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Social Integration Processes in Estonia and Slovakia

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

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Abstract

Studies of interethnic integration in Central Eastern Europe have sought to account for the impact that institutional settings, structural conditions and elite-level interaction have on the accommodation of and conflict resolution between ethnic groups. Much existing literature has placed particular emphasis on the importance of institutional factors, both domestically and as a result of international pressure. Simultaneously, scholarship on the issue has left out of focus the contributions of non-dominant minority actors to the dynamics of interethnic relations. Where minorities are taken into account, this happens largely in terms of their failure to recognise structural opportunities for their inclusion into majority society.

This study analyses interethnic integration in the Central Eastern European context from the perspective of structuration theory. Structuration theory provides a sound theoretical foundation in order to study non-dominant agency and its impact on the structures of integration, owing to its ability to reconcile dichotomies. The thesis comprises a comparative case study of interethnic interaction in Estonia and Slovakia, focusing on the Russian-speaking and the Hungarian minority respectively. A structuration approach is applied to the empirical findings in order to problematise practices of integration and their constraints that lie in the institutional and interaction context of Estonian and Slovak post-Communist society. I argue that although Russian-speakers in Estonia and Hungarians in Slovakia are constrained by institutional environs and majority-dominated structures, minority members actively participate in and shape institution-building and group formation in their interaction with majorities. Minority integration is analysed in terms of the minorities' co-operation within, counteraction against and formulation of alternatives to the *status quo* structures of interethnic relations.

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Author's declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this doctoral thesis is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

____

Ada Charlotte Regelmann, Glasgow, 06 December 2011 and Belfast, 04 April 2012

List of acronyms and abbreviations

General

CAA	Cultural Autonomy Act
CoE	Council of Europe
CSCE	cf. OSCE
ČSSR	Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (Československá socialistická republika)
ECRML	European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages
ELL	Estonian Language Law
ESSR	Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic
EU	European Union
FCNM	Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
HCNM	OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, formerly Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe, CSCE
SLL	Slovak Language Law

Estonia

AEF	Open Estonian Foundation (Avatud Eesti Fond)
ERSGR	Estonian Republican Union of Russian Citizens (E'stonskii respublikanskii Soyuz grazhdan Rossii)
EVEK	House of Representatives of the National Minorities of Estonia (Eestimaa Vähemusrahvuste Esindajate Koda)
EÜP	United People's Party of Estonia (Eesti Ühendatud Rahvapartei)

EÜVP	Estonian United Left Party (Eestimaa Ühendatud Vasakpartei)
IL	Pro Patria/Fatherland Union (Isamaaliit)
KAPO	Estonian Security Police (Kaitsepolitsei)
LICHR	Legal Information Centre for Human Rights (Inimõiguste Teabekeskus)
LÜÜRA	Union of National (Ethnic) Cultural Communities (Rahvusvaheline Rahvuskultuuride Ühenduste Liit)
RA	Representative Assembly (Predstavitel'noe sobranie)
RCA	Russian Cultural Autonomy (Russkaya Kul'turnaya Avtonomiya)
RE	Reform Party (Reformierakond)
RUSHKE	Russian School in Estonia (Russkaya Shkola v E'stonii)
SDE	Social Democratic Party (Sotsiaaldemokraatlik Erakond)
VBEE	Russian Baltic Party of Estonia (Vene Balti Erakond Eestis)
VEE	Russian Party of Estonia (Vene Erakond Eestis)

Slovakia

DS	Democratic Party (Demokratická strana)
CSEMADOK	Hungarian Social and Cultural Association in Slovakia (Szlovákiai Magyar Társadalmi és Közművelődési Szövetség/ Maďarský spoločenský a kultúrny zväz na Slovensku, since 1993; in communist Czechoslovakia: Hungarian Workers' Cultural Union of Czechoslovakia or Csehszlovákiai Magyar Dolgozók Kultúregyesülete, which provided the short name CSEMADOK that is still used today)
CVEK	Centre for the Research of Ethnicity and Culture (Centrum pre výskum etnicity a kultúry)
FIK	Forum Information Centre (Fórum Információs Központ/Fórum informačné centrum)
FKI	Forum Minority Research Institute (Fórum Kissebségkutató Intézet/Fórum inštitút pre výskum menšín)
FMK	Independent Hungarian Initiative (Független Magyar Kezdeményezés)

FRK	Forum Regional Development Centre (Fórum Régiófejlesztési Központ/Fórum centrum pre regionálny rozvoj)
HZDS/L'S-HZDS	(People's Party –) Movement for a Democratic Slovakia ((L'udová strana –) Hnutia za democratické Slovensko)
IVO	Institute for Public Affairs (Inštitút pre verejné otázky)
MK	Hungarian Coalition (Magyar Koalíció)
MKDM	Hungarian Christian Democrats Movement (Magyar Keresténydemokrata Mozgalom)
MKP	Hungarian Coalition Party (Magyar Koalíció Pártja)
MNP	Hungarian People's Party (Magyar Néppárt)
MPP	Hungarian Civic Party (Magyar Polgári Párt)
PPA	Péter Pázmány Foundation (Pázmány Péter Alapítvány)
ODÚ	Civic Democratic Union (Občianska demokratická únia)
SDKÚ/ SDKÚ –DS	Slovak Democratic and Christian Union (– Democratic Party) (Slovenská demokratická a kresťanská únia (– Demokratická strana))
SDL'	Slovak Democratic Left (Strana demokratickej ľavice)
SNS	Slovak National Party (Slovenská Národná Strana)
VPN	Public Against Violence (Verejnost' proti nasiliu)

Chapter 1: Post-communist multiculturalism and the challenge of social integration: an introduction to the problem

1.1 Introduction

Two decades after the demise of socialism in the multinational federations of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), the Soviet Union (SU), Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, and in their associated states of the 'Eastern bloc', the parameters of social, economic and political transformation across the region have changed dramatically. As part of the process of state- and nation-building, the dynamics of interethnic power relations have established unequal conditions for ethno-linguistic majority and minority members to renegotiate interethnic relations and their respective positions in relation to the state. In the context of the Europeanisation of the region, interethnic integration has become a contested field of interaction between multitudes of actors. Recent studies of democratic developments and of the democratic inclusion of national minorities in the post-socialist countries have pointed out the persistently problematic relations between dominant and marginalised ethnic groups in the region. In numerous cases, this is reflected in minority groups' partial exclusion from the democratic processes in general and is manifested in their partial exclusion from the processes which determine state-building and community-formation specifically. In reaction to these developments, the integration of dominant and marginal, or majority and minority groups, as well as the analysis of these processes, have become a major preoccupation both for political institutions and agents, as well as for scholars studying recent social and political developments in CEE.

The fundamental argument of the thesis is that social integration is a matter of the creative response of social groups to the structural situation constituting the collectivity which they inhabit. I suggest that, in the face of undergoing structural change, groups also change the perceptions they have of these circumstances, of their position therein and of themselves as a group. In turn, these understandings generate the agency that helps re-establish the boundaries of their collectivities, either re-confirming existing boundaries or modifying them. Social integration then refers to the interaction of groups in the form of stable and maintained cooperative relationships. Essentially this argument draws upon a structurationist perspective on the relation of structure and agency, while locating agents at

the centre of social integration processes. In this introductory chapter, I provide an overview of approaches to the study of interethnic relations in post-socialist Europe and introduce the structurationist approach to social integration that will be applied in this thesis. This discussion will enable a better understanding of the dynamics and factors impacting interethnic relations in the context of institutional and structural change.

1.2 Society integration in CEE: systemic and agentic approaches

This section engages with a range of approaches that have dealt with questions of ethnic group relations and interactions, including theories of state- and nation-building, nationalism studies, as well as ethnic bargaining and mobilisation theories. My discussion will show that, while providing crucial insights into certain aspects of interethnic relations, these approaches do not generate an understanding of intergroup integration, first, as a process of interaction and, second, as a process that is dependent on minority agency. As I argue in this section, the limited potential to understand the trajectories of integration of institutionalist and rational-actor theories is rooted in the flawed or undertheorised concepts of group agency and social action underlying these theories.

The issue of national sovereignty has framed interethnic relations across the region. This has made social integration a central question for studies of nationalism and democratisation. Filling the ideological gap left by the fall of communism, both processes featured as functions of the transitions that post-socialist states went through. Tensions in interethnic relations were said to be a prime cause of the destabilising effects of political and economic transition as well as of social stratification, helping to reduce these processes to a common denominator: the nation. Understood as the result of democratisation processes, national sovereignty was supported by the emergence of laws, rules, regulations and guidelines aimed at fostering national cohesion.

Typically, the dynamics of ethnic diversity within the nation have been analysed in terms of historical structures, pointing to the re-emergence of historical conflicts and to the influence of the structures and details of the socialist federations' nationality policies. Shaping group structures, these historical legacies impacted the power relations of state- and nation-building (Harris 2002). Accordingly, as a result of these historical legacies, group structures generated contradictory images of the nation among the different groups. Interpreted as constitutive aspects of ethno-national groups, the logics of nation-building followed the imperatives of ethno-national identity. Under the conditions of democratic

competition for power, which regularly favoured titular groups over ethno-linguistic minorities, said aspects were demonstrated to have dominated state-building processes in the region, hampering the achievement of national unity in light of the diversity of the population (Saidemann & Ayres 2008; Csergo 2007). As a result, at least during the 1990s, interethnic integration in many parts of CEE appeared to be in danger of failure due to an apparent incompatibility of the norm systems represented by the states' political institutions, which have on the one hand reproduced the titular group's national sovereignty and, on the other, driven the processes of democratisation.

Extant literature on the developments of interethnic relations and nationalism, specifically the literature focusing on the CEE region over the last two decades, has suggested that interethnic relations were temporarily stabilised as a result of the logics of nationalism and democracy (Lauristin & Vihalemm 2009; Fisher 2006; Harris 2002). Nationalism and democracy, however, follow competing logics. In the long run, democratic claims have brought into question the legitimacy of the unilateral concept of national sovereignty that creates structures that divide society into 'winners' and 'losers' (Lauristin & Vihalemm 2009, p.13). However, changes to the *status quo* underlying the process of democratic consolidation are often presented in terms of *outside* impulses for transitions within the nation-state. In the light of minority kin-states' efforts to provide protection to their 'kin' abroad, the structures of the 'triadic nexus' (Smith 2002; Brubaker 1996) have forced these states to frame integration in more inclusive terms in order to avert the perils of destabilisation, further disintegration and geopolitical insecurity predicted by the concept. Similarly, the CEE nation-states' early orientation towards their 'return to Europe' has increased the openness of political institutions to norm-diffusion from western Europe. While as part of the application of conditionality criteria, the reorientation of domestic policies induced the selective permeability of group boundaries, European norms also had a stabilising function with respect to the nation-state logic on the grounds of the European minority-rights framework (Galbreath & McEvoy 2011; Pridham 2008). Overall, analyses of the embeddedness of interethnic relations across CEE in the 'quadratic' structures of domestic minority-majority antagonisms, kin-state bilateralism and Europeanisation have argued that these generated a new equilibrium in the relation of nation-state building and ethno-linguistic diversity.

The institutionalist and structural approaches of state- and nation-building show that these have explained interethnic integration in CEE by the allaying impact of democratisation on nation-state building and the implementation of minority protection norms in the

institutional framework of the nation-state. Area-studies discussions have been engaged with the question of the maintenance and stability of a unitary political system imposed over a heterogeneous society. Because societies in the CEE region represented diversity which was hard to accommodate, many of the contributions to the debates tended to reduce minority groups to obstacles in the construction of unitary nation-states across the region (Vachudova 2005; Linz & Stepan 1996). Others ascribed minority communities the role of 'watchmen' for democratic deficits in their states, responding to increased nationalising processes within states by asserting minority national identity (Budryte 2005; O'Dwyer 2004). In both cases, the minority groups are largely thought of as functions of political processes which they appear not to determine, except '*qua* existence'. Once the systemic provisions for integration are in place, minorities are expected to adapt. Alternatively, they are expected to exercise self-restraint under the imperatives of stability and democracy and thus, until the nation-state has responded to the functional requirements and groups' 'need-dispositions' (Parker 2000, p.19), continually represent a challenge.

As a result, the minority groups' role in integration processes is limited either to integration according to the system's logics, in this case the requirements of national sovereignty under the majority - that is titular dominance - or to contradicting this logic where minority ethnic identities permeate the political, social and economic systems. Crucially, the processes of minority groups' adjustment or resistance to constraints of the nation-state have not been of interest to institutionalist approaches. As has been criticised widely in social theory, agency is not the (explicit) concern of functionalist approaches; rather, actors are conceptualised as bearers of social roles, and these roles are determined *post hoc*, that is: by the functions they fulfil or the consequences the fulfilment of the role has for the system. Thus, in these approaches, agency is solely a requirement of the maintenance and perpetuation of the social system, not a factor of social change (Homans 1964; Giddens 1984; Mouzelis 1995).

Theories of ethnic conflict and interethnic bargaining provide an alternative perspective on interethnic integration, focusing on the rational interaction of minority and majority groups, analysing it as conflict over national sovereignty. In contrast to the role sovereignty takes when it is analysed as an *outcome* of the democratisation and integration process, here national sovereignty is understood as the contested subject and outcome of an interethnic conflict. Sovereignty is portrayed as a zero-sum game, where only one group can have its way in the conduct of political business. Majority and minority groups are portrayed as actors seeking rewards and adjusting their actions accordingly (Cordell &

Wolff 2010). Although largely expressed in terms of economic motivation, the rationality of conflicting agents in post-socialist ethnic conflicts is based upon emotional interests and interests in avoiding anticipated modes of sanction. According to the actor-centred approaches, these are the factors that drive actors in their engagement in state- and nation-building (Hale 2008; Horowitz 1985).

Examining actors' motivation for ethnic contestation, actor-centred studies have looked at preferences for unitary nation-states as a desire or a perceived right of ethno-national groups, hostility and disrespect towards other groups and the reluctance to share a state with them, and fears of violations of a state's territorial sovereignty (on side of the majority) and of suppression (on side of the minority) (Budryte 2005; Jenne 2007). Essentially, all these interests and motivations, discussed as part of ethnic conflict studies, are understood to be concerned with the outcomes of bargaining; in this sense, these approaches share with rational choice theory the limitation that they are 'essentially conditional and future oriented' (Elster 1989, p.99). Thus, while actor-centred approaches allow contextualising actors in the interactive space with other actors, whose actions are taken into account in calculations of the potential outcomes of own and other actors' actions, they fail to explain the origins of the interests that individual actors follow other than the anticipated consequences, or in some cases structural or institutional demands (Coleman 1986).

Mobilisation theories of ethnic conflict have linked ethnic bargaining more closely to the structural position of actors. Ethnic identity and nationalism are conceptualised as tools in the hands of majority and minority elites. These tools are used to mobilise support, in order to promote the preferred vision of the nation, and to secure access to power and crucial resources for the group and its elites, which are perceived as discriminated against or under threat (Barany & Moser 2009; Kolstø 2000). These perspectives have avoided assumptions of the salience of primordial identities and de-randomised actors' goals. At the same time, researchers were keen not to over-generalise from structural conditions (Cordell & Wolff 2010). Particularly against the backdrop of the armed conflicts and wars in the former Yugoslavia and parts of the former SU, research centred around questions of how to avoid both general violations of democratic rules and the outbreak of interethnic violence and potential break up of even more states, and to enable interethnic integration within these societies (Galbreath 2005; Kelley 2004). However, parallels made by some western researchers between the Yugoslav and Moldovan-Transnistrian cases, on the one hand, and the Baltic states, on the other, proved fears of violent conflict in CEE to be exaggerated

(Kolstø 2002). Across the geographical belt from the post-soviet Baltic, via Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania to Bulgaria, the conflicts between ethno-linguistic majority and minority groups remained without large-scale violence. This remarkable development raised the question as to how violent conflict had been avoided, in contexts that appeared structurally similar, and to what extent the answers to this question were transferable to other contexts of ethnic conflict. As part of the process, kin-states and international organisations are discussed as crucial resources, potentially representing strong allies for both sides of the bargaining process (Jenne 2007; Jurado 2003). Overall, theories of resource mobilisation have emphasised the structural resources at hand both for majority and minority groups and their realisation in interethnic bargaining processes (Olzak 1983).

International actors are also analysed as actors in their own right with their own (geopolitical) interests and national ambitions in the process, complicating the interest situation and potential alliances (Waterbury 2010; King & Melvin 1998). In contrast to functionalist and structurally-oriented rational choice theories, here the social requirements according to which actors direct their action refer to intersubjective norms and acceptances. Analyses of CEE's Europeanisation as a socialisation process have borrowed heavily from symbolic interactionism. This theory proposes that actors act according to the meanings that they attribute to aspects of social reality, while these meanings are constantly re-constructed or modified in social interaction (Diez & Stetter 2008; Christiansen et al. 2001). Unlike the functionalist conceptualisations of the 'quadratic nexus,' which emphasised the role of external impulses for the change in domestic interethnic integration (Smith 2002c), in the analysis of their re-interpretations and re-productions of the social context the interactionist or 'learning' approaches bring states 'back in' *as actors*, and emphasise their agentic potential (Emirbayer & Mische 1998). From this perspective, approaches to European integration in the field of minority rights are particularly interesting (Rechel 2009; Agarin & Brosig 2009; Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier 2005). However, it has been argued that in symbolic interactionism the structural context looses the constraining aspects of institutions and structures so clearly pointed out by functionalists: structure is reduced to actors' representations and interpretations of things, leaving the question of the *maintenance* of stability unanswered. In the field of European integration of minority rights this seems to be reflected in a vaguely defined set of norms, which so far have been used for policy changes in CEE far more than in the former EU-15, and whose long-term effect on the interethnic integration in CEE is unclear (Galbreath & McEvoy 2011; Pridham 2007; Johns 2003).

Another reservation in relation to the explanatory force for interethnic integration has to be made in relation to approaches of intersubjective norm generation, as the latter have largely looked at states as actors, which are dominated by majority groups, while neglecting minority groups' actions (Budryte 2005; Berend 2003; Cohen 1999). The now-popular notion that integration is a 'two-way process' (give and take between state and minority instead of one-way assimilation) is a variation of this approach. With regard to the minorities' possible responses to state provisions for minority participation or majority preparedness to power-sharing, theories of integration have identified various options for non-dominant groups to begin to participate in decision-making processes where state- and nation-building (and thus, integration) are determined. Once such provisions are in place, however, the onus for minority integration is placed on minorities themselves – while states and international organisations are analysed through an agency perspective. In this respect, the role minorities take in constructivist approaches resembles their role in the functionalist approaches, as discussed earlier: minorities appear as recipients of policies or alternatively as refusing to cooperate with the state.

As a result, these approaches to interethnic integration in the CEE region imply that the institutionalisation of certain minority rights can serve as a remedy for interethnic conflict. Tending to portray minorities as a problem for policy-making, it follows logically from this perspective that minority members are not seen as actors of integration, but its recipients. In contrast to the implications of such approaches, my research suggests that integration can never be fully accomplished, nor can a state or society be called 'fully integrated' at any stage. Rather, as I argue throughout the thesis, (social) integration denotes the process of interaction between social and political structures and the actors, translating structural conditions into practices. In and through these practices, they continuously renegotiate the boundaries that denote groups as different, and form the institutions that determine the different social groups' relations to the state.

1.3. Social integration: starting assumptions

The role of minority groups and their visions of how the fundamental political institutions should frame interethnic coexistence have remained relatively undefined in the approaches discussed so far. How can minority groups impact state- and nation-building when they are expected to adapt to the requirements of nation-state building set by the titular group? Moreover, studies of minority nationalism have asked whether minorities even want to adapt - after all, there is no shortage of examples which demonstrate that the secession

from their country of residence is considered a viable option for groups on the basis of the self-determination narrative, such as across the former socialist Yugoslavia. In response to these and similar questions, studies of nationalism, ethnopolitics and ethnic relations have identified factors that support interethnic co-operation and minority participation. Decisively, in this section I argue that these contributions are valuable and will be reflected upon throughout the thesis. However, as this section demonstrates, both realist and constructivist approaches to integration through the prism of nationalism and ethnicity remain concerned with the entities and outcomes of integration. The section therefore provides for initial reformulations of core terms and concepts from nationalism studies and related theories to elucidate their usage in this study. As argued throughout the thesis, in contrast to such approaches this study investigates the trajectories of integration as a process that is shaped, if never fully controlled, by the agency of the social actors involved. While the argument of the thesis draws from the constructivist critique of essentialist understandings of groupness and national narrative, it goes beyond this critique by deploying a relational concept of groups, as will be further elaborated in chapters 2 and 3.[1]

Many studies have highlighted the importance of cooperation between majority 'moderates' and minority actors for interethnic integration against the strongly ethno-nationally-minded majority political elites (Nedelsky 2009; Henderson 2002). These point to the diversity of majority actors and demonstrate that 'allies' for minorities do not have to come from the outside –for instance, in the form of kin-states' protection of, or involvement with, international organisations (Csergo 2007). All these approaches share, however, the understanding of minority-majority relations as impeded by the ethnic conflict over national sovereignty or, in case of cooperation, enabled by agreement on an alternative civic understanding of sovereignty. National sovereignty itself continues to be conceptualised as the object of national aspirations and the route to control over those resources. Despite its focus on actors, this perspective disregards the more participatory aspects of national sovereignty, represented in citizens' visions of state-society relations. Importantly, national sovereignty is not necessarily limited to questions of dominance, but also to those of representation and contributions to state-building. That said, it is striking that the impact of minority strategies of integration have featured so little in the research of

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[1] What is distinct about the relational approach is that it emphasises relations, transactions and changing figurations over substantialised actors, things or entities. In relational thinking, power is not something that one possesses or does not possess, but that flucturates in the interactive social relations, such as ethnic or gender relations. Moreover, ethnicity is also not something an individual possesses, but crystallises and alters in the transactions between actors and structures (for a discussion of the relational approach cf. Emirbayer 1997). This is not to say that we cannot talk about actors anymore, but that these actors need to be understood as relations rather than fixed entities. This point will be further elaborated in chapters 2 and 3.

interethnic integration in post-socialist Europe, even though their demands – expressed in political activities – are acknowledged as part of the conflict analysis that contrasts national sovereignty and minority claims.

In studies of nationalism and interethnic bargaining, minorities have received attention. However, here both majority and minority groups have tended to be treated as homogeneous groups. In this context, ideologies of nationalism and sentiments of ethnic belonging, often discussed under the ambiguous term of 'identity', have been suggested as determining factors of intergroup interaction and the trajectories of nation- and state-building (Harris 2009). Nation-building, here, is understood as the effort, largely of elites, to 'construct an overarching collective identity which can bind the political community in a more meaningful way' (ibid., p.39). Consequently, nationalism theories have demonstrated how nations and ethnic groups are constructed, and therefore potentially can be subject to de-construction and alternative re-construction. Moreover, theories of nation-building have made clear that these processes are distinct from, if however closely related to state-building. As a result, the literature often distinguishes the political and the ethnic nation, enabling discussions about civic *versus* ethnic nationalism, which in turn has led to many contributions exploring the boundaries of liberal-democratic (nation-)states' capacity to accommodate diversity or act as a 'neutral' framework for multicultural societies (Kymlicka & Opalski 2001). Because of their focus on identities, if 'constructed', at their core these theories tend to be based upon reified concepts of ethno-national groups and their interests or sentiments, which had originally been criticised by these theories, and the 'homogenisation' of groups in research.

