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Introduction. Revivals and Movements in Non-Democracies

This Issue's Subject and Terminology

This journal's *Letonica* special issue, *Folklore Revivals in Non-Democracies*, reflects on the non-democratic circumstances during the socialist era in which many of Europe's folklore and folk music revivals developed. The issue is an outcome of the research project *Folklore Revival in Latvia: Resources, Ideologies and Practices* (2022–2024), funded by the Latvian Council of Science, and therefore the majority of analyses and reflections are written from the Latvian perspective. However, our goal was to analyze broader issues relevant to a wider geographical area, and we are deeply thankful for the valuable contributions that widen the scope of the discussion, including Lithuanian, Ukrainian, Hungarian, and

to some extent Estonian revival histories; also, several articles touch on the Latvian diasporas in the West in the context of Cold War divide. Mostly, articles analyze the revivals emerging in the second half of the 20th century in the Soviet Union and its satellite states; still, some of the articles touch on earlier revival processes. In this introductory article, we have been cautious about extrapolating our conclusions to other countries besides Latvia, leaving it to experts of each geopolitical area. Yet, the Baltic and post-Soviet perspective of our research remains central.

The word *revival* appears in this issue paired with terms such as folk music, folklore, nation, folk. The terminological nuances can point to different aspects and context-specific meanings of revivals, even when related to the shared space of folk culture. Studies on various other revivals disclose similar processes in religion, art, music, and architecture by analyzing great diversity of cultural, social, and political phenomena. Two expanded volumes published almost simultaneously, *The Oxford Handbook of Music Revival* (Bithell, Hill 2014) and *Revival. Memories, Identities, Utopias* (Lepine et al. 2015), invite us to place folk culture-related revivals in a broader panorama of revival processes. This means discussing cultural practices, styles, and artifacts with a focus on their multiple temporalities, namely, "as the selective and deliberate re-purposing in the 'present' of a practice, a style, or an artifact recovered (and often persisting) from a 'past'" (Davis 2015: 12).

In his conceptualization of revival as "a world-wide phenomenon", Owe Ronström has paired it with other "re-concepts" such as revitalization, recreation, reorientation, re-enacting; at the same time, he expresses apt criticism of *revival* as an insufficient analytical concept, which is "often used to imply a difference between original and copy, real and unreal, authentic and inauthentic" (Ronström 1996: 6–7). Even in the narrower field of folk music and folklore, various revivals do not have the same stylistic and ideological content; however, they share the feature of reflecting the past while addressing the present cultural, social, political circumstances and intentions.

As noted by Juniper Hill and Caroline Bithell, although some revival efforts may have purely aesthetic motives, most are driven by implicit or explicit social, cultural, or political agendas, with activism recognized as a defining feature throughout their documented history (Bithell, Hill 2014: 10). The focus of this special issue – folklore revivals in non-democracies – clearly continues this line of theoretical thinking.

In the Baltics, folk music revivals cannot be separated from broader folklore practices, locally described with the emic term *folklore movement* (*folkloras kustība* in Latvian, *folkloro sąjūdis* in Lithuanian, *folklooriliikumine* in Estonian), which is used by both revivalists and researchers. The temporal reflection on the Baltic folklore

revival movements involves a sharp fracture created in these countries by the Second World War and the Soviet occupation. Under Soviet rule, referring to the heritage of the pre-Soviet past in a positive light was not only a cultural but also a political act. The strong political dimension distinguishes the histories of Baltic folklore revivals from other folk revival processes. Folklore in the Baltics was a vehicle for the revival of national identity and political independence, especially in the 20th century as it was an important part of the Singing Revolution (Šmidchens 2014), which led to the restoration of the independence of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

Hill and Bithell suggested not reading the word *revival* too literally with a focus on *re*-prefix only, as in re-contextualization and many other similar notions. Referring to anthropologist Ralph Linton's definition of nativistic movements (Linton 1943), they drew attention to the aspect of *continuity* or perpetuation as another significant understanding of revivals (Hill, Bithell 2014: 5). The Latvian and, more broadly, Baltic folklore movements were not only about re-contextualizing expressive artistic styles in the name of anti-modernity and cultural nostalgia, or creating alternative spaces to the officially promoted Soviet cultural reality. The experienced or inherited knowledge about the radical social, economic, linguistic and cultural transformations since the Second World War and the efforts of restoring continuity with the interrupted past form an interwoven theme for the Baltic revivalists.

