

Green College, Oxford  
Reuters Foundation Paper No: 214

**REPLACEMENT MIGRATION:  
Is it a solution for Latvia's ageing  
and declining population?**

**By: AIJA LULLE**

Trinity 2003



## **Content**

Acknowledgements

Introduction

1. Current demographic situation
  - 1.1. Demographic situation in Latvia
  - 1.2. Demographic situation in the UK
2. Existing immigration policies
  - 2.1. Existing policy in the UK
  - 2.2. Immigration situation in Latvia
3. British and Latvian press analysis - social attitudes towards demographic changes and immigration
4. Demographic and economic requirements of replacement migration
5. Conclusion
6. Summary
7. List of interviewees
8. Bibliography

## **Acknowledgements**

I am very grateful both the Reuters Foundation and the Wincott Trust, and, in particular, to Sir Geoffrey Owen, for providing the fellowship that allowed me to conduct this study.

I am also grateful to Dr. Matthew Gibney of the Refugee Studies Centre at Queen Elizabeth House who kindly agreed to be my academic supervisor.

I would like thanks to go to Paddy Coulter, Director of the Reuters Foundation Oxford Programme for his help and guidance. I would like to thank Jenny Darnley, Administrator of Oxford Programme, for her kindness and help.

Green College has provided a great and friendly environment and Oxford University has stimulated my intellect. It was great privilege to be here.

## **Introduction**

During a recent visit to London, an illegal Latvian immigrant whom I befriended discouraged me from buying a baguette. Upon my enquiry, she explained in disgust: “I used to prepare them at night when I came to London four years ago and I wept bitterly at the time seeing my miserable situation. I saw one of my co-workers, an Albanian guy, spit into bread being prepared for a customer”.

The main aim of my research is to try to answer fundamental questions: will Latvia need to import a workforce in the near future; is replacement migration a possible solution for the ageing and decline of Latvia's population; and what might the causes and consequences be of that? However, my friend's story was one of the reasons why I was interested to study more about the existing social attitudes towards immigration in the UK and in Latvia.

My hypothesis is that the gap between society's needs and the stance of the press towards immigration is huge and that the press maintain this barrier. I want to argue that the press prevents mainstream society from understanding the important role of migrants in the economy and prosperity of their country. In order to verify my hypothesis I analysed empirical data, statistical data and research studies such as the United Nations (UN) Population Division Report ‘Replacement migration: is it a solution for ageing and declining population?’ and theoretical literature such as Stephen Castles and Mark J. Martin's research ‘The age of migration’ (1998).

It is clear that for demographic, economic and social reasons migration cannot be stopped. However, problems related to the situations of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers situations continue to grow in many countries.

Overall, I cannot agree more with researchers who stress that it is hard to find a more complex and controversial topic than migration. Research on migration is fundamentally interdisciplinary: sociology, demography, political science, law, history, economics, geography, psychology are all relevant.

In my research I intend to make a comparison of press coverage in Latvia and the United Kingdom. Therefore in the first and the second chapter I have to describe the demographical situation and immigration policies in

Latvia and the United Kingdom. A comparison helps to explain and increase our knowledge of the phenomena of immigration.

The two countries are in very different situations concerning immigrations. On one hand there is Latvia, which regained its independence in 1991 and has started huge reforms in the economy and social sphere and at the same time was facing a sharp decrease in the birth rate and in emigration. Latvia's population is declining at an average speed of 34 people a day. Society is getting older, the countryside is increasingly emptier of people, employers and investors are rising alarms which expose the myth that Latvia has the benefit of highly qualified cheap labour force.

On the other hand, there is the United Kingdom with its lengthy experience of democracy and highly developed economy and living standards. The population in the UK has slowly started growing again recently because of immigration and today many feel that there are too many immigrants in "this small overcrowded island"<sup>1</sup>.

However, an ageing population is a feature of both countries. In Latvia and the UK the populations are expected to decline between 2000 and 2050, and the proportion of population aged 65 years or older will grow. According to United Nations Population Division Report on replacement migration, the population in Latvia by 2050 will be 1,628,000, which would be a sharp decline from 2,357,000 in 2000. The proportion of older people is estimated to grow from 14 to 27 per cent during this period. In the case of the UK there will be 56,667,000 in 2050, a decline from 58,830,000 in 2000. The proportion of aged 65 years and older will grow from 16 to 25 per cent.<sup>2</sup>

Currently, there are no clear signs whether Latvia will face immigrant flows or not, but the main question for Latvia's future is and will be the following: What would help the country's progress in the long-term perspective? A possibility could be a replacement immigration programme for the Latvian government to consider, maximising Latvia's progress and benefits from it.

In my opinion, immigration policy plays a crucial role. So, I interviewed experts from different fields to seek their opinion on the current demographical situation in Latvia and their forecasts on possible migration trends after joining European Union (EU).

---

<sup>1</sup> \* This is a popular expression in public attitudes towards immigration in the UK .

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Population Division Replacement. 'Migration: is it a solution for ageing and declining population?', 2000.

In order to study how social attitudes and social views influence immigration policy in Latvia and the UK I did a content analysis of the coverage of demographical trends and immigration by three Latvian dailies (*Dienas bizness, Diena, Neatkarīga Rita Avīze*) and three British daily newspapers (*Financial Times, The Guardian, The Daily Telegraph*). The time period for the content analysis was the second part of year 2002.

My aim has not been to analyse the complexity of immigration phenomena from a historical perspective, nor to analyse deeper asylum policy, which certainly would demand a longer studies and larger research. My essay is more a research study of the main challenges in current immigration policies and in social attitudes towards migration. In this research I also hope to raise issues about ideological constructions of public debate and notions of ethnic and cultural superiority and inferiority. Thus, in some sense it is an essay about bread. It is a mirror in front of baguette eaters and spitters.

## **Chapter 1: Description of current demographic situation**

According to the United Nations Population Division's research 'Replacement migration: is it a solution to declining and ageing population?'<sup>3</sup> there are two crucial trends which exist in the study of the current demographic situation in Europe: population decline and population ageing.

During the first half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the population of most developed countries is projected to become smaller and older as a result of below-replacement fertility and increased longevity. The most rapidly ageing continent in the world is Europe.

Let us have a closer look at the current demographical situation in Latvia and the UK.

### **1.1. Demographic situation in Latvia**

The total population in Latvia in 1990 was 2.67 million, but by 2000 it had declined to only 2.42 million according to UN Migration Report 2002<sup>4</sup>.

Latvia's census data differ. According to the 2000 Population and Housing Census in Latvia, the size of the population as of 31 March 2000 was 2,377,383. In the age group 0-14 years there were 430,275 people, which is 18.1%; in the age group 15-59 there were 1,448,833 which is 60.9%. There were 509,250 people in age group 60 or older and that is 21.0% of the total population<sup>5</sup>. Since the previous census in 1989, the total number of population has fallen by 10.8 % or 289,000.

The last national prognosis by the Demography Centre of the University of Latvia was developed in 1998-1999. According to this prognosis, in 2025 there will be 2.16 million people in Latvia. However, the 2000 census has already showed 40,000 people less than in the prognosis. This suggests that 2.1 million people would be a more realistic future prognosis for 2025, if the current trends of birth rate and immigration remain constant.<sup>6</sup>

This unfavourable demographic process results in a rapid ageing of population - the number of children decreases and the number and proportion of elderly people rises.

---

<sup>3</sup>United Nations Population Division. 'Replacement migration: is it a solution to declining and ageing population?', 2000 and [www.un.org/esa/population/publications/migration](http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/migration) United Nations. International Migration Report 2002

<sup>4</sup> United Nations. International Migration Report, 2002.

<sup>5</sup> Statistical bureau of Latvia. Census data, 2000.

<sup>6</sup> Zvidriņš P. 'Demogrāfija', Rīga, 2003, pp 249.; 'Sociālekonomiskā procesa trajektorija Latvijas pilsētās un novados laikā no 1985-2002'. Ventspils augstskola, 2002.

This trend is the result of a considerable decrease in the number of the newborns in comparison with the situation during the previous census in 1989 when the number was twice as big. In 1987 more than 42,000 children were born in the country, but in 2000 there were only 20,000.

One of the most credible reasons for population decline was the insecure economic situation during Latvia's period of transition, which also had negative effects on family size. Demographers indicate that demography is mainly influenced by social and economic conditions<sup>7</sup>. However, another reason for this decline was the emigration out of Latvia in the early 1990s.

The steepest fall in birth rate was in the 1990s. During very recent years there have been some more positive features in the demographic trends, but the mortality rate still exceeds the birth rate. Latvian demographer Pēteris Zvidriņš stresses that under a favourable state policy attitude towards the family as an important institution in society, there would be more new families and they would be bigger.<sup>8</sup>

It was also recognised in the Social Report 2002, issued by Ministry of Welfare: "Despite the features of positive trends, the demographic situation in Latvia is still not satisfactory. (...) It is of paramount importance to stimulate the birth rate by developing and improving family policy in the country as well as by reducing poverty"<sup>9</sup>.

Minister for the Family and Children Ainārs Baštiks, asked to characterize the existing demography policy in Latvia, firstly generalised that "Latvia is dying out"<sup>10</sup>. He highlighted the prevailing viewpoint in the society that having a child or even a spouse lowers your living standard and as a result a society of egoists is emerging. He has observed, "the roles of grandparents are changing. They prefer to work or just enjoy their own life instead of looking after their grandchildren". The Minister for the Family and Children thinks that an example of an ideal family model is where grandmother looks after the children. This, however, can be characterised as a rather controversial assertion in today's economic and social realities.

Director of the Economics Institute of the Academy of Sciences, Raita Karnīte, has also used the expression: "we are dying out". She said that

---

<sup>7</sup> Zvidriņš P, 'Demogrāfija', Rīga, 2003, pg 6.

<sup>8</sup> Zvidriņš P, 'Demogrāfija', Rīga, 2003, pg 232- 236.

<sup>9</sup> Social Report, 2002. Ministry of Welfare of Latvia.

<sup>10</sup> \* Here and further are quotes from interviews. The list of interviewees is attached at the end of the essay.

currently the only positive factor in Latvia's demographic situation is the general improvement of economic situation.

The question about Latvia's demographic situation is widely discussed by the mass media, but the government has established no special policy. Overall the existing policy is passive and does not tackle depopulation issue.