In part, this substantialist understanding of nations in nationalism studies reflects demands from majorities engaged in nation-state-building as well as minority communities to expand the provisions for minority recognition; however, it does not reflect fully the diverse positions and perceptions of both majority and minority members and tends to conflate the 'nation' as a 'category of analysis' with a 'category of practice' (Brubaker 1996, p.16, paraphrasing Pierre Bourdieu). The experience, social realities and perceptions of minority and majority group members however are multitudinous. Regarding interethnic relations, they result from overlapping social, economic, regional and other cleavages on the one hand, and from majority-dominated integration as it develops in pursuit of the imperatives of national sovereignty on the other hand. Moreover, reflections on actor-centred approaches above make it clear that the concept of 'actorness' should also reflect the process of the intersubjective deliberation of meanings *within* a group. As the analysis

of majority-minority interaction proffered by this study demonstrates, both majorities and minorities in the two countries have developed diverse approaches to integration, which partly superseded group boundaries rather than being congruent with them.

Extant literature on interethnic deliberation has tended to reflect the heterogeneity of majority groups, specifically as political actors, but neglected the diversity of minorities as a factor that impacts the integration process. Crucially, this thesis argues, integration is always an ongoing process, which can be analysed with respect to its changing manifestations in the ethnopolitical order of political communities and their institutions. Understanding integration as interaction between groups demands taking a perspective that looks at minorities as actors in their own right. It is important to understand that both majorities and minorities constitute relational groups whose members are embedded into societal relations in multiple and intersecting ways. Political, social and economic marginalisation is not limited to members of minority groups alone, nor does it apply to all of them. As argued earlier in this chapter, this thesis is concerned ultimately with non-dominant agency, for which the agency of ethnicised groups in nationalising states is selected as a case study. Because of this, it is assumed that - while for example socio-economic cleavage characterises social relations across the board of all ethnic or linguistic groups - with regard to political and social participation in the nation-state, majority members have a head start compared to minority members, who in some cases have to deal with a range of intersecting inequalities. In addition, it is the heterogeneous minorities' contributions to integration that have been neglected in scholarship.

Therefore, this study sets out to examine the routes minority members chose in order to impact state- and nation-building in two post-socialist CEE countries, Estonia and Slovakia, and by which they shape the integration processes as heterogeneous actors with complex sets of interests and intentions in the context of the constraining impacts of political and social structures. As part of my argument, I will show the importance of non-dominant agency for the trajectories and temporal outcomes of integration, starting with an explanation of my theoretical claim that non-dominant participants of social processes do indeed exert their agency in these processes. In addressing the trajectories of interethnic cooperation, competition and bargaining in the pre- and early state-building phases, I discuss how these have shaped interethnic interaction to the present. I emphasise the role state institutions play in the continued efforts of the majority groups towards nation-/community-building and analyse their impact on the boundaries between majority and minority groups as the backdrop of the collective action of minorities. By exploring

minority activists' strategies of engagement with the disadvantageous structural context, I seek to ascertain how the different preferences minority groups exhibit with regard to interethnic integration in the states in which they reside have resonated in the institutional framework and impacted majority-minority group formation and integration in Estonia and Slovakia.

The thesis is concerned with problems of *group relations*. This is not to deny that social integration could be examined at every and any level of interaction between agents, including individuals or institutional macro-actors. However, my argument is precisely that that an individual's agency is *always* structured by their groupness, which shapes both how they perceive their social situation and how they are perceived by others. Likewise, macro-actors such as states frequently fail to represent equally all those social groups that constitute a particular society (Brubaker et al. 2006). The analysis of individual integration or macro-actor integration therefore presupposes an examination of group relations. The group is therefore chosen here as the central category of inquiry for studying social integration; other levels of integration are taken into account where this is deemed appropriate and necessary.

I understand groups in a non-essentialist way. Neither their structural properties nor the psychological relation of their members to their groupness are taken as givens. Instead, as I conceptualise groups, their existence is intrinsically embedded in processes of institutionalising boundaries between 'categorised' individuals, normatively, socio-structurally and in relation to individual sentiments of belonging and solidarity. As Social Identity Theory argues, group categories are established and re-confirmed by groups in the process of differentiating one's own group in demarcation from others (Rupert 2000; Tajfel 1974). Social integration between groups becomes a problem, when demarcation is related to, or congruent with, the different command over crucial resources, that is: when in-group favouritism becomes out-group discrimination and turns into a power conflict (Tajfel 1982). Where this is the case, power conflict transforms relations between socially defined groups into those of competition between more and less powerful groups, or in the case of institutionalised conflict in the social system, between dominant and non-dominant groups.

Thus, I define social integration as the cooperative interaction between groups by which they participate in establishing a common social system. Crucially, this thesis and its concept of social integration do not ascribe certain characteristics to the system that the interacting groups establish, or the relations these groups should take therein: the 'content'

of integration is left to the negotiations of the actors involved. I take no stance regarding, for example, the suitability of different forms of power-sharing, or a position concerning the problem of minority rights or affirmative action between 'diversity' and 'equality'. However, this approach to integration does ask to what extent non-dominant, and so less powerful, groups are able to shape their social relations with the dominant group and change their position within the social circumstances. Proposing a non-prescriptive account of integration, I ask about the nature of integration processes and the determinants of their varying directions.

In this sense, the present study differs from accounts of nationalism and multiculturalism studies. Unlike the latter's, its subject of enquiry is not the 'nation' or nationalism of any group. These are considered aspects of the structural context that shape the integration process. Instead, the approach to integration proposed here scrutinises the structuration of majority-minority relations by looking at minority agency as it figurates in the structural context of nation-state-building. In order to do so the present thesis utilises the analysis of minority activism in order to draw wider and more generalisable conclusions about the process of social integration and the role of non-dominant agency therein. The thesis deals with concepts commonly used in nationalism studies and ethnopolitics, however reformulates these from a structurationist perspective, rejecting reifying and substantialist understandings of the concepts and enabling the analysis of processes rather than entities.

Decisively, this thesis analyses the role and options of non-dominant groups in evoking social change. By bringing allegedly powerless actors to the centre of analysis, I argue that these do in fact have agency, which is understood as the 'capability of doing [things they intend to do]' (Giddens, 1984), p. 9) and develop the theoretical frame for analysing social integration through the prism of what Giddens termed the 'dialectic of control' (ibid., p. 16). In doing so, I hope to open up the space for understanding social integration as ultimately dependent on non-dominant creative responses to the structural or institutional circumstances, rather than seeing social integration as re-actions of non-dominant actors, determined by these circumstances. The source of the non-dominant agency lies in the very structures that constitute constraints for the actors in the first place. Their handling of social structures and their own position therein play a crucial role in maintaining or changing the parameters of a social system.

The thesis then revisits a fundamental problem of the social sciences: the relation of structure and agency. The structuration approach to this dilemma allows, I suggest, the

conceptualisation of non-dominant actors as able to draw upon social structures as resources for them to act. Based on a historic and non-deterministic concept of agency inherent to the approach, non-dominant group agency, then, is not restricted to re-actions to structural constraints, but is capable of drawing creatively upon structural resources to impact the group's own position within these.

1.4 Case studies, terminology and concepts

This study sets out to examine the role of minority agency in the process of interethnic integration by comparative study of Russian-speakers in Estonia and Hungarians in Slovakia. In this section, the choice of the case studies is outlined. The two case studies are selected, because they have the advantage of sharing crucial features which together form a structural context that is 'similar enough' to be suitable for comparison. These include the policies of state- and nation-building, the countries' relation to the broader structures of Europeanisation as well as the minorities' kin-states, and the historical legacies of group relations that continue to shape group interaction. At the same time, the cases are also 'different enough', a fact that allows the researcher to distance herself from the particularities of each case, while reflecting upon the individual trajectories of integration in view of the respective other case. Thereby, interesting arguments can be generated about the processes of state-society interaction in general, and minority agency in different structural contexts specifically.

In recent years, both Estonia and Slovakia have received their share of public and academic attention, when ethnic group relations appeared to have deteriorated to the extent that minority members took to the street, while majority politicians declared that 'multiculturalism has failed' (Slovak Minister of the Interior Daniel Lipšic, according to *Sme* 31/08/2011). As recently as 2007, Estonia faced an unprecedented outbreak of protest by Russian-speakers, the country's large minority population of Soviet-era migrants. These protests turned into the infamous 'Bronze night' riots in the old town of the capital Tallinn, lasting for three subsequent nights. The demonstrations were triggered by the removal of a monument that has come to have great symbolic value for the Russian-speaking community in Tallinn, which constitutes just under half the capital's population. The protests addressed much more than 'memory politics', bringing to the surface the inconvenient but hitherto obscured fact that Estonian integration policies towards the minority population, initiated in the late 1990s, had failed. In 2009, an entirely non-violent and perhaps more 'eloquent' protest of several thousand Hungarian-speaking citizens of

Slovakia, the country's largest minority population took place in the stadium of Dunajská Streda, a town with close to 80% Hungarians among its population, against the government's move to tighten language legislation. The new law threatened to restrict the opportunities for minority members to use their language in public, a right that minority members felt was already insufficiently respected. Twenty years after Estonia and Slovakia had become independent states it is apparent that neither have yet come to terms with their populations' ethno-linguistic heterogeneity. Rather, majority members dominate political processes, while minority members are largely excluded from the institutions considered important for meaningful political participation and the groups' cultural-linguistic self-determination. These incidents as well as persistent tensions between ethno-linguistic groups across CEE have revived the questions of long-term conflict resolution, which for minority members and some researchers were never, in fact, 'solved'.

The conditions under which debates over integration unfolded in the two countries accentuate particularly well the ambiguity of minority rights institutionalisation in the context of nation-state building. In both states, the minority groups have challenged the dominant vision of the unitary nation-state. At the same time, they have also developed strategies to make do - for the time being - with the *status quo*, adopting practices of adaptation according to the terms set by the majority. The realisation of minority rights in Estonia and Slovakia has, at times, generated fears among majority groups about sovereignty and geopolitical security. As part of the dynamics of interethnic cooperation and challenge, the involvement of the minorities' kin-states (i.e. Russia and Hungary) has contributed to the reluctance of majorities to share political power with minority citizens, due to painful histories of conflict over territorial sovereignty and oppression. Simultaneously, ambiguous signals from Europe as part of the countries' 15 years of Europeanisation before their accession to the EU in 2004, while temporarily stabilising interethnic relations, have added to the complexity of institutional resources for both majority and minority groups to legitimise and challenge *status quo* power relations.

At the same time, Hungarians in Slovakia and Russian-speakers in Estonia represent different instances of the challenge of post-socialist multicultural integration. The differences between the minorities point both to structural and agentic differences, which shall be discussed here briefly. They concern specifically the particular forms of how the categories of group belonging are institutionalised in the two states; the normative and structural resources available to minority activists as a result of the former; and the

political, social and cultural organisational structures the minorities in the two countries have been able to maintain.

Even though both states are relatively young and have, prior to 1991, only existed as independent states for slightly more than two decades - in the case of Estonia - and for only a few years during the Second World War - in the case of Slovakia -, the claim to the right of national sovereignty reaches back much longer. Large parts of the Russian-speaking minority in Estonia are being viewed as immigrants, because the largest proportion of the group residing in the country today moved there as part of inner-Soviet labour migration. This is despite the overlap of the Soviet-migrant group with Russians and other minorities that have been settled in the Estonian region for much lengthier periods (though in smaller numbers). In contrast, Hungarians in Slovakia have argued in a similar vein to Slovaks – and this view is accepted by most Slovaks – that their kins have settled in the region at least as long as Slovaks (Krekovič 2007). The arguable difference between 'indigenous' Hungarians and 'migrant' Russian-speakers has – indirectly – shaped the research on interethnic integration in the region, where direct comparisons of the situation of Soviet migrants and national minorities are extremely rare.[2] These differences, I suggest, are compelling reasons for an extended comparison of the two cases. As I hope to show in this thesis, the different categorisations of minority groups have functioned as a resource for some minority actors, while they constrained others in their claims for participation and inclusion.

Categorical differences inevitably bring up the substantive question of terminology. Whereas references to 'Slovaks' and 'Hungarians' have been relatively undisputed, the distinction of 'Estonians' vs. 'Russian-speakers' has not.[3] Many contributions to the analysis of the latter group in the Baltic states refer to the difficulties involved when making this distinction (Agarin 2010; Galbreath 2005; Laitin 1998). The term Russian-speakers does not denote an 'ethnic' group, either as it is defined in research or in national statistics. As a state-imposed category of nationalist practice in Estonia, 'Russian-speakers' comprise the large group of Russians and russified nationalities who, during the Soviet era, moved to the Estonian Socialist Soviet Republic (ESSR) and where, if it was not already, Russian

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[2] Although edited volumes on minority rights across the CEE region often include contributions on Russian-speakers in post-Soviet countries alongside historical minorities in other post-socialist countries, and Kelley (2004) uses both country cases of Latvia and Romania, there is only one direct comparative study of the Estonian and Slovak cases that has been conducted in recent years (cf. Brosig 2011).

[3] Throughout the study the term 'Hungarians' will refer to the members of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia, except indicated otherwise (such as in references to Hungarians in Hungary). In so doing, I follow the predominant practice in the literature on the issue, where the alternatively used term 'Magyars' is not widely accepted.

became their primary or only language of communication. In practice, however, it can also incorporate some Russians who are officially categorised as an 'historical' Russian minority, i.e. those Russians who settled in Estonia before 1940. The distinction of Russian-speaking and Estonian populations implies that the use of the languages is mutually exclusive. Of course, this is not the case: many Russian-speakers speak Estonian and vice versa. It is for that reason that a parallel construction of Estonian-speakers does not help in any way with the problem of accuracy. At the same time, the group of Russian-speakers is so heterogeneous in terms of the members' citizenship (including Estonian, Russian, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Armenian citizens and many other, as well as the group of Estonia's large stateless population) that political membership does not provide a helpful category either. For this study, I assume that language use is the most important signifier of group membership in the context of minority integration in the two countries. As I hope to show, nation-state policies affect societies in multiple ways, and 'Russian-speakers' seems to be the term that comes closest to identifying the impact these policies have on minority members' strategies for integration in Estonia.

In addition to these categorical differences inscribed into the institutions and structures of intergroup relations, the specific structures provided by kin-states - claiming responsibility for the minority groups to very different degree - and international actors force the groups to interact within similar structural contexts. The literature on diaspora politics has pointed to the 'instrumentalisation' of (perceived) kins residing in neighbouring countries by states in support of their own domestic as well as bilateral and international political interests (King & Melvin 1998). In this respect, both Russia and Hungary have been analysed as states engaging in active diaspora support, which can become a resource for mobilisation of minorities in their countries of residence (Waterbury 2010; Zevelev 2001). At the same time, the structures of kin-states for the two case studies also exhibit important differences, in part due to the EU membership of Hungary and the difficult relations between the EU and Russia. Moreover, Russia's diaspora politics in the Baltic states have been identified as aimed primarily at a domestic audience, rather than to the benefit of Russian or Russian-speaking minorities abroad (Smith 2002c). In contrast, Hungary's claim to consult with 'its' sizable diaspora communities, specifically in countries that share borders with Hungary, in order to provide support, has been described in more appreciative terms by minority members, as I will demonstrate in chapters 8 and 9 of this thesis.

Throughout the thesis, I argue that the most important structural factors for interethnic relations have their root in policies of nation-state building. This argument bears important

similarities with the scholarly contributions made by nationalism studies. In line with the latter, my thesis emphasises the structural relevance of institutions that are based on the agendas of ethnically and territorially defined nationalisms (Horowitz 1985). However, I do not take the view that "the right" institutional framework can resolve the problems of nationalist conflicts. Rather, I concur with critical nationalism theorists such as Brubaker (1998) who argues that 'nationalist conflicts are in principle, by their very nature, irresolvable' (p.273), because nationalism itself is always dependent on boundaries between groups that are themselves contested and disputed. At the same time, this does not mean that the conflicts between majority and minority groups in CEE are 'irresolvable' or a 'necessary' consequence of the suppression of nationalist sentiments during socialism, as other scholars of nationalism in the region have suggested (for a critical discussion of these arguments cf. ibid.; also Verdery 1996). Essentially, these often primordialist and orientalist approaches are based on the assumption that nations, as groups, maintain 'identities' that distinguish their members from those of other nations and groups, making them 'unique', determine the interests of their members (which are said to lie in the strife for 'national self-determination'), and also enable their continued existence as an entity through the ages (Harris 2009).

My approach differs from many contributions also of constructivist nationalism studies in that it does not take identities, however 'constructed', to be the core driving forces of integration/disintegration processes, neither as a determining psychological structure, nor as shaping the rational action of majority and minority actors. While taking into account the valuable contributions made by theories of nationalism, the focus is shifted away from questions of nationalism in general and (group) 'identity' specifically. Instead, the study concentrates on the interaction between ascribed groups and the boundaries that constitute their role in society in the first place, as inscribed in the political institutions. The relational approach to groups deployed in this thesis highlights that groups emerge (and are being altered) in the processes of 'categorisation and identification', self-understanding and self-representation, and 'commonality, connectedness and groupness' and therefore in the interaction of agents (Brubaker & Cooper 2000). Decisively, the interest of this study is not the question of majority and minority groupness, but how the members of differently situated and categorised groups are able to shape social and political relations in the society they inhabit.

In other words, the thesis engages with the interaction between, on the one hand, normative, social and psychological structures - such as institutions and regulations, social

and economical cleavages, and in-group/out-group perceptions - and, on the other hand, the agency of groups. I argue that these groups only come into being *through* the interaction of structure and agency, and are thus expressions of the trajectories of social integration. In this sense, when studying the integration of societies, what is interesting is to look at the processes that help maintain or alter the structures which affect social and political participation. The focus of this thesis, therefore, is on the question of the interaction between political structures and social actors, rather than on the entities that constitute the potential outcomes and representations of these processes, i.e. nations or ethnicity.

It is for this reason that the concepts of ethno-linguistic groups and nations that is applied in this thesis are different from conventional usages. I will refer to ethnic, ethno-linguistic or linguistic groups as those social groups that differ in their preferred practices of self-identification with a cultural or language group and/or language use. They become political entities because of the ways in which ethnicity and language are inscribed into the political institutions of the states in which these groups live. In the interaction with political institutions, in both states the majority groups have successfully shaped political community formation by inscribing ethno-linguistic group membership as decisive factors for political and social participation. It is on this basis that participation and access to crucial social and political resources is unequally distributed between different ethno-linguistic groups, and that these groups' political mobilisation is - sometimes deliberately, sometimes necessarily - framed in ethno-linguistic terms. The thesis analyses, how in this context the interaction of groups impacts the processes of institution-building and group formation. Nation-state-building is used as a term that denotes this specific overlapping form of state-building, i.e. the consolidation of state institutions, intertwined with nation-building, i.e. the efforts of political actors to define normatively and institutionalise structurally the political community.

Within the conceptual framework outlined above, this thesis constitutes an attempt to understand the process of integration between majority and minority groups in Estonia and Slovakia, and state-society interaction in more general terms. In order to do so, in this thesis I will analyse comparatively the trajectories of nation-state-building and the political roles assigned to majorities and minorities respectively. This will allow me to understand both the Estonian and Slovak majorities' preferential interaction with the state structures and the structural context within which minorities in both countries interact with the state. Moreover, in this thesis I investigate the forms of organisation, agendas and strategies the

Russian-speakers in Estonia and Hungarians in Slovakia have developed and applied in this interaction. While strong identification with their group and a strive for 'self-determination' may be among the agendas of minority activists, it is one argument of the thesis that it is not the identification with one group that constitutes an obstacle to minority participation. Simultaneously, minority nationalisms must not be neglected as a factor shaping interaction between the groups altogether. This study then supports the view that these aspects are part and expressions of the changing forms of the interaction between majority and minority groups, and eventually between society and state, rather than entities that precede agents' interaction with structures.

From the beginning of independent statehood in Estonia and Slovakia, the perceived difference between, firstly, majority and minority communities, and secondly between indigenous and migrant communities has shaped the specific approaches of both states to integration. At the same time, both states ultimately followed the same imperatives of state- and nation-building. Taking the theoretical approaches to, and case studies of, interethnic relations in both countries as a point of departure, my work compares and contrasts these two country cases. In so doing, I am able to assess integration as interaction and minority strategies as strategies of engagement with disadvantages resulting from structural positions, rather then individual dispositions. My comparison has the advantage of pointing out the aspects frequently overlooked as intrinsic characteristics of each case, yet when perceived in an holistic analysis obtain greater explanatory value as comparable processes.

1.5 Methodological considerations

Two forms of empirical data inform this study. On the one hand, document analysis was used as a complement to the secondary literature for thorough analyses of minority policies in Slovakia and Estonia as well as public debate on the issues. Three types of primary sources were used here, simultaneously constituting sources of information on the developments of negotiation processes and representing the international observers' stance as participants in the processes: First, policy documents issued by the Slovak or Estonian governments are utilised in the analyses of state- and nation-building; second, progress reports authored by domestic and international monitoring committees, particularly the Council of Europe's Advisory Committees on the Framework Convention for the

Protection of National Minorities and the European Commission,[4] and in Estonia also by the monitoring committees analysing the impact of the national integration strategy, help evaluate the developments and outcomes of state policies. The analyses of these documents include a review of national policies and international agreements underlying these; third, public representations, information material and (political) programmes of minority organisations are used in the analysis of how minority actors have presented their arguments to the public. In the analysis of these documents, I was particularly interested in policy changes generally as well as changes in how these policies are justified by their proponents, potentially representing changes in the representation of integration and in the states' approaches to multiculturalism. Moreover, I sought to contrast policies with monitoring documents and identify correlations and the direct impact(s) of individual actors on policy developments.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews with both participants in and observers of the integration processes in the two countries formed the other main source of empirical data for the study. The partly structured interview has at least three advantages over the unstructured interview or fully structured questionnaires (for a discussion of the differences see Bryman 2008): It employs guiding questions that allow for (relative) cross-case comparability in a double case study; it gives the researcher leeway in the formulation and adjusting of questions to a specific context; it gives ample space to the respondent to answer freely to questions, which enables to enhance the researcher's understanding of perceptions and emphases the respondent would like to make. By and large, the semi-structured interviews conducted during my fieldwork were structured conversations. The interviews with minority representatives in particular were employed in this thesis to understand the perceptions of social and political processes, learn about the framing of the problems of integration and the reasoning for political and social actor formation.

In total, I conducted interviews with 54 individuals and small groups in the two countries, as well as an additional interview with an Estonian academic in Glasgow and a telephone interview with a representative of the German Rosa-Luxemburg-Foundation which had, in the past, provided funding for a Russian-speakers' organisation in Estonia (cf. appendix A). The interviews with small groups were designed in the same way as individual interviews, but generated different dynamics in the process of interview. Although the small groups

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[4] Progress or Regular Reports by the Commission assess the progress of the two countries towards EU accession. The implementation of the Framework Convention is regularly assessed by state parties, independent minority rights experts in the countries' as selected by the Council of Europe for this task, government comments and resolutions by the Committee of Ministers at the Council of Europe.

brought together individuals and representatives of the same organisation and similar backgrounds, during the interview the participants produced interesting responses to the researcher's questions, which represented the participants' deliberations on the interview questions. In this way, these group interviews supported the researcher's understanding of groups as heterogeneous and 'knowledgeable' actors, who continuously deliberate their perceptions and actions in relation both to majority and other minority actors.

