

Exit in the Near Abroad

The Russian Minorities in Latvia and Kyrgyzstan

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Minorities that have experienced discrimination can find a satisfactory place in society if they can create their own economic niche.

RUSSIANS in the near abroad do not generally resort to violence in order to express grievances related to post-Soviet nationalization processes. Their reactions to adverse changes include emigration, protest, and acceptance, but their responses to inimical elements of post-Soviet nationalization are not uniform—the degree of Russian exit, voice, and loyalty varies across Soviet successor states.¹ For example, there is a much lower rate of post-Soviet Russian emigration from Latvia, a state that has implemented exceptionally antagonistic nationalization policies, than from Kyrgyzstan, a state that has implemented more accommodating nationalization policies.

Many scholars reason that Russian emigration from Soviet successor states is motivated by discriminatory policies and practices in those states. Rogers Brubaker, for instance, claims that economic competition based on ethnicity has contributed to the exit of Russians from the Soviet southern tier and most likely will continue to do so in the future.² Similarly, David Laitin argues that aspects of Kazakh nationalization that focus on job protection for ethnic Kazakhs motivate Russian emigration from Kazakhstan.³

In light of these observations, it is ironic that the overwhelming majority of Latvia's Russians have not emigrated despite discriminatory policies that exclude them from the high-paying public sector. One reason Russians remain in Latvia despite its discriminatory policies is that they have established an independent business community that enables them to survive economically in the country's private sector. In contrast, one reason Russians emigrate from Kyrgyzstan despite its accommodating policies is that they have not established their own economic niche. Poor economic conditions and the

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About 6,000 Russian teenagers and school children march in downtown Riga, Latvia, February 5, 2004, protesting against a law, requiring teaching only in Latvian. The slogan in Cyrillic reads: "Hands off our schools!" (AP Photo/AFI)

absence of an independent business community render economic survival a challenge for Russians in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan, making exit an appealing alternative to constant struggle.

The analysis in this article suggests that if a multi-ethnic state has an ethnic division of labor that satisfies the economic aspirations of a national minority, the degree of economic competition between groups is decreased, and as a result so too is the national minority's need and desire to emigrate. This ultimately generates a low rate of minority exit even in a nationalizing state characterized by discriminatory policies that favor members of the national majority. As will be shown below by a comparison of the exceptionally antagonistic policies that characterize Latvian nationalization with the accommodating policies that characterize Kyrgyz nationalization, the rates of and motives for post-Soviet Russian emigration from these two countries differ considerably. These differences are related to the presence or absence of an ethnic division of labor, and this in turn explains why Russians have been able to create an independent business community in Latvia but not in Kyrgyzstan.

Antagonistic Versus Accommodating Nationalization

Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, Latvia and Kyrgyzstan have implemented nationalization programs that aim to promote members of their respective titular nationalities. Consequently, both Latvia and Kyrgyzstan can be classified as nationalizing states.

These are states that are conceived by their dominant elites as nation-states, of and for particular ethnocultural nations, yet as "incomplete" or "unrealized" nation-states, as insufficiently "national" in a variety of senses. To remedy this defect, and to compensate for perceived discrimination, nationalizing elites urge and undertake action to promote the language, culture, demographic preponderance, economic flourishing, or political hegemony of the core ethnocultural nation.⁴

Latvia and Kyrgyzstan differ, however, in the degree to which they are nationalizing states. While Latvia has adopted an exceptionally antagonistic nationalization strategy that promotes Latvians at the expense of Russians, Kyrgyzstan has adopted an accommodating nationalization strategy that attempts to balance the conflicting interests of Kyrgyz and Russians. This characterization of Latvian and Kyrgyz nationalization is based on an evaluation of the citizenship, language, and education policies of each country.⁵

Citizenship. Post-Soviet Latvia has established a far more exclusive citizenship regime than has post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan. In 1991 the country's *demos* was restricted to individuals and their descendants who were citizens of Latvia on June 17, 1940, the day the Soviet Union invaded the country.⁶ Because Russians became a real presence in Latvia only during the post-war period, most of its current Russian residents were not citizens in 1940 and were therefore automatically excluded from the post-Soviet political community. A 1994 law on citizenship established additional exclusionary parameters, including a "window" system that limited the number of people eligible to join the *demos* annually and, in effect, slowed the expansion of a multi-ethnic society.⁷ Pressure from the European Community and later the European Union for lenient naturalization requirements—provoked in part by this legislation—prompted the Latvian regime to hold a referendum in 1998 on the question of naturalization.⁸ Although the window system was abolished after the referendum results were tallied, the naturalization requirement itself was not eliminated, and numerous restrictions on non-citizens remain in force.⁹ Latvia's exclusivist citizenship policy has produced a society consisting of citizens of Latvia (overwhelmingly ethnic Latvians), non-citizens or aliens (overwhelmingly ethnic Russians), and citizens of Russia (Russians who are permanent residents of Latvia but take Russian citizenship).¹⁰

In contrast, newly independent Kyrgyzstan adopted a zero-option citizenship policy that automatically included all permanent residents of the former Kyrgyz

Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) in the post-Soviet *demos*.¹¹ The Kyrgyz SSR enacted a law on citizenship in 1990 that established citizenship of the Kyrgyz SSR and declared every one of its citizens to be simultaneously a citizen of the Soviet Union.¹² Shortly after the Soviet Union's demise, Kyrgyzstan enacted a second law on citizenship that automatically included all citizens of the Kyrgyz SSR in the newly constituted Kyrgyz *demos*.¹³ This policy established the equality of all citizens before the law, and thus rendered Russians legally entitled to the same rights and privileges—and beholden to the same responsibilities—as Kyrgyz.¹⁴

