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The Russian-Speaking Population in Estonia and Ukraine: Migration, Integration and Historical Position on The Way from a Titular Nation to a Minority

Abstract. *The paper describes the process of political, social and economic transition in the Baltic States and Ukraine, with special emphasis on the Russian-speaking population. The analysis includes a historical overview of the time before the beginning of the system change, before 1989, when the migration of the Russian-speaking population took place. Furthermore, the phases of democratic system change and consolidation after 1990/1991 are described and analyzed with the given perspective. The theoretical approach combines elements from political science and sociology.*

Keywords: Russians; Transition; Migration; Integration; Democratization; Eastern Europe; Ethnic minority.

Introduction

The distribution of the Russian language in Eastern Europe has historical roots. The language is widely spread throughout the territory of the former Soviet space up to the present day. This situation is largely due to the historical and political continuation of the Soviet era, when large population groups were dislocated throughout the Soviet territory for political and economic reasons. Due to the privileged position of Soviet Russia during the Soviet time, the Russian language was considered to be the *de facto* main language of communication within the USSR. The spread of the Russian language was further accelerated through the migration processes taking place within the Soviet sphere. The Russian language in fact became one of the main carriers of the “Soviet” idea within the autocratic regime. One of the outcomes of these large-scale migration processes was that Russian-speaking peoples built rather large groups in some member countries of the Soviet Union. Due to the fact that these newly formed minorities had been forced neither to learn the actual native tongue during the Soviet time, nor to assimilate with the host society, their position turned to be problematic in some

countries after the collapse of the Soviet system. However, not all countries used the same strategy to deal with these new population groups.

This paper seeks to describe the relationship between the historical position of the Russian-speaking population in successor states of the USSR and their status after the political transition. The Russian-speaking population in Eastern Europe did, in fact, become a minority in most of the countries, at least with respect to its ethnic relation towards the titular nations. However, differences can be found in the ethnic policies of the successor states of the Soviet Union. These differences began to appear already during the period of political mobilisation of oppositional forces in the society during the late 1980s. Simultaneously, the position of the Russian-speaking population started to change as the transition processes advanced towards independence of states. The crucial moment was reached during the formation of new political elites and their interaction with the old decision-makers, the former often represented through the indigenous population and the latter through an ethnically mixed old-system elite. The balance of power in this phase is important for the power of lawmaking henceforth. Under the circumstances of ethnic-based differences paired with political contradiction, political decisions can, in some cases, lead to ethnic segregation. Hence, if ethnic-based differences are carried on to the next phase of political transition, they are difficult to revoke. The phase of democratic consolidation shows the outcome of the political decisions which were made during the transitional change of a political system. With this, the social and political position of the Russian-speaking population can become subject to change, compared to the position of the titular nation.

For the analysis, the processes of political, social and economic transition in the Baltic States and Ukraine are taken under consideration. The paper offers a comparative overview of the transitional periods between the 1980s and the mid-1990s, with emphasis on the position of the Russian-speaking population. The analysis also includes a historical overview of the time before the beginning of the system change, before 1989, as the majority of the Russian-speaking population migrated into the countries. This phase reveals some important facts that possibly explain differences in the position of the Russian-speaking population during and after the transition.

Soviet migration processes and facts

a.) Ideology behind Soviet migration

Economic and political reasons. A number of instruments were used during the Soviet rule in order to dislocate the workforce throughout the enormous empire. The dislocations were carried out for economic and political reasons; the main official reason was the elimination of economic backwardness of the national republics, especially the periphery regions of the Soviet Union. Moreover, the goal was to transform largely rural and undereducated societies into urban, industrialized and civilized ones. In order to achieve this goal, large-scale industrial enterprises were built throughout the Union in order to secure the growth of the working class as the carrying power of the Soviet rule. Urbanisation and improvement of social conditions were the main aims of the Soviet system after World War II (Tishkov 1997, p. 42). Of course, the central regime administration faced major differences in the development of its member states. Some republics, such as the Baltic republics, had built functioning democratic states and market economies in the years between the two World Wars. Others, such as the countries in Central Asia, were much more dependant on agriculture and central state leadership. These differences later shaped migration, since some states were in greater need of a workforce for their newly built enterprises than others. Plus, some areas became more popular destinations for migration based on their development.

