standard model of Russophones' in-group representation, the essay seeks to test three hypotheses:

H1: The attitude towards Latvia triggers Russophones' in-group differentiation that becomes more salient over time.

H2: The attitude towards Russia triggers Russophones' in-group differentiation that becomes more salient over time.

H3: The attitude towards Europe and the European Union triggers Russophones' in-group differentiation that becomes more salient over time.

This study is the first that compiles extensive and diverse cross-sectional data on Russophone attitudes in order to test these hypotheses. The data were collected through

⁵*Mazākumtautību līdzdalība demokrātiskajos procesos Latvijā* (Rīga, Latvijas Universitātes Filozofijas un socioloģijas institūts, 2017), available at: [https://www.km.gov.lv/uploads/ckeditor/files/Sabiedrības_integrācija/Petījumi/Mazākumtautību%20līdzdalība%20petījuma%20zinojums%202017\(1\).pdf](https://www.km.gov.lv/uploads/ckeditor/files/Sabiedrības_integrācija/Petījumi/Mazākumtautību%20līdzdalība%20petījuma%20zinojums%202017(1).pdf), accessed 9 November 2018.

representative surveys conducted by the Baltic Institute of Social Science (BISS) and SKDS.⁶ We sub-sampled Russophones from various datasets by selecting only respondents aged 18–74 who speak Russian within their family.⁷ When available, survey weights or indexes derived from official socio-demographics statistics were used (all SKDS surveys) and BISS (2010) to provide samples with better representation of the general population. The aggregated size of Russophone samples in the BISS cross-sectional surveys varies from 4,409 to 5,190 respondents and from 1,206 to 1,620 respondents in the SKDS surveys. Surveys were conducted in the period from 1997 to 2016.⁸ In total the essay draws upon cross-sectional data from eight survey questions (see the Appendix) that measure Russophones' support for the standard model as well as for alternative in-group representations. The questions we used were asked in the same way in all surveys and respondents could choose to answer either in Russian or Latvian. The choice of questions was guided by the theory, but also by what was available in the cross-sectional surveys—in other words, we opted for questions that were constantly and consistently asked and could demonstrate the best possible fit to the theoretical dimensions we aimed to measure.

The cross-sectional data are analysed using a binary logistic regression and, in one case, a multinomial logistic regression analysis that is an extension of the binary logistic regression applied for nominal outcomes with more than two attributes.⁹ Among the independent variables we include gender, age, education, occupation, region, type of residential area, citizenship status, ethnicity and income. To account for the fact that the data are clustered within survey waves, we also include as dummy variables the year when the survey was conducted. This helps to avoid the composition effect (differences between years resulting from differences in the distribution of covariates in the respective years) and reveals the effect of time, controlled for socio-demographic differences in samples.

Results

Belonging to the 'nationalising state'

Our first hypothesis (H1) focuses on Russophones' attitudes toward Latvia. The standard model suggests that Latvia is ruled by nationalists. In line with this model, Russophones

⁶BISS and SKDS are private and independent local research companies whose major fields of activity include various types of public opinion research. Both companies are experienced in researching socio-political issues in Latvia and their findings are often used by Latvia's policy-makers. More detailed information about BISS is available at: <http://www.biss.soc.lv/?category=darbibasVirzieni&lang=en>; and about SKDS at: <http://skds.lv/about-us>, accessed 17 December 2018.

⁷In a few cases where information on the language used at home was not available, we relied on a proxy variable that the analysis suggested best approximates the language use at home. Thus, the respondent was considered a Russophone if: he/she answered the survey questions in Russian; if he/she answered the questions in another language, but considered him/herself a Russian (BISS 2007); or if no information on language use was available, but the native language of the respondent was Russian or bilingual, including Russian (BISS 2004, 2015).

⁸The list of surveys and sources of additional information are presented in the Appendix.

⁹Considering that the selected dependent variables are ordinal, an ordinal regression analysis was also attempted; however, tests of parallel lines showed that the location parameters (slope coefficients) were not the same across response categories. Therefore we opted for a logistic regression model. Nevertheless, the results are very similar to those obtained in an ordinal regression analysis.

TABLE 1
RUSSOPHONES' ATTACHMENT TO LATVIA AND NATIONAL PRIDE (%)

| | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| How close do you feel to Latvia? (2017) | Very close 31.7 | Close 52.3 | Not very close 14.3 | Not at all 1.0 | Hard to say/NA 0.7 |
| How proud do you feel of being a resident of Latvia? (2017) | Very proud 19.0 | Somewhat proud 44.3 | Not very proud 22.4 | Not at all 5.5 | Hard to say/NA 8.8 |

should predominantly demonstrate a negative attitude toward Latvia that can be translated into a weak sense of belonging and a strong sense of anxiety regarding the Latvian government.

In order to understand the socio-demographic determinants of Russophones' sense of identification with Latvia, we used two cross-sectional survey questions: how close Russophones feel to Latvia and how much pride they take in being residents of Latvia (henceforth tentatively called 'national pride').

The 2017 data show that the majority of Russophones (84%) feel close to Latvia (see Table 1). Moreover, a considerable group (31.7%) expresses very close belonging. Yet Russophones take pride in being residents of Latvia to a lesser extent (63.3%). The 2017 data on specific age groups reveal that older cohorts (46–74) are more likely to demonstrate belonging to Latvia, and that the oldest cohort (61+) is also more likely to express national pride. While these data expose weak or rather moderate in-group differentiation, they also suggest that the Russophones' attachment to Latvia is a multifaceted phenomenon that does not necessarily translate into a positive attitude toward Latvian statehood or polity. For instance, a large Russophone group tends to doubt the viability of Latvia as an independent state; however, cross-sectional data collected in 2011 and 2017 surveys (Austers & Nikišins 2017, pp. 203–6) indicate that Russian-speakers have become less inclined to doubt Latvia's statehood (a decrease from 50% to 37%).