Language Policy. Latvia's language policy is far more antagonistic toward Russian-speakers than Kyrgyzstan's language policy. Both the Latvian and Kyrgyz SSRs passed legislation in 1989 establishing their respective titular languages as the state languages, and Russian as the language of inter-ethnic communication.¹⁵ Since then, however, Latvia's language policy has been characterized by a distinct drive to promote the state language and eliminate both the *de jure* and *de facto* use of Russian. In 1992, Latvia passed a law on languages that eliminated Russian's status as the language of inter-ethnic communication, permitted appeals to state agencies in Russian only if accompanied by a notarized translation in the state language, increased the number of spheres of communication in which the use of Latvian is mandatory, and called for the creation of a "language police" system consisting of a State Language Center, an Inspection Board, and a Language Commission.¹⁶ Together these stipulations rendered Latvian *the* language of public communication. A 1999 law on the state language marked the apex of linguistic nationalization in Latvia, increasing the number of spheres of communication in which the use of Latvian is mandatory and discontinuing the legal use of Russian in the public realm.¹⁷ In fact, this policy designated all languages except Latvian and Livonian as foreign. From a legal standpoint, the status of Russian in Latvia is equivalent to that of Chinese or Arabic.

In contrast, Kyrgyzstan's language policy has become increasingly accommodative toward Russian-speakers since independence. The country's elites have promoted the use of Kyrgyz since 1989, but have struck a delicate balance between the promotion of Kyrgyz and the protection of Russian.¹⁸ While the 1989 law on the state language expanded the spheres of communication in which the use of Kyrgyz is required, it also designated Russian as the republic's language of inter-ethnic communication.¹⁹ Although the constitution confirms

Kyrgyz as the state language, it also guarantees the preservation, development, and functioning of Russian, and it prohibits the infringement of rights and freedoms based on ignorance of the state language.²⁰ A 1994 presidential decree expanding the spheres of communication in which Russian is tolerated permitted its use in geographical areas and economic sectors where Russian-speakers predominate and in economic sectors that require use of an international language for continued progress.²¹ Elites ultimately took the decree's premise to its logical conclusion, and in 2000, Russian became Kyrgyzstan's official language, to be used on an equal basis with the state language "in spheres of state administration, legislation, and legal proceedings of the KR [Kyrgyz Republic], and also in other spheres of public life."²²

Education. Policies regulating the language of instruction in educational institutions affect Russian-speakers far more adversely in Latvia than in Kyrgyzstan. Although the 1989 law on languages guaranteed the right to receive a secondary education in Latvian or Russian and secured Latvian and Russian instruction in vocational, professional, and higher-education institutions according to specialties needed in Latvia, subsequent policies promoted a gradual liquidation process to ensure that education will eventually be conducted solely in the state language.²³ For example, whereas a 1991 law on education guarantees all residents the right to receive an education in the state language or their native language, students must pass Latvian proficiency exams in order to graduate high school, regardless of the language in which they are educated.²⁴ Similarly, the 1992 law on languages promises "teaching in the state language and other languages" in vocational and professional schools according to specialties needed in Latvia, but also stipulates, "In institutes of higher education financed by the state, beginning with the second year of study the primary language of instruction will be Latvian."²⁵ This policy confirms that all students enrolled in any institution of higher education must pass exams in the state language.²⁶ A 1998 law on education effectively bans Russian-speaking students from state institutions with the following declaration: "In state institutions of education and in self-governing institutions of education the language of instruction is the state language."²⁷ Moreover, as of September 2004, classes will be taught only in the state language from the tenth grade in state and municipal general-education institutions, and from the first year in state and municipal vocational institutions.²⁸

Table 1

Russians Emigrating from Latvia

1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
30,740	19,694	14,223	8,395	6,264	5,606	3,442	1,904

Source: *Demographic Statistics in the Baltic Countries* (Tallin, Riga, and Vilnius: Statistical Office of Estonia, Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, and Lithuanian Department of Statistics, 1996); *Demographic Yearbook of Latvia* (Riga: Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 2000).

Policies regulating the language of instruction in Kyrgyzstan's educational institutions are far more accommodating. While the 1989 law on the state language designated Kyrgyz as the main language of teaching at all levels, it also guaranteed a choice of language of instruction.²⁹ Subsequent policies promote Kyrgyz but also ensure the preservation of Russian. For example, Kyrgyzstan's law on education establishes that although the primary language of instruction is Kyrgyz, teaching may be in any language. Moreover, citizens are guaranteed a choice of language of instruction in all state institutions, and students are required to study three languages: Kyrgyz, Russian, and a foreign language.³⁰

In sum, Latvian nationalization is far more antagonistic toward Russians than is Kyrgyz nationalization. In contrast to Kyrgyzstan's citizenship policy, which automatically included all residents of the Kyrgyz SSR in the newly constituted Kyrgyz *demos*, Latvia's exclusivist citizenship policy created a *demos* based on ethnicity, thereby producing a second-class society made up mainly of Russians. Moreover, while Kyrgyzstan's language policy is characterized by a balance between the promotion of Kyrgyz as the state language and the preservation of Russian as the official language, Latvia's language policy has become increasingly hostile toward Russian speakers and has designated Russian as a foreign language since 1999. Although students in both countries are free to learn in Russian, students in Latvia, in contrast to their counterparts in Kyrgyzstan, suffer serious repercussions if they adopt this option without independently mastering the state language.

Russian Exit from Latvia and Kyrgyzstan

Despite the fact that Russians in Latvia are confronted with exceptionally antagonistic nationalization policies, few of them have left the country since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Between 1989 and 1999, Latvia's Russian population diminished by a mere 22 percent.³¹

Table 2

Russians Emigrating from Kyrgyzstan

1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
32,893	32,032	59,294	89,984	41,463	18,718	14,020	9,891	7,869	9,281

Source: *Natsionalnyi statisticheski komitet Kyrgyzskoi respublikii* (National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic) (Bishkek, 2000).