As the Soviet rule evolved, the Russian language-based ideology started to constitute the basis for development in the states of the Union. All parts of the Soviet Union underwent a demographical evolution (Tiit 2011, pp. 50-59). “Soviet” became very strongly associated with “Russian.” Socio-professional structures in the countries were based on the main example from the Centre (Moscow). The Soviet Union was to become not a state of administrative territories (“bourgeois federalism” with “bourgeois nationalists” seeking to form independent national states), but a state of “national statehoods”, thus forming self-determinations based on “socialist federalism” under the roof of USSR. Since citizens of all Union Republics attained Soviet citizenship, the idea of “nationality” gained new meaning, as it was the defining feature attaching a person to a specific “national republic” within the Union. This resulted in the Soviet citizenship and “Soviet peoples. Up to this day, “nationality” has a different meaning than “citizenship” to former citizens of the former Soviet republics. The first has to do with identity, and the second with a legal affiliation (Tishkov 1997, p. 29-31).

Cultural diversity. The introduction of the Soviet (or, here, Russian) theme into the cultural mosaic of the Union met different reactions. One must not forget that at the beginning of the Soviet rule, the ethnic and cultural diversity was subject to protection and prevalence of the

Bolsheviks (1917). Political movements among non-Russian peoples were (officially) supported by the Bolsheviks, as expressions against absolutism. The Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets (*Всероссийский съезд Советов*), held on October 25th 1917, declares: “The Soviet Power shall provide all the nations that inhabit Russia with the genuine right to self-determination” (Tishkov 2007, p. 43). The “doctrine of ethnic nationalism” postulated a nation as an ethnic group with a set of inalienable characteristics (territory, economic ties, language, social mentality). With that, the existence of an ethnic group declared to be an indigenous nation (коренная нация) within their own statehood completed the term of a national statehood discussed in the previous chapter. Lenin, who was an opponent of Russian nationalism, said: “We want the largest state possible, the closest union possible and the greatest possible number of nations living next to the Great Russians (великорусы)” (Lenin 1962 cited in Tishkov 2007, p. 42).

The union states were thus equipped with a certain amount of self-determination. However, the russification of the Soviet Union grew with time. Still, the republics retained the right to designate their own cultural profile through education, literature and media, even if censure was common. Some republics succeeded greatly in the prevalence of their ethnic culture. Those were, for example, the Baltic republics, which had the fame of being “westernized” and “cultivated.” Ukraine, on the other hand, showed a rather different exposure towards russification. Here, Russian language already dominated everyday life by the mid-1980s. The situation leads one to believe that the common ground of Ukrainian and Russian culture, most notably the similarities of the languages, was a much larger one than between Russia and the Baltics. This fact is not to be underestimated when it comes to the position of the Russian-speaking population in Estonia and Ukraine.

Policy, mechanisms and instruments. The deportations and repressions of the Stalin era were not primarily ethnically motivated, though a certain ethnic component cannot be overlooked. Repressions can be seen as part of ethnic policy insofar as that the majority of deportees in the union republics were of indigenous origin. Also, the local oppositional intelligentsia, which was “removed” after the Soviet power was established, was also of local origin. This was especially the case in countries that had already experienced democratic systems between the World Wars. The largest deportations were carried out in Estonia in 1941 and 1949, when most of the deported were ethnic Estonians (Vetik 2002, pp. 71-105). Ukraine, which had seen the establishment of the Soviet regime already in 1922, was led to great population losses through organized collectivization and famine of the “Holodomor” in

the beginning of 1930s (Tishkov 2007, p. 42). Since the famine hit rural areas the hardest and the majority of the rural population were ethnic Ukrainians, it can be concluded that the losses on the part of ethnic Ukrainians through the “Holodomor” were particularly severe (NKVD USSR 1925). Deportations in Ukraine during the course of Stalinist purges hit Ukraine in 1940s and 1950s. The majority of the victims were Ukrainians. (Zemskov 1991, p. 3-4)

An important instrument of migration was the law on “*Distribution*” (распределение), which was passed in 1968 for “Distribution of Work Force and Young Specialists after Graduating from a Higher Educational Establishments (Institutes)” (Ministry of Education USSR 1968). Graduates were “distributed” as young specialists in order to work for industrial facilities throughout the Union. The employment was carried out for a number of years after graduation. The demand of specific professions was reported by facilities directly to Institutes. The graduates obtained benefits in places of work (living space, job guarantee etc.), which made the decision in favour of migration easier. This mode of migration brought educated young workers to peripheral parts of the Soviet Union, especially during 1950s and 60s, when the industrialization was at its full speed. The fact that such institutes were mostly situated in large Russian cities at that time made the distribution of Russian-speaking specialists even more probable. Later educational institutions for higher education were also established in union republics. But even so, some subjects were still taught in Russian.