Due to differences in variable coding in the available datasets, the regression model specifications slightly differ (see Table 2). The Nagelkerke pseudo- R^2 indicates that the model explains just 8% of the variation in belonging to Latvia and 9% of the variation in national pride; the models fit the data very well, are significantly better than the Intercept Only models, and correctly classify around 80% of cases.¹⁰ The regression analysis suggests that Russophones' attachment to Latvia and pride in being a resident of Latvia gradually weakened from 2000 to 2015, but reverted to the pre-economic crisis level in 2017. The probability of feeling close to Latvia in 2017 was approximately twice as high as in 2015, and 40% higher than in 2010, yet this was still lower than the level in 2000 (Sig.=0.078). The differences in national pride were similar: in 2017 Latvia's Russophones were twice as likely to feel proud of being residents of Latvia than in 2015 or 2010. A sense of belonging to Latvia was more pronounced among Russophones living in cities.

¹⁰Explained variation of 10% or more is usually considered a significant proportion of variation, and classification accuracy of 80% can be rated as very good.

TABLE 2
LOGISTIC REGRESSION OF FEELING CLOSE TO LATVIA AND FEELING PROUD OF BEING A
RESIDENT OF LATVIA ON DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

| | <i>Model 1</i> <i>Belonging to Latvia</i> | | | | <i>Model 2</i> <i>Feeling proud</i> | | | |
|--------------------------|--|-------------|-------------|---------------|--|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| | <i>B</i> | <i>S.E.</i> | <i>Sig.</i> | <i>Exp(B)</i> | <i>B</i> | <i>S.E.</i> | <i>Sig.</i> | <i>Exp(B)</i> |
| Gender (male) | -0.149 | 0.088 | 0.089 | 0.861 | -0.439 | 0.078 | 0.000 | 0.645 |
| Citizenship (a citizen) | 0.378 | 0.101 | 0.000 | 1.459 | 0.566 | 0.091 | 0.000 | 1.761 |
| Type of residence (city) | -0.398 | 0.151 | 0.009 | 0.672 | -0.142 | 0.128 | 0.268 | 0.868 |
| Income (ref. high) | | | 0.006 | | | | 0.358 | |
| No answer about income | -0.370 | 0.131 | 0.005 | 0.690 | -0.092 | 0.123 | 0.453 | 0.912 |
| Low income | -0.143 | 0.138 | 0.301 | 0.867 | -0.191 | 0.123 | 0.120 | 0.826 |
| Medium income | 0.026 | 0.117 | 0.822 | 1.027 | -0.023 | 0.103 | 0.822 | 0.977 |
| Year (ref. 2017) | | | 0.000 | | | | 0.000 | |
| 1997 | -0.027 | 0.201 | 0.892 | 0.973 | 0.117 | 0.177 | 0.510 | 1.124 |
| 2000 | 0.252 | 0.143 | 0.078 | 1.287 | -0.007 | 0.121 | 0.953 | 0.993 |
| 2006 | 0.212 | 0.190 | 0.266 | 1.236 | -0.263 | 0.151 | 0.081 | 0.769 |
| 2007 | 0.089 | 0.191 | 0.641 | 1.093 | | | | |
| 2010 | -0.338 | 0.164 | 0.040 | 0.713 | -0.597 | 0.142 | 0.000 | 0.550 |
| 2015 | -0.813 | 0.142 | 0.000 | 0.443 | -0.753 | 0.124 | 0.000 | 0.471 |
| Age (ref. 61–74) | | | 0.000 | | | | 0.000 | |
| 18–30 | -1.075 | 0.205 | 0.000 | 0.341 | -0.740 | 0.177 | 0.000 | 0.477 |
| 31–45 | -0.712 | 0.193 | 0.000 | 0.491 | -0.725 | 0.162 | 0.000 | 0.485 |
| 46–60 | -0.459 | 0.178 | 0.010 | 0.632 | -0.574 | 0.147 | 0.000 | 0.563 |
| Constant | 1.196 | 0.216 | 0.000 | 3.307 | 1.021 | 0.258 | 0.000 | 2.775 |

Note: For the purpose of analysis, the first two, positive categories were coded together as '1' and the last two as '0'. The analysis excludes those who found it difficult to answer the question (less than 8%). The model also controls for education, regions and employment status.

The data indicate significant generational differences, showing that older Russophones are more likely to feel close to Latvia and to express national pride. Notably, the positive correlation with age can be also observed among ethnic Latvians, which points to possible cohort effect—namely, that the identities of young people in general are becoming increasingly globalised and detached from the local or national milieu (Lesko & Talburt 2012).¹¹ Nevertheless, the shifting identification pattern of younger cohorts contributes to, but does not fully explain Russophones' decreasing attachment to Latvia up to 2015. Although some scholars have criticised the unsubstantiated expectations toward the citizenship–belonging nexus in Latvia (Duvold & Berglund 2014; Ijabs 2016, p. 294), our analysis reveals that Latvian citizenship actually significantly increases in-group differentiation: Russophone citizens of Latvia are 1.5 times more likely to feel close to Latvia and 1.8 times more likely to express national pride than non-citizens.¹²

A sense of insecurity with respect to Latvia as a 'nationalising state' is pertinent to the standard model of Russophones' identity, as it fosters a defensive diasporic mindset.

¹¹However, disentangling the age and cohort effect would require a separate analysis that is beyond the scope of this essay.

¹²Like Estonia, Latvia still has a large group of non-citizens (247,000 people), comprised of individuals who moved to Latvia or were born in Latvia after the Soviet occupation in 17 June 1940 and who refused to go through naturalisation after 1991 or did not pass the naturalisation exam. Non-citizens are predominately a Russophone group; a majority of them identify as ethnic Russians.

TABLE 3
THE PERCEIVED THREAT OF THE LATVIAN GOVERNMENT (%)

| | Fully agree | Somewhat agree | Somewhat disagree | Fully disagree | Don't know/NA |
|---|-------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------|
| To what extent do you agree or disagree that the current government endangers the existence of Russian language and culture in Latvia? (2016) | 17.8 | 30.4 | 22.8 | 16.6 | 12.3 |

In order to test to what extent Russophones see the Latvian state as a threat to their identity, we conducted a logistic regression of their attitude toward a claim that the Latvian government endangers the existence of Russian language and culture. The analysis excludes 10% of respondents who found it difficult to answer this question. The independent variables have slightly changed, as this survey was conducted by SKDS. The Nagelkerke pseudo- R^2 indicates that the model explains 8% of the variation. While this is not much, according to the Omnibus test of deviances, the specified model is significantly better than the Intercept Only model (chi-square = 68.6, $df=28$, $p < 0.001$). Overall, it correctly classifies 57% of cases. The Hosmer–Lemeshow Test confirms that the specification of the model is satisfactory (Sig. > 0.05).

