

Assimilation or Integration? The Russian Minority in Lithuania

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This paper examines the development of the Russian national minority in Lithuania after 1990. My basic argument is that after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russians in Lithuania, whose identity was predominantly defined as "Soviet," suffered an identity crisis, which resulted in several sets of available identity choices. Two possible choices examined in this paper are "integration" and "assimilation." I look at these two possibilities and on the basis of available empirical data, and I suggest which of them is more possible.

I will start with basic definitions; I will also briefly present theories of identity of the national minorities, and by using concrete empirical data, I will find the actual identity trajectory of the Russian minority.

Social and National Identity

Social identity, in its broadest sense, means a self-definition of the person in relation to others. In the more narrow definition, social identity refers to a relationship between the self-definition of a person (or a label assigned for himself or herself) and the membership in various social groups.¹

National identity is usually associated with a membership in the state, or citizenship, and such related phenomena as patriotism expressed as an attachment to one's political community. The other popular way to define national identity is to claim that it primarily means an attachment to one's ethnocultural community. The proper way, I suggest, would be to define and use the term of national identity as having two main components-ethnocultural identity and political loyalty.² Identity without the ethnocultural component is basically only patriotism (attachment to the state or citizenship), and identity without the political attachment is barely an ethnic identity, which is not associated with political claims.

One of the important consequences of the dual character of national identity is that political identity is more fluid and could be influenced by political, economic, and other changes faster, while ethnocultural identity is a more stable identification, which usually is not subject to arbitrary change

¹ Social Science Encyclopedia (1989) s.v. "Social Identity," by Rupert Brown, p. 771.

² Eriksen stresses this dual character, saying that both symbolic and socio-political dimensions are important for ethnicity in Thomas Hylland Eriksen *Small Places, Large Issues: An Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology*. London: Pluto Press, 1995, p. 255.

because ethnic nationality is seen as an ascribed component of identity and therefore resistant to change.³ Political loyalty has not necessarily been associated with patriotism as an active demonstration of loyalty and therefore its change is not so psychologically painful as a change of ethnocultural identity.

Assimilation and Acculturation

The term "acculturation" is helpful in situations in which one adopts some cultural features without identifying with the dominant group. Gordon concludes in this respect that acculturation (he prefers to use the term 'cultural assimilation') occurs at the beginning of cultural contacts, but this stage of cultural contact may continue indefinitely.⁴

I define assimilation as a loss (or a process of losing) of the earlier national identity and its exchange for a new one, when acculturation means only acceptance of cultural components from the cultures in contact, not necessarily rejecting one's own⁵ sentiments, traditions, and memories. In this way, acculturation is viewed as a wider phenomenon, when assimilation could be one of its final stages, although not necessarily so.

The term "assimilation" (and to a certain extent-"acculturation") not only has been defined in various ways, but it has also been used to describe a process, an outcome (condition) and a strategy of minority groups. As a process it could be described as "crossing the fluid cultural boundary separating [minority] from dominant society."⁶ This means that the processes of assimilation can be subdivided into stages ranging from partial assimilation to complete assimilation.⁷ As an outcome of that process a (complete) assimilation refers to a situation where the cultures are merged to the extent that we cannot find distinct characteristics or particular loyalties and therefore we call it a single culture. As a strategy of national minority, assimilation is the search for acculturation that resists a segregation strategy for preserving ethnic identity (schools, cultural identity, language autonomy).⁸

Integrated National Minority

Integration could be described as a strategy of the state (and of the minority as well) to include the minority in all spheres of social life but at the same time preserve the cultural distinctiveness and ethnic self-awareness of

³ Scheibe, K. "The Psychology of National Identity." in Sarbin, Th.R. and K.E. Scheibe, eds. 1983. *Studies in Social Identity*. New York: Praeger, p. 128 .

⁴ Gordon, Milton M. 1959. *Assimilation in American Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 77.

⁵ Van. Der B~rghe, P. 1987 . .*The Ethnic Phenomenon* London: Praeger, p. 215.

⁶ La.till, DaVid. 1998. *Identtty In formation*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p, 30.

⁷ Htrvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups. 1980. s.v. "Assimilation and Pluniism."