Other social groups migrated throughout the Soviet Union. New industrial facilities were in constant need of a workforce, since the industrial output was mostly aimed for at the entire Soviet Union, plus exports. In many areas, the need for a workforce could not be covered by the local republic, so migration of workers became common. For them, new living space had to be built, which again raised the need for a workforce. Within the migration process, some areas were more desirable than others, since they offered better working conditions and future possibilities. Another important group within the migrations was the Party functionaries and other insiders, who were sent off by the central administration to all union republics in order to supervise and report back about the work of the local wings of the Communist Party. The main areas of assignment were the Party apparatus and other administrative spheres, as well as the industrial network, especially large and structurally important enterprises (Semjonov 2002, pp. 105-108). These persons were either Party-loyal Russians or, often, locals who had been raised and/or educated in Russia. The military, which was stationed in all parts of the Soviet Union, was also an important Russian-speaking group, though one must keep in mind that the military was normally cut off from interactions with

the rest of the society and was not encouraged to build longer-lasting ties with the country of deployment.

Theoretical background

The theoretical approach combines two basic concepts: democratic transition and social assimilation. The transitional period of a country’s democratisation is divided in three subsequent phases: the end of the autocratic regime, institutionalisation, and consolidation of democracy. The chronological subsequence of the phases allows this approach to serve as a time frame for the analysis of the democratisation process. Another important phase of the analysis is the historical background. In this phase, processes are described which lead to the ethnic situation in the countries today. The most important feature during the end of the autocratic regime is the formation of a political opposition and its interactions with the old decision-makers. The institutionalization implies the development of new semi-democratic or democratic institutions, which even the path to full democratization. Once the democratic institutions and features are established, the consolidation phase begins. Here the behaviour of systemic actors is analysed with respect to system stability.

Within the phases of democratic transition, especially during the last phase, a second theoretical approach is used to describe the socio-economic integration of the Russian-speaking population. Different theoretical concepts show different ways for a minority culture to interact with the majority culture (Kalter 2008, pp. 20-21). Generally, two forms of society need to be present for any kind of interaction: the host society and the guest society (Esser 1980). This way, the following terminology can be used:

	Contact/interaction/inclusion with the majority society	
	yes	no
Interaction/ Perpetuation of the minority culture	yes	Multiple integration Segmentation
	no	Assimilation Marginalization

“Multiple integration” is used by H. Esser to describe the situation of the minority being able to equally interact with both social spaces (Esser 2008, pp. 11-36). “Assimilation” and “marginalisation” describe the cases when the minority does not interact with the minority culture only, and when the minority interacts with neither the majority nor the minority. “Segmentation,” on the other hand, shows a situation where the minority only functions within its own cultural space (Esser 2008, p. 23). In this paper, the term “integration” is used to describe the general way a minority culture is incorporated into the majority society. It is important to note at this point that today no accepted definition of the term “integration” exists, nor is there a universal way to measure integration as such. In order to be able to analyse integration, an attempt is made to use dimensions and indicators (Esser 1980, p. 221; Michalowski and Snel 2005, p. 11). The socio-economic processes are divided into five dimensions: cultural, structural, social, identifying and political. Every dimension contains a number of indicators, as shown below:

1. Language	Cultural Dimension
2. Knowledge of the majority culture/cultural similarities	
3. Access to/participation in labour market	Structural Dimension
4. Autonomous access to basic services	
5. Access to/participation in education	
6. Access to/participation in residential market/neighbourhood	Social Dimension
7. Civil society activities	
8. Social life/leisure	
9. Ethnic background of partner/social network	
10. Personal assessment	Identifying Dimension
11. Compliance with cultural and personal values	
12. Access to basic rights	Political Dimension
13. Access to political participation/electoral franchise	
14. Access to political office	

The social dimensions are drawn from the empirical analysis and add up to an evaluation of the socio-economic integration of the Russian-speaking population. The

political dimension especially offers a bridge towards the phases of democratic transition. Through the combined theoretical approach, the state of democratic transition is merged with socio-economic elements. This allows a new perspective on nation- and state-building processes next to ethnic tensions in Post-Soviet spaces