The 2016 survey data indicated a rather polarised picture (see Table 3): almost half of Russophones (48%) agreed that the current Latvian government endangers the existence of Russian language and culture. However, a sizable group (39%) also disagreed with such a statement. Furthermore, the most radical group that fully agreed that the Latvian government poses a threat was significantly smaller than the moderate group ('somewhat agree'). Similarly, by measuring perceived discrimination on a linguistic basis, Bērziņa (2016, pp. 10–2) has concluded that Latvia's Russophones do not demonstrate a strong consensus. Moreover, the share of ethnic minorities who think that they can develop their language and culture in Latvia significantly increased during 2015–2017; the same applies to a positive assessment of ethnic relations in Latvia, which also significantly increased among ethnic minorities during 2015–2017.¹³

The regression analysis revealed that Russophones remained polarised *vis-à-vis* the perceived threat over the years in question (see Table 4). Likewise, it should be noted that there were no significant differences between age groups, which suggests that the split perception of threat exists across various Russophone generations. Yet this perception also varied significantly across the Latvian regions. Russian-speakers in Latgale, the most Russophone region in Latvia, were two to three times more likely to see the Russian language and culture as endangered (Sig. < 0.01), whereas an opposite opinion was more likely to appear among Russophones who live in regions dominated

¹³Mazākumtautību līdzdalība demokrātiskajos procesos Latvijā (Rīga, Latvijas Universitātes Filozofijas un socioloģijas institūts, 2017, pp. 57–9), available at: [https://www.km.gov.lv/uploads/ckeditor/files/Sabiedribas_integracija/Petijumi/Mazakumtautibu%20lidzdaliba%20petijuma%20zinojums%202017\(1\).pdf](https://www.km.gov.lv/uploads/ckeditor/files/Sabiedribas_integracija/Petijumi/Mazakumtautibu%20lidzdaliba%20petijuma%20zinojums%202017(1).pdf), accessed 9 November 2018.

TABLE 4
LOGISTIC REGRESSION OF PERCEIVED THREAT TO RUSSIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE ON
DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

| | <i>B</i> | <i>S.E.</i> | <i>Sig.</i> | <i>Exp(B)</i> |
|----------------------------|----------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Education (ref. higher) | | | 0.033 | |
| Primary education or lower | -0.299 | 0.272 | 0.272 | 0.742 |
| Secondary education | -0.426 | 0.164 | 0.009 | 0.653 |
| Citizenship (a citizen) | -0.275 | 0.148 | 0.064 | 0.760 |
| Region (ref. Latgale) | | | 0.000 | |
| Rīga | -0.732 | 0.196 | 0.000 | 0.481 |
| Vidzeme | -1.123 | 0.221 | 0.000 | 0.325 |
| Kurzeme | -0.911 | 0.314 | 0.004 | 0.402 |
| Zemgale | -1.186 | 0.250 | 0.000 | 0.305 |
| Year (ref.: 2016) | | | 0.581 | |
| 2012 | 0.164 | 0.159 | 0.303 | 1.178 |
| 2014 | 0.062 | 0.159 | 0.697 | 1.064 |
| Constant | 0.972 | 0.509 | 0.056 | 2.642 |

Note: For the purpose of analysis, the categories 'fully agree' and 'somewhat agree' were coded together as '1', and 'fully disagree' and 'somewhat disagree' as '0'. The analysis excludes those who found it difficult to answer the question. The model also controls for gender, age, having children in a family, type of settlement, occupation and income.

by ethnic Latvians. Thus our findings to some extent contest Ekmanis' (2017, p. 146) claim that 'language is largely a non-issue' in Latgale. Given that Ekmanis' research focused on the youngest Russophone generation of Latgale, our analysis rather corroborates Vonda's observation that Russophone high-school students 'who live in places with the biggest Russian communities feel most "excluded" from Latvian society' (Vonda 2016, p. 153). This shows that the standard model of identity has a stronger impact in areas where the discrimination narrative can obtain higher social support and where it is the least challenged by ethnic Latvians. Yet future research should clarify the association between perceived threat and different generational segments by using larger Russophone samples.

The regression also revealed that those with a low income were almost twice as likely to demonstrate a sense of insecurity. Likewise, according to this analysis, the most educated Russophones were more likely to perceive the policy of the Latvian government as a risk factor. That is to say, they were more prone to accept the discrimination theme as part of their in-group representation.

Our analysis shows that, along with a rather consistent in-group differentiation regarding the perceived threat of Latvia as a 'nationalising state', Russophones' identification with Latvia displays an inconsistent pattern that alludes to the conditionality of their sense of belonging and national pride. The interaction of internal factors (such as, generational differences or differences between citizens and non-citizens) as well as external factors (Latvian ethno-politics, sensitive geopolitical issues) can help to understand this conditionality. Acknowledging the fluctuating character of the standard model, the 2017 data suggest, however, that the growing group consensus has reduced in-group differentiation. Thus, our cross-sectional data only partly support the first hypothesis (H1): the attitude towards Latvia triggers Russophones' in-group differentiation on generational and citizenship bases (belonging and national pride), as

TABLE 5
 RUSSOPHONES' ATTACHMENT TO RUSSIA (%)

| How close do you feel to Russia? (2015) | Very close | Close | Not very close | Not at all | Hard to say/NA |
|---|------------|-------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| | 4.8 | 15.7 | 41.4 | 33.8 | 4.2 |

well as on regional dissimilarities (perceived threat to identity). However, the data do not support an assumption that in-group differentiation has become more salient over time.

Attitude toward a symbolic homeland

Russia plays a crucial role in forming Russophone identity in Latvia and elsewhere. The standard model of in-group representation presupposes that Russophones should overwhelmingly demonstrate allegiance and benevolence toward Russia. In this section, we analyse two survey questions that address Russophones' sense of belonging and their attitude toward Russia as a threat, a view which is predominant among ethnic Latvians.

