An exploratory study of Latvian life wisdom:

Creativity and culture as a transitional space to build resilience and overcome hardships

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Abstract

This study examines from a psychoanalytic lens how Latvian creativity, which originated from Latvian life wisdom, allowed the people of Latvia—a small nation—to self-express, build resilience, thrive, and overcome hardships over many centuries. In addition, this study shows how Latvian folklore, literature, songs, and dances were instrumental to “voice” and self-expression during several periods of hardship in Latvian history and how creativity affected Latvian identity and belonging. This study also sheds light on hardships that Latvians experienced and how Latvian life wisdom helped to overcome them.

The purpose of this study is to show how creativity, developed through Latvian folklore, traditions, and culture, has unconsciously served as transitional space to overcome hardships, build resilience, and find meaning in life. If creativity through culture has impact on resilience, then its application could play a meaningful role in organizational settings.

Key findings include (a) creativity expressed through singing, dancing, craft making, and love of nature has served as a transitional space to experience positive emotions and overcome challenges; and (b) Latvian work ethic, moral values and family were key factors in building resilience.

Keywords: Creativity, culture, healing traumas, Latvian life wisdom, resilience, singing, transitional space, and vulnerability.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

Intergenerational trauma caused by war and immigration is both painfully fresh and a historical dilemma. Time has shown that some cultures or societies are able to come through periods of trial or even genocide, whereas others have not. What makes the difference?

It is becoming apparent that social resilience in times of hardship and trauma may be linked to an ”in-between space” where authenticity and creativity could exist (Winnicott, 1971). In this thesis, I explore this notion further by looking at one particular culture: Latvian life wisdom, as it is manifested in Latvian creativity.

After regaining independence in 1991, Latvia has been rebuilding its identity, uncovering its history, reuniting Latvians across the world, and regaining its voice as an independent country within the European Union.

Due to Latvia’s vital geographic location at the Baltic Sea, uniting East with West, the country has been ruled by Germany, Sweden, and Russia for more than 700 years. Latvia became an independent nation for the first time in 1918, which lasted until 1940. During those years, a strong foundation of Latvian identity and moral values was built. In 1938, “Latvian life wisdom” was coined and was further researched in the 1990s (Rudzīte, 1990). On June 19, 2014, it was included in the Latvian Constitution—*Satversme*—to capture Latvian identity, traditions, culture, and history. Latvian wisdom includes all Latvian nation’s historical experience. It includes Latvian folk songs dainas, Latvian traditions and also positive and negative experiences, which goes farher than an individual experience. It was included in the Latvian Constitution in 2014.[1]

Including the Latvian identity in the Constitution signals the importance of historical experiences. As Vaira-Vīķe Freiberga said in a recent TED talk: “Knowing your past and history allows opening the door to who you are via a freely chosen identity and having a choice to construct whom you want to be.”[2]

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[1] Retrieved from http://likumi.lv/ta/id/57980-latvijas-republikas-satversme
[2] Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JT26gr3I1Vc

This research study proposes that Latvian life wisdom transferred from generation to generation through traditions, folk songs, singing, dancing, symbols, mythology, and craftsmanship could be a way of applying psychoanalysis and unconsciously creating a transitional “in-between” space (Winnicott, 1971) to build resilience and overcome hardship and trauma.

1.2 Interest in the Research

I am interested in exploring Latvian life wisdom and creativity because of their richness and sustainability. I am curious about how Latvians survived for more than 700 years as a small nation, managing to keep their language and pass on rich traditions that are still alive today. Here are some questions that come to mind:

- What are the linkages among Latvian life wisdom, which manifests itself in different kinds of creativity (folk songs, music, dancing, art, poetry, etc.), love of nature, Latvian work ethic, and resilience?
- From a psychodynamic perspective, what is the interrelationship among creativity, resilience, and trauma?

Specifically, this exploratory study will investigate the elements of Latvian life wisdom by focusing on the creativity and resilience that helped Latvians to overcome hardships during deportations between 1941 and 1949, and during the Soviet regime. My father and grandparents were deported to Siberia between 1949 and 1956. Considering that they have passed away, I could only learn about their experience from the stories documented by others; hence, my interest in the period and hardships.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

The main research question is: Does creativity, as a significant aspect of Latvian life wisdom, foster or does not foster resilience to overcome hardships and deal with transgenerational trauma? Moreover, what is the meaning of Latvian life wisdom and what are Latvian values and characteristics fostering creativity and resilience?

1.4 Scope

During World War II, Latvia as a nation was split in three groups: Latvians deported to Siberia as enemies, Latvians departed to the West as refugees, and Latvians who stayed in Latvia (the majority). According to the research and characteristics of trauma, the events that took place during World War II and Stalin's regime were traumatic to all three groups in one way or another (Vidnere, 2015). According to Alayarian (2011), "how people go through events depends on subjective experience, the level of resilience, values, ways of thinking, coping mechanisms, environmental factors, and availability of support from family, friends, or professionals."

Many years had to pass before stories of what happened in 1941 and 1949 could be told. They were collected via oral history projects and individual publications (Vidnere, 2008; Opoļska, 2012; Kalniete, 2001), and in first-hand accounts written by people deported from Latvia to Siberia in the 1940s and 1950s. Creativity and culture were ways for people to express themselves, to have a voice and to reunite Latvians across the world. One expression of creativity and culture was the Latvian Song and Dance celebration events taking place once every five years[3].

While researchers have examined Latvian ethnicity and methods of coping and resistance (Kalniete, 2001; Elksnis-Geisler, 2011; Vanaga, 2013), identity and traditions (Brancis & Kļaviņa, 2004), the Latvian nation's life wisdom (Rudzīte, 1990), and life stories of people deported to Siberia, in exile in the west, and in Latvia (Vidnere, 2008; Opoļska, 2012; Matīss, 1998; Kalniete, 2001), this is a unique study. No research exists that explores linkages between Latvian life wisdom, creativity as a way of self-expression, the idea of a transitional space, and resilience from the psychodynamic lens. Moreover, if creativity and culture have helped Latvians to overcome hardships, it

[3] The first Latvian Song and Dance Celebration took place in 1873. Retrieved: http://www.nordicbalticchoir.lv/en/news/the-song-and-dance-celebration/;
In 2003 the Latvian Song and Dance Celebration was proclaimed in the UNESCO list of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. Retrieved from: http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/RL/baltic-song-and-dance-celebrations-00087

could be applied to other environments (states, organizations, individuals) in building resilience.

Chapter 2 provides a literature review highlighting key historical events that affected Latvia, mainly in the past 100 years. It also explores the relationship between values (Milts, 1966) and needs (Maslow, 1943), as they characterize Latvian creativity phenomena. It discusses hardships and trauma, resilience, and the “in-between space” where authenticity and creativity could exist (Winnicott, 1971).

Lastly, the chapter explores how Latvian life wisdom manifests itself in different forms of creativity, such as singing, dancing, and reciting folk songs, and refers to several studies about music and choral singing and their impact on brain, lowering stress and relieving anxiety (Loersch & Arbuckle, 2013).

Chapter 3 outlines the research methods used, such as narrative, phenomenological, and interpretative phenomenological analysis.

The study comprises a literature review discussing Latvian history, values, and needs, and psychoanalytic methods such as transitional space (Winnicott, 1971), resilience, and trauma (Alayarian, 2011). It explores individual stories of Latvians deported to Siberia and living in exile in the West, and provides an interpretation of the shared experience of Latvians as a group interested in creativity phenomenon.

Chapter 4 provides key findings from the literature review and semi-structured interviews. It confirms that no previous research was done to link creativity and resilience. It groups data into common themes that emerged, such as hardships, family, work ethic, moral values, respect for nature, singing, dancing, craft making and others. Moreover, it presents views and insights shared by interviewees.

Chapter 5 offers the limitations and implications of the research study and provides recommendations. While data obtained via the literature and interviews showed a positive linkage between creativity as a transitional space and resilience, the sample size (n=42) is too small to conclude that creativity increases resilience. This exploratory study is a step toward showing that creativity can build resilience, and it encourages more in-depth research to explore creativity, including its application in corporate settings.

I hope that this study will contribute to increased awareness and understanding about both Latvian hardships and the clinical paradigms studied in transitional space through the lenses of creativity and resilience.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Overview

This research uses Donald Winnicott's psychoanalytic theory of transitional objects and transitional space resulting from creativity (Winnicott, 1971) in the Latvian context. It addresses links to values and needs as key foundational motivators impacting people's decisions and their ability to respond to stressors.

While researchers have generated many publications on Latvian hardships between 1941 and 1991; folk songs; culture; and singing and dancing as important elements of Latvian identity and heritage in Canada, Latvia, and the US (Bula, 2010; Elksnis-Geisler, 2011; Kļavina, Brancis, 2004; Matīss, 1988; Šmidchens, 2014; Vīķe-Freiberga,1982, 2010; Zauberga, Veisbergs & Chesterman, 2014), relatively little has been written about creativity as an "in-between space" to build resilience and overcome hardships, either within the Latvian context or beyond it.

Research in the past fifteen years has focused on documenting witnessing historical experience in Siberia (Elksnis-Geisler, 2011; Opoļska, 2012; Vidnere, 2008, 2015), in Latvia and in exile, along with different ways of overcoming hardships and methods of coping and resistance (Bleiere, Butulis, Feldmanis, Stranga & Zunda, 2014; Elksnis-Geisler, 2011; Vidnere, 2008, 2015), there is no interdisciplinary focus on Latvian life wisdom and creativity as means of developing resilience.

There is a gap with respect to research that links Latvian life wisdom and creativity with resilience, from the psychoanalytic perspective. Additional research is required to discover the source of the particular hardiness that enabled Latvians to overcome hardships (Vidnere, 2015). Therefore, justification exists to examine the gap and the issues not addressed in previous studies. There is a need for future research to

examine creativity and resilience in greater depth. As this is only an exploratory study, the focus is on highlighting facets of Latvian life wisdom and their manifestation via creativity.