Estonia – historical background

The democratic development of Estonia after the collapse of the Soviet system has been a success according to theoretical concept of democratization. The russification of the Soviet Estonia, though less successful than in other states, still left a mark on the development of the Estonian society. Until the 1980s, “Soviet” was unmistakably connected to “Russian”. The number of non-Estonians grew from 23,000 in 1945 to 602,000 in 1989, increasing their percentage of the total population from 8.2% in 1934 to 30% in 1989 (Tiit 2011, pp. 40; 58). The percentage of ethnic Estonians, at the same time, fell from 88.1% to 61.5% (Chinn; Kaiser 1996, p. 97). The Estonian population lost around 20% of its population during the war and deportations (Tiit 2011, pp. 47-49). As we have learned earlier, most of the deported were ethnic Estonians. The population grew largely due to industrial projects in the 1950s and 60s, most of the demographic growth being due to immigration. By the year 1959, the Russian-speaking population had grown to constitute 20% of the total Estonian population (Statistical Office of Estonia 1989; 2001). Main production branches under Soviet rule in Estonia included textile industry, foods and provisions, oil shale, chemical industry, metal industry, and cellulose production (Köörna 1983). The most active industrialization was carried out in the 1950s until the 1970s. New factories were established in Tallinn and the north-eastern part of the country. In the mid-70s already 20% of all enterprises employed over 1,000 workers, an increase from 6% in the 1960s. More than 50% of the output was exported to all parts of the Union and abroad, thus naturally producing much more output than the relatively small Estonian inner market could absorb (Kalabekov 2013). The need for a workforce grew continuously (Vetik 2002, p. 74). New townships and quarters were built for the new incoming workforce. This resulted in a high concentration of Russian-speakers in some towns and areas. Particularly, some parts of Tallinn (Lasnamäe, Põhja-Tallinn) and North-eastern Estonia (Sillamäe, Narva, Kohtla-Järve) showed high percentages (up to 95%) of Russian-speakers among the population. The migration processes also caused changes in rural-urban distribution. In 1934, the ratio of rural to urban population was around 70/30. In 1959, the ratio was already 44/56, and in 1989 30/70, a complete reverse of the pre-war situation. With

this, the ethnic Estonians only comprised 62% of the urban population in 1959 and just 51% in 1989, compared to the 87% of the rural population who were ethnically Estonian (Tiit 2011, p. 58). Military personnel were also present in Estonia, as in all parts of the Soviet Union. Around 125,000 persons were deployed in Estonia for military purposes in the mid-80s. However, they were mostly stationed in “closed cities” or military bases and had less day-to-day contact with the local population (Tiit 2011, p. 60-63). The remigration (emigration) reached its peak between 1990 and 1994, as around 88,000 persons left the country (Vetik 2002, p.74). In 2001 Russians still constituted 26% of the total population (Tiit 2011, p. 45). Many had stayed for different reasons: some had lived there for over 20 years and had built family and social networks. The economic and political situation stabilised rather quickly after the system turnaround, so many were seeking more stability. Also, the events after 1991 indicated that the situation in Estonia might evolve more positively than in other parts of the former Soviet Union.

Ukraine – Historical background

Ukraine’s Soviet past held similar developments to Estonia’s. The population losses through war and repressions took about one fifth of the Ukrainian population. As mentioned earlier, many of the victims were ethnic Ukrainians: peasants and local intelligentsia (Hildermeier 1998, p. 369). Along with collectivization and repressions, the industrialization of Soviet Ukraine also occurred during the beginning of the 1930s. Main production branches under Soviet rule were agriculture, mining, metallurgy and the chemical industry. Also, large electricity plants were constructed in the eastern and southern part of the country. The Dnepr River served as a natural resource for hydro energy stations. Ukraine was one of the first countries to experience the urge to modernize the peripheral parts of the young Soviet Union. This aim was pursued even more specifically after World War II, when war reparations were paired with a vast economic promotion. The five-year-plan of 1946-1950 saw the investment of 20% of the total Soviet budget into the economic development of Ukraine. In the 1950s, Ukraine’s production was already leading the Soviet average in some branches. This caused an influx of workers, which in turn caused the population to triple from 1.2 to 2.9 million. However, agriculture was still at a standstill in the 1950s, not having been able to reach its pre-war output numbers (Magosci 1996, p. 645). This is of importance, since the rural-urban distribution shifted in Ukraine between 1950 and 1989, as it had also done in Estonia. In 1959 the ratio of rural to urban population was 54/46; by 1989, it had shifted to 32/68

(Statistical Office of Ukraine, 2013). Not surprisingly, the population growth fell on the urban and industrial areas, increasing the percentage of immigrants in these parts of the country.