After 2010 Latvia will inevitably face the rapid ageing and decrease in the number of people in working age. These are the consequences of the very low birth rate in the 1990s. Demographers also warn that it is going to be difficult to manage this crisis in the near future and even in the medium term because the gaps in the youngest age groups are too deep.<sup>11</sup> Sooner or later, they argue, Latvia has to open its doors for foreign workers<sup>12</sup>.

## **1.2. Demographic situation in the United Kingdom**

The demographic situation in the United Kingdom differs markedly from Latvia. In 1990 total number of population was 57,561,000, but in 2000 – 59,415,000. At the same time rate of natural increase is declining: in 1990 it was 2.3 per 1,000 inhabitants but in 2000 it was 1.1. The rate of growth per 1,000 inhabitants in 1990 was 3.6, but in 2000 it was 2.7.

The population mostly grows because of immigration. Net migration in the UK amounted to 660,000 persons between 1990 and 1998, an average of 73,000 persons per year. In 1990, the proportion of the total population who were foreign-born was 6.5 per cent. According to UN calculations, this is in line with the numbers needed for keeping the total population constant, 88,000 migrants per year.

However, the numbers of migrants needed to keep the population of working age constant are about twice the level of the past decade.

There are huge differences between Latvia and the UK in terms of refugees and asylum seekers and their impact on demographic situation in the country. The number of these grew significantly in the UK during the past decade. There were 43,700 refugees in 1990 and 121,300 in 2000, according to UN data.

---

<sup>11</sup> 'Sociālekonomiskā procesa trajektorija Latvijas pilsētās un novados laikā no 1985.-2002.'. Ventspils augstskola, 2002, pg 18.

<sup>12</sup> Vītoliņš E. 'Nodarbinātība un darba apstākļi'. *Dzīves apstākļi Latvijā 1999. gadā*. Latvijas statistikas pārvalde, 2000. pg 97.

The population of the UK is getting older. The proportion of the population aged 65 years was 15.9 per cent in 1995.<sup>13</sup> These numbers are comparable with average indicators in the European Union: the proportion of the population aged 65 or older was 15.5 per cent in 1995.<sup>14</sup>

Focusing on population decline and ageing trends, the UN Population Division study addresses the question of whether replacement migration is a practical solution. Replacement migration refers to the international migration that would be needed to offset declines in the size of population, the declines in the population of working age as well as offsetting the overall ageing of a population. The UN study considers five different scenarios with regard to the international migration streams needed to achieve specific population objectives or outcomes. The five scenarios are:

1. The medium variant of the projections from the United Nations *World Population Prospects: 1998 Revision*. According to this scenario, the population of Europe, for example, would be 101 million or 14% less in 2050 than in 2000. The population of European Union would be 44 million or 12% less in 2050 than in 2000.
2. The medium variant of the *1998 Revision*, amended by assuming zero migration after 1995. Under this scenario the proportion of the population aged 65 years or older would continue to increase rapidly and in the UK would reach 25%.
3. This scenario computes and assumes the migration required to maintain the size of the total population at the highest level it would reach in the absence of migration after 1995.
4. This scenario keeps the size of the population aged 15-64 years at the maximum level it would reach in the absence of migration. The total number of immigrants until 2050 that would be needed under this scenario is 6 million in the UK.
5. This scenario computes and assumes the migration required to maintain the potential support ratio (PSR), i.e., the ratio of the working-age population (15 to 64 years) to the old-age population (65 years or older), at the highest level it would reach in the absence of migration after 1995.

The total number of migrants needed to keep the potential support ratio constant until 2050 is extremely large in all examined countries.

---

<sup>13</sup> United Nations Population Division, 'Replacement Migration: is it a solution to declining and ageing population?', 2000.

<sup>14</sup> United Nations Population Division, 'Replacement Migration: is it a solution to declining and ageing population?', 2000.

It is 700 million for EU, nearly 1.4 billion for Europe and 60 million in the UK<sup>15</sup>.

Major findings of the UN Population Division Report include:

- During the first half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the populations of most developed countries are projected to become smaller and older as a result of below-replacement fertility and increased longevity.
- Population decline is inevitable in the absence of replacement migration, despite possible positive features in demographical trends.
- The numbers of migrants needed to offset declines in the working-age population are significantly larger than those needed to offset total population decline. However, maintaining potential support ratios at current levels through replacement migration alone seems out of reach, because of the extraordinarily large numbers of migrants that would be required.
- In most cases, the potential support ratios could be maintained at current levels by increasing the upper limit of the working-age population to roughly 75 years of age.

Declining and ageing populations will bring new challenges of many established economic, social and political policies and programmes. For example, in absence of migration, the calculations in the UN report indicate that the upper limit of the working age would need to be raised to about 76 years in the EU in order to obtain in 2050 the same potential support ratio observed in 1995, i.e. 4.3 persons of working age per older person.

In absence of large-scale migration, the figures show that it would be necessary to raise the upper limit of the working-age to about 72 years in order to obtain in 2050 the same potential support ratio observed in 1995 in the UK, i.e., 4.1 persons of working-age per each older past working-age<sup>16</sup>.

Therefore in the content analysis of press coverage (Chapter 3) I will examine whether press coverage of demographic changes and immigration is also related to the following questions:

- the appropriate ages for retirement;

---

<sup>15</sup>UN Population Division Report 'Replacement Migration: is it a solution to declining and ageing population?'

<sup>16</sup>UN Population Division Report 'Replacement Migration: is it a solution to declining and ageing population?', 2000.

- policies and programmes relating to international migration, in particular, replacement migration;
- the integration of large numbers of recent migrants and their descendants.

## Chapter 2: Existing immigration policies

Around 175 million persons currently reside in a country other than where they were born. It is about 3 per cent of world population. Most of the world's migrants - 56 million - live in Europe, Asia (50 million) and Northern America (41 million), according to UN statistics in the International Migration report 2002.<sup>17</sup>

Immigration policy is highly discussed within European Union. There is no doubt that government policies greatly influence international migration. However, there is considerable variation in the effectiveness of official policies, stress Stephen Castles and Mark J. Martin in their research 'The age of migration'.<sup>18</sup> In order to answer the question whether replacement migration is a solution for ageing and declining population we have to take a closer look at the existing immigration policies in both countries, focusing on efforts to attract the workforce needed to benefit countries' economies.

### 3.1. Current immigration policy in the United Kingdom

The Immigration Act of 1971 gave the Home Secretary the power to make immigration rules that guide the practice of the Immigration Service in the UK. On January 1, 1973, Britain's entry into the European Community (EC) gave new rights to enter and work to EC nationals.

But, on the surface, Britain is out of step with her continental European partners on immigration policy. Britain has not signed the Schengen Agreement<sup>19</sup>, nor does she wish to allow free movement across her borders<sup>20</sup>. However, as Zig Layton-Henry argues, it was impossible to have an integrated labour market for the European Community (EC) if there were different immigration regimes in the member states.

From the 1980s, the Commission of the EC discussed the migration issue, but failed to come up with a common policy towards entrants from non-EC countries and has not been able to accomplish this up to now. The

---

<sup>17</sup> UN Population Division. 'International Migration Report' 2002

<sup>18</sup> Castles, S. and M. Martin. 'The age of migration: international population movements in the modern world'. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1998, pg.93.

<sup>19</sup> \* The Schengen Agreement to abolish internal border controls and institute common policies on visas, asylum applications, control of third country nationals, the Exchange of information on so-called undesirables (criminals, terrorists, illegal immigrants, rejected asylum applicants). Germany, France and the Benelux countries signed this agreement in 1985, however it was not implemented until 1995.

<sup>20</sup> Layton-Henry, Z. 'Britain: The Would-be Zero-Immigration Country' *Controlling Immigration*, 1994, pg 279 - 288.

1991 Maastricht Treaty, which set up the European Union (EU), established EU citizenship, but again failed to work out a common policy towards immigrants from non-EU states, though there were measures for co-operation on asylum policy included.

In his foreword to the White Paper *Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain* David Blunkett, Home Secretary of the UK said, „There is nothing more controversial, and yet more natural, than men and women from across the world seeking a better life for themselves and their families”,<sup>21</sup>. This White Paper sets out the key challenges the UK faces in developing its nationality, immigration and asylum policy in order to produce a coherent strategy. One is certainly the economic challenge. Developing as well as developed economies are becoming more knowledge-based and more dependent on people with skills and ideas. Immigrants bring new experiences and talents that can enrich the knowledge base of the economy.

In response to this need for new knowledge and highly educated professionals, the UK has made improvements to the work permit system in recent years. The UK has simplified the eligibility criteria, introduced the facility to submit applications electronically and achieved substantial reductions in turnaround times. Up until January 2001, 70 % of the full applications were decided within one day of receipt. In September 2000 the UK also introduced a new way for people to enter through the Innovator Scheme, which allows entrepreneurs with business plans that can generate significant benefits for the UK to enter and set up businesses<sup>22</sup>.

The Home Office White paper points out that the UK is enhancing the current routes of entry and tightening procedures through:

- The introduction of a Highly Skilled Migrant Programme to enable the most talented migrants to work in the UK.
- Changing the Immigration Rules to let certain postgraduate students switch into employment.
- Meeting the demand for short-term casual labour building on the principles of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Scheme.
- Publishing a consultation document about the Working Holidaymaker Scheme to take views on ensuring the scheme is as inclusive as possible.

---

<sup>21</sup> Home office. ‘Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain’, 2001.

<sup>22</sup> Home office. ‘Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain’, 2001, pg. 11.

- Ensuring ministers of religion are suitably qualified to fulfil their role for the benefit of the community.
- Regulation of those who provide advice and services regarding work permit applications.

### **UK Labour Immigration 2000**

Routes of Entry	number	Per cent
Work Permits(A)	67,100	35
Working Holidaymakers	38,500	20.1
EU (B)	35,700	18.7
Domestic employees	14,300	7.5
Au Pairs	12,900	6.7
UK Ancestry	11,000	5.8
Seasonal agricultural workers	10,100	5.3
Ministers of religion	1,180	0.6
Investors	50	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>190,830</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Home Office admissions data, International Passenger Service (IPS).

A – this describes the number of entrants to the UK with work permits and as such is a different figure to the number of work permits issued in 2000 (80,000).

B- IPS.