Choosing adequate interview partners and gaining access to them is usually a difficult task for researchers. Interview partners were chosen primarily on the basis of web-based research on individuals and organisations engaged in the field of integration and minority participation. Interviews were arranged by email in most cases; a smaller number of interviewees was recruited via 'snowballing', that is through other interviewees and acquaintances in the field, and were often arranged directly at an interview. Interviews were conducted with politicians, academics and minority cultural and political activists. These included, among others, representatives of the Legal Information Centre for Human Rights in Tallinn, a leading minority institution independently monitoring Estonian legislation and policy implementation from a human rights and international legal perspective, and of the Forum Institute, the leading research and documentation institute on matters of the Hungarian minorities in Slovakia and abroad that also offers trainings for civic and political activists, and engages in minority advocacy. Other interviews included those with representatives of organisations such as youth centres, sports and cultural clubs, students' organisations and others. Moreover, several interviews were conducted with minority and majority representatives who have, over the past twenty years, functioned in a variety of roles in the integration process, such as Tanel Mätlik, currently head of Estonia's integration foundation and Kálmán Petőcz, former diplomat for Slovakia and Director General of Human Rights and Equal Treatment at the Government Office of the Slovak Republic (cf. appendix A).

The study was prepared following the guidelines for Social Science Ethics issued by the University of Glasgow, which is also summarised in the Plain Language Statement in appendix B. In all cases, already in the invitation for interview, researcher and research study were introduced. The brief outline stated the purpose of the study and specific reasons, why the participant was selected. Further, the option of full anonymity was given and confidentiality of data storage and use were outlined. All interviewees agreed to the interview being recorded and transcribed by the researcher. At the interview the background of the study, form of data analysis, use of quotations in the thesis, potential

risks to participants arising from involvement in the study and the option of full or partial anonymity (i.e. the option that selected statements could only be quoted anonymously) were discussed. All participants declared that they did not require anonymity, except for one statement of one respondent. The questionnaire used was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Law, Business and Social Sciences/School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Glasgow.

The interviews were very different in form and length, and also changed over the course of my research progress. Rather than one continuous field stay, I chose to visit the countries repeatedly for stays that lasted between one week and over three months. This helped me getting acquainted with the field contexts gradually, while being able to retreat from it for phases of reflection, where I could embark on the writing process in the context of British academia. For my research, having had both longer and shorter stays in the countries, I found the repeated visits rather than one in-depth stay helpful as well as practically more feasible. It allowed the interviews to reflect the dynamics of academic work much better than a one-off stay. I started interviewing just half a year into my doctoral studies, in April 2008, and did the last interviews in May 2010. In both countries, preliminary interviews were not recorded, but served as an introduction into the questions that participants of integration in Estonia and Slovakia raised themselves, and which potentially differed from the questions international academia highlighted. The second, and longer, phase of my fieldwork included semi-structured interviews which were recorded and then transcribed by the researcher. The interview data are stored securely and were used only for the purpose of the PhD research.

Although I did not receive a response to all requests for an interview, in the majority of cases a (mostly positive) response was the rule. Interview partners were open and welcoming to my research in general, and I received many questions about the reasons for my interest in what many participants perceived as 'of little interest to Europe'. Throughout my fieldwork I experienced as an advantage the fact that I was considered an 'outsider'. This was particularly important with respect to interviews with Hungarians in Slovakia who conveyed to me that the comparison between the 'historical' Hungarian minority and the Russian-speaking 'migrants' would be received very badly by fellow Hungarians, if a Hungarian were to conduct such research. Interview partners were also curious to learn that I had no family or other relations to any of the groups involved in my study. In response to my outsider position, many were eager to explain very elaborately their perceptions and sometimes tried themselves to take an 'outsider's' perspective to their own situation. All

interviews were characterised by mutual respect and while gender and age issues may have played a role in some interviews, as in all social interactions, overall these did not impact, neither positively nor negatively, the data gathered.

The interview situation itself generated potential issues of power relations between the interviewer and the interviewee. On the one hand, interviewees were in a potentially vulnerable position due to their lack of control over the researcher's use of interview data. The vulnerability was increased by the fact that some of the interviews were conducted with non-professionals. For example, members of minority organisations in both countries who had rarely been interviewed in the past, and if so not by an academic from abroad, were excited about the interest in their work. In order to ensure that interviewees fully understood the purpose of the interview and that the interview did not raise unreasonable expectations on side of the interviewees, this aspect was explicitly and repeatedly discussed at the beginning of and during the interview. On the other hand, the fact that some of the interviewees (have) worked professionally for the promotion of their cause and claims - several being politicians, advocacy campaigners and advanced academics - made them strong actors in the interview situation. The purpose of the questionnaire, recording and transcribing of interviews was to moderate the control some interviewees attempted to take over the trajectory of the interview.

To support my research, I could rely on English as my working language, which is the languages most of the interviews were conducted in, and my native German, which served as language of interview or helped facilitate communication in around 5 interviews. Additionally, I used Russian as main language of interview in three cases, and as means of communication outside the interview situation with several individuals. Most interviews in which English or German could not function as the main languages of interview, the interview situation was in fact relaxed by the mix of languages, and characterised by the wish to communicate and a mutual interest in a successful conversation. Using Slovak in order to initiate interviews proved to be a helpful tool. Overall, in most interviews it was neither the researcher's nor the interviewee's first language of communication. It was therefore crucial for the analysis of the interviews not to weigh every word. Instead, throughout the analysis, a form of 'empathetic hermeneutics' - in a loose sense - was deployed, seeking to understand the argument and perceptions the interviewee conveyed by contextualising these.

While document analysis supported the analysis of the context of minority activism, interviews were the main source for understanding the constraints as well as supportive and empowering factors for minority groups' political and civic activities. For the analysis, I repeatedly revisited the notes made during interviews as well as the transcriptions and recordings throughout the writing period. Initially, core themes of the interviews were identified in order to help structure the theoretical argument and the presentation of the thesis. Later, the constant revisitation enabled me to reflect upon the interviews in light of the development of the argument, and allowed me to refine assumptions and contextualise interviewees' responses.

Interviews were conducted in Tallinn, Tartu, Jõhvi and Kohtla-Järve (Estonia) as well as in Bratislava, Košice, Šamorin and Galanta (Slovakia). My particular aim was to circumvent the bias often found in interview-based research on minorities in CEE, which is largely limited to capital cities. While Bratislava and Tallinn were the most important sites of my fieldwork, southern Slovakia is represented as well as North-East Estonia, the areas where large proportions of the populations are minority members. It is admitted that my research does not give a voice to those who are entirely outside the political debates on integration. In part due to the focus of the research question, in part reflecting lack of access due to language constraints, my research therefore perpetuates the elite-bias that also shapes most other research on the issue. I researched those people, who are already visible (even if only to a limited extent) and have thus found ways to voice discontent or support of policies and political demands. This aspect merits more research in the future and will require refined research methods. Many of the interviewees in fact represent several functions in the integration process. For example, Estonian academics interviewed as researchers simultaneously were experts who had elaborated the state's integration programme, or were part of the team monitoring the integration process. Similarly, in Slovakia several key players of the Hungarian minority had worked as researchers, authors of the political programme of the Hungarian minority party, and as members of the minority elite were highly educated, skilled, and fluent speakers of the titular language.

A second bias became very clear to me during my field work in relation to the representation of women and men in my research. Although in general my sample of interviewees largely reflects the representation of men and women occupying the functions that I was interested in, women are actually underrepresented among my interviewees. Effectively I interviewed fewer women than would have been ideal, as more men than women in high functions responded to my interview requests and followed through on

acceptance;[5] (a great pity was that former Estonian Minister for Ethnic and Population Affairs Urve Palo was unavailable for interview, and an interview with the current Estonian Minister of Culture did not materialise either).[6] Despite these limitations, the interviews constituted the most important basis of my research, and allowed me to contrast minority groups' engagement with the perceptions of activists as regards their aims, their strategies for attaining them, and the success of (or constraints experienced upon) their activities.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

My thesis is divided into three parts consisting of three chapters each. The first part, starting with this introductory chapter, introduces my approach to researching integration and sets out to develop the theoretical background for my study. In chapters 2 and 3, I put in place the theoretical groundwork of the thesis. Discussing structuration theory as it was developed in reaction to the persisting problems of the structure-agency divide in social theory, I establish the fundamental categories of analysis that will guide my research. Essentially, structuration theory conceptualises structure as constraining as well as enabling agency, which allows for a new perspective on minorities as self-determined actors and renders possible the impact of minority action on social and political processes. Building upon the structuration approach, in chapter 3 I discuss the contributions of assimilation theory and social movement theory to the understanding of how boundaries between groups become meaningful for the trajectories of intergroup interaction. Further, the chapter identifies a thorough analysis of the institutional context as crucial pre-condition for the analysis of non-dominant actors' role in the dynamics of interethnic relations.

Part two of the thesis provides an analysis of the structural-institutional context of interethnic integration. I particularly focus on the strategies and means majority groups have applied in the process of state-building in the context of international integration and

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[5] Moreover, I noticed that the role women took in interviews was in several cases, but clearly not always, that of assistant (adding to the interview, whose main respondent was male rather than taking the role of main respondent) or interpreter.
[6] However, while a study of a particular impact of ethno-linguistic discrimination on women, researched extensively in relation to multiculturalism in societies across the world – note the extensive literature on the intersection of various forms of exclusion (sexism, racism, ageism etc), questions of international gendered division of labour and the more recent debates on multiculturalism and gender (Phillips 2007) - is yet to be conducted, I would hazard a guess that gender discrimination in the societies that I research runs transverse to society, including ethnic belonging intersects with economic rather than ethnic discrimination and both Russian and Estonian communities on the one hand, and Slovak and Hungarian on the other hand are similarly structured in terms of gender relations.

bilateral conflicts with minority kin-states. In chapter 4, I review the historical legacies and background of state-building, nation-building and democratisation in Estonia and Slovakia. The chapter sheds light on the complex histories of aspirations for national self-determination and oppression in the regions that today constitute the two countries, and discusses the role of minority policies in these processes. Following this, chapter 5 investigates both states' fundamental political institutions that determine the boundaries of the political community. In response to the restrictive institutions of formal and practical political membership both states gradually opened the political community to minority members – I discuss the context of these changes and their impact on minority citizens' actual membership in the Slovak and Estonian political communities. Chapter 6 analyses the ways in which the understandings of state-ownership and national sovereignty were translated into further 'nationalising' of the state and thereby impacted the boundaries between majority and minority groups. A detailed analysis of the political steps taken looks at the ambiguous effect policies of limited minority recognition have had on majority-minority group interaction. The effects of state- and nation-building in both countries have prompted debates on the detrimental effects of the particular majority-minority relations enforced in Estonia and Slovakia.

The third part of the thesis then investigates the responses of minority groups to the majorities' state- and nation-building efforts, analysing minority contributions to state-building and discussing their overall role in shaping the integration process. Chapters 7 and 8 examine the political strategies applied by political actors and parties established by minority members. I investigate the ways in which minority political activists have attempted to find inroads into the political decision-making in order to change their disadvantageous relations to the state and to the majority group. In so doing, I argue that minority actors have creatively used the multiple structures of domestic and international minority legislation to support their strategies, and re-adjusted these in response to changing institutional contexts. Simultaneously, I identify main obstacles to meaningful political participation as well as the unintended consequence of such continued exclusion for minority mobilisation. Chapter 9 then looks at the alternative strategies the minority groups have developed outside the political institutions. In order to determine their situation in the social and political processes, minority groups have engaged in civic and cultural activism, attempting to create new opportunities and at the same time communicate their demands in a non-contentious way to authorities. I conclude that, although minority groups have continuously sought and found forms of activism to impact state-building as well as minority group formation, majority reception of minority

contributions to integration both inside and outside the political institutions has been limited.

Overall, my thesis discusses non-dominant groups' contributions to majority-minority integration. In the concluding chapter, I briefly revisit the major findings of the thesis. I argue that both majority and minority groups need to be described as heterogeneous actors who dynamically adjust to their structural contexts, and who use (even limited) access to powerful institutions in order to shape these according to their own needs and demands. Scholarship on interethnic relations in CEE has so far focused on the preparedness of majority groups to the limited opening of states' political institutions, by providing certain minority rights aimed to allay minority demands for participation, which characterise integration policies in the region. In contrast, the agendas and strategies of minority members as actors, representing both their perceptions of interethnic relations and their active responses to these have been unrecognised by researchers, except where loud minority protest appeared to portend or express some imminent threat to stability. In so doing, scholarship has also largely neglected the contribution non-dominant groups have made to state-building and the redrawing of group boundaries in CEE. My thesis seeks to fill this gap.

Chapter 2: Social integration as structuration process

2.1 Introduction: System and social integration

The introductory chapter determined intergroup integration and specifically non-dominant groups' contributions to this process as the core problem of this thesis. The approaches to interethnic integration in CEE discussed in the previous chapter have pointed to the structural constraints that limit minorities' influence on intergroup processes. At the same time, the agentic approaches discussed have given little to the understanding of how antagonistic groups constitute and maintain the social system they inhabit. Enquiring as to how minority groups can realise their agentic potential, while the statal society is simultaneously maintained, raises theoretical questions about the relation of agency and structure. Thereby it refers to the distinction between social and system integration that has haunted social theorists for over a century. The predominant focus of examinations of system integration lies with the compatible or contradictory relationships between the 'parts of social systems' (for example institutions), while that of social integration lies at the heart of theories on conflict or cooperation between the actors in a system (Mouzelis 1995).

Crucially, this distinction between social and system integration must be understood in purely analytical terms. David Lockwood was the first to point to the inherent connection between the systemic and agentic levels and their interrelations in the process of mutual constituency. In his Social and System Integration (Lockwood 1964), he suggests the re-visitation of the dichotomy by distinguishing *system* integration from *social* integration. Lockwood's main contribution consists of his interpretation of the system-social (or structure-agency) divide as a question of perspective of the researcher on the moving forces of social change. A system integration perspective analyses these processes from an 'objective,' outsider perspective. Social integration, on the other hand, allows for the analysis of integration from the view of the actors involved, enabling the researcher to identify facilitators and constraints for agency at the level where integration processes are interpreted, evaluated, and decisions are made by actors. The main difference between both approaches and the analytical advantage of the distinction lies in the research perspective. As has been argued by Lockwood, social and system integration constitute two aspects of the same process.

While the term integration has gained a high profile, its usage tends to confuse rather than clarify the issues discussed. To complicate matters further, the term is widely used in public and political debate to discuss related problems, without however operating with the conceptual and theoretical precision required of an academic analysis (Government 2008; Government 2000). Numerous studies today are set at the interface of theoretical and policy discussions of integration (see for example Muižnieks 2010; Vetik 2002). Time and again, the analytical and the normative aspects of the term are conflated, with the concomitant danger of confusing how integration processes pan out in a specific situation with what is seen as their desirable development. To be sure, both approaches to the topic of integration are perfectly legitimate. However, while a normative perspective can provide a useful framework for analysis, it becomes problematic when the normative fundaments are not disclosed or discussed by the authors. At the same time, analytical approaches that look at outcomes rather than processes can face the same problem, because they necessarily establish norms regarding the 'desired' outcomes.

My own approach to integration is dynamic and cannot determine the 'contents' of integration – this is to be left to the actors participating in the process, as will become clear in the discussions of this and the next chapter. What I can determine, however, is the extent to which actors can shape integration processes. This approach requires a theoretical framework concerning the interaction of the actors in a social system and how they constitute or impact upon the social structures, or the relations between actors and structures. Such a perspective on integrating social systems then requires an analysis of the actors' capacity to act and react in the environments and situations they encounter, of their ability to interpret and (re)conceptualise the structures they are intertwined with, and of the social structures as constraining or enabling actors to maintain or change their relation to institutions and structures.

A consequential theory of structure and agency is essential for understanding why and how human actors are able to impact upon the societal structures they are embedded in – even more so when we think about actors considered 'less powerful' than others. Picking up Lockwood's suggestion of looking at structure and agency as 'two aspects of the same process', structuration theory has set out to provide a theoretical framework that conceptualises structure and agency as a duality, which allows for understanding both components as mutually constitutive. As I demonstrate in chapters 2 and 3, this enables an approach to integration from the minority actors' perspective. In what follows I introduce and discuss the concepts of structure and agency as outlined in structuration theory, and

relate these two to social action and the question of unequal power relations between actors as fundamental categories of social change through social integration. Thus, the discussion provides for the theoretical understanding of majority-minority integration in CEE.

One reservation needs to be made in relation to the overall theoretical approach, however. In this thesis, structuration theory is utilised as the overall theoretical framework that enables us to understand why it makes sense to analyse non-dominant agency in the first place. It has been criticised that the abstract language of structuration theory is unsuitable for empirical research. I partially agree. As such, the overall theoretical framework of structuration explains, why and how social integration in the two case countries develops in the ways it does. However, as this chapter will elucidate, structuration theory allows the researcher to conceptualise integration as the process that is generated in the 'dual' relation of structure and agency, in which the social action of, for example, minority members represents the diachronic materialisations of the structural and agentic potential of social actors. In order to account for the empirical analysis of the social interaction of state and society in the two countries, this thesis utilises concepts from assimilation theory, social movement theory, as well as the studies of nationalism, ethnopolitics and multiculturalim, which will be discussed and reformulated from a structurationist perspective in chapter 3. Throughout the thesis, the language of structuration theory is largely omitted, however will be returned to in the concluding sections of the empirical chapters as well as in chapter 10. Thereby, I aim to enable empirical analysis in a less abstract language in order to align this research with the debates of minority integration in CEE, while at the same time I maintain the thread that links the overall theoretical argument on non-dominant agency with the empirical analysis of institutions and minority actors' conduct (Giddens 1984; Stones 2005).

2.2 Social structures: Constraints and resources for human agency

Structuration theory was originally outlined by Anthony Giddens and then further developed by, among others, William Sewell, and Mustafa Emirbayer and Anne Mische (Giddens 1984; Sewell 1992; Emirbayer & Mische 1998). It provides a framework to explicate the relation between structure and agency, and contains theoretical tools for analyzing the relation to the structural properties of a system of differently powerful actors, and by extension, power itself. The central idea of structuration is the 'duality of structure'. Emphasising the constraining *as well as* enabling properties of structure, this theory understands agency as tied to and conditioned, but not determined by the structures.

Structures are activated by situated agents in multiple ways in a given situation. Thus, structures are conditioned by agents' interaction, the reproduction or transmutation of structures depends on human action. In turn, this action is not conceivable without the structures, which simultaneously guide the ideas and perceptions that precede actors' actions, limit their agency and provide the resource base for it.

Giddens' formulation of structure outlines the basis from which to continue into a more thorough elaboration of the concept. The structurationist understanding of structure differs from its usual conceptualisation in social theory. In his critique of the common understanding of structure in social theory and social analysis, he identifies (at least) four problems: Structure is mostly conceptualised as (1) 'external' to individuals, (2) equated with constraint, (3) outcomes of pre-existing actors' actions or activities, (4) independently existing from agents' knowledge of them (Giddens 1984, pp.16–26). In the introduction to this thesis, these limitations were identified with respect to functionalist approaches to integration in CEE. Post-structuralist approaches have attempted to better integrate actors into the concept of structure. Focusing on human practices, the theories have emphasised the 'virtual' aspects of structure. Social reproduction was explained by the actors' cultural knowledge, their habits and conventions, by which they enabled the maintenance of society (Bourdieu 1984). Ultimately, the emphases on cultural or 'mental' structures have failed to overcome the limitations of structure to constraint, as they could not explain creativity and change of actors' strategies.

Structuration theory adopts both the classical and the post-structuralist concepts of structure, referring to them as actual and virtual structures. In order to enable a theory that recognises the 'structuring properties allowing the "binding" of time-space in social systems' (Giddens 1984, p.17) while simultaneously emphasising human agency in the reproduction or transformation of systems, the concept of structure needs to be further elaborated. Virtual structures function as rules of social interaction and have two aspects: they relate to 'the constitution of *meaning* and […] to the *sanctioning* of modes of social conduct' (Giddens 1984, p.18, emphases in the original). Thus, they refer to 'normative elements and codes of signification' (ibid., p. xxxi), which cannot, however, be conceptualised without and apart from the structural properties or actual structures that have the potential to serve as a 'source of power in social interaction' (Sewell 1992, p.9). As a consequence, virtual structures function as 'schemas' that inform the activation of actual structures, while the actual structures function as the 'resources' for the realisation of virtual structures.

The structural properties that mediate social transformation can be further distinguished as authoritative (human) and allocative (non-human) types of resources (ibid.). Allocative resources have an existence beyond the virtual structures; their materiality alone, however, is not what makes them resources. They become resources in the actualisations and instantiation in human agency based on the 'schemas' or inter-subjectively established norms that inform their activation. Schemas can be thought of as (informal) conventions and habits, procedures, repertoires of interpretation schemes, scenarios and action recipes, or strategies that are applied in the reproduction of social life (Giddens, 1984). It is what people know, both consciously and unconsciously, as part of their memory, experience, or routine. They differ from 'publicly fixed codifications of rules' (Sewell 1992, p.8) such as laws, because the latter can be actualised as resources by actors, and thus go beyond the virtual realm of interpretative structures. Structure, then, is a set of schemas and resources, which exist as virtual and actual properties of social systems. Schemas depend on their instantiations in social practices, on being regenerated and validated through their actualisation as resources, in order not to lose their structuring role for agency. As indicated, according to Giddens, schemas

> 'cannot be conceptualized apart from resources, which refer to the modes whereby transformative relations are actually incorporated into the production and reproduction of social practices' (Giddens 1984, p.18).

In this sense, resources should not be understood as material entities that are powerful due to essentiality; at the same time they are not reducible to schemas. Schemas are validated and realised through the actualisation of resources. Resources are those abilities or possessions that actors use as means of interaction according to cultural schemas. The accumulation of resources in turn depends on the enactment of schemas. Only in the actualisation of schemas do material entities or features existing in time-space get attributed the necessary information or guidance on their social use. Resources are sources of power, the power to do something. It is the actualisation of particular resources via the application of certain schemas that empowers actors to engage with their environments. Schemas, in turn, are dependent on their validation through application to resource allocation or enactment of (for example) hierarchies.

Because structure is conceptualised as a duality of schemas and resources, it can be transformed. Crucially, the realisation of schemas is not limited to a certain context, but holds for a variety of social situations; this means that they can be actualised in different situations at different levels of social interaction and in relation to various resources,

allowing for the transposition of schemas from one context to another (Sewell 1992, p.8). As patterns of action they are inter-subjectively available, which highlights their role as the ties of social systems. Moreover, social systems are not only constituted by one structure, but by *structures*, that is 'isolable sets of rules and resources' (Giddens 1984, p.17), which differ immensely in various aspects. The variability and complexity of coexisting structures, and the combination of the various elements determine how changeable or taken-for-granted they are conceived of by social actors, and how powerful they are in structuring agency. In this sense, structures can differ in their depth, durability, scope, and in character. They can be particularly stable and taken-for-granted or vulnerable to debate and/or change (deep structures or structures on the surface); structures might be exceptionally durable or rather short lived; they can also differ in proximity and accessibility to actors (local, regional, global structures). Their particular character and form (organisations, formal or informal networks, etc.) is closely connected to the specific subsystem the particular structures constitute (Morawska 2001, pp.51–52).