The theoretical frameworks that support the research focus are transitional space (Winnicott, 1971), trauma and resilience (Alayarian, 2011), research on Polish (Nowakowski, 2014) and Armenian (Tcholakian, 2016) trauma, Milts' classification of values (1996), Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943), Erikson's psychosocial development (McLeod, 2008) and studies showing benefits of singing in groups to lower levels of cortisol and stress (Horn, 2013). Applying the concept of transitional space to creativity in the context of Latvian choirs, dance and the love of nature present new opportunities for creating transitional space in corporate cultures. Moreover, linking creativity to values and needs may explain why education is critical in reaching higher values and self-actualization.

To summarize, this research study contributes to the literature in the area by integrating elements such as creativity, resilience, and trauma and exploring their interrelatedness through a psychoanalytical lens. Studying Latvian experience and traditions has the potential to contribute to the critical literature on creativity and resilience in overcoming hardships and trauma.

To provide some context, I will highlight Latvia's history with a focus on Latvian life wisdom and creativity. Annex A provides a detailed description of key historical events.

2.2 History

Key historical facts

Around 3000 BC, the proto-Baltic ancestors of the Latvian people settled on the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea. The Balts (meaning *white* in Latvian) established trade routes to Rome and Byzantium, trading local amber for precious metals. By 900 AD, four distinct Baltic tribes inhabited Latvia. In the late 12th century, the first missionaries came to Latvia and in the beginning of the 13th century, Germans ruled large parts of today's

Latvia. In 1282, Riga became part of the Hanseatic League. Riga became an important point of east–west trading and formed close cultural links with western Europe. Despite foreign rule from the 13th to 20th centuries, the Latvian nation maintained its identity throughout the generations via its language and musical traditions. Latvian, an Indo-European language, and Lithuanian are the only two surviving Baltic languages.

Latvia proclaimed independence in 1918. During the early 20th century, there was a huge focus on education, languages, culture, moral values, and national identity. In 1910, Latvia had 98 different secondary schools, or one school per 26,000 people, while Germany had one school per 42,600, France one school per 43,000, Italy one school per 59,000, and Russia one school per 84,000. In 1932 Latvia had the highest number of students per capita in Europe (Bleiere, Butulis, Feldmanis, Stranga, Zunda, 2014).

Latvia had talented poets and novelists (Aspazija, Vilis Plūdonis, Kārlis Skalbe, Fricis Bārda, and Rūdolfs Blaumanis). Moreover, there was a rich and diverse development in theater life, fine art (Jānis Rozentāls, Vilhelms Purvītis, Rihards Zariņš, etc.), and music (choral movement, solo singing with key artists Jāzeps Vītols, Alfrēds Kalniņš, Emīls Melngalvis, and Emīls Dārziņš) (Bleiere et al., 2014).

The country was forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1940, invaded and occupied by Nazi Germany in 1941, and reoccupied by the Soviet Union in 1944 for the next 50 years (Bleiere et al., 2014).

Migration and its effect on ethnic makeup

In the postwar period, Latvia was made to adopt Soviet-farming methods. Rural areas were forced into collectivization. An extensive program to impose bilingualism was initiated across Latvia, limiting the use of Latvian in official contexts in favor of using Russian as the main language. All minority schools (Jewish, Polish, Belarusian, Estonian, and Lithuanian) were closed down, leaving only two languages of instruction in the schools: Latvian and Russian. An influx began of laborers, administrators, military personnel, and their dependents from Russia and other Soviet republics, and in 1959 about 400,000 people arrived from other Soviet republics. By then, the ethnic Latvian population had fallen from 80% to 62% (Bleiere et al., 2014).

Since Latvia had maintained a well-developed infrastructure and educated specialists, Moscow decided to base some of the Soviet Union's most advanced manufacturing in Latvia. To maintain and expand industrial production, skilled workers were migrating from all over the Soviet Union, decreasing the proportion of ethnic Latvians in the republic. "Four million people arrived in Latvia between 1951 and 1990 because of the policies of the Soviet regime, but 1.82 million had left. The total balance of migration during the Soviet period (since 1940) was 941,000 people. It explains the decrease in the proportion of Latvians from almost 80% before the war to 52% in 1989" (Bleiere, et al., 2014).

De facto independence was restored in 1991. The Saeima, Latvia's parliament, was elected in 1993. Russia ended its military presence by completing its troop withdrawal in 1994. The government denationalized private property confiscated by the Soviets, returning it or compensating the owners for it, and privatized most state-owned industries. Latvia joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union in 2004 (Bleiere, et al., 2014).

In 2014, the Latvian Constitution (Satversme) was amended with a preamble to capture Latvian identity.[4] Latvian wisdom, which includes all the Latvian nation's historical experience, is part of it. This collected experience includes Latvian folk songs, *dainas*, Latvian traditions, and also positive and negative experiences, which go farther than an individual's experience. In 2015, Latvia held the presidency of the Council of the European Union. On July 1, 2016, Latvia became a member of the OECD.

2.3 Values and Needs—Drivers for Creativity

This section explores Milts' classification of values, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and Erikson's theory of psychosocial development as they illuminate the paradox of Latvian creativity.

August Milts, director of the National Oral History Project (NMV) at the University of Latvia's Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, stressed the need to study values as

[4] Retrieved from http://likumi.lv/ta/id/57980-latvijas-republikas-satversme

an element that unites the individual and society, the separate and shared values (Milts, 1996). Milts, influenced by Scheler's values theory, developed a hierarchy comprising basic values, social values, cultural values, and higher spiritual values, which set "an example for a higher moral obligation, for humankind's maximum programme of action without which a society's minimum demands cannot be optionally realized" (Table 1) (Bela, 2011). According to Bela's research (2008), in 600 Latvian life stories collected by Milts as part of the NMV Project, he encountered from basic, natural values to family, responsibility, and work values, to the highest spiritual values such as the experience of sacredness, freedom, and conscience." Milts (2005) also focused on the issues of paradox and contrast, considering all events in a lifetime as a unit of contrasts—there is no good without bad, no beauty without ugliness.

Table 1. Life Values According to Milts' Classification

Nature, basic life	Life, vitality, health, quality of environment
Social life	Prosperity, order, solidarity, social security, justice, responsibility
Culture	Unity, individuality, qualitative action, humane way of life, care for higher values
Higher values	Goodness, virtue, truth, beauty, freedom, meaning of life, faith, hope, love

This research study assumes, similarly to Bela (2011), the accepted point of view of the social sciences that values are considered essential ideas of a culture and that members of one group will generally share similar values. Each person's world view and value system are intrinsically connected with the values and worldview of the society and social group to which the person feels he or she belongs (Bela, 2011).

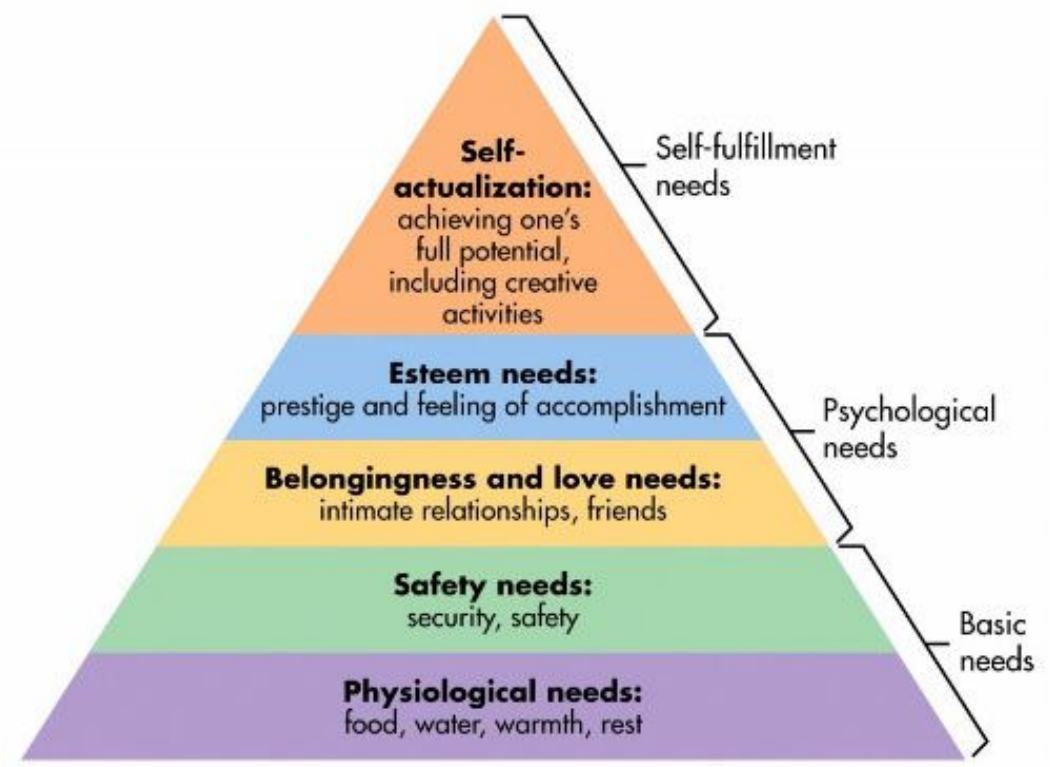
I argue that Latvian folk songs fulfilled at least two roles: 1) creating a sense of belonging to a social group and geographic location, since folk songs differed from one part of Latvia to another; 2) teaching values and passing them on to next generations. For example, there are many folk songs that speak about a certain geographic location,

an ethnic group and they contain references to the higher values, such as love of nature, appreciation of beauty, generosity and goodness to others.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Erikson's Psychological Theory

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, all deficiency and growth needs must be met before self-actualization, and specifically creativity, can occur. [5]

Table 2. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs[6]



The first four levels are deficiency needs and the top level is known as growth or being needs. According to Maslow, one must satisfy lower level deficit needs before progressing to meet higher level needs and reaching self-actualization. "Maslow identified self-actualizing people as individuals who are highly creative, who have peak experiences, and who are able to resolve the dichotomies inherent in opposite

[5] In the 1960s and 1970s, three additional needs were added to the original five-stage model: cognitive (knowledge and understanding, curiosity, exploration, need for meaning and predictability) (5), aesthetic (appreciation and search for beauty, balance, and form) (6), and transcendence (helping others to achieve self-actualization) (8) (Maslow, 1970a & 1970b).

