

ABSTRACT

of the end-product study on the project
**“ Changes of Ethnic Structure and Characteristics
of Minorities in Latvia”**
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The main aim of the project was to investigate the changes on ethnic composition in transition period in Latvia. In the course of study the brochure entitled “ Latvijas iedzīvotāju etniskā sastāva izmaiņas 90.gados” (Changes of Ethnic Structure in Latvia in the 1990s) has been prepared for publication in September 1998.

The issue begins with a brief review of ethnodemographic research and literature on the theme. Special chapters are devoted to analysis of results on ethnic differentiation of intensity of population reproduction (fertility, mortality and natural growth), migration and assimilation processes, as well as changes in ethnic composition and citizenship. The final chapter deals with forecasts of population development of ethnic Latvians and all larger minorities in Latvia (Russians, Belarusians, Ukrainians, Poles, Lithuanians, Jews and Gypsies) for period until 2015.

The brochure has been prepared in Latvian but the summary of the study will be given also in English and Russian.

FINAL REPORT
on the project “Changes of the Ethnic
Structure and Characteristics of Minorities
in Latvia”

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1. INTRODUCTION

The number of ethnic Latvians in Latvia comprise only slightly more than half the total population in Latvia and Latvians are observed as a minority in working age groups and in many populated areas. Minorities, especially Russians and other ethnic groups of Slavs, compose a majority in the capital city of Riga and many other cities and towns of Latvia. At the same time the relations between ethnic Latvians and non-Latvians, especially Russians, have often been strained. Therefore, a theme of investigation is very actual for Latvia

The cardinal change in power relationships brought by independence has caused also structural ethnodemographic changes. Latvia, as all countries in transition, has experienced an adverse economic development. The depth and breadth of these changes affected the lives and behaviour of almost all families. The need for comprehensive study of Latvia's case is evident. And particularly that almost 50 years the data on ethnicity ethnic relations and social statistics were mainly for official use and restricted for public dissemination (especially in native languages) and scientific analysis. Besides, also in the 1990s the investigation of matters on demography and ethno – sociology is not sufficiently developed in Latvia.

The main aim of the project is to investigate the changes of ethnic composition in Latvia in transition period. To reach this aim the following tasks have been set forth to:

- investigate ethnic structure of the population in Latvia during 1989 – 1997 and especially changes of titular nationality (Latvians) and numerically largest minorities (Russians, Belarusians, Ukrainians, Poles, Lithuanians, Jews, Gypsies),
- investigate the differentiation of demographic processes for these ethnic groups and to reveal a role of population reproduction, migration and assimilation on the changes of ethnic structure,
- study specific peculiarities of ethnic minorities in the 1990s, prepare projections for the demographic development of all larger ethnic groups and their structure in the nearest perspective (till 2010 – 2015).

The investigation was based mainly on data of the last census (1989), current accounting of events from civil registration (births, deaths, marriages, migration) and

data of Latvian Civil Population Register which was established within the last years starting from 1992. In some cases the analysis was based on Soviet period statistics. For the purpose of this research the data of different sample surveys, polls and information derived from other sources are used. The author uses special statistical and demographic methods for population projections, measurement of intensity of demographic processes, ethnic assimilation indexes, etc.

In Strasbourg in February 1993 in the meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe it was suggested to consider that the ethnic minority is sufficiently representative group of persons which has lasting, permanent relations with a home country. It has specific differences from titular nationality (language, origin, religion, culture) and a deliberate wish to preserve these peculiarities. According to these recommendations a minority in essence is a component of the aggregate of non-titular citizens.

In Latvia for the time being in official documents a term – ethnic minority is not defined and has been started to be used very recently. In daily policy and publicism two points of view are reflected:

- 1) those foreigners affiliated to the aggregate of citizens are recognised as ethnic minorities,
- 2) minorities are all constantly living non–titular representatives (excluding the military personnel from abroad and short – term guest – workers), also non-citizens.

The dissemination of the first point of view in Latvia and in the Baltics till now has been limited. In the Baltic States the laws on citizenship were adopted only recently (in Latvia in 1994). So, the revival of ethnic minorities, in a legal sense, has started from this time. It should be noted that only recently many Russians and other Eastern Slavs (Belarusians, Ukrainians)¹ reconciled themselves to designation – ethnic minority, but many even now have not reconciled themselves to such a position and it is considered as an offence. Human psychology was influenced by the dominant of russificated environment and Russian language of previous years.

It should be taken into consideration that, as a matter of fact, even till 1994 (actual process of the civil registration took place in 1992 - 1994) there was a lack o

¹ Factually also Poles but in our work this ethnic group is selected separately.

detailed statistical data published on the distribution of citizens in ethnic groups. Moreover, in ethnodemographic investigations (for dynamic comparisons) more essential significance is to state changes which have occurred in the composition of ethnic groups for a longer time, including the years of the Soviet period. Therefore, the analysis mainly of ethnic groups will be included in our investigation.

2. THE STATUS OF ETHNODEMOGRAPHIC INVESTIGATIONS AND A SHORT OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE

It should be noted that already until the 13th century there were ethnically mixed population in the Baltic region. The Baltic States have historically formed traditions in the fields of counting and analysis of statistical data on population size and composition. Although in the Baltic provinces since 1782 the soul revisions were carried out and the first modern census was held in 1881, nevertheless, our knowledge on ethnic composition on minorities of the pre – World War I period is fragmentary. On the whole a favourable situation was in the period between both world wars when Latvia was independent country. In this relatively short period four censuses were organized in (1920, 1925, 1930 and 1935). Also, matters on ethnic affiliation and native language were included in them. Data obtained, on the whole, were published and analysed. Nevertheless, in the 1935 census and also in other investigations a part of the population of non –Latvian origin with poorly expressed ethnic self – awareness and those born in ethnically mixed marriages sometimes unsubstantially were added to Latvians, therefore in statistical data the proportion of minorities was slightly decreased in comparison with the actual.

In all post–war Soviet censuses of 1959, 1970, 1979 and 1989 the respondents were asked to name their ethnic identity. In ethnically mixed marriages the children's ethnicity was chosen by the parents, taking into consideration also the subjective affiliation of older children. These censuses have also ascertained the mother tongue of the respondents and knowledge of other languages. That gives a basic information for scientific analysis of ethnic Latvians and minorities. But existing data should be regarded with care, especially it concerns to data on migration, as the registration of migrants (and

their ethnicity) had been carried out by specific procedures. The registration of movements of military personnel, prisoners and some other categories of the population (such as employees of security services, etc.) and the reflection of them in statistics is a question which one cannot ignore. Besides, the matters on ethnicity, ethnic relations and migration were discussed mainly within a narrow range of officials and only some information was open and available.

After regaining of independence in Latvia in the 1990s no census is carried out and foreseen that the next census will occur only in 2000 or 2001, therefore in research in the nearer years only other sources of information will be used. On the other hand it should be noted that Civil Population Register has been established whose data are available for researchers. Ethnodemographic investigations have intensified, they are carried out by several centres, mainly by Ethnic Studies Centre of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology (Dr. Elmārs Vēbers, Prof. Ilga Apine, Dr. Vladislavs Volkovs) and Centre of Demography (Dr. Atis Bērziņš, Dr. Ligita Ezera, Prof. Pēteris Zvidriņš) at the University of Latvia and Institute of Statistics (Dr. Bruno Mežgailis). Four monographs on historical and demographic development of Latvians have been written whose authors are Dr. Ilmārs Mežs (*Latvians in Latvia*, 1992 and 1994), Pēteris Zvidriņš and Inta Vanovska (*Latvians: a statistical and demographical portrait*, 1992) and Professor Andrejs Plakans of Iowa State University (*The Latvians: a short history*, 1995), as well as some brochures on ethnic groups in the country on the whole. As more significant one could mention a publication of National Affairs Division of the Ministry of Justice *National and ethnic groups in Latvia* (1996) and *Latvia and its ethnic minorities* (1997) by Elmārs Vēbers published in Latvian, Russian and English.