The multiplicity of structures creates tensions between and within structures, making them more susceptible to change. Structures are multiple, as different logics and dynamics apply to e.g. educational or religious structures, enabling actors to enact

> 'a wide range of different and even incompatible schemas and have access to heterogeneous arrays of resources' (Sewell 1992, p.17).

These different schemas are known by actors as a 'system of transposable dispositions' (Bourdieu, 1977, p.83, cited in Sewell 1992, p.17). Schemas are the (cultural) knowledge of agents, who can use a schema learned in a specific context and transpose it to an unfamiliar context. The transposability of schemas in turn makes it impossible to know exactly how resources can and will be accumulated. Moreover, resources themselves, embodying cultural schemas, can be interpreted differently, as the cultural schemas that inform their use is always, to some extent, ambiguous. Lastly, both schemas and resources are activated by different actors who are situated in different sets of structures as well as by individual actors who encounter different structural sets. By transposing schemas from one situation to another, agents are able to interpret the new situation from their accustomed view and react accordingly, or reinterpret the schema in relation to the new situation, and thus to potentially revise their perception of the past, present and future. The intersections of structures, then, allow for the 'distancing' of the actor from the structures, who can apply schemas from one 'structural complex' to another, which enables theorising or applying theory to social reality. These five axioms – the multiplicity of structures, the

transposability of schemas, the unpredictability of resource accumulation, the polysemy of resources, and the intersection of structures – are what allow structural change to be conceptualised as inherent to structural operations (Sewell 1992, pp.16-19). This aspect of the structurationist conceptualisation of structure makes it possible to overcome the problems Giddens identified with common understandings of structure.

Although the theory of structure, as suggested by Sewell (following Giddens), proffers a concept of social change as inherent to the concept of structure, the many references to agency and actors allude to the fact that social change cannot be understood completely without conceptualising agency. Schemas and resources are transposable, applicable, and capable of being activated in various contexts only insofar as that there is an actor to transpose schemas through which resources are (re)interpreted. The concept implies that structures can be enacted and applied by different actors. Moreover, newly reinterpreted resources can enable agents to try and change the power relations with others. This concept of structure, centred on the relation of schemas and resources, allows for the analysis of social change as much as of social stability. Despite structure and agency being mutually constitutive and sustaining, the reproduction of social systems does not happen automatically, but requires constant effort of agents. Therefore, structures are always 'at risk', if only to some extent (Sewell 1992, p.19). Change functions according to the same reproductive biases of structures that explain the powerful continuities of social relations and also make it possible to explain the paths followed in episodes of change.

Overall, according to the structurationist understanding, structure cannot be equated with constraint only, because it enables agency as well as the transformation of former constraints into assets (and vice versa). Moreover, structures are not simply the outcomes of actors' doings, but also enable social action in the first place, however in a 'dual way' style. It is now possible to argue that structural change is not imposed onto a system from the outside or by 'voluntaristic' actors as traditional functionalist or rational choice theories suggest; instead structures, as conceptualised here, do not exist independently from the actors' knowledge – structures are only realised as structural constraints and resources through the agents' application of their cultural knowledge to human or non-human characteristics, possessions and physical surroundings. This conceptualisation of structure so far has three crucial consequences for the understanding of structuration. First, it enables us to see structure as inherently related to agency, because schemas and resources need an actor to enact them in social reality; structures provide the virtual and actual resources for agency, thereby simultaneously making it possible and limiting it. Second,

there is an inherent temporality to structure, based on its dependence on being reproduced over and again by agency. Third, as resources are normally unequally distributed, structures represent power relations, expressed as (unequal) resource allocation and domination. Subsequent chapters focus on questions of agency, temporality and power aspects of structuration to elaborate on these aspects further.

2.3 Human agency: Iteration, Evaluation and Projection

Structuration is a theory strongly focused on agency: structure and system accordingly require the conceptualisation of agency. In turn, structure needs to be incorporated into the theory of agency. Giddens's critique of common approaches to agency identifies at least six problems with how human conduct and action are explained: the flaws (inherent in functionalist and interpretative sociology) of either (1) overemphasising or (2) underemphasising structural constraints were already discussed in the introductory chapter. Moreover, according to Giddens, common approaches conceptualise human action as an (3) 'aggregate or series of separate intentions, reasons and motives' (Giddens 1984, p.3) or as (4) the sum of individual acts. Many concepts of agency also (5) fail to relate it to the 'coherence of an acting self' (ibid.), neglecting the mediating role of the body and its properties through or by which agency is exerted. Finally, (6) agents' knowledge and reflexivity of situations are underelaborated in most theories of agency (ibid., especially pp.2-5). In sum, agency has often been taken out of its context in both the circumstances and the conditions under which it takes place. In so doing, it necessarily presupposes pre-existing units (individuals) generating 'self-action' as the basis and the 'ultimate starting point of social analysis' (Emirbayer 1997, p.287), which the notion of duality does not accept. Instead, in Giddens's own formulation of agency, the duality of agency is conceptualised as recursive social practices, which are not

> 'brought into being by social actors but continually recreated by them via the very means whereby they express themselves *as* actors' (Giddens 1984, p.2, emphasis in the original).

The reproduction process requires some form of 'knowledge' of the agents about exactly how the continuity of practices can be ensured. Giddens discerns three levels of 'knowledgeability' of actors: unconscious motives/cognition, practical consciousness, and discursive consciousness, with permeable boundaries, however, between the different levels (ibid., p. 7). These layers of knowledge enable agents in different forms of behaviour. The stratified model of the agent allows for the reflexive monitoring of action, its rationalisation and the motivation for action. Giddens also insists that agency 'refers

[…] to [the] *capability of doing*' (ibid., p.9, my emphasis), not to the actors' intentions or knowledge about things. So, knowledgeable human agents continuously reflect on their own and others' activities and the context in which they are conducted. But what is it that makes people *act* and how does this engender social change?

Agency not only relates to unconscious and conscious motives and reasons, and the perception of current conditions and contexts, but also to the *un*acknowledged conditions and *un*intended consequences of action. According to Giddens, social change occurs primarily due to the unintended consequences of actions and the 'imperfect' reconstruction of contexts in social practices. While much of human agents' everyday activities are routines, actors are capable of reflecting on contexts, including other actors' activities, on their own motives, and on the potential outcomes of action. Moreover, the concept of structure as elaborated in section 2.2 reminds us of the relative flexibility of the actors' evaluative and projective capabilities. Schemas by which or within which contexts are monitored or judged are transposable; the repertoire of such schemas is potentially ever-expanding. Importantly, the actors' knowledge is socially constructed in the sense that it is acquired through socialisation and learning, and reconstituted through social action in relational processes *with others*. Therefore, agency is conceptualised here first of all as dynamic. The dynamics of agency enable it to be directed towards the ever-changing structural contexts, but also to the changing boundaries of what is considered the (relevant) context in the first place.

Emirbayer and Mische's reformulation of Giddens's idea of dual agency, based on their 'relational' approach to sociology, allows for expansion and more precise specification of agency that follows Giddens, but overcomes problems of the original theory as criticised by social theorists (Emirbayer & Mische 1998; Emirbayer 1997). Emirbayer and Mische incorporate these aspects without giving superiority to any of them, thus providing theoretical tools for analysing diverse forms of agency or practices. Their disaggregation of the elements of agency enables us to understand it as social practices of temporally embedded agents. Founded in 'relational pragmatism' (Emirbayer and Mische 1998, p.973), their theory sees agency as lying always in the interaction of actors with their contexts in the form of an ongoing 'dialogue', and so they conceptualise the actor as a 'dialogical structure' (ibid., p.974). Emirbayer and Mische develop agency as a triadic concept, incorporating an iterational, a projective and a practical-evaluative element. These 'chordal' dimensions of agency refer to its orientations towards the past, future and present, conceptualising agency as inherently temporal. Thus understood, agency allows for the

> 'selective reactivation […] of past patterns, [the] imaginative generation […] of possible future trajectories [and the evaluation of] alternative possible trajectories of action […] [in] presently evolving situations' (Emirbayer and Mische 1998, p.971).

Although all elements of agency are ever-present in every response to encountered situations, they are not always balanced; usually one dimension is prevalent in the process of concretely situated social action.

As Emirbayer and Mische argue, each of these dimensions exhibits a triadic structure, in themselves oriented towards past, present and future, thus always carrying aspects of the other two components as well (ibid., p.973). It is the agent's temporal orientations that allow for switching between the dimensions and changing the agent's relationship to structure. The iterational element describes those reactivations of agency patterns that refer to the actor's past, established or past routines, and incorporated practices; it helps agents to maintain their identities and general stability in relation to the social structures, particularly in the face of change. The projective element includes the capacity to imagine possible trajectories according to the actor's own orientations, desires, apprehensions; it allows for reconfiguring the agent's habitual patterns of thought and action in relation to these imaginative moments. The practical-evaluative element encompasses the ability to judge practically, normatively, or discursively, in response to the situational contexts. This goes along with the ability of actors not only to monitor their own relation and interaction with the structures, but also the other actors' (inter)actions and relations. Following this understanding, in situations the individual encounters, he or she might react according to learned routine, habits and so on. Still, even then, variations and modifications are possible. Neither the situations nor the reactions are usually identical, as situations may have slightly different contexts or actors might make 'mistakes' in their re-enactment of schemas. In new situations this seems to hold in particular.

Emirbayer's and Mische's disaggregation of the elements of agency allows for analysing the relationship between the reproductive and the transformative dimensions of social action and for explaining how reflexivity on past, present, and future in a given situation can possibly lead to differently oriented action, either by 'increasing routinization or problematization of experience' (ibid.). Agency denominates the concept of the ability to act in various contexts. It provides the patterns to engage with the structures, and the ability to reflect on them and the actor's relation to them. These temporal patterns are selectively activated in order to exert impact on a given context. The iterational component gives the actor the scope to pay attention to aspects of the context according to

biographical, experiential and motivational relevance. Recognising types and categories of patterns, the actor can draw from the repertoire of routines and habits. In turn, this 'schematisation' results in patterns of knowledge and expectations about one's own future action and that of other agents, providing for frames of stable social interaction; it also enables actors to maintain an identity, despite and in the face of changing circumstances (ibid., especially pp.978-981).

The projective dimension, too, is inherently structured as a chordal triad. The actor's projections on future outcomes of potential action are based on retrospective categorisation of types of action and their outcomes, placed in a sequence which provides for the narratives of causal relations between actions and development patterns. In processes of 'symbolic recomposition' actors creatively combine components of potential action and possible outcomes as scenarios for the future. These, in turn, are assessed in light of the 'moral, practical, and emotional concerns arising from lived conflicts' (ibid., p.990). Crucially, this is an inter-agentic process. Just as 'moral, practical, and emotional concerns' are generated in interaction among actors and in relation to their contexts, so too are the narratives and projections they invent and recompose in response to the latter. Moreover, actors are capable of selecting past interaction patterns to deliberate upon possible future trajectories in order to develop joint strategies for change and innovation. This aspect of deliberation is close to one dimension of the third, the practical-evaluative element of agency. 'Contextualising' social experience, deliberation offers the actor the opportunity to make their decisions based on consideration and reflexion in interaction with others. Practical evaluation is relevant when actors find themselves in a situation where old habitual patterns do not offer an appropriate response. This is not only the case in situations of large scale change, but holds for many routine practices too, for example in everyday interactions with others (Sewell, 1992).

In practical evaluation, aspects of the present context are related back to the schemas of interaction, and potential responses to the problem are identified. It is then for the actor to deliberate (in a self-reflective process or public discourse) the projections in light of the particularities of the current situation. The actor's choice and the exertion of the subsequent response, however, must not be seen as the ideal fulfilment of a balance of the actor's best interest, moral standards and practicability. Rather, the execution of a decision represents the 'contextualization of our habits, ends, duties, and projects' (Emirbayer and Mische 1998, p.1000). Moreover, Giddens's incorporation of Robert Merton's notion of unintended consequences into the structuration concept of agency reminds us that a decision to act and

its execution are no more identical with the outcomes than rational choice theory's intentions. Instead, the chordal triad of agency provides the theoretical tools to understand the temporality of situated agency in relation to ever-changing contexts, which actors can never fully overlook. The capability 'to do things' is always related to the actor's embeddedness in multiple structures, which not only limit the options available or perceptible to the actor, but also provide her with a potentially expanding repertoire of past patterns, current challenges, and desires, interests or anticipations concerning future trajectories.

2.4 Structure, agency and action: Accounting for social continuity and change

Central aspects of Giddens's approach to structuration have come under scrutiny from a variety of theoretical stances (Parker 2000; Mouzelis 1997; Held & Thompson 1989; Archer 1996). Among the critics who have gone furthest in the elaboration of their own understanding of structuration are Nicos Mouzelis and Margaret Archer. Mouzelis conceptualises system and social integration in relation to social hierarchies. These exist as structures in the form of institutions and figurations of actors, and are reproduced or transformed through interaction of micro- and macro-actors in social games, which differ in kind and in impact, depending on the position of the actor in the hierarchy (Mouzelis 1995). Archer emphasises social and system integration as '*qualitatively* different aspects of society' (Archer 1995, p.11, emphasis in the original), whose relation is that of interplay, rather than of interpenetration (ibid., p.15).

A major point of critique is Giddens's notion of the duality of structure and agency, which is often interpreted by critics as the 'identity' of the two. This would render the heuristic value of the approach doubtful. It is argued that, when understood as duality, structure and agency are practically reduced to one another, inhibiting the analysis of their interplay as they, the critique goes, could not be understood as distinct from each other. Mouzelis and Archer argue that both can and should be related to one another only in the form of non-identity, that is as analytical dualism. The question whether to think of structuration as a duality or a dualism might appear to be a philosophical problem, with little relevance for social analysis. Indeed, some comment that the main problem of the controversy lies in the fact that Giddens's concept of structuration remains too much at the philosophical level, producing highly abstract and generalising *ontological* concepts of structure-agency (Stones 2005), rather than providing a theory explaining the relation between the two, as Archer claims to do.

The problem of duality certainly needs consideration. The point that the concept of duality leads to conflation is not quite so easily cast aside as a purely philosophical problem, as it has consequences for how structure and agency are conceptualised as such; it is crucial, moreover for our understanding of how social change is possible and how it takes place. Giddens's own formulation of the relation of structure and agency and his attempts to formulate a more applicatory theory by developing strategic conduct and institutional analysis, falls short in its elaboration of the concepts. The positioning of differently powerful actors and their shifting relations to the system is not only an empirical, but an analytical question, which needs to be incorporated into the elaboration of structuration theory. I argue, however, that it is the concept of duality of structure and agency, rather than dualism, which enables us to understand social integration as a relational process between groups, permanently re-constituting and possibly ever-changing their situational contexts. In turn, the assumption of ever-changing relations between groups allows one to ask interesting questions about the relative permanence of most aspects of these relations as expressed in social integration. It is this conceptualisation of social integration that addresses the contribution of relatively autonomous agents to social stability and change.

Both structure and agency carry elements that share dynamic relationships. Schemas and resources can be combined innovatively and thus support the actors' ability to re-adjust their relations to the structural context. Simultaneously, orientations in agency can be refocused, emphasising projective elements where habits have dominated, or representing practical evaluation of current contexts, where projection has guided the direction of agency. It should be clear by now that agency and structure refer to a potential, to the capability of historical actors to enact schemas and resources in situational contexts. Agency is not to be equated with concrete social action, as if it were the sum of every empirical instantiation of this potential in social reality. Nor is structure to be equated with the concrete representations of schemas or resources. Social action and interaction are diachronic, following the time-line of human (social) existence. However, the structural contexts and the agentic triad constrain and enable social action synchronically.

While agency and structure are inseparable, mutually constitutive in a relational way, both are inherently dynamic, allowing for them to never be completely determined by the other. Not only can schemas and resources be enacted in different and innovative combinations, but the different orientations of agency allow for variety in the interaction with structure. This variability however is only a potential, as long as the social actors and their specific

encounters with the structural contexts remain eclipsed by the analysis. Generating their responses to the temporal-relational context, actors are enabled by both the multiplicity of structure and the agentic orientations; however, it is only the concrete actor's

> 'constitution of such orientations within particular structural contexts that gives form to effort and allows actors to assume greater or lesser degrees of transformative leverage in relation to the structuring contexts of action' (Emirbayer and Mische 1998, p.1004).

Partly as a consequence of the former, we need to specify structure as relational structural contexts of empirical social action (and agency), also accounting for the differentiation between structure as represented in the boundary of the model and structure as it appears in the scripts. Mustafa Emirbayer and Jeff Goodwin provide an elaboration of this thought in their approach towards a new theory of collective action. They argue that social action is always 'embedded within, and simultaneously shaped by a *plurality* of relational contexts of structural "environments"' (Emirbayer & Goodwin 1996, p.364, emphasis in the original), which they call the cultural, social-structural and social-psychological contexts of agency and action. Crucially, social action relates not only to one, unitary structural context, but instead unfolds at the intersection of three contextual dimensions, which constitute the specific context of every specific instance of action. Moreover, as noted above, it is not the overlapping structural contexts alone which shape social action, but actors are capable of differently orienting towards the specific relational contexts. Importantly, the three contexts of action, again, are not represented by specific units or entities, but capture processes of transactions and ties between the dynamic, relational actors.

The cultural context of action denotes the conceptual and symbolic patterns that shape the actors' normative and interpretive frames of reference, their 'understanding of the world and of their own possibilities within it' (ibid. p.365), such as ideas of nationhood, democracy or equality. The social-structural context refers to the relations between human and organisational actors, and how allocative and authoritative resources are unfolding in transactions and patterns of access to such resources; for example, this can refer to legal contexts regulating the relations between groups, the distribution of wealth, and access to political power. The social-psychological context encompasses the relational structures of emotion and commitment, identity and solidarity, which provide both enablement and constraint to agency and action, such as intergroup attitudes. All three structural contexts are deeply intertwined, sometimes coherently, sometimes are mutually incompatible. They follow different logics, however, which need to be theoretically distinguished (ibid.).

Decisively, it is the intersection of these different logics in specific situational contexts that provide for different combinations of sets of structures for every actor. Moreover, the temporal-relational orientations of agency enable actors to enact different 'scripts' (Barley & Tolbert 1997) from the intersection of contexts at different points in time, or instance of social action. These 'scripts' represent the specific intersection of contextual structures that can be enacted, replicated or revised by a specific historical actor. It is individually altered 'scripts' that actors can exert leverage on, or their own specific figuration of overlapping contexts. While actors are often able to modify these patterns of interaction in their immediate social proximity, this much less often leads to the 'objectification' or 'externalisation' of revised patterns of interaction of a broader set of agents, or in other words to structural-institutional change.

2.5 The structuration of groups: Collective subjectivity, power and domination

While the question concerning how likely change is in a given context is mainly an empirical question, I concur with Barley and Tolbert that it is generally more likely under contextual change affecting more than one actor. Even though it seems to say that change occurs, when change occurs, this is not a circular argument. Instead, it suggests that in contexts when the intended and unintended consequences of earlier actions have led to a situation where particular schemas have generally lost their validity, or habitual action does not lead to the envisaged outcomes anymore, it is more likely to generate collective questioning of patterns or principles than situations where habits are adequate to their contexts. Clearly, such situations often generate active responses that apply corrections, for example by employing mechanisms to avoid unintended consequences, identified as causes of the problems which led to contextual change. However, in the same way collective questioning bears the potential for collective deliberation, reflexion on current social relations and institutions, by expanding the actors' options. To be sure, for a possible institutionalisation of new processes and relations to be lasting, an adjustment of social actors both in terms of structure and agency is required. This, however, is a process that in turn requires the common effort of all actors involved in shaping the specific intersection of contexts for each actor affected.

The notion of the actors' impact on the structural context brings us back to the notion of power and differently powerful actors. Despite the 'dialectic of control' that is inherent to structuration, arguing that actors are always both constrained and enabled in their action by structures, Giddens, too, is aware of differences in control that can be exerted by different

actors. Decisively, continuity or change in the structure of a social system do not depend on individual (micro or macro) actors' changing behavioural patterns (alone), but require relational agentic effort at many levels of social structuration. Regarding the exertion of political power and domination, for example, orders have to be fulfilled by the subordinated; decision-making of the few on behalf of the many others requires some form of legitimation; the rules according to which domination and legitimation function have to be put in place. Giddens referred to these three aspects as structures of domination, legitimation and signification (Giddens 1984, pp.28-34). All three are expressed in various ways in the contextual structures, where 'meaning, normative elements and power' interlace (ibid., pp.28-29). Again, it is a question of empirical historical manifestation, exactly which norms are signified as important, and what kind of power structure crystallises. The framework suggests, however, that while change can be initiated by deliberating on only a specific, context-bound expression of (for example) power relations, significant social change is only to occur when change is observable with regard to the respective interpretative schemes, norms, and facilities of domination (ibid., p.29), affecting the social system as a whole.

While social change often is the effect of gradual shifts in the relational structures of a social system and the often unintended consequences of institutionalised patterns of interaction, it can also be brought about purposefully by actors particularly aiming at change (Olson 1965). Theories of collective action, social movements or revolutions emphasise the importance of discursivity, of active distancing of actors from the structural contexts that shape them, and their 'cognitive liberation' (McAdam 1982) from these. Essential to form a collective actor with 'collective subjectivity' are webs of relational actors who establish a common interpretation of the causes of the problems they encounter, as well as possible and desirable alternatives to the current situation (Benford & Snow 2000). In short, they have to develop relative coherence with regard to their agentic orientations (Melucci 1995). The formation of a collective actor, in turn, is then based on some form of perceived, experienced, or imagined groupness. Understanding groups as potential actors in their own right, formations of relational webs of actors exhibiting similarity with respect to one or more properties relative to structures, can thus have a normative, socio-structural and identificational representation. Naturally, individuals are embedded in numerous intersecting webs of interaction. Many group boundaries can be expected to be congruent with respect to normative, identificational and socio-structural properties.

Active and conscious processes of collective actor formation are just one route by which movements of 'powerless' actors become a 'match' for more powerful actors. However their importance lies in the discursive, deliberative and interactional conscious processes of a group becoming an actor. The argument of discursivity and collective action supports another aspect of understanding groups as agents. It allows us to understand individual group members' adjustment to systemic requirements not simply as a 'reaction', but at least potentially as social action, based on deliberation and conscious evaluation. Thus, it is possible to say that not only purposeful political collective action, but also everyday action of individuals is embedded in deliberations about, and evaluations of, situational contexts by relational individuals. In structural contexts of domination/subordination between groups, non-dominant group 'members' might therefore attempt to impact their situation not only by openly challenging the normative and institutional patterns according to which the system works, but also by responding to the structures in less openly challenging, everyday action even without wanting to support a 'group identity', nonetheless supporting or subverting the system intentionally or unintentionally. Social integration, then, analyses the interaction processes between dominant and non-dominant actors.