Population censuses show that the percentage of Russians grew from 16.9% in 1959 to 22% in 1989. At the same time, the percentage of Ukrainians decreased from 76.8% to 72.7% (Statistical Office of Ukraine, 2003-2004). By 2001, the percentage of Russians had decreased to 17.2% and the share of Ukrainians grown to 77.8%, reaching post-war levels. Although it seems as if Ukraine today is facing an ethnic distribution more favourable towards native citizens than is the case in Estonia, the reality shows a rather different picture. The most important difference is that Ukrainian language is a Slavic language and has a much stronger connection to Russian compared to the Finno-Ugric roots of Estonian (Kappeler 2012, p. 17). Also, historical ties connect Ukraine to Russia and Russian culture from the 17th century at the latest (Magosci 1996, p. 12). Ukraine had no democratic experience before the Soviet rule, as opposed to Estonia, which established a mostly stable democracy between 1918 and 1940. Ukraine experienced the Bolshevik rule early, in 1922. The historical assimilation brings East Ukraine towards Russia and West Ukraine towards Poland, whereas Estonia historically faced Scandinavia, Livonia and Northern Europe. The Crimea was already 60% Russian-speaking when it became a part of Ukraine in 1954. Although Ukraine experienced emigration after the collapse of the Soviet system, the ethnic composition of the population has not changed as drastically as in Estonia (Malynovska 2006). Nevertheless, the lingual and cultural situation in Ukraine has been shaped dramatically by the Russian rule, as the next chapter shows.

Language issues – an excursus

Russian language and culture was present in the everyday life of Soviet Estonia (Semjonov 2002, p. 11). Secondary schools were commonly taught in Russian, as were selected subjects in higher educational establishments and universities (Estonica, Eesti haridus nõukogude okupatsiooni ajal). The everyday work situation showed that the use of language largely depended on the work team. Some teams were mostly Estonian, some mostly Russian. The branch and area of residence also played a role. Estonian-dominated fields were public administration, culture, education and agriculture (Park 1994, pp. 69-87). Russian-dominated fields were coal mining, the metal industry and the textile industry (Eesti Riigiarhiiv 1970, ERA.R-10.26.872). The Communist Party organs had both Estonian and Russian

functionaries. Documentation for internal affairs was in Estonian, and for Moscow and central organs it was submitted in Russian (Veskimäe, 2013). A poll held in the 1970s showed that around 30% of the ethnic Estonian population indicated Russian as their second language of use; around 13% of Russians said the same about Estonian language (Eesti Riigiarhiiv 1970, ERA.R-10.26.872). In 2001 and 2011, around 60% of Estonians spoke Russian as a foreign language, and 1% as a mother tongue. At the same time, around 40% Russians said Estonian was their second language of use (Statistical Office of Estonia, 2001; 2011). The linguistic situation in Estonia is different today, since Estonian started dominating everyday life during the transitional phase. The new republic was built upon an “Estonian” premise, which forced the Russian-speaking population to adapt to Estonian and to learn the language. Since Estonian and Russian are rather different based on their structure, the establishment of Estonian as an opposite of Soviet-Russian was a powerful tool of Estonian statehood in the beginning of the 1990s.

Language poses one fundamental difference between Estonia and Ukraine, as seen above. Another fact is important at this point: in Estonia, the majority of Ukrainians and Belorussians, who compose about 5% of the population, declare Russian to be their first language of communication (Statistical Office of Estonia, 1989; 2001). So in Estonia, a rather clear language frontier exists. In Ukraine, the linguistic situation is rather different. Here a division between mother tongue and the first language of communication (e.g. inside the family) must be considered in addition to nationality. Some Ukrainians actually see Ukrainian as their mother tongue (due to ethnic background), but declare Russian to be their first language of use. Therefore in this paper the term “first language” instead of “mother tongue” is used when referring to the following distinctions: Russian-speaking Ukrainians; Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainians and Russian-speaking Russians. There are also those who identify as bilingual. Statistical data shows bilinguals are mostly Ukrainians, whereas Russians are mostly first-language Russian-speaking (Medvedev 2010). A poll by the Ukrainian Democratic Circle (Український Демократический Круг) shows that in 2010 36% of the population indicated that they spoke either Ukrainian or Russian inside the family, and 27% indicated that they used both (Medvedev 2010). Another survey from the Ukrainian Academy of Science in 2011 shows 42% speaking Ukrainian at home, 38% Russian, and 17% both languages (Kramar 2012). In everyday life, 63% of the population identify as bilingual (Medvedev 2010). These results do not resemble the ethnic situation when it comes to nationalities or the use of mother tongue. Of ethnic Ukrainians, who make up 78% of the