In the 1990s several surveys (inquiries) were performed in which programmes the matters on ethnicity of respondents were included. Here, as a more significant one should mention the 1994 Latvian NORBLAT survey, which was the first comprehensive living conditions study, conducted in Latvia. Some aspects of inequalities of Latvians, Russians and other minorities as to living conditions were analyzed in publications, especially in the book *Latvia: The impact of the transformation. The NORBLAT living conditions project*. *FAFO Report* (1996). Survey of 4200 men and women in reproductive age carried out in September – October of 1995 should be mentioned as a very important research of the 1990s. This survey, performed under the leadership of the

Grantee and main results have been published in Latvian (*Family and fertility in Latvia, 1996*) and in English (*Fertility and family surveys in countries of the ECE region . Standard country report. Latvia.*, New York and Geneva, 1998) reveals characterizations of fertility, families and households viewed ethnically.

The Latvian labour force surveys carried out by the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia in November of 1995 and 1996, contain very important data about the mobility in the labour market and the economic activity of population. The sample included six thousand randomly selected households. In their questionnaires a question on ethnicity was included, however, the results from the point of view of ethnic groups, have been elaborated very limited. From the third quarter of 1996 a matter on ethnicity is included in households' of budget studies.

In the last years also some collected articles on matters of national policy and political nation have been prepared as well as on the development of greater Latvian minorities (Russians, Belarusians, Ukrainians, Poles, Jews): their history, relations with ethnic motherland, the degree of organization, political orientations, social, cultural and educational activities. The treatise of ethnic history (*Slavs in Latvia*, 1998) by Ilga Apine and Vladislavs Volkovs is of essential significance. Some materials of scientific conferences on democratization, national rights, ethnopolitics, etc. have been published.

Statistical data on changes of ethnic composition of the population (not taking into consideration the influence created by assimilation) are published by Central Statistical Bureau yearly. The main demographic events in ethnic aspect and in the last two years also the material on distribution of resident population by citizenship (according to Population Register data) are published by this institution.

Notwithstanding the increase of the number of investigations the status of statistics and the level of ethnodemographic investigations yet are not satisfactory. The data from the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia and Civil Population Register differs, the first source of data shows more inhabitants than the second, besides, also ethnic structures calculated according to these sources slightly differed. Till now in investigations the characterizations of ethnic differentiation of demographic processes (fertility, mortality, migration) are used relatively poorly. Practically in Latvia till now nobody was engaged in determination of intensity of assimilation processes and its created influence on changes of ethnic composition of the population. Only in the last

years the first publications on ethnic differences in living conditions, poverty and aspects of reproductive health and behaviour appeared.

For the first time the prognosis of ethnic composition in Latvia for the period of ten years was carried out by the Centre of Demography, University of Latvia under the supervision of the Grantee in 1993. Now the author of the Report has prepared a new variant of prognosis for a longer period and introduces with results of projections.

3. CHANGES IN ETHNIC COMPOSITION AND CITIZENSHIP

According to the aim of the project one of the main tasks was to investigate the changes of ethnic composition in transition period. As information base the last Soviet census (1989) data, calculations of the Central Statistical Bureau, the Population Register and our own for the 1990s were used.

It should be emphasized that transition period had different phases with certain features. Due to the political transformation when the USSR moved towards the direction of greater freedom and publicity, and awakening of the Balts occurred in the end of the 1980s, the census data reflected the growth of national consciousness among the Latvian population. On October 8-9, 1988 the First Congress of the Latvian Popular Front took place and the Latvian National Independence Movement (LNNK), which from the beginning had expressed a separation from the USSR, prepared its first congress on 18 - 19 February 1989. The organized meetings and demonstrations followed one after the other.

In 1988, when Latvia still had a status of a constituent republic of the USSR, a special governmental commission of scientists and officials worked out some proposal and rules for regulation of immigration and in February 1989, one month after the 1989 census critical moment, the Government and Council of Trade Unions issued the Declaration "On measures for the cessation of unsubstantiated mechanical increase in population and regulation of migration processes in the Latvian SSR". Factually already in 1989, there was a sharp drop in the amount of arrivals (immigrants) and net – migration has become negative for the first time since World War II. The flow of new migrants has almost stopped while the outflow of the former immigrants has increased

significantly as the Declaration promoted to stop a demand for additional labour and eliminated privileges in housing for residents of workers' hostels.

According to the censuses data, the number of ethnic Latvians between 1979 and 1989 increased from 1,344 thousand to 1,388 thousand. The number has increased slowly, failing to reach the level of 1914 or 1940. Besides, assimilation was the largest source of the Latvian population increase in the 1980s. The component amounts to about 30,000 Latvians from their total growth of 43,700. As this figure was calculated using a subtraction method, it reflects also all deficiencies of numbering the population. The increase could not be accounted for either natural increase or by migration increase. Most likely some thousand of them were formerly assimilated Latvians who in new political conditions decided to identify with their Latvian roots (mainly re-identification of individuals of mixed parentage) and others could be individuals frightened by rumours of immigrant possible status in the future deciding to play it more safe. Data discrepancy could arise also in association with features of data processing and accounting of special contingent (military personnel, army recruits, prisoners, etc.) to match population estimates for the Soviet Union as a whole.

The share of Latvians in total population decreased from about 80% in 1944 – 1945 to 62% in 1959 and 52% in 1989. On the other hand, the total number of Russians and their proportion have increased considerably in every of the intercensal period, reaching 34% in 1989. The third largest ethnic group is Belarusians, the fourth – Ukrainians. The total number of Eastern Slavs (Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians, 1,117 thousand in 1989) increased by almost six times in comparison with 1935 when the last pre-war census was carried out in Latvia. The growth rate of Ukrainians exceeded that of other larger ethnic groups.

The 1989 census found more than 100 ethnic groups (in 1935 only 35). The fifth largest ethnic group is the Poles, the sixth - Lithuanians but their share was only 2.3 and 1.3% in total population of Latvia. The amount of Jews, who had arrived in Latvia in the 16th century and who were even the third largest ethnic group before World War II, diminishes steadily as a result of very low level of fertility and of heavy out – migration. Since the 15 – 16th century Gypsies live in the Baltics, mainly in Latvia. Their number (7 thousand in 1989) had a profound tendency to increase but their share in total population is only 0.3%. The number of other minorities (Tatars, Germans, Estonians, etc.) is very

small. Therefore, the analysis of ethnos composition usually is restricted with eight major minorities.

In the 1990s, the changes in ethnic composition have been quite different than in previous decades (in Soviet period). As can be seen from data of Table 1, the number of all ethnic groups in the 1990s has decreased, excluding Gypsies.

Table 1

Changes in Ethnic Composition in Latvia: 1989 – 1998
(at the beginning of the year)

	Thousands		Percentage	
	1989	1998	1989	1998
Total	2667	2458	100	100
Latvians	1388	1365	52.0	55.5
Russians	906	796	34.0	32.4
Belarusians	120	97	4.5	3.9
Ukrainians	92	71	3.5	2.9
Poles	60	54	2.3	2.2
Lithuanians	35	31	1.3	1.3
Jews	23	9	0.9	0.4
Gypsies	7	8	0.3	0.3
Others	36	27	1.2	1.1

For the first time since the war, ethnic Latvians represent a gradually increasing proportion, reaching 55.5% of the total population in 1998. At the same time, the absolute number of Latvians have systematically decreased since 1992. Only for a very short period when a part of Latvians repatriated and the level of fertility still was relatively high, the number of Latvians slightly increased, nevertheless did not reach 1,400,000 but in the last years decreased due to excess of deaths over births. Here it should be noted that the accounting of migration is not sufficiently precise in the country and some sources claim that amount of illegal migrants eventually exceeds that of legal migrants and might be that for ethnic Latvians the total balance of migratory movement is even negative. Registered net – migration rate for Latvians slightly exceeds zero.

