



Joanna Ligenzowska

Uniwersytet Rolniczy
im. Hugona Kołłątaja w Krakowie
Instytut Ekonomiczno-Społeczny
ripsa@tlen.pl

Jakub Piecuch

Uniwersytet Rolniczy
im. Hugona Kołłątaja w Krakowie
Instytut Ekonomiczno-Społeczny
ripsa@tlen.pl

NATIONAL MINORITIES INTEGRATION IN THE BALTIC STATES

Summary: The purpose of this article is to review immigrant integration policy in the Baltic States, in particular emphasis on the issue of access to social services and the general model of social policy towards minority groups. In the introduction to the topic are primarily issues related to the overall look at the issue of immigration in the Baltic States and the structure of in the context of immigrant origin. In the next part of the paper outlines the overall picture of integration policy in the Baltic States, taking into account national legislation. The whole issue was supplemented analyzed by reviewing the most important government programs in Baltic States in order to quickly and efficiently integrate the newly arrived residents of local communities.

Keywords: Baltic States, integration, national minorities.

Introduction

Worldwide known as the Baltic States – Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia are three countries located on the eastern coast of Baltic Sea. Together stand over an area of approximately 175 000 km² with 6.5 million of inhabitants. Each of them belong to the group of the smallest countries in Europe. Apart from geographical location, Baltic States share the same historical, cultural, economic and political factors, which determine its development. Until the year 1991 all this area were a part of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics what had enormous influence on their political, economical and ethnical situation and future growth.

The purpose of this article is to exemplify the assimilation process of national minorities in three Baltic States since the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990 and it's impact on a future development.

There are two fundamental factors which have determined changes in a situation of the minorities in Baltic States during last three decades. The most important one was the dissolution of Soviet Empire in early nineties of XX century, the second was the integration with European Union structures in 2004. From the perspective of Poland, the changes which take place in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia are crucial, because of Polish minorities in these countries and anxiety of the extension of the conflict in Ukraine, where the situation of Russian minorities were used as a pretext for intervention. This paper focuses on territorial units, regarded in the European statistical nomenclature as NUTS 1 level. Research bases on the analysis of national reports and studies. The data collected or estimated by the national statistics, and EUROSTAT also have been used.

The first part of the paper presents the social changes that took apart in a Baltic States in historical perspective. And the second part is focused on adjustments taking place after dissolution of Soviet Union and integration with EU.

1. History

After the Second World War Baltic States lost their independence and Soviet rules forced these countries to give up their sovereignty and submit to Soviet power. Moreover incorporation into Soviet Republic brought two great processes, russification and sovietization. Far and foremost the main aim was to transform those societies into one communistic nation and assimilate them with the rest of the Soviet empire [Best, 2013]. However russification in Baltic countries was pursuing a the policy of favoring inflow to the Baltic republics of people from other Soviet republics. That is why during this period, Russians were encouraged to migrate to those countries to work, and through this immigration process, the number of Russian residents within these countries increased whereas influx of people from others Soviet Republics could be observed as well. The most difficult situation was in Latvia and Estonia where percent of the Russian – speaking immigrants was increasing from year to year. The reason of such kind of situation lied in quite high level of development of those two countries. Latvian Republic and Estonia were more industrialized and were offering more workplaces. Due to this fact, local people started being marginalized. In addition a lot of inhabitants were deported to labor camp or killed. Thus those factors changed the face of the countries [Eberhardt, 2009].

Table 1. The ethnic composition of Latvia during 1959-1989

Nationality	Population (in thousands)				Difference 1959-1989	
	1959	1970	1979	1989	in thousands	%
Latvians	1297,9	1341,8	1344,1	1387,8	+89,9	+6,9
Russians	556,5	704,6	821,5	905,5	+349,0	+62,7
Belarusians	61,6	94,9	111,5	119,7	+58,1	+84,1
Ukrainians	29,4	53,5	66,7	92,1	+62,7	+213,3
Poles	59,8	63,0	62,7	60,4	+0,6	+ 1,0
Lithuanians	32,4	40,6	37,8	34,6	+2,2	+6,8
Jews	36,6	36,7	28,3	22,9	-13,7	-37,4
Estonians	4,6	4,3	3,7	3,3	-1,3	-28,3
Other nationalities	14,7	24,7	26,5	40,3	+25,6	+ 174,1
Total	2093,5	2364,1	2502,8	2666,6	+573,1	+27,3