⁸ WeJ,S, Hilde and Christoph Reinprecht.] 996. *Osterreichs ostliche Nachbarn: nationule Identitat und demokratischer Neubeginn*. Wien:Institut ftir Sociologie, p.60.

the minority.⁹ The identity of the integrated national minority refers to the political loyalty to the state that the minority is living in, and preserving of cultural identity of their perceived "homeland." It is the compromise variant between assimilation and irredentism.

Exclusion of possibilities for national minorities to be included in the definition of the nation does not necessarily mean that nation-state will refuse to integrate a national minority in all fields of the civic life of the state. But together with integration, state policy may be directed towards institutionalizing national minorities and granting them specific rights and support for the maintenance of their national distinctiveness. From the other side, a national minority itself could show the wish to be institutionalized and thus refuse the assimilation. The will and "voice" of the national minority to preserve the status of the national minority indeed is a necessary condition for formation of the integrating national minority. The resistance to assimilation is especially characteristic for the cultural elite of the national minorities.

In the following sections I provide a basic theory regarding assimilation and integration of national minorities. Based on this theory, I will organize my empirical data in order to evaluate the contemporary situation of the Russian minority in Lithuania.

Gordon's Theory of Assimilation

Gordon sees assimilation as a process that can be subdivided into several stages. His basic thesis is that "Assimilation has not taken place ...until the immigrant is able to function in the host community without encountering prejudiced attitudes or discriminatory behavior."¹⁰

Several important conclusions stem from Gordon's. The first is the connection made between structural assimilation and marital assimilation. According to Gordon, structural assimilation inevitably leads to marital assimilation. The second conclusion is that the consequence of marital assimilation is the key for identificational and, subsequently, full assimilation. The third important proposition, as I have mentioned in defining "assimilation," is that the stage of cultural assimilation (or, using the terminology we defined earlier-"acculturation") can continue indefinitely. To summarize, we can say that according to Gordon, groups can maintain the stage of acculturation, but if the threshold of structural assimilation is passed, all other forms of assimilation will follow, leading to the eventual disappearance of the minority group. This means that separate clubs, societies, and institutions are extremely important.

⁹ As a strategy of the minority group it is defined by Fishman as "retentionism"-" (...) attempts by the minority group, either through the school or by any other means, to retain unique values, either in altered or adopted form(. .)." See Fishman, Joshua A. "Childhood Indoctrination for Minority-Group Membership." In *Daedalus* vol. 90/2, p.330.

¹⁰ Gordon, p. 63.

Laitin's "Tipping Game" and the Importance of Linguistic Assimilation

Laitin's assumptions about the possible linguistic assimilation of the Russian minority in post-Soviet are based on his theory of identity construction as a "tipping game." National identity in Laitin's theory of the "tipping game" is defined as equilibrium that is sufficient for the majority of the group. Equilibrium here is a set of actions that leads to the most profitable outcome or, in this case, the most profitable language and cultural practices and set of attitudes. If the identity equilibrium for the majority has been successful over generations, it can be perceived by the actors as natural. In conditions of instability, people will tend to look for a new identity equilibrium. According to this theory, individuals' choices of action are based

on what they think others are going to do. Using the model of a "language tipping game," Laitin shows that at under certain conditions assimilation can be accelerated.

Laitin sees the choice as determined by calculation of the expected payoff, which includes: the calculation of expected economic returns; the expected in-group status; the expected out-group status. For example, according to this schema, the assimilation of Russians is likely to occur if the payoffs from switching to the practices of titular society and learning titular language are expected to be larger than not doing so. This will push the Russian minority to a linguistic tip, making this group bilingual.¹¹

Kolsto's Model of Identity of the Post-Soviet Russian Diaspora

In P. Kolsto's theoretical model, several possible identities of a Russian national minority might be created, depending on the political and cultural components of national identity. Kolsto looks at the identity of the Russian speaking minorities from two perspectives: cultural identity and political loyalty. Assimilation, according to this scheme, occurs when the political loyalty of the minority group is combined with the cultural self-(re)definition with the majority of the new nationalizing state. Integration of the minority means political loyalty to the state of residence and cultural identification with the perceived homeland.¹²

Based on these authors' works, we can claim that the most favorable conditions for assimilation are: structural assimilation, abandonment of the minority group's own institutions, language assimilation through the phase of bilingualism, favorable expectations that are calculated from expected economic returns, in-group and out-group status, cultural and political orientation to the majority population, and the state of residence.