The numbers and proportions of Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians are systematically declining, especially that of Ukrainians. Comparing 1998 to 1989, the Russian population dropped by 109.5 thousand or 12.1 %, the Belarusian population by 22.7 thousand or 18.9% and the Ukrainian population by 20.7 thousand or 22.4%. The proportion of the total population composed of these nationalities dropped from 42.0% to 39.2%, mainly because of return to their homelands.

Very rapid declines by more than 50% have been observed in the Jewish and German populations due to their emigration to Israel, Germany, the USA and some other countries as well as because of their very unfavourable age structure and very low reproduction (fertility) rate.

Particularly should be mentioned Finno – Ugric language speaking ethnic minority – the Livs (Livonians) who have been living in the Baltics for 5,000 years, even before the Balts arrived here. The Livs still retained their identity, however, now only less than 200 people declare themselves to be Livs (in 1935 – 844). In 1991 the Latvian government passed a special regulation for environmental and cultural protection of their ethnic territory (the Liv Coast).

The author calculated a special ethnic diversity index², which shows that Latvia has one of the most diverse ethnic composition in Europe. The index in Latvia was 0.39 in 1939 and it reached 0.61 in the end of the 1980s. However, in the period since independence the index has systematically decreased, and in 1998 it was 0.58. In the capital Riga where live one third of the population of Latvia the index decreased from 0.64 in 1989 to 0.62 in 1997.

Investigation shows that the proportion of the titular nationality is still rather high among the rural population but it is very low in cities, especially in the capital Riga. However, it increased between 1989 and 1997 in Riga from 36.5 to 38.5%, in the second largest city of Latvia and the major city of Latgale Daugavpils from 13.0 to 14.2% and in the third city Liepāja from 38.8 to 44.8 %. From seven cities of the Republic only in one (Jelgava) the share of ethnic Latvians recently exceeded 50%. In many towns and villages, Latvians also constitute a minority.

Since non–Latvians still in several administrative territorial units have a poor knowledge of language of the Republic many Latvians factually live in conditions of

² The more diverse the ethnic composition of the state (territory), the higher also the value of the index.

ethnic discomfort and they are unable to conduct their daily affairs in their own language. Still in the country, especially in Latgale, there are relatively many children who are forced to learn Russian because there is a lack of Latvian schools or at least there would be some classes for Latvians in Russian schools.

According to data of the Ministry of Education and Science in the school-year 1996/97 93% of Latvian and 94% of Russian children learned at schools in mother's language. Nevertheless, 15 thousand of Latvian children learned in Russian schools and 4 thousand of Russian and about 4 thousand children of other minorities learned in Latvian schools.

In the last years there should be observed such a tendency that children of mixed and minority families are sent to Latvian schools and particularly to Latvian preschool establishments. Law on language also stipulated that the language of teaching in higher educational institutions is Latvian, except the first year students, and since 1993 all graduating students have to pass an exam in Latvian. As a result, changes in knowledge of Latvian were inevitable.

According to 1989 census data, only 21% of Russians and 18 % of other non-Latvians knew Latvian language. The sample surveys show that now at least 50% of non-Latvians claimed Latvian language ability and among those people who spent most of their childhood in Latvia the proportion is even higher (about 60%). If in 1989 about 40% of the population in Latvia did not know Latvian then now according to data of the Centre of sociological studies of European Community "Eurobarometer" – less than 13%.

A majority of non-Latvians feel that learning of the Latvian language is a main factor to facilitate the integration into society. At the same time the large size of the Russian-speaking community and the former Soviet policy of Russification have created a certain inertia and unwillingness from many Slavic people and representatives of other minorities to adapt to the Latvian cultural community. Therefore, only a small part of non-citizens have taken advantage to become citizens of Latvia.

The reinstatement of the Latvian citizenship was restored in 1992. According to the Law on Citizenship adopted by the Saeima (Parliament) on 22 June 1994, with a few exceptions, only persons who were citizens of Latvia at the time of the Soviet annexation in 1940 and their descendants are automatically entitled to Latvians citizenship.

However, most of the other persons resident in Latvia could become citizens through naturalization.

According to the data based on the Latvian population Register, still a high proportion of resident population is non-citizens in Latvia (28% in 1997). Russians make up 66% of this group, Belarusians – 12 % and Ukrainians – 9%. The proportion of ethnic Latvians among non-citizens is less than 2%. The total Latvian Citizen population (1.8 million) today is less than before World War II.

The proportion of Latvians in the Citizen population is 78% which is by 22 per cent points more than in total population and is almost the same (80%) as briefly before World War II or just after it. There are about 300 thousand ethnic Russian citizens and their share in the total Citizen population (16%) is two times lower than in the total population as a whole. However, their number after the war has increased almost twice and in comparison with other minorities it has grown much more. Nevertheless, only about 40% Russians living in Latvia are Latvian citizens.

The third largest minority among citizens are Poles (39 thousand). Then follows Belarusians (21 thousand), Lithuanians (12), Gypsies (7), Jews (6) and Ukrainians (5) but the total of these five ethnic minorities only slightly exceeds 50 thousand people. This means that only 5-6% of Latvian citizens are not Latvians or Russians. The ethnic diversity index for citizens is much lower than for the total population of Latvia.

More than 90% of Gypsies and 50% of Estonians are Latvian citizens. A relatively high that proportion is also among Jews (almost 50%) but the lowest –among Ukrainians (7%) and Belarusians (20%). According to experts' opinion the reasons of a slow naturalization are such as not sufficient information on requirements of naturalization, a difficult test in history of Latvia, lack of knowledge in Latvian, incapability to pay a duty of naturalization, advantage not to be a citizen what is reflected as a possibility not to serve in the Army of the Republic of Latvia and to emigrate to CIS countries without a visa.

In order to increase the speed of naturalization and the process of integration on the whole on June 22, 1998 the Saeima approved the amendments in the Law on Citizenship giving a possibility for all children born to non- citizens to be granted citizenship after the country regained its independence status. True, in accordance with established order of the law the deputies claimed to stop the publication of these

amendments for two months in order to organize voting of the population concerning this question. Also, a special state programme on integration is worked out.

4. ETHNICAL DIFFERENTIATION OF INTENSITY OF POPULATION REPRODUCTION AND MIGRATION PROCESSES

4.1. DIFFERENTIATION OF NATURAL INCREASE AND ITS COMPONENTS

In all last decades in vital records and in documents of registration of moves there were questions on ethnicity of every person. For newborns the ethnicity of both parents has been registered but in data processing for newborns a nationality of mother is taken into consideration. Therefore in studies of intensity in demographic processes vital records and data on current migration registration are the main sources. Different surveys help with important additional information. Particularly significant is Fertility and Family survey, in which indices on ethnic peculiarities on fertility preferences, reproductive behaviour and marital fertility were obtained.

The author of the Report has summarized the data on absolute and relative indicators of birth, death and net of natural movement of the population for Latvians, Russians and all other larger ethnic groups for the period since 1985. The statistical data show that in the second half of the 1980s the natural increase was positive for all ethnic groups excluding Jews. Negative values of balance between births and deaths for Poles were small, and in 1987 the minimal positive natural increase (14 people) was observed. In some previous years (in 1973 – 1981 and 1985) the natural growth was negative also for Latvians.

In the 1980s, the authorities in Latvia approved a complex set of measures stimulating the natural increase (fertility). The decreasing trend in the natural growth in total population, titular nationality and several other ethnic groups had been stopped in the second part of the 1980s. Only for Poles and Jews whose age structure was unfavourable and who mainly lived in urban areas (especially Jewish population) the depopulation situation continued and was not surmountable until present days.

