

The longing for belonging, for equality, but also the yearning for uniqueness and a special quality, was reflected with rare clarity by the Secondos' (second-generation foreigners) movement on the occasion of the Swiss federal referendum on naturalization: These young people expected to be given, at last, equality and the civil rights of the country in which they had been born. Being Secondos, they also unequivocally expressed their will to be perceived as a group, a group of young people with a migratory background, and with all its idiosyncrasies. The ambivalent desire for belonging and being different perhaps comes very close to what integration is all about.

Integration through Time

And when will integration processes be completed? In the first, second or third generation. Some consider naturalization the final step, the crowning conclusion of integration. Is that so? Or was it ever? Naturalization has always been but a relatively random milestone on a long road. Also, Switzerland, for decades, has practically given away Swiss citizenships in large numbers to foreign spouses of Swiss men, without ever asking said spouses whether they could tell *ja* from *nein* on their ballots. And the invective *Papierlischweizer* (paper Swiss) sufficiently indicates that citizenship does not necessarily mark the end of stigmatization. No, integration processes take a long time, several generations, in fact.

For a better understanding of integration in its temporal dimension, the following image may be helpful: the place where a stream and a river meet. It is here that after a thunderstorm you can see the stream continuing its course, calm, deeply blue-green, unaffected by the brown waters of its tributary, all churned up by the storm. For kilometers, both bodies of water flow side by side, clearly distinguishable by their different colors, not blending. Only much farther downstream do they begin to mix, as due to the different flowing speeds eddies start to form. After some time, the colors begin to blend, the differences start to diminish, and eventually, you can't tell which water comes from which river. And thus a new, single stream is born.

Meanwhile, and this is important within our specific context, the observer himself or herself has changed locations, standing in an entirely new spot, kilometres away from the place where the two streams have met. Not only has the water blended, the surrounding scenery has changed completely. And there you have integration in a nutshell. Differences remain visible over a long period of time. But at some point, almost unnoticed, integration has taken place. And society itself has arrived in another place, having absorbed foreign influences, believing that it recognizes itself in them. And thus a new mainstream has been born.

LIMITS TO SOCIAL MOBILITY: ROMA AS A SOCIAL STATUS

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In spite of the fact that research of social construction of ethnicity dominates ethnicity studies, it has rarely been applied to the case of Roma. Analysis of a ghettoized Roma settlement in Lithuania helps seeing that society can see "Roma" as a particular caste without allowing its members to change their social position. Following the distinction between a social construct of ethnicity and a social group (Brubaker's "ethnicity without groups"), the conventional approach to status as a set of particular social roles is used for disclosing the limits to the social mobility of the Roma.

On the basis of survey data, one can trace an increasing social distance towards Roma throughout the last 10–15 years. By now, the Roma became the most disliked ethnic group in the country, and there is a range of indicators that their social exclusion has deepened. Media images of drug-trade and poverty from a ghettoized settlement in the outskirts of Vilnius became an icon associated with the Roma. Factor analysis reveals that Roma are associated by the majority with a set of “socially problematic” groups such as former criminals, drug-addicts, or alcoholics, and not with a set of other ethnic groups (no matter, liked or disliked ones). At the same time, both Roma and the society tend to expect that Roma will socially advance only through the narrow niches of musical or other craft occupations, without encouraging other channels of social mobility. Although socially mobile Roma tend to distance themselves both from negative images and from real contacts with people from a ghettoized settlement, they encounter prejudice anyway. Thus individual advancement, although suggested by majority, is in fact being hampered, and social mobility depends on change of a group status.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES OF ETHNIC MINORITIES AND IMMIGRANT GROUPS IN LITHUANIA

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The data of several sociological studies reveal both direct and indirect evidence of the problems that ethnic minority groups of Lithuania face in the labour market, and complement statistical data, including the data of official institutions such as the Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson. Though scarce, these data may in fact show persistent social differences (e.g., lower educational attainments, higher unemployment rates among non-Lithuanians, and mono-ethnic segments in the labour market).

Ethnically homogeneous social relations and formations, as well as their overlapping in the spheres of primary and secondary spheres, strengthen ethnic borders and limit individual integration. In addition, lower evaluation of one’s own social status and symbolic power, which is peculiar to members of the Lithuanian ethnic minorities, also reflects unequal social relations among the majority and minorities. These factors are determined by lower social resources of minority groups’ members.

The analysis of the positions of several governmental bodies and institutions confirms the dominant position of the majority ethnic group. Minorities are not effectively represented or employed in the governmental structures. Higher posts held by people of non-Lithuanian origin are rare cases. However, it is difficult to claim that ethnicity limits career opportunities in Lithuania. Other factors, such as the disproportionate impact of economic restructuring and the decline of traditional industries on the Russian minority (geographic concentration in urban areas plus the sectorial concentration of Russian workers in traditional industries) should be considered. The case of Russians and the Russian-speaking minority in Lithuania could be a good illustration and elaborated for the situation presented.

To generalize the research data, the following rifts in the labour market are more obvious among the ethnic minority members: a relatively higher concentration of minority groups in the lower levels of hierarchical positions (especially in the public sector), lower social mobility, and the higher probability of unemployment.