population, just 68% declare Ukrainian to be their mother tongue. Some 30% of the entire Ukrainian population declare their mother tongue to be Russian, which does not match the 18% of ethnic Russians who live in Ukraine today. (Medvedev 2010). This situation makes it difficult to draw clear lines between nationalities and ethnic identities in Ukraine.

A variety of factors shape the use of language. The rural-urban distribution was already mentioned earlier. Both in Estonia and Ukraine, the majority of the rural population is native, either Estonian- or Ukrainian-speaking. Also, an east-west distribution is present in both Estonia and Ukraine. In 2010, around 70% of the population of Eastern Ukraine indicated Russian as their first language of use, whereas this percentage was only 7% in Western Ukraine. 80% of the population of the latter uses Ukrainian as a first language (Medvedev 2010). In Estonia, the eastern part of the country is more Russian-speaking than the western part. In the border-city Narva, 95% of the population are Russians or Russian-speakers (Tiit 2011, pp. 60-63). Tallinn and Kiev both show a rather different picture from the rest of their countries. In Tallinn, around 55% are Estonians and 35% are Russians (Statistical Office of Estonia, census 2001). Kiev shows results of around 60% Ukrainian mother-tongue-speakers, but only 15% of those use it in everyday life. Notably, 30% of Kievites speak Russian inside the family and 50% use both languages (Medvedev 2010). Here again we see a situation where the mother tongue and the language of use do not match, as is the case in many parts of the country. Other factors shaping language use are age, area of life and family situation, making the language and identity issues sometimes even more difficult.

One can conclude that the language situation in Ukraine is much more complex than in Estonia, made more so by the fact that Russian was largely used during Soviet rule and eventually displaced Ukrainian. This was especially the case in large cities, the east and south of the country. It is possibly the linguistic closeness of the languages that allowed Russian get a major role in the Ukrainian society during Soviet times (Polese 2011, pp. 36-50).

2. Transitional period

Estonia and Ukraine

Important laws were passed by the last Estonian Supreme Soviet (legislature period February 24th, 1985 – March 18th, 1990), smoothing the way to independence. Only members of the Communist Party could be elected to the body, though the composition was ethnically mixed.

According to the list of Members, the ratio of ethnic Estonians to other groups was about 65/35. The following laws were passed:

- Sovereignty of the Estonian SSR (passed June 23rd, 1988)
- Law on National Flag (passed October 20th, 1988)
- Law on Official State Language (passed January 18th, 1989)
- Abolishment of the Leadership of the Communist Party (passed February 23rd, 1990)

The first semi-democratic Parliament (Supreme Soviet of the Estonian Republic) was elected on March 18th, 1990. This time opposition forces other than the Communist Party were allowed to run for office. All permanent residents of Estonia were eligible to vote. The Communist Party lost most of its power to the challenging forces, most notably to the Popular Front. The legislative body passed the Declaration of Independence on August 20th, 1991. Before that, a referendum on state independence was held (March 3rd, 1991), with an 88.8% turnout and, 77.8% of all residents voting for independence (Toomla 1999 p. 113).

The Law on Citizenship, passed by the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian Republic on February 26th, 1992, gave citizenship of the newly independent Estonia to offspring of citizens of the first Republic of Estonia (1918-1940). Based on the law from the year 1938, it forced all other residents to fulfil requirements for obtaining citizenship, language requirements among others. Most of the Soviet immigrants were therefore not granted automatic citizenship after the passing of the law (Semjonov 2002, p. 119). Those who had registered for citizenship before the March 1990 elections could obtain citizenship with a simplified procedure. However, only about 900 persons took advantage of this possibility before the first democratic parliamentary elections in September 1992 (Budryte 2005, p. 75). Before that, in June 1992, the Constitution was passed via referendum, granting all residents basic civil and human rights (Raun 1997, pp. 342-343). Also, all permanent residents, regardless of their citizenship, were allowed to vote at local elections. The first local elections were held in October 1993 (Noffke 2008, p. 86).