Despite the regained political independence, the situation aggravated rapidly in the 1990s. Factually since 1988 the indicators of births and natural increase in Latvia on the whole have been falling, and in 1991 the balance of births and deaths became even negative. For Latvians, Russians and Belarusians it occurred in 1991, for Lithuanians in 1992 and for Ukrainians, who had a more favourable age structure, in 1993.

As a result in the period from 1989 to 1995 the excess of deaths over births reached almost 42,000 (see Table 2), and the share of Russians (18.2 thousand) consisted 43.6% and that of Latvians (15.7 thousand) – 37.5%. The positive natural increase was observed only for Ukrainians (1,540) and Gypsies (580).

Table 2

Natural Increase of Population by Ethnicity in Latvia: 1989 – 1997

	1989-1995	1996	1997	Total in 1989 - 1997
Whole population of which:	-41 798	-14 538	-14 703	-71 039
Latvians	-15 661	-6 618	-6 761	-29 040
Russians	-18 210	-5 234	-5 376	-28 820
Belarusians	-2 796	-1 003	-1 025	-4 824
Ukrainians	1 540	-274	-232	1 034
Poles	-3 370	-698	-625	-4 693
Lithuanians	-778	-264	-282	-1 324
Jews	-2 123	-216	-193	-2 532
Gypsies	580	93	87	760
Others	-980	-324	-296	-1 600

So that the number of population of different ethnoses, their sex – age structure, the proportions of those living in urban and rural areas and other features are rather different, we in order to ascertain the natural increase and intensity of processes of natural movement, adjusted different coefficients calculated on average per 1000 inhabitants as well as other special indices including mean ones for a longer period.

The analysis of rates of population natural growth calculated on average per 1000 inhabitants has shown that at the beginning of the 1990s the highest level of natural increase was for Gypsies and Ukrainians (9.4 and 7.5‰ in 1990, correspondingly) but the lowest for Poles (-4.7‰) and particularly for Jews (-20.1‰). It was slightly higher for Latvians (1.1‰) than that of Russians (0.9‰), however, this rate was minimally below the mean in the country. In principle these relations remained also in the following years, nevertheless the number of Slavs decreased more rapidly in a natural way especially that of Belarusians. During four years (1992 – 1995) a mean natural increase was positive only for Gypsies, the lowest negative rate was stated for Ukrainians (Table 3). Perceptibly lower than the mean (-5.0‰) it was also for Latvians (-3.5) but for other nationalities- perceptibly above the average in the country. These indices were very high for Belarusians, Poles and particularly for Jews indicating on their rapid dying-out.

Table 3

Natural Increase Rate by Ethnicity in Latvia: 1990 – 1996
(per 1,000 population)

Whole population of which:	1990	1991	1992 - 1995	1996
		1.2	-0.1	-5.0
Latvians	1.1	0.2	-3.5	-4.8
Russians	0.9	-0.6	-6.2	-6.5
Belarusians	1.9	-0.4	-8.7	-10.1
Ukrainians	7.5	5.5	-1.8	-3.7
Poles	-4.7	-4.0	-12.0	-12.7
Lithuanians	1.1	0.5	-6.7	-8.2
Jews	-8.5	-20.3	-21.0	-20.1
Gypsies	9.4	8.5	10.7	12.3
Others	5.3	4.7	-8.9	-14.3

Calculations testify that a more rapid dying-out of Russians and other nationalities of Slavs is associated with a very low fertility rate, very rapid aging of ethnic groups of these populations what in its turn is caused by a considerable

reemigration of relatively young people. Differences in mortality have a certain significance. The use of standardized indices permitted to determine also the significance of distribution of residence (urban and rural population). Russians and Ukrainians are very urbanised but the proportion of the titular nationality is still rather high among the rural population where fertility rate is higher. Urbanization of Belarusians was also apparent and it should be noted that industrial cities and Eastern part of Latvia (Latgale), where fertility level has decreased very sharply, are their typical locations.

As a result of this survey it is stated that in the 1990s systematically every year the proportion of born children to Latvian mothers has increased (from 56,5% of the number of newborns in 1990 to 63.6% in 1997) and has decreased to Russian mothers (28.5% and 25.1%, correspondingly) and to other mothers of numerically major ethical groups, indirectly indicating to different changes in fertility level for various nationalities. This matter is studied more in detail using age - specific fertility age rate as well as different indices of assimilation. The one and five years fertility rates for Latvian women, Russian women and women of other nationalities in total (their proportion in the total population is within 11 to 12%) were calculated for all ages from 15 to 49 years using the data of 1993 – 1994 (see Table 4). In the country such detailed calculations have been done for the first time.³ They showed convincingly that in all age groups fertility was substantially lower for Russian women than that of Latvian and non – Latvian ones besides the greatest distinctions are aged over 35 when the difference of rate is already two and more times. The possibility of birth of the second child for Latvian women is essentially higher than that of non-Latvians.

Synthetic indicator – period total fertility rate of Latvian women 1.72 was 1.6 times higher than that of Russian women (1.07). After the standardization procedure, eliminating the differences between proportions of those living in urban and rural areas,

³ The results of calculations of age rates for small population groups showed that the quality of official statistical data not always is satisfactory. Particularly it regards to the period when Russian troops and their family members left Latvia. A lot of people have not registered their change of residence. A striking example is recently stated fact that only from one pagasts (district) (Kuldīga's rayon (region), Raņķu pagasts) 1.6 thousand military persons departed in previous years but they had not drawn up documents (had not struck his/her name off the list of tenants). Also that the total amount of migrants from Latvia registered by Russian Statistics for the period 1989 – 1994 substantially (by one – third) exceeds that of emigrants for Russia registered by the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia indicating on imperfection in population account and data quality.

the discrepancy corresponding characteristics of fertility, shrink, nevertheless, they remain.

Table 4

Age – specific and Total Fertility Rates by Ethnicity in Latvia: 1993 – 1994

Age	Whole population (per 1,000)	of which			Rate of Latvians higher than that of Russians (%)
		Latvians	Russians	Others	
15-19	38.6	41.4	30.9	55.6	34
20-24	117.2	131.8	91.6	113.7	44
25-29	77.7	96.4	52.1	63.2	85
30-34	37.3	47.2	25.9	30.4	82
35-39	15.6	20.8	10.0	13.3	108
40-44	3.9	5.3	2.4	3.5	121
45-49	0.24	0.33	0.15	0.17	122
Total fertility rate (per 1 woman)	1.45	1.72	1.07	1.40	61

According to the Latvian fertility and family survey (1995) data, average number of children for women aged 40 – 49 years (at the end of reproductive period) were: for Latvians 1.91, Russians 1.61, Belarusians 1.66, Ukrainians 1.65, Lithuanians 1.79, Poles 1.75, Jews 1.57. These data show the ethnic distinctions in fertility for a longer period, on average more than in length of two decades, and they are not so dependent on characteristics of situation as it was with the afore-mentioned period age- specific and total fertility rates. Therefore one can conclude that present socio-economic living conditions for Russians in comparison with Latvians are less favourable in realization of their reproductive intentions. Some surveys, for example NORBALT, confirm that non-citizens and ethnic Russians are among the vulnerable segment in Latvian society and compared to citizens and ethnic Latvians they have slightly smaller proportions of privileged. A larger part of Russians than of other ethnic group thought they would leave for permanent residence elsewhere in case they were provided with an apartment and job.

Already the first post – war life tables elaborated on the basis of the materials of the census of 1959 showed that mortality intensity for Latvians is somewhat lower than for Russians and non – Latvians on the whole. Later investigations confirmed this coherence. According to mortality tables 1988 – 1989 life expectancy of both sexes for Latvians was 71.0 years and for Russians 70.2 years but urban – rural standardized indicators differ even more: 71.4 and 69.7 years, respectively. A great part of immigrants coming from rural areas who have not adapted themselves to urban living conditions could partly explain this phenomenon.