[6] Retrieved from http://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html

contraries such as those constituted by 'freedom and determinism,' 'the conscious and the unconscious,' as well as 'intentionality and a lack of intentionality.'"[7]

McLeod (2008) refers to Erikson's theory of psychological development[8] that the self-actualized person might be in danger of dying, but nevertheless may find meaning in life. This means that lower level needs might be unfulfilled while one still has a sense of meaning in life. Mahatma Gandhi, Viktor Frankl, and Nelson Mandela may serve as examples of people who each personify a reality self-actualization. "Risking his life, Mahatma Gandhi used civil disobedience for purposes of freedom; Viktor Frankl was a holocaust survivor who never relinquished his grasp of life's meaning; and Nelson Mandela continued to find meaning in life even while he was imprisoned. The safety of these individuals may have been threatened, but they may be cognizant of being values. They may find life meaningful explicitly because of situations of danger to their lives, in particular, situations represented by the dichotomy of life and death."[9]

I draw a parallel with Latvians who were able to be highly creative without having all deficiency needs fulfilled. Deportees in Siberia faced hardships and inhumane conditions and demonstrated elements of higher values, such as goodness, beauty, meaning of life, faith, hope, and love. Deportees hoped that Latvia would be free again and they would eventually return home. Their belief in a homeland and freedom enabled Latvians to overcome hardships and survive (Vidnere, 2008; Opoļska, 2012). Faith in God, as stated in Vidnere's study (2008), also enabled Latvians to survive. Lastly, despite poverty, Latvians were resourceful in finding scraps and leftovers of anything that could let them create something new. They also continued nurturing beauty by creating flower gardens, even in Siberia. On the one hand, Latvians appreciate unity, as is evident in the Latvian Song and Dance Celebrations, where people sing together in choirs. On the other hand, Latvians are individualists and prefer living in individual farms, one family per farm. Folk songs communicate values related to a humane way of

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[7] Retrieved from https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/theory-and-psychopathology/201308/the-theory-self-actualization
[8] Retrieved from http://www.simplypsychology.org/Erik-Erikson.html
[9] Retrieved from: https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/theory-and-psychopathology/201308/the-theory-self-actualization

life and respect for animals and nature. They also care for higher values such as respect for one another. The next section will further explore hardships, trauma, and resilience from a psychoanalytic perspective.

2.4 Latvian Hardships, Trauma, and Resilience

Oh life, oh life,
To live this life one needs to have
The lightest hand, the lightest foot
And good advice that wisdom holds.
(Latvian folk song)

In 1941 and 1949 about 10% to 15% of the Latvian population was deported to Siberia (Vidnere, 2008; Bleiere, Butulis, Feldmanis, Stranga, & Zunda, 2014). The deportations were unexpected and shocking, and people were unprepared and helpless to prevent it. All these elements can create emotional trauma. The traumatic impact depends on the degree of the person's resilience and the ability to dissociate in a healthy way (Alayarian, 2011).

On the nights of June 14 and 15, 1941, 15,424 people were deported from Latvia to Siberia, including infants and children under 10 (15% of deportees). Of these deportees, almost 40% died. "Terror on this scale, in so short a period, had never been experienced in Latvia, and the result was horror and shock among the populace" (Bleiere, Butulis, Feldmanis, Stranga, & Zunda, 2014).

During the Nazi regime 80,000–100,000 civilians were killed in Latvia (Bleiere et al., 2014). It is estimated that around 123,000 Latvians took refuge from the Soviet army by fleeing to Germany and Sweden and later to North America, Australia, and Brazil (Bleiere, et al., 2014). The Soviets reoccupied the country in 1944–1945, and further deportations followed as the country was collectivized and Sovietized. More than 200,000 Latvian citizens (10% of the population) died during World War II.

In 1949, 43,000 rural residents and Latvian patriots were deported to Siberia. Between 136,000 and 190,000 Latvians, depending on the sources, were imprisoned,

repressed, or deported to Soviet concentration camps (Gulags) in the postwar years from 1945 to 1952 (Vidnere, 2008 & Bleiere, et al., 2014). According to Vidnere (2015), "the Soviet authorities pursued deliberate genocidal[10] policies by slating for persecution many specific national and socioeconomic groups. In most cases, there were no trials or judicial proceedings."

"The deportees were exposed to massive human rights violations during the Soviet occupation of Latvia. During early 1940s, deportees were forbidden to correspond with their relatives. Later, they were permitted to send one letter a year provided it was written in Russian. In the 1950s, they were allowed to write two letters a year, but still the letters had to be written in Russian. The average length of time in the various forms of confinement (Gulag, prison camps, and the so-called resettlement) ranged from five to nine years" (Vidnere, 2015).

In most instances "the reason for deportation to Siberia became a family secret. Only 32% of the respondents (*N* = 187 in Vidnere's study) knew clearly why their family had been selected for deportation" (Vidnere, 2015). The families of most of the respondents were deported to Siberia because they were considered "enemies of the state," mostly due to their socioeconomic class or level of education (Vidnere, 2015). "Upon returning to Latvia, many of the respondents born in Siberia experienced difficulties obtaining university education. They had to attend universities outside Latvia because they had "tainted" biographies: their parents' deportation precluded their being accepted at the universities in their own country" (Vidnere, 2015).

Russia has not recognized the hardships Latvians experienced in deportation (Vidnere, 2008).[11] "Through such denial, the survivors' rationality, truth, and even history, are also 'murdered'. Denial, therefore, becomes a means of celebrating the past destruction of the victims and rubbing more salt in their already gaping wounds, as they are subsequently resigned to a falsified version of their own history" (Alayarian, 2011).

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[10] Polish lawyer Raphael Lemkin, defines *genocide* as "the destruction of a nation or an ethnic group" (Retrieved from: https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/genocide; Tcholakian, 2016).

[11] More research is required to determine a level of trauma, if any has occurred. It is outside the scope of this research. There is a difference between stress and trauma.

“Many who have lost their loved ones may fail or may not be allowed to grieve, and therefore may suffer the pathology of melancholia, an ambivalent, distracting and violent grief. Mourning is important to understand the private and public pain that some people may have experienced” (Alayarian, 2011).

Alayarian (2011) quotes Freud, “mourning allows for restoration of the lost object and enables the mourner to assess the value of the relationship and comprehend what has been lost in losing the other. Mourning allows people to convert loving remembrances into a memory and move on.” This is why monuments are important: they allow people to move on and not to transfer trauma to the next generations.

Armenians (Tcholakian, 2016) have suffered in the same way as Latvians, from an oppressor’s refusing to admit the psychological and political harm and damage done. The Soviet regime affected Latvians in the long term, because the denial causes dissatisfaction and resentment. As long as Latvians hear statements such as, “it never happened, people are exaggerating, it is time to forget the past and move on” (Herman, 1997), it is difficult to find closure and heal. In memory of Latvians who died in Siberia, coordinated trips to Siberia have been taking place in the past ten years to visit deportation places and set up monuments. The monuments help the victims of deportations to mourn and grieve.

I would like to draw a parallel to Poland’s experience. Like Poles, Latvians suffered trauma as a result of World War II and the Communist regime, and there is “a legacy of unexplained and untreated traumas” (Nowakowski, 2014). Latvians also experienced “centralised fear as a way of asserting authority and keeping the entire nation under control” (Nowakowski, 2014). Further research, from a transgenerational trauma perspective, is required to identify an impact on future generations.

Respondents in Vidnere’s (2008) study reported that they were able “to endure extreme stress because of the following factors: hope to return to their native country some day (83%, *n* = 459), willpower (62%, *n* = 342), physical strength (55%, *n* = 306), faith in God (50%, *n* = 280), helpfulness of fellow inmates (39%, *n* = 216), belief in fate (30%, *n* = 168), desire for revenge (9%, *n* = 52), helpful local residents (9%, *n* = 48, helpful camp guards (4%, *n* = 20), and other factors (24%, *n* = 135)” (Vidnere, 2015). Most respondents in Vidnere’s (2015) study “seem proud that they lived through

extreme hardships and survived. Many say that they would not wish suffering like what they endured even on their worst enemies. Many respondents emphasize the value of education, that everything can be taken away and lost except that which is in you. Other themes include faith, endurance, persistence, honesty, hope, and hard work. Most respondents talk in terms of internal victories over death, hunger, cold, betrayal, murder, and torture. When asked if they were "broken," 74% who answered said they "were not broken" by their experiences in Siberia."

"Those who managed to survive and eventually return home discovered that the idealized state they remembered was no longer there. They endured continued persecutions and immense hardship for several more decades" (Vidnere, 2015).

What can foster this kind of fortitude? Next sections attempt to provide answers by exploring resilience, transitional space and creativity.

Resilience

Alayarian (2011), in her book "Trauma, Torture, and Dissociation: A Psychoanalytic View", researches which traits in the unconscious enable some people to be resilient to the experience of trauma and lead fulfilling lives while others collapse psychologically. People have subjective reactions to objective events, and no two people will experience, or respond to, a stressor in the same way.