According to the 2017 survey, less than one third of Latvia's Russophones (20.5%) felt close to Russia (see Table 5). Thus, a sense of belonging to Russia was not very pronounced. Yet, attachment to Russia significantly differed across various generations. The oldest Russophone cohort was again more likely to feel close to Russia. This might perhaps be explained by a cohort effect—the oldest cohort was prone to demonstrate a more rigid and inclusive identification. Future research, however, should provide more detailed knowledge about the interaction between identity-specific and cohort-specific attitudes.

The regression analysis shows that the predictive power of the specified model is quite weak: it explains just 7% of the variation. However, the Hosmer–Lemeshow test confirms that the model fits the data very well, and 73% of the cases are correctly classified. Our analysis reveals that belonging to Russia is also a rather conditional phenomenon (see Table 6). It went up until 2006, but gradually weakened thereafter. In 2017, Russophones were two times less likely to feel close to Russia than in 2007.

The regression analysis indicates that Latgale and Rīga, the two most Russophone regions of Latvia, did not display significant differences with respect to belonging to Russia. Remarkably, Russophone citizens were almost two times less likely to demonstrate close ties with Russia than non-citizens, which again shows that Latvian citizenship matters. Namely, Russophone non-citizens were more inclined to maintain the standard model of in-group representation that disenfranchises them from Latvia and strengthens their long-distance nationalism toward Russia.

Next, we explore socio-demographic factors that can best predict the perception of Russia as a threat to the independence of Latvia.¹⁴ The 2016 survey revealed that Latvia's Russophones overwhelmingly (88%) disagreed with the claim that Russia is a threat to the independence of Latvia (see Table 7). Moreover, the majority fully disagreed with such a claim. This indicates a strong in-group consensus that united

¹⁴An ordinal regression analysis was not an optimal solution, as the number of respondents who gave an answer 'fully agree' or 'somewhat agree' was very small.

TABLE 6
LOGISTIC REGRESSION OF FEELING CLOSE TO RUSSIA ON DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

| | <i>B</i> | <i>S.E.</i> | <i>Sig.</i> | <i>Exp(B)</i> |
|----------------------------|----------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Citizenship (ref. citizen) | -0.506 | 0.084 | 0.000 | 0.603 |
| Type of residence (city) | 0.516 | 0.129 | 0.000 | 1.675 |
| Region (ref. Latgale) | | | 0.040 | |
| Rīga | -0.008 | 0.100 | 0.939 | 0.992 |
| Vidzeme | 0.013 | 0.136 | 0.927 | 1.013 |
| Kurzeme | -0.380 | 0.149 | 0.011 | 0.684 |
| Zemgale | -0.195 | 0.145 | 0.177 | 0.823 |
| Year (ref. 2017) | | | 0.000 | |
| 1997 | -0.330 | 0.214 | 0.123 | 0.719 |
| 2000 | -0.041 | 0.128 | 0.749 | 0.960 |
| 2004 | 0.145 | 0.149 | 0.330 | 1.156 |
| 2006 | 0.881 | 0.153 | 0.000 | 2.413 |
| 2007 | 0.733 | 0.163 | 0.000 | 2.081 |
| 2010 | 0.622 | 0.149 | 0.000 | 1.863 |
| 2015 | 0.495 | 0.133 | 0.000 | 1.641 |
| Age (ref. 61–74) | | | 0.001 | |
| 18–30 | -0.361 | 0.118 | 0.002 | 0.697 |
| 31–45 | -0.358 | 0.116 | 0.002 | 0.699 |
| 46–60 | -0.409 | 0.110 | 0.000 | 0.664 |
| Constant | -1.141 | 0.218 | 0.000 | 0.319 |

Note: For the purpose of analysis, the categories ‘Very close’ and ‘Close’ were coded together as ‘1’, and ‘Not very close’ and ‘Not at all close’ as ‘0’. The analysis excludes those who found it difficult to answer the question. The model also controls for education, gender, income and employment status.

various Russophone generations. Other research data have suggested that Russophones are inclined to see Russia as a peaceful country that is not going to attack anyone. For example, a majority of them believe that the Latvian media exaggerate Russia’s potential aggression towards the Baltic states (Bērziņa 2016, p. 23) and those who express positive attitudes towards Russia are more likely to support the Kremlin’s narrative on the Russia–Ukraine conflict that frames Russia as a peace-loving country (Kaprans & Juzefovičs 2019).

The regression model with respect to the perceived threat of Russia gives adequate predictions compared to the Intercept Only model ($Sig < 0.001$), and explains 7% of the variation in the perceived threat, correctly predicting 90% of cases (see Table 8).

The regression reveals that during the Russia–Georgia war in 2008 Russophones were 2.4 times more likely to see Russia as a potential threat than in 2016. Citizenship status was one of the strongest socio-demographic predictors that explained the variation in perceiving Russia as a threat. That is, Russophone citizens of Latvia were 1.8 times more likely to see Russia as a threat to Latvia’s independence.

Our analysis also only partly confirms the second hypothesis (H2). The cross-sectional data demonstrated that Russophones’ attitude towards Russia can create considerable in-group differentiation on generational, citizenship and regional bases. However, belonging to Russia, a sense that underscores the standard model, remained a rather marginal polarising factor whose relevance decreased during 2015–2017. The strong and persistent consensus on Russia as a peaceful country with respect to Latvia also goes against our assumption that Russophones’ in-group differentiation has become more visible over time.

TABLE 7
THE PERCEIVED THREAT OF RUSSIA (%)

| <i>To what extent do you agree or disagree that Russia is a threat to the independence of Latvia? (2016)</i> | <i>Fully agree</i> | <i>Somewhat agree</i> | <i>Somewhat disagree</i> | <i>Fully disagree</i> | <i>Don't know/NA</i> |
|--|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| | 1.2 | 5.4 | 32.4 | 55.8 | 5.1 |

TABLE 8
LOGISTIC REGRESSION OF RUSSIA AS A THREAT ON DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

| | <i>B</i> | <i>S.E.</i> | <i>Sig.</i> | <i>Exp(B)</i> |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Citizenship (a citizen) | 0.600 | 0.196 | 0.002 | 1.822 |
| Year (ref. 2016) | | | 0.001 | |
| 2003 | 0.430 | 0.284 | 0.131 | 1.537 |
| 2008 | 0.884 | 0.255 | 0.001 | 2.421 |
| 2012 | -0.073 | 0.293 | 0.804 | 0.930 |
| 2014 | 0.317 | 0.275 | 0.248 | 1.374 |
| Intercept | -2.491 | 0.624 | 0.000 | 0.083 |

Note: For the purpose of analysis, the categories ‘fully agree’ and ‘somewhat agree’ were coded together as ‘1’, and ‘fully disagree’ and ‘somewhat disagree’ as ‘0’. The analysis excludes those who found it difficult to answer the question. The model also controls for gender, age, education, ethnicity, income, type of settlement, occupation and region.