The music and folklore revivals after the Second World War developed against the political background of the Cold War and the Iron Curtain. Several volumes have previously pointed to the specifics of Eastern bloc revival histories (Slobin 1996; Stavělová, Buckland 2018). The non-democratic, highly controlled sociopolitical environments added an extra layer of ideological contradiction and difficulty to the revivalist efforts, but also motivated them.

Even though the political aspect of the folklore revivals seems particularly explicit in the case of the Baltic countries, thus making them a good example to analyze from the perspective of social movement theory, crafting alternative identities through folklore activities was common throughout the entire Soviet Bloc. In this view, certain forms of folklore and peasant culture functioned as cultural opposition during socialism: folk art in recreational and youth culture, folk in pop culture, ethnographic research and archives on countercultural elements of folk culture, and peasant heritage in the values and behaviors of dissents and social transformation (Csurgó et al. 2018: 578; see also Žencis et al. 2024; Herzog 2010). An excellent example of the aforementioned is the *Táncáz* (dance house) movement in socialist Hungary, with these grassroots circles offering young people a voluntary, socially engaging alternative to the compulsory and ideologically controlled activities of the communist era (Balogh, Fülemele 2008).

A perpetual doubt during our three-year research project was whether the keyword *movement* allows us to define and academically discuss the Latvian and neighboring folklore movements within the framework of social movement theories. Or, sometimes more strictly: whether we should avoid the *emic* term *folklore movement* in academic discourse and look for a better, more analytical or widespread concept. In this journal issue, our conceptual decision was to prioritize the term *folklore movement* both to honor the “feeling of movement” (Eyerman 2006) of the researched communities, and to call for a broader interdisciplinary discussion on the twists and incompatibilities of revival and social movement theories, thus also between the humanities and social sciences which still often inhabit separated discursive spaces. At least two conversations are needed in this case. The first concerns the social and political aspects of artistic expression (with which we refer to folk culture in this issue) and the artistic aspects of social movements, which already have a decent research history. And the second – leading to the theme of this issue – concerns the character and range of possibilities for both cultural revivals and social movements in non-democracies, which is a more recent and less developed topic in academia.

Our three-year research project started in January 2022. In February, Russia invaded Ukraine, and the nearby war became a counterpoint to our research and made the flashbacks to the Soviet times even more acute and unresolved. This made our focus on the as yet less-studied non-democratic aspects of revival histories even more crucial, drawing the studied revivals out of a purely aesthetic and cultural realm into the arena of political claims and, at times, limited protest opportunities.

(Non)overlapping of the Social Movement and Revivalism Literature

In social sciences and humanities, many diverse collective, dynamic processes of change are described as *movements*. When generalized, many of these processes contain both cultural and political aspects and share comparable similarities. Still, a disciplinary divide persists between social scientists analyzing social and political movements, and humanities scholars focusing on cultural and artistic movements and revivals, with not much cross-referencing.

Among early 1940s–1950s writings on various movements, a cross-disciplinary view was present in anthropological literature. In his seminal theory, Anthony F. C. Wallace proposed the umbrella term *revitalization movements* to designate “all the phenomena of major cultural-system innovation” (Wallace 1956: 264). He noted that the various framings of such phenomena depend not only on their local characteristics but also “on the discipline and the theoretical orientation of the researcher” (*ibid.*).

He wrote that, from the viewpoint of behavioral sciences, all such movements follow a uniform process; therefore, he did not differentiate between revivals and social movements. A lot of far-reaching definitions and theories have been developed since then; however, the need for umbrella understandings occurs again in the current wave of academic interdisciplinarity.