Conditions stimulating the formation of identity of the integrated national minority are the following: separate and successfully functioning minority institutions, preservation of linguistic separateness, cultural

¹¹ Laitin, p. 29.

¹² Pal Kolstoe. 1996. "The New Russian Diaspora-An Identity of its Own?" In *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 19/3.

orientation to the perceived homeland, and political loyalty to the state of residence. In the following sections, I will discuss the situation of the Russian minority in Lithuania in the light of the above-mentioned conditions.

The Citizenship Issue

The simple and effective procedure of citizenship acquisition in November 1989 led to an absolute number (98%) of the permanent residents acquiring citizenship in the Republic of Lithuania.¹³ For later immigrants, the residential and language requirements were raised.¹⁴ This is the clear advantage of Lithuania, in comparison with other Baltic states, where there are large populations without citizenship. The "zero" option of citizenship granted political rights for the Russian population and strengthened their identification with the Lithuanian state, when in the other states the denial of citizenship, at least theoretically, is a clear obstacle for such an identification.

Taking for granted a political loyalty to the Lithuanian state on the part of the Russian minority, I do not discuss the possible identities of the national minority, when its political loyalty is not connected to the state of residence.

Geographic and Demographic Distribution of Minority Population

The geographic distance of the national minority from their perceived "homeland" is one of the important factors. The closer the minority lives to the "homeland," the more contacts with its "own" cultural environment could be expected. The constant personal contact with relatives and friends in the "homeland," and the possibility of short visits, could reinforce the former identity of the integrated minority,¹⁵ and reduce the possibility of assimilation. The possibility of contacts with the homeland means that members of national minority will not feel the pressure for assimilation, or this pressure will be significantly lower. With cheap travel and telephones and the mass media, it is easy to preserve close contacts with the homeland.¹⁶ The size and compactness of the national minority is important for similar reasons, because a numerically large minority living in a compact territory is not likely to be assimilated.

In the case of the Russian minority in Lithuania, we can distinguish several categories of Russian "communities" according to their geographic-demographic situation: Klaipeda city (about 60,000 Russians, 50 km away

¹³ Novogrockiene, Jurate and Algimantas Jankauskas. 1998. "The Situation of National Minorities: Integration Possibilities." In Lopata, Raimundas (research project director). National Question in Lithuania: Acculturation, Integration, or Separateness? Vilnius: University of Vilnius, June 1998, p. 44.

¹⁴ Law on Citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania, article 12.

¹⁵ Smith, M. Estellie. 1966. "Portuguese Enclaves: the Invisible Minority." In Fitzgerald, Thomas K., ed. Social and Cultural Identity. Athens: Southern Anthropological Society, p. 86.

¹⁶ "Latinos in California: the Next Italians." Economist. December 14, 1996.

from the Russian Kaliningrad district), Vilnius and Visaginas (a large proportion of Russian population, contacts with Russia eventually more difficult than in Klaipeda, but TV, radio and other cultural material easily available), Russians in other cities and towns (small proportion and size, relatively difficult contact with homeland).

Language Attitudes and Knowledge

As we discussed in the section on assimilation, language plays the crucial role in the maintenance or change of cultural identity, because it is the core value of the ethnocultural identity of the Russian minority.¹⁷ Knowledge of language is absolutely crucial for the process of acculturation, meaning that assimilation cannot even occur without acquisition of the majority language by the minority population.

The policy of "parity bilingualism" (one's native language plus Russian) in the Soviet state had resulted in the situation where the Russian population was not obliged to learn the local languages of their place of residence. The teaching of the Lithuanian language in the schools along with the Russian language of instruction was poor. Nevertheless, the level of Lithuanian language proficiency in Lithuania was one of the highest in the Soviet Union (according to the census, 33.4% of Russians declared in 1989 that they could speak Lithuanian¹⁸). This is probably due to the small proportion and weak concentration of Russians in the country.¹⁹ A large proportion of the Russian population, even those who were born in Lithuania and finished the secondary schools there, however, did not speak the Lithuanian language or spoke it very poorly.

The recreation of a Lithuanian state was followed with efforts to establish the official status of the Lithuanian language and make the influence of the Russian language in public life weaker. The role of the Lithuanian language became more prominent than Russian in office work, science, and education.²⁰ The new state language policy was widely accused of being inadequate to the aims raised. It is claimed that the state did not do enough to provide the persons trying to learn the language with textbooks and programs. The Russian schools lacked teachers of Lithuanian and teaching materials as

¹⁷ Berry, John W. et al. 1992. *Cross-Cultural Psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 305.