The British government's work permit scheme allowed 104,000 foreigners to fill jobs in 2001. The total of 190,830 does not include economically active family members and dependants of primary migrants, students or refugees. Overall, in 2000, foreign-born migrants made up 8% of the labour force in the UK.

The UK Home Office's analysis admits that many parts of the immigration system are not working effectively. One of these areas is asylum policy. The number of asylum applications received in 2000 was 80,315, excluding dependants, thus, 9,155 (13 per cent) more than in 1999 (including dependents there were 98,900 applications in 2000 and 91,200 in 1999). United Kingdom made 118,195 asylum decisions in

2001. Nine per cent of applicants were given leave to stay in the country.<sup>23</sup>

In 2002 the UK received 80,530 applications.<sup>24</sup> The question about the asylum policy in the United Kingdom is not seriously considered in this essay. However, it cannot be ignored, because it is one of the hottest issues in press coverage and forms social attitudes towards immigration in general.

Another issue, which should be taken into account more seriously by government and which is widely discussed in public debate, is related to illegal immigration and illegal work. It is extremely difficult to measure how many migrants are present in UK illegally and those who are here lawfully but have no right to work. But while there are no accurate means of estimating the numbers involved, the most reliable indicators suggest that the number could run into hundreds of thousands, according to the Home Office estimates.

Overall, it is important to note that the government's stance on immigration levels in 1990 as well as in 2000 are that this level was too high and during these 10 years policy was to lower immigration level<sup>25</sup>.

### **3.2. Situation of immigration in Latvia**

Despite unfavourable demographic situation and alarmist signals from employers about predictable workforce shortage in different economic sectors, the government of Latvia does not have a clear immigration policy. However, legislation related to immigration is being harmonised with EU, in line with Latvia's goal to enter the EU next year.

Present migration policy in Latvia can be defined as a mixture of various means, the aim of which is to soften the negative consequences of past migrations. Contemporary immigration policy of the Baltic States is heavily influenced by the unregulated immigration from the USSR, mostly from Russia, Byelorussia and Ukraine over the last 50 years. Now the number of arrivals is regulated by the procedure of delivery of visas. That is why the constraint of new arrivals to the Baltic States is the main feature of contemporary migration policy.

---

<sup>23</sup> 'Common entrance exams'. *Index on Censorship* 2, 2003. pg 40.

<sup>24</sup> 'Common entrance exams'. *Index on Censorship* 2, 2003. pg 73.

<sup>25</sup> United Nations. International Migration Report 2002.

In the early 1990s Latvia faced not only decrease in a birth, but also emigration. The net migration in 1990 was minus 23,000 and in 2000 it was minus 5,000 people.

It is interesting to note, that the Latvian's government's position concerning immigration levels in 1990 was that it was satisfactory, but by 2000 they were claiming it to be too high. However, considering the decrease in the population it is surprising that the government would make such a statement. According to UN Migration Report in 2002, the Latvian government stated in their policy back in 1990 that they wished to maintain their level of immigration, but during the past ten years there has been a decrease, which raises questions about the migration policy applied in Latvia. Probably it is related to the general negative attitude towards migration held in many countries. By 2001, almost one-quarter of all countries viewed immigration levels as too high. In 2001, 44 per cent of developed countries had policies aiming to lower immigration levels, as did 39 per cent of developing countries, according to the UN Migration Report 2002.

On 31 October the Saeima (Parliament of Latvia) adopted a Law on Immigration, which is to replace the 1992 Law on the Entry, and Residence of Foreign Citizens and Stateless Persons in the Republic of Latvia. The law entered into force on 1 May 2003.

In order to harmonise the Latvian legislation with EU norms on asylum and related international standards, the Saeima adopted a new Asylum Law last year, which broadens the applicability of refugee status by introducing the concepts of alternative status and temporary protection. The law also allows for a shortened asylum application review at the border. The new law entered into force on 1 September 2002. By the end of 2002, alternative status had been granted to 3 stateless persons from Byelorussia. Latvia had only 11 officially recognised refugees in 2002<sup>26</sup>. After Latvia joining the EU there would be a similar situation with asylum seekers as in Finland, according to Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs of Latvia. Currently the number of asylum seekers' in Finland is 1,500 – 3,000 per year.<sup>27</sup>

The content analysis of Latvian press coverage shows that in many cases immigration, refugee and asylum seeker issues are currently discussed as a problem which Latvia will probably have to face in the future.

---

<sup>26</sup>Report Human Rights in Latvia, 2002. Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies.

<sup>27</sup> Press release, Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs of Latvia, June 2, 2003.

### Chapter 3: Social attitudes towards demographic changes and immigration

Some serious analysis has been done of the role of the media in the public debate on immigration, mainly on the subject of asylum seekers and refugees<sup>28</sup>. It is clear that the portrayal of immigrants in media should receive similar close scrutiny in future as well. As is emphasised by Ron Kaye, given that trends very similar to those in the UK are occurring in refugee and asylum policy and practice (and immigration policy in general) in Europe, it is clear even from limited research in this area that stereotyping of immigrants is occurring in many parts of the European media. It is therefore important in analysing these trends across Europe to tease out the similarities and differences in the treatment of immigrants by the media.<sup>29</sup>

At the moment there is a lot is being written about immigration: in virtually every issue of British newspapers and roughly, every second or third issue of the Latvian press we can find articles about immigration. Many of them, however, are related to asylum seekers, but do not use replacement migration as a main theme. Newspaper articles were searched for references to demographic changes or immigration. Approximately 200 such references to immigration were found in *The Daily Telegraph*, 360 in *The Guardian* and 260 in *Financial Times*. In Latvian dailies the average number of references to immigration was approximately 90 during the period analysed. References to demographic changes were far less. For example, using the key word 'demographic', 42 references were found in the *Daily Telegraph*, three times less on average in the Latvian dailies. These references were further searched to combine with key word 'workforce' in order to find the articles about workforce shortages or the impact of immigrants on workforce. The searches were finally constructed using the following strings:  
'Immigration' and 'demographic',  
'Immigration' and 'workforce',  
'Demographic' and 'workforce'.

---

<sup>28</sup> See, for example, Brosius H. B. and P. Eps 'Prototyping though Key Events: News Selection in the Case of Violence against Aliens and Asylum Seekers in Germany', *European Journal of Communication*, 10 (3) 1995, pg 391-412.; Coleman, P. 'Survey of Asylum Coverage in the National Daily Press', *The Runnymede Bulletin* 291, 1995; Kaye, R. Redefining the Refugee: The UK Media Portrayal of Asylum seekers. *The new migration in Europe*. Ed by Khalid Koser and Helma Lutz. Macmillian Press LTD, 1998, pg 163-182.

<sup>29</sup> Kaye, R. 'Redefining the Refugee: The UK Media Portrayal of Asylum seekers'. *The new migration in Europe*. Pg 180

Some irrelevant examples were picked up in the searches using these terms in this way. Irrelevances were simply discarded after analysis. The examples were then grouped under main themes. Less salient themes were excluded under the framework of this research.

Two trends can be seen to be crucial with regard to media coverage of the immigration issue: politicisation and an immediate reaction to the newest statistical trends in migration. The politicisation of immigration was a very significant trend in the period analysed in the media analysed in both countries the second part of 2002. In most cases this politicisation was related to actual events in politics such as elections in Germany and Sweden, debates about the rejection of immigration law in Germany, etc. However, the issue itself was also used as a tool for political conflict. The research suggests that the media sets the agenda for public debate as well as playing largely intermediately role when politicians and decision makers about immigration policy shape public concern over immigration.

All the newspapers analysed closely followed the latest official information about the current situation as regards migration and the prognosis for the future. The research clearly demonstrates that demographic changes and immigration are seen to be important issues and they therefore evoke unflagging interest.

Of course, the nature of the press coverage differs between the two countries. Viewed objectively, the Latvian press writes more about demographic changes and declining population. The British newspapers are more eager to study issues about workforce shortages, illegal immigration and to follow latest information about changes in the numbers of asylum seekers. However, it has not been possible to go into greater depth of analysis under the framework of this essay.

*The Daily Telegraph* often marks out immigration issues in connection with elections in European countries. *The Guardian*, unlike other papers, tries to dispel myths about migrants, asylum seekers' and refugees as a whole. Its coverage includes stories about the personal experience of refugees and reflects their opinion more explicitly than did other media.

*Financial Times* coverage stands out with its historical explanations about migration processes, especially in its supplements or special reports about countries like Greece, Albania, and Canada. Similarly, the coverage differs from other media analysed in this research with its impartial reporting which taps a wide range of sources from both

business and political communities. This media in the context of EU expansion analyses immigration, in particular replacement migration. Pensions and pension funds usually are reflected as separate issues. Sometimes they are related to ageing society.

Latvian newspapers have a wide range of themes related to immigration: *Diena* stands out with serious think-thank opinion columns, the business newspaper *Dienas bizness* concentrates on economic analysis, warning about workforce shortages because of demographic changes.

Overall the main lines in press coverage on replacement migration could be divided as follows in both the UK and Latvia:

1. A linkage of immigration issues to the expansion of the EU;
2. Shortage of workforce, declining of population;
3. Threats and challenges of replacement migration;
5. Illegal immigration;
6. Integration of existing immigrants in society;
7. Interpretation of think-thanks and academics about global solutions for ageing and declining populations.

Many of these questions are closely related to each other.

1. **Immigration and EU.** In terms of possible migration flows after Latvia's joining EU, the dominant trend in the press is as follows: within EU, migration is not popular. According to the research of the European Commission up to end of the 2001 only 4.4% of EU citizens were emigrating from their native countries. In absolute number this means 16 million out of 370 million citizens. The salient groups of migrants within EU are students and highly qualified workers.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, the press report that EU countries are already full of illegal immigrants from East and Central Europe. Western countries tolerate workers without official permissions because they are ready to do jobs which are not attractive to the indigenous population<sup>31</sup>. As an actual trend it is useful to examine foreign workers in the relatively richer EU candidate countries Slovenia, Czech Republic and Hungary. Immigrants who work in these countries mostly come from the Ukraine, Romania and China.

A separate issue is the business response to possible immigration: on the one hand business people are open to immigration and warn about inevitable workforce shortages if there is insufficient immigration.

---

<sup>30</sup> Plamše, K. 'ES migrē drosmīgais mazākums'. *Diena*, Aug. 27, 2002, pg 1 and 3.