In music revival studies, Tamara Livingston is known for defining music revivals as social movements which are "in opposition to aspects of the contemporary cultural mainstream" (Livingston 1999: 66). Her theoretical frame of reference leads back to Wallace (1956) as well as anthropologist Ralph Linton's theory of nativistic movements (Linton 1943). Nevertheless, for our point it is important that Livingston's definition did not provide a more detailed terminological dialogue with social movement theorists. More recently, a bridging link between music revivals and social movements has been proposed by sociologist Denise Milstein, who highlighted the intersection of art and politics in revivals: "Definitions that categorize revival as a social movement shed light on the intersection of political and aesthetic concerns in the search for new and old sounds" (Milstein 2014: 421).

Overall, despite the fact that the keyword *movement* is widespread within folk culture revival studies, a deeper dive into its theoretical opportunities and implications seems lacking, keeping it to a rather closed conversation within the study field. Recently, Theresa Jill Buckland and Daniela Stavělová called for terminological attention to the related terms *movement*, *folklorism* and *revivalism*, which occur as different labels for similar practices, but also can signal distinct connotations related to unique social, cultural, and political contexts (Buckland, Stavělová 2018: 8). From the perspective of the case studies covered in the publication edited by them, the term *revival* seems to have a broader meaning than *folklore movement*, which is used as a synonym for the regionally significant *folklorism* processes (ibid.: 9). From our point of view, this proves how diverse the understandings of the concept of *movement* can be.

The literature on social movements is much broader than research on music and folklore revivals, and nowadays it also contains extensive discussion related to cultural and artistic phenomena. Traditionally, artistic revivals did not fit into the modernist conception of social movements, which focused on economic and political protests in the context of class struggle. However, in the 1970s and 1980s, "changes in the nature of the phenomena themselves" and "new patterns in social movements" were noticed (Marx, Holzner 1975: 311), and research on so-called new social movements shifted from the economics and politics to the cultural and identity realm (Touraine 1985). After this cultural turn in research, extensive monographs have been dedicated to the cultural analysis of social movements (Johnston,

Klandermans 1995; Baumgarten et al. 2014; Reed 2019 [2005]). Some authors are noteworthy for addressing and bridging the disciplinary gap.

For the theme of this Introduction, the work of social scientists Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison is of high significance. Since the 1990s, they have been prominent in researching the interrelation between social movements and cultural expressions, particularly music, with an effort to bring the competing discourses of sociology and cultural theory into closer contact. Importantly, they also paid attention to the social agency of tradition in social movements. In their seminal book *Music and Social Movements: Mobilizing Traditions in the Twentieth Century* (1998), folk music revivals are seen in the context of social conditions and movements of the time, with a focus on the civil rights, student, and antiwar movements of the 1960s. They criticized the tendency of cultural and musical historians to stress the apolitical nature of music revivals. Specifically, they turn to folk revival studies:

It is somewhat limited to refer to these developments primarily in terms of a 'folk revival.' For what was going on was much more than a new wave of popularity for folk music [...] in terms of cultural transformation, it was rather the recombination of folk music with other musical genres [...] and the shaping of a totally new kind of oppositional 'youth' culture that seem most significant and long-lasting. [...] The social movements of the 1960s offered and practiced a new vision of participatory democracy, and that vision formed a central part of the cognitive praxis of the 'folk revival' (Eyerman, Jamison 1998: 107, 109).

By dedicating chapters and sections of their book to folk music revivals (and calling them social movements), they provided a broader sociological explanation to the new wave of mobilization of traditions that occurred in the second half of the 20th century, and suggested seeing its wider audiences and footprints in popular culture. Similar to noting that humanities scholars tend to overlook the political side of arts, they also pointed to sociologists' bias of seeing traditions as barriers to social change, innovation, and progress, and to their lack of a broader understanding of arts and tradition as dynamic mediators and performers of social and political transformation (see also Eyerman 2002, 2006).

A link between the research of artistic processes and social movements was also created by sociologist of culture Shyon Baumann. Based on a comparative review of the literature on social movements and artistic recognition, he found a strong analogy between how the art worlds and social movements succeed. He proposed a *theory of artistic legitimization* by referring to the factors explaining the paths of social movements, such as political opportunity structures, resource mobilization, and framing processes (Baumann 2006). When seen comparatively with social movements, artistic legitimization can be explained as follows:

Discrete areas of cultural production attain legitimacy as art, high or popular, during periods of high cultural opportunity through mobilizing material or institutional resources and through the exercise of a discourse that frames the cultural production as legitimate art according to one or more preexisting ideologies (Baumann 2006: 60).