Source: 1959 – *Itogi vsesojuznoj perepisi nasielienija 1959 g.*, Centralnoje Statisticeskoje Upravlenie, Moskva 1963; 1970 – *Itogi vsesojuznoj perepisi nasielienija 1970 g.*, Centralnoje Statisticeskoje Upravlenie, Moskva 1972; 1979 – *Itogi vsesojuznoj perepisi nasielienija 1979 g.*, Centralnoje Statisticeskoje Upravlenie, Moskva 1981; 1989 – *Nacjonalyj sostav nasielienija SSSR. Po danym vsesojuznoj perepisi nasielienija 1989 g.*, Gosudarstviennyj Komitet SSSR po Statistike, Moskva 1991.

In the period of 30 years number of Russian-speaking immigrants increased in Latvia to 41,9% whereas the number of local inhabitants decreased to 52% of the total population of the country. In 1989 the Russian were the biggest ethnic minority – over 900 thousand people however the fastest growing was observed among Ukrainians. Due to the tendencies described above, there was a serious risk that the Latvians would become a minority in their own country.

Moreover, simultaneously the changes in Latvian occurred linguistic changes. Russian language were more preferred than local, what caused an isolation of Latvians because they were keeping together and they did not want to assimilate with immigrants who were not able to learn their language. As a result Russian-speaking people were gaining more and more power in decision making in each of the regions.

The situation was analogical in Estonia where Russian-speaking population was concentrated in the main cities and in the capital (Tallinn) in a first place, not in a countryside. Therefore Russians were more expansive and played more dominated role in country life. In 1989 the Russians reached 30,3% of total population and with remaining of Russian – speaker they represented almost half country population [Eberhardt, 2009]. Like in Latvia, the fastest influx of foreign population was from Ukraine – 205,7% over 30 years.

Table 2. The ethnic composition of Estonia during 1959-1989

Nationality	Population (in thousands)				Difference 1959-1989	
	1959	1970	1979	1989	in thousands	in %
Estonians	892,7	925,2	947,8	963,3	+70,6	+7,9
Russians	240,2	334,6	408,8	747,8	+234,6	+97,7
Ukrainians	15,8	28,1	36,0	48,2	+32,4	+205,7
Belarusians	10,9	18,7	23,5	27,7	+16,8	+ 154,1
Finns	16,2	18,5	17,8	16,6	+0,4	+2,4
Jews	5,4	5,3	5,0	4,6	-0,8	-14,8
Germany		7,9	3,9	3,5	+3,5	
Latvians	2,9	3,3	4,0	3,1	+0,2	+6,9
Poles	2,3	2,7	2,9	3,0	+0,7	+30,4
Lithuanians				2,6	+2,6	
Other nationalities	10,4	11,8	14,8	18,3	+7,9	+75,0
Total	1196,8	1356,1	1464,5	1565,7	+368,9	+30,8

Source: 1959 – *Itogi vsesojuznoj perepisi naselienija 1959 g.*, Centralnoje Statisticeskoje Upravlenie, Moskva 1963; 1970 – *Itogi vsesojuznoj perepisi naselienija 1970 g.*, Centralnoje Statisticeskoje Upravlenie, Moskva 1972; 1979 – *Itogi vsesojuznoj perepisi naselienija 1979 g.*, Centralnoje Statisticeskoje Upravlenie, Moskva 1981; 1989 – *Nacjonalnyj sostav naselienija SSSR. Po danym vsesojuznoj perepisi naselienija 1989 g.*, Gosudarstviennyj Komitet SSSR po Statistike, Moskva 1991.

Situation was slightly different in Lithuanian Republic which was the most populated country among those three. The main reason was an economical situation. Lithuania was more rural country then Estonia and Latvia and it did not have a lot of workplaces to offer, thus Lithuania was less attractive for immigrants. Furthermore influence of catholic religion was also strong barrier in sovietization process. In addition demographic growth within 30 years was much faster than in other republics: 1950 – 2573,4 thousands, 1959 – 2711,4 thousands, 1970 – 3128,2 thousands, 1979 – 3391,5 thousands, 1989 – 3674,8 thousands. Nevertheless a percentage of the foreign nations especially in the biggest cities, was quite high and dominated by two nations Russians and Poles. That had consequences from strategic point of view because they hold high stands in administration and had big influence on government policy [Eberhardt, 2009].

Table 3. The ethnic composition of Lithuania during 1959-1989

Nationality	Population (in thousands)				Difference 1959-1989	
	1959	1970	1979	1989	in thousands	in %
Lithuanians	2150,8	2506,8	2712,2	2924,3	+773,5	+36,0
Russians	231,0	268,0	303,5	344,5	+ 113,5	+49,1
Poles	230,0	240,2	247,0	258,0	+28,0	+ 12,2
Belarusians	30,3	45,4	57,6	63,2	+32,9	+ 108,6
Jews	24,7	23,6	14,7	12,4	-12,3	-49,8
Ukrainians	17,7	25,1	32,0	44,8	+27,1	+ 153,1
Latvians	6,3	5,1	4,4	4,2	-2,1	-33,3
Other nationalities	20,6	14,0	20,1	23,4	+2,8	+ 13,6
Total	2711,4	3128,2	3391,5	3674,8	+963,4	+35,5

Source: 1959 – *Itogi vsesojuznoj perepisi nasielienija 1959 g.*, Centralnoje Statisticeskoje Upravlenie, Moskva 1963; 1970 – *Itogi vsesojuznoj perepisi nasielienija 1970 g.*, Centralnoje Statisticeskoje Upravlenie, Moskva 1972; 1979 – *Itogi vsesojuznoj perepisi nasielienija 1979 g.*, Centralnoje Statisticeskoje Upravlenie, Moskva 1981; 1989 – *Nacijonalnyj sostav nasielienija SSSR. Po danym vsesojuznoj perepisi nasielienija 1989 g.*, Gosudarstviennyj Komitet SSSR po Statistiki, Moskva 1991.

2. Immigration: Statelessness and Citizenship since 1991

After regaining independence, the relationship between Russia and Baltic States had dramatically changed. For a couple of month Russian-speaking minorities lost their significance. Because of restructurisation of the economy and collapse of some large domestic enterprises, most of Russians lost their job and had to leave Lithuania and Estonia. Moreover Latvia and Estonia perceived foreign minorities as unnecessary part of society and were aiming to limiting their influence by imposing its own legacies which occurred to be very restrictive for non-citizens. Apart of only in Lithuania where in the acts of discrimination based on race, language or other motives related to a person's nationality, were prohibited and were punishable. The different choices made by Estonia and Latvia on the one hand, and Lithuania on the other can be linked to their different demographical situation at the moment of regained independence. In effect since 1990 there was observed a fast decreasing Russian-speaking population. However it did not mean that society, which was built for over 50 years changed rapidly. Many Russian-speaking citizenship stayed despite hostile policy of the State. In 2011, the most ethnically homogenous country was Lithuania, where the inhabitants of other nations numbered less than 20%, including Poles (6%) and Rus-

sians (5%). However, in Latvia this proportion of the population reached almost 40%, while in Estonia it was 32%. Due to different attitude of each republic to minorities the right to obtaining citizenship has been highly diversified so far.

Estonian Citizenship Act introduced very strict conditions of “naturalization” for post Soviet population. Generally they got back to the situation from before 1940. Citizens of the former Soviet Union who had arrived during the Soviet era and their children had – and still have to pass a process of naturalization to receive an Estonian passport. This procedure implies *inter alia* that the candidates have to prove their knowledge of the constitution, the history and the national anthem; they have to swear an oath of allegiance and, foremost, they have to pass an examination testing proficiency in the national language [*The Estonian Citizenship Act*, 1993]. The criterion involving long-term ties with Estonia was obviously meant to exclude those minorities who entered the country in large numbers during the Soviet era (for example Ukrainians). Furthermore this law not allows them voting and deprived of them many to take an active role in the life of the State or change their situation. This resulted that in 1992 there was almost 32% of Estonia’s population were individuals with undefined citizenship. Situation has changed because processes of migration, naturalization and far and foremost adaptation. By 2006, the percentage of stateless people in Estonia fell to 8%. Before accession to the European Union Estonia has started integration policy, which aimed an assimilation minorities with the rest of Estonians. Government set 3 main priorities: linguistic-communicative integration: the creation of a common sphere of information and the Estonian language environment with the preservation of cultural diversity; legal-political integration, understood as a creation of population loyal to the Estonian state, and a reduction of the number of residents without Estonian citizenship, socio-economic integration understood as the achievement of greater competitiveness and social mobility regardless of ethnicity and native language [Poleshchuk, 2009]. Priority was given to knowledge of the Estonian language and to the acquisition of Estonian citizenship. Liberalization of the law allowed also vast amount of non-citizenship on leading normal live and protect them their own culture and language.

Latvia similar as Estonia has very restrictive law, which must to be fulfill to obtain citizenship. When the Soviet Union dissolved into successor states in 1991, it significant population in Latvia was left without clearly defined citizenship. A “zero-option,” which would have effectively granted citizenship to all residents of Latvia after the dissolution of the USSR, was rejected. Latvia was stand over by the highest amount Russian-speaking people but concerns of local government for destructive influence for those. Therefore only the people who

had Latvians ancestors before 1940, had a right to obtain the citizenship. Moreover only people with proficiency level of Latvian language was employed in state services. Although, the biggest controversy aroused Education Act. Students in minority schools were obliged to conduct at least 60% of their education in Latvian at the high-school level, what aimed at tremendous progress in the linguistic assimilation. National minority schools operating under different education programs persisted in Latvia until the mid-1990s [Ekmanis, 2009]. Due to the pervasive criticism of the European countries those rules has started change since 1998. After this period government introduced new core curriculum in eight national minority programs and made modifications such as provisions for dual citizenship, as well as loosening naturalization requirements and easing the path to citizenship for children of non-citizens [Ekmanis, 2009]. Residents were eligible to become naturalized citizens if they had resided in Latvia for at least five years, had a reasonable command of the Latvian language, and renounced any previous citizenship. Those changes seemed to be very unexpected and quite liberal but there was only one reason – association agreement with the European Union. Latvia, like Estonia struggled with the problem of statelessness and with unequal treatment of minorities what was not acceptable. Currently, the law changing encouraging and allows dual citizenship take part in voting and easily move through the area UE, EFTA and NATO.

Lithuania, alternatively to Estonia and Latvia after regaining sovereignty, preferred to apply the so-called “zero-option”, which meant the granting of citizenship to all permanent residents of the restored Lithuanian state regardless of nationality and without any language requirements [*The Lithuanian Citizenship Law*, 1991]. A result of much smaller concerns of Lithuanian government about problem of non-citizenship they lead normal life. It is worth beholding that because of low number of minorities, the problem actually did not exist what allowed to be very liberal. For example in 2001 more than 83,4% of the populations are Lithuanians, 6,7% Poles, 6,3% Russians. The other minorities in the country are marginal (Byelorussians 1,7%, Ukrainians 1,2%, Jews 0,2%, Germans 0,3%, Roma 0,1%, Tartars 0,1%) [Kallonen, 2004]. Constitution of Lithuania ensured equal human rights and fundamental freedoms to all the people. Moreover Article 37 of the Constitution spells out that “Citizens who belong to *ethnic communities* shall have of right to foster their language, culture and customs” [*Advisory Committee...*, 2003]. Hence minorities have right to develop the culture, language, customs and traditions of their nation or ethnic group and to preserve their national/ethnic identity, the State’s support in developing their national culture and education and to use freely and without interference his or her minority language, in private

and in public, orally and in writing [*Advisory Committee...*, 2003]. In addition Lithuanians are able to create their own radio and television programmes in their own language. Also newspapers printed in the minority language can be sell. In compare to Latvia and Estonia domination of Russia did not influence on policy toward national minorities.

Summary

The purpose of the article was to described integration process of the minorities in Baltic States since the time of the fall of the Soviet Union in 1990.

Since the Second World War when Baltic States had lost their independence there has been a large influx of people from other Soviet republics which resulted in the marginalization of local communities. After nearly 50 years of captivity percentage of foreigners in some large cities of Estonia and Latvia was higher than the percentage of the citizens of these countries. The result of this situation was a resentment and hostility towards the residents population. That is why when Baltic States became free again introduced very restrictive law of naturalization and obtaining citizenship.

In Latvia and Estonia process of integration might be divide on three periods: post-transitional confrontation being an effect from the institutionalization of hegemonic control and ethnic dominance and entailing escalation to ethno-political crisis, transition to de-escalation, a 'wait-and-see' period followed by exploration of the alternative strategies of conflict management through political and societal integration and initial attenuation of ethnic tensions and start of conflict transformation in conjunction with implementation of integrationist strategies of ethnic peace-building [Aklaev, 2001]. In compare to Latvia and Estonia Lithuania which was not dominated so much by russian-speaking minorities from the beginning brought in very liberal law relating to non-citizenships.

Accession to European Union forced a change in a policy of Baltic States because the protection and participation of minorities is one of the founding principles of the EU. It is implicitly incorporated through the notion of subsidiarity, which is manifested in the Maastricht Treaty or in the European Council of Copenhagen [*Copenhagen Criteria...*, 1993]. It is a reason which allowed bringing in new integration programmes and donating cooperation between Baltic States and minorities in those countries.

Literature

- Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (FCNM) (2003), Opinion on Lithuania, www.coe.int/T/E/Human_Rights/Minorities (dostęp: 10.10.2014).
- Aklaev A. (2001), *From Confrontation to Integration: The Evolution of Ethnopolitics in the Baltic States*, PRIF-Reports, No 59.
- Best M. (2013), *The Ethnic Russian Minority: A Problematic Issue in the Baltic States*, "Verges: Germanic & Slavic Studies in Review", Vol. 1, s. 33-41.
- Copenhagen Criteria. Bulletin of the European Community* (1993).
- Dudzińska K. (2012), *The (Un)resolved Problem of National Minorities in the Baltic States*, "PISM", No 31 (364), s. 662-663, Warszawa.
- Eberhardt P. (2009), *Przemiany narodowościowe w państwach bałtyckich na przełomie XX i XXI wieku*, Roczniki Nauk Społecznych, 37, z. 1, s. 93-111, Warszawa.
- Ekmanis I. (2013), *Judging the Book by Its Cover? Latvian Integration beyond the Headlines*, REECAS.
- The Estonian Citizenship Act* (1993), www.legaltext.ee (dostęp:10.10.2014).
- Federal State Statistical Service (Centralnoje Statisticeskoje Upravlenie), Moskwa 1963, 1970, 1972, 1979, 1981, 1989, 1991.
- Kallonen M. (2004), *Minority Protection and Linguistic Rights in Lithuania*, EURAC.
- The Lithuanian Citizenship Law* (1991), www.urm.lt (dostęp: 10.10.2014).
- Poleshchuk V. (2009), *Minority Rights in Estonia and Latvia*, Tallinn.

INTEGRACJA MNIEJSZOŚCI NARODOWYCH W KRAJACH BAŁTYCKICH

Streszczenie: Celem niniejszego artykułu jest przegląd polityki integracji imigrantów w krajach bałtyckich ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem kwestii dostępu do usług społecznych i ogólnego modelu polityki społecznej wobec grup mniejszościowych. Poruszono tu przede wszystkim kwestie związane z ogólnym spojrzeniem na tematykę imigracji w krajach bałtyckich i jej struktury w kontekście pochodzenia imigrantów. Następnie przedstawiono ogólny obraz polityki integracyjnej w państwach bałtyckich z uwzględnieniem przepisów krajowych. Cała analiza została uzupełniona o przegląd najważniejszych programów rządowych w krajach bałtyckich mających na celu szybkie i skuteczne zintegrowanie nowo przybyłych mieszkańców do społeczności lokalnych.

Słowa kluczowe: kraje bałtyckie, integracja, mniejszości narodowe.