The transitional period in Ukraine was shaped through a strong position of the Communist Party during transition after Glasnost (Ländergutachten Ukraine 2004, BTI). The leader, Leonid Kravchuk, saw the modernization of the Communist Party as the main key to reforms. The Nomenclature remained strong under Kravchuk, and the old elites endured almost no loss of power. Also, the economic structure with old functionaries remained in power, as they were interested in keeping the old power structure intact (Kappeler 2012, p.

256). The Communist Party gained the majority of seats in the first semi-democratic elections on March 4th, 1990 (Pritzel 1997, pp. 330-337). The old elites made certain that the Russian-speaking population was well represented. The opposition, with its left-wing support of Confederation under Soviet Rule, as well as the right-wing, with the National Ukrainian movement and RUCH (among others), did not gain enough power in the new executive bodies to threaten the position of the old decision-makers (Ländergutachten Ukraine 2004, BTI). The declaration of sovereignty was passed on July 16th, 1990, followed by the Declaration of Independence on August 24th, 1991. The Communist Party was banned in 1991, but remained in power through its functionaries. The Ukrainian semi-democratic Rada passed the Law on Citizenship on October 13th 1991. With this law, all residents became citizens of Ukraine, gaining the right to take part in the Referendum on Independence on December 1st, 1991. The turnout was 84%, and 90% voted in favour of independence (Pritzel 1997, pp. 340-343). In March-April 1994 the first democratic parliamentary elections, where the majority still remained to newly formed Communist Party and old Nomenclature. Finally the Verhovna Rada passed the Constitution in June 1996. The Constitution was seen as a compromise between the elites and the economic functionaries (Pritzel 1997, pp. 345-348). Ukraine appeared to be politically and economically torn between old and new, East and West until the Orange revolution in 2004.

Conclusion

What can be concluded from the overview of the migration and integration processes that have taken place in Estonia and Ukraine over the last decades? The analysis of the historical background shows that although these two countries faced similar fates due to their Soviet experience, the outcome of the processes was rather different. First, Estonia and Ukraine differed in their economic and political foundation prior to the Soviet time. Estonia managed to retain some of its autonomy with respect to its own Estonian, language and culture. Although Russian was present in everyday life, the Estonian component always served as a boundary against the Soviet-Russian component. Ukraine faced a different development; here the Russian language gained access to more spheres of the public life. The Ukrainian language had almost disappeared from the discourse in larger cities and the eastern part of the country. If we take the indicators introduced in the theoretical concept and look at the language, we see a rather controversial picture. The Russian-speaking population was assimilated into the Soviet culture via the Russian language during the Soviet time. This

assimilation was carried out in all parts of the Soviet Union, since Russian was present everywhere. So if we take one union republic as a part of the Soviet Union (e.g. Estonia), then the native population there (e.g. Estonians) actually had to assimilate with the superior culture (Soviet-Russian). They actually faced a “reverse assimilation”, whereupon the Russian-speaking population was already assimilated to the Soviet-Russian space. After the collapse of the superior power, the degree of the assimilation showed. Estonia underwent a rather easy switch to Estonian in all public spheres. Ukraine, on the other hand, is facing difficulties to shake the Russian language until today. To use the terminology, the “reverse assimilation” is present in Ukraine up to the present day, since a number of ethnic Ukrainians still call Russian their first language of use or even their mother tongue. The passing of the Law on Regional Languages in Ukraine in July 2012 and the fact that 13 Oblasts adopted the law straight away only shows the persistence of the language issue (RIA Novosti 2012). One of the reasons can surely be found in the linguistic history of Ukraine and Russia, in contrast to that of Estonia and Russia. The political dimension gives us some basis for comparison as well. In Estonia the Russian-speaking population was virtually excluded from the first democratic processes in the beginning of the 1990s. Thus, the formation of new elites happened among Estonians. This was different in Ukraine – here the old decision-makers remained in power. Could the further development of the countries have anything to do with the way that the Russian-speaking population was dealt with in the course of the democratic transition? Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Estonia has only had scarce diplomatic contact with the Russian Federation and has directed its view entirely towards the West. Ukraine is struggling with its position between Russia and the West until today. Surely, the role of the Russian-speaking population cannot bear the sole responsibility for the political development of the countries. However, its influence is not to be underestimated.

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