In general, music in social movements has been studied the most (see e.g. Garofalo 1992; Roy 2010; Rosenthal, Flacks 2011; Redmond 2014; Kaltmeier, Raussert 2019). Fewer publications exist on the role of folklore (Smith 1967; Reich 1971; Davis 2002), yet the politicization of folklore is the subject of a growing number of studies (e.g., Kencis et al. 2024). The expanding body of literature connecting art worlds and social movements offers a rich opportunity to broaden academic theoretical interpretations and include less noticed facets in the scope of study.

Our conclusion is that, if a question arises whether the Latvian and other folklore movements can be analyzed in terms of social movement theory, this question is valid and deserves attention and academic dialogue. The skepticism is based on the common understanding of social movements in terms of open activism, protest, strategic action, and public display of collective dissent. Artistic revivals, however, are often about aesthetic and lifestyle choices, able to create such states as “a kind of inner freedom that the phenomenon of the folklore revival brought” (Buckland, Stavělová 2018: 7). The *modality* of revivals may seem much calmer, oriented toward internal opposition rather than external protest. Such subtler expressions, however, become important when encountering non-democratic circumstances – the binding aspect that will be outlined in the next section.

Social Movements and Revivals in Non-Democracies

Social movements are a central focus in sociology and political science, yet their complexity and dynamic nature makes them difficult to define. Broadly, social movements are political phenomena particularly connected to forms of “contentious politics” (Tilly, Tarrow 2007). By characterizing social movements as anti-systemic “challengers” (Tilly 1978; in Castañeda, Schneider 2017: 71), they are positioned as actors that disrupt the status quo, operating outside of the regular polity. Social movements are fundamentally relational, often emerging in opposition to powerful institutions, typically the government. Therefore, they should be studied together with the context in which they arise. However, they vary not only depending on the political context they emerge in, but also by the issues they address, the resources they can mobilize, and the type of actors they involve. When viewed as political actors, social movements can also be analyzed through the lens of power relations.

The contentious nature of social movements stems from the clash between two opposing interests: that of the movement and that of the authority they challenge.

A problem related to social movement studies, according to Charles Tilly and others, is that the term is sometimes too loosely applied to any kind of popular action or protest. From this problem arises the issue of properly defining social movements for the purposes of systematic analysis (Tilly, Tarrow 2007: 8). A vast amount of literature provides definitions across a broad spectrum ranging from very specific to inclusive and vague. Notwithstanding the difficulty in defining them, it is easier to do so through specific, measurable characteristics to facilitate their analysis, particularly in the context of non-democratic regimes. In the following, we will present two conceptions that are insightful, since they operationalize social movements through two different – and therefore complementary – sets of elements.

Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani (2020) describe social movements as comprising three key elements: a collective sense of identification, dense informal networks among actors, and conflictual collective action. Collective identity becomes a crucial element in the power of the movement and distinguishes a proper social movement from protest events. The strong ties among its participants guarantee that the movement has a certain temporal continuity. This definition of movement networks limits them to informal and non-hierarchical structures, which would be less available and more controlled in a non-democratic regime. As in the case of Latvian folklore movement in the Soviet Union, it included both formal and informal networks. Finally, to qualify as a social movement, actors must engage in some form of conflict. Without it, they would be more accurately described as "consensus movements" (Della Porta, Diani 2020: 44). Knowing that open conflict is hardly possible in a totalitarian regime, it is still acknowledged that ideological and political opposition was an interweaving motif in the Latvian and neighboring folklore movements.

Three different elements were proposed as criteria for a social movement by Charles Tilly and Lesley Wood (2020: 6–8): campaign, repertoire, and WUNC displays (worthiness, unity, numbers, commitment). The element of *campaign* refers to sustained efforts involving multiple, varied, and interconnected actions tied together by a common narrative thread. The second element, the *repertoire*, encompasses a variety of actions that are used to make claims visible, including artistic expressions. The last element, WUNC, is an acronym for four factors: worthiness (participation of certain social groups or famous individuals that legitimize the movement), unity (objects or symbols that participants display or wear as identifying markers, and coordinated actions such as marching or singing), numbers (ability to attract large numbers of participants, measured through signatures, gatherings and other

engagement forms), and commitment (demonstrated through visible sacrifices, such as enduring adverse conditions or the participation of vulnerable groups). This set of elements presents social movements as strategically organized entities that emphasize public visibility. To a large extent, this description corresponds to the Latvian folklore movement process; however, the most doubtful could be its "campaign" character, as it should rather be considered a wider and vaguer process.

