

National Integration and
Formation of Multi-Ethnic Society:
Experiences in Estonia and Latvia
after EU Enlargement

Edited by

Nobuya HASHIMOTO, Hiromi KOMORI

March, 2009

Kwansei Gakuin University

Nishinomiya, Japan

First Published in 2009

Copyright 2009 by editors and contributors

School of Humanities, Kwansei Gakuin University
1-1-155, Nishinomiya Uegahara, Japan 662-8501
Tel. +81-798-54-6284
E-mail: hashin@kwansei.ac.jp

Editors

Nobuya Hashimoto (Kwansei Gakuin University, Japan)
Hiromi Komori (Kyoto University, Japan)

The proceedings of international conferences entitled « *Integration Policy in Estonia and Latvia from a Viewpoint of European Dimension* » and « *Russia, Baltic States, Europe –Ethnopolitics of Memories and Histories* » held in Tokyo and Nishinomiya, Japan in November 2008.

National Integration and Formation of Multi-ethnic Society: Experiences in Estonia and Latvia after EU Enlargement, edited by Nobuya Hashimoto and Hiromi Komori. Kwansei Gakuin University, Nishinomiya, Japan, 2009

Printed in Kobe, Japan

Contents

Prefaceiii

Contents.....v

Contributors and Japanese Members of the Project.....vi

Part I Integration Policy in Estonia and Latvia from a Viewpoint of European Dimension

Introduction to Part I (Hiromi Komori).....3

Ten Years of Integration Policies and Processes in Estonia (Raivo Vetik).....7

Integration Policy in Latvia: Acquisition and Failures (Brigita Zepa).....19

Finnish Relations with Estonia and Latvia:

A Case-Study in Wider EU Relations with Baltic Countries (Hiski Haukkala)..35

Part II Russia, Baltic States, Europe –Ethnopolitics of Memories and Histories

Ethno-Politics of Memories and Histories:

The Challenge of Baltic Countries (Nobuya Hashimoto)45

The Dispute about Estonian Contemporary History (Olaf Mertelsmann).....51

Regime Change, Historical Memory and Ethnic Identity (Brigita Zepa).....61

Recent Lithuanian Historical Self-image:

Based on Analyses of Commemoration (Sayaka Kaji).....87

Brigita ZEPA

Integration Policy in Latvia: Acquisition and Failures

Integration policy: policy documents and practice

A series of research studies in Latvia over the last several years have focused on integration policy from various positions, both in theoretical and empirical terms, as well as from the position of evaluating policy in this area. These studies have made it possible to draw certain conclusions about successes and failures in this policy area. According to one of the authors, in 1998, of Latvia's Public Integration Concept, Elmārs Vēbers,¹ the idea of policies related to unity in Latvia's society emerged not in the late 1990s, when the conceptual document which, to a certain extent, served as a reaction to demands made by international organisations against Latvia as a European Union candidate country was drafted, but a full decade earlier, when Latvia began to deal with problems inherited from the Soviet regime in such areas as ethnic, cultural and language issues. The first step was to define the status of the state language and to introduce the status of Latvian citizenship. The law which declared the Latvian language to be Latvia's state language was adopted in 1989, the aim being to strengthen the positions of the language in the country. During the Soviet era, the status of the Latvian language in public life had deteriorated rapidly, particularly in the labour and government spheres. The Russian language became increasingly dominant. There was much debate in the context of public unity when the institution of Latvian citizenship was reinstated and the body of Latvia's citizenry was defined. A law on citizenship which was approved in 1994 identified naturalisation procedures for permanent residents who wished to become Latvia's citizens. Language and citizenship policies in these and other instances were often the result of a compromise among political forces after a great deal of debate. It must also be emphasised, at the same time, that many public organisations have monitored the implementation of these policies, and research institutions have conducted their research. The thing is that those who have drafted the relevant policies have been in no great hurry to study the conclusions which researchers have drawn. In the early 1990s, for instance, the Latvian Centre for Social Research found² that an absence of Latvian language skills would be a serious obstacle against the naturalisation of non-citizens. Despite this fact, Parliament added age limitations to the citizenship law which ensured that naturalisation would at first be open only to young people, with the age limitations being expanded gradually and year by year. As could be expected, the number of naturalised citizens was not substantial during the first years when this process was in effect – just 6,993 naturalised citizens during the three years from 1995 to 1997, inclusive.³ A national referendum in 1998 led to changes in the citizenship law which eliminated the age restrictions. The fact is that the long-lasting debates about the citizenship law from 1991 until 1994, the limitations on naturalisation, as well as the slow pace of naturalisation – all of these factors caused public tensions. These were exacerbated further by the very critical position which the Russian