Conclusion

In this chapter I elaborated a theoretical framework for understanding the relation of structure, agency, social action and social change. In so doing, I discussed how both social change and social integration are enabled by the properties of social systems, its virtual and actual structures. I demonstrated that these structures depend on their actualisation in human agency, while in turn agency is made possible through these structures as the resources for situated social action. Change of a social system over time is enabled by the multiplicity of structures, allowing individual actors to reinterpret given situations or enact resources in new contexts, and developing preferences and strategies in relation to their memory traces, current requirements of action and projections of future trajectories. While this theory, in principle, explains how human action can impact the structures that constrain the actor, it has not been elaborated sufficiently, why and how specific groups form as actors, and how group interaction contributes to the maintenance or change of a social system. Structuration theory has been criticised for its limited applicability to empirical research. Indeed, it is hard to apply the highly abstract theoretical language used in this chapter to the analysis of Russian-speakers' and Hungarians' interaction with Estonia's or Slovakia's political structures. The questions of how to engage in a structurationist analysis of integration in the two countries are therefore central to the

theoretical and conceptual elaborations of chapter 3. The following chapter sets out to identify the empirical actors and crucial structures, determining these actors' relations to each other, in the context of interethnic integration in multinational societies, such as Slovakia and Estonia.

Chapter 3: The generation of groups and collective actor formation

3.1. Introduction

My thesis explores the role played by ethno-linguistic minority groups in the process of interethnic integration, which constitutes a crucial aspect of state- and nation-building in multinational societies. The previous chapter introduced agency and social action, fundamental categories that enable the investigation of non-dominant or minority groups as social actors on the basis of their capacity to interact with the social and political structures which they inhabit. The present chapter seeks to identify the properties of ethnic or ethno-linguistic groups specifically. Extant theories of assimilation dealing with interethnic integration have understood the significance of ethno-linguistic, minority-group belonging, first and foremost, as a constraining aspect of an individual's position in social interaction. Classical assimilation theory, however, tends to eschew any direct and substantial discussion of 'group belonging' itself, neglecting the constituting role of political institutions in determining group boundaries. As I demonstrate in this chapter, a structurationist approach to group boundaries allows these to be understood as generated through social practices of aggregate groups in relation with state (and social) institutions. It is this relationship that makes group boundaries malleable and thus integration a possible development of intergroup relations. The pattern and process of the formation of group boundaries lies at the centre of interethnic interaction. They represent the relations between groups and the forms and directions of cooperation and adaptation. This chapter demonstrates that the latter, though conditioned by institutional structures, can be modified by group members in interaction with the structures constituting the institutional framework as well as of group relations.

In this chapter, I discuss ethnicity (in lieu of ethno-linguistic groupness) and the different moments that ethnicity carries both as a constraining element and as a resource for collective action. In a second step, I review aspects of social movement theory in search of clues as to how groups establish themselves as actors. In conclusion, this chapter discusses factors that were identified by assimilation and movement studies which impact ethnic group relations. Overall, the chapter provides a reformulation from a structurationist perspective and a discussion of central concepts that will guide my empirical study.

3.2 Assimilation theory and the study of interethnic integration

Integration as a group-based social phenomenon has been researched most coherently in assimilation theory.[1] It was long the central aim of assimilation theory and assimilation studies to demonstrate the influence of minority group adaptation to mainstream (or the 'host') society on the minority population's participation in the mainstream. The starting point for analyses and theories in the field are immigrant, indigenous or other minority groups, distinguishing sets of ethnically or culturally differently 'equipped' individuals. Initially, taking these groups as givens, the emphasis of integration studies was primarily on the reduction of social inequality between existing groups. 'Structural assimilation', often analysed as a mode of social mobility, ultimately compares the social and human capital of individuals with different group memberships, who compete for access to crucial resources and the rights to participation in decision-making (Gordon 1964). Group belonging, decisively, represents an aspect of individuals' capital and thus a relative constraint or an asset respectively for their participation in society. In this understanding, integration between groups therefore increases with the individual group member's advancement in society, and the resulting aggregate group's integration into the societal mainstream.

On this basis, both classic and segmented assimilation theory have identified ethnicity as the determining variable in structural processes of social mobility, providing for a certain predictability vis-à-vis future developments in contexts of group adaptation in countries/societies of immigration. In virtually all cases, language – or, more precisely, the command of the host state's official language – is not only one of the most pronounced group markers, but also a – if not the – key determinant for the minority members' ability to compete with the majority population, for social mobility and integration (Gordon 1964). Focus on ethnicity as group members' specific human and social capital allows for an analysis of structural assimilation as relations of differentiation or accommodation of groups, expressed particularly in terms of social, economic, and spatial structures, as well as political participation. In turn, persistence of ethnic segregation – for example, in the labour market – can be related to the perpetuation of ethnic boundaries in other structures.

[1] This approach, though rooted in the American tradition of sociology and the construction, development and problems of US American society as an 'immigrant society', has developed into a number of related theories, finding applicability in societies far beyond the US context. However, its explicit 'liberal' tradition with the strong focus on individual achievement is evident even in many more recent studies, despite numerous reformulations and reconsiderations (Yans-McLaughlin, 1990). Though its original realm of research is immigrant integration, conclusions can be drawn also for the context of (national/ethnic) minority integration.

The role of language is qualified, however, when its intersection with other fundamental determinants of social mobility is considered, including age, gender, class and race/ethnicity. For example, it makes a crucial difference for the individual's adaptation to majority society beyond the acquisition of the majority language, whether the minority member has spent most of their life in a different cultural and structural context, or was socialised and educated by and within majority structures and institutions (Zhou 1997; Portes & Zhou 1993). Moreover, despite increasing majority language acquisition by minority members over time, inequalities tend to persist. Assimilation theory, then, makes a strong case for the argument that, at least structurally, ethnicity and race continue to constitute the most important reference points in the construction of boundaries between 'host' and 'immigrant' societies, or majority and minority groups more generally.

Despite this emphasis on ethnicity, for a long time the essential term itself remained a 'black box' in assimilation theory (Zhou 2005, p.131). As Zhou argues in a critique of pre-existing approaches, ethnicity was often explained as a static effect of either cultural or structural processes. Working on the basis of these unwarranted assumptions, it is impossible to account for the 'interaction patterns, institutions, personal values, attitudes, lifestyle, and presumed consciousness of kind' that co-determine the emergence and salience of (ethnic) group belonging, practices and potential assimilation (Yancey, Juliani, and Erikson, 1976, quoted in Zhou 2005, p.141). Moreover, the focus on ethnicity as a notion of individual human and social capital being the sole determinants of integration neglects the complexity of ethnic integration contexts. It overlooks both that ethnicity is not a social feature that can be 'overcome' in a one-way process through individual effort over time, and that ethnicity itself is the (temporary) outcome of complex interactions between the members of a specific ethnic group and powerful actors determining social boundaries, primarily the state. Particularly where other group markers, such as language use, lose their salience while ethnicity and other forms of group distinction along (former) ethno-linguistic boundaries persist, it is crucial to understand that the latter can be a category of subjective belonging as much as it represents 'objective' criteria. The members' embeddedness within social networks, family relations and emotional ties can be pursued by practicing an explicit ethnic identity, which might entail no more than sentiments of closeness or solidarity (Morawska 2005; Yans-McLaughlin 1990); individuals choose between different forms of ethnic belonging, depending on the situational context (Loury, Modood & Teles 2005a).

In contrast to the limited notion of ethnicity in much of classical assimilation theory, the conceptual approach followed here defines ethnicity as a complex of structural relations, interactions, and resources. This enables us to move beyond understandings of ethnicity as either an unchangeable unit of essentiality, something that people 'have' rather than 'make', or as a voluntarily changeable affiliation, to be taken up or disposed of freely by the individual in the process of assimilation. Reformulated from a structurationist perspective, ethnic group belonging is a reciprocal process of in-group and out-group distinction, informal ascription, official categorisation, and social identity, expressed in practices which create, maintain, modify or shift the boundaries between the groups involved, in which the state serves as a powerful tool in forming, perpetuating or dissolving ethnic identities (Wimmer 2004). These group boundaries, for majority and minority groups alike, constitute means to reduce social complexity, legitimise structures of power and resource distribution, and enable access to specific material and emotional support (Lamont & Molnár 2002). Over time, the maintenance of group boundaries therefore can become a goal in itself for any side involved, providing for the respective group's members' normative frames, social networks, identity formation, and specific resources (Olzak 1983).

While in some cases ethnic boundaries are simply by-products of the transactions between participants in society, they can also refer to the actors' 'borrowing' or transposing boundaries between situations or forms of social organisation, such as when the existence of group differences becomes institutionalised in the form of differently ascribed roles or denial of access to certain spheres or resources (Alba 2005). Moreover, group structuration through the institutionalisation of boundaries can entail the 'invention' of boundaries. These processes overlap, so that boundary construction often involves both unacknowledged and acknowledged, as well as inventive and borrowed, elements. To be sure, 'invention' of categorical boundaries does not require the invention of their components, but may refer to the sudden emphasis that is put on a line of distinction which had not formerly played a role (Tilly 1999). In this sense, the institutionalisation of new polities following border changes after wars, dissolution of state federations or struggles for (national) independence may be accompanied by the crystallisation of (new) minorities, such as, prominently, across the map of Central and Eastern Europe.

Thus, ethnicity as a categorical relation expresses domination and subordination, inclusion and exclusion, identification and prejudice, marking 'sets of actors sharing a boundary distinguishing all of them from and relating all of them to at least one set of actors visibly

excluded by that boundary' (Tilly 1999, p.62). In other words, although the boundaries may refer to ties and relations between sets of individuals, they thereby produce groups and identities along the boundaries of which social arrangements configure. Unsurprisingly, subordination, exclusion and prejudice constitute sometimes insurmountable barriers to minority participation in society. However, as noted above and in line with the structurationist argument, these not only constrain minority members, but also provide for alternative agency.

Building upon this conceptualisation, ethnicity and group belonging of minority groups can be understood not only as barriers to assimilation or resources for ethnic minority 'retention' (Gans 1997), but also as resources at hand emerging from and responding to the requirements of migration/border change (etc.) itself (Eve 2011), in confrontation with the demands posed by the majority context (Waters & Jiménez 2005), or even as one of the few routes to participation in 'mainstream' society (O'Toole & Gale 2009; Banducci et al. 2004). Minority group institutions, then, are decisive for the group's ability to allocate and pool group resources, providing also means of minority-identity mobilisation. Whereas these institutions provide the frames of reference for individual sentiments of belonging, in multiethnic societies they are potentially incongruent with formal and 'objective' forms of membership, such as citizenship.

This political dimension of assimilation brings to attention the limited leverage of minority members to determine their adaptation and social advancement (Wimmer 1997). Both the explicit requirements for formal membership and public policies deploying restrictive access criteria for full participation in society impact the minority's ability to respond to these demands. At the same time, policies are themselves embedded in economic and social processes, underpinning ideological and strategic battles between political actors, including those regarding the problems of integration. However, politics and political institutions can also shape integration. This might include the redistribution of resources and support for marginalised or excluded groups, by initiating debates and promoting recognition and acceptance of other groups and refraining from political games at the expense of minorities, by cooperating with minority groups or involving them with decision making in order to include their views, problems and demands for devising policies, or by helping sustain minority self-organisation.

Integration is not to be mistaken as a one-way process in either direction. As argued in this section, it is neither the minority group that can fully determine its adaptation to the

majority context even if its members desire to assimilate nor is it the specificities of the institutional and policy frame that 'automatically' lead to intended outcomes. Critically, integration is not a sequence of causal effects. Instead, as a complex and reciprocal, often parallel process, in which actors' anticipations of future developments play a role as much as their experience with former, similar processes and their current interests and evaluation of the situation, the existence of socio-ethnic groups is a consequence of societal differentiation, representing value and power conflict, resource inequality, inter-group prejudice and in-group sentiment. Both in institutional boundary-drawing and group interaction, groups are constituted as carriers of different roles in society, as differently positioned sets of society members, as adherents of different values or beliefs, as equipped with specific capabilities, and as in the process of an in-group group distinguishing itself from out-groups (Alba 2005; Lamont & Molnár 2002).

'Political institutions create incentives [for minorities] to organize in a particular way' (Loury, Modood & Teles 2005b, p.451); however, they do not and cannot determine the actual forms of organisation evolving from interaction between minority and majority, or the state. Minority presence in a society itself is often, at least initially, the unintended outcome of policies or developments focusing on different aims, without fully acknowledging potential effects beyond the intended goal. So-called '*gastarbeiter'* ('guest workers') in the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland and other countries, hired for temporary employment during the 1950s and 1960s, were intended by politicians responsible for these (temporal) immigration policies, as well as by many migrant workers themselves, to leave the countries after a few years of work. However, many of them have not left even 50 years after their arrival in the countries; instead complex minority, *de facto* immigrant structures developed in the countries of residence, along with policies allowing for their accommodation (Avci 2006). Institutions impacting such processes are not confined to those directly dealing with ethnicity or migration. Labour market, education and social welfare policies affect minority opportunities and structuration, as do economic and general political developments, including secularisation, (cultural and social) liberalisation, or devolution.

Although these interlacing institutional structures are all important factors in the processes of integration, nationalism theories have argued that the concept of the 'nation' institutionalised in the political framework of a country is the most important determinant of how majority-minority group relations can develop. The line can be drawn between what Ilan Peleg calls exclusivist and accommodationist approaches, or what is often

referred to as ethnocentric/ethnic and civic nationalisms (Peleg 2007). While it is inherent to all types of nationalism to draw a distinction between those who are part of the nation and those who are not, and in this sense all forms of nationalism are, ultimately, exclusivist, exclusivist and accommodationist approaches draw their lines differently with regard to their definition of the 'nation' (Harris 2009). Consequently, they are based on very different understandings of the state and its purpose. Whereas exclusivists and ethnocentricists see the state as possession of the titular group but not the other groups, resulting in citizenship differing from the polity, accommodationists and civic nationalists do not make such claims, leaving the polity ultimately more open to diversity. The prevailing understanding of nation and state is decisive for the implementation of integration measures, and eventually for the options of intergroup approximation (Horowitz 1985). When much of the 1990s' literature on nationalism in the post-socialist context has highlighted the 'ethnic' aspects of CEE nationalisms, this distinction became increasingly contested. Many authors criticised the 'orientalisation' of CEE nationalisms and questioned the underlying assumption that 'Western' nationalisms were automatically less problematic or could even be described in terms of civic nationalism (Johns 2003; Kymlicka 2000; Brubaker 1996).

Peleg's account of the ethnoconstitutional order as a dynamic scale of more or less accommodationist regime types aims to overcome these limitations of the ethnic/civic divide in nationalism studies. Accommodationist regimes differ in their logic of integration from exclusivist and ethnocentricist regimes: The latter's aim is the perpetuation of the 'state-ownership' and dominance of the 'core' group by assimilating, repressing or even eliminating other groups, which are perceived and 'constructed' as a threat to the dominant group's claim on ownership, sovereignty and hegemony. Unlike in ethnocentric regimes, the accommodationist interest of 'integrating' the political community lies in peaceful conflict resolution between ethnic groups and in thereby achieving stability, rather than in the survival of one group; the state is a tool for providing recognition and participation of several or all groups while stability and unity are expected to depend on the acknowledgement of diversity. Critically, regimes and states are no unchangeable entities. On the contrary, despite their institutionalised nature, the fundamental constitutional orders of states and the question of inclusion in the political community are dynamic (Peleg 2007). As a result, most states can be characterised as somewhere between the two extremes and differ in degree, not in substance

As argued in chapter 1, the literature on nationalism points to institutional-structural determinants in the process of interethnic accommodation. Three contexts have been identified as primary factors to impact the dynamics of regime type with regard to nationalism. First, the specific capacities and characteristics of the institutional frame and its components shape how both internal and external calls for change can be adopted and strategies be implemented that allow for regime transformation; second, the system's embeddedness into international structures plays a crucial role with regard to both a country's international integration and its bilateral relations with minorities' kin-states; third, the power dynamics between majority and minority groups impact the process. Analyses of the impact of these structures on majority-minority integration, as suggested in chapter 1, largely neglect minorities as heterogeneous agents of change, as well as minorities' role in creating alternative structures of integration or segregation. It follows from the above, however, that the different concepts of the nation provide ambiguous and dynamic resources not only for the majorities, but also for minority actors in the intersecting structures of integration within which the groups operate.

Minority structures in the countries of residence as well as transnational structures with actors in their countries of origin, so-called kin-states or international minority and migrant networks constitute resources for minority groups', sometimes powerful, action. Instead of analysing integration as shifts in the adaptation strategies of members of aggregate groups, the reciprocal and structurationist approach enables us to understand minority responses to changing contexts as the self-determined collective action of groups sharing more than the common experience of assimilation or exclusion. This includes looking at minority networks, interactions and the 'ways in which common struggle, shared social relations, and group control affect […] the fates of whole categories' (Tilly 1990, p.81) of minority groups. In very rare cases, integration represents the strategy of isolated individuals, but more often than not involves loosely or tightly interconnected people linked by personal ties or common experience (ibid., p.83). Unlike aggregate groups, minorities often not only share statistical parameters, but constitute collectives.

Extant minority structures are crucial for a group's ability to develop their own approach to accommodation with the majority: that is, to transform themselves, as a collective, into a collective actor. A minority group with well-institutionalised group structures, social institutions and the ability to discipline members will have fewer problems organising the group for collective action; a group struggling to organise its members around binding social institutions is likely to have less control of group markers, and instead to 'find their

identity produced at least as much by outsiders as by themselves' (Loury 2002, quoted in Loury, Modood & Teles 2005a, p.5). Threat of direct (minority) resource denial as a strategy for mobilising their membership can function only for minorities whose resource base has something to offer to its members; minority groups with a weaker institutional and resource base are dependent on more symbolic identity enforcement in order to expand the groups' resourcefulness (ibid.).

Boundaries or minority categories can have a liberating effect for some minorities, while hampering others in their efforts to adapt to society. Boundaries are sometimes directly targeted in group conflict in the struggle of groups to self-determine their own categories. Often particular (sub-)group identities are emphasised for strategic reasons, or to get control over the boundaries of their own groupness (Modood 2005). In contrast to this, sometimes groups unite under more inclusive categories, in order to engage in a common struggle germane to all those groups involved (A. Stepick & C. D. Stepick 2011). Re-defining categories by directly targeting these in the minority's discursive and political actions or indirectly changing them through larger shifts in membership is an action embedded in the intersecting contexts of integration which need to be taken into account in order to evaluate the process. New, or reinterpreted and 'refreshed' categories, which are distinguished from larger categories can enable the respective minority to establish more coherent or politically stronger collective actors, as their identity enhancing abilities might grow, or participation in collective struggle becomes more promising for the group's members.

It follows from the above that boundary making involves (at least) three levels of action: first, policies and politics are powerful means for decision-makers to shape and constrain constituting boundaries in society; second, as intended and unintended consequences of these policies, interaction, boundary change (boundary crossing, blurring or brightening between majority and minority groups) affects aggregate groups of differently accommodating individuals, often creating tension between political norms and 'social reality'; third, minority members' identity and collective action mobilisation re-defines group belonging and challenges the politics of membership. Often overlapping and mutually responding processes, these three impacts on boundary making correspond with the potential outcomes of integration.

Classically, the main configurations of these processes have been identified in a four-quadrant-scheme (Berry 1997), which can be applied to acculturation as well as structural

assimilation processes, referring to the forms of integration of the minority into the majority's or the minority's structures. Distinguishing assimilation, integration, separation and marginalisation respectively, the processes refer to a) the minority giving up or losing its characteristic cultural, socio-economic or political features; b) the minority practising a balance between both minority and majority characteristics, usually conceptualised with regard to the perpetuation of some aspects of minority culture, while displaying the socio-economic and political features of mainstream society; c) the minority being characterised by both culturally and socially very distinct characteristics, living separately or excluded from majority society with respect to most or all spheres; d) minority members or the whole group being unable to form coherent minority structures while simultaneously not adapting to majority society (Berry 1997). However, as argued above, integration seldom if ever takes place between just one minority group and one clearly defined majority or mainstream frame. Concerning the latter, it is not only the heterogeneity of majority society that allows for 'segmented assimilation', for cultural hybridity, and for multiple frames of reference for those potentially assimilating. (Parts of) the majority and (parts of) the minority can also integrate into a common framework new to both (Laitin 2003); minorities may integrate with other, perhaps stronger minority groups, forming one large heterogeneous minority group rather than several (Modood 2005). Moreover, and particularly in the face of the extension of cultural space beyond state or territorial borders, minorities can draw from different cultural frames, including those of 'kin-states' or transnational ties with (diaspora) kins with greater flexibility (Morawska 2001).

To conclude, assimilation theory offers arguments about a number of factors determining the dynamics and directions of integration processes. However, as argued previously, these processes are not social mechanisms, but can be controlled or managed, though never entirely, by political actors. This highlights that the forms of integration, including segregation or marginalisation, can be part of the agenda of dominant and non-dominant political actors as well as the unintended consequences of their politicking. Structural and interactive integration at group level therefore cannot be analysed sufficiently without taking into account the activities of the political actors involved. Whereas the dominant group's agendas are sufficiently covered by the analysis of the political community and regime, non-dominant group politics need specific attention beyond structural membership. This is not to neglect the structural constraints that impact majority political action. Both majority and minority groups are embedded in an array of social, socio-economic, and normative structures, which often intersect rather than overlap with ethnicised group

boundaries. For the purpose of this thesis that analyses the significance and changing role of interethnic boundaries for political participation it is assumed that majority members have a head start in interacting with state structures in relation to minority members. While the theoretical approach taken in this thesis always reflects, to an extent, the impact of majority agency, the focus - and the specific merit of the thesis - is on minority agency, which allows us to explore an understudied aspect of the interaction between groups. Importantly, assimilation theory and political approaches to minority integration can provide only to a limited extent the conceptual tools for analysing non-dominant groups as collective political actors. In order to enable such an examination of minority agency I also draw on social movement and collective action theories, which are discussed in the next chapter.

3.3 Social movement theory and the formation of collective actors

Minority members do not necessarily constitute entities in their own, overt evaluations and perceptions. We speak of groups as social actors only in cases where there is sufficient acknowledgement of groupness expressed in the actions of these groups, for instance, when 'objective' groups activate this groupness as a resource for their agency. Theories of social movements have contributed to understanding this process by providing theoretical tools that conceptualise the deliberation and identity construction involved in transforming an 'objective' group into an in group with a 'subjective' or perceived sense of itself as a group. Although social movement action differs from other forms of non-dominant group action, and far from all minority groups can be said to engage in ethnic movement activism, these theories offer categorisations and insights into processes of creating a collective actor that can help understand minority self-organisation. These also provide some methodological implications that help outline research steps for empirical analysis.

Studies of collective action, aimed at understanding the mechanisms of revolutions and 'contentious politics' (McAdam et al. 2001), have pointed to the indispensible precondition of some form of collective grievance in order to evoke a particular group's desire for social or political change (Crossley 2002). However, for a grievance to turn into collective action much more than just objective groupness and its individual members' grievance are required. A discriminated group does not automatically organise as a collective actor, even in the face of a beneficial political opportunity structure and a good resource base. Doug McAdam introduced the term 'cognitive liberation' to account for the process of bringing in people as mediators between opportunity and action, who attribute meaning to the

structural conditions and their own role therein (McAdam 1982). This meaning, as Piven and Cloward write, is enabled by three aspects, namely the loss of the system's legitimacy in the group's members' eyes, the change in the group's world view from fatalistic to the assertion of some form of 'rights' they feel entitled to claim, and the trust in their own capacity or power to evoke change (Piven & Cloward 1977, pp.3–4, quoted in McAdam 1982, pp.49-50).