According to Alayarian (2011), resilience has been studied by Werner (1984, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1996; Werner & Smith, 1982) and Garmezy (1970, 1981, 1991, 1993; Garmezy, Mastern, & Tellegen, 1984). Werner began to see how the effects of trauma are passed down from one generation to the next (Alayarian, 2011). A caring connection with someone other than a family member was found to be a powerful protective factor, and it was identified as a key contributor to developing resilience in these individuals. Being listening to, demonstrating kindness, compassion, and respect enhance resilience (Alayarian, 2011). According to Werner and Smith (1992), "resilience skills include the ability to form relationships (social competence), to problem solve (metacognition), to develop a sense of identity (autonomy), and to plan and hope (a sense of purpose and future). Werner emphasizes the importance of social skills and intelligence, and of humor, this last enabling the individual to laugh when they would

rather cry" (Werner & Smith, 1992). There is a well-known Latvian folk song: "Sorrow my sorrow, I don't worry about it."[12] The song encourages staying positive and creates a space for healthy dissociation, and in turn, engenders resilience (Alayarian, 2011).

2.5 Transitional Space

Winnicott (1991) defined culture as "experience, as an inherited tradition." Cultural experience begins with creative living, manifested first in play. The infant's first act of play occurs through the employment of what Winnicott called the transitional object, the child's first use of a symbol. Winnicott defined "the transitional object as the first possession, and transitional phenomena as the object and all that transpires in the intermediate area.

"The object itself is not transitional; it represents the child's transition from the state of being merged with the mother to a state of being in relation to her, as something outside, and separate from, the child. Transitional objects link the infant to the mother to offset feelings of separation at a time when the dual-unity is challenged by the growing awareness of separateness. Thus the function of the objects is to soothe, comfort, and guarantee attachment" (Winnicott, 1971).

"The concrete transitional objects lose their meaning, but this meaning spreads over the whole cultural field, into areas such as art, religion, and creative scientific activities. In these areas, illusion is allowed, and questions of objectivity versus subjectivity, and internal versus external reality, are deferred. In this sense, cultural phenomena, like transitional objects, reflect inner and outer reality; however, cultural phenomena are communally shared and validated illusion" (Winnicott, 1991).

With respect to ethnic group, Laar (1996) suggests that "ethnic identity can be conceptualized as a transitional phenomenon. Ethnic identity, the part of a person's sense of self as a member of an ethnic group, is at the interface of personal identity ("me") and group identity ("not-me"); the group's transitional objects are concrete

[12] The folksong adapted to Jazz. Retrieved: https://soundcloud.com/normundsrutulis/bedu-manu-lielu-bedu-hans-antehed-quartet-normunds-rutulis-katrina-cirule

representations of shared cultural meanings, and thus deny the separateness of the individual and the group, as the childhood transitional objects defended against the separateness from the mother. To these objects, both inner reality (subjective or personal meaning) and external reality (objective or cultural group meaning) contribute, but the question of the source of the meaning (the individual or the culture) is not asked; thus, the illusion is maintained" (Laar, 1996).

Laar also quotes Winnicott when discussing culture and traditions: "culture is an inherited tradition in the common pool of humanity, to which people can contribute and from which they can draw. In any cultural field there is no possibility of being original except on the basis of tradition. The interplay between originality and tradition allows for inventiveness, which is another example of the interplay between separateness and union. Cultural groups would differ in the degree of separateness they allow the individual, and in the level of personal expression or creativity that is considered tolerable" (Laar, 1996).

"In the wake of separation, loss, and death, people seek to preserve the relationship by identifying with an internalized representation of the lost object; in addition, as in the case of the transitional object, they create externalized representations, rituals, and symbols, which are idiosyncratic or shared, that serve the same purpose in a different domain. This domain is the transitional space where illusion and reality meet" (Laar, 1996).

I argue that Latvian communities in exile in the West and Siberia tried to replicate "lost object" from their homeland as they remembered it and recreate the lost sociocultural milieu on a smaller scale. A transitional object serves as an internal representation in the externalized representation of the lost country, a place where illusion and reality meet, and a defense against separation and loss.

Winnicott (1971) remarks, "creativity is the doing that arises out of being." The artist creates and recreates unconscious processes, and presents these in a manner that resonate with our shared sense of symbols. By articulating these shared symbols, the artist invites us into this intermediate area of experiencing. The poet, for example, chooses symbols and images of a common language, and finds comfort not available in herself (Praglin, 2006). "S/he invites others into this in-between space, beyond the

merely private, subjective, or psychological, which serves as a resting place between inner and outer reality, between psyche and culture. Through art, therefore, one can move from the private to the social world. Creative expression--through art —may resolve situations, and allow for new possibilities. In this way, it is like the child's experience in imaginative play" (Winnicott, 1986).

2.6 Latvian Life Wisdom—Creativity

"Latvia has 29 professional theaters, 178 museums, 461 choirs, 866 folk dance ensembles, 71 brass bands, 248 folklore ensembles, 1,757 libraries, and 579 NGOs working in cultural fields" ("Latvia Today," 2014).

This section illustrates a few examples of Latvian life wisdom based on Rudzite's interpretation (Rudzite, 1990) to illuminate linkages with the notions of the transitional object and transitional space. According to Rudzite, Latvian life wisdom creates Latvian spiritual heritage sourced by folklore (folk songs, proverbs, sayings, beliefs, and legends); creative work, poetry, and prose; ornaments and symbols; traditions that honor human life and the sun; and nature.[13]

Latvian Folk Songs, Singing and Literature

Like some African-Americans[14], Latvians have often used folk song and music for empowerment, human rights, and perseverance.

Folk songs[15] are regarded as the aesthetic, ethical, and philosophical code of the Latvian nation. The songs were collected and published in 1894 by Krišjāns Barons. The six volumes comprised about 217,000 folk songs, but the actual number is about 1.5 million, having at least one song per Latvian.

Although these songs are presented from the first-person singular viewpoint, there is never one person identified with the "I." The songs give voice to words that

[13] Retrieved from: https://lv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latviskā_dzīvesziņa
[14] Retrieved from: http://folkmusic.about.com/od/historyoffolk/a/Folk_History.htm
[15] Zauberga, Veisbergs, & Chesterman, 2014 is the main source for this section.

could equally have been spoken by hundreds who share the same fate. Latvian folk songs describe the cycle of the individual's life. The songs are epic stories about people's lives in relation to the stations of the solar year with their attendant festivals and celebrations.

On the surface, the songs are about the sun, trees, rivers, and girls, but most of the images are archetypal. Thus an oak tree stands for the strength and endurance of a Latvian man who spreads out deep roots in the soil of his native land; the sun (a feminine noun in Latvian) symbolizes a mother who keeps one warm and provides shelter and bread; the color white symbolizes goodness and beauty. For a people constantly dominated by invaders, folk songs, serving as the only means of self-expression, have been essential for the survival of the nation.

Latvians sing on every important occasion in their lives (Bula, 2008). It has become historically established that in critical situations Latvians would get together and just sing. According to Horn (2013), "when you sing, musical vibrations move through you, altering your physical and emotional landscape. Singing in a group, creates harmony and pleasure."

Loersch & Arbuckle (2013) suggest (based on seven studies) that "people's emotional responses to music are intricately tied to the other core social phenomena that bind people together into groups. They also suggest that music evolved as a tool of social living.

Often it is only through song that Latvians can speak about their grief. This is why the political transformations of the 1990s in the Baltic States were called the "singing revolution" (Šmidchens, 2014). It also explains why Latvians, like other Baltic nations, have such highly developed choral singing. There are many folk songs dedicated to singing itself. For example,

With a song I was born, with a song I grew up,
With a song I lived through my life,
With a song I shall be laid
In a mound of white sand.

I went about singing
While serving harsh masters,
In order to mitigate
My tears in songs.

Latvians have a Northern restraint and they scorn the direct expression of deep emotions. Accordingly, *dainas* are free from emotionalism and sentimentality and rather focus on some concrete detail indirectly linked to the emotion concerned. An old saying has it that men's tears should be seen only by the gods, a tree, a river, or mother sun:

River Daugava, the black-eyed,
In the evening blackly flows;
How else but blackly can she flow;
Her water full of precious souls.

Folk songs provide insight into Latvian values and qualities; for example, love for the native land. The Latvian soul is impregnated not only with an idea of patriotic love for the country but with a passion for the actual soil, for turning back the furrows under a plough, for planting and reaping. "One's own piece of land" has been a century-old dream for many Latvians, enhanced by its denial due to oppression and deprivation.

I own my fatherland
With all its fields;
I must be the master here,
As I am the ploughman here.

Latvians are a hard-working nation. The work ethic used to be high and many songs describe work as a source of joy and wealth. Ethical judgment, wisdom, and insight are generalized and pertain to the community as a whole. Many of the old folk songs are proverbial in character.

Oh work, oh work,
I can't do without it:
Work gives me joy,
It makes me a rich person.

The eyes fear the job,
The hands do not fear the job,
The hands do not fear the job,
They know how to tackle it.

In Latvian folklore, God is portrayed as a little white-haired man who would mix with people and test their qualities. Often the word God is used in the diminutive form: Dieviņš.

Slowly, slowly God came riding
Downhill into the valley:
He would not stir the ploughman's horse
Nor the wild cherry blossoms.

The dichotomy of life and death is not perceived as irreconcilable: life moves in a natural cycle, every end a new beginning, just as winter is always followed by spring.

Latvians are capable of philosophical endurance and a humorous treatment of life's problems. Many songs are dedicated to marriage and the relationship between spouses.

A guy says in the first year:
You are a flower, my dear bride!
The second year, the third year:
You are a little witch, you are a little witch!

The humorous approach is enhanced by the use of diminutives: bride and witch are used in the diminutive form, which suggests mere teasing (Zamberga, Veisbergs, & Chesterman, 2014).