Comparing these two conceptions, we can conclude that the case of the Latvian folklore movement does not fully "tick all the boxes"; still, most of the listed social movement criteria are relevant for discussing this folklore revival movement within the Soviet Union, and possibly also other neighboring folk culture revivals. Criteria such as a collective sense of identification, uniting symbols, repertoire and actions, informal networks, worthiness, and conflictual collective efforts might also be available in non-democracies, with conflictuality not necessarily being overt but interpreted as involving two contending sides – the subjects of the movement and the authorities – who hold opposing interests.

Social movements are often analyzed in terms of democracy or, at least, a positive degree of democratization of the country. Chen and Moss (2019) suggest that the conditions that contribute to democratization – disintegration of centralized authoritarian structures, an increase in the number of participants in politics, and the formation of connections among them – also influence the emergence and development of social movements. The opposite is also true, i.e. social movements contribute to the creation of these elements that foster democratization. Still, movements are often framed as strategic, organized activism, which is not assumed to be possible in non-democratic conditions. It is important to add that scholars have recently stressed that non-democratic systems have been strongly under-represented in social movement theory, and newer, more comprehensive theories have been developed (Rohlinger, Corrigall-Brown 2019).

A key consideration regarding non-democratic systems is the available window of opposition or protest. Unarmed and indirect resistance might be the only opportunity of social protest there, as it is generally assumed that "in most contexts civilians have the strategic advantage with regard to nonviolent resistance" (Schock, Demetriou 2019: 348). Societies in the Baltics have a long history of nonviolent resistance, defined as "the struggle by individuals, by social groups and even by entire peoples, to assert their vested rights by recourse to psychological, social, economic, political and other non-military methods" (Blūzma et al. 2009: 21). In non-democratic systems, individuals and groups that engage in collective actions aimed at countering some aspects of the regime need to find alternative ways to speak up. As repression can take several forms, non-violent resistance also manifests in

numerous forms. Through the decades, scholars have identified different classes of unarmed resistance (Blūzma et al. 2009; Eglitis 1993; Sharp 1973), which can be summarized in the following three categories.

The first is passive opposition: social, political, and economic non-cooperation and acts of omission, such as refusing to sing songs and play certain state-promoted music, or declining to participate in certain mandatory activities. The second is active nonviolent resistance, protest, and intervention, such as singing banned songs, performing unauthorized plays or music, or displaying flags or symbolic colors. The third is spiritual resistance, such as the maintenance of prohibited traditions, cultural expressions, and the celebration of banned holidays. These actions are considered non-traditional, unpredictable, and flexible to change, making them particularly suitable for escaping state control.

Cultural expressions such as music and art form both repertoires and resources for a social movement by nonviolent means. Music might not be political *per se* but may contain hidden meanings, such as specific melodies and texts, their performance in contentious situations, or by specific actors. Such acts can be interpreted both as the politicization of art and the aestheticization of protest. In non-democratic systems, it is typical to use such alternative resources of opposition, among which is artistic expression (Mathieu 2019).

Steven M. Buechler speaks of "free spaces" as a half-way point between political power and everyday life. This dimension is considered specifically relevant for the creation and consolidation of collective identity, and "free spaces" are possible in non-democratic contexts in informal forms (Buechler 1995: 446). A similar point was proposed by Alberto Melucci, who wrote about two poles of a social movement: visibility and (pre-political) latency (Melucci 1989: 70–73), whereby "the potential for resistance or opposition is sewn into the very fabric of daily life" (*ibid.*: 71).

Several studies on the Baltic independence movements, including Ainė Ramonaitė's article in this issue, point to the folklore movements as pre-political resources – a gradually formed fertile soil for the rapid emergence of nationalist social movements during perestroika in the late 1980s. As noted by Beissinger, "a vibrant nationalist subculture persisted, helping to explain why Baltic nationalisms emerged so quickly once a political opening materialized" (Beissinger 2009: 233).