<sup>31</sup> *Dienas bizness* Darba tirgus jau ir paplašinājies. July 26, 2002, Pg. 9.

But, on the other hand, they are sending signals that immigration is unwelcome because it would damage the existing labour market. For example, German building industry workers do not hide their concerns over EU enlargement. They estimate that newcomers from East and Central Europe will prove to be severe competition. As a result opportunities to keep workplaces for Germans will shrink.<sup>32</sup>

It is interesting to note that Latvian business is against the country joining the EU. This is because some business people feel that after Latvia joins the Union, more immigrants will come to the country and this will be bad news for domestic businesses.<sup>33</sup> Linda Šulca, the representative of domestic business, says that she is against immigration, despite that it would boost wages. She argues that Latvian identity is more important for her.<sup>34</sup>

The linkage of immigration and EU in press coverage was strongly influenced by the politicisation of the issue. Xenophobic sentiments along with political populism were seen in political as well as media agendas during summer 2002. The Freedom Party in Latvia in its election campaign advertisements warned that immigration is inevitable after joining EU. The party controversially mixed symbols of freedom, nationality and EU. In a TV advertisement, which was later removed, black man guarded the Latvian Freedom monument and another kissed a Latvian girl in national costume, while the sound track warned: "Today he is a guard; tomorrow will he be your son-in-love?" The general reaction in Latvian newspapers was one of condemnation. However, *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze* (August 3, 2002, pg. 1 and 4) stressed that competent institutions do not inform society about possible immigrant inflows. Meanwhile, *Diena* wrote that a migration scheme provided by this party is impossible and The Freedom Party just wants to sow fears. The human rights researcher Nils Muižnieks, currently the Minister of Society Integration, pointed out that warning about immigrants is a manipulation, because this recalls the trauma still evident in social views that have been forged in the Soviet times. Although, the overall trend of these articles does not frame the question around the immigrant flows. But it leaves a space for speculations and guesses about an unknown situation in the future.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Balode, I. 'Vācijas celtnieki baidās no ES paplašināšanās'. *Dienas bizness*. October 25, 2002, pg.9.

<sup>33</sup> 'Bizness in ES', *Dienas bizness*, December, 23, 2002, pg 14.

<sup>34</sup> 'Vai Latvijai jābūt ES?' *Dienas bizness*, October 25, 2002, pg. 14.

<sup>35</sup> Arāja D. 'Čevers grib sēt bailes'. *Diena*. July, 31, 2002, pg 3; Galzons, E. 'Iekšlietu speciālisti: bailēm, ka iestāšanās ES vairo noziedzību, nav pamata'. *Diena*, July 5, 2002, pg 1 and 3. and Galzons, E. 'Vēl nav jāuztraucas par migrantiem'. *Diena*, August 3, 2002, pg 1 and 3.

## 2. Shortage of workforce, declining of population

Press publications in Latvia point to workforce shortages. For example, BMW, Bosch, Siemens, Philips, IBM and other companies had displayed interest about possibilities of starting production units in Latvia, but all of them have decided not to do so. Reasons for this vary, but one of them, obviously, is workforce shortages. In the case of BMW 2,500 qualified specialists would be required. It is not likely that all could be recruited only from Latvia. Workforce shortages are obvious in several sectors such as wood-processing, engineering and electrical industries, telecommunications, and food processing<sup>36</sup>.

The cheap workforce in Latvia is often mentioned as an attractive factor for foreign investors and, in this case, immigration. However, there are also signals that the workforce is getting more expensive and this factor will diminish as an attraction in future.<sup>37</sup>

The Latvian press also reported that several effects of population decline are already obvious in Latvia. *Diena* reported the closing of schools because of the decline in the number of children in school age. Zigfrīds Grīnpauks, the representative of the Ministry of Education and Science, avoided commenting on a question about reduction in the number of teachers<sup>38</sup>. This lack of information leads to concern and speculation. As a result, at least one group of professionals feel insecure and uninformed about their future workplace.

## 3. Replacement migration

One significant trend in the British press is so called 'number battle' about predictions for the future. A British think-tank The Migration Watch, which is often used as a source in *The Daily Telegraph* and could be characterised as sceptical towards immigration, published its analysis at the beginning of August, warning that Britain can expect 2 million extra migrants in the next 10 years. This prognosis led to a storm in other media. *The Guardian* called this prognosis "A swamp of muddled thinking" and characterised the prognosis of The Migration Watch as "a wild guess based on flawed analysis"<sup>39</sup>.

Also noteworthy were vivid and alarmist comparisons used by authors of research. For example, they write that the number of incomers is like "a population the size Cambridge being added every six months". *The*

---

<sup>36</sup> Dieziņa, S. Valdmanis G. 'Tautsaimniecībā trūkst strādājošo'. *Dienas bizness*. October 3, 2002, pg 3.

<sup>37</sup> Austrumeiropas darbaspēks kļūst dārgāks. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*. November 21, 2002. pg. 6;

Paparde, I. 'Latvijā zemākās darbaspēka izmaksas ES kandidātvalstīs'. November 22, 2002, pg. 1 and 4;

Arklīņa, I. Burkovska-Jakobsena I. 'Uzņēmumu ceļojums uz Latviju'. *Diena*. November 26, 2002, pg 15.

<sup>38</sup> Grīnuma I. 'Šogad slēgtas sešas skolas'. *Diena*. August 6, 2002, pg. 4 and Grīnuma I. Skolās krasi sarucis skolēnu skaits. *Diena*. September 11, 2002, pg 1 and 4.

<sup>39</sup> Adams, R. Stewart H. 'A swamp of muddled thinking'. *The Guardian*, August 7, 2002, pg. 15.

*Guardian* has doubts about this prognosis, first published in *The Daily Telegraph*. *The Guardian* published also the explanations of David Coleman, Reader in demography at Oxford University, about numbers mentioned in the research. He writes that “the estimate of 2 million over a decade is the arithmetically unavoidable consequence of the continuation of the level of net international migration over the last three years, including a modest allowance for illegal migrants. If the Home Office does not agree with the latter estimates, it should provide its own.<sup>40</sup>” The last comment raises an important question about social attitudes towards immigration, namely, that the lacks of accurate data create space for speculation and suspicion.

David Coleman criticised the existing immigration policy in the United Kingdom also in another article which was published in *The Daily Telegraph* in May 18, 2002. He underlines that the trouble with the present Government’s immigration policy is that most of the incomers are “the wrong sort of immigrants, from the point of view of our economic needs. Since the 1960s, most have come as dependants – spouses, students and asylum seekers, who contribute little to the productive economy. We need workers”.

According to research by Castles and Martin and the Home Office White Paper *Secure Borders, Safe Havens: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain* and also research on transnational families, this conclusion could be characterised as partial.<sup>41</sup> Research studies show that the myth that migrants’ wives do not participate in the labour force nowadays must be dispelled, because it does not correspond to the real situation in the workforce. The same criticism should be made about partial interpretation about contribution of existing students’ (e.g. tuition fees) and the possible contribution to receiving country’s economy.

Foreign students, while in Britain to study, also have the potential to produce valuable benefits for the UK through joining the workforce at the end of their studies<sup>42</sup>. According to the research by Ceri Gott and Karl Johnston, ‘Migrants in the UK: fiscal effects’, graduate migrant workers are likely to earn high wages, reflecting a valuable contribution to the UK economy through a positive fiscal contribution (i.e. they contribute more to a government revenue in taxes than they receive in benefits and public services). According to another piece of research by Michael Shields and

---

<sup>40</sup> Coleman, D. ‘My figures are correct’. *The Guardian*, August 8, 2002, pg.19.

<sup>41</sup> Castles, S. M. Martin. ‘The Age of migration. International Population movements in the Modern World’. Second edition, 1998 Macmillian Press LTD’, 1998. See also *The transnational family*, ed. By Bryceson D. and U. Vuorela. *Berg*, Oxford, 2002.

<sup>42</sup> Home Office White Paper ‘Save Haven, Secure Borders: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain’. 2001.

Stephen Wheatley, 'Price Migrants' Labour market outcomes', these contributions are enhanced by English language fluency and qualifications obtained in the UK.

A set of articles, related to the rejected German immigration law, which had sought to simplify the country's complex immigration rules and allow greater access for well qualified candidates from outside the EU to work in Germany, shows that the politicisation of immigration can harm the interests of economy. Despite the business demand for the law to be amended to meet an immediate skills shortage in certain sectors and longer-term demographic development, the issue was frozen in the pre-election atmosphere. The argument of Edmund Stoiber, the opposition candidate chancellor, was that "Germany already has 4 million unemployed people who cannot find work".<sup>43</sup> A misleading aspect of this conclusion lies in the hypothesis about the fixed numbers of jobs. The idea underlying fear of job displacement is simple: if the number of jobs is fixed, and immigrants occupy some jobs, there are fewer available jobs for natives. An adequate theory of the unemployment effect of immigration must be more complex. It must treat the wage response and the unemployment response, as well as the internal migration response<sup>44</sup>. Underemployment has recently come to be recognized as an important phenomenon in both OECD countries and Central and Eastern Europe. Many workers in these economies lack opportunities to perform the type of work that they could and would like to do. As a result, they may work less productively or for fewer hours than they could and would like to work.<sup>45</sup> Therefore migration can play a significant role to combat unemployment.

*The Guardian* tried to explain immigrants' impact on wages by data from Home Office research, which concludes that immigrants do not take jobs from the resident population and may even boost general wage levels<sup>46</sup>. Steven Bell, global chief economist for *Deutsche Asset Management* explains that "an inflexible labour market will make life tough for immigrants and it leads to high unemployment – one of the principal

---

<sup>43</sup>Williamson H. 'Business in Germany hits at CDU over immigration'. *Financial Times*, September 17, 2002, pg 7. See also Connolly K. 'Schroder setback on 'skills for import'. *The Daily Telegraph*. December 19, 2002, pg.13.

<sup>44</sup> Julian L. and Basil S. 'The economic consequences of immigration'. *Blackwell*, Cato institute, 1990, pg 213.