Moreover, since 1992, there has been a steady decrease in the rate of Russian exit, and in 1999, only 1,904 Russians (less than 1 percent of the Russian population) emigrated from Latvia (*see Table 1*).³²

In contrast, exit has been the dominant Russian reaction to post-Soviet developments in Kyrgyzstan, despite its accommodating nationalization policies. Since acquiring independence, Kyrgyzstan has lost a significant portion of its Russian population, which fell by 34 percent between 1989 and 1999.³³ Table 2 shows the number of Russians who left Kyrgyzstan each year between 1990 and 1999.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the motivations for Russian emigration from Latvia and Kyrgyzstan differ.³⁴ Post-Soviet Russian emigration from Kyrgyzstan is stimulated primarily by economic factors: poor economic conditions and discriminatory personnel practices that inhibit a typical Russian's ability to make a living. In contrast, post-Soviet Russian emigration from Latvia is stimulated by exceptionally antagonistic nationalization policies related to citizenship, language, and education. Latvia's Russians do not leave the country because of economic factors. Unlike their counterparts in Kyrgyzstan, they do not consider local economic conditions a push factor. Nevertheless, since discriminatory policies reserve high-paying jobs in the public sector primarily for Latvians, it is important to note that it is not Latvia's healthy labor market that ensures a low rate of Russian exit from Latvia. More critical is the independent business community built up by the country's Russian community, which provides Russians with a reasonable degree of financial security that would otherwise be lacking in so nationalistic an environment.

Donald Horowitz argues that "the net result of the ethnic division of labor is greatly to reduce the occasions for economic competition and to channel competition within trades and occupations in an intra-ethnic direction." Anatoly Khazanov agrees:

Horowitz (1985:113) has expressed the view that the ethnic division of labor is more of a shield than a sword, smoothing rather than fueling interethnic conflicts. Indeed, as long as each ethnic group is firmly entrenched

in its economic and social niche, there are fewer grounds for conflict.³⁵

Horowitz and Khazanov are correct: An ethnic division of labor can diminish the likelihood of conflict, especially if the division of labor satisfies members of the minority in question. The ethnic division of labor in Latvia satisfies most Russians—Latvians dominate the public sector, while Russians dominate the private sector. Over time, Russians have been able to create an independent business community that is largely immune to the inimical effects of Latvian nationalization. Most Russians seek opportunity in this economic niche rather than compete with Latvians for unattainable public sector jobs or leave the country.

There is no such ethnic division of labor in Kyrgyzstan. Although the means employed to accomplish exclusion from the public sector are informal discriminatory practices rather than formal policies, Russians in Kyrgyzstan are nonetheless excluded from the public sector. Unlike their counterparts in Latvia, however, Russians in Kyrgyzstan have not been able to carve out an economic niche in the private sector. They either eke out a minimal subsistence in the informal economy or leave the country. The inability to work in the public sector, the lack of a separate economic niche, and the dismal option of survival via the informal economy contribute to the widespread anxiety of Russians about their prospects in Kyrgyzstan, which ultimately generates a high rate of exit.

Latvia's Independent Russian Business Community

There has not been much research on Latvia's Russian business community, but scholars and local experts agree that the community exists. Ousted from the state structure by formal citizenship and language policies, Russians have created an economic niche in Latvia that, over time, has generated a Russian economic elite. According to Pal Kolsto:

In political and cultural terms, then, we may note a marginalization of the non-Latvian population. In socioeconomic terms, however, no such marginalization seems evident. . . . Whereas the Russians have few opportunities for improving their societal status qua group, they do have considerable possibilities for making careers within private enterprise. As long as there exist alternative social ladders that well-qualified and ambitious Russians can climb, it is less frustrating that career possibilities within the state apparatus are in practice closed to them.³⁶

Boris Tsilevich, a deputy in Latvia's parliament, the Saeima, evokes the economic role of the Jews in medieval and early modern Europe to characterize this phenomenon. In response to the denial of political rights and exclusion from the public sector, European Jews for many centuries engaged primarily in financial activities. According to Tsilevich, many Russians in Latvia have adopted the same coping mechanism:

Young talented Russians see that they have no chances here [in the public structure]. This I call the Jewish syndrome. . . . Today, young talented Russians who are inclined toward working for the state, or at the management level, are forced to enter the private sphere or to emigrate from Latvia. The private sphere, however, allows them to break through, to build a good career.³⁷

Given Latvia's exceptionally antagonistic nationalization program, it is surprising that the country's elites have not interfered with Russian activity in the private sector. The Jewish model is compatible with antagonistic nationalization, however, because it sees Russians as having no incentive for a concern with politics unless (and until) their business interests are affected. In the absence of this condition, the model ensures that Russians will leave politics to Latvians, thereby preserving the ethnic divide between the country's political and economic elite.³⁸ As Graham Smith observes about the Russians in Latvia (and also in Estonia):

Rather than struggle to retain their occupational niches within public sector management, many have moved over to the private sector, making up what constitutes one of the fastest growing social groups within the Baltic states, a new Russian business elite.³⁹