However, this approach still seems to accept as givens the (subjective) groups who, potentially, become social actors. In his seminal study, McAdam describes the construction as a 'collective actor' of a group that initially only existed as an 'objective group' by analysing the role of the local churches in black insurgency in the United States. Later, Melucci develops this concept into what he calls a social movement's collective identity (Melucci 1995; Melucci 1989). While many social groups seem to construct and share an identity of belonging or emotional ties, this is not always transformed into a collective *actor's* identity. Identity construction thus involves the notion of purpose. It is a relational and interactive process providing for a tool to help overcome a situation that is perceived detrimental to (and by) the group members. Importantly, this identity is created in the process of group members' exchange of experiences, and the understanding that their grievances are not individual, but based on systemic conditions and shared by others (Della Porta & Tarrow 2005). Discursively establishing the reason(s) for the grievance, the group 'discovers', or more accurately establishes itself as collective: developing alternative scenarios to the status quo constitutes the basis for determining the 'ends, means, and fields of [collective] action' (Melucci 1995, p.44).

Decisively, collective actors exert their agentic potential based upon their ability to understand and evaluate current arrangements and envisage alternatives; collective actors constitute agents who, as a group, exercise this process practically through interaction and negotiation. They are constructed purposefully, in order to achieve change according to the group's overarching agenda. These agendas are created, again, in inter-subjective deliberation among group members. Moreover, they are not fixed, but can be changed over time, as collective actors develop their plans of action in constant relation to the social arrangements. Based on their understanding of the current situation and projected alternative arrangements, they also devise their clear agentic strategies. Unlike individual actors, however, collective actors (like some macro-actors, cf. Mouzelis 1995) require deliberation and their explicit construction as actors in order to act. In the same way, other aspects of agency stand out much more as conscious processes, rather than partially

unacknowledged dynamics. Identity construction precipitates the remits of collective actors' activities, manifested in their agendas, strategies and tactics. In everyday individual action, agendas and strategies are often not articulated explicitly or even acknowledged, but performed as routines or habits (Giddens 1984). In contrast, as guiding schemes of deliberate action as is the case for collective actors, agendas and strategies are purposefully developed and made explicit in a direct relation to the construction of a collective actor identity (McAdam et al. 2001).

As carriers of projective and evaluative elements, framed in the specific ideas, ideals, fears and desires the group members articulate, and of experience and memory, *agendas* determine the sort of change the group desires, by identifying the aspects of the *status quo* they oppose and the outcomes they envisage (Benford & Snow 2000). On this basis, strategies and tactics are developed that govern which and how collective actor practices are exerted; neither self-explanatory, nor generated 'out of the blue', these guiding schemes of action are dynamic and necessarily entail their own readjustment to changes in agendas, just as agendas are adjusted in response to the experience with successful application of the devised strategies. In collective action, group agency is realised through the interaction and negotiation among group members, consciously and deliberately taken out of the routine context and made explicit, with the ultimate aim of fostering or averting specific forms of (social) transformation.

Framing their agendas and strategies, actors apply three 'core framing tasks' for collective actors, including diagnostic, prognostic and motivational action framing (Benford & Snow 2000). In these processes, activists 'negotiate a shared understanding of some problematic condition or situation they define as in need of change, make attributions regarding who or what is to blame, articulate an alternative set of arrangements, and urge others to act in concert to affect change' (ibid., p.615).

Benford and Snow (2000) developed their concept in the context of social movement theory. Unlike social movements, not all collective actors aim at some form of social change. Often, the 'problematic condition' identified by representatives of minority organisations consists simply of their interest in creating space for less represented cultural practices, without 'blaming' anyone for the lack of such space. However, I would argue that even the latter's activities are embedded in action frames carrying, ultimately, the same characteristics as Benford and Snow's collective action frames, relating the activities to a

specific idea of how society, and here in particular inter-group relations, should be shaped, and what the collective actor's contribution could be to this.

Collective actors engaging in framing processes, however, are not only concerned with the reasons for their discontent and ideal future scenarios: their diagnostic frames entail analyses of the present opportunity structure, the resources available to them in order to further their interests and their anticipations of reactions of political actors opposing their cause. Similarly, the choice of strategies is impacted by the opportunity structure, potential allies and adversaries, and the available options in cooperation with existing institutions (R. Koopmans & Statham 1999; Kriesi et al. 1998). Devising alternative scenarios, collective actors incorporate and transpose frames from other, related contexts. In many cases, they avail of frames used by those the collective actors oppose. This is particularly well illustrated by cases in which movements draw upon higher level institutions, international conventions and moral declarations or normative commitments of their states, in order to combat what movement activists see as their violation (Keck & Sikkink 1998). However, diffusion processes are not limited to the direct challenge to one state, but can also be observed where strategic repertoires and frames are transposed across movements, in a 'transnational' process (Kolins Givan et al. 2010).

For the concern of this thesis, which lies with the impact non-dominant group members have on their structural contexts, the analysis of action frames underlying non-dominant group collective action allows us to understand the collective actors' perspective on the *status quo* and the need for change, as well as how they aim to achieve this. However, framing analyses cannot account for the consequences of movement framing. The study of consequences and the 'success' of social movements has generated a range of explanations aiming to account for the numerous outcomes of movement activities. Crucially, the identification of success is conditioned by the definition of success in the eye of the scholar and by the field of study. In this sense, researchers might see success only in terms of policy responsiveness and general change in the political opportunity structures or by increased openness or intransigence toward movement activities; others might deem a movement successful only if it is able to sustain itself as a collective challenger over time, with or without modifications of its movement identity, either emphasising the 'survival' of the movement or its success in changing people's attitudes towards them and in mobilising supporters (Jenkins & Klandermans 2005).

More problematic than the definition of social movement and collective action success, however, is the methodology used to capture the relationship between the two. The difficulty for the researcher lies in the claim of a causal relationship between the collective actor's aims and activities on the one hand, and on the other, potential changes in the distribution of social goods, in the access of different members of society to the political structures or other forms of social and political change. How is it possible to be sure about the collective actor 'causing' the modifications in the structural contexts? Numerous actors that are not part of the movement, and may not share its goals, can be involved in bringing about change for their own reasons. Even more so, when we are talking about changes to a state's institutional structure, external actors have often proved more powerful in persuading states to implement certain provisions that movements within the state also pursue in their activities. However, the international actors may not even be aware of the movement, or not interested in its grievance, but follow their own agenda. Moreover, it has often been argued that the opening up of the political opportunity structure is what brings people to address the institutions by forming collective actors where they see chances to further their interest, rather than the other way around (Amenta & Caren 2004, p.475).

Aware of these methodological issues, and drawing upon the insights into political and social accommodation of diverse interests from preceding chapters, I argue that no clear one-way causal relation can be established between collective action and socio-political change; this is even more so, since collective action is multilayered and involves a plurality of interaction forms with the structural context. Accordingly, political change and collective action are therefore deeply interrelated. In order to evaluate the impact of minority collective action, it is necessary to base any analysis of non-dominant contention on an examination of the contexts for minority activities, as outlined in preceding chapters. Second, an analysis of the non-dominant actors' framing of contention enables us to identify how they devise their approach to challenging the *status quo*. Simultaneously, this defines the ideal scenario and, by extension, what can be understood as 'success' of their collective action. Third, the aims need to be related to the applied strategies and activities, in order to allow for an evaluation of the success of the collective actors with respect to their mobilisation of supporters, of institutional resources, and of allies outside the institutional setting. Fourth, revisiting the structural contexts and the changes therein over time, we can now relate these to the actions of the various actors involved, ruling out 'clear' cases of other actors' sole impact and identifying forms of impact by the non-dominant group. As this thesis is concerned with very heterogeneous groups and their varied

formations as collective actors and activists, the question of 'success' is necessarily relative. This, I suggest, can be complemented by an evaluation of the perceptions both challengers and actors representing the institutions have of the reasons for changes in policies and institutions, and the reasons they give for the failure of non-dominant actors' inclusion. While this does not always give us clear-cut evidence of any immediate inclusion of e.g. movement representatives in decision-making, it does allow us to draw conclusions about the difficulties experienced by non-dominant political actors both in generating a politically more influential collective actor, and in impacting upon structural contexts.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion to this chapter, I suggest that in order to address the central research question of this thesis what is needed is a 'genuinely political analysis' (Loury, Modood & Teles 2005b, p.453), first, of how ethnicity/minority group boundaries are explicitly encoded in politics and public policy and the processes that provide for the perpetuation or change of group boundaries; second, of the structural contexts of group interaction, which themselves are subjects to change and therefore impact the dynamics of political interaction between the groups; and third, of minority self-organisation for political action as defined above. The review of assimilation and social movement theories showed that the institutional context, in particular state policies, representing the outcome of the interaction of powerful actors, constitutes the most important structures that constrain majority-minority interaction. The institutional-structural context for minority agency therefore constitutes the subject of part II of this thesis. In part III then my analysis of the actual forms minority interaction with the institutional-structural context will shed light on the minorities' role in interethnic integration processes in Slovakia and Estonia.

Chapter 4: Historical background of interethnic relations in Slovakia and Estonia

4.1 Introduction

The challenge of interethnic integration has long characterised the region currently occupied by modern-day Slovakia and Estonia. The restructuring of European political geography after the break-up of the great continental Empires following World War I represented an opportunity for the many nationalist movements of the 19th century to institutionalise their aspirations for 'national self-determination' (Harris 2009). The borders drawn during the peace negotiations near Paris in 1919 and 1920, as well as the restructuring of the Baltic region, and particularly the Tartu Peace Treaty of 1920, continue to shape Central Eastern Europe today. As a result of the nation-state-building processes across the region, the coexistence of the many 'nationalities' inhabiting the territories formerly belonging to multicultural empires generated an antagonistic relationship between the titular nations' claims for unitary nation-states and the heterogeneity of the populations. In both Estonia and Czechoslovakia, interethnic relations during the interwar period were shaped, by and large, by forms of 'multiculturalism'. These went furthest in Estonia's cultural autonomy scheme, but were also reflected in Czechoslovakia's recognition of minority rights in the fields of language, culture and (specifically) education. In both countries, these rights enabled self-determination for at least some of the countries' many minority groups (Nedelsky 2009; D. J. Smith & Cordell 2008).

The situation changed dramatically with the onset of World War II. At the same time, the events during the war in Estonia and the country's subsequent incorporation into the Soviet Union led to a very different development of interethnic relations than in the case of Czechoslovakia. Between 1940 and 1989, enormous political, economic and demographic shifts helped to alter significantly the ethnic make-up of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic (ESSR), and these changes were accompanied by Soviet nationalities policies, which oscillated between Russification and *korenizatsiya*, or indigenisation (R. J. Kaiser 1994). In contrast, with the exception of the war years, Slovakia existed as part of varying federations with the Czechs, in which Czechoslovak nation-building and gradual assimilation of minorities prevailed, despite the granting of some measure of minority rights (Heimann 2009). The first two subsections of this chapter seek to provide an outline of the history of interethnic relations in the two regions over much of the 20th century. It

highlights in particular the ways in which group antagonism and minority rights were framed by the various regimes regulating interethnic group relations. The purpose is to provide an historical background to processes of interethnic integration and accompanying debates in both countries during the 1990s and 2000s. Following discussion of the 'multiculturalisms' of the ESSR and Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (ČSSR) in sections 4.2 and 4.3, I explore the developments that helped the countries eventually break away from the federations with Russia/the Czechs and the role nationalism and interethnic quarrels played therein (sections 4.4 and 4.5).

4.2 Interethnic relations in Czechoslovakia

Czechoslovakia was primarily a product of Czech and allied efforts to find a 'convenient' solution to the problems the region's multi-ethnicity generated, after Czechs, Slovaks as well as the Germans, Hungarians and other groups had become independent from the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Innes 2001).[1] With the new state failing to represent Slovakia's desire for self-determination as a 'cultural nation', the tensions between 'Czechoslovakism' and Slovak nationalism were inscribed into the constitution of the new state (Kirschbaum 1995). Slovak nationalism before 1918 had been a struggle against the policies of 'Magyarisation' that came to prominence over the second half of the 19th century in the Hungarian part of the empire and affected, besides the political and economic spheres, the rights of Slovaks to native-language education. Inter-war 'Czechoslovak' nation-building, often emphasising the ethno-national aspects of the titular groups, meant that Slovaks were included in the state-bearing nation, while Germans and Hungarians – as well as other minorities – were not. Czechoslovakia was not built upon a broad consensus of its constituent groups, but shaped by the manifold ignorance of émigré Czech elites and the allies towards the other groups' sentiments and claims (Heimann 2009). As such, the First Czechoslovak Republic did not reflect the Slovak elites' visions of self-determination, and failed to fulfil the many Slovaks' hopes regarding the promise of modernisation through Czechoslovakism. At the same time, the new state respected the linguistic and cultural

[1] Innes argues that the members of the Czech and Slovak political elite who negotiated state-making at the Paris Peace Conferences of 1918 calculated that 'neither region was likely to achieve independent statehood alone, nor, if independence was achieved, could they sustain it in the face of those German and Hungarian minorities who would find themselves demoted from overlords to underdogs' (2002, p.4).

rights of the German and Hungarian minorities, but did not respond to their collective demands for the status of a 'nation' rather than a nationality (Kirschbaum 1995).[2]

The first Czechoslovak constitution did not reflect the objections of Slovak nationalists to the formation of a Czechoslovak nation. These objections and the lack of any response to them provided grounds for Slovaks' recurrent arguments that they were dominated by the 'arrogant' Czechs. However, unlike other ethnic groups inhabiting the country, Slovaks *were* included in the 'state-bearing nation', even if largely formally. In the view of many Czech leaders, granting Slovaks too much autonomy or authority in the new state could have resulted in similar demands from the other large minority groups (Leff & Mikula 2002, p.307), and would have been unwise given the strong clerical tendencies and alleged political immaturity and 'backwardness' of the Slovak lands (Heimann 2009; Nedelsky 2009, p.74).[3] The Slovaks' unsatisfied demands for national self-determination came to the surface in the course of the Second World War, when Slovakia eventually gained 'independence' (albeit as a highly dependent ally of Nazi Germany), and Hungary regained parts of southern Slovakia (Jelinek 1976).

After the war Slovakia was counted as part of the anti-Nazi forces, thanks partly to the efforts of Czech émigré elites, and partly to the timely turn of Slovaks against the Nazis in the National Uprising of 1944. Slovakia integrated into Czechoslovakia with the Czechs, while Hungary again lost recently annexed territories that today make up southern Slovakia. As a result, the situation for the residents of this region changed once again. The Czechoslovak state attributed 'collective guilt' for the break-up of Czechoslovakia to Germans and Hungarians, who became subjected to the so-called 'Beneš decrees', effectively depriving virtually all members of these groups of Czechoslovak citizenship rights, expropriating much of their property, evicting large groups of Hungarians to Hungary in an exchange for Slovaks residing south of the border, and annulling all minority rights with respect to language use in the public sphere and education in minority languages (Heimann 2009). The situation changed only in 1948 when Communist Czechoslovakia was established and minority rights were introduced (Jelinek 1976).

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[2] The Czech and Slovak languages differentiate between nation and nationality (*národ, národnost'*); the latter refers to a person's ethnicity, the former alone is considered an entity that has the right to its 'nation-state' (Kirschbaum 1995).

[3] This presumption of 'backwardness' partly reflected the different degrees of democratisation and decentralisation Czechs and Slovaks had enjoyed under Austrian and Hungarian rule after 1867 respectively. Bohemia, as part of the Austrian monarchy was more decentralised and independent from the Crown than the lands under Hungarian rule. The Czech lands also became increasingly industrialised, while the Slovak lands remained agrarian. Moreover, the national movements of Slovaks and Hungarians were closely linked and had a strong catholic core, distinguishing them from the Czech national movement (Kirschbaum 1995; Heimann 2009).

Although parts of the Slovak elite continued to demand the status of a separate, but equal nation with the Czechs, Czechoslovakism asserted itself. Until 1992, Slovaks had the same status as Czechs as part of the Czechoslovak majority; their status was particularly distinct from that of Hungarians, Ruthenians, Romanies and other minority groups.

In post-war Czechoslovakia, and in comparison to the situation of minority rights in other countries even during the inter-war years, provisions for the cultural reproduction of minority groups have been relatively extensive (Jelinek 1993). However, from the Hungarian minority's perspective, most important was the question of how minority rights and related structures developed in their region over time. The provisions for education in Hungarian in particular have changed repeatedly and sometimes dramatically since the end of the Habsburg rule. With the exception of the years following the end of the Second World War, when the Czechoslovak state suppressed all group-based activities and institutions of the Hungarians and Germans, education in Hungarian has been provided continuously within the territory of Slovakia since the break-up of the Habsburg Empire (Bakker 1997).

The effort to construct a 'Czechoslovak' nation-state, unsurprisingly, drew much from 19th century nationalist thought and the emphasis was particularly on the support of the linguistic nation. Since Czech and Slovak educational institutions had been neglected in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, efforts were put into the development of Czech and Slovak language schooling (ibid.). This was, to some extent, to the detriment of Hungarian language schooling. At the same time, provisions were made as early as 1919, when the National Assembly adopted a law on minority schooling, setting the legal basis for the almost 750 primary, medium and secondary schools across southern Slovakia with full or partial education in Hungarian (László 2004, p.199). The fact that most of these institutions belonged to the Roman Catholic Church undermined the effective maintenance of Hungarian language education. The ongoing land reform, which redistributed the often inefficiently used properties of the owners of large estates, affected the church's financial basis and so too that of Hungarian education (Bakker 1997, p.73; Pavel 1930).[4] As a result, Hungarian education lost some of its independence from the state, which made it more vulnerable to the state's changing concepts of nation- and state-building and the roles

[4] The land reform was an enormous project of redistribution of property in Czechoslovakia, where much of the land property was concentrated in the hands of a few landowners. The Roman Catholic church was among the landowners with considerable proportions of land in the form of *latifundia* (i.e. comprehensive estates of more than 1,000 hectares) which were low in production (Pavel 1930, p.268).

majority- and minority-language education should play therein.[5] In higher education, opportunities to study in Hungarian were significantly decreased, while opportunities to take up studies in Hungary were also impeded (Bakker 1997). In addition, many members of the Hungarian educational elite left the country after 1920, partly because they were denied citizenship, partly because civil servants of Hungarian nationality lost their positions and incomes. Thus, the community was also deprived of its intellectuals and professionals, a loss which significantly affected the social composition of the community in the inter-war period (ibid., p.40; Csergo 2007).

The war and post-war years had an even more drastic effect on interethnic relations due to several border changes. During the war, those Hungarians who remained on the territory of the independent Slovak state could maintain many of the minority rights granted them by inter-war Czechoslovakia, including the right to be educated in Hungarian (Jelinek 1976). In contrast, after 1938, the situation in Hungarian-occupied southern Slovakia changed markedly, and while the Hungarians who lived there regained the status of the titular nation until the end of the war, Slovaks became a minority again. The changes meant (among other things) that Slovaks lost most of the opportunities to study in their own language. As Henderson claims, in Horthy's Hungary Slovaks 'were subjected to even greater oppression than in the latter decades of the Austro-Hungarian empire, and also suffered economically' (Henderson 2002, p.13). While for Slovaks the war-years in the annexed region are remembered as the most oppressive time, for Hungarians in the region, the immediate post-war period was by far the worst, when the territory that today constitutes southern Slovakia again became Czechoslovak.

The post-war 'population exchange' between Czechoslovakia and Hungary affected to a large extent the Hungarian elite that had been able to remain in the country after 1920 (Csergo 2007). According to Bakker, the departure of much of this elite does much to explain the current, lower educational attainment of Hungarian minority members in comparison with their Slovak cohorts (Bakker 1997, p.74). Of course, education was neither the only nor the most important sphere impacted by the 'Beneš decrees'. Hungarians temporarily lost their citizenship rights, were deprived of minority rights, and in many cases lost their homes and land (Heimann 2009). Moreover, Slovak elites within Czechoslovakia campaigned for the Hungarians' 're-Slovakisation', suggesting that

[5] Also, in other respects, the development of Czech and Slovak education was to the expense of minority education. The reduction of church-financed Hungarian schools in the late 1920s cannot be explained by the nation-building plans alone, as it was an outcome of the land reforms; yet, the state also did not introduce compensatory measures. Moreover, in some of the state-owned Hungarian and German schools the state changed the language of instruction to Czech or Slovak (Bakker 1997, p.73).

Hungarians living in southern Slovakia really were Slovaks who had been turned into Hungarians during Magyarisation. Non-compliance with re-Slovakiastion often resulted in further curtailment of rights and potential transfer to parts of the Czech lands or to Hungary (Jelinek 1993).

The institutional framework for interethnic relations changed again after 1948. Czechoslovakia and Hungary were both part of the emerging Socialist bloc, and in Moscow anti-Hungarian policies were now perceived as expressions of 'bourgeois nationalism' (Murashko 2000, p.94). In a country strongly influenced by the Stalinist Soviet Union, Slovak demands for a federal solution of the revived, Czechoslovak state were soon dismissed, and the proponents of this arrested on grounds of alleged 'bourgeois nationalism'.[6] This again left those Slovaks still claiming some form of autonomy unsatisfied.[7] At the same time, the situation of the Hungarian and other minorities improved. Most importantly, citizenship rights were reinstalled. Moreover, minority rights were introduced, allowing for the foundation of the Cultural Union of Czechoslovak Hungarian Workers (CSEMADOK) as part of the National Front (*Národný Front* in Slovak),[8] and other minority rights in the realm of group reproduction. The proportion of Hungarian children studying in their mother tongue increased during the 1950s, but declined steadily from the 1960s onwards (László 2004, p.202).[9] Thus, the Hungarian education system existing today has its roots in the 1950s. Whereas two decades after the

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[6] Among those arrested was Gustáv Husák, whose reputation was restored in 1960 and who later became Slovak Deputy Prime Minister during the liberalisation period of 1968 under party leader Alexander Dubček, remarkably also a Slovak.

[7] This was despite the acceptance in the Košice Agreement of 1945 of both nations as equal. However, the Constitution of 1960 'had severely limited Slovak autonomy' (Nedelsky 2009, p.137), as was criticised by Slovaks. This could not be compensated for by the simultaneously established separate Czech and Slovak National Committees, who featured some authority over their parts of the federation, 'at least on paper' (Cutler & Schwartz 1991, p.518).

[8] The Slovak name of the organisation is *Kultúrny zväz mad'arských pracujúcich v Československu*, in Hungarian it is *Csehoszlovákiai Magyar Dolgozók Kultúregyesülete*, abbreviated as CSEMADOK. The National Front was the state-wide umbrella organisation of the – with the exception of the *Komunistická strana Československa* (Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, KSČ) mainly impotent – political parties and society level organisations. They were effectively controlled by the KSČ, and during the first two post-war decades CSEMADOK leaders followed the line of the party (Varga 2004).

[9] While in the school year of 1950/51, thus shortly after the 'Beneš decrees' were revoked, the proportion of Hungarian children studying in Hungarian nurseries constituted 7.24% of all children in nurseries in Slovakia, in 1958/59 this had risen to 12.61%. Similarly, primary school children studying in Hungarian constituted 8.18% of all primary school children in 1950/51, and 10.43% in 1958/59. The development in the upper secondary schools (*gymnázium*) was delayed, and while in 1950/51 the proportion of children receiving education in Hungarian was at 0.88%, this had increased by 1966/67 to 10.46%. Since the mid-1960s, the numbers of Hungarian schoolchildren studying in Hungarian schools or classes dropped, and increasingly parents send their children to study with Slovak as the main language of instruction. In 1958/59, the proportion of Hungarian children studying in Slovak lay at 10.07%. Four decades on, in 1990/91, the proportion had increase to 26.45% of all Hungarian children; at secondary schools the proportion had also more than doubled, from 10.37% in 1968/69 to 22.11 in 1990/1991 (all percentages retrieved from Szarka 2004, pp. 202, 205).

end of the war institutions offering elementary and intermediate level education had reached numbers that were sufficient to meet the needs of Hungarian school children, the situation of secondary and university education remained limited (Bakker 1997, pp.74-75). In 1968, minority rights were enshrined in the Constitutional Law on the Status of National Minorities (Sobotka 2009, p.91), which were however never fully realised (Marušiak 2002).