International context—Europe and the European Union

As already noted, the European context plays a crucial role in the formation of Latvia’s Russophone identity. Yet, the standard model suggests that the image of Europe worsened following the escalation of geopolitical tensions between Russia and the EU. Therefore, in this section, we explore Russophones’ sense of belonging to Europe as well as their attitudes toward the EU.

The 2017 survey data revealed that only 25.5% of Latvia’s Russophones felt close to Europe (see Table 9). This suggests that, as is the case with belonging to Russia, the Russophone majority does not show a strong identification with Europe.

The regression analysis of Russophones’ attachment to Europe yields a model that explains 14% of the variation. The Hosmer–Lemeshow test confirms that the model fits the data excellently, correctly classifying 82% of the cases. The regression reveals that in 2017, as in 2015, Latvia’s Russophones were much more likely to feel close to Europe than before the country entered the EU (see Table 10). Identification with Europe had increased (Sig < 0.05) since 2010, when Latvia was severely hit by the global economic crisis. The in-group dynamics can at least partially be explained by generational changes. Regression analysis shows that the youngest cohort (18–30) was almost two times more likely to feel close ties with Europe than the oldest cohort (61–74). Notably, the identification with Europe was stronger in less Russophone regions (Kurzeme and Zemgale). Education also affects belonging to Europe:

TABLE 9
 RUSSOPHONES' ATTACHMENT TO EUROPE (%)

| How close do you feel to Europe? (2017) | Very close | Close | Not very close | Not at all | Hard to say/NA |
|---|------------|-------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| | 5.2 | 20.3 | 48.5 | 20.7 | 5.2 |

Russophones with higher education were more likely to feel close ties with Europe. Russophone non-citizens, in turn, were less likely to express close ties with Europe.

Previous research (Kļave 2005, pp. 108–12) has suggested that Russophones and ethnic Latvians supported the EU to equal degrees in the 1990s, but that this changed dramatically in 2002/2003, right before Latvia officially joined the EU. While support for the EU continued to increase among Latvians, Russophones became more sceptical. Perhaps this scepticism was partly triggered by the frustration that the EU did not take a clear position in advocating Russophones' rights (Cianetti & Nakai 2017). The 2017 survey showed that roughly half of Russophones (52.7%) held a positive opinion about the EU (see Table 11). Moreover, the cross-sectional data revealed that this positive attitude has significantly increased over time. Yet perception of the EU was profoundly polarised, since a large group (32.5%) also expressed a negative opinion. The opinion towards the EU indicated salient differences between age groups: the youngest Russophone cohorts (18–34) were more likely to express a positive attitude. Beyond generational differences, an attitude toward the EU illuminated ideological differences. On a more general level, Austers and Nikišins (2017, pp. 199–201) argue that Latvia's Russophones' perception of the EU boils down to two large groups: Euro-optimists and radical Euro-sceptics. However, the former were more numerous than members of the latter group. While Euro-optimists were inclined to agree that membership in the EU encourages social cohesion and integration of national minorities in Latvia, radical Euro-sceptics hold a strong consensus that contests such a statement.

The regression analysis combined Russophones' attitude toward the EU with their attitude toward Russia. Such a combination gave us yet another opportunity to test the hybridisation potential of Russophones' identity. As the reference category in our model we chose positive attitude toward Russia and negative toward the EU. The model gives adequate predictions compared to the Intercept Only model (Sig < 0.001), and it explains 20% of the variation.¹⁵ The model correctly predicts 57% of cases, yet it performs worse in predicting negative attitude toward Russia (17%). This means that such attitudes are affected in a complex way by factors beyond those included in our models. The results of the regression analysis suggest that the most significant socio-demographic predictors are the survey year, region, occupation and income.

The regression analysis reveals that compared to 2008, Russophones in 2015 and 2012 were more likely to hold a positive attitude toward both Russia and the EU, rather than just towards Russia (see Table 12). This could be explained by generational effect, considering that younger people are more likely to have a positive opinion of the EU and Russia (Sig. < 0.001). Russophones in Rīga and Western Latvia (Kurzeme) and those who live in urban areas were significantly more likely to express a positive

¹⁵The model excludes 19% of respondents who found it difficult to express an attitude toward Russia and/or the EU.

TABLE 10
LOGISTIC REGRESSION OF FEELING CLOSE TO EUROPE ON DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

| | <i>B</i> | <i>S.E.</i> | <i>Sig.</i> | <i>Exp(B)</i> |
|----------------------------|----------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Citizenship (a citizen) | 0.293 | 0.100 | 0.003 | 1.340 |
| Education (ref. higher) | | | 0.000 | |
| Primary education or lower | -0.571 | 0.162 | 0.000 | 0.565 |
| Secondary education | -0.387 | 0.102 | 0.000 | 0.679 |
| Region (ref. Latgale) | | | 0.003 | |
| Rīga | 0.172 | 0.119 | 0.148 | 1.188 |
| Vidzeme | 0.238 | 0.172 | 0.166 | 1.268 |
| Kurzeme | 0.335 | 0.170 | 0.048 | 1.399 |
| Zemgale | 0.619 | 0.161 | 0.000 | 1.857 |
| Year (ref. 2017) | | | 0.000 | |
| 1997 | -1.072 | 0.219 | 0.000 | 0.342 |
| 2000 | -1.338 | 0.153 | 0.000 | 0.262 |
| 2004 | -1.827 | 0.215 | 0.000 | 0.161 |
| 2006 | -0.496 | 0.172 | 0.004 | 0.609 |
| 2007 | -0.198 | 0.172 | 0.249 | 0.821 |
| 2010 | -0.355 | 0.158 | 0.025 | 0.702 |
| 2015 | -0.014 | 0.128 | 0.916 | 0.987 |
| Age (ref. 61–74) | | | 0.000 | |
| 18–30 | 0.591 | 0.140 | 0.000 | 1.805 |
| 31–45 | 0.022 | 0.145 | 0.877 | 1.023 |
| 46–60 | 0.172 | 0.136 | 0.206 | 1.188 |
| Employment (employed) | 0.051 | 0.105 | 0.630 | 1.052 |
| Constant | -1.574 | 0.254 | 0.000 | 0.207 |

Note: For the purpose of analysis, the categories 'very close' and 'close' were coded together as '1', and 'not very close' and 'not at all close' as '0'. The analysis excludes those who found it difficult to answer the question. The model also controls for gender, type of settlement and income.