While it is difficult to measure the economic power of Latvia's Russians, scholars suggest that about 80 percent of the country's privately owned businesses are owned by non-Latvians.⁴⁰ Of the employed Russian respondents who participated in a 2000 Baltic Barometer Survey, 68 percent were employed in the private sector, which means they were self-employed or worked for privatized firms, new private enterprises, or self-owned businesses.⁴¹ It appears that some Russians in Latvia "have adopted behavior typical of a diaspora by starting business enterprises, primarily in trade and financial operations, and are therefore thriving economically."⁴² Moreover, as Anatol Lieven states in his discussion of this subject, "for the moment [Russian businessmen] are doing very well in Latvia, and more and more intelligent and determined young local Russians are rising to join their ranks. So far, they have faced no serious obstacles in the economic sphere."⁴³ Represent-

tatives of Latvia's Russian population also acknowledge that Russians have created their own economic niche in the country's private sector. For example, the leader of Latvia's Socialist Party, Alfred Rubiks, admits:

In the early 1990s nationalism was very developed here, and it still exists today. If you are Russian, a Latvian firm will not hire you or will do so only with difficulty, and if I am Latvian, a Russian firm will hire me only with difficulty. We have a stratification of society, a division into two diasporas: Latvian and Russian, two societies. . . . Russians work for Russian businessmen, Latvians work for Latvians.⁴⁴

Boris Katkov, the president of the Association of Latvian-Russian Cooperation, confirms this assessment:

In Latvia there is a Russian business community and many Russian businessmen make regular trips to Russia. . . . A two-community system is beginning to appear in Latvia. One structure consists of Latvian organizations which are comprised primarily of Latvians, while the other structure consists of Russian-speaking organizations which engage in business and commercial activity—and they hire only Russians.⁴⁵

Russians in Latvia frequently mention the difference between the difficulties associated with getting a job in the public sector and the ease of getting a job in the private sector. Consider the following accounts from Russians living in Latvia.⁴⁶

I understand that I cannot work for the state if I am not a citizen. In the private sphere, however, there is no difference—in business I have no problems. It is almost impossible for a Russian to get a state job, so for the most part we engage in small business. (28-year-old Riga male)

Financially life's gotten a lot worse especially if you compare incomes—my salary is one-third of what I made before the Soviet Union's collapse. There are some Russians who went into business, and they receive good salaries. . . . It is not necessarily more difficult for Russians to find good work [than Latvians] because Russian business in Latvia is very powerful. (53-year-old Riga female)

Creating an Independent Russian Business Community

Three conditions have facilitated the development of a Russian business community in post-Soviet Latvia: (1) voluntary and dominant Russian settlement, (2) Russian connections to existing socio-political networks, and (3) geographical proximity to Russia. The absence

of these conditions partly explains why an independent Russian business community has not emerged in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan.

The settlement of Russians in the Baltic region of the Soviet Union, carried out on a voluntary basis, ultimately led to Russian dominance of the political and economic institutions of the Latvian SSR. Consequently by the end of the 1980s Russians were in a strong socio-economic position vis-à-vis ethnic Latvians. The initial Soviet-era wave of Russian settlement in the Baltic republics occurred in the immediate aftermath of World War II, but Russian migration continued until 1989. Economic opportunity and higher living standards “sucked in workers, especially those young and unmarried, from all over the Union.”⁴⁷ The war, deportations, high rates of emigration in anticipation of renewed Soviet rule, and rapid post-war industrial development contributed to an unusually high demand for labor in the Latvian republic. Economic opportunity, ongoing development, higher living standards, and a decent supply of consumer goods appealed to workers, managers, specialists, Party personnel, and military retirees.⁴⁸

Slavs dominated most employment sectors in the Latvian republic by the end of the 1980s. Latvians outnumbered non-Latvians only in the agricultural and cultural sectors of the economy.⁴⁹ Russians dominated industry, technology, information and computer services, and the managerial class. By 1989, Russians represented 62 percent of Latvia's industrial workforce, and in combination with Russian Jews held 58 percent of the republic's scientific jobs and 51 percent of information and computer service jobs.⁵⁰ In addition, Russians held important political posts in the Latvian Communist Party and in key areas of local government, which enabled them to exercise a disproportionate voice on the future of the republic.⁵¹ By 1970, Russians and non-Latvians comprised 54 percent of the republic's Communist Party membership, while Latvians comprised 46 percent.⁵² Although Latvians occupied some important posts, they were generally “shadowed” by Russians to guarantee compliance with center demands—this ensured that Latvians did not control decision-making organs of power. When the Soviet Union eventually collapsed, Russians were well connected to Latvia's formal institutions.

In contrast, Russian settlement in Central Asia was involuntary and failed to generate Russian dominance of political and economic institutions in the Kyrgyz SSR. Consequently, by the end of the 1980s Russians were in a weak socio-economic position vis-à-vis ethnic Kyrgyz. Most of the country's Russians migrated

to the Kyrgyz SSR before World War II out of political and economic necessity—the republic was not considered an attractive destination. The first wave of Soviet-era Russian migration to the region occurred during the late 1920s and early 1930s and was an integral part of Moscow’s strategy to resolve a compelling problem. Quite simply, the Soviet regime was unable to persuade Central Asians, who operated in a feudal-patriarchal socio-economic system, to shift their loyalty, respect, and devotion from traditional to Soviet elites. Indeed, “after nearly ten years of Soviet rule Central Asian traditional elites (religious, tribal, and communal) still commanded ‘respect,’ ‘influence,’ and ‘authority’ among the natives; the Soviet regime did not.”⁵³ Russians were sent to Central Asia on a mission to weaken opposition to central rule, found and manage political, cultural, and education institutions, and assist collectivization and industrialization efforts.⁵⁴ The second wave of Russian immigration was a result of Stalin’s drive to industrialize Central Asia, which began during the war and continued through the 1960s, while the third was a result of Khrushchev’s Virgin Lands program. These center-initiated economic policies were unpopular among local residents, and the resettlement of Russians in the region was needed to facilitate their implementation.