¹⁸ The number of the Russians speaking the Lithuanian language might be higher, because the methods used in the census had some important problems, which are distorting the actual picture. About the paradoxes in the population census, see Vladis Gaidys "Russians in Lithuania," in Shlapentokh, Vladimir, Munir Sendich, and Emil ~ayin, eds. 1994. *The New Russian Diaspora*. New York: Sharpe, p. 97.

¹⁹ Gaidys, pp. 97-98.

²⁰ Aasland, Aadne. 1996. "Russians Outside Russia: the New Russian Diaspora" in Smith, Graham, ed. *The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet States*. London: Longman, p. 487.

well. This situation created fears of marginalization by a large proportion of the population. Knowledge of the Lithuanian language and attitudes toward the language are changing from ignorance to acceptance, creating the ground for a deeper acculturation. Already in 1989 there was wide acceptance of the idea that in principle every resident of Lithuania should know the Lithuanian language (83% of Russian respondents agreed).²¹ Nowadays, the necessity of a sufficient knowledge of the state language is almost universally accepted among the Russian minority.²²

The Educational System

The network of Russian schools was well-established in the Soviet times and education in the Russian language was easily attainable for those who desired it. Teaching of the Lithuanian language in these schools was very problematic, especially because of the lack of skilled teachers and the small number of teaching hours. In ten years, the situation changed radically.

In the period of the past ten years the following tendencies in the education of the Russian minority in Lithuania can be traced: tertiary education is now available only in the Lithuanian language; the share of pupils in schools in which Russian is the language of instruction is decreasing, while in the schools where Lithuanian is the language of instruction, the number is increasing (see diagram); and there are more schools in other minority languages available. Similar tendencies are found in the other Baltic countries as well.

The general policy of the state is to provide the national minorities with the possibility of education in their native language. According to the Law on the Education of the Republic of Lithuania, conditions for the educational institutions in the native language of instruction should be created, if the language is demanded, in the places where the national minorities live (Article 12.2).

In 1997-1998 in Lithuania, there were] 57 secondary schools with 49,347 pupils (9% of the total number of pupils in Lithuania) in which Russian was the language of instruction.²³ The situation of the "Russian schools," however, is not excellent. The number of children in schools and kindergartens that use the Russian language is slowly decreasing while there is an increase in the number of students in those schools with Lithuanian as the language of instruction. The dynamic of the student enrollment in the schools with the Lithuanian or Russian language of instruction in the city of Klaipeda is presented in chart 3. There is a similar situation in the other cities

²¹ Krukauskaite, Eugenija. 1996. "State and National Identity," in Taljunaite, Meilute ed. *Changes of Identity in Modern Lithuania*. Vilnius: Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, p. 260.

²² Stroganov, Jurij. 1998. "Nas deliat na chuzhikh i svoikh." *Litovskij Kurjer*. December 24.

²³ Novogrockiene, p. 44.

of Lithuania: in the city of Vilnius, four schools, with Russian as the language of education were closed or re-organized in 1998.²⁴

It is the expectation of the parents that a better knowledge of the state language will help their children in the future, i.e., entering tertiary education. Besides, creating and strengthening the schools in the languages of the other minorities attracted members of national minorities studying in the Russians schools before (this is especially true in the case of the Polish and Belorussian national minority). These tendencies led to the "re-organization" (closure) of some schools, creating potential conflict situations. Especially in the areas where there are no other Russian schools, the closure of schools is usually perceived as an assimilationist policy by some members of the Russian minority. These varied reactions provoked a decision by the Ministry of Culture and Education to abolish the compulsory final examination of the Russian language in the schools with Russian as the language of instruction. It is believed that the optional nature of that exam will reduce the motivation of the pupils to study the Russian language. The readiness of the Lithuanian state institutions to provide schools in the minority language of instruction indicates a readiness to accept an integration perspective.²⁵ The practical problems faced by those schools and recent trends, however, point to an assimilationist policy, or the policy of integration with the aim to facilitate assimilation afterwards.

Social Distance

The social distance between the national groups in the society plays a very important role for the identity change processes, because the precondition of assimilation is primary contacts, when prevailing secondary contacts means acculturation or accommodation first. Reduction of the social distance and the consequent structural integration are very important processes for Gordon's scheme of assimilation. Several aspects of social distance can be distinguished.