TABLE 11
RUSSOPHONES' OPINION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (%)

| <i>What is your opinion of the European Union?</i> | <i>2008</i> | <i>2009</i> | <i>2012</i> | <i>2015</i> | <i>2017</i> |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Very positive | 1.6 | 5.2 | 3.3 | 2.6 | 8 |
| Somewhat positive | 34 | 39.8 | 47.8 | 49 | 44.7 |
| Somewhat negative | 32.7 | 31.5 | 26.0 | 32.4 | 23.7 |
| Very negative | 7.6 | 12 | 5.2 | 5.2 | 8.8 |
| Don't know/NA | 24.1 | 11.5 | 17.7 | 10.9 | 14.8 |

opinion of both Russia and the EU. The least educated Russophones, in turn, were almost twice as likely to hold a positive opinion only of Russia. Notably, Russophones who did not want to disclose their income (29% of all respondents) were also about two times more likely to hold a positive opinion of Russia only.

An emancipated in-group representation insists that social identity embraces different, but complimentary cognitive anchors that enable hybrid identification and lead to a less rigid and exclusive identity project. Assuming that hybridity indicates the deviation from the standard model, we also tested how much feeling close to Latvia depends on Russophones' sense of belonging to Russia and Europe. We found that the relationship between different kinds of identities is, in fact, extremely weak. In particular, there was

TABLE 12
REGRESSION OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS RUSSIA AND THE EU ON DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

| <i>Positive attitude towards Russia and the EU</i> | <i>B</i> | <i>S.E.</i> | <i>Sig.</i> | <i>Exp(B)</i> |
|--|----------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Age | -0.026 | 0.007 | 0.000 | 0.974 |
| Citizenship (a citizen) | -0.103 | 0.156 | 0.507 | 0.902 |
| Type of residence area (a city) | -0.744 | 0.219 | 0.001 | 0.475 |
| Tertiary education | Ref. | | | |
| Primary education or lower | -0.607 | 0.297 | 0.041 | 0.545 |
| Secondary education | -0.266 | 0.183 | 0.146 | 0.767 |
| Latgale | Ref. | | | |
| Rīga | 0.522 | 0.202 | 0.010 | 1.685 |
| Vidzeme | -0.117 | 0.238 | 0.623 | 0.890 |
| Kurzeme | -0.841 | 0.356 | 0.018 | 2.318 |
| Zemgale | -0.093 | 0.280 | 0.740 | 0.911 |
| 2015 | Ref. | | | |
| 2008 | -0.468 | 0.208 | 0.024 | 0.626 |
| 2009 | -0.277 | 0.192 | 0.149 | 0.758 |
| 2012 | 0.321 | 0.199 | 0.107 | 1.378 |
| Intercept | 1.616 | 0.504 | 0.001 | |
| <i>Negative attitude towards Russia</i> | | | | |
| Age | -0.016 | 0.010 | 0.100 | 0.984 |
| Citizenship (a citizen) | 1.093 | 0.273 | 0.000 | 2.983 |
| Type of residence (a city) | -0.233 | 0.364 | 0.522 | 0.792 |
| Tertiary education | Ref. | | | |
| Secondary education | -0.156 | 0.286 | 0.584 | 0.855 |
| High income | Ref. | | | |
| Low income | -1.212 | 0.485 | 0.012 | 0.297 |
| Medium low income | -1.368 | 0.457 | 0.003 | 0.255 |
| Medium income | -1.294 | 0.433 | 0.003 | 0.274 |
| Medium high income | -0.948 | 0.381 | 0.013 | 0.388 |
| Latgale | Ref. | | | |
| Rīga | 1.343 | 0.377 | 0.000 | 3.830 |
| Vidzeme | 0.893 | 0.430 | 0.038 | 2.442 |
| Kurzeme | 1.833 | 0.558 | 0.001 | 6.250 |
| Zemgale | 1.340 | 0.454 | 0.003 | 3.818 |
| 2015 | Ref. | | | |
| 2008 | -0.526 | 0.299 | 0.079 | 0.591 |
| 2009 | -1.077 | 0.296 | 0.000 | 0.341 |
| 2012 | -1.211 | 0.326 | 0.000 | 0.298 |
| Intercept | -1.823 | 0.841 | 0.030 | |

Note: The reference category: positive attitude towards Russia, negative towards the EU. The models also control for gender, employment and income.

no correlation between feeling close to Russia and feeling close to Latvia (Sig. = 0.16, corr. coef. = 0.05). Similarly, there was a very weak negative correlation (Sig. = 0.06; corr. coef. = -0.08) between attitudes towards Russia and the EU. From this, one can conclude that an appreciable number of Russophones can successfully combine different identities and loyalties that are contextually and conditionally isolated from each other.

To sum up, the data show that the European context has prompted in-group differentiation among Russophones, particularly on generational and socio-economic bases. However, the increasingly positive attitude towards Europe and the EU suggests that differentiation within the Russophone community has declined. Hence this only partly confirms our third hypothesis (H3).

Discussion

In this essay, we examined the extent to which Latvia's Russophone identity is homogenous. Conceptually, we looked at socio-demographic deviations *vis-à-vis* the standard model of the in-group representation that frames Russophones as an alienated and self-sufficient group. Our analysis of cross-sectional data was targeted around three formative contexts of opinion-based Russophone groups: Latvia, Russia and Europe.