Although Russians were privileged for a few decades after the war, by the 1980s Russian dominance of political and economic institutions in the Kyrgyz SSR had greatly diminished as a result of two factors. First, the Kyrgyz began to pose new competition. The Kyrgyz population was growing rapidly due to naturally high birth rates, and it was increasingly urbanized and educated. Second, affirmative action policies that promoted ethnic Kyrgyz to high-status positions were widespread. As the power of Central Asian elites increased, “they packed republic political, economic, and cultural institutions with their relatives, friends, political allies, and other colleagues from their home regions.”⁵⁵ Russians rarely fell into these privileged categories. By 1989, ethnic Kyrgyz comprised 52 percent of the republic’s population but 65 percent of the republic’s university student body, 55 percent of its directors of economic enterprises, 64 percent of the republican Supreme Soviet, and 69 percent of the local soviets.⁵⁶ When the Soviet Union disintegrated, Russians in Kyrgyzstan dominated only low and mid-level positions in industry. Given that manufacturing comprised only 28 percent of the Kyrgyz GDP in 1990, Russians did not inherit a large slice of the republic’s economic pie.⁵⁷ Russians in newly independent Kyrgyzstan were therefore ex-

cluded from the country’s formal institutions, removed from the nexus of power, and disconnected from local socio-political networks.

In sum, Central Asian and Baltic Russians inherited very different historical legacies in 1991. Whereas Russians in Kyrgyzstan were excluded from formal institutions and local socio-political networks, Russians in

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Latvia were well connected to such institutions and networks. In a state that implements exceptionally antagonistic nationalization policies designed to ensure the political, economic, and social prosperity of its titular nationality, these connections are critical because they provide a means to facilitate coordinated activity. Russians in Latvia have created an independent business community by utilizing connections with former Soviet institutions like the Komsomol and contacts with individuals associated with these institutions as a basis for new economic activity.⁵⁸ According to Igor Pimenov, president of the Latvian Association for the Support of Russian-Language Schools:

Former Komsomol activists in Latvia had very good contacts with the Moscow Komsomol nomenklatura. To this day they have good contacts with those former Moscow Komsomol members who now work in Moscow commercial banks and are influential in this sector.⁵⁹

Many of Latvia’s Russian business entrepreneurs are former members of the nomenklatura, and during the Soviet era Latvia’s nomenklatura had close contacts with Russia’s nomenklatura. Nils Muiznieks claims that Russian managers in Latvia’s industrial and transport sectors had solid contacts with their counterparts in Russia during the Soviet era and were therefore, when the Soviet Union collapsed, better situated to engage in private business activity than Latvians, who dominated the agricultural and cultural spheres of the economy.⁶⁰ These ties remain intact, and today Russian entrepreneurs in Latvia employ these connections in private business activity. Latvia’s geographical proximity to Russia not only makes it possible to maintain ties with former Soviet institutions and individuals associated with them, but also helps Russians in Latvia establish new business contacts in Moscow. Many Russian permanent residents of Latvia who own or are employed

by firms in Latvia that work with firms in Russia take Russian citizenship in order to facilitate travel to and from Russia.⁶¹

Russians also benefit from political parties and non-governmental organizations that represent the socio-economic interests of Russians in Latvia. The three parties that comprise the Russian Party and the Saeima faction known as For Human Rights in a United Latvia represent, directly or indirectly, the interests of Russians in Latvia, including the socio-economic welfare of Russians and the development of the country's Russian business community. Russian Community, a non-governmental organization representing local Russians, lists in its charter the establishment of business contacts and initiatives in the interests of Latvia's Russian population as primary goals.⁶² An objective of Russian Society, an organization that recently merged with Russian Community, is to increase the number of Russians who study abroad in Russia. These students establish future business contacts that they can—and do—utilize when they return to Latvia.⁶³ Similarly, the Association of Latvian-Russian Cooperation seeks to normalize political and economic relations between Latvia and Russia in order to improve the socio-economic welfare of Russian citizens who reside in Latvia. A principal goal of this association is to develop, strengthen, and expand professional ties and business contacts between Russians and Russian enterprises in Latvia and in Russia.⁶⁴ Political parties and non-governmental organizations that represent the socio-economic interests of Russians in Latvia thus promote the expansion of the country's Russian business community.

In contrast with their counterparts in Latvia, Russians in newly independent Kyrgyzstan were in a weak socio-economic position vis-à-vis the titular nationality, because they were excluded from political and economic institutions, and thus removed from the nexus of power. In other words, Russians were not well connected to the socio-political networks that facilitate coordinated activity. Implementation of affirmative action policies favoring ethnic Kyrgyz meant that there were far fewer Russians in political and economic positions in the republic in the 1980s than in the 1950s and 1960s. By 1989, ethnic Kyrgyz were over-represented in universities, enterprise directorship positions, and the republican Supreme Soviet. When Kyrgyzstan became independent, Russians in Kyrgyzstan found themselves ousted from the state structure by discriminatory personnel practices, excluded from local socio-political networks, and distant from Moscow in geographic terms. Unlike their counterparts in Latvia,

Russians in Kyrgyzstan lack resources that could facilitate the creation of an independent economic niche. There are no political parties in Kyrgyzstan to defend the interests of Russians, and although there are two non-governmental organizations with this objective, they are small, poorly funded, and thus not particularly influential.