First is the cultural distance to the surrounding environment (a pre-independence pattern of culture contact). In the discourse about national minorities in the post-Soviet states, this is often called rootedness. It is worth mentioning that even the Russian national minority is not a homogeneous group by descent and level of integration.²⁶ One can differentiate several groups according to their integration into Lithuanian society: non-immigrants and those born in Lithuania, post-war immigrants, and recent immigrants (in the last 10-15 years). These differences are especially important for individual identity choices, and they influence attitudes toward languages. The process

²⁴ Rod'kin, Maksim. 1998: "Placzevnyje itogi" Litovskij Kurjer. December 17.

²⁵ Resler, T.J. 1997. Dilemmas of Democratisation: Safeguarding Minorities in Russia, Ukraine and Lithuania. In *Europe-Asia Studies* ' 49/1 p 101.

²⁶ It is eventually true about all national minorities. See Brubaker, Rogers. 1996. *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 62.

of acculturation of the Russian population outside the Russian federation began before the 1990s.²⁷ The best way to measure social distance is to look at the endogamy/exogamy pattern of the national minority. The higher the rate of endogamy, the wider is the social distance between the groups. The research in Lithuania suggests that the attitudes towards interethnic marriage are rather negative among the Lithuanians in comparison with the other nationalities.²⁸ It could be explained both by the smaller pool of marriage choices for the smaller groups and by the higher prestige of the dominant ethnic group. The nationality choice of the children in the mixed families shows the dominance relationship in the society~ because the second generatio'n usually chooses the nationality of the dominant group. The rate of assimilation through the family is 60%, i.e., the percentage of children from the mixed Lithuanian and non-Lithuanian families that chooses to identify with the Lithuanian nationality.²⁹

Absence/Presence of Conflict

Presence of conflict sharpens and recreates cultural boundaries and political affiliations; therefore, assimilation is clearly an unavailable option for national minorities and their particular members when there is an open conflict between minority and majority population. As research in various parts of Europe suggests, the conflict could be consciously used in order to recreate boundaries where they are blurring and thus prevent a process of assimilation. The use of violence as a boundary-building process is especially important where the state is involved in forced assimilation and suppression of national minorities.

The absence of violent conflict in Lithuania creates favorable conditions for diminishing the social distance with all of its resulting consequences.

The Role of the Elite

The role of the elite should not be underestimated. It is an elite of the national minority mostly concerned about the preservation of the national minority identity. From the position of the political and cultural elite of the national minority derive the forms of national identity and methods of its preservation. As Laitin has said, there will always be some people whose expected return from assimilation is lower than the preservation of identity.³⁰ The major portion of the minority's cultural and political elite, in distinction from the rest of the minority, have a negative calculation of expected economic returns from the assimilation process, and therefore will be the main

²⁷ Laitin, p. 159.

²⁸ Zvinkliene, Alina. 1996. "Ethnic Inter-marriage in Lithuania." In Taljunaite, Meilute, ed. *Changes of Identity in Modern Lithuania*. Vilnius: Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, p. 158.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

³⁰ Laitin, p. 30.

supporters of preservation of the cultural identity. The Russian cultural and political elite, however, is poorly organized and has a very limited influence on the Russian population. The studies of elite in the Lithuanian Republic reveal that Russian and other national minorities are highly underrepresented there. Even in the fields where the Russians are represented the most-Parliament, private business, and the judicial system-their share in the elite is half the size of their share in the whole population.³¹ This situation could be perceived as indicating a restricted social mobility of the Russian minority in Lithuania by the members of this minority, creating incentives for assimilation.

Russian Minority in Politics

Political participation and political identity of the Russian minority from 1989 was developing in three main directions: from political loyalty to the newly re-established state, loyalty to the Soviet Union, and marginal loyalty to the emerging Russian state. These three directions of national identity development were represented by three political movements of the Russian minority, which can be found in the other former Soviet republics as well: organizations supporting national fronts, cultural Russian organizations (mainly non-political, but with orientation towards Russia as guarantee of their cultural rights) and pro-Soviet Interfront movements.³²