<sup>45</sup>Human Development Report 2002; International Labour Organisation, Correspondence on underemployment, February 2002, Geneva

<sup>46</sup> Travis A. 'Immigrants boost wage levels for all'. *The Guardian*, December 11, 2002, pg.9. and 'Migration myths'. *The Guardian*. December 10, 2002, pg 17.

causes of anti-immigration sentiment. A flexible labour market means that immigrants have more impact on wages than on unemployment.<sup>47</sup>

#### **4. Illegal immigration**

This is another very widely discussed issue. Some foreigners enter without going through required immigration procedures. Others enter through these procedures, but violate the terms of their entry, by overstaying their permit or working without permission parallel to their legal stay in country (e.g. students).

The discussions on this issue touch upon a particular economy's fields dependence on illegal immigrants as well as strong encouragement to combat this type of migration. For example, *The Guardian* in its investigation *Fowl play* (July 8, 2002, G2, pg 2) discovered that "the supermarkets are dependent on illegal labour. (...) About 40% of their food suppliers' workforces are tied up with gangmasters and illegal labour". Dependence is shown also in other piece *The push-me pull-you of immigration* (August 9, 2002, G2, pg 5): "How many Little Englanders are having their houses done up and their children looked after by cheap-labour migrants with no right to work?" This quote raises a question about double standards over illegal immigration.

Latvian newspapers report that illegal workers from neighbouring country Lithuania compete with domestic workers, although representatives of domestic enterprises deny any employment of illegal workers, arguing that it would lower quality standards.<sup>48</sup>

As Castles and Martin underline, illegal migration is, by definition, a product of the laws made to control migration.<sup>49</sup> In this case, it would be interesting to look at practices of different countries how their illegal migrants become legal. There was only one short news story during period analysed about Italy's practice<sup>50</sup>.

#### **6. Integration of existing immigrants in society**

"A surgeon who was carrying out an operation had to break off halfway through because his foreign assistants did not know enough English to understand his orders. When he spoke of this, he was at once accused of 'racism'. Here is a small but telling example of a dismal plague, which has fallen on us in England now. To be accused of 'racism' is bad enough. But even more pernicious is the neurotic guilt which puts many

---

<sup>47</sup> Bell. S. 'Immigration key to the national wealth'. FT Fund management, December 11, 2002, pg.6.

<sup>48</sup> Radovics V. 'Nelegālais lietuviešu darbaspēks konkurē ar vietējiem celtniekiem'. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, November 4, 2002, pg 4.

<sup>49</sup> Castles, S and M. Miller. 'The age of migration. International Population movements in the Modern World'. Second edition, 1998 Macmillian Press LTD, pg 96

<sup>50</sup> 'Imigranti vēlas legalizēties Itālijā', *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, November 13, 2002, pg 10.

people perpetually on their guard in case they should offend some ‘ethnic community’ thought to be floating about in the vicinity.”<sup>51</sup> This quote is one of *The Daily Telegraph’s* ‘juicy’ and ‘sexy’ pictures which, from time to time, add fuel to the flames of the immigration issue. However, the questions about workforce shortage and foreign workers’ integration in society (e.g. language training programmes) are ignored in this vivid picture and would make it less attractive to anti-immigration readers. The newspaper, to quote The Migration Watch, also warned “mass immigration to Britain is placing intolerable pressures on public services, especially health, housing, transport and education”.<sup>52</sup> Immigration is posited as a social problem. In this way social views could lead to frustration and stigmatisation of immigrants, blaming them of damaging local infrastructure. The answer could be found in *The Guardian* publication *Cities reborn* (October 30, 2002, Special Supplement, pg 14). Lord (Richard Rogers, the architect and Anne Power, professor of Social Policy at the London School of Economics explain that ethnic minorities make up 7 % of the UK population but 25% of London’s population. Meanwhile, 70 % of ethnic minority households live in the poorest 10 % of urban local authorities in the country. Therefore, superficially, immigration and race topic have become linked with inner-city poverty and disadvantage.

Another interesting field is vox populi or readers’ letters, which are rather difficult to analyse. On the first view, there are at least two striking features: first, that the letters of the same author appear time to time and the second that opinion in letters corresponds or complements with opinions in the newspapers news stories and comments. However, generally speaking, this is a very important aspect in analysing social views and infusing fresh blood for into old debates. For example, reader of *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze* suggests that more research be conducted in order to test that existing ethnic proportions do not allow opening Latvia’s borders to new immigrants.<sup>53</sup> In my opinion this is an important point which should be studied closely in Latvian as well as British newspapers, instead of making assumptions which are not based on facts.

## 7. Think – tank analysis

General migration theories emphasise the tendency of people to move from densely to sparsely populated areas or from low- to high-income areas, or link migrations to fluctuations in the business cycle. These approaches are often known as ‘push-pull’ theories, because they

---

<sup>51</sup> Simple P. ‘End column’, *The Daily Telegraah*, July 26, 2002, Pg. 29

<sup>52</sup> Johnston P. ‘Public services ‘under strain from immigration’’. *The Daily Telegraph*, November 27, 2002, pg.13.

<sup>53</sup> Birzkops J. ‘ES migranti: zinātniski risināms jautājums’. *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, August 22, 2002, pg 2.

perceive the causes of migration to lie in a combination of ‘push factors’, impelling people to leave their areas of origin, and pull factors attracting them to certain receiving countries. Push factors include demographic growth, low living standards, lack of economic opportunities and political repression, while pull factors are demand for labour, availability of land, good economic opportunities and political freedoms<sup>54</sup>. Authors of comments in press seek to explain society migration processes from a theoretical point of view and a basic explanation of ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors usually serve as a ground for more specific analysis. Experts’ comments would seem to make a very important contribution to public debate on replacement migration.

This kind of the commentaries is found in the Latvian newspaper *Diena* and the British daily *Financial Times*. The Migration watch is popular source for *The Daily Telegraph*. *The Guardian* uses different sources for think-tank analysis, with often a footnote indicating research which has been published by Home Office. Experts and think-tanks in their publications focus on various issues related to replacement migration. For example, in analysing migration processes in the world they stress that OECD countries should do their duty and assign 0.7% of their GDP in financial assistance to other countries. They argue that developed countries, especially in Europe, should abolish the barriers to exports from developing nations and that financial assistance should be divided more equally<sup>55</sup>. Most developed countries also have to make an effort in order to establish new workplaces in developing countries. In addition, these commentators feel that Europe should open its doors widely; otherwise the pressure of illegal migration will remain too strong.

---

<sup>54</sup> Castles, S and M. Miller . ‘The Age of Migration. International Population movements in the Modern World’. Second edition, 1998 Macmillian Press LTD, pg 9-10

<sup>55</sup> Lēmans, Ž.P.’ Kā kontrolēt globālo krīzi’ and Sajans S. ‘Vecuma globalizācija’; both in *Diena*. August 9, 2002, pg 2.

## Chapter 4: Demographic and economic requirements

Press coverage of immigration creates a kaleidoscope of impressions, but the main trend could be characterised as the marginalisation of immigrants from mainstream society. The powerful, rich hosts are ‘we’; poor, weak and likely criminals and terrorists are ‘others’. The discourse of ‘we’ and ‘others’ (immigrants) is very significant and ubiquitous in the coverage of immigration. This is the background of the public debate on immigration and cannot be ignored as it has deep roots in other fields such as academic thinking<sup>56</sup>, the legislative system and not only in the press.

A separation of migrants from mainstream society is very widespread – from theoretical to legal practices, social institutions and social attitudes in general. Firstly, the sociology of immigration has constructed its object of study as a separate world; its focus is primarily on the sociology of being different. This portrayal of essential difference attaches irreducibility to the status of being a migrant<sup>57</sup>.

Poor language skills, lack of understanding of the host culture together with political, social and economic marginalisation and suspicious and arrogant social attitudes within the host country stigmatise immigrants in general, whether they are legal workers in foreign country, illegal immigrants, refugees or asylum seekers. There is a fundamental disparity between society’s needs and social views: firstly they are ‘others’, secondly, they are all immigrants and therefore unwanted. The confusion comes from political assertions and continues in press coverage resulting in a haste of frustrations for immigrants in a host country. As the content analysis research of shows, immigration in political discourse and press coverage is often tied up with such words as ‘criminality’, ‘terrorism’, etc. It is also a very plausible cause of the widespread negative attitude towards migration processes in general, though it demands deeper analysis.

It is clear from the content analysis of press coverage that skilled migrants very seldom are an issue of public concern. It raises a question about meaning of word ‘migrant’ itself in public debate as well as about class distinction among different kind of immigrants.

---

<sup>56</sup> See, for example, Portes, A. ‘Economic Sociology and the Sociology of Immigration: A conceptual overview’. *The Economic sociology of immigration. Russel Sage foundation*. New York, 1995, pg 1-2.; Timera, M. ‘Righteous or Rebellious? Social Trajectory of Sahelian Youth in France’. *The Transnational family*, Oxford, Berg, 2002, pg 148.

<sup>57</sup> Timera M. ‘Righteous or Rebellious? Social Trajectory of Sahelian Youth in France’. *The Transnational families*, Oxford, Berg, 2002, pg. 147.

The Fitzgerald Committee in Australia found that immigrants were being blamed unjustly for unwelcome social changes: “When there are forces moving our society which people seem not to be able to identify, or to understand, or to halt, immigration as a cause seems easier to pinpoint, the change it brings becomes negatively perceived, and it is felt that by manipulating immigration in this way or that way we can avoid having economic or social problems”<sup>58</sup>.

As Sarah Spenser argues, such attitudes must be recognised by the government and met with decisive leadership, education, and presentation of the facts about non-European immigration<sup>59</sup>.

The Fitzgerald Committee found, however, that public misunderstanding was not the whole problem. Surveys revealed that the immigration programme “is not identified in the public mind with the national interest and must be given a convincing rationale”. That is, if the public were to be convinced that immigrants were not to blame for socio-economic problems, the government must be able to demonstrate both that there were sound reasons for allowing the immigrants to enter, and that the immigrants were not subsequently contributing to these problems.

A very important contribution to public debate is the comments of experts and think tanks in newspapers. They can help to create awareness of the context of demographic changes and migration. However, the influence of these articles must be studied more carefully. Public attitudes toward immigration certainly influence public policy, though the extent of the influence is unclear.

The UN Population Division Report on replacement migration raises questions for the future of replacement migration: what is the appropriate age for retirement, what policies and programmes relating to international migration, in particular, replacement migration, should be changed and how to integrate large numbers of recent and future migrants and their descendants? In terms of social attitudes towards immigration all these questions are relevant and my research shows that the dailies analysed in both countries are trying to find answers to these questions. However, as

---

<sup>58</sup>See ‘Immigration: A Commitment to Australia: The Report of the Committee to advice on Australia’s immigration policies’ (Fitzgerald Report), Canberra, *Australian Government Publishers’ Service*, 1988. The five person committee sat under the chairmanship of Stephen Fitzgerald, an academic, businessman and former Ambassador to China.