Imants Ziedonis was one of the most open voices in poetry during the Soviet occupation era. He communicated provocative ideas in metaphors and subtext. For example, the title of one of his collections was a “steam that promotes boiling.” His creative work is characterized by expression (“verbal tightrope-walking”) (Zamberga, Veisbergs, & Chesterman, 2014). One of Ziedonis’ poems on singing and self-expression is:

> “I tell you, sing! Sing when you are ok. But sing when you have to get over an absurdity. Sing into the eyes of the one who abuses you. Exult in your superiority when you are beaten. (…) Sing when you drink. You drink because of sadness, because of boredom. You can drink a bottle, but can you sing a bottle? Sing by the grave! Why are you silent, sing! (…) It is for you, the living, that song is needed, not for the deceased!” (Zamberga, Veisbergs, & Chesterman, 2014).

Dance

Folk dance is one of the most important of Latvia's national cultural treasures. From ancient times, dancing and singing have been an essential part of life in Latvian family celebrations and events related to nature's seasonal changes.[16] Latvian dance draws its strength from basic values that have crystallized in the ancient past of the Latvian nation. It is the Latvian way of feeling nature, upholding traditional celebrations and customs—Latvian heritage inherited from parents.

In remote Latvian villages everybody dances—children in kindergarten, first graders to students in upper grades, the young, the middle-aged, and seniors. This shows how deeply rooted Latvia's traditions related to dance are in the Latvian nation. The Dance Celebration is the highlight in the development of Latvia's folk dance culture. The folk dance, from its origins in ethnographic dance, relies on the creative inspiration of choreographers to create new dances (Drulle, 2013).

To summarize, this section provided examples of folk songs, literature, singing and dancing as fundamental elements of Latvian culture, creativity, and heritage.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter will illuminate the methodological approach and design of the research study. The assumption is that creativity as a transitional space built resilience and allowed Latvians to overcome hardships.

When talking about Latvian culture and creativity, I would be showing bias by only including positive things and eliminating negative ones. I will try to step back and look at the information from a balcony to ensure that I have captured information accurately without any bias.

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[16] In 2003, the Latvian Song and Dance Celebration was included in the UNESCO list of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

3.1 Approach

A combination of narrative and analyzing stories told and phenomenological (Creswell, 2007) research methods were used to collect data in this research study to obtain the stories of individuals' experiences and common experiences of all participants.

Narrative stories were gathered through interviews, observations, documents, pictures (Creswell, 2007), and oral history recordings also known as "constructive memory" recordings (Kalniete, 2006). An oral history method (a qualitative narrative type) was applied in gathering the personal reflections of 18 Latvians deported to Siberia. The researcher was a listener and a questioner and situated individual stories within participants' cultural, personal, social, and historical contexts (Creswell, 2007).

A phenomenological study describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a phenomenon—a universal essence (a "grasp of the very nature of the thing," (Creswell, 2007). This study was applied to both 18 people in Cēsis who were deported to Siberia and experienced inhumane hardships, and other 24 individuals who were selected based on creativity in their lives.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) "focuses on the meaning individuals give to their life experience through detailed analysis of their personal stories, from which themes are detected and interpreted. IPA draws from the disciplines of hermeneutics, phenomenology, and idiography" (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Phenomenology focuses on how episodes or events appear to the individual, the meaning given rather than the event itself or the objective facts (Smith & Osborne, 2008). IPA has been described as "a dual interpretation or double hermeneutic process" (Smith & Osborn, 2008) in which the participant tries to make sense of their world and the researcher in turn attempts to give it meaning and understanding from the participant's perspective. The researcher analyzes individual stories, draws conclusions, and develops themes for analysis. (Smith & Osborn, 2015).

The IPA method involves a defined group for whom the research problem has relevance and personal significance (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). In this instance, 18 individuals who were either deported to Siberia by the Soviet regime or born in Siberia

and 24 of individuals of different ages who have applied creativity in their lives, were chosen for interviews because of their interest in creativity.

The most common approach is the semi-structured interview. I interviewed 18 deported individuals as a group in Cēsis city (Latvia) in their Community Centre (the municipality has awarded them space for their regular meetings). The meeting was arranged in advance, and I provided a short description of my topic and areas of interest for discussion. I had individual in-person interviews with other 24 participants, averaging 60-90 minutes in Latvia and Canada. Most of the interviews were held in Latvia and I translated parts used in the thesis in English. I performed six pre-interviews via phone to discuss the topic and identify scope. I also prepared semi-structured interview questions (see Appendix B) and experimented with four participants, after which I realized that the questions created too mechanical an approach and limited emotional exposure. Also, the responses appeared too thought through. I decided to focus instead on three key themes with open-ended questions and let participants tell a story.

1. **Creativity and Latvian life wisdom:** Tell me about creativity in your life and how it has manifested itself in your life. What can you tell me about Latvian life wisdom?
2. **Experience of creativity:** What were reasons to engage in creativity? How did you feel?
3. **Creativity, resilience, and hardships:** What role did creativity play in hardships? What comes up for you when you think of creativity and resilience?

I asked follow-up questions when needed and used oral history stories written by deportees to illustrate situations (Elksnis – Geisler, 2011; Kalniete, 2005; Opoļska, 2012; Vidnere, 2008).

During the interview, data collection and analysis process I used myself as an instrument to interpret the data and understand experiences and stories of the interviewees. I emphasized Latvian creativity as a phenomenon for Latvians. This phenomenon was explored with a group of 24 individuals of different age groups who experienced it. I also focused on exploring the lived experiences of individuals and how

they had both subjective experiences of creativity and objective experiences of something in common with other people (Creswell, 2007).

It is challenging not to bring personal experience into the picture when interviewing participants and analyzing data related to hardships because of my personal interest in the topic and me being Latvian. Reading stories of the deportees and the hardships that they had to overcome, made me very emotional. I applied "night vision cycle"[17] (Lehman & Van de Loo, 2016) learned during the Executive Master in Consulting and Coaching for Change program and listened with the third ear (Van de Loo, 2007) to stay objective and focus on the experiences of the participants.

The main purpose of this qualitative, narrative, and phenomenological research thesis is to explore and shed light on individual and common experiences of representatives from several generations of Latvians who were deported to Siberia and lived in exile and Latvians who experienced the Soviet regime through creativity, culture, and Latvian life wisdom in the context of transgenerational trauma (Volkan, 2004).

The research was carried out in three stages:

1) I reviewed literature linked to the transgenerational transmission of trauma and the Latvian hardships/genocide in light of creativity and resilience. Moreover, I examined oral history stories and analyzed them with respect to hardships and creativity.
2) I conducted open-ended interviews with a group of deported Latvians and a select number of Latvians who apply creativity in their lives. The deported Latvians were between the ages of 64 and 88, from Cēsis (a city in the northern part of central Vidzeme in Latvia), and most of them were second-generation descendants of Latvian hardship/genocide survivors who had been sent to Siberia as young children, with their parents, or were born in Siberia. The other 24 participants, Latvians living in Latvia and Canada, were between the ages of 20 and 91 (Table 3). Since this is an exploratory study, it includes perspectives

[17] Night vision cycle includes triggering (observing and wondering), creating and entering reflective space, associating, spiking, patterning and linking.

from different age groups and geographical locations. Participants with interest and experience in creativity were chosen since the main focus of the research is to show interconnectedness between creativity, resilience, and hardships.

3) I used narrative and phenomenological analyses by assessing stories via oral history literature and interviews. Specifically, I looked for similar threads of creativity and experience among participants.

Table 3. Sampling Statistics—Age, gender, and place of residence of participants

Age								
	21–30	31–40	41–50	51–60	61–70	71–80	81+	Subtotal
Gender								
Female	4		5	3	4	7	5	28
Male		1		3	1	7	2	14
Place of residence								
Latvia								36
Abroad								6
Total	*N* = 4	*N* = 1	*N* = 5	*N* = 6	*N* = 5	*N* = 14	*N* = 7	*N* = 42

3.2 Data Collection and Ethical Considerations

I collected data from the literature and interviews. I engaged with participants first via email by explaining the objective and scope of the research. Then I conducted a group interview with 18 participants for 2.5 to 4 hours and one-on-one interviews ranging from 60 to 90 minutes with other participants (22 of the 24 interviews were in person and 2 were by phone). Four interviews were conducted in English and the rest were in Latvian. Interviews began as semi-structured, covering three open-ended questions because I wanted to obtain free-flowing narratives instead of having short answers to questions. I asked follow-up questions for clarification. I audio-recorded most of the interviews and transcribed them in Latvian and then translated key parts into

English. I looked for common themes and patterns. Participants were advised about confidentiality through a letter of consent (Appendix B). The parts that were included and referenced in the written study have been shared with the participants and none of the participants had concerns about their responses being used in the research.

3.3 Observations and Analysis

I observed interviewees, listened deeply, and used myself as an instrument, which allowed me to create a safe and trusting space. In some interviews, I also created a reflective space, which led to associations for both the interviewee and the researcher. Themes emerged through associations and spiking, which led to patterning and linking (Lehman & Van de Loo, 2016).

During interviews, in addition to audio-recording the conversation, I made notes on what happened and how the participant spoke and used their body language. I also made notes related to how my questions were received by the interviewees and what I felt and experienced.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

4.1 Discussion—Analysis

An overall analysis of the findings of the 42 participants revealed the importance of history, Latvian life wisdom, and traditions, and their relationship with creativity and resilience. Common themes such as family, work ethic, moral values, belief in education, together with different modes of creativity (singing, dancing, craft making, nature, and others) were directly linked to the amendment in the Constitution related to Latvian identity and life wisdom.

4.2 Summary of Key Themes That Emerged

Forms of creativity included singing, poetry recital, dancing, craft making, simply being innovative and creating new objects by reusing scrap, working with one's hands, and love of nature (an environment that creates beauty— flower gardens, trees, tidiness, respect for nature and animals, treating animals as equal). Many participants compared their experience in choirs and dancing ensembles to a family. Moreover, a few of them stated that you cannot choose your family, but you can choose where you want to belong via a choir group or dance ensemble. Table 4 provides a summary of key themes.