When the support for radical groups declined, the political preferences of the Russian national minority and other national minorities were significantly different from the Lithuanian majority. Support for the Labor Democratic Party (LDP) was dominant,³³ but gradually declined from 75-85% in 1992-1994 to merely 30% in the summer of 1995) which coincided with the general loss of support for LDP. According to another survey, 50% of Russians declared commitment to LDP, and only 33% Lithuanians did so, although the general feeling of closeness to that party was lower among Russians than among Lithuanians. A very small number declared that they never voted for LDP.³⁴

The support for Conservative and Christian Democratic parties was always very low. It can be explained that the more recently established parties were mostly oriented towards restitutorial policy, while the Labor Democratic

³¹ Steen, Anton. 1997. *Between Past and Future: Elites, Democracy and the State in Post-Communist Countries. A Comparison of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.* Aldershot: Ashgate, p. 46, table 3.8.

³² Rudensky, Nikolai. 1994. "Russian Minorities in the Newly Independent States." In Szporluk, Roman. *National Identity and Ethnicity in Russia and the New States of Eurasia.* New York: Sharpe, p. 67.

³³ Opposition parties presented the support of the national minorities for the LDP as an evidence of pro-Soviet or pro-Russian orientation of the party and its government.

³⁴ Fourteen percent of Lithuanians declared that they feel very close to the party they support and only seven percent of Russians did the same. See Richard Rose and William Maley. 1994. *Nationalities in the Baltic States.* Glasgow: University of Strathclyde.

party can be characterized as favoring continuational policy and was openly trying to collect the voices of national minorities.

The third and most recent political development shows that members of the Russian minority are likely to vote for their ethno-national parties.³⁵ This might have several sources; one of these is the lack of representation of the Russian minority in politics, which leads to distrust in Lithuanian national parties and directs votes to the ethno-cultural parties. This could also be a form of protest, because the relationships with the ethno-national parties are not strong. Another possible explanation may be called the pragmatic behavior of the national minority allying with moderate political groups and using the division within the majority.³⁶

The political participation of the Russian minority shows the tendency to form distinct political behavior, which could be characteristic for the integrated national minority.

Media

The Lithuanian state media not only broadcast programs in the Russian and Polish languages, but also offer short programs targeted toward smaller populations of national minorities such as Ukrainians and Belorussians.³⁷ This kind of proportional representation of national minorities in state-controlled media has three main consequences. First, it clearly shows that the Russian minority is one of many minorities in Lithuania, and should be treated equally with the other national minorities. Second, this policy of the Lithuanian state shows that there are efforts not to assimilate national minorities, but to create the feeling of integrated national communities, which are preserving their cultural and linguistic characteristics, but identify themselves politically with the Lithuanian state. Third, it prevents the building of a more cohesive conglomerate identity of "Russian-speakers" as an opposition to "titulars." The tendency, however, to shorten Russian programs on TV and radio and place them at an inconvenient time again shows that they are not regarded as an essential part of the state policy, and can be easily abandoned due to the lack of financing or another reason.

³⁵ For example, in Klaipeda city where about 35,000 Russians live, the Russian Union/Alliance of citizens received 9,380 votes in the last municipal elections in 1996. The total electoral participation rate was 32.99%. If we assume that the voting activity of Russian and non-Russian population is about the same, we find that among 11,000 Russians who voted, 9,300 voted for the ethnonational coalition. Data received from the homepage of Lithuanian Parliament <http://www.lrs.lt>.

³⁶ Rose, Richard and William Maley. 1994. "Conflict or Compromise in the Baltic States?" In RFEIRL Research Report, 3128, p. 27.

³⁷ Novogrockiene, Jurate and Algimantas Janauskas. 1998. "The Situation of National Minorities: Integration Possibilities." In Lopata, Raimundas, research project director. National Question in Lithuania: Acculturation, Integration or Separateness?, unpublished research. Vilnius: Institute of International Relations and Political Science.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have discussed several indicators of the changing identity of the Russian minority. The most important of these are geographical and demographic characteristics of the national minority, presence or absence of open conflict between majority and minority, the role of the elite of the national minority, language attitudes, the educational system, and a complex of variables that show the social distance between majority and minority populations.

The preliminary interpretation of the situation of the Russian minority in Lithuania shows us that the situation is quite ambiguous. We can find both indications of a formation of an integrated national minority and a creation of favorable conditions for the assimilation of this minority group. My conclusion is that the assimilation of the group is not very likely in the nearest future, but the preconditions for individual assimilation are already established.