<sup>59</sup> Spenser, S. *The implications of immigration policy for race relations*. ‘Strangers & Citizens. A positive approach to migrants and refugees’. Ed by Sarah Spenser, IPPR/Rivers Oram Press, 1994, pg 307-311.

mentioned above, they are heavily influenced by confusion over different kinds of immigrants and the 'we' and 'others' attitude.

One of the options is to change the centre of gravity from the general attitude of blaming migrants to the real debate and analysis of existing policies and social needs. Similarly, decision makers on immigration and demographic changes must be sure about the messages that they are sending to society. As the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) points out, "great care needs to be taken to ensure that the messages on migration that are communicated are consistent with each other and consistent over time."<sup>60</sup>

Another option is regular consultation between decision makers and business; otherwise policy can harm such national interests as economic growth<sup>61</sup>. As Spenser underlines if the government is to seek to change public attitudes on immigration, and members of ethnic minority communities are to be given an opportunity to influence those policies, the public should be consulted and a forum provided for continuing discussion.

As my research shows, the broad social requirements in terms of replacement migration are: active demographic policy, clear immigration policy and explanation about steps taken by government, structural reforms, arrangement of pension system and integration of existing immigrants.

Many of these issues are insufficiently analysed in the press or require more focus than now.

### **1. Active demographic policy**

According to the UN Report on replacement migration, it is clear that after 2010 Latvia will inevitably face a rapidly ageing society. Moreover, immigration, which is the most possible solution for population decline in general, is not a solution for the declining Latvian population. Hence, we may conclude that the question about surviving refers to the Latvian nation, but not the country in general. It must be taken into account that relationship between demographic and socio- economical development is bilateral: both of them promote each other's growth<sup>62</sup>.

A. Pelss, economics lecturer at the University of Latvia, thinks that new economic compensation models must be implemented in Latvia to

---

<sup>60</sup> 'Secure Borders, Safe Heavens: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain. Response from the Institute for Public Policy Research', March 2002. [www.ippr.co.uk](http://www.ippr.co.uk)

<sup>61</sup> Spenser, S. *The implications of immigration policy for race relations*. Strangers & Citizens. A positive approach to migrants and refugees. Ed by Sarah Spenser, IPPR/Rivers Oram Press, 1994, pg 314.

<sup>62</sup> 'Demogrāfija no Tautas attīstības perspektīvas'. *Tautas attīstība*, Jumava, 2002.

encourage families to have more children. One solution would be conventional social payments for bearing of children and payment for their education. Currently women with children are in an unfavourable situation, because the social payments towards their pension are smaller in comparison to those for working women. He suggests that these payments should be linked with the average of the most senior officials such as president of the state. Pelss underlines that even though this mechanism would not necessarily stimulate women to bear more children, it would diminish the social disparity towards mothers with children. Another stimulus is re-implementation tax for childless persons. There are two aims of this tax: the first, it carries an information function that children are a norm of family life; the second, those who cannot or do not want to raise children, have to help society as a whole to solve demographic problems. The third solution would be a payment of sickness leave allowance from the state's social budget. Currently, employers have to pay this allowance, but the mechanisms of free market are not strong enough to force employers to undertake more spending. Therefore they avoid employing women with small children.

Ainars Baštiks, Minister for the Family and Children thinks that immediate steps must be taken to improve system with collection of alimony from divorced spouses. Currently women often cannot collect them, because the father of a child is unemployed or conceals his true earnings.

Raita Karnīte, director of the Institute of Economy at the Latvian Academy of Sciences, suggests that other countries' experience must be studied. She also stresses that very important to provide conventional help for families in terms of access to health services and to the children's educational materials such as books.

Although some of these solutions may be questionable, they must be taken into account as they should help shift the focus of public debate away from the wail that population is declining and getting older to analyse current and possible new policies and strategies which might improve the situation, for example, the need to combat the black economy. At the same time, government moves to implement policies which correspond to society's needs, should be closely monitored by the media and non-governmental organisations.

Who gains and who loses from demographic changes is also an interesting field of public debate. For example, pharmaceutical and medical equipment companies, which are already benefiting from ageing populations, are an interesting field of research. Also, the media's investigation could be appearing in terms of the market – advertisement,

fashion and utilitarian object – changes. Some of examples of analysis are already appeared in the British press.

## **2. Immigration policy**

Despite the differences in immigration in Latvia and Great Britain, both countries have to consider replacement migration strategies, according to the UN Report. Instead of this, a significant trend in social attitudes in both countries is fear that the ‘they’ or ‘others’, who are needed to maintain the countries’ economies are too numerous. A lack of clear governmental strategies makes the situation even tougher. The main trend in interviews with Latvian representatives of governmental, non-governmental and academic fields was that immigration as such is not considered at governmental level in Latvia. Ingus Alliks, an official from the Ministry of Welfare, answered that immigration impact on the pension system has not yet assessed. Ieva Jaunzeme, Latvian Employers’ Confederation director-general, said that this question had not analysed because of the “well known attitude towards immigrants in Latvia”. Raita Karnīte, a director of the Institute of Economics, said that research about immigration had not been carried out, though she admitted that immigration from EU and third countries is plausible in near future, because of the Latvia’s beneficial location close to Russia, one of the biggest markets in Europe.

According to information from the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, no one institution in Latvia has carried out a research about sectors which will face workforce shortages, therefore no one field of economy can enjoy preferential treatment in terms of attracting workers from abroad. But, the Citizenship and Migration Department admits that such research is needed and consequently this question is under current consideration with the Ministry of Economy.

However, workforce shortages are already reality not only in highly developed countries but also in Latvia. Despite the demonisation of economic migrants, nearly all rich country governments are now engaged in a major competitive drive to attract explicitly economic migrants to work in activities where skilled labour shortages hamper economic growth and exports.<sup>63</sup> Bob Sutcliffe, the author of publication on *Index on Censorship*, rightly remarks that in many countries recruitment campaigns are carried out, especially for nurses, high technology specialists and teachers.

---

<sup>63</sup> Sutcliffe B. ‘A wealth of experience’. *Index on Censorship*, 2. 2003, pg. 44-45.

Surveys of conjuncture in Latvia also show workforce shortages in certain sectors of economy<sup>64</sup>. There is a lack of highly skilled workers, for example, in metal manufacturing, office technicians and computer processing. State employment service data show that there are lacks in low skilled fields as well.

However, the question of adopting replacement migration to solve these problems is very difficult and multidimensional. Firstly, it is doubtful that a solution could be replacement migration within an expanded EU, because populations are declining and getting older in existing EU countries as much as in aspirant countries which will join EU in 2004. This leads to the conclusion that attracting immigrants from third countries should be considered. Secondly, both countries need young immigrants. According to an OECD survey, the average age of population in its countries is 36, but average of age of immigrant population is 30<sup>65</sup>. A solution of special age and profession quotas in immigration policies would not be the only solution for ageing population and it also raises ethical questions.

One of the most challenging question, which shows a gap between social views and society's need is immigration vis-à-vis existing unemployment.

Generally, in the good times, the influx of labour has been welcomed. But in the recent economic downturn, questions are being raised about whether the brakes should now be more firmly applied to immigration<sup>66</sup>. The correlation between unemployment and workforce merits a wider explanation, while economic theories show that hypothesis about fixed numbers of jobs most plausible is discarded<sup>67</sup>. Inside the EU, with its sluggish labour markets, it is difficult to make the argument that allowing in more people will make the labour market better. Therefore more research should be used to explain the impact of immigrants even during times of economic slowdown. The cause of unemployment in many cases may be inflexible labour market and not immigrants.

Immigrants not only take jobs, they make jobs. They open new businesses that employ natives as well as other immigrants and themselves. The businesses immigrants start tend, at first to be small, of course, but small businesses are now the most important source of new jobs. Growing numbers of immigrants are self-employed and owners of small businesses. Most typical are ethnic restaurants and convenience stores. In Latvia's case it would be an interesting field of investigation of society's economic and cultural needs for such kind of business

---

<sup>64</sup> Conjuncture and consumers surveys. Statistical institute of Latvia. February, 2003.

<sup>65</sup> 'Mygration myths', *The Guardian*, December 10, 2002, pg 17.

<sup>66</sup> Parker G. Under pressure to put the brakes on *Financial Times* Special report 'Luxembourg', June 3, 2003.

<sup>67</sup> Home Office. 'White Paper. Save Haven, Secure Borders: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain'. 2001, pg 15.

enterprises, since there are very few of them and for the general population in Latvia different cultural restaurants and shops are still rather exotic experiences.

Another field, which should be taken into account in public debate, is correlation between society's needs for a foreign workforce and small domestic business concerns about destructive concurrence. Business persons in Latvia have concerns that foreign businesses will push out domestic businesses. It shows that in terms of possible new immigration the question about state support to local business must be an important part of the equation.

'The daily bread' for public concerns about immigration is illegal immigrants. One can agree with Castles and Martin's arguments that immigration, in particularly illegal immigration, has extremely unequal effects upon different social strata. Some groups gain from foreign labour migration, while other groups lose. The winners are large investors. The losers often are migrants themselves, who find themselves forced into insecure and exploitative jobs<sup>68</sup>. The losers may be also small domestic enterprises<sup>69</sup>. But on the other hand the question of illegal immigration must be scrutinised closely from a demand and supply perspective. Illegal immigrants concentrate in certain fields of the economy. As is shown in British press investigations, building industries, small cafés and food producers are dependent on illegal immigrants and these enterprises and in their turn are crucial for supermarkets.

The Home Office White Paper sets up the aims of combating illegal working through improved enforcement action, less potential for fraud, effective gathering and sharing of information and working with business and the trades unions, strengthening the legislative system, which includes stronger penalties for those who are breaking the immigration rules, targeting criminals through intelligence and enforcement operations, co-operating with EU and other international partners and tackling organised crime through prevention strategies in source and transit countries<sup>70</sup>. Public debate, in most cases, follows a repressive approach on the assumption, that illegal immigration is a pure evil which must be tackled. However, adopting solely repressive attitudes towards illegal immigration seem not to be a very practical solution for society's needs, and media must analyse possible failures in government policy. It

---

<sup>68</sup> Castles S. Martin M. 'The Age of Migration. International Population movements in the Modern World'. Second edition, 1998 Macmillian Press LTD, pg 167

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, pg 167.