The aim of this section was to point out that cultural and artistic efforts, such as folklore movements, can be a significant oppositional resource in non-democratic regimes. If the folklore movements analyzed in this issue do not always fit into the dominant theoretical frameworks of social movements, one approach would be to conclude that social movement theory is not relevant here. However, as the cited sources demonstrate, the terminology and frameworks used for describing social

movements actually open up a broader and advantageous perspective for discussing folklore movements in various social and political circumstances. If there is much less research in this area, this might be more of an opportunity than a shortcoming. Non-democratic circumstances are a factor that brings social movements and artistic revivals closer. Some kind of resistance and protest is present in any revival, but in non-democracies it takes a more intense shape, linked to the state's strong control, surveillance, censorship, restrictions on performance, the violent rupture of cultural and state continuity, the threat to its existence, and the difficult flow of communication and influences from abroad.

The Themes and Composition of This Issue

The articles of this issue are grouped under four titles, addressing several issues of folklore revivals in non-democracies: *Folklore as Resource*, *Revival Manifestos*, *Revival as Survival*, and *Cold War Divide*. Other recurring themes in this issue are the sensibility toward successive historical periods and layers of folk culture revivals, the general societal visibility of folklore movements, and the discussion of authenticity under non-democratic political circumstances.

Folklore as Resource

This issue begins with two theoretically innovative articles that bring attention to the instrumentalization of folklore as a discursive and political power. The proposed conceptual frames are the discourse of authenticity, Pierre Bourdieu's field and capital theory, and social movement theory.

Within the context of the non-democratic Soviet regimes in the Baltic States, the meaning of authenticity for the folklore movement crystallized against the backdrop of specific Soviet aesthetics. Much of the thinking that fueled the folklore movement in the Baltics was directed against the Sovietized version of folklore.

Toms Ķencis, in the article *Authenticity as a Symbolic Capital of the Folklore Field: The Case of Soviet Latvia*, analyzes the Latvian folklore revival through Bourdieu's field and capital theory, showing how authenticity operated as symbolic capital in the struggles between Soviet cultural authorities and grassroots revivalists. As argued by Ķencis, by mobilizing authenticity as cultural resistance, revivalists transformed social and cultural capital into symbolic power, contributing to broader national and political shifts during the perestroika era.

The question of the visibility and power of the folklore movement in the broader society is analyzed in **Ainé Ramonaitė's** article *Tracing the Influence of Folklore Revival on Lithuania's National Independence Movement*. Ramonaitė applies resource mobilization theory to examine empirical data on the links between the folklore

movement and the Lithuanian Reform Movement *Sąjūdis*, demonstrating the influence of folk revivalists on the emerging political movement. She concludes that, “although the ethno-cultural movement was not overtly political, it did have a significant and tangible impact on the national independence movement in the late 1980s”, thus confirming the importance of the folklore movement in cultural opposition and the independence processes in the Baltic States.

Revival Manifestos The next three articles reveal how the Baltic folklore movement’s revivalist practices operated as multifaceted manifestos, articulating cultural opposition through visual, textual, and musical forms. Each case shows how revival was not only a return to tradition but also a deliberate strategy of communication, identity construction, and a creative practice. As these studies illustrate, folk revival in the Baltic context was not merely about safeguarding tradition but about producing declarations of opposition, identity, and self-determination. Through visual symbols, festival discourse, and musical practice, the folklore movement encoded its political aspirations into everyday and performative forms, turning revival into a vehicle for both cultural continuity and political transformation.

The turn toward visually pronounced political statement and folklore movement-related expressions of cultural opposition carried out in the visual realm are analyzed by **Digne Ūdre-Lielbārde** in the article *Visualizing Cultural Opposition: Folklore Movement in Late Soviet Latvia*. Besides discussing visual opposition and self-representation within the folklore movement, the article focuses on the reinstatement of the Soviet-banned carmine red–white–carmine red flag of the independent Republic of Latvia at one of its first public displays at the opening concert of the International Folklore Festival *Baltica* on July 13, 1988. As argued by Ūdre-Lielbārde, this marked the moment when the folklore movement gained clear political outlines and dovetailed with the claims of the political part of the independence movement.