There was no any life table constructed by ethnicity in the 1990 s. Based on population estimates by sex and age groups and age–specific mortality rates for Latvians and Russians Dr. Juris Krūmiņš performed standardized death rates for 1994 – 1995. According to these calculations, the mortality of Russian males exceeds that of Latvian ones by 14% and females mortality differs by 17%. However, these indices, should be used carefully due to the problem of numeration – denominator bias, as information on ethnicity of the deceased is recorded from documents but information on ethnicity o individuals are received from corrected census data (without reference to documents).

In order to eliminate this imperfection as well as to obtain data on differences of average life expectancy for all minorities, the author used also another access. Average infant mortality rates were calculated for all nationalities for different periods. Average infant mortality rate for the years 1973 – 1977 for Russians was 12% higher than for Latvians but in the last years these differences almost disappeared (see Table 5). These data were used by corresponding corrections (increasing or decreasing) of average life expectancy calculated for all population in the country. It was considered that these characteristics calculated easily and sufficiently precise reveal basic differences wha exist in population mortality. One can even adopt a hypothesis that infant mortality indices can be used as indicators of life quality because their significance reflects social, economic and environmental conditions in a concrete populated area (territory). Here it should be taken into consideration that infant mortality in rural areas is higher than in urban areas therefore it is useful to use urban – rural standardized rates for practical needs.

In the end-product of the study also ethnic characteristics of replacement o generations will be analysed, including gross and net rates of population reproduction

Table 5

Birth – rate and Infant Mortality Rate by Ethnicity in Latvia in the 1990s

	Crude birth rate, ‰ in 1992 - 1996	Average number of children for woman aged 40 – 49 (in 1995)	Infant mortality rate per 1,000 in 1995 - 1996
Latvians	11.3	1.91	15.4
Russians	7.3	1.61	14.9
Belarusians	7.8	1.66	10.1
Ukrainians	8.1	1.65	7.9
Poles	8.5	1.75	14.2
Lithuanians	12.0	1.79	16.3
Jews	3.4	1.57	22.7
Gypsies	22.2	...	18.6
Others	8.6	...	18.7

what are calculated for the first time.

As well as send their children to pre–school establishments and to schools with training in Latvian. If in 1989 about 40% of the population in Latvia did not know Latvian the know according to data of the Centre of sociological studies of European Community “Eurobarometer” less than 13%.

4.2. DIFFERENTIATION OF MIGRATION

The location of Latvia on the crossroads between North Europe and Russia (and Belarus) with several ports for many centuries determined the interest of neighboring big nations about this country and caused migratory moves of the population. Livonians or Livs who lived in the present territory of Latvia and Estonia were the first who suffered from German crusader attacks. As a result of expansion by Slavic peoples, the Baltic tribes were forced to regroup and some of them had to move from their lands to the North. The territory of the Baltic people was threatened by Slavs from the East and South

and by Scandinavians from the North -West. Until the 13th century the region had an ethnically mixed population. All political changes and wars caused massive migration flows, and the 20th century has been particular: the role of migration in the increase of population size and in change of its composition was more significant than that of natural population reproduction.

Since the restoration of independence Latvia experienced drastic changes in direction and intensity of migration. As it was mentioned in paragraph 3, already at the end of the 1980s some attempts to restrict immigration from other Soviet republics were undertaken and since 1990 a net – migration has become negative.

The level of emigration and repatriation reached a peak in 1992, when the former Soviet military forces and their family members left the Baltic States. The total number of people who left Latvia since 1990 amounts to almost 200 thousand but the net migration - to about minus 130 thousand. The number of immigrants consisted one – third of those people who emigrated but the number of immigrants (mainly from the CIS) since 1995 is less than 3 thousand per year.

The majority of emigrants go to the CIS, mainly to Russia, also to the Ukraine and Belarus, while the share of other countries is only one – fifth. After the regaining of political independence the emigration to the West increased but it did not acquire a mass character. The bulk of those chose Germany, Israel and the USA. Latvia has a negative migration balance with neighbouring Lithuania while with Estonia it is near to zero.

The data obtained from the 1996 sociological research regarding emigration from Latvia (carried out by the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology) show that 75% of respondents who emigrated from Latvia were born in Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine. Only 18% were born in Latvia.

As it is seen from the data in Table 6 – in the period from the last census to the beginning of 1998 net migration was positive only for Latvians. The rate of migration increase for Latvians was insignificant and due to immigration their number increased only by 6,330 persons or less than 5%.

In terms of absolute figures, a great majority of emigrants (more than 80,000 people) were ethnic Russians, followed by Ukrainians (21.5 thousand), Belarusians (18 thousand) and Jews (11 thousand).

Table 6

Migration Increase of Population by Ethnicity in Latvia: 1989 – 1997

Whole population of which:	1989- 1995	1996	1997	Total in 1989- 1997
		-123 109	-7 252	-6 764
Latvians	5 689	402	239	6 330
Russians	-71 287	-5 100	-4285	-80 672
Belarusians	-16 536	-744	-747	-18 027
Ukrainians	-20 044	-559	-896	-21 499
Poles	-1 692	-63	-126	-1 881
Lithuanians	-1 660	-95	-91	-1 846
Jews	-9 539	-730	-713	-10 982
Gypsies	-134	5	9	-120
Others	-7 906	-368	-154	-8 428

However, if we take relative indices of emigration then particularly Jews are distinguished by their number what because of migration has decreased almost for half in a very short time. Moreover, as it was mentioned above also their natural increase was strikingly negative, therefore the decrease of their total number is rather rapid.

Ukrainians repatriate very intensively from Latvia. Partly it is in association with the Ukraine's refusal to grant the Ukrainian citizenship for Ukrainians living in Latvia. Russia and Belarus entitle to citizenship for their compatriots therefore relative emigration (also repatriation) characterizations are relatively lower. The number of Poles and Lithuanians because of migration shrinks, however, the intensity of emigration is very low in last two years. In the beginning of the 1990s a considerable number of representatives of other minorities left Latvia (Tatars, Moldavians, etc.) but since the mid - 1990s their out – migration intensity is very low.

Emigration of Russian speaking population is the main component of the overall decrease of the population in Latvia. Mostly it is Slavic Diaspora voluntary repatriation to their homelands. However, according to Russian and Belarusian officials not all of them are voluntary migrants, among repatriates from Latvia in 1992 – 1997 they

enumerate almost 30 thousand refugees or persons in a refuge – like situation and involuntarily relocating persons. In reality only former Soviet military and security personal and their family members may be attributed to forced migrants. Besides, part of this contingent sought a refuge status factually so that certain benefits are envisioned for refugees.

The issue of refugees affected Latvia as well as other Baltic States some years ago when illegal immigrants tried to pass through the Baltics on their way to Scandinavia. Since 1992 more than thousand illegal migrants and asylum - seekers were arrested but now this question is not actual. Latvia joined the UN Convention on Refugees adopted in 1961 and the Protocol to it of 1967. At present in the country there are no refugees from abroad. In Latvia reside a small number of asylum - seekers fro abroad (from Afghanistan, Armenia, India). Also, a movement of legal labour force between Latvia and foreign countries is small and in the nearer future it practically cannot influence the ethnic composition in the country.

As a specific group of illegal persons migrants is the former Soviet army officers and their members of families. This issue still is not settled although their temporary residence permits have been extended several times. Nevertheless, it is more political not ethnodemographic issue because the number of these persons is insignificant and it gradually shrinks.