Conclusion

The foregoing analysis reveals how an ethnic division of labor that satisfies the economic aspirations of a national minority can play a critical role in the processes of political and economic development. Russians remain in Latvia because they have established an independent business community that enables them to survive economically in the country's private sector, but leave Kyrgyzstan because they have not carved out an economic niche. Russians in Kyrgyzstan have not found a way to make it easier to survive in a post-Soviet environment marked by discriminatory personnel practices and poor economic conditions. The ethnic division of labor that satisfies the economic aspirations of Russians in Latvia decreases the extent of economic competition between Russians and Latvians. This lessens the average Russian's need and desire to emigrate, and ultimately generates a low rate of Russian exit even though Latvia is a nationalizing state characterized by discriminatory policies that privilege ethnic Latvians. Kyrgyzstan has no such division of labor, and Kyrgyz dominance of the political and economic sectors of society ensures the political and economic marginalization of local Russians. There is a high rate of Russian emigration from Kyrgyzstan because many Russians consider exit more appealing than trying to survive through the country's informal economy. In sum, as suggested by the analysis in this article, an ethnic division of labor that satisfies the economic aspirations of a minority decreases the economic competition between groups, thereby lessening the minority's need and desire to emigrate and ultimately generating a low rate of minority exit.

Notes

1. Exit and voice are responses adopted by customers or members who are dissatisfied with a firm or organization; loyalty is a response adopted by those who are satisfied with the firm or organization. Exit is an attempt to escape dissatisfying conditions, whereas voice is an attempt to alter dissatisfying conditions. See Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970).

2. Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 172.

3. David Laitin, *Identity in Formation: The Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), p. 197.

4. Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, p. 9.

5. The core of any nationalization project is a cluster of policies related to demography, the composition of the citizenry, the primary language of instruction in educational institutions, and the legal designation of titular and minority languages. Because I am analyzing Russian minority politics, I characterize nationalization strategies in terms of how formal policies governing ethnic relations affect members of a specific Russian minority population. This enables a classification based on comparable data, such as legislation in which formal policies are described in detail.

6. "Postanovlenie verkhovnogo Soveta Latviiskoi Respubliki o vosstanovlenii prav grazhdan Latviiskoi Respubliki i osnovnykh usloviikh naturalizatsii" (Register of the Supreme Soviet of the Latvian Republic and the Basic Requirements for Naturalization), September 15, 1991, in "Vedomosti verkhovnogo soveta i pravitelstva Latviiskoi Respubliki" (Report of the Supreme Soviet and Government of the Latvian Republic), no. 43 (October 31, 1991): 2128.

7. "Zakon o grazhdanstve" (Law on Citizenship), July 22, 1994. The law on citizenship also requires applicants to reside in Latvia for five years and know the history and national anthem of Latvia, and calls for the creation of a commission to test the state (Latvian) language skills of applicants for naturalization.

8. Referendum results prompted the changes to the 1994 citizenship law, which included the abolition of the window system and the expansion of civic rights for children. See "Izmeneniia v zakone o grazhdanstve" (Amendments to the Law on Citizenship), *Diena* (November 4, 1998): 2.

9. The Latvian Human Rights Committee has compiled a list of fifty-eight legal restrictions on non-citizens. These include exclusion from certain professions and positions and deprivation of electoral rights.

10. Non-citizen status, which defines a non-citizen as a permanent resident of Latvia who was a citizen of the former Soviet Union but not of Latvia or any other existing state, was established in 1995. See "Zakon o statuse grazhdan Byvshikh SSR, ne imeiushchikh grazhdanstva Latvii ili drugogo gosudarstva" (Law on the Status of Citizens of other SSRs, but not Citizens of Latvia or other States), April 25, 1995, in *Prava cheloveka: sbornik zakonodatelnykh aktov i informativnogo materiala* (Human Rights: Collected Laws, Acts, and Informational Materials) (Riga: Commission for Human Rights and Public Affairs, 1997), pp. 33–35. As of January 1, 2004, Latvia's *demos* was 75 percent Latvian and 18 percent Russian—while 67 percent of non-citizens were Russian, less than 1 percent was Latvian. See Latvia's Board for Citizenship and Migration Affairs, www.np.gov.lv. According to the president of the Association of Latvian-Russian Cooperation, about 60,000 Russians who reside in Latvia have adopted Russian citizenship. Personal interview, October 5, 2000.

11. Every post-Soviet state except Latvia and Estonia adopted the zero-option citizenship policy, which grants all legal residents of a former republic the right automatically to receive citizenship of the independent successor state.

12. "Zakon o grazhdanstve Kirgizskoi respubliki" (Law on Citizenship of the Kyrgyz Republic), October 26, 1990, Articles 1 and 2.

13. *Ibid.*, December 18, 1993, Article 1.

14. Article 4 establishes the equality of Kyrgyz citizenship regardless of how it is acquired.

15. "Zakon Latviiskoi Sovetskoi Sotsialisticheskoi Respubliki o iazykakh" (Language Law of the Latvian SSR), May 5, 1989, in *Vedomosti verkhovnogo soveta i pravitelstva Latviiskoi Sovetskoi Sotsialisticheskoi Respubliki* (Report of the Supreme Soviet and Government of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic), 20 (May 18, 1989), pp. 510–14, preamble; "Zakon o gosudarstvennom iazyke Kirgizskoi SSR" (Language Law of the Kyrgyz SSR), September 23, 1989, Article 9.

16. "Zakon Latviiskoi Respubliki o iazykakh." March 1992, in *Vedomosti verkhovnogo soveta i pravitelstva Latviiskoi Respubliki* 17 (Report of the Supreme Soviet and Government of the Latvian Republic) (April 23, 1992), pp. 938–42. According to this policy, all state agencies must use the state language, all employees of state institutions, enterprises, and organizations are obligated to use the state language, and these agencies are permitted to respond to inquiries in a language other than the state language only after an initial response is given in the state language.

17. "Zakon o gosudarstvennom iazyke" [Latvia], December 21, 1999, Article 1.

18. For example, in 1999 the government requested samples of documentation written in Kyrgyz so that the National Commission for the State Language could begin to modernize the Kyrgyz language. That same year Kyrgyzstan passed a law requiring civil servants to know the state language to the extent necessary for the performance of their job duties. See "Zakon Respubliki Kirgizstan o gosudarstvennoi sluzhbe" (Law on State Service of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan), November 30, 1999, Article 12. Moreover, the government has launched a program to develop and expand the use of Kyrgyz between 2000 and 2010, which requires that all public documentation be written in the state language by 2005, and specifies three tasks to be accomplished by the same year: (1) develop measures for managing documentation in the state language in all government ministries, departments, institutions, committees, and education establishments; (2) define minimal state language proficiency requirements for managers and workers at all levels; and (3) develop a system of periodic language testing for managers of state organs and administrative and self-governing bodies, and for employees who work with the public. See "Programma razvitiia gosudarstvennogo iazyka Kirgizskoi Respubliki na 2000–2010 gody" (Program for Developing the State Language of the Kyrgyz Republic in 2000–2010), September 20, 2000.

19. "Zakon o gosudarstvennom iazyke Kirgizskoi SSR," September 23, 1989.

20. "Konstitutsiia Kirgizskoi Respubliki" (Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic) (Bishkek: Raritet Info, 1999), Article 5. The Kyrgyz constitution was adopted in 1993 and amended in 1996 and 1998.

21. "Ukaz prezidenta Kirgizskoi Respubliki o merakh po regulirovaniu migratsionnykh protsessov v Kirgizskoi Respubliki" (Decree by the President of the Kyrgyz Republic on Measures to Regulation the Migration Process in the Kyrgyz Republic), June 14, 1994.

22. "Zakon Kirgizskoi Respubliki ob ofitsialnom iazyke Kirgizskoi Respubliki" (Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on the Official Language of the Kyrgyz Republic), May 25, 2000, Article 1. Moreover, the speaker of parliament, members of parliament, the government, and guests all have the right to address parliament and government sessions in Russian, and simultaneous Kyrgyz-Russian/Russian-Kyrgyz translations are provided of speeches delivered during parliamentary and government sessions. Three aspects of the policy further accommodate Russian speakers. First, Article 2 confirms that the state will protect Russian and create conditions for its functioning and development. Second, and more important in the context of daily life, Article 3 grants citizens the right to appeal to organs of state and local administration in Russian, and requires these agencies to accept all documents submitted in Russian. This is vital to Russian speakers because numerous transactions, from paying basic service bills to filing complaints, are conducted in government offices. Finally, Article 13 designates Russian a required subject in all schools, including state institutions of higher education.

23. "Zakon Latviiskoi Sovetskoi Sotsialisticheskoi Respubliki o iazykakh," May 5, 1989, Articles 11 and 12. Students are permitted to receive an education in a language other than Latvian in private institutions and in state institutions with national minority education programs. However, the choice this offers Russian speakers is problematic. First, most residents of Latvia cannot afford private education. Second, students who fail to master Latvian independently encounter obstacles in the future owing to regulations that ban individuals who do not master the state language from a variety of professions. Third, according to the 1998 law on education, professional exams are administered only in the state language, work must be written and defended in the state language in order to receive an academic or scientific degree, and vocational training financed by state and municipal budgets is conducted only in the state language. See "Zakon ob obrazovanii" (Law on Education), November 17, 1998.

24. "Zakon ob obrazovanii," June 19, 1991, Article 5. The law also indicates the state's intention to phase out education conducted in any language other than Latvian when it states in Article 5, "In institutes of higher education financed by the state, beginning with the second year of study the primary language of instruction is Latvian. . . . In schools for national minorities in which the language of instruction is not Latvian, in classes 1–9 not less than 2, and in classes 10–12, not less than 3 of the liberal arts subjects must be taught, for the most part, in the state language."

25. "Zakon Latviiskoi Respubliki o iazykakh," March 1992, Article 11.