The International Folklore Festival *Baltica* was one of the most important events of the folklore movement in the Baltic States. Considering the scale and importance of the festival, it is discussed by several authors in this issue. A novel theoretical approach to analyzing folklore festival programs as manifestos is proposed by **Aleida Bertran** in her article *Theorizing Festival Programs as Manifestos: The International Folklore Festival Baltica during the Singing Revolution (1987–1991)*. Through the theoretical framework of critical discourse analysis, Bertran proposes interpreting the discourse of festival programs as manifestos that legitimize the history, heritage, and knowledge of a festival community under censorship. In this view, the festival programs are not only crucial for understanding the festival’s

history but also help uncover the degree of political involvement of the folklore movement in the independence claims.

Besides the conceptualization of the value of the archaic, the ambiguity, elasticity and capacity of the term *authentic* is well demonstrated by **Valdis Muktupāvels**'s article *Archaization versus Modernization: The Revival of Instrumental Traditions in Riga Folklore Ensembles, Late 1970s and 1980s*. The revival of musical instruments was aimed at rejecting modernized and professionalized instruments introduced by Soviet cultural policies. This meant that not only more primitive and archaic instruments were favored, but also new ones were created. Authenticity, as Muktupāvels describes it, was imagined to reside in those music instruments considered to be the most archaic, for example, the herders' instruments believed to have originated in prehistoric times. Moreover, as their playing did not require formal musical education, this was important for the members of the folklore movement who distanced themselves from professional interpretations of folk music. Often, the lack of historical sources on folk musical instruments encouraged revivalists to experiment and be creative. As Muktupāvels's article shows, authenticity embraces creativity, and many of the innovations introduced by the revivalists have become part of today's canon of musical instruments considered traditional.

Revival as Survival The third group of articles comprises several detailed case studies showing how, alongside the wish to reconnect with, preserve, and restore aspects of a community's traditions and heritage, revivals are also a response to social, political, or cultural circumstances and often stand in opposition to the given conditions. These historical case studies focus on revivals as cultural survival mechanisms in the face of radical changes brought by geopolitical events and political regimes.

The term *folklore movement* in the post-Second World War communist and socialist territory in Europe, and especially in the Baltics, is used in a narrower meaning, reserved for the period of late socialism and perestroika. However, heightened interest in preserving and reviving folklore has a longer history reaching back to the national awakenings of the 19th century. Often, these historical layers of revivals form a firm ground for the next waves of revival initiatives. As analyzed by **Aigars Lielbārdis** in the article *Ethnographic Ensembles in Latvia: From Village to Stage*, one of such important historical layers in Latvia, connected to staging folklore, was the emergence of the so-called ethnographic ensembles. Continuing the practice of staging folklore established during the interwar period, the first use of the term *ethnographic ensemble* in Latvia occurred during the first Soviet occupation in 1941. As with many folklore-related practices, ethnographic ensembles expressed,

promoted, and maintained the aesthetics of the Soviet amateur art, but at the same time they were crucial in preserving folklore and traditions, providing a means to express national sentiment. According to Lielbārdis, ethnographic ensembles set the conditions for the development of a distinctive culture of folk music performance, which in the 1970s developed into a nationwide folklore revival movement.

In the article *Diametrically Opposed? The Survival/Revival Chances of an Interwar Folk Culture Movement under Communist Dictatorship in Hungary*, Anna Klára Andor traces the history of Hungary's interwar folklore movement *Gyöngyösbokréta* (1931–1948), which evolved from a tourist attraction into a government-supported campaign for safeguarding peasant heritage and national identity. After 1945, the communist regime dismantled this framework, replacing it with state-controlled ensembles designed to oppose the earlier model, forcing communities and revivalists to seek alternative strategies of cultural preservation. The study also highlights the resilience of *Gyöngyösbokréta* in Vojvodina, Serbia, where it adapted to shifting political contexts and continues to survive today as a festival tradition.