Table 4. Summary of key themes (*N* = 42)

Values	**Number of participants**	**Creativity**	**Number of participants**
Taught in family, Family tradition	36	Singing	17
Work ethic	22	Dancing	10
Moral values	20	Craft making	15
Education and learning	40	Nature	10
Faith and hope	30	Working in nature	16
		Beauty (flower garden, tidiness)	17

Family or key family caregivers (grandmother, mother) played a main role in their children developing an interest in creativity. Work ethic and moral values taught through family and the appreciation of education and learning were foundational pieces for developing an interest in creativity, building resilience, and overcoming hardships. Another theme that emerged was related to past hardships, namely, the injustice done to Latvians through deportations between 1941 and 1949 and later during the Soviet time. All of the Cēsis Deported Group and the majority of other interviewees expressed the importance of receiving at least an apology from the persecutor. Deportees felt that in order to let go of the past and mourn their close ones who died during the Soviet regime, they needed Russia to admit its injustice and inhumane attitude. Participants shared their views on the subject:

> *B3 (age 29): Russia must apologize for the past for unfairness to Latvians. It's unfair that due to the former Soviet regime and the past 50 years being part of Soviet Union, Latvia couldn't develop and Latvians have to work harder to compete with the world. The start-up capital is smaller compared to Western countries.*
>
> *B25 (age of 68): Escaping from repressions, Latvians are scattered throughout the world, and even today, the names who with a single signature made decisions about the fate of Latvians.*

As per memories of Gundars Eglītis born in 1928, deported to Siberia on June 14, 1941:

"Men were separated from women and children. This was the last time I saw my father…Future was in the fog. We couldn't understand how suddenly innocent people could become criminals. We were naïve then, overly human to understand that destroying people could be a mandatory part of the Stalin regime" (Opoļska, 2012).

As per memories of Zigrīda Perevalova born 1928, deported to Siberia on June 14, 1941 and released in 1956:

“Let’s not get upset with people who say, was it really so awful as you describe about Siberia? Anyone who didn’t experience it, cannot understand it. Every year on June 14, I want scream and cry, say out load the pain that I carried in me for many years, and ask once more, “Why did this happen?”” (Opoļska, 2012).

4.3 Summary of What Happens When Engaging with Creativity

Creativity allows for self-expression and increases self-confidence; it feels good and is emotionally uplifting. Interviewees reported feeling united; they experienced a sense of belonging and a feeling of sacredness. They also indicated feeling pride while singing and dancing together on the big stage and while wearing Latvian costumes. Most of the participants who engaged in creativity indicated that they had positive feelings, which allowed them to step back and look at conundrums or problems that they needed to resolve from a different perspective. These findings were also supported by historical stories recorded in literature.

The following sections provide comments participants shared with respect to each theme.

Family

Most participants indicated that they started singing or dancing because either their parents did it or their parents wanted their children to learn. Even though parents may had enrolled them in dancing and singing, all participants continued doing it because they liked it and it was important to them. It is clear that family teaches moral values including unity and respect for each other.

> *B6 (age 23): It’s necessary to strengthen family ties. When the family members are together, bad things are forgotten and the outlook is more positive. Family plays an important role. It’s a huge gift to spend time with the family. I feel being together makes you feel united and supports belonging… Love of nature has been taught through the family. We appreciate what we have. Nature gives a joy*

of discovery where you can relax, free yourself from negative emotions, and gain energy.

B11 (age 46): Choir: a family tradition. Everyone in the family was singing, every neighbor was singing too. My great-grandfather's last name, Zińģīƫis (from a popular song), was given to him because of his singing. Children went to a music school. I also had to play a piano. Then neighbors with children got together and everyone was singing. Music was an entertainment for children.

Singing I was born and grew;
Singing lived my whole life through
Singing went my soul;
In the garden of God's Son.

Singing in a choir and dancing

B6 (age 23): Creativity helps to expand my viewpoint and see different perspectives. Singing and dancing have an unconscious impact on me. It's beauty, you are in something you like doing, you are in the moment, you cannot hide your emotions and feelings. Music has a healing quality. Creativity manifests itself in doing something new and experimenting, trying to discover something unknown. It's daring. When I sing, something inside me opens up. I am more sensitive, I can connect with myself at a deeper level and it's much easier with emotions. Dancing and singing, music help overcome challenges acquired during the day. You go to a practice, meet with people, feel that you belong (it's a family) and after it you feel much lighter and the challenges that you faced have a different meaning. You aren't preoccupied with them anymore. You are able to look at them differently.

B9 (age of 54): Song was always with me—different events in childhood, at school, family. Song created a united feeling. Singing and song unite people, create a feeling of safety, give energy and will. When I sing, I have huge

satisfaction—being on the big stage together with other singers and choirs. There is an amazing feeling of belonging, positive energy, any song charges you. Both singing and dancing are sources of strength. When there are challenges at work, choir or dance practices help me to stand back and see things from a different perspective. When "hot emotions" are gone, I can look at the situation from a different viewpoint. Singing creates peacefulness and balance. Singing has also a therapeutic meaning for body. It takes care of internal organs—deep singing requires deep breathing, which is similar to yoga practices of deep breathing. It is a workout; it provides balance; gives a structure. Singing opens you up—interpersonal interaction. Singing also pushes you to be out of your comfort zone. Singing different tones (amplitudes)—"standing" with different voices. It is not about overcoming yourself, but it teaches you a proper singing that is not in your comfort zone. Singing teaches to inhale, breathe deeply, and stay with it without reacting and responding in anger.

B24 (age 67): When people were deported to Siberia they were singing Latvian songs (Pūt vējiņi, Pērkons[18]) so children didn't cry. Singing is a Latvian phenomenon. People were singing and dancing to feel united.

A4 (age 60): Music is a conversion with God. Culture creates an environment, courtesy and civility. Culture is an understanding of a national ethnic world.

B10 (age 66): I see a choir as a living organism. Choir is a joint art; people think about the collective good vs. the individual good. Singing together at the Latvian Song Celebration event—the unity that you feel is comparable to an orgasm. A new conductor trying to lead 15,000 choristers from 300 choirs from across Latvia, the new conductor with his hands and eyes connects with the 15,000 choristers and they succeed. You have created something new collectively—the moment, twinkling.

[18] "Sun, Thunder, Daugava." Retrieved: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WeovGfNEEsk

B11 (age 46): Singing—what does it mean? It allows you to turn off, focus, get yourself in order.

The stories shared by the interviewees show that singing helps reduce stress, helps to feel better, and relieves anxiety. “When singing, the vibrations that pulsate through the body help release endorphins that are associated with pleasure, as well as oxytocin, a hormone that helps relieve anxiety and stress. Oxytocin also boosts feelings of trust and bonding, which helps connect persons to the songs they are singing and the people they are singing with. Singing in a group, creates harmony and pleasure” (Horn, 2013). It can be concluded that singing created a transitional space and allowed people to step back, disconnect from negative emotions, re-engage, and see different perspectives.

Dance as self-expression

B13 (age 28): I started dancing when I was 5 years old and I am still dancing and growing. Dancing and ballet was mother’s dream, so the daughter realized it. Latvian dance is very complex: 32 kinds of polka alone, holding and embracing. Latvian dance is based on ornament and choreography, not ballet as Russian dancing. Dance allows me to express my essence to others in a very creative and interesting way. Everything is accessible, making what’s already known different. Dance is self-expression, choreography—showing what’s inside and sharing it with others. Dance is a way of thinking, a creative life view, an integral part of my life. If I didn’t have dance, I would be depressed, life would be gray, like in a picture frame.

Dance helps to overcome challenges and hardships. It allows you to forget what’s on your mind. Dance is in the present moment.

Dance creates an extended family, a circle of friends, communities of interaction. You can choose with whom you want to interact, where you want to belong and be, because you cannot choose your immediate family, that’s given.

Everything has a meaning: color, symbol, emotion; they are chosen very carefully. As a result, you feel accomplished and satisfied.
Creativity is an interaction, mutual exchange, relationship, a collective work to get to a better result.

Craft making, knitting, making traditional Latvian dolls (100% natural)

B10 (age 66): One can find creativity in small things. My mother always did something—knitted, embroidered, made small gifts, and father dressed as a Santa.

B12 (age 48): Creating brings energy and people feel it. When I feel good, customers come in the store and vice versa. I believe that we are born to create and then we are happy. When I think of creativity and resilience, what comes to my mind is a picture from childhood seeing parents always doing something. I learned how to create a space that is pretty and joyful. It allows my soul to feel good. If I have a space and good feelings, I can dream and fly. It's a small place for harmony. I think I learned it from my parents. There was no space during the Soviet time. Seven of us lived in a two-bedroom apartment. One has to be brave in order to take on creativity. Need to have faith in God, then you hold onto it and believe in yourself. If you stay on the path, you will find your way and your place. Creativity characterizes the Latvian nation.

B17 (age 48): Very strong national awareness was created in the 1930s. It was impacted during the Soviet regime. Folk songs still sustain an internal "I" through singing. A Latvian is an individualist, which is also reflected through Latvian individual farms—one family per farm. I learned creativity from my godmother. She had magazines of crafts, sewing from 1930s – the Latvian independence time. There was also some knitting material left, which I used in crafting different things. There was very poor variety of craft materials during the Soviet time.

Soviet system was created to satisfy basic needs: eating, drinking, and obtaining basic education so you could start working in factory at a production line. There was no need for imagination or ability to analyse and compare how other nations are living outside the Soviet system. One simply needed to accept that socialism was the best that could happen to a working class. Therefore, creativity became a part of society, survival and self-expression. No-one can forbid expressing yourself without words. Self-expression with embroidery, crafts, dances and songs don't seem being dangerous and protesting against the system. In that moment, when you do what you like and you can self-express yourself, you feel truly free and invincible because your freedom is unlimited. Your body can comply with the regime, to what's happening around because it cannot be changed but your spirit/mind stays in creative space. In fact, an alternative world gets created in which one can maintain her deepest "I" in the most intact way.

