Chapter 5

A Comparative Study of Kazakhstan and Estonia During and After the Nation-Building Process

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ABSTRACT

This chapter discusses Kazakhstan and Estonia's Russian minorities after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. These two particular states were chosen for their importance within the Central Asian and Baltic region. Both states have significant Russian minorities and state building processes were affected by them. This chapter contains information about the historical processes of these states during the dissolution of Soviet Union, theoretical background of state building processes and finally national laws of particular states after the beginning of the 1990s. In the last part of this chapter, there is a comparison between Kazakhstan and Estonia in terms of Russian influence.

INTRODUCTION

Kazakhstan has the biggest Russian minority within the Central Asian states (Greenall, 2005). Kazakhstan gained its independence in 1991 and it was the latest independent state within the Soviet Union (Kazakhstan, 2012). After the Gorbachev’s Glasnost and Perestroika policies, Soviet Union states started demanding their independencies. The Jeltoqsan events in Alma-Ata, Human Chain in Baltic States and Black January events in Caucasus were the sparklers of the separation period (Hiden & Salmon, 1994).

Estonia is the Baltic region’s smallest country that has the second largest Russian minority within the state. The researcher would prefer to choose Estonia to Latvia that has the biggest Russian minority for Estonia’s non-citizens (aliens) problems (EU-MIDIS, 2009). Baltic States were the latest to be included in the Union and first ones which gained independence from the Soviet Union.

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This chapter will start with the histories of these particular states and how they gained independences. The theoretical base of this paper is built on R. Brubaker’s (1994) diaspora-home states and host states explanation and T. Kuzio’s (2001) nation building and transformation in post-Soviet states formulations. Further, Russian diaspora is discussed, using Russian language and non-citizens are examined. In the last part of the chapter similarities and differences of particular states are discussed. In conclusion, the researcher tries to find an answer to one particular question: “Is a far relative better or a close neighbour?”

HISTORY

The Soviet Union was dissolved in 1991 and fifteen independent states were created. As the Union hadn’t got any harmonic nationality within the states, after the independence most of the independent states faced serious nationality problems. These problems were just a side of the coin since there were also economic and political problems as well. According to the different sources, regressive process started during the Brezhnev era (Guriiev & Tsyvinski, n. d., p. 10). After Brezhnev died there were old Communist Party Secretaries that could serve one year or less in Moscow. It can be compared with the Ottoman Empire’s decline years, unsuccessful and inexperienced sultans led Ottoman Empire to destruction.

However Gorbachev’s Glasnost and Perestroika policies had an aim of rescuing Soviet Union and tried to prevent nationalist movements in Soviet states, this attempt was unsuccessful.

I would prefer starting my paper with an introduction to Kazakhstan and Estonia histories because both states had different experiences during the independence period. I am going to discuss deeply under the Estonian history part, Molotov- Ribbentrop Pact’s secret article about Baltic States which had a significant impact on enhancing Baltic nations and gaining independence from Moscow (Suprenat, 2004). 1991 was a milestone firstly for post-Soviet states and then for world politics. Since that year there have been lots of theories such as F. Fukuyama’s The End of the History and S. Huntington’s response Clash of Civilizations.

After 1991, successor states except Belorussia started to re-write their histories (Yapıcı, 2009, p.3). During nation building and state building processes, history, myths, languages played crucial roles. In particular, Estonia created superhuman heroes and the nation believed in its historical powers. (Yapıcı, 2009, p.4) According to Yapıcı, citing from Taras Kuzio, it is impossible to create a new identity without a mythological basement. Rewriting history of successor states started within the control of the governments. In Baltic States, Soviet Union started “otherize” and Soviet times started as “occupation” (Yapıcı, 2009, p.8). During the re-writing of history period, Kalev- Estonian

Table 1. Transitions in comparative perspective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘Double (democracy/market)’</th>
<th>‘Triple (democracy/market/stateness)’</th>
<th>‘Quadruple (democracy/market/stateness/nation)’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>Remainder of central-Eastern Europe</td>
<td>Former Yugoslavia</td>
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<td>Southern Europe</td>
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