Our findings showed that all three identification contexts trigger Russophones' in-group differentiation. Russophones' citizenship and age were two major factors that explain the deviation from the standard model. That is to say, a legal link with Latvia and generational background were the two most important predictors for in-group differentiation. Other relevant socio-demographic factors—education, regional or residential affiliation—displayed a more conditional character. We have to note, however, that the explanatory power of some models turned out to be rather low—particularly those addressing an attachment to Latvia or Russia and the perceived threat from Latvia's government. These shortcomings suggest that the origins of these attitudes need to be explored further by adding other relevant predictors, such as media consumption or social networks.

Russophones' identification with Latvia illuminates a complex socio-cognitive process. On the one hand, we detected a rather strong consensus on belonging to Latvia. On a very superficial level this already challenges the dominance of the standard model that fosters disenfranchisement with respect to Latvia. On the other hand, there was a noticeable in-group differentiation. The polarising attitude toward the perceived threat of the government's policies to Russian culture and language reveals that the insecurity discourse significantly affects in-group differentiation and problematises Russophones' belonging to Latvia as a positive accomplishment for the country. Acknowledging the rather high support for the discrimination narrative, it is important to note that a considerable Russophone segment did not feel threatened and thus did not align with the awareness of being an oppressed minority—a self-image that is encoded in the standard model and is regularly invoked by the Kremlin. In a nutshell, Russophones' consensus on belonging to Latvia was much stronger than their consensus on Latvia as an ethnocratic state (Agarin 2016; Ijabs 2016). Hence, a sense of belonging to Latvia was ultimately a stronger impetus for a shared in-group representation than a sense of alienation and self-isolation.

Russophones' identification with Russia was much weaker than identification with Latvia. However, Russia remained a crucial significant other that nurtured the imagined unity of Latvia's Russophones. Even though the majority did not feel close to Russia, their 'external homeland' remained a relevant cultural and historical source of positive identity and solidarity. In this way, the standard model retained relevant impact on the Russophone diasporic identification, reinforcing the image of Russia as a romanticised kin state that is culturally juxtaposed to Latvia. Arguably, many Russophones positioned themselves as an aesthetic rather than as a moral diasporic community *vis-à-vis* Russia. As Werbner (2002) has noted, while moral community emphasises co-responsibility and political attitudes toward events in the country of origin, aesthetic community is focused on popular culture and nostalgic rituals and ceremonies that relate to the country of origin. At the same time, socio-economically Russia was often not seen as significantly

different from Latvia (Bērziņa 2016, p. 25). Our data suggest, however, that the positive image of Russia can be strengthened during geopolitical conflicts, invoking long-distance nationalism and a desire to morally defend the symbolic kin state.

The strength of Russophones' belonging to Europe was similar to that of their identification with Russia. Yet these two contexts appealed to different opinion-based groups of the Russophone community. While strong ties with Russia were more characteristic of the older generation, identification with Europe was more visible within the youngest generation. Younger Russophones, who are prone to enjoy benefits from global media, international friendship networks, travelling across Europe and free labour movement, have evidently internalised the European dimension in their identity projects. This, however, suggests that the redefinition of the standard model (that intends to strengthen attachment to 'Russian civilisation') through belonging to the European cultural and social space was pertinent only to a limited Russophone segment. Moreover, the EU, the political symbol of Europe, triggered a noticeable in-group polarisation regarding the EU's role in advocating minority rights as well as in pursuing geopolitical goals. In other words, if the perception of Russia as a political actor largely united Latvia's Russophones, attitudes toward the EU divided them.

Our analysis, however, does not provide compelling evidence for an overarching hybrid belonging pattern that might embrace the majority of Latvia's Russophones. A strong sense of belonging to Latvia suggests that the actual homeland has the most crucial impact on their in-group cohesion. Recognising Russophones' critical potential toward Latvia as a political entity, the polarising effect of the perceived threat of the 'nationalising state' does not signal growing support for alternative identity projects, oriented to Russia or Europe, but rather alludes to competing acculturation strategies with respect to Latvia (Zepa 2006). However, it should be taken into account that a considerable Russophone segment mediated their identification with Latvia through identification with Russia or Europe.

Russophones' internal differentiation outlines diverse opinion-based groups that can be associated with competing identity representations. According to our analysis, we can distinguish three ideal types of Latvia's Russophone identity: compatriots, critical moderates and European Russians (see Table 13). Compatriots followed the imperatives of the standard model. Meanwhile, critical moderates demonstrated a substantial conditionality in supporting the standard model, but also challenged it in terms of belonging to Latvia as well as their rather pragmatic relations with Russia and Europe/the EU. Critical moderates could be seen as a stronghold of the emancipated in-group representation, which entitles many Russophones to be simultaneously in and out of the standard model. We believe this emancipated identity originates from complex relations with Latvia's national identity project and ethnic democracy that, as Fabrykant concludes, focuses not on ethnic homogeneity, but on commitment and loyalty, which 'does not necessarily imply ethnic nationalism at the attitudinal level' (Fabrykant 2018, p. 326). The European Russians, in turn, formed an explicit opposition to the standard model by demonstrating a strong sense of belonging to Latvia as well as to Europe/the EU and by maintaining a critical attitude toward Russia.

The existence and relevance of such ideal types, of course, deserves a more thorough analysis, including an analysis of particular socio-political contexts as well as a

TABLE 13
THE IDEAL TYPES OF LATVIA'S RUSSOPHONE IDENTITY

| <i>Compatriots</i> | <i>Critical moderates</i> | <i>European Russians</i> |
|--|---|--|
| Have a positive opinion of, and feel close to Russia and dislike the EU, do not feel close to Latvia, do not see Russia as a threat to Latvia's independence, but instead see Russian language and culture endangered by Latvian authorities | Embrace both Russia and the EU, however, can sometimes be critical of both entities; feel close to Latvia, yet not very proud of living there | Do not like Russia, and see it as a threat; show affinity toward the EU, express strong belonging and national pride toward Latvia |
| This type is most characteristic among non-citizens, the older generation, less educated Russophones and the residents of the Latgale region | This type is most characteristic of Russophones in Riga. Critical moderates are often young people | This type is most characteristic of Russophones who live in the regions dominated by ethnic Latvians; citizens; the younger generation; the well off and more educated segment |


comparative analysis of Russophones in other countries. At this point we must also admit that several grey areas still exist, suggesting that Russophones rarely fall neatly into one ideal type or other. Nevertheless this study illustrates that, regardless of the number of ideal types, Latvia's Russophones can be characterised as displaying a high level of cognitive polyphasia. That is, different and incompatible cognitive anchors that frame in-group representation help them navigate through competing discourses toward Latvia, Russia and the EU. It can be said that such navigation skills play a crucial role in maintaining a somewhat comfortable position in Latvian society.