¹ Vēbers, E. „Vai teiksim ardievas sabiedrības integrācijai?” (Shall We Say Farewell to Public Integration?). In *Pretestība sabiedrības integrācijai: cēloņi un sekas* (Resistance to Integration of Society: Causes and Consequences). Rīga: University of Latvia Institute of Philosophy and Sociology (2007).

² Zepa, B. “Public Opinion in Latvia During a Stage of Transition”, *Quarterly of the Estonian Market and Opinion Research Centre*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 1992, pp. 10-19. See also Zepa, B. “Valsts statusa maiņa un pilsoniskā apziņa” (Changes in the State's Status and Public Awareness”, *LZA Vēstis*, No. 7/9, 1995, pp. 31-45.

³ Naturalisation Board of the Republic of Latvia, data as at 1 January 2001.

Regime Change, Historical Memory and Ethnic Identity

In his outstanding book, "Remembering War: The Great War and Historical Memory in the 20th Century,"¹ Jay Winter writes that over the course of the last 100 years, there has been a substantial increase in interest about history, and that there have even been several cases of "memory boom." The first wave of historical memories occurred at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, and this facilitated the emergence of new collective identities – particularly national identities, but also social, cultural and individual identities. The second wave, which occurred in the 1960s and 1970s, was in large part a form of remembrance of World War II and the Holocaust.

Winter writes that among other reasons for why there is interest in history today, there is the fact that "for some there is a nostalgic yearning for a vanished or rapidly vanishing world, for others it is a language of protest, seeking out solidarities based on common narratives and traditions to resist the pressures and seductions of globalization, for others still it is a means of moving away from politics."²

If we think about what encourages people in Latvia to focus on historical memories today and why the last two decades have been rife with discussions about such subjects, we can make reference to what Winter had to say about the first, second and third "memory boom." Among those circumstances which have stimulated historical memory in Latvia, there is not just the strengthening or new emergence of national and other identities, but also the desire to speak frankly about twists and turns in history, about phases and events of history that were taboo during the Soviet period. These included the repressions of Stalinism and the Soviet regime (mass deportations, forced collectivisation, nationalisation of private property, etc.), the Soviet occupation of Latvia in 1940, and the period of independence which existed in advance of that occupation.

At the same time, it is interesting that according to Winter, the historical memories of younger generations often encourage people to turn away from politics. In Latvia, it must be said that one of the most typical elements in the historical memories of the *post-occupation generation* is the generation's close links to politics. This can be seen in the fact that institutions of government have commissioned explanations of history that were not possible during the totalitarian Soviet regime, as well as historical memories from members of the public, in which relationships of power (subordination, captivity, offences) are the dominant dimension.

Baiba Bela-Krūmiņa, a researcher of Latvian life stories, writes in her dissertation³ that regime change created an enormous amount of interest in history in Latvia. The public arena was oversaturated with historical memories. At the same time, however, people typically mistrusted historians, because they knew that during the Soviet occupation, historical events had been interpreted in ideological terms, and documentation has been forged. An alternative method for recording and creating history became very popular – that was the collection and analysis of life stories. The philosopher Maija Kūle wrote about the deepest structures of social thought and sense of the world in Latvia of the 1990s, considering the myths which existed

¹ Winter, J. (2006). *The Great War and Historical Memory in the 20th Century*. Yale University Press.

² *Ibid.*

³ Bela-Krūmiņa, B. (2004). "Dzīvesstāsti kā sociāli vēstījumi" (Life Stories as Social Messages), doctoral dissertation, p. 50.