I raised children—gave them opportunities to try everything so they can choose. By exposing them to singing, dancing, sports, etc., I have given them an instrument so that they can speak and express themselves and so they aren't in a situation I was—afraid and quiet. As to singing, I believe that song and singing heals.

Creativity via gardening and landscaping

B11 (age 46): Another outlet for creativity is gardening and the natural landscape. The natural landscape has always meant something to Latvians. Order and tidiness in environment—flower beds and land-soil work. Land and flower beds are ways of creating for Latvians. Of course, there is a song related to landscape.[19] *Creation is a miracle. It creates positive emotions, joy, and if something doesn't turn out, you have a chance to try again. Creativity—goals in life are very important; small goals are even more important because they are*

[19] A popular Latvian song about landscape: "Tumša nakte zaļa zāle" ("A dark night, green grass," 2008, Song and Dance Celebration concert). After the official presentations, which may last until midnight, people continue singing and dancing until 3 a.m. or even later. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SgBMY4KjSNc

more achievable. An orderly environment helps. A system is a base for everything. In order to generate ideas, it is important to have an order and system. Order also comes from the Germans. Latvians were praised for their diligence and perseverance even more than Baltic Germans. The Latvian work ethic and virtue was known to others. A folk song that comes to mind is "Work Like a Turk," which characterizes Latvians working hard.

Choir helped in being creative. From childhood, we learned about "choir wars." People who sing are happier; bitterness gets out through singing. When you sing, the body fills up with oxygen. Moreover, you have to adjust your singing to whoever is next to you; you are not the only one. Teamwork and ongoing adjustment. People are put next to each other based on voice and with whom you can sing together—it creates a system and people energetically adjust to sound. It is similar to how people working together achieve harmony and a collective result.

B25 (age of 68): In Siberia, flowers were blooming in front of every Latvian house.

Pride from singing and dancing

B14 (age 20): I have been dancing folk dances since the age of three. I cannot imagine life without dancing. Creativity develops through the process. Practices together unite dancers and on the one big stage together, I feel part of the whole—it's beautiful when it happens. Dance gives unity—it's a family. I am proud to be involved in dance. I learned some moral values, humanity and understanding others through the dance ensemble. Every movement in the dance has a meaning and it's important how you do it. The audience responds to how you perform. It doesn't matter how big or small a nation is. We are here and we surprise people abroad! It matters.

To summarize, this section showcased experiences of different kinds of creativity. Based on the thoughts shared by the interviewees, creativity provided positive emotions and created a transitional space to express themselves, overcome challenges, and had a positive affect on resilience. It seems that it also had a therapeutic role when looking at how creativity has been applied in therapy. According to Smyth and Nobel (2015), “a number of non-traditional creative / expressive therapies, including art, music, drama, and body-oriented approaches, has demonstrated at least preliminary effectiveness in reducing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms, reducing the severity of depression, and possibly improving quality of life.” According to Malchiodi (2014), “art, music, dance, and movement therapies are "brain-wise" interventions that stimulate whole-brain responses to help individuals of all ages experience reparation, recovery and well-being.”

Based on the responses of the interviewees and the researched literature, Latvian work ethic, moral values and family were key factors in overcoming challenges and fostering resilience.

Finally, Latvian life wisdom transferred from generation to generation through traditions, folk songs, singing, dancing, and craftsmanship created a transitional “in-between” space.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Limitations

There are several inevitable limitations inherent in qualitative research and subjective interpretation.

First, in collecting data, I might have missed some nuances because of the scope, size, and complexity of the topic. I undertook an exploratory study of linkages between Latvian life wisdom, which encompasses traditions, folk songs, literature, and more, and looked at it from the perspective of creativity in relation to resilience and hardships. Each of these topics could have been studied separately. Therefore, it is possible that I overlooked some important nuances.

Second, considering that I am myself Latvian living in Canada, I could have been biased in my choice of examples and stories that portray Latvia and Latvians in a better light.

Third, I may have influenced participants during the interviews by asking some leading (as opposed to neutral) questions. In addition, most of the interviews were conducted in Latvian and when translating them into English I may not have captured the full meaning, especially when participants spoke about Latvian folk songs.

Lastly, the size and composition of the research sample, which cannot be considered a representation of the general population, is too small to conclude that creativity indeed increases resilience and helps to overcome hardships. At the same time, this research is a good start and provides insight into subject areas that have never been researched in such a context.

5.2 Future Research

Considering that this research explored creativity relatively superficially, it would be valuable to explore in greater depth each field of creativity—dancing, singing, folk songs, literature, art, nature, etc.—in relation to resilience and transitional space. Moreover, it is possible that the effectiveness of each creativity area with respect to building resilience may differ. In addition, it was beyond the scope of this research to explore the direct application of creativity in a corporate setting. Therefore, research

looking at creativity as a transitional space in corporate organizations and ways to affect corporate culture could be valuable. Lastly, the study did not look at transgenerational trauma as a result of hardships experienced in World War II and the Soviet regime. Based on responses from some participants and the research literature, unresolved trauma may be passed on to future generations.

5.3 Implications and Recommendations

This study has a number of practical and theoretical implications that could be of interest to researchers in the social sciences. To begin with, the way one responds to challenges and hardships largely depends on one's values and needs. An individual who lives mainly according to cultural and higher values (Milts, 1996) and seeks self-actualization will have faith and hope while being authentic and creative, and likely have higher resilience. These values are taught via family, culture, and educational institutions. Therefore, it is recommended that future research explore opportunities to introduce these values via creativity in educational institutions.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Short Historical Chronology (Zeltiņa, 2012)

2nd millennium B.C.E.: The Baltic tribes reach the territory of present-day Latvia and settle there.

1198 A.D.: The beginning of the Crusades.

1201: Riga—the modern-day capital of Latvia—is founded by Bishop Albert.

13th century: A bitter, century-long struggle. German crusaders subjugate the Baltic and Finno-Ugrian tribes, ancestors of the Latvians, as well as the Estonians. The territory they inhabited becomes part of the state established by the Livonian Order of knights. Until the second half of the 16th century, only oral folklore and applied arts developed among the indigenous population.

1312–1321: Marino Sanuto includes a map in his work *Secreta Fidelium Crucis* (or *Liber Secretorum*) indicating the land of Letoini pagani, probably the first indication of the Latvians as a united nation.

1507: Latvian translation of Pater noster, handwritten in a Catolic Agenda.

1522–1525: The Reformation reaches Livonia. In 1525, freedom of faith is declared in Riga Town Council.

1525: Believed to be the year of publication of the first book in Latvian. The book was Lutheran in content, and therefore was seized and destroyed.

1558–1575: The Livonian (or First Northern) War for the lands of Livonia between Russia, Poland–Lithuania, Sweden, and Denmark. Russia is not yet able to conquer the lands of Livonia.

1562–1795: The Duchy of Courland is established as an autonomous territory within Poland–Lithuania.

1600–1629: The Polish–Swedish War, a continuation of the previous struggle for domination in the region.

1655–1661: The Second Northern War, as a result of which the Vidzeme region comes under Swedish rule and the rest of the land comes under the control of Poland–Lithuania. Russia still fails to achieve a ruling position in the territory of Livonia.

1629–1721: The “Swedish” period in Vidzeme, during which this territory (including Riga) became part of Sweden. Schools for the common people (Latvian) were introduced and the power of the landowners was restricted, though serfdom was not abolished.

1694: Ernst Gluck completed the first translation of the Bible into Latvian.

1700–1721: The Great Northern War. Russia at last establishes its control over the northern and eastern parts of Latvia, incorporating them into the Russian Empire. Actual power still belongs to the German nobility.

1795: The Duchy of Courland and Semigallia is annexed by the Russian Empire.

1817: Serfdom is abolished in Kurzeme (the western part of Latvia).

1819: Serfdom is abolished in Vidzeme (the central part of Latvia).

1850s–1860s: The First National Awakening or the time of the Young Latvians. The Latvian intellectuals studying in St. Petersburg and Dorpt (Tartu), in protest against the policy of Germanization, initiate the establishment of national schools, the formation of national ideology, and the organization of the Latvians into social and cultural associations.

1860s–1870s: Numerous Latvians leave their homeland for Russia in order to become landowners there.

1888–1899: The Second National Awakening. The representatives of the intellectual left-wing movement Jaunā strāva (New Stream) display a skeptical attitude towards the way the Young Latvians treated national culture, and instead emphasize the importance of science and the class struggle. This movement becomes the basis for the Social Democratic party.

1905: Latvian Social Democrats announce a general strike as a response to the revolution in Russia. On January 13, 1905, around 20,000 workers in Riga go out on a protest demonstration. An army battalion meets them on the embankment of the Daugava and opens fire. In the panic, many seek refuge on the ice of the river, but when the ice breaks there are numerous casualties. In spring, the center of the revolution moves to the countryside—the laborers on the estates owned by the nobility go on strike, revolutionaries address the people from church pulpits, and manor houses are set on fire.

1906: A punitive expedition arriving from Russia arrests and kills hundreds of insurgents. Several thousand leave in the first political immigration.

1914–1918: World War I. Latvia, being part of tsarist Russia, also becomes involved. Upon the signature of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, most of the area of present-day Latvia comes under German control.

November 18, 1918: Latvian National Assembly solemnly proclaims the Republic of Latvia.

January 2–May 22, 1919: The time of Soviet rule in Latvia, the Red Terror, killing thousands of civilians.

October 11–November 1919: Struggle for liberation of Latvia from the Army of Western Russia, financed by Germany. The decisive battle is fought in Riga on November 11.

January 26, 1921: The Republic of Latvia is recognized de jure.