<sup>70</sup> Home Office. 'White Paper. Save Haven, Secure Borders: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain'. 2001 pg 38.

is crucial to understand why they concentrate in these fields and what kind of steps should be taken to improve the situation. Probably the certain fields of economy need easement in tax policy. At the same time the work permit schemes must be monitored and outcomes must be evaluated.

New channels for low skilled migrants must be provided, if the Government wants to reduce effectually the demand for illegal workers. A very serious question is that asylum seekers and refugees are not allowed to work. It opens the door for a wide range of negative attitudes of tax payers and press, especially the tabloid papers, which though not analysed in my research, blame refugees and immigrants on the grounds that tax payers must spend a lot of money in order to sustain them. At the same time possible mistakes a government policy, for example, obstacles which prevent refugees from becoming economically self sufficient, gain less attention in public debate.

### **3. Structural reforms**

In my opinion, public debate should focus more on certain reforms which are needed in order to receive immigrants and to gain more from their presence in the receiving country.

One of areas is housing policy. It is an important question in Latvia as well as the UK. Press articles show that often immigrants are blamed for “swamping” Britain’s public services, but relatively is seldom the core of the problem analysed. Low-income immigrants seek areas of low-cost or government subsidised social housing. There, in many cases, are other more immigrants settled, who speak the same language or, at least, with whom new immigrants can share their ‘others’ experience. Often it leads to segmentation and segregation, which is obvious also in other countries in Europe. The press should analyse deeper causation and effects of this segregation, which undermine social integration and even sharpen the ‘we’ and ‘others’ division. Indigenous people often want to avoid these areas. At the same time, the process of integration is slow and diminishes the opportunities for through immigrants of finding an appropriate job. Through understanding of migratory processes therefore is very important. Migration systems theory suggests that migratory movements generally arise from the existence of prior links between sending and receiving countries based on colonisation, political influence, trade, investment or cultural ties. The migrations systems approach implies that any migratory movements can be seen as the result of the interaction of macro and micro structures. Macro structures refer to large-scale institutional factors, including the political economy of the world market,

interstate relationships and laws. Micro structures include networks, practices and beliefs of migrants themselves.<sup>71</sup>

It would be naïve to think that implementing a few policies and programmes could achieve a significant progress in curtailing segregation. However, well-managed policies, connected each to each other could influence the situation with an aim of keeping balance within the labour market and guaranteeing social security.

Immigrants tend to settle down in big cities. There is a huge set of cause and effects which interact each with other. It is very important to answer why this happens and what kind of steps should be taken to turn migration streams away from big cities and in that way to better social and economic development various locations. One of the factors involved is relatively worse economic situation in regions, including worse infrastructure, passive labour market and lack of appropriate housing, which is the real problem in Britain and most probably will be the case for Latvia. The question whether there is a social network of previous immigrants with same cultural background is also important. There could be a lack of schools, priests etc. As a result these places are not attractive immigrants.

It leads to hypothesis that certain reforms in education system are needed. Firstly, mainstream schools need to provide the subjects which are necessary for kids from immigrant families with emphasis on regions where immigration is necessary, but where there is a lack of appropriate education opportunities for children from different cultural backgrounds. If the numbers of such children are very small private lessons should be considered. Teachers should be appropriately prepared to impart such lessons. Secondly, the system of professional education should be revised in order to prepare necessary a skilled workforce in regions. Gunta Piņķe, the head of the Analysis and Prognoses Division of the Ministry of Economy of Latvia, said in an interview that, to her mind, immigration is not necessary in fields of economy with workforce shortage. She thinks that structural reforms in education system are needed to prepare the domestic workforce for certain sectors of economy. This assumption is questionable and, of course, demands deeper research, but, probably it will not be the only way to combat workforce shortage. For example, what about workforce shortages in sectors which demand highly skilled engineers? It leads to the conclusion that the correlation between reforms in the education system and replacement migration also should be the subject of more research.

---

<sup>71</sup> Castles, S. and M. Martin. 'The Age of Migration. International Population movements in the Modern World'. Second edition, 1998 Macmillan Press LTD. pg. 24-45 and 171.

#### **4. The pension system in Latvia**

According to demographic changes and longevity trends in Europe, it is clear that a pay-as-you-go system cannot survive and has to be changed. Press coverage in Britain also shows a growing concern about this system. From a theoretical perspective, the pension system is most significant example where Latvia is one step ahead of Britain in the context of solutions of demographic changes.

There already exists a three level pension system in Latvia. The three levels or pillar system works as follows: a worker must pay into a government-run account (this part is threatened by demographic risk), while part of the account is operated as a traditional pay-as-you-go system; another part is invested in mutual funds (the two last parts are threatened by financial risks). Ingus Alliks stresses in an interview that currently the prognosis about this system is optimistic, despite the unfavourable demographic situation. He thinks that existing EU countries will also have to introduce a similar system, because the old one does not square with the present situation. The new system was established with support from the World Bank in the middle of the '90s when there was no strong civil society which could protest against the obvious unfairness towards current pensioners, who receive very small pensions.

At the same time the age of retirement has been advancing, and in 2008 it will be 62 years for both women and men. Despite that Ingus Alliks said that in the mid-term prospective there was no necessity to change the age of retirement, even though this system will demand an increase in retirement age by a few years in the absence of immigrants of working age. This necessity has already dawned upon employers. So Ieva Jaunzeme, director-general of the Latvian Employers' Confederation, admits that the main interest of employers is that employees can receive adequate salaries and pensioners can receive proper pensions. In the current situation a solution would be to increase the age of retirement. Pensions are not a harmonised area within the EU. However, during recent years the European Commission is paying growing attention to this question and stresses that general guidelines should be developed in order to adopt practices and experience from existing and future members of the EU. This is another issue which also should be taken into account in public debate.

The answer for Britain would be the three level system adopted firstly in Sweden and then applied to several countries, including Latvia. Other different financial solutions must also be considered. However increasing the retirement age seems to be inevitable in any case. This is shown also in research about the situation in Finland. The old age dependency ratio (ratio of those aged 65 and above to those between 18-65) in Finland,

which was 20% in 1990, is likely to reach 25% by 2010 and 40% by 2030.

To cope with the fiscal pressure imposed by the demographic shock, so the government could rely on lump-sum taxes, cut pension benefits, increase pension contributions or raise the retirement age.

According to research, the best policy response to demographic shock would be an increase in the retirement age. This would raise the welfare of almost all generations. Cutting back pension benefits is the next best policy response, researchers suggest. This solution would raise the welfare of generations born in the period 1990-2040. Increasing pension contributions represents the worst policy<sup>72</sup>.

When it comes to public debate and social views toward inevitable changes in the pension system, mainstream society should be informed that replacement migration could make these changes less painful.

### **5. Integration of existing immigrants**

As has been explained in earlier parts of this essay, press coverage in Britain and Latvia differ, because one deals with immigration as a current reality, but the other, most probably will face immigration issues in the near future. At the same time there is one significant trend, which is common to both of them – concern about future immigration. If it is clear that immigration is required for the economies of both countries, so why is it so hard to accept? There are several reasons, such as general and strongly ingrained prejudices towards immigration, failures in the existing policy of integrating immigrants in mainstream society, insufficient explanation of the immigrants' role in coming to terms with the host country's economy and culture as well as the politicisation of immigration issues. All of these should be examined more closely.

After reviewing the of press cuttings on immigration one can see that the prevalent anti-immigration attitude is based on the idea that migration is unwelcome and problematic. As Zig Layton-Henry underlines, “The weight of public and media opinion tends to focus on the disadvantages of immigration and the need for tough immigration controls.”<sup>73</sup>

Immigration policy in Britain, especially under Conservative administrations during 80s, has been based on a series of assumptions, for example, that sovereign states have an absolute right to determine which non-citizens should be allowed to enter and remain within the territory of the state.<sup>74</sup> When it comes to current debates on immigration issue in the

---

<sup>72</sup> Kenc, T. and W. Perraudin. ‘Demography, pensions and welfare: fertility shocks and the Finnish economy’. London, Institute for Financial Research, Birkbeck College, University of London, 1996, pg 3.

<sup>73</sup> Layton-Henry Z. ‘Britain: The Would-be Zero-Immigration Country’ *Controlling Immigration*, 1994, pg 273 - 276.

<sup>74</sup> Layton-Henry Z. ‘Britain: The Would-be Zero-Immigration Country’ *Controlling Immigration*, 1994, pg 273.

UK, it would be worth while to analyse more closely an assumption that a 'tough' immigration policy can (or cannot) maintain good race relations.

A major tactical assumption that underpins current immigration policy is that control is possible. In the British case this is more realistic than is the case in most countries, because Britain is an island. However, as Gary P. Freeman in a commentary on the Layton –Henry Zig research indicates, despite Britain's unusual advantage in being an island, even Mrs Thatcher's governments were able to reduce immigrant inflows by only a few thousand a year. He stresses that Britain is a deviant case, too, in that governments have steadfastly ignored the economic consequences of immigration, even when these would almost certainly be positive. The immigration debate focuses obsessively on controlling numbers and dealing with racial tensions.

Gary P. Freeman concludes that the most important aspects of the British immigration policy-making process are that it is Parliament-centred and highly public. He assumes that British immigration policy seems to be the work of responsible political elite who veer from time to time towards populist manipulation of racial issues. It is a thin line between responding to a fearful public and exploiting their anxieties, strong political lobbies in favour and against immigration make public debate even tougher.

---

## **Conclusion**

However strange it could seem at the moment to compare press coverage in Britain and Latvia, there are surprisingly similar trends. Most salient is an emotional tone in public debate on immigration. It expresses very the core of migratory processes: they are totally transnational and so is a public debate on it. Unfortunately, very often migration is considered as harmful or as pathological phenomena, even if it is beneficial for the economy.

According to my research it is clear that migratory processes cannot be readily stopped just as the ageing process cannot be reversed in most of Europe's countries. Admittedly, in a long-term perspective, society will get used to changes in its demographic structure. However, in order to maintain long term economic development, both Latvia and the UK have to consider certain appropriate replacement migration strategies. Therefore the centre of gravity of the public debate must be moved from a general, superficial debate on whether replacement migration is necessary or not, to an analysis of certain key policies and strategies related to immigration and demographic changes.