5. INVESTIGATION OF ASSIMILATION

Up to now the studies of ethnic assimilation are insignificant and mainly based on sample surveys. In the 1960s a survey was organized where the data from Passport Office on choice of ethnicity (nationality) of descendants in ethnically mixed marriages receiving a passport in Riga were used. A similar survey was carried out by scientists of the Centre of Demography of the University of Latvia under our guidance in the 1980s.

In 1989 in order to study ethnic assimilation we have used the materials of the census for the first time. According to programme elaborated specially the data on the distribution of young people and children of the second generation in ethnically mixed marriages by nationality in association with their parents' nationality were obtained. Data

on choice of nationality of children in mixed marriages include two age groups: to 15 years (143.4 thousand of children) and young people aged from 16 to 26 (34.3 thousand), a part of whom already lived separated of parents and had established their own families.

The descendants of ethnically mixed marriages were represented in both age groups whose belonging to some of parents' nationalities parents or their older children and young people testified during the census in January of 1989. The chosen nationality of young people representing the second group in most cases was fixed in the passport. However, the choice of nationality in census occurs by the principle of self – determination and 4.1% of descendants of mixed marriages considered themselves as belonging to some another nationality different of parents' one. Moreover, for 3,340 children of families where spouses were of one nationality, belonging to another nationality different of parents' one, was recorded.

Taking as a basis empirical data obtained particular ethnonimic and patronimic indices were calculated which have been worked out by Russian demographer Andrejs Volkovs and he has substantiated their use in statistical analysis. Ethnonimic indices show the degree to which the number of children choosing a definite nationality is greater or lesser than the number of children born to mothers of the corresponding nationality. We have used also different other modifications of index. The patronimic indices show that mean proportion of representatives of second generation who adopt a father's nationality.

Carrying out this project the author chose somewhat another method for a study of assimilation. The Population Register information on nationality of permanent inhabitants aged from 16 – 25 and their parents' nationality as a main source of data was used. Information collected in 1998 on all persons (approximately for 100 thousand) born in 1973 – 1982 whose father's and mother's nationalities were different and who were recorded in the Register ⁴ according to the Law of the Republic of Latvia. "On Population Register"(adopted on December 11, 1991 with amendments on November 3, 1992 and on January 16, 1997) was used for calculation of corresponding statistical indices.

⁴ In Register news on year and date of birth, sex, citizenship, ethnicity, communicating language, in family, etc. is included.

In principle this method to study assimilation methodologically is rather close to that described previously when the data of census are used as a source of information, therefore the results obtained are comparable. Nevertheless, it should be taken into consideration that the Population Register data on nationality are taken from the passport and only in some cases this nationality cannot correspond to one of parents' nationalities.

We have used also the registration data of new-borns and materials of different investigations on the use of language in family and everyday life in the study of processes of assimilation.

Analysing the materials of last census on nationality of descendants in mixed marriages we stated that descendants of such marriages in 94% cases live in families where a mother or father represents one of two numerically greatest nationalities – Latvian and Russian (of which 41% were Russians and other non – Latvians, 32% Latvians and Russians and 21% Latvians and other non–Russian nationalities) and only for 6% of minor children one of parents was neither a Russian nor a Latvian. From descendants of 43.2 thousand Latvian – Russian marriages 27.7 thousand or 64% of children had Latvian nationality but 15.5 thousand or 36% of children – Russian nationality. Thus, we see that in the 1970s and 1980s Latvians assimilated Russians more intensively than Russians – Latvians. Even more intensively Latvians assimilated other minorities because Latvian nationality more than in cases of 80% was dominating. Besides, from ethnonimic indices calculated follows that Latvians most intensively assimilated Lithuanians, Poles and Belarusians.

The analysis of nationality of descendants in Russian – non–Russian marriages shows that Russians most intensively assimilated Belarusians and Ukrainians whose self – confidence (ethnic consciousness) was developed most weakly. Also in other mixed family groups, except Russian – Latvian, the trend of assimilation is markedly russified. As a result, the index of ethnic assimilation (ethnonimic) for Russians was the highest 1.12. Also for Latvians it was positive – 1.07 but for other nationalities markedly negative: for Jews 0.93, Ukrainians 0.58, Poles 0.52, Belarusians 0.46, Lithuanians 0.45 and for other nationalities 0.66 on the whole .

Patronymic indices show that in order to determine a nationality for a child, the nationality of father has a more significant role than that of mother. Besides in mixed families where one of parents was of Russian nationality, the father's ethnic belonging

was preferred much often than in mixed families where one of parents was a Latvian. There is a certain base to consider that relations in Latvian families between spouses are more democratic.

Already at the beginning of the 1990s analysing the nationality of children born in 1974 – 1989 the increase in intensity of assimilation towards the Latvian nationality was stated. It was promoted by change of political situation in awakening period and a the beginning of national independence. The courses of last years approve it completely. If in the 1960s the proportion of young people of second generation in mixed Latvian-Russian families who, receiving a passport, were registered as Latvians was 57.0% then in 1989 – 69.8% and in the first six months of 1998 – 93.1%. Precondition to the development of the civic nation is the harmonization of the life of all ethnic groups and increasing interval security.

These data indirectly point to the formation of Latvian political or civic nation where ethnicity has not a decisive significance.

Sociological studies testify to perceptible changes in the attitude of minorities to the Latvian country. Increasingly larger part of representatives of minorities regard Latvia as their homeland and are aware of the necessity of the Latvian language, they try to master it. Data of 1998 show that in new political, economic and social conditions the proportion of those persons who in ethnically mixed marriages prefer the Latvian nationality has substantially increased but the preference of Russian ethnos has decreased. As it is seen from Table 7, in 1989 from the descendants of a Latvian father and Russian mother 65.8% were of Latvian (so a father's) nationality but in 1998 this proportion has increased to 89.4%. In mixed couples of Latvian mother - Russian father this proportion has increased from 62.4% to 87.3%. Here, as the only exception is marriages with a participation of representatives of Jewish nationality when somewhat decreased their assimilation degree.

Typically that assimilation degree towards the Latvian nationality has intensified exactly in the last years what can be seen from ethnonimic indices of the youngest passport recipients (persons aged 16) which, in combinations with a representative of Latvian nationality, have increased.

The study also showed that a positive assimilation towards the Russian nationality has substantially decreased and self – confidence of other ethnoses has

Table 7

Ethnicity of Parents and Their Children in Latvia: 1989 and 1998
(per cent of children by father's or mother's ethnicity)

Ethnicity		Ethnicity chosen by children			
		Father's		Mother's	
Father's	Mother's	1989 ¹	1998 ²	1989 ¹	1998 ²
Latvian	Russian	65.8	89.4	34.2	10.6
	Ukrainian	88.5	96.1	11.5	3.9
	Belarusian	92.5	97.3	7.5	2.7
	Polis	92.9	94.3	7.1	5.7
	Lithuanian	93.0	97.8	7.0	2.2
	Jewish	95.2	88.6	4.8	11.4
Russian	Latvian	37.6	12.7	62.4	87.3
	Ukrainian	92.7	83.9	7.3	16.1
	Belarusian	95.2	87.3	4.8	12.7
	Polis	86.0	52.7	14.0	47.3
	Lithuanian	83.5	54.2	16.5	45.8
	Jewish	89.6	64.8	10.4	35.2

¹ Children aged 0-15

² Persons aged 16 – 25

increased as a result of the establishment of national cultural societies, opening of Ukrainian, Polish, Belarusian, Jewish and Gypsies pre-schools, schools and classes and the development of closer contacts of minorities with ethnic homelands.