During the 1960s, Hungarians attempted to use the window of opportunity presented by the liberalisation of the political climate to push for increased minority rights, especially in education. CSEMADOK's leadership became more outspoken about the situation of Hungarians during the period of liberalisation, especially during the Prague Spring of 1968 when democratisation and decentralisation were promoted more generally (Varga 2004). Although, under Dubček, some Hungarian demands were accepted, they were never translated into practice during the subsequent 'normalisation' period under Husák (Marušiak 2002). In fact, during the 1970s, the authorities made several attempts to reduce the proportion of Hungarian-language education both in Hungarian and in bilingual schools, which was increasingly perceived as discrimination by Hungarians (Varga 2004). Despite some limited protest on the part of the Hungarians and efforts by a Hungarian underground group which focused on Hungarian language education, the number of Hungarian language classes and schools declined gradually over the 1970s and 1980s, disproportionally compared to the number of all schools in Slovakia (László 2004 p.202; similarly Gabzdilová & Homišinová 1994, cited in Csergo 2007, p.162). By the late 1980s, more than a quarter of Hungarian school children received education with Slovak as the language of instruction.

The Czechoslovak state's policies towards minorities were not *overtly* assimilatory; that said, the importance of the Czechoslovak nation-building project did not decline between 1948 and 1989. This ambiguity formed the background of the interlacing processes of democratisation and increasing demands for minority/national rights, which I discuss further in section 4.4.

4.3 Interethnic relations in the First Estonian Republic and the ESSR

The situation in Estonia differed substantially from that in Czechoslovakia. In 1918, the First Estonian Republic was created as a nation-state of the titular nation. Initially dependent on the unity of all social groups against Soviet Russia and its local Estonian

supporters, the new state soon failed to live up to the promises it had made towards minorities. Interethnic relations were shaped by mutual distrust and conflicting understandings of 'ethnic equality' (Alenius 2004). This changed only in 1925, when Estonia introduced its scheme of Cultural Autonomy, which was subsequently granted to the German and Jewish national minorities and praised internationally for its appeasing effect on the relations between Estonians and the former dominant Baltic Germans (D. J. Smith & Cordell 2008). As a consequence, inter-war Estonia was considered one of the most democratic countries in Europe in the 1920s and early 1930s.

Approximately 8.2% of Estonia's inter-war population was Russian, thereby forming by far the largest minority community of the time (Raun 1991, p.247). Among others, this number includes those Russians who had settled in Estonia for centuries as Old Believers, those who had come to the Estonian part of the Russian Empire in the course of industrialisation to find work there (particularly to Tallinn and Narva), and those who had deserted the Russian army, or fled as members of the 'White' armies in the Russian civil war. However, in many cases other minorities, such as the Finns, reported Russian ethnicity in censuses (Alenius 2004, p.43; Kaiser 1994). Perhaps due to its structural heterogeneity, the Russian minority was politically disunited and failed to establish Russian cultural autonomy (Smith 2002, pp.16-17). It was only in 1937 that Russian organisations eventually did file a petition to establish cultural autonomy. This was denied them, however: as the authorities explained, after the coup d'état of 1934 the constitution was no longer valid and therefore also the basis for cultural autonomy was not given (Osipov 2008, p.19). The coup was the beginning of an overall nationalising turn in state policy under the leader Konstantin Päts, which among other things was made responsible for the increasing support of Baltic Germans for the 'Back to Reich' propaganda from Nazi Germany (Smith 1999).

Although the Russian minority in Estonia did not organise under the cultural autonomy scheme, it did enjoy cultural rights as a national minority, in particular the right to education in its mother tongue, and in this respect profited from geographically concentrated settlement, particularly in the North-East (Smith 1999, p.461). However, even in this respect relations were not without problems. The difficult relations of the 'triadic nexus' of the Estonian state, the Russian minority and the (Soviet) Russian kin-state were evident even at this time, for example, when Russian schools in Estonia used textbooks from Soviet Russia. The events of 1939 and 1940 resulted in the Soviet annexation of the

country, based on the secret annexe to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939, resulting in a drastic change in the parameters of majority-minority relations in Estonia (Smith 2002).

The war years were shaped by the Soviet and German occupations of 1940-1941 and 1941-1944 respectively, which for Estonia also meant substantial population loss: large sections of the population of Estonia fell victim to deportations and purges, which fuelled the resentment and pain many had felt since the first intrusion of Soviet troops (Misiunas & Taagepera 1993). Deportations continued after Estonia's re-incorporation into the Soviet Union in 1944. The 'different waves of cleansing and repression' as part of Soviet mass violence in Estonia were by no means ethnically motivated. As Mertelsmann and Rahi-Tamm argue, the repressions and purges

> 'targeted at different times the national elite, "social alien elements," "kulaks," "bourgeois nationalists," "former people" (in Russian *byvshie liudi*), ethnic minorities, "collaborators with the Germans," etc' (Mertelsmann & Rahi-Tamm 2009, p.309).

The consequences of war and Sovietisation have impacted profoundly on the debates of collective and individual memory and attitudes towards the Soviet regime, as well as on the potential to utilise 'history' in today's political conflicts. Mertelsmann and Rahi-Tamm emphasise that it was initially émigré historians who constructed the frames of Baltic collective memory by referring to Stalinism as the 'years of genocide' (see for example Taagepera 1993). In nationalist discourse this narrative was adopted and has shaped Estonian historiography as well as public perceptions of the Soviet era in general (Onken 2007).

The demographic changes also affected the immediate economic basis of the republic, particularly in the face of Soviet industrialisation (Raun 1991; Misiunas & Taagepera 1993). Moreover, years of war had run down Estonia's economy and its material basis of production, with the industrial and agricultural capacity of the region almost halved, infrastructure almost entirely destroyed, and housing capacity significantly diminished (Misiunas & Taagepera 1993, p.74). The Soviet Union, aiming to quickly industrialise the otherwise relatively well-developed region (in comparison to other republics) sent Soviet citizens from other republics to strengthen economic development, including 'Russian Estonians' who had emigrated to Russia in the late 19th/ early 20th century. The migration of people who had undergone twenty years of Soviet socialisation from other parts of the Union to the new member republics also served another purpose: namely, to 'solve' the problem Soviet authorities had with their new citizens, whom they deeply distrusted (ibid.,

p.78). Under Stalin, purges and deportations continued, while collectivisation and industrialisation continued to change both the country's demographics and economic distribution. Again, these deportations and arrests did not target Estonians on the basis of ethnicity, but on 'political grounds', largely as 'kulaks' and 'nationalists'; nonetheless, in the late 1940s/early 1950s they *effectively* targeted Estonians more consistently than other groups (Mertelsmann & Rahi-Tamm 2009, p.316). Already by the late 1950s, Russians constituted more than 20% of the population of the ESSR, while the share of Estonians had declined to below 75% (Raun 1991, p.247). Changes in ethnonational demography continued until 1989, when Estonians constituted 61.5% of the population, while Russians made up to 30.3% and other groups, including largely Russified Soviet nationalities, made up 8% (ibid.).

From the period of intensive Sovietisation until the early 1950s, migration from other parts of the Union was related less to official distrust of new Soviet citizens and concerned more with expanding the labour supply. Estonia, as well as Latvia and (to a lesser extent) Lithuania, were the most developed Soviet republics in terms of industry and also agriculture. Moreover, they acted as a 'laboratory' for planned economic-industrial development in other regions, with new technologies being tested and introduced here first (Misiunas & Taagepera, 1993). As a consequence of the progress in industrial development, there was (according to the central planning from Moscow) a recurrent labour shortage in the region. From the late 1960s onwards, after years of decentralised (republic-based) planning, economic planning in the republics was again subject to the central authorities' decision-making (ibid.).

After Stalin's death, the Soviet Union allowed for some decentralisation in political decision-making to the republics' Communist Parties. As a consequence, the role of Estonians in the *Eestimaa Kommunistlik Partei* (Estonian Communist Party) increased notably; practitioners of national culture, for example composers for the Estonian song festivals, earlier charged with engaging in 'bourgeois nationalism,' were rehabilitated; Estonian non-violent dissent began to reconfigure itself (Raun 1991, pp.169–220). The 'indigenisation' further strengthened inter-war understandings of ethnic or national 'ownership' of the territory. As Brubaker (1996) puts it, the Soviet regime institutionalised both ethnoterritorial federalism and personal (ethnic) nationality (*natsional'nost'*). Simultaneously, the regime institutionalised tensions between these fundamental categories of its nationalities policies and the strict limits it set to ('bourgeois') nationalism. In this context, mass settlement of Soviet citizens from other republics, predominantly from the

RSFSR – encouraged by the centre – and a consequent ethno-demographic shift, were by many Estonians conceived of as gradual Russification (D. J. Smith 2003). The migration of Russians in particular into the ESSR was criticised openly by Estonians from the mid-1950s (Raun 1991, p.128). Each group was reluctant to learn the other's language, and neither was inclined to integrate socially, an attitude represented well by the existence and maintenance of group specific institutions such as schools (ibid., pp.210–212).

The Soviet-era migration of industrial workers and technical intelligentsia from other Soviet Republics not only increased the proportion of people who used Russian in the vernacular and in formal settings. Because it was their mother tongue, the status of Russian as a 'language of inter-ethnic communication' was fostered by all-Union policies. For example, this included the penetration of education by tuition in Russian with the educational reform of 1958/59, with an increasing effect from the 1970s onwards (Kirkwood 1991). By the late 1970s, the Leninist doctrine that 'no language, and especially not Russian, should be given the status of 'state language' (ibid., p.61) and of 'national self-determination' were replaced by increased promotion of Russian and less emphasis on the languages of the Union Republics to encourage a 'national-Russian bilingualism'. At this point, less than 50% of the Union's non-Russian population had Russian as their first or second language in 1979 (ibid., p.69).[10] As Ehala indicated, linguistically, Estonians did not integrate well with the Soviet Union (interview with the author, Glasgow, 12 February 2008). Still, by the late 1980s the situation was such that 33.57% of the Estonians claimed to speak Russian well, while only 13.49% of Russians in Estonia were fluent in Estonian (Agarin 2010, p.50). Overall, in terms of political representation, Soviet nationalities policies aimed to avoid creating or reinforcing the perception that the regime was surreptitiously promoting Russian domination. While local Russians bought into the vision of a multinational Soviet political community, Estonians did overall perceive Sovietisation as Russification.

4.4 Democratisation and interethnic relations in Slovakia

Analyses of democratisation in Czechoslovakia tend to focus on the role of Czech dissidents, with a strong 'Prague-bias'. Comprehensive approaches or studies of Slovakia's role in the democratisation processes suggest that the movement was more heterogeneous. Early activities for democratisation saw Czech, Slovak, Hungarian and other group

[10] For Estonian the number was only 28.7%, Kirkwood claims (ibid.).

members acting together or in parallel for similar goals, aiming to establish democratic rule in the federation while increasing individual citizens' access to and impact on structures of power through decentralisation and other forms of institutional reform, as well as bringing decision-making on many issues closer to citizens and enabling their participation therein. The development of the debates and conflicts over the future of the federation, however, saw the articulation of a whole range of interests, among which cultural-ethnically founded group rights and (territorial or non-territorial) sovereignty ranked highest (Nedelsky 2009). Claims for more rights for the non-Czech nationalities had repeatedly surfaced in different phases of the Czechoslovak era (Heimann 2009). Although parts of the Slovak political elite had continually striven for more Slovak autonomy and sovereignty over republican issues, and Magyars and other minorities had voiced demands for more minority rights (particularly during liberalisation in the late 1960s), national or ethno-cultural group integration still constituted only one aspect of Czechoslovak dissent, which was primarily concerned with democratisation.

For the Slovak political elite in Czechoslovakia, democratisation was closely intertwined with the question of nationalism, or national sovereignty (Brown 2008; Harris 2002). In the 1960s, the Czechoslovak constitution eventually included paragraphs that reflected the objections of Slovak nationalists to the formation of a Czechoslovak nation by institutionalising separate Czech and Slovak National Committees. These latter had some authority over their respective parts of the federation, 'at least on paper' (Cutler and Schwartz, 1991, p. 518). It was not until after 1968, however, that federalisation became more feasible in practice. The period of limited 'liberalisation' before the entry of Soviet and Eastern bloc troops into Prague and Bratislava had again made visible and reinforced the dividing line between Czech and Slovak proponents of general democratisation, on the one hand, and Slovak 'federalists' on the other. The former supported some form of federalisation where nationalities' rights would be one aspect among many; for the latter, federalisation was the main aim, and they felt their cause was being met with indifference by many Czechs (Nedelsky, 2009).

With the reforms of the late 1960s, federalisation was one of the very few desired goals that was actually achieved (Heimann 2009, p.270). It institutionalised separate Czech and Slovak National Councils as well as a federative council. The republics formally gained sovereignty in political decision-making over most issues (Innes 2001).[11] This was combined with more autonomy for the Slovak economy in particular, allowing Slovakia to

[11] Cf. Constitutional Law on the Preparation of the Federation, June 1968 (Innes 2001, pp.28–30).

catch up somewhat with the Czech lands, which had continuously enjoyed better economic development. Slovak nationalist demands were satiated for a time. While national power-sharing was soon overruled by the policies of normalisation, the two-tier system of political 'representation' remained formally intact (ibid.).

At the same time, inter-war minority rights had been largely restored in the realm of schooling and the support of Hungarian culture: minority rights were based on the formal recognition of the equality of Hungarians and Ukrainians with all other Czechoslovak citizens (Marušiak 2002). In particular, CSEMADOK repeatedly demanded more rights and support for their group in the political arena. In March 1968, the leadership of CSEMADOK insisted it was

> 'necessary to create such national minority bodies and institutions [*národnostné organy*] which, as part of the state authorities, will actively participate in the work of political, economic and government bodies on behalf of different minorities. As such, they can contribute to the solution of minorities' problems through the principles of self-government' (Central Committee of CSEMADOK, 12 March 1968, quoted in Varga 2004, p.435, author's translation)

In response to such demands, the constitutional law on the federation of 1968 recognised and emphasised the cultural rights of minorities (Marušiak 2002, Sobotka 2009); however, the authorities did not respond to demands for group based *political* representation. Doubtless, such minority demands did not conform to the idea of a socialist and 'supranational' society (Kalvoda 1988, p.11). Moreover, neither in the direct aftermath of the constitutional act, nor at any point later before Czechoslovakia ceased to exist was there any legislation that would have guaranteed the practical realisation of this law (Marušiak 2002, p.222).

Members of the Hungarian community had participated in the dissident movements; CSEMADOK in particular had played its role in the dissident movement by promoting minority rights. CSEMADOK was excluded from the National Front as a punishment for the activities it had pursued more and more openly between 1968 and 1969 (Marušiak 2002). Additionally, as a long-term consequence, CSEMADOK was subordinated to the Ministry of Culture, losing some of its decision-making authority in questions of Hungarian minority culture (Varga 2004). While normalisation was a setback to the minority situation in the eyes of Hungarian activists in the 1980s, Hungarian dissent started to crystallise again and more strongly during that same time (Sándor 2004). In particular, Hungarian dissidents continued to criticise ongoing minority discrimination as part of the

Charter 77 movement - primarily alongside Czechs - and as part of the Catholic opposition in Slovakia (ibid., p.30). In the 1980s, different opposition groups emerged within Hungarian dissent. Activities and demands were focused primarily on questions of minority members' opportunities for mother-tongue education, the condition and quality of minority schooling, the support for and decision-making in minority cultural affairs, and the use of minority languages in public life, including the use of Hungarian denominations for geographical and topographic places (Marušiak 2002, p.246). It also concerned minority activists that the Beneš decrees continued to survive formally, even if they were no longer applied in practice.[12] While many of these questions were of limited concern to Slovak (and Czech) dissidents, these groups did actively protest when Miklós Duray, one of the best known Hungarian activists (who still is a leading politician in today's Hungarian Coalition Party MKP/SMK) was imprisoned for 'Hungarian nationalism' (Sándor 2008, p.31).

Thus, although disagreement on a number of historical and minority rights-related issues persisted during the Czechoslovak era (Marušiak 2002; Heimann 2009), dissidents of all national backgrounds increasingly cooperated over the course of the 1980s. Out of the various dissident groups that emerged in that decade, a movement grew in the form of the Slovak *Verejnost' proti nasiliu* (Public Against Violence, VPN) and the Czech *Občanské forum* (Civic Forum). In order to have their views represented, Hungarian dissidents formed the *Független Magyar Kezdeményezés/Mad'arská nezávislá iniciatíva* (Independent Hungarian Initiative, FMK), Miklós Duray's political movement *Együttélés Politikai Mozgalom/Politická Hnutia Spolužitie* (Political Movement Coexistence, *Együttélés*) and the Hungarian strand of the *Magyar Kereszténydemokrata Mozgalom/Mad'arské krest'anskodemokratické hnutie* (Christian Democratic Movement, MKDM) (Öllös 2004). Despite initial engagement in common activity through the Public Against Violence movement, aimed at overcoming Czech and Slovak Communism, lines of disagreement arose not only between representatives of the Slovak and Czech factions, but also between the Slovak and Hungarian groups. In the context of the democratisation of the late 1980s/early 1990s, the VPN reiterated its demands for more Slovak autonomy and sovereignty, initially within a common framework with the Czech Republic, later as a confederation, and lastly as a separate nation-state (Ramet 1994). The power of the

[12] This is the case until today. In a recent decision of the National Council, the Beneš decrees are considered inviolable by the Slovak state. However, in the same debate in the National Council, Slovakia has condemned the principle of collective guilt (Malová & Učeň 2007). Minority politicians in post-communist Slovakia have also fought for the restitution of dispossessed property, proposing that at least those houses and land that was owned by the state should be conferred on the municipalities where the property is located (Dostál 1998).

Communist Party had dominated the political arena despite the various political organs that had been institutionalised in response to nationalist claims: with its gradual wane, any mitigating impact on Czech-Slovak relations also faded. As a consequence, identification with Czech or Slovak (or minority) nationalisms came to the fore during the events and debates of the late 1980s/early 1990s in relation to political institution-building.

The importance of autonomy relative to general democratic issues was mirrored in the different national groups, not only supporting their own group's cultural expressions, but also in voting almost exclusively for ethnically-based political parties (ibid.). However, a significant proportion among the population of Slovakia supported some form of federation with the Czechs according to opinion polls – this included the Hungarians, who in 1989 had made up 4% of the Czechoslovak population, but would constitute 11% of the Slovak Republic's inhabitants (Leff 1997, p.139; Jelinek 1993).[13] However, there was no consensus on how a future common federation should be formed; the support for various forms of future statehood was ambiguous and changing. Even under the condition that the two republics would have continued to form a (con)federation, the conflicts over sovereignty were likely to have continued. In this context, the influence of the VPN's nationalist wing grew. Simultaneously, the democratisation of the late 1980s/early 1990s had led to the creation of an array of cultural organisations by the different ethnic groups inhabiting Slovakia, including the Slovaks. The demands and identities articulated, while not entirely new in the context of interethnic relations in the country, posed the challenge of establishing institutions and a state that provided the structures and means to integrate these diverse groups into one community.

Despite the disagreements on a number of historical and cultural/minority issues, the VPN united Slovaks, Hungarians, and members of other minorities. The conflict that began to dominate interethnic relations and the democratisation process was that between Czechs and Slovaks. In early 1991, the VPN's two large blocs separated, leaving Christian conservative and moderate reform groups together with the Hungarian groups as a weakened VPN, which was already displaying internal ethnic divisions. The stronger branch of the VPN, including the Slovak National Party (SNS), the Slovak Democratic

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[13] According to Jelinek (1993), the Czecho-Slovak embassy in Israel supplied the following data as of 3 March 1991. *Nationalities in Czechoslovakia:* Czechs 8,426,070; Slovaks 4,819,948; Moravians 1,360,155;Hungarians 586,884; Romanies (Gypsies) 114,116; Poles 61,542; Germans 53,418; Silesians 45,223; Ukrainians 20,954; Ruthenians 18,648; Russians 5930; other and unsure 55,078.
Nationalities in the Czech Republic: Czechs 8,327,648; Moravians 1,356,267; Slovaks 308,269.
Nationalities in the Slovak Republic: Slovaks 4,511,679; Hungarians 566,741; Romanies (Gypsies) 80,627.

Left (SDL') and the new *Hnutia za democratické Slovensko* (Movement for a Democratic Slovakia, HZDS), reconfigured the direction and character of the democratic transformation (Harris 2002). HZDS, under the leadership of Vladimir Mečiar, successfully capitalised on Slovak nationalist sentiments, while at the same time the alliance between the Slovak and Hungarian movements was broken (Csergo 2007, p.32). In the political debates of 1991/1992, the focus shifted from the question of how the issue of sovereignty in the Czech and Slovak Republics was to be solved *democratically* when democratic sovereignty was understood differently by Czechs and Slovaks, to sovereignty being increasingly debated as a question of ethnic sovereignty, without necessarily debating its implications for democracy (Heimann 2009).[14]

Tensions between the Czech and the Slovak Republics were exacerbated by the problems of an unequally developed economy, which worried the two republics differently. The Slovak economy, which since the 1960s had engaged in a more 'Soviet style' industrialisation, relying on heavy and military industry, now faced far more difficulties than the Czech economy as it 'transitioned' to a non-socialist economy in order to sustain local demand to replace production based on exports to the Soviet Union (Henderson, 1999). Rather than this being mirrored in political divisions – for example, in a left-right divide – the economic differences were again framed along republican lines and couched in terms of whether the burden of economic transformation was to be shared and, if so, how that would be done. The economic issue then served further to fuel nationalism. Thus, the conflicts were not ethnic in principle, but represented mainly the traditionally different understandings in Slovak and Czech political thought of how to institutionalise democratic principles. However, with the goal of Slovak self-determination becoming increasingly popularised, politics were ethnicised (Nedelsky 2009; Csergo 2007).[15]

When, in September 1992, Slovakia's National Council passed a separate constitution for the country, the future of (Czech and) Slovak statehood had still not been settled. The Slovak political elite had emphasised for decades its perception of relative exclusion from

[14] Another debate emerged after Havel's somewhat imprudent suggestion of omitting the term 'socialist' from the common state's denomination in 1989 and calling it Czechoslovakia. Bitter memories of Slovaks led them to suggest Czecho-Slovakia instead, which was disapproved by the Czechs as for them 'it was too painful a reminder […] of the Slovaks' and Ruthenians' 'betrayals' of 1938 and 1939' (Heimann 2009, p.318). It took three weeks to solve the dispute by agreeing on the state's new name Czech and Slovak Federative Republic.
[15] While there was public support for both a federalist and a separatist solution, demonstrations in Bratislava particularly represented the nationalist spectrum, not only displaying and shouting anti-Czech, anti-Hungarian and anti-Semitic slogans, but even attacking Havel, when he turned up at such a rally unexpectedly (Heimann, 2009, p. 317). Public commemoration of Hlinka and Tiso as 'pioneers' of Slovak independent statehood also expressed the strong support among a large part of the population for Slovak independence regardless of its rather inglorious history; the Czech public was appalled by this (ibid.).

the Czech-Slovak political community during common statehood. The newly formulated demands and identities posed the challenge of integrating these diverse groups into one community. Moreover, demands were raised claiming the sovereignty and self-determination of the nation that was increasingly defined in ethno-cultural terms, which also affected the way in which minority members framed their political participation and projections of future statehood (Harris 2002). While common statehood would have been an equally realistic option for the developments after mid-1992, most analysts attribute the actual split to the uncompromising negotiations on the future federation of the two leaders, Vladimir Mečiar and Václav Klaus, who steered the situation towards the 'inevitability' of separation. They are cautious, to point out that it was not so much a conflict between the Czech and Slovak groups that made the eventual split inevitable, but the failure of the Czech and Slovak leaders of the negotiations (Henderson 1999). Nonetheless, the political foundations for the split had been laid out in the months and years leading up to the 'failed' talks between the heads of the two republics, rather than developing naturally, as the claim of inevitability seems to suggest.[16] As Shepherd argues, Slovakia's eventual independence was a

> 'no nonsense solution when everything else was blurred. […] Once the deed had been accomplished, there was no great outcry and the issue is, of course, completely off the agenda now' (Shepherd 2000, p.140).