26. *Ibid.*, Article 12.
27. "Zakon ob obrazovanii," November 17, 1998, Article 4.
28. *Ibid.*, see Article 9, point 3, of the law's transitional provisions. An amendment to this law passed in February 2004 further curtails the use of Russian in schools for national minorities: As of September 2004, 60 percent of classes taught in minority secondary schools will be taught in Latvian. Minority schools already teach 30 percent of classes in Latvian. See Baltic News Service, "Protests Against Latvia's reform in Moscow Continue for Second Day" (May 29, 2003), www.asu.edu/eps1/LPRU/newsarchive/Art2153.txt.
29. "Zakon o gosudarstvennom iazyke Kirgizskoi SSR," September 23, 1989, Article 21.
30. "Zakon Respubliki Kirgizstan ob obrazovanii," December 1992 and November 1997, Article 5. Kyrgyzstan's 1992 law on education was amended in 1997, but nothing changed in respect to the language of instruction issue.
31. *Results of the 2000 Population and Housing Census in Latvia* (Riga: Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 2002), p. 121. Since the life expectancy rate is consistent, this decrease can be attributed primarily to emigration. The 1970–75 life expectancy at birth rate differs from the 1995–2000 life expectancy birth rate by less than two years. See *Human Development Report 2000* (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2000), p. 187.
32. The 1992–94 data are from *Demographic Statistics in the Baltic Countries* (Tallin, Riga, and Vilnius: Statistical Office of Estonia, Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, and Lithuanian Department of Statistics, 1996), p. 57. The 1995–99 data are from *Demographic Yearbook of Latvia* (Riga: Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 2000), p. 159.
33. *Osnovnye itogi pervoi natsionalnoi perepisi naseleniia Kirgizskoi Respubliki 1999 goda* (Main Results of the First National Population Census of the Kyrgyz Republic in 1999) (Bishkek: Natsionalny Statisticheskii Komitet Kirgizskoi Respubliki, 2000), p. 26. Because of the constant life expectancy rate, this decrease can be attributed primarily to emigration. The 1970–75 life expectancy at birth rate differs from the 1995–2000 rate by four and a half years in Kyrgyzstan. See *Human Development Report 2000*, p. 187.
34. The following conclusions are based on data that I collected on motivations for Russian emigration from Kyrgyzstan and Latvia. Between September 1999 and December 2000, I interviewed Russian residents of Bishkek (the capital of Kyrgyzstan) and Riga (the capital of Latvia) who intended to emigrate. I asked about the factors influencing their decisions to emigrate and what changes would be needed for them to remain in the country.
35. Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 113; Anatoly M. Khazanov, *After the USSR: Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Politics in the Commonwealth of Independent States* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), p. 102.
36. Pal Kolsto, *Political Construction Sites: Nation-Building in Russia and the Post-Soviet States* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000), p. 120.
37. Author interview, November 1, 2000.
38. Aina Antane and Boris Tsilevich, "Nation-Building and Ethnic Integration in Latvia," in *Nation-Building and Ethnic Integration in Post-Soviet Societies: An Investigation of Latvia and Kazakhstan*, ed. Pal Kosto (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999), p. 150.
39. Graham Smith, "When Nations Challenge and Nations Rule: Estonia and Latvia as Ethnic Democracies," *International Politics* 33, no. 1 (March 1996): 37.
40. Rasma Karklins, *Ethnopolitics and Transition to Democracy: The Collapse of the USSR and Latvia* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1994), p. 132.
41. Richard Rose, *New Baltic Barometer IV: A Survey Study*, Studies in Public Policy no. 338 (Glasgow: University of Strathclyde, 2000), p. 5.
45. Igor Zevelev, *Russia and Its New Diasporas* (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 2002), p. 126.
43. Anatol Lieven, *The Baltic Revolution: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and the Path to Independence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. xxviii.
44. Author interview, October 6, 2000.
45. Author interview, October 5, 2000.
46. These excerpts are from interviews the author conducted with Russian residents of Riga in 2000.
47. Lieven, *Baltic Revolution*, p. 184.
48. Romuald J. Misiunas, "The Baltic Republics: Stagnation and Strivings for Sovereignty," in *The Nationalities Factor in Soviet Politics and Society*, ed. Lubomyr Hajda and Mark Beisinger (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990); Neil Melvin, *Russians Beyond Russia* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1995); Nils Muiznieks, "Latvia: Restoring a State, Rebuilding a Nation," in *New States, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nation*, ed. Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Irena Saleniec and Sergei Kuznetsov, "Nationality Policy, Education and the Russian Question in Latvia Since 1918," in *Ethnicity and Nationalism in Russia, the CIS and the Baltic States*, ed. Christopher Williams and Thanasis D. Sfikas (London: Ashgate, 1999); David J. Smith, Artis Pabriks, Aldis Purs, and Thomas Lane, *The Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania* (London: Routledge, 2002); John Ginkel, "Identity Construction in Latvia's 'Singing Revolution': Why Inter-Ethnic Conflict Failed to Occur," *Nationalities Papers* 30, no. 3 (September 2002): 403–33.
49. Judith Fleming, "Political Leaders," in *Nationality Group Survival in Multi-Ethnic States: Shifting Support Patterns in the Soviet Baltic Region*, ed. Edward Allworth (New York: Praeger, 1977), p. 132.
50. Lieven, *Baltic Revolution*, p. 187.
51. Richard Shryock, "Indigenous Economic Managers," in *Nationality Group Survival in Multi-Ethnic States: Shifting Support Patterns in the Soviet Baltic Region*, ed. Edward Allworth (New York: Praeger, 1977), p. 109.
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53. Gregory J. Massell, *The Surrogate Proletariat: Moslem Women and Revolutionary Strategies in Soviet Central Asia, 1919–1929* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 73.
54. Nancy Lubin, "Ethnic and Demographic Trends," in *Soviet Central Asia: The Failed Transformation*, ed. William Fierman (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), pp. 48–49. Lubin discusses these trends in Uzbekistan, in particular, in *Labour and Nationality in Soviet Central Asia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).
55. William Fierman, "The Soviet 'Transformation' of Central Asia," in *Soviet Central Asia: The Failed Transformation*, ed. William Fierman (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), p. 25.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
57. World Bank, *World Development Indicators* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2003), p. 191.
58. Melvin, *Russians Beyond Russia*, p. 42.
59. Valentinas Mite, "Latvia: Russian Speakers Hold Their Own on the Business Front," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Feature (May 17, 2002).
60. Nils Muiznieks, "Latvia's Changing System of Ethnic Stratification" (paper presented at the conference "Democracy and Ethnopolitics," Riga, March 9–11, 1994) [in Latvian]. Aadne Aasland argues that many Slavs in Estonia and Latvia have good connections with business communities in Russia that only increase their business opportunities. See Aadne Aasland, "Citizenship Status and Social Exclusion," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 33, no. 1 (spring 2002): 61.
61. Author interview, Boris Katkov, president of the Association of Latvian-Russian Cooperation, October 5, 2000.
62. *Ustav Russkoi Obshchiny Latvii* (Charter of the Russian Community in Latvia) (Riga, 1992).
63. Author interview with Tatiana Aleksandrovna Favorskaia, president of Russian Society, October 4, 2000.
64. *Ustav Latviisko-Rossiiskoi assotsiatsii sotrudnichestva* (Charter of the Latvian-Russian Cooperation Association) (January 12, 1999).

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