Along with Russophones' in-group differentiation, this essay also addresses group dynamics. Our analysis suggests that the standard model of identity has experienced inconsistent support over the years. Its relevance increased in 2015, when Russophones' identification with Latvia (ties, national pride) significantly weakened. Arguably, this shift can be at least partly attributed to the Russia–Ukraine conflict that exacerbated ethno-linguistic tensions also in Latvia. However, Russophones' sense of belonging to Latvia became stronger during 2015–2017. Moreover, the annexation of Crimea and Russia's proxy war in Ukraine did not increase Russophones' perception of discrimination or anxiety with respect to ethnic relations in Latvia. Nor did it weaken a sense of belonging to Russia. Perhaps the Ukrainian crisis slowed down—but did not stop—the further emancipation from the standard model. In fact, some of the evidence outlined in this essay suggests that the crisis had a limited impact on Russophones' identification and that their increased sense of anxiety gradually evaporated.

A similar normalisation pattern can be observed in terms of the Russia–Georgia war in 2008, which again largely divided Latvian society along ethno-linguistic lines. This war weakened Russophones' attachment to Latvia, but it did not affect their identification with Russia or Europe and did not reinforce their belief that Russia is a threat to the independence of Latvia. On the contrary, Latvia's Russophones most likely framed Russia as a defensive and peaceful country. Yet, the securitisation of

identity boundaries (Kachuyevski 2017)¹⁶ together with the persistent condemnation of Russia by Latvia and other Western countries may have shaken Russophones' explicitly positive perceptions of their external homeland.

The dynamics within the opinion-based Russophone groups also suggest that the decisive and unprecedented referendum on Russian language as the second state language in Latvia, held on 18 February 2012, most likely did not increase Russophones' insecurity. Nor did anxiety increase due to various 'militant democracy' measures that were introduced subsequently, in order to reduce risks to national security, the Latvian language and the official interpretation of history (Ijabs 2016). Moreover, our data do not suggest any relevant impact on the opinion-based Russophone groups arising from the Russian school protests that occurred in 2004.¹⁷ Instead, Russophones' ties with Latvia became stronger after these protests. Hence, we can tentatively argue that crucial local ethno-political events have a much weaker impact on Russophones' identification than international and profoundly mediated events that cannot be corroborated by direct experience.

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¹⁶See also the Introduction to this Special Issue.

¹⁷These protests were organised in Rīga, in order to stand against the government's decision to introduce the Latvian language as the only language of instruction in all schools. The decision provoked a high political activity among Russophones, particularly among the youngest generation.

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Appendix. Cross-sectional survey questions

| <i>Survey question</i> | <i>Scale</i> | <i>Survey waves</i> | <i>Unweighted N (Russophones)</i> | |
|---|--|---------------------|---------------------------------------|-------|
| How close do you feel to Latvia? (Baltic Institute of Social Sciences) | Very close | 1997 | 2,913 | |
| | Close | 2000 | 819 | |
| | Not very close | 2004 | 468 | |
| | Not at all | 2006 | 983 | |
| | Hard to say/NA | 2007 | 314 | |
| | | 2010 | 995 | |
| How proud do you feel of being the resident of Latvia? (Baltic Institute of Social Sciences; The Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Latvia) | Very proud | 1997 | 2,913 | |
| | Somewhat proud | 2000 | 819 | |
| | Not very proud | 2004 | 468 | |
| | Not at all | 2006 | 983 | |
| | Hard to say/NA | 2007 | 314 | |
| | | 2010 | 995 | |
| To what extent do you agree or disagree that the current government endangers the existence of Russian language and culture in Latvia? (SKDS) | Fully agree | 2012 | 393 | |
| | Somewhat agree | 2014 | 394 | |
| | Somewhat disagree | 2016 | 388 | |
| Fully disagree | 2012 | 393 | | |
| | 2014 | 394 | | |
| | 2016 | 388 | | |
| Don't know/NA | 2012 | 393 | | |
| | 2014 | 394 | | |
| | 2016 | 388 | | |
| | How close do you feel to Russia? (Baltic Institute of Social Sciences) | Very close | 1997 | 2,913 |
| | | Close | 2000 | 819 |
| | | Not very close | 2004 | 468 |
| Not at all close | | 2006 | 983 | |
| Hard to say/NA | | 2007 | 314 | |
| | | 2010 | 995 | |
| What is your opinion of Russia? (SKDS) | Very positive | 2008 | 89 | |
| | Somewhat positive | 2009 | 166 | |
| | Somewhat negative | 2012 | 301 | |
| | Very negative | 2015 | 654 | |
| | Don't know/NA | 2017 | 763 | |
| | | 2017 | 763 | |
| To what extent do you agree or disagree that Russia is a threat to the independence of Latvia (SKDS)? | Fully agree | 2003 | 319 | |
| | Somewhat agree | 2008 | 373 | |
| | Somewhat disagree | 2012 | 373 | |
| | Fully disagree | 2014 | 400 | |
| | Don't know/NA | 2016 | 412 | |
| | | 2016 | 412 | |
| How close do you feel to Europe? (Baltic Institute of Social Sciences; The Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Latvia) | Very close | 1997 | 2,913 | |
| | Close | 2000 | 819 | |
| | Not very close | 2004 | 468 | |
| | Not at all close | 2006 | 983 | |
| | Hard to say/NA | 2007 | 314 | |
| | | 2010 | 995 | |
| What is your opinion of the European Union? (SKDS) | Very positive | 2008 | 89 | |
| | Somewhat positive | 2009 | 166 | |
| | Somewhat negative | 2012 | 301 | |
| | Very negative | 2015 | 654 | |
| | Don't know/NA | 2017 | 763 | |
| | | 2017 | 763 | |