Hence I can conclude that my hypothesis - the gap between society's needs and the stance of the press is huge and that the press help maintain this barrier - is correct.

### **1. Demographic policy**

During the first half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the populations of most developed countries are projected to become smaller and older as a result of below-replacement fertility and increased longevity. The most rapid ageing continent in the world is Europe. After year 2010 Latvia will inevitably face rapid ageing and a decrease of people of working age. It is clear that sooner or later Latvia has to open its doors to foreign workers.

Existing demographic policy in Latvia is passive and does not correspond to the depopulation trend in the country. Immigration, which is the most practical solution to population decline in general, is not a solution for the declining Latvian population. Hence, we may conclude that the question about surviving refers to the Latvians, but not the country in general. According to existing depopulation trends and the most pessimistic demography scenario, the last Latvian will die approximately after 150 years.

### **2. Immigration policy**

A proposal for Latvia would be that government institutions have to start to work on immigration strategies as soon as possible. Some lessons can be drawn from the UK experience. One of them is the necessity of having informed debate on immigration policy and the steps to be taken by government in order to improve it.

Controls on immigration must be based on clear, defensible criteria, which reflect the capacity of country to absorb immigrants. To be defensible, the criteria used must be based on factual evidence, for example, on skill shortages, the impact of migrants on the housing and labour market and so forth. Once immigration policy is set, the public needs to be informed of its rationale. Public could be informed of the skills and experience which immigrants bring, from which in the long term country will benefit.

If there are objective reasons why a country cannot accept, for example, certain balance between Latvians and ethnic minorities, these reasons should be given with supporting evidence.

### **3. Social views**

One could say that the Latvian press has to learn from public debate in Britain in order to learn how not to repeat the same and mistakes which widen the gap between society's needs and social views towards immigration. However, sound advice may not be heeded. Because of the extreme of the issue politicisation and strong political lobbies in favour and against immigration, immigration issues are and will be scrutinised in the press. According to the example of populism of The Freedom Party in Latvia, the pattern of public debate has been repeated: mainstream centre-right parties hardening their rhetoric against foreigners.

As Sarah Spenser underlines, the relationship between anti-immigrant or racist ideology and historical, structural conditions is of course complex and racism cannot be tackled effectively without removing the structural causes which feed it: including the conflicts over resources in the deprived areas in which immigrants first settle: shortage of housing and jobs, hospital places and schools. The source of the problem is not public attitudes but the conflicts, which give rise to those attitudes.

We cannot conclude from this that a change of attitude by government accompanied by positive initiatives to change public attitudes to new and past immigrants would not be worthwhile. But government can act to stop immigrants and members of ethnic minorities being blamed for those conditions<sup>75</sup>.

---

<sup>75</sup> Spenser, S. *The implications of immigration policy for race relations*. Strangers & Citizens. A positive approach to migrants and refugees. Ed by Sarah Spenser, IPPR/Rivers Oram Press, 1994, pg 310 – 315.

As my research has shown, politicians and the press have tended to follow each new announcement about changes in total numbers of immigrants. Where a negative, poorly informed public debate focuses solely on numbers, the potential hostility fuelled by any increase in immigration could present a serious threat to public order. The government and the press should move to shift the debate away from such narrow, negative concerns.

My suggestion is that public debate should move from general discussions on immigration issue to concrete policies, such as housing, education, labour market policies in order to examine pro and contra arguments towards replacement migration.

As the responses of those experts interviewed in Latvia has shown, the immigration issue is one which is like a taboo or, at least, the issue, which they avoid to analysing closely. This attitude should be changed, before it is too late, because, the consensus to keep immigration out of the public debate has not succeeded in stemming anti-immigrant feeling but has ensured that neither those against nor those in favour of immigration have been properly consulted<sup>76</sup>.

#### **4. International co-operation**

There are plenty of experience and practices within EU and candidate countries on how to deal with immigration issue and how to integrate existing immigrants. Immigration is one of the most important and topical issues in EU. It is a process which has its roots in international and global processes. Therefore the press should take an effort to analyse these questions in the broader international context. Both present EU member states and candidates can learn from each other.

#### **5. Future trends of migration**

The press has to take into account the conclusions of Castles and Martin about the global tendencies of migration, which are likely to play a major role in the next 20 years. The main trend will be the globalisation of migration – the tendency for more and more countries to be affected by migratory movements at the same time. Another tendency would be the acceleration of migration. The growth in volume of migration in all major regions at the present time also is an important trend, as is the differentiation of migration. Most countries do not simply have one type of immigration, such as labour migration, refugee or permanent settlement, but a whole range of types at once.

---

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, pg 320 -321.

Typically, migratory chains, which start with one type of movement often continue with other forms, despite government efforts to control the movement. Most probably many countries will face also the feminisation of migration: women play an increasing role in all regions and all types of migration. And, of course one of the crucial tendencies will remain the politicisation of migration. Domestic politics, bilateral and regional relationships and national security policies of states around the world are increasingly affected by international migration<sup>77</sup>.

There is a long way to go towards development of governmental policies and the changes of ideological constructions about superiority of 'we' or people of host country and the inferiority of the 'other' or immigrants'. There is also a current attitude which is morally wrong that immigrants are used or will be used only as a tool to maintain the economies of developed countries, but they will not be treated as equals in terms of political and social rights. Therefore academic research in this field is highly important and never has such a topic been more relevant, because the problems relating to immigrants in their adopted countries continue to grow constantly.

---

<sup>77</sup> Castles, S. Martin, P. 'The Age of Migration: international population movements in the modern world'. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1998.

## Summary

In her essay Aija Lulle analyses British and Latvian press coverage on demographic changes and immigration. The author tries to answer fundamental questions: is replacement migration a solution for declining and ageing populations and whether the press coverage actually maintains the gap between society's needs and social views.

However strange it may seem to compare publications in two quite different countries Great Britain and Latvia, there are surprisingly similar trends. The most salient feature is the emotional tone in the public debate on immigration. This underlines the essence of migratory processes: they are totally transnational as so is the public debate. Unfortunately, very often migration is considered as harmful or as pathologic phenomena; even when it is beneficial for economy.

The author concludes that her hypothesis - the gap between society's needs and press attitude is huge and the press maintain this barrier - is correct. She also underlines that there is the long way to go towards development of governmental policies. Changing ideological constructions about 'we' or the host country are being superior and the 'other' or immigrants being inferior is not easy. The current attitude that immigrants are used or will be used only as a tool to maintain the economies of developed countries, but will not be equal in terms of political and social rights is morally wrong.

## **List of interviewees<sup>78</sup>**

**Nils Muižnieks**, Minister of Social Integration

**Ingus Alliks**, Welfare Ministry,

**Gunta Piņķe**, Ministry of Economy of Latvia, Economic Policy Department, Macroeconomic Analysis and Prognoses Division, Head of Division

**Ainārs Baštiks**, Minister for Family and Children

**Raita Karnīte**, Institute of Economics, Latvian Academy of Sciences, director

**Ieva Jaunzeme**, Latvian Employers' Confederation, director-general

**Andris Pelšs**, University of Latvia, Faculty of Economy, lecturer.

---

<sup>78</sup> \* The interviews took place in Latvia in April, 2003. Interviews and Latvian articles have been translated into English by the author of this essay.

## Sources

Publications in British and Latvian dailies: *The Guardian, The Daily Telegraph, Financial Times, Diena, Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze, Dienas bizness* (July – December, 2002).

United Nations Population Division ‘Replacement migration: is it a solution for ageing and declining population?’ 2000.

United Nations International Migration Report, 2002.

## Bibliography

Bryceson D., Vuorela U. *The transnational family. Berg, Oxford, 2002.*

Castles, S. and M. Martin. ‘The Age of Migration: international population movements in the modern world’. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1998.

‘Common entrance exams’. *Journal Index on Censorship* 2, London, 2003.

Conjuncture and consumers surveys. Statistical Institute of Latvia. February, 2003.

Demogrāfija no Tautas attīstības perspektīvas. *Tautas attīstība. Jumava*, 2002.

Home office of Great Britain. White Paper ‘Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain’, 2001.

Human Development Report 2002; International Labour Organisation, Correspondence on underemployment, Geneva February, 2002,

Kenc, T. and W. Perraudin. ‘Demography, pensions and welfare: fertility shocks and the Finnish economy’. London, Institute for Financial Research, Birkbeck College, University of London, 1996.

Kaye, R. ‘Redefining the Refugee: The UK Media Portrayal of Asylum seekers’. *The new migration in Europe*. Ed by Khalid Koser and Helma Lutz. Macmillian Press LTD, 1998.

Layton-Henry Z. 'Britain: The Would-be Zero-Immigration Country' *Controlling Immigration*, 1994.

Ministry of Welfare of Latvia, Social Report, 2002.

Portes, A. 'Economic Sociology and the Sociology of Immigratoins: A conceptual overview'. *The Economic sociology of immigration*. Russell Sage foundation. New York, 1995.

Press release, Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs of Latvia, June 2, 2003.

Report Human Rights in Latvia, 2002. Latvian Centre for Human Rights and Ethnic Studies.

'Secure Borders, Safe Heavens: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain. Response from the Institute for Public Policy Research'. March 2002. [www.ippr.co.uk](http://www.ippr.co.uk)

Simon, L. and J. Basil. 'The economic consequences of immigration'. *Blackwell*, Cato institute, 1990.

'Sociālekonomiskā procesa trajektorija Latvijas pilsētās un novados laikā no 1985.-2002.' Ventspils augstskola, 2002.

Spenser, S. 'Strangers & Citizens. A positive approach to migrants and refugees'. Ed by Sarah Spenser, IPPR/Rivers Oram Press, 1994.

Sutcliffe, B. 'A wealth of experience'. *Journal Index on Censorship*, 2, London, 2003.

Vītoliņš E. 'Nodarbinātība un darba apstākļi'. *Dzīves apstākļi Latvijā 1999. gadā*. Latvijas statistikas pārvalde, 2000.

[www.MigrationWatchUK.org](http://www.MigrationWatchUK.org)

Zvidriņš, P. 'Demogrāfija', Riga, 2003.