1920–May 15, 1934: The Republic of Latvia is a democratic parliamentarian state, with a constitution (Satversme) and a parliament (Saeima) elected by the people, enjoying economic and cultural development.

May 15, 1934: Prime Minister Kārlis Ulmanis together with the Aizsargi—a military ideological organization—organizes a successful coup d'état. The Saeima is dismissed and an authoritarian regime is established. There is no bloody persecution, but all political parties are banned and censorship is established; some Social Democrats were also arrested.

1937: Stalin's repressions hit the Latvians living in Russia.

August 23, 1939: The German–Soviet Nonaggression Pact, or Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, between the Soviet Union and Germany is signed. Its secret protocols document the division of spheres of influence in Europe between the two powers, in accordance with which the Baltic States were annexed by the USSR.

September 1, 1939: World War II begins.

October 30, 1939: Responding to Hitler's call for Germans from all over the world to return to their homeland, more than 80% of the 55,000 Baltic Germans living in Latvia (whose ancestors arrived in Latvia in the 12th century) leave the country. They were the

owners of numerous plants and factories, as well as estates in the countryside, and formed a part of Latvia's intellectual community.

June 16, 1940: President Ulmanis receives a telegram from Moscow requiring a response within eight hours to an ultimatum demanding permission for the Soviet army to enter Latvia and form a new government.

June 17, 1940: At night, nine Soviet tank divisions cross the Latvian border. Independent Latvia has ceased to exist.

June 1940–June 1941 (or the Year of Terror): A new puppet government is formed in Latvia, led by the scientist August Kirhenšteins, while the minister of internal affairs is the popular writer Vilis Lācis.

July 14–15, 1940: Saeima (Parliament) elections with a single list of candidates. All alternative lists have been found faulty and rejected, and the persons who submitted them are persecuted. The official results show 99% as having voted in favor of this single list.

July 21, 1940: In its first decrees, the new People's Saeima abolishes the Republic of Latvia, "reestablishes" Soviet rule, proclaims the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic (LSSR), and applies to join the USSR.

August 5, 1940: A delegation from Soviet Latvia led by Kirhenšteins arrives at the session of the Supreme Council of the USSR in Moscow dressed in national costume. A unanimous decision is made to accept Latvia as a republic of the USSR.

June 14, 1941: During a single night around 16,000 people are deported to Siberia—mainly homeowners, wealthy farmers, lawyers, businesspeople, and intellectuals—and 550 officers of the Army of the Republic of Latvia are gathered together, ostensibly for summer training in a camp at Litene. This is just a pretext, since they are arrested (some killed in the process) and most are deported to Siberia.

June 22, 1941: Germany attacks the Soviet Union. In the beginning of July, Riga is in German hands, becoming the center for the government of the whole East Baltic, the capital of Ostland. Latvian hopes of renewing an independent state are not fulfilled, as the Germans have no respect for Latvian autonomy—according to Hitler's plans, the land is to be colonized. Until the winter of 1943–1944, when the German army is defeated at Stalingrad and the frontline starts to slide back westward, participation by

Latvians in the war is insignificant. A very small number of mobilized Latvians are employed in mass killings of the Jews in Rubmula and Biķernieki forest.

1944: The Latvian legion is formed, with the promise that these units will only take part in warfare defending the territory of Latvia against Bolshevism.

August 1944: The emigration of civilians to Germany begins, mainly through the ports of Liepāja and Riga.

September 1944: Civilians flee Kurzeme in huge numbers, with the aim of leaving for Sweden. Some German units, along with part of the Latvian Legion, are trapped in the so-called 'Kurzeme Cauldron' of 'Fortress Kurland' (the names given by the different sides), and for nearly eight months they hold the line against a Soviet force outnumbering them, turning the whole of the Kurzeme coast into a war cemetery.

May 8, 1945: Germany capitulates and the war in Europe is over.

May 10, 1945: Soviet rule is reestablished in the whole of Latvia. At the same time, until the early 1950s, several thousand of the so-called "forest brethren," or national partisans, hide in the forests of Latvia, fighting against the regime.

March 25, 1949: The second mass deportation: 49,000 people are sent to Siberia.

March 5, 1953: Joseph Stalin dies.

February 1956: The 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the USSR. The secretary general, Nikita Khrushchev, reveals the truth about the genocide against the Soviet people, including Latvians. For a time, within the framework of socialism, some attempts at democratization are made. The Latvians who have survived in Siberia start to return.

1956–1960: The period of rule by National Communists in Latvia, during which every attempt is made to stop the consistent policy of Russification. Still, a poorly qualified workforce of thousands continues to flow in from the Soviet republics. The Latvian language is driven out of the administrative and service spheres, and ruling positions are given to non-Latvians.

1964: A campaign aimed at banning the national festival of the Summer Solstice, or Jāņi. The ban also affects all forms of art that mention the festivity. There is a plan to gradually stamp out all things Latvian, which is made even worse by the fact that the plan is carried out by Latvians.

August 21, 1968: The secretary general of the Communist Party of the USSR, Leonid Brezhnev, gives the order to invade Czechoslovakia. An army of 500,000 destroys the last hope of democratic development in any states of the Socialist Bloc. Latvia, too, experiences stagnation and social apathy from that moment on.

1987: The secretary general of the Communist Party of the USSR, Mikkhail Gorbachov, announces *perestroika*—democratization of society in the USSR.

June 1–2, 1988: The general meeting of the Creative Unions (organizations of writers, artists, etc.), at which the idea of a Popular Front is developed.

October 7, 1988: A demonstration at Mežaparks in Riga, with some 120,000 participants. The "Singing Revolution" or Third National Awakening has begun.

March 18, 1990: The Latvian Popular Front wins a majority in the elections to the Supreme Council of the Latvian SSR.

May 4, 1990: The Supreme Council adopts the Declaration on the Restoration of the Independence of the Republic of Latvia.

January 13, 1991: In response to a military attack on various strategic sites in Vilnius, Lithuania, in which people were killed, a demonstration is held in Riga. By the evening, the Saeima and government buildings, radio and TV studio buildings, and the telephone exchange are surrounded by barricades—day and night, thousands of people are there to guard them.

January 20, 1991: OMON (a special police force) attacks the Ministry of Interior in the center of Riga; five people are killed, two of them cameramen.

August 1991: A putsch in the USSR, after the failure of which all three Baltic states regain their independence de jure. Reestablishment of the Democratic Republic of Latvia—with elections of the Saeima and president, a multiparty system, a transition to a market economy, and removal of Soviet economic structures, including collective farms (*kolhoz*) and large enterprises. The national currency, the lat, is reintroduced and borders are opened.

April 16, 2003: The Republic of Latvia joins the European Union.

April 2, 2004: The Republic of Latvia joins NATO.

July 1, 2016: Latvia becomes a member of the OECD.

Appendix B: Interview Guide—Themes and Questions

A. Personal background

1. Place and date of birth
2. Place of residence—country (Siberia, Latvia, West)

B. Meaning of Latvian wisdom, creativity, and traditions

"Since ancient times, the identity of Latvia in the European cultural space has been shaped by Latvian and Liv traditions, Latvian wisdom (*latviskā dzīvesziņa*), the Latvian language, universal human and Christian values. Loyalty to Latvia, the Latvian language as the only official language, freedom, equality, solidarity, justice, honesty, work ethic and family are the foundations of a cohesive society. Each individual takes care of him/herself, his or her relatives, and the common good of society by acting responsibly toward other people, future generations, the environment and nature."[20]

1. How does this statement resonate with you?
2. Which part speaks the most to you? Could you tell me more about it?
3. What is/was the meaning of creativity (*radošums*) in your life? How did it manifest itself? What emotions did you experience when you were in the creative mode?
4. What creates pride? What are you proud of as a Latvian?
5. What creative practices did you practice or experience?
    a. Nature
    b. Singing
    c. Dancing
    d. Latvian folk songs
    e. Making crafts
    f. Art, poetry, music
    g. Other
6. What emotions came up through the creative practices?

[20] Retrieved from the Latvian Constitution: http://likumi.lv/ta/id/57980-latvijas-republikas-satversme

a. Joy
b. Peace
c. Sadness
d. Other emotions

7. What meaning did you assign to this experience? Why did you engage in creative practices?
8. Provide three to five adjectives describing your relationship with creativity/traditions/culture.

C. Self-expression in different periods

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, how could you express yourself, your voice?
    a. Before 1940
    b. Between 1941–1990
    c. 1991 onwards

2. How did it manifest itself?
3. What helped you to express your voice? Were there times when you were afraid to express your voice? Why?
4. What story did you tell yourself when you could not express yourself?

D. Resilience

1. What does resilience mean to you? How do you know that you became more or less resilient? How does resilience show up internally and externally?

E. Use of creativity (how it manifested)

1. What was your motivation to overcome difficulties and hardships?
2. How did you deal with pain?
    a. Focus on not letting it get to you?
    b. Focus on acknowledging that it got to you?
    c. N/A

F. Hardships and trauma

1. What was the biggest hardship that you had to overcome? Your parents and grandparents had to overcome?
2. Can you openly talk about hardships that Latvians had to overcome between 1941 and 1990?
3. Are you able to accept and let go of what happened to your grandparents and parents?

Appendix C: Letter of Consent

I am a student at the Executive Master's Program in Consulting and Coaching for Change at INSEAD University in Fontainebleau, France. I am interested in exploring the use of Latvian creativity and traditions and their impact on resilience and overcoming difficulties and challenges from the psychoanalytical lens. The interview will focus on your personal views about creativity and ways to overcome difficulties and hardships, and will also necessitate the sharing of personal information.

Interviews will be tape-recorded. Your identity will be known only to the researcher of the study and confidentiality will be strictly respected. You will be free to discontinue your involvement at any time during this process if you so wish.

Parts of the interview included in the published paper will be shared with you.

Thank you,

Una Blumberga

I am willing to participate

NAME _____

SIGNATURE _____

Tables

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