The dynamics between experts and the local population – or rather lack thereof – is discussed in Lina Petrošienė's article *Musical Folklore of Lithuania Minor During the Soviet Era (1946–1989): The Voices Lost and the Forms of Revitalization*. The revival of the musical folklore of Lithuania Minor (nowadays divided between the Russian Federation and Lithuania) in the Klaipėda Region of Lithuania started in the 1970s and was largely carried out by folklorists, dialectologists, ethnomusicologists, and other professionals, but not by the Lietuvinkai – the autochthonous people of the region. Moving from the revival to the post-revival phase, as argued by Petrošienė, the revival of the musical folklore of Lithuania Minor can be considered a transition of the tradition into the state of intangible cultural heritage, thus marking the legacies of the folklore movement.

Larysa Lukashenko's article *Preconditions, Establishment, and Development of Folk Music Revival in Ukraine (late 1970s – early 1990s)* examines the historical, political, and socio-cultural preconditions that led to the emergence of the Ukrainian folk music revival between the late 1970s and early 1990s. It situates the revival within the broader context of late Soviet stagnation, tracing how ensembles such as *Drevo*, *Slobozhany*, *Horyna*, *Dzherelo*, and *Rodovid* became key actors in reshaping traditional music. By analyzing their formation, repertoire, and methods of activity, Lukashenko highlights the revival's reliance on both internal cultural traditions and external influences. The article underscores the enduring significance of these early ensembles in shaping the trajectory and identity of the Ukrainian folk music revival into the post-Soviet era.

Cold War Divide The last group of articles address the larger geopolitical context of the Cold War and the Iron Curtain in folklore movement and folklore research histories by providing three perspectives on Latvian cultural processes and showing that the folklore movement was shaped as much by transnational connections and cross-border networks as by local practices. These articles reveal that the Latvian folklore revival was never confined to a purely local or apolitical sphere: it was inherently entangled with the global tensions and cultural exchanges of the Cold War. Folklore served as both a medium of solidarity across borders and a site of contestation within ideological struggles, allowing revivalists to negotiate identity on a transnational stage.

Even though the relations between Latvian folklore revivalists and folklore researchers have not been without friction, expert knowledge has been an important part of the folklore process. **Rita Zara's** article *Guests Beyond the Iron Curtain: Cross-Border Visits of Latvian Folklorists during the Cold War* contributes to the topic of the Cold War divide in the academic practice of folkloristics. During the Cold War, Latvian folklorists in Soviet-occupied Riga worked under strict ideological control and KGB surveillance, with limited contact beyond the socialist bloc. Yet, through the Committee for Cultural Relations with Compatriots Abroad, carefully managed exchanges with exile communities in the West created rare cross-border encounters that connected divided Latvian scholarly and cultural worlds.

Another analysis of the International Folklore Festival *Baltica* appears in **Ilga Vālodze Ābelkina's** article *International Folklore Festival Baltica '88: The Return of Latvian Folk Music from Exile*. The festival is examined from the perspective of the relations between folklore revivalists in Soviet-occupied Latvia and the exiled Latvian diaspora of the Second World War refugees and their descendants in the West. By analyzing two Latvian exile folklore groups – *Kolibri* from the USA and *Vilcējas* from Sweden – that participated in *Baltica '88*, Ābelkina addresses the networking of revivalists across borders on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

A focus on the connections and networks between individuals, folklore groups, and media helps to explore the question of the visibility of the folklore movement in a broader society. In her article *Transnational Networks Behind Folk Music Revivals: A Methodological Study of the Latvian Folklore Group Skandinieki*, **Ieva Weaver** zooms in on the example of the Latvian folklore group *Skandinieki*. The focus on one of the leading groups of the Latvian folklore movement helps to unearth the importance of the transnational ties between the revivalists and their allies in different countries. Weaver's article not only confirms the active contacts and flows of inspirations between Baltic revivalists, but also analyzes the somewhat uncomfortable and previously neglected question of the connections between Baltic and Russian

revivalists, drawing the conclusion that the "history of the Latvian folklore revival can't be written without consideration of the role of Russia". Another aspect of Weaver's article is treating printed media as revival actors in creating the "folklore worlds" on both sides of the Iron Curtain and showing the instrumentalization of folklore as an ideological weapon.

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