Some authors have argued that this result contradicted the views of the majority of the two republics' populations (Leff 1996). After all, the main conflict of the time was that of democratising a former Communist state, for which both republics had

> 'moved in tandem to remove the regime. Civic Forum and [VPN] were formed simultaneously, in response to the same events, and the same deeper political, economic and social problems. They had compatible demands, and similar visions of the future' (Henderson 1999, pp.31-2).

However, the two movements were formed in parallel with each other, not as one. Other scholars have therefore argued that, for example, the number of Slovaks estimated to have been opposed to the split has to be reconsidered, and was probably lower than previously assumed, not the least because most members of the Hungarian community were known to be opposed to the split and constituted 10% of the Slovak population (Nedelsky 2009). Thus, Heimann argues convincingly that the decision taken by Mečiar and Klaus

[16] Heimann supports a similar argument, Heimann, 2009, p. 321.

> 'followed quite logically both from the course of the Velvet Revolution – which had really been two revolutions, one Czech and one Slovak – and, more profoundly, from Czech-Slovak tensions which had dogged Czecho-Slovakia/Czechoslovakia from its inception and meant that, while most Czechs were able to identify with the state, a majority of Slovaks considered their nationality to be Slovak, not Czechoslovak' (Heimann 2009, p.321).

At the same time, the Hungarian group anticipated the restriction of their recently gained rights, and therefore preferred to continue a more centralised common statehood with the Czechs, fearing that the Slovaks would turn against them once 'turned loose.' In very much the same language utilised by the Slovaks in arguing against 'Czech domination', Hungarians demanded recognition as a state-bearing group against efforts by the Slovak majority to institutionalise its dominance in the political system of the emerging state. However, they also feared the curtailing of rights in a Slovak nation-state, not least because of the historical animosities between the Slovak and Hungarian groups. Unsurprisingly, therefore, they protested strongly against the formulation of the Slovak constitution, which declared the Slovaks as the single, state-constituting nation, when it was passed in September 1992 (Nedelsky 2003).

Importantly, the split of Czechoslovakia was never put to a referendum. With hindsight, it can be assumed that, even though many Slovaks did not support an independent Slovakia, their support for a common state with the Czechs lacked sufficient strength and depth to make them bring this demand into the streets at a time of 'triple transition' (Shepherd 2000). Perhaps unsurprisingly, therefore, the divorce was as 'velvet' in character as the preceding revolution, particularly in comparison to other countries that underwent regime change and fell apart into new states. That said, such a statement should not go without the qualification that the 'velvet' split was accompanied by eruptions of xenophobic, particularly anti-Hungarian, anti-Semitic, and anti-Czech demonstrations in Bratislava,[17] and thus taken by observers, as well as minority members, as heralding repressive, intolerant political practices and policies (Fisher 2006).

In the struggle for a new consensus regarding the definition of the political community in Slovakia, three strands had emerged in Slovak politics. These have since shaped the state's institutional development. They consist of a nationalist, a moderately liberal-conservative and a pluralist concept of political community. These are not easily assigned to political parties, but rather represent tendencies in the changing politics of dynamic and

[17] In the Czech Republic, skinhead attacks as well as nationalists' rhetoric were aimed particularly against Gypsies and Vietnamese (Heimann 2009, p.322).

heterogeneous political actors (Csergo 2007). The nationalist principle has dominated political thought far beyond parties that usually count as 'nationalist'. Simultaneously, parts of the moderate camp support the idea of a unitary nation-state, usually opposing the broadening of minority group rights; others favour more liberal concepts of Slovakia as a civic nation, which overlaps with the ideas some minority representatives support. Pluralist concepts, almost exclusively represented by the Hungarian camp, encompass a broad range of ideas, from loose demands for recognition of minorities as legitimate political actors to concepts of co-nation and equal status of majority and minority groups (ibid.). Although the latter two strands have always played a role in Slovak policies, the 1990s and beyond were dominated by the idea of establishing a Slovak nation-state.

The first signs of the institutionalisation of the ethnic principle as a guide for Slovak state politics were already evident when the country was still part of the federation with the Czech Lands, namely in 1990 with the adoption of the Official Language Law, discussed in more detail in chapter 6. This document was read by observers and politicians not only as a counter to Czech domination, but also as a preemptive move against other ethnic groups living in Slovakia, particularly the Hungarians, whose demands for recognition in the federal Slovak state were only to a very limited extent represented by the new law (Daftary & Gál 2003). A much more important step to institutionalise Slovak sovereignty to implement a multifaceted ethnic principle was the HZDS's draft for a Slovak constitution, which was adopted on 1 September 1992 (Ústava 1992). The preamble of the constitution resembles the text of the Slovak declaration of independence from June that year, in which the National Council

> 'proclaims the sovereignty of the Slovak Republic as the foundation of the sovereign state of the Slovak nation' (quoted in Nedelsky 2009, p.182).

The National Council adopted the constitution with the support of the vast majority of the MPs, though it was clearly rejected by the Hungarian representatives and - for reasons of lack of catholic imprint on the constitution - also by the representatives of the Slovak Christian Democratic Movement. The Hungarian parties sensed that the Slovak concept of the nation was not inclusive of other nationalities. Therefore, they proposed a draft version with a more inclusive wording, suggesting the constitution began with the phrase 'We, the citizens of Slovakia', rather than 'We, the Slovak nation'. When this was rejected, the Hungarian representatives walked out in protest and were absent for the final decision on the adoption of the constitution. As a consequence, the constitution was adopted with the exclusion of substantial parts of the population and despite the strong criticism of the

minority representatives (Nedelsky 2009). With respect to its impact on the development of interethnic relations in independent Slovakia, the decision to not engage in a debate with minority representatives and to avoid mention of interethnic consensus formation on common statehood and the place and role of minorities in it cannot be overestimated. As I discuss in chapter 5, this exclusivist approach was mirrored by the fundamental identity documents of the political community.

4.5 Democratisation and interethnic relations in Estonia

As was the case in Slovakia, the processes of *glasnost'* and democratisation during the 1980s in Estonia which eventually led to the country's independence in 1991 were closely intertwined with national sovereignty and nationalism (Budryte 2005). Estonia's incorporation into the Soviet Union was perceived by many Estonians as an ongoing, unlawful occupation by an oppressor that had ruled the country for centuries. The Soviet era has been portrayed by Estonian writers, historians and dissidents as having been a peril to the 'survival of the Estonian people' (cf. Raun 1991, p.xviii). Indeed, several aspects of Estonia's Soviet history concern drastic demographic changes (as mentioned earlier in this chapter). As a result, long before *perestroika* set in, grass-root initiatives had made national sovereignty and the use of Estonian language in all realms of society a matter of human rights (Vardys 1981). Dissident groups in the 1970s raised demands to end Russification and initiated a referendum to secede from the Union (Misiunas & Taagepera 1993, pp.266-267). Particularly in the 1980s, criticism grew stronger, when Estonians argued that they could not take the permanent influx of Russians into the republic, as this caused the continuous decline of Estonian language, knowledge of Estonian traditions, and the general decline of the Estonian proportion in the population (ibid., p.269). Moreover, Russian migration was understood as directly related to economic and environmental exploitation. For many Estonians,

> 'Russaphones were the immediate cause of environmental decay because Russian speakers' hands razed the land, opened the sewer spigot, thieved Estonia's mineral wealth, and discarded as waste all extracted resources not part of the production plan' (Auer 1998, p.666).[18]

These accusations and the demands for an end to Russian migration to Estonia and even secession were published in *samizdat*: although negative sentiments towards Russian-

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[18] This was not least because Estonians had shown reluctance to work in the oil shale mines (Auer 1998, p.665).

speakers existed among Estonians, there is evidence that many, if not most, citizens were unaware of any ethnic tensions in the Republic or the Union as a whole, and believed in the notion of peaceful coexistence of Soviet nationalities (Agarin 2010, p.67).

Still, in the ESSR, demands for democratisation known across the Soviet Union and Central Eastern Europe were inextricably linked to the future of the Estonians as a cultural, linguistic or ethnic group. Among other reasons,

> '[t]he Soviet regime never managed to eradicate entirely the legacy of the interwar period [i.e. Estonian independent statehood 1918-1940], nor did it necessarily seek to do so in the years after 1953' (D. J. Smith 2003, p.161).

Estonian dissent had broadened its social base during the 1970s and 1980s, mobilising around ecological, economic and democratic development of the republic and Estonian national self-determination (Raun 1997; Raun 1991). The reforms under Gorbachev's aegis evoked even stronger and more loudly articulated demands for cultural and political rights vis-à-vis Moscow. Group sentiment grew among Estonians towards Russian-speakers, and primarily Russians, and even led to anti-Russian marches and clashes between the groups (ibid.). This was, however, not a new phenomenon, as already during earlier protests demands for Russians to leave the ESSR had been voiced (Vardys 1981). As a consequence, not all strands of the democratisation movement could be considered open to Russians and Russian-speakers. However, it would be incorrect to assume a general *political* divide between Estonians and Russians. Many Russians supported some form of Estonia's 'native inhabitant[s'] […] final word on the destiny of their land and people' (Open Letter From the Estonian SSR, quoted in Vardys 1981, p.295). In so doing, they also did not oppose the increasingly open display of Estonian national symbols, their demands for safeguards for the Estonian language or the increasingly vehement demands for dissolving the ties with Moscow. And despite anti-Russian sentiments on the side of the Estonians, both Estonian and Russian activists engaged in the Popular Front, the reform-oriented strand of the emerging movement for democratisation and autonomy. Russian-speakers' support for independence grew over the months of 1989 and 1991. In September 1989 only 9% of Russian-speakers supported independence according to opinion polls (Agarin 2010, p.78); in March 1990, the Russian-speaking deputies of the Supreme Council decided not to participate in a vote on independence, thereby expressing their suspicions regarding the growing nationalism that accompanied the vote, but simultaneously allowing for the vote to go ahead in support of independence (Smith 2002, pp.56-57); in March 1991, a referendum was organised by the Popular Front in which all

residents could participate and it was estimated that between 25-40% of the Russian-speakers voted for independence then (Smith 2002, p.59). Among Estonians, the support for independence grew even more rapidly. While, in April 1989, 56% of Estonians were pro-independence, in May 1990, the proportion had risen to 96% (Raun 1991, p.229).

While the majority of Russian-speakers did not actively participate in the movement, those who did agreed with Estonians in their demands for decentralisation (ibid.). Consequently, Estonia's path to independence in the turbulent years between 1987/88 and 1990 was shaped by the emerging movements for autonomy, mutually reinforced by similar movements in Latvia and Lithuania (Misiunas & Taagepera, 1993). The Estonian population along with a substantial part of the Russian-speakers supported this development, initially only claiming autonomy within the Union and only later calling for independence, a fact increasingly neglected in the academic literature on the topic in the subsequent years (Agarin 2010). Public pressure mounted against many centrally-led economic policies, and these were decidedly not sanctioned by Moscow.

Russian-speakers' hesitancy to support independence was due to several factors. On the one hand, it was far from clear what 'independence' meant. The Popular Front continued to support varying forms of autonomy and independence within a loose federation with other (former) Soviet republics, and promoted a reform course on the basis of existing institutions. A number of Estonian parties that had formed since 1987 with the aim of (re)gaining national self-determination, including the *Eesti Muinsuskaitse Selts* (Estonian Heritage Society, EMS) and the *Eesti Rahvusliku Sõltumatuse Partei* (Estonian National Independence Party, ERSP), which mobilised on the basis of strong anti-Soviet rhetoric and supported the restoration of the pre-Soviet Estonian state (Raun 1991). Part of the Russian population organised to counter the progressing decentralisation, fearing particularly for their language-related rights and privileges (Misiunas & Taagepera 1993, p.312).

On the other hand, a 'counter-movement' developed that advocated the goal of maintaining the status quo, claiming (with only limited justification) to represent the Russian-speaking population. These movements opposed the course of the Popular Front as much as that of the Estonian nationalists, and supported a pro-Soviet course. The 'Internationalist Movement' (*Interdvizhenie,* Intermovement) gained support almost exclusively from the ranks of Russian-speakers – predominantly among the non-Estonian *nomenklatura* and to some degree the older population. However, due to their 'conservative' stance on *glasnost'*

and *perestroika*, they received little support from Moscow (D. J. Smith 1998). Although 2-3,000 supporters could be mobilised to rally against the Popular Front's 'nationalism' in summer 1988, Intermovement was supported by only around 15% of the Russian-speaking population in the ESSR, according to an opinion poll in 1988; it eventually lost most of its support among even them in the following years (Raun 1991, p.226). Joint activities with the *Ob''edinennyi Soyuz trudovykh kollektivov* (United Council of Work Collectives, OSTK) – largely consisting of managers of the large industrial sites, particularly of the Estonian North-East and old-guard CPE leaders – allowed the Intermovement's leadership to continually influence the Russian-speaking industrial workers.[19] However, the Russian-speakers' support for both counter-movement organisations did not exceed around a third of the group's members (D. J. Smith 2002, p.49).

On the initiative of the radical ESRP, in that year the *Eesti Kodanike Komiteed* (Estonian Citizens' Committees) organised a register for all citizens of inter-war Estonia and their descendents (D. J. Smith 2002). Inviting all persons registered to participate in elections to an unofficial and non-Soviet *Eesti Kongress* (Congress of Estonia), the radical nationalists saw the Congress of Estonia as the only institution able legitimately to decide on the future of Estonia. The registration campaign had emerged from discussions among the movements for autonomy about who would have the legitimacy to take decisions in an autonomous Estonia. Given that a third of the population had come to Estonia during the course of the past five decades, or had in many cases stayed in the country only a few years previously, this part of the population were now increasingly perceived by Estonians as the ugly remnants of equally ugly Sovietisation and Russification policies (Semjonov 2002). The vast majority of Estonian inter-War citizens followed the citizens' registration initiative (Smith 2002). The underlying restorationist understanding of the Estonian political community simultaneously declared the Soviet period unjust, as times of alien occupation, which had interrupted the just and normal path of Estonian statehood. The restorationist concept established an understanding of Estonian independent statehood as a continuum, which in 1990 resumed what had been interrupted by Soviet occupation (D. J. Smith 2003).

Underlying this campaign was the argument of legal continuity which, rejecting the view that Estonia had joined the Soviet Union voluntarily, perceived all Soviet-era settlers as representatives of an occupying force, who could not be trusted in their ambitions for a

[19] Although it had attempted to exert direct influence on Estonian workers too, most Estonian representatives expressed their support for the Popular Front and deserted the OSTK (D. J. Smith 2002, p.49).

fully independent Estonia (Chinn & R. Kaiser 1996). Based on the notion that the polity of any new Estonian state should necessarily be unaffected by the population changes under the Soviet regime, the Citizens' Committees' initiatives laid the foundation for the Estonian approach to statehood and polity that still exists and continues now to shape Estonian integration. The nationalist stance of the movement for change gradually gained the upper hand in public debate and population's support, and by spring 1990, the Congress of Estonia declared itself the representative body of the citizens of Estonia, assembling both nationalist and moderate parties and being supported by many members of the Popular Front (Smith 2002, p.54). Moreover, during the events of 1991, when Soviet armed forces intervened in Vilnius and Riga, killing 21 unarmed demonstrators, the Soviet Union and its 'reformers' lost all their credibility. In late August 1991, in response to the imminent threat from the advancing Soviet military in the aftermath of the August coup and violent attacks of Soviet troops in Lithuania and Latvia, radical and moderate nationalists in Estonia joined forces. Estonia finally declared its independence and began to reinforce and legitimise this by restoring pre-war Estonia's international diplomatic links and adopting large parts of the first Estonian Republic's constitution (ibid., p.60).

The Popular Front had long supported autonomy within or secession from the Soviet Union without (in contrast to the nationalist approach) relying on the legal continuity argument; this approach was compatible with claims that all residents of the ESSR would be included as citizens of a new, federative, autonomous Estonian Republic or an independent state. This did not go far enough for the Congress and its supporters. Insisting that independent Estonia needed to be restored, they iterated that the Soviet-era migrants could not become citizens of the state automatically (ibid.). When the Supreme Council of Estonia, formally the most important representative body of the ESSR, voted on Estonian independence in March 1990 and again in August 1991, Russian-speaking representatives abstained (D. J. Smith 2002, p.56). However, even under the conditions of ethnicised conflict and serious concern among many Soviet-era settlers, in a referendum on Estonian independence in March 1991 which was open for all residents to participate, an estimated 25-40% of the non-Estonian population voted in favour of independence (D. J. Smith 2002, p.59).[20] Undoubtedly, though a significant and increasing minority of Russian-speakers supported Estonian independence, the nationalist movements had also not done enough to attract and include most parts of the Soviet immigrant population; with events accelerating,

[20] Raun claims that 77.83% of the overall population voted yes, suggesting that 'nearly all Estonians' and around 30% of the Soviet-time settlers supported independence (Raun 1991, p.239). A controversial referendum organised from Moscow later that year also suggested that the majority of non-Estonians (also) supported the new union treaty proposed by the Soviet government (D. J. Smith 2002, pp.58–59).

many of these parts of the population were left behind (Misiunas & Taagepera 1993, p.322).

This development hampered the inclusion of the Russian-speaking migrant population into the decision-taking on the future of the state. The exclusion of Russian-speakers was not absolute; some 34,000 Soviet-era migrants applied for Estonian citizenship before independence, which was appreciated as a 'patriotic act' by the nationalists (Raun 1991, p.228). Also, the option of naturalisation was envisaged by most nationalist parties. However, the argument of legal continuity adopted with the decision on independence meant, first and foremost, that all demographic changes that were caused by Soviet-era immigration were illegitimate. As a result, Soviet-era migrants had no automatic right to become citizens of independent Estonia. In effect, this excluded the vast majority of Russian-speakers from the Estonian citizenry and therefore from the political community that would decide on the form of statehood, membership and institutions of the new political community. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter 5.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a discussion of the difficult historical legacies of interethnic relations in Slovakia and Estonia. It showed the complex ways in which nationhood, national sovereignty and democratisation have been interlaced in the two countries. The following chapters attest to the continuous role of historical tensions. They suggest that the groups in both countries have not drawn conclusions from the past that would have enabled state-building and community formation on the basis of co-operation and integration.

5 State-building in Estonia and Slovakia: Institutionalisation of political membership

5.1 Introduction

In the theoretical part of this thesis I suggested that an analysis of interethnic integration requires a discussion of how interethnic relations are encoded in the political institutions and processes. In light of the specific paths to independence in Slovakia and Estonia examined in the previous chapter, the question can now be put more pointedly: To what extent have the ethnicised power relations that emerged during democratisation been inscribed in the fundamental institutions of the state? If the political institutions do exhibit an ethnic bias, how is this reflected in the political structures that these institutions generate? What are the dynamics of this ethno-cultural bias and how have these dynamics been mirrored in the political-institutional frameworks of Slovakia and Estonia since 1992/93?

This chapter seeks to investigate how the foundations of political membership in the constitutions of the two states have been derived from latent discursive institutions of Estonian and Slovak nationalisms; how they have shaped the design of political membership in the institutional structures of the two states; and to what extent changes in the policies of political membership have contributed to a re-formulation of the boundaries of the political community in Slovakia and Estonia. These nationalisms re-surfaced, were further developed and became powerful tools in the political competition of the democratisation and independence movements, as discussed in the previous chapter. I analyse political membership at three levels: Identity institutions – that is, those institutions and crystallised narratives which form the normative underpinnings of a political community; regulations of the political system – the policies and legislation that regulate and structurate group relations with the state; and practices of interethnic inclusion – those programmes of political actors that result in the cooperation between groups in the political sphere and the *de facto* inclusion of the minority group into political processes. In so doing, I follow a distinction made by Juviler and Stroschein, who suggest that an analysis of the interlacing of institutions at these three levels provides for a comprehensive understanding of how political community/membership is conceptualised (Juviler & Stroschein 1999).

In order to support and structure my analysis, I draw upon the idea of discursive institutionalism, which suggests that political 'philosophies, policies, and programmes' carry both cognitive and normative ideas about 'what one ought to do' and 'what is good or bad about what is' (Schmidt 2008, p.306). As such, the institutions of political membership simultaneously represent the background and the outcome of the decision-making of majority elites, as well as changes therein, and constitute the structural context of interethnic integration. Although I do not engage in a full analysis of the Estonian and Slovak discursive institutions, I suggest that for understanding the continuities in Slovakia's and Estonia's approaches to state-building and interethnic relations it is helpful to look at the normative and cognitive ideas imparted by the discourses and fundamental institutions of statehood and political membership.

Discursive institutionalism also reminds us that it matters not only what is being said, but who says it to whom in what circumstances (ibid. p.310). Therefore, power relations between actors as well as the role different political institutions play in the hierarchies of the political system are relevant to the opening of opportunities for change in the regulations of political membership. The state's constitution represents the most fundamental artefact imparting the understanding of political membership and the roles ascribed to members of society (Juviler & Stroschein 1999). Citizenship policies essentially regulate formal access to membership; in cases where access is granted, the political system can impact political membership by manipulating the participation of different groups differently. At the same time, political institutions can also be designed to compensate for formal exclusion or disadvantage of a specific group in relation to the state. Decisively, the relative autonomy of majority elites to adjust policies and their political programmes to institutional and structural demands allows actors to change policies and programmes according to changing contexts.

This chapter analyses how the political institutions in Estonia and Slovakia have envisaged participation in state-building and how changing policies of political membership have impacted the normative foundations of interethnic relations. In section 5.2, I discuss the constitutional consensus on the boundaries of the political communities in both countries, and how the normative institutions were devised from the histories of group antagonism. The following sections look at the limitations of political membership implemented in Estonia and Slovakia. In the Estonian case Russian-speakers were formally excluded from citizenship, when Estonia was declared an independent state; the subsequent policies on naturalisation and, later, 'legal-political integration' are discussed in sections 5.3 and 5.5. In

Slovakia, political membership of Hungarians was institutionalised in a less systematic form; however, nