

The Adaptation of Ethnic Minority Groups: Defining the Problem (Case of Lithuania)¹

Natalija Kasatkina

INSTITUTE OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND DIPLOMACY, VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY, KAUNAS

ABSTRACT. This paper reviews the adaptation strategies among various ethnic groups in Lithuania. The four variants – assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalisation – are seen as the specific outcome of status, social relationships, and ethnic identity. The context of the four strategies is conceptualised through discussion of the relevant notions of ethnic studies, the importance of status groups, and adaptation challenges. The specific contents of the four are analysed on the basis of survey and interview materials that cover the topics of identification, social distance, closure of social networks, and civic activity. The specific sampling approach was worked out in order to achieve a reliable cross-group comparison of five ethnic samples (Lithuanian, Russian, Polish, Jewish, and Tatar). This study aims to overcome the tendency to see minority integration as an issue that can be fully solved politically, and to reveal the contents of ethnic relations and remaining social challenges through sociological analysis.

Ethnicity in contemporary society

Ethnic group, ethnic minority, diaspora: theoretical view

The concept of ethnicity that entered the discourses of Central and Eastern Europe after the collapse of the communist block quickly established itself as an essential part of social science. However, does it represent any specific methodological view or has it merely replaced the older terms of the languages in the region such as ‘nationality’? In fact, ethnicity indeed corresponds to the Lithuanian word ‘*tautybė*’ that was formerly translated as ‘nationality’ – yet this meaning of the term is only valid in a limited number of fields such as applied studies or statistics. In analytical studies, ethnicity is given preference due to its background in social science. At the same time, this preference for the term ‘ethnicity’ is strengthened by the fact that the original words related

¹ This text is related to a research project carried out in 2001-2002 (supported by grants from the State Foundation for Science and Studies (No.398; No.A-564) and the Open Society Fund-Lithuania) and reviews many points of the monograph based on that study: Kasatkina N., Leončikas T. (2003) *Lietuvos etninių grupių adaptacija: kontekstas ir eiga*. Vilnius: Eugrimas (forthcoming).

The Phenomenon of Internal Diasporas in Russia: The Case of the Mari¹

Seppo Lallukka

ACADEMY OF FINLAND / FIREES, HELSINKI

ABSTRACT. By examining theoretical definitions as well as empirical observations, the argument is developed that the phenomenon of diaspora does not necessarily involve an international dimension. In the Russian Federation an example of this is provided by those members of non-Russian nationalities who have within the federation a titular autonomous unit but who live outside it. In this paper, I attempt to typologize possible trajectories of identity development in major Mari diaspora communities. Evidently, variations of integration and assimilation constitute the most widespread identity options facing them.

Diaspora: international and intra-state dimensions

Among nationality issues of the post-Soviet space, the problems of diasporas have become an object of overriding concern. Moreover, it is quite natural that by virtue of their large size and political weight, Russian diaspora groups have captured the most attention devoted to the issue in public. Indeed, the change in the status of those Russians who happened to be residents of the non-Russian republics during the collapse of the Soviet Union has been drastic: A group of over twenty million people representing the empire-bearing nationality, formerly privileged by their political and cultural dominance, were transformed overnight into minorities of uncertain status, scattered over a number of newly independent states. However, for a large number of other nationalities of the former Soviet Union, including those autochthonous to Russia, the issue of diaspora is also an important one. Besides this one can argue that the question also existed before the demise of the Soviet system.

The notion of diaspora is by no means a clear-cut one. Not infrequently, it is difficult to discern a diaspora from a group of migrants, an ethnoreligious group,

¹ The research upon which this paper is based was carried out as part of the project "Diaspora mobilisation and identity trajectories in Russia: the case of the Eastern Mari" and financed by the Academy of Finland. Versions of this paper were presented at the Fourth Annual World Convention of the Association for the Study of Nationalities held in New York City in April 1999 and at the international seminar, "Social Adaptation of Ethnic Minorities" held in Kaunas, Lithuania, in October 2001.

Interethnic Relations and the Acculturation of the Non-titular Population in Estonia and Lithuania: A Sociopsychological Perspective

Nadezhda Lebedeva

INSTITUTE OF ETHNOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

ABSTRACT. The empirical social-psychological study of interethnic interaction in Estonia and Lithuania was a part of the project “Democratisation and The Ethnic World: models of regulation of ethnopolitical crises”. The main aim was to study a social-psychological discourse of interethnic relations and the degree of its overlap or contradiction with the ethnopolitical (public) discourse. In this paper, we shall focus on some data from this project that regards acculturation and those elements of the discourse that have to do with adaptation of the non-titular populations to the changing contexts of their societies in a time of broad political and economic reforms and democratisation.

Introduction

The survey was carried out in October-November 1996 in the capitals of Estonia and Lithuania among the titular ethnicity and among the Russian residents. The data that was analysed come from 32 Estonians, 35 Russians from Estonia, 34 Lithuanians, and 42 Russians from Lithuania who were chosen on the basis of random sampling. All of the surveyed were residents of the capital cities; the majority of them worked, had families, and were relatively far from politics. The samples are weighted according to sex and age.

The methods used come from empirical research and are mainly oriented to the actualisation of social-perceptive images of cross-cultural interaction: method of ethnic auto- and heterostereotypes (Katz D., Braly K.W, 1933), Bogardus' scale of social distance (Bogardus E.S. 1959), “Who am I?” test (Kuhn M. & McPartland T. 1954), measure of satisfaction with realisation of the life sense of Crumbought (1968) adapted by Yadov and Muzdybaev, etc. There has been also a focus on so-called ‘ethnic’ values and ‘universalist’ Western values such as democracy, human rights, and liberalism for studying the relationship of these value blocks in the consciousness of different groups and their leaders.

Identity block

We calculated the share of answers (the open ended question ‘Who am I?’ – Kuhn & McPartland’s test) that refer to ethnicity and those that refer to citizen-

Social Exclusion and Double Marginalisation: Roma in Slovakia after 1989¹

Michal Vašička

INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS, BRATISLAVA

ABSTRACT. The article deals with an issue that is becoming one of the most important challenges to Slovakia and its social, political, and economic development in the 21st century. The article describes the factors that led to the rise of the debate on Roma issues in Slovakia. The author is intrigued by the specificity of Roma as a national minority, and he describes the pre-1989 conditions of the current unfavourable socio-economic situation of Roma communities in Slovakia. In an attempt to explain why whole communities of Roma have been sliding deeper into poverty, the author focuses on the policies of the communist state toward Roma, the demographic behaviour of Roma, the unpreparedness for the social and political changes of 1989, and consequently, the process of the ethnicisation of poverty. The article describes the processes of social exclusion, social isolation, and double marginalisation of Roma in Slovakia and analyses the strategies that the Roma and the majority population use to deal with poverty.

The shift in understanding the so-called Roma issues

Rise of the debate

The Roma issue has become the hottest topic in Slovakia during the last 10 years. Politicians and celebrities have realised the importance of investing significant amounts of time, money, social capital, and especially political will into solving the so-called Roma issue. This was a remarkable shift from the past, in that Slovakia's political and social elite, regardless of their motives, began to understand the complexity of the issue and the urgency of dealing with it. Interest in dealing with the issue was encouraged by the following three motives during the last few years:

1. *Morality and the importance of human rights:* Some began to realise their obligation to help the Roma, and that inappropriate, misguided, or directly discriminatory methods and policies applied to Slovaks in the past should no longer be tolerated on Slovak soil. This reasoning,

¹ Based on the research conducted for the World Bank from November 2000 to April 2001.

Dimensions of Social Integration: Appraisal of Theoretical Approaches

Vida Beresnevičiūtė

INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH, VILNIUS

ABSTRACT. This paper focuses on the main theoretical points of the concepts of social integration, social participation, social exclusion, and social capital. They cover determinants that condition a certain position in the social environment, as well as possible resources that determine different integration strategies or adaptation routes in different groups. I consider them in the context of ethnic studies and the social and cultural status of ethnic minority groups in particular and highlight their relevance for developing empirical research. References to various social studies and research are used to illustrate analytical methods and their empirical implications.

Constant changes in contemporary societies challenge their members to be ready to adjust. Social actors are in constant search for new strategies of integration and often have to concentrate all their skills in order to take advantages of available opportunities. During the great transformations in Eastern Europe over the last decade, ethnic groups were often confronted by new requirements emerging from redefined citizenship, civic loyalty, knowledge of the state language, value changes, participation in the newly formed bodies of the private or non-governmental sectors, etc. Ethnic groups had to respond in a more active or passive way or avoid adaptation through emigration, segregation, or life in closed communities. Both minorities and majorities went through multiple processes conceptualised in different terms, such as adaptation, acculturation, assimilation, or integration. This paper takes a look at how the concept of integration can help to understand ethnic processes in the social formation of a new nature and quality.

Besides being a basic element of the vocabulary of social science, “integration” came to dominate the ethnic policy discourse in most countries of Eastern Europe after 1990. New legal mechanisms, rights, international conventions, and treaties were intended and declared to promote the integration of national minorities. In Lithuania, most discussions on the issues of ethnicity and national minorities were concerned about the civil and political loyalty of the minorities. Therefore, the idea of integration was also politicised, particularly in the framework of public opinion. Nonetheless, the creation of a proper legal framework for minorities has been more or less successful. Yet the legally defined mechanisms, even if crucial to the development of civic society, are not sufficient for social developments. Ethnic processes remain a social challenge in that

Discursive Realities: The Construction of National Identity in the Documents of Lithuanian Cultural Policy

Eglė Rindzevičiūtė

BALTIC & EAST EUROPEAN GRADUATE SCHOOL / SÖDERTÖRNS HÖGSKOL

ABSTRACT. In this paper the author has tried to map a possible conceptual approach, which would combine both discourse studies and cultural policy studies and to apply this theoretical framework to the analysis of state policy documents. The paper focuses on the case of Lithuania, an Eastern European country that experienced secessionist nationalistic upheaval in the late 1980s and currently faces the process of European integration. The ongoing debate about Lithuanian cultural policy, which started in the very early 1990s, is an exemplary case of the complex process in which traditional local thinking about nation, culture, and identity clashes, merges, and/or coexists with ideas and norms imported from Western Europe. The author argues that during the whole of the last decade Lithuanian cultural policy maintained its nationalistic character and the ongoing process of European integration is not diminishing the power of ideas characteristic to traditional Lithuanian nationalism.

For language is in every case not only communication of the communicable but also, at the same time, a symbol of the noncommunicable. This symbolic side of language is connected to its relation to signs, but extends more widely – for example, in certain respects to name and judgment. (Walter Benjamin “On Language as Such and on Language of Man” (1916))

In this way, Walter Benjamin says that discourse produces “non-reality” or “silenced reality,” where silent respect replaces critical debate. Moreover, he says that the discourse itself is a symbol of silence. The more we talk about words or the textual side of reality, the more probable it is that there is something we want to hide. This is a good starting point to address the question of the power of discourse: This question is crucial in any inquiry into cultural policy, the field where culture meets power. My paper presents the first stage of a wider research project that is dedicated to exploring the development of the ideological mechanisms of cultural policy discourse in the Baltic countries during the 1990s. In this paper I have tried to map a possible conceptual approach that would combine both discourse studies and cultural policy studies and to apply this theoretical framework to the analysis of state policy documents. I also try to demonstrate the basic logic of the functions of “sovereignty,” “identity,” and “security,” the core ideas defining a nation-state, in the state cultural policy discourse.

Ethnopolitics in Latvia: Ethnopolitical Activities of State Institutions and Non-governmental Organisations and their Influence on the Social Integration Process

Artūrs Jansons

INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIOLOGY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA

ABSTRACT. The article is based on data from the survey “The Ethnopolitical situation in Latvia and its influence on the social integration process in the year of 2000”. Through the commentary, the general climate of civil activism and ethnic relationships is highlighted. The paper concludes that despite many organisations, there is little constructive interaction between them; therefore their input in promoting social integration has been *limited* so far – both from the governmental and the non-governmental sides.

There are many reasons that provoke ethnopolitical activities in Latvia. As we know, Latvia is a state with an ethnically divided society. There are more than 130 different nationalities in Latvia; however, 99 percent of the population belongs to the ten largest national groups. These are Latvians, Russians, Belarussians, Ukrainians, Poles, Lithuanians, Jews, Roma/Gypsies, Germans, and Estonians.

The complicated ethnic structure is not stable and proportional to all aspects of ethnic relations. For example, the use of language and cultural affiliation does not correspond to the ethnic structure of society. Linguistic affiliation divides the society into two parts, because people usually use either Latvian or Russian in their families. However, cultural affiliation forms a different structure, which corresponds neither to ethnic nor linguistic structure. Moreover, many people in Latvia do not belong to any single culture, and sometimes they form culturally a marginalised part of society.

The real potential of national minorities does not appear in the official statistics of Latvia because the amount of people who are involved in national minority activities and who really belong to national minorities is considerably smaller than the formal size of any concrete ethnic group shown in the statistics. This is one of the reasons for political manipulation, and it is therefore too difficult to formulate a concrete definition of national minority in Latvia. In general, we may define this situation as an initial period in the process of national minority formation, where self-identification from ethnic groups to na-

Lithuanian National Minority in Poland: Self-organisation of a Minority Group

Danuta Borowska

VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT. This paper reviews the situation of the Lithuanian minority in Poland by describing the main organisational efforts and public activities of the minority. The issues of non-governmental and political participation, language use in education and media, and cultural activity are covered. Alongside, the relevant data on population are presented. The overall climate in which minority lives is highlighted by remarks on minority-related Polish legislation and attitudes of the general public. The conclusion is made that the Lithuanians' strong skills of self-organisation has helped to maintain a distinctive ethnic community in spite of its small size and an occasionally non-supportive environment.

Introduction

In this paper, I shall review how a minority group organises its social and public life. I shall discuss the main forms of the particular minority organisations and activities. Through the efforts to organise itself as a distinctive community, a minority is able to maintain and reproduce its identity as well as integrate into the larger society as a group. By self-organisation, a minority can more effectively resist cultural and structural assimilation into the majority.

Lithuanians in Poland live in a rather compact area. They belong to the so called "historical" or "frontier" minorities. They have a strong level of self identification that is related to their beliefs about the past, common history, and cultural affinity. A very strong factor of identification is the usage of their native language, a fact which is different from majority of Polish society. Lithuanians in Poland have a strong collective identity; they feel a "group soul" and they recognise themselves as group members.

After the Second World War, Poland largely became an ethnically homogeneous country. National homogeneity was considered one of the fundamental achievements of the new state, especially when contrasted with respective problems faced during the inter-war period.

The Constitution of the People's Republic of Poland, adopted in the 1950s, guaranteed equal rights to all citizens and forbade national, racial, or religious discrimination. This meant acceptance of a general principle of non-discrimi-