In case of marriages Lithuanian (male) – Russian (female) and Pole (male) – Russian (female), non-Russian nationalities are preferred even with a great prevalence. Families where a father is of Russian nationality but a mother is of Polish, Lithuanian and Jewish nationality in order to choose a nationality for a child now there is only a slight deviation towards the Russian nationality

Calculated ethnic assimilation coefficients were as follows: for Jews 1.09, for Latvians 1.07, for Russians 1.03 and for other larger ethnic groups they were below one,

showing a (negative outcome of assimilative processes –for Poles 0.75, Ukrainians 0.71, Belarusians 0.60, Lithuanians 0.54. By help of these coefficients we evaluated the increase or decrease of every ethnoses in post – censal period.

The main results of investigation of assimilation we have used to make demographic forecasts of ethnic composition through the beginning of next century. According to the established essential difference in assimilation intensity for different ethnicities one should use these statistical indicators in order to estimate the size of ethnic groups and ethnic composition for intercensal period or to forecast them for the future.

6. DEMOGRAPHIC PROJECTIONS OF DEVELOPMENT OF ETHNIC GROUPS

Demographic trends of different ethnicities of Latvia have been studied extensively only within last years. Moreover, because of small number of ethnic groups the indices of intensity have been calculated mainly for Latvians and Russians. As mentioned above only due to our investigations the calculations on intensity of assimilation of ethnoses and evaluation of these results in determination of the present ethnic composition and in performance of forecasts have been started. For the first time the indices of assimilation were adapted to forecasting of ethnoses in 1993 and their application has proved right.

Nevertheless, Latvia is facing a crucial stage in its demographic development. Tremendous political, economic and social changes went together with sharp shifts in international migration patterns.

Fertility rate and population reproduction rate on the whole declined dramatically during the 1990s, and the current levels are among the lowest in the world. Consensual unions have gained increasingly larger prevalence whereas the legal marriage lost much of its dominant status. Before World War II, Latvian statistics on morbidity and mortality were comparable to or even slightly better than the average indicators for Europe. Even at the end of the 1950s, life expectancy in Latvia remained higher than in Eastern and Southern Europe. However this position was lost during subsequent decades. These

indicators have improved only since 1996. Therefore, the demographic future of the population of Latvia appears rather uncertain. Of course, uncertainty is larger for ethnic Latvians and other ethnic groups than for the country on the whole.

Before the performance of demographic forecasts for ethnoses we have analyzed the methodologies and assumptions offered by specialists of the UN and Eurostat, as well as the results of our previous forecasts.

It turned out that forecasts carried out before five years are close to the factual. However, really the number of Latvian and Russian population as at the beginning of 1998 was about 2.6 and 3.4% less correspondingly than the forecasted (in medium variant or scenarios) but the number of all scanty minorities, except Jews (their number forecasted successfully), factually was from 1.9 to 7.6% bigger than the forecasted (see Appendix 1). In the course of the study ascertained that these differences developed mainly because of two reasons: 1) fertility factually continued to decrease also in the second half of the 1990s (according to forecast assumption the fertility rate had to stabilize); 2) Russians factually assimilated the representatives of minorities to a less extent (such a hypothesis was taken into consideration in one of forecast variants).

As seen from the data in Table 8, in proportional distribution of ethnoses the differences between the factual and forecasted are minimal, in particular in numerical relations of two bigger ethnoses (Latvian and Russian).

The latest projections were carried out in the first half a year of 1998 partly using statistical data on natural movement and migration of 1997. As since 1995 the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia has no data on composition of ethnic groups by sex and age (such data are only about Latvians and Russians according to situation as at the beginning of 1995) calculations with different methods on situation were performed as at the beginning of 1998. The Population Register data on major nationalities were the main source of information. In addition we used also our data of the 1993 forecasts corrected and above mentioned data of the Central Statistical Bureau with corresponding their shift for three years (as at the beginning of 1998). Thus, the calculation of parameters of existing structure of sex and age for every ethnic group was one of the most labour-consuming stages in projection. It is possible therefore only some countries carry out such studies (calculations) at all.

Table 8

Observed and Projected Ethnic Composition in Latvia: 1993 – 2015
(in per cent)

	Observed in 1993	Projected ¹ in 1993 for 1998	Observed in 1998	Projected ¹ (in 1998) for the year		
				2000	2005	2015
Latvians	53.76	55.85	55.53	56.0	57.3	59.9
Russians	33.67	32.86	32.38	32.1	31.2	29.6
Belarusians	4.06	3.65	3.95	3.9	3.7	3.3
Ukrainians	3.05	2.63	2.91	2.8	2.7	2.4
Poles	2.17	2.11	2.19	2.2	2.2	2.1
Lithuanians	1.23	1.20	1.28	1.3	1.3	1.2
Jews	0.57	0.38	0.38	0.3	0.2	0.2
Others	1.49	1.32	1.39	1.4	1.4	1.3

¹ Medium variant

As in the previous round (1993) the cohort – component approach was used for calculations. The projections were performed on PC using DEMPROJ. In order to show uncertainty concerning fertility, mortality, assimilation and international migration the author of this work has formulated several variant assumptions for each of the mentioned components (factors). The future course of the components was formulated at the level of summary (synthetic) indicators such as total fertility rate, life expectancy at birth for females and males, net migration (in the form of absolute figures) and also ethnomic (assimilation) indexes.

Working out hypotheses for the period after 2005 we, to a great extent, used the most recent population forecasts in the countries of the European Economic Area and published in the Eurostat Working documents (mainly as materials of Meeting on 15 – 16 September 1997 “Working party on Demographic Projections”, Luxembourg). ⁵ Especially it concerns total fertility rate and life expectancy at birth parameters as target indicators for the period 2005 –2015. When preparing fertility assumptions we have

⁵ The Grantee participated at the Meeting, representing Latvia.

widely used information about childbearing intentions expressed by women and men (mainly from Latvian FFS (1995) data).

One of our variants envisaged also the keeping of the recently observed rates (and in some cases absolute figures) constant what is more intended for analytical needs. Extrapolation procedure was carried out in several variants using time series methods (on different periods or only for extrapolation of separate components) and also simplified methods adapting formulae in perspective calculations of the number of population by a definite number of years (at constant rates of demographic migration and natural increase). In some cases also so called methods of demographic potential were used appreciating the changes of population potential as a result of fertility and mortality changes.

In the course of execution of the work the author went on a mission to Washington (in 1996) and Oslo (in 1998) where at the US Bureau of the Census and at the Division for Social and Demographic Research, Statistics Norway consulted about the execution of projections, in particular on their technical matters including software.

According to our main (medium) variant of projections it is expected that total population size in Latvia will continue to fall from its present level of 2.46 million (as of 1 January 1998) to 2.44 million in the year of 2000 and 2.30 million in 2015. This size is slightly lower than figure published by the UN in the World Population Monitoring for this year (2.38 million).

All variants of extrapolation (with unchanging and changing age structures, i.e. using corresponding formulae or graphical extrapolation) and cohort component approach with the recently observed rates (1996 or 1995 –1997) give much lower sizes of the population : between 2.10 and 2.18 million for the year 2015.

The variant of keeping the current rates constant shows that for all ethnic groups (excluding Gypsies) a decrease would be in population, especially for Eastern Slavs. However, it is assumed that the level of fertility and life expectancy will increase (more profoundly fertility, reaching from 1.14 – 1.15 at present to at least 1.40 – 1.45 around 2015) but negative values of net migration will be systematically decreasing. Nevertheless, even with such assumption in the nearest future all seven larger ethnic groups will experience a fall in population size and only after 2000 it will slightly increase for Latvians (to a level of 1.38 million in 2015). For all other ethnicities the

most likely variant is that their size will be decreasing systematically. It is expected that total size of Russians will decrease from its present level 796 thousand to 682 in 2015.

Such differences between titular nationality and all other minorities (excluding Gypsies) are developed in accordance with differences of intensity of processes (fertility, mortality, migration and assimilation described in above mentioned paragraphs. Moreover, in the last years such a situation, that age structure of Latvians is younger than that of other ethnoses, gradually developed. In the composition of Latvians the proportion of children is the greatest but the proportion of the old people – the least (22% of children aged to 14 years and 20% aged after 60 in 1998, correspondingly). In 1989 the age structure of the Russian population was perceptibly younger than that of Latvians (the mean age was 34.4 and 37.0 years, correspondingly) but at present for Latvians it has increased minimally (to 37.3 years) but for Russians rather essentially (39.6). The level of ageing for other minorities is much higher, therefore the average age is greater for Belarusians 44.4 years, Ukrainians - (41.4), Lithuanians and Poles - 42.8 and Jews 49.2 years..

According to forecasts the number of Jews will decrease very rapidly. Even in that case if out- migration of Jews would decrease in eight to ten years to zero their number will shrink for half already before the year of 2010.

Thus, one cannot doubt that in the nearer and medium far perspective the proportion of Latvians will increase regularly (from 55.5% at present to 57.3% in 2005. and 60% in 2015). In its turn a part of other major nationalities will decrease. In accordance with calculations the proportion of Eastern Slavs would decrease from 39.2% in 1998 to 35.3% in 2015 (of which the proportion of Russians from 32.4% to 29.6%, correspondingly).

Similar to our projections of 1993 a characteristic feature of these projections is a continuous ageing of total population and all ethnic groups. The proportion of children will decrease (excluding a short period around 2010) but the proportion of people in retirement age will increase considerably (see Appendix 2). A particular strong increase will be found among very old, people especially among non- Latvians. The number of persons in the potential labour force (aged 15 (19) – 59 years)⁶ will stabilize and for

⁶ The minimal age for retirement currently is 60 years for men and 56.5 years for women but it will increase to 60 also for women within nearest 7 years (by June of 2005).

Latvians will rise slowly in the nearest 10 –15 years but then one will witness a decline. The most probable variant is that for all other larger ethnic groups the number of working age persons will decline and total level of demographic burden⁷ will increase. For Latvians the burden will become weaker by 2010 and only then it will increase slightly.

The study confirmed that still a considerable ethnic differentiation remains in the field of population reproduction. Fertility rate for Latvians has been much higher than for Russians and other minorities , excluding Gypsies. Bu mortality for Latvians is slightly lower than for Russians and on average in the country. Partly these differences are formed due to distinctions in age structures, however, also after the standardization procedures, eliminating the influence of the structural factor, the differentiation does no diminish. The age structure of minorities is more aged than that of Latvians. Because o emigration of predominantely younger people and very rapid decrease of fertility the average age of Slavs has essentially increased.

Taking as a basis the analysis of differentiation of processes of assimilation, migration and natural movement, the demographic forecasts of every ethnos are performed until 2015. These calculations testify that the total size for all minorities will be decreasing systematically (excluding Gypsies). Also, the number of Latvians in the nearest future will decrease slightly, however, it will , most believably , increase after 2000.

In the nearer and medium a perspective the proportion of Latvians will increase regularly reaching 60% in 2015, while the proportion of the larger minorities will decrease. The trend towards the population aging will remain and the level of demographic burden will increase.

⁷ Number of children and persons over working age per 1,000 working age persons.

CONCLUSIONS

As a result of the execution of the project a wide empirical material was obtained. It is the basis of brochure on changes of ethnodemographic situation in transition period in the 1990s in Latvia.

The research showed that according to political, economic and social changes from planned system to market economy, a deep demographic crisis concerning the development of all existing ethnoses in the country has set in. In result, the population of all major ethnoses have decreased, however, to a different extent. The size of ethnic Latvians has slightly increased due to immigration and also the development of processes of assimilation. Nevertheless, a rather unfavourable situation is for Latvians regarding the sphere of population reproduction when mortality essentially exceeds fertility. Therefore, their factual number has changed rather minimally. Though, official statistical (of the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia) data indicate to insignificant decrease in the number of Latvians, yet our investigations show that taking into consideration a positive trend of assimilation their totality has even slightly increased. The proportion of them has perceptibly increased in total population in the country (from 52% in 1989 to 56% in 1998). However, still it is one of the lowest among European countries. The number of Latvians is less than before the war ranging Latvia in a unique place in the history of nations of a million or more people.

Both natural increase and net migration are negative for all numerically major ethnic minorities. Except Russians and lately also Jews, the size of all minorities decreases as a result of their assimilation. Therefore, their proportion in total population in the country, except a scanty minority of Gypsies, decreases systematically.

As regards to citizens the proportion of Latvians is essentially higher than in all population but a part of representatives of Eastern Slavs (Russians, Belarusians, Ukrainians), a considerable share of whom are immigrants of the Soviet period or their descendants, is less. Geographical distribution of ethnic minorities and non-citizens is exterritorial and it is favourable for integration

(democratization). Yet, the process of integration towards homogenization is proceeding slowly. Still Latvia belongs to society in transition towards complete democracy. Factually in the country there are two communities – Latvians and so – called Russian speaking – having various interests and sources of information and comparatively little has been done in order to overcome these differences.

The study revealed that still a great part (about one – third) of marriages contracted is ethnically mixed indirectly showing a certain degree of tolerance in society. The calculation of special ethnic indices showed a clear tendency to get orientation to Latvian ethnicity. Also, a trend is positive to the Russian nationality, nevertheless, it has essentially decreased because of the increase of ethnic self-awareness of other minorities.

Summing up we conclude that for all ethnic groups the population reproduction level never before has been so low as now and the nearest perspectives are not optimistic. The survival of the Latvian ethnos is endangered. Also a gradual exhaustion of several minorities, at first, of Jews and Germans is real. This is the people's response to economic and social hardship as well as to inactivity of the authorities in the field of the regulation of population development. However, in the further perspective a role of ethnic factor will decrease by forming of civic Latvians nation and integrating more intensively in European society.

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Projected and Observed Ethnic Composition in Latvia in 1998

	Projected in 1993 (thsd)	Observed (thsd)	Difference (in per cent)
Whole population of which:	2 509	2 458	-2.0
Latvians	1 401	1 365	-2.6
Russians	824	796	-3.4
Belarusians	92	97	5.4
Ukrainians	66	71	7.6
Poles	53	54	1.9
Lithuanians	30	31	3.3
Jews	9.5	9.4	-1.1
Others	33	34	3.0

Projected the Age Composition of Larger Ethnic Groups in Latvia:
1998 – 2015
(medium variant, in per cent)

	Age groups (years)	1998	2000	2005	2010	2015
Latvians	0-14	21.9	20.5	17.2	16.2	17.6
	15-59	57.8	57.9	59.8	60.7	59.3
	60+	20.3	21.6	23.0	23.1	23.1
Russians	0-14	16.2	14.3	10.1	8.1	7.7
	15-59	63.1	63.3	64.7	62.5	55.7
	60+	20.7	22.4	25.2	29.4	36.6
Belarusians	0-14	9.9	9.0	7.1	7.2	8.3
	15-59	64.7	62.9	61.0	58.0	51.9
	60+	25.4	28.1	31.8	34.8	39.7
Ukrainians	0-14	12.2	10.7	8.0	7.7	8.9
	15-59	68.6	67.5	66.7	63.3	55.8
	60+	19.2	21.9	25.4	29.0	35.3
Poles	0-14	14.5	13.4	11.5	11.9	13.6
	15-59	60.1	59.4	59.0	56.5	53.2
	60+	25.4	27.1	29.5	31.6	33.2
Lithuanians	0-14	12.9	12.2	10.6	11.0	12.5
	15-59	62.6	61.2	59.4	57.0	53.9
	60+	24.5	26.6	30.0	32.0	33.7
Jews	0-14	10.0	8.4	5.4	5.9	8.0
	15-59	52.8	53.0	52.8	48.5	42.8
	60+	37.2	38.5	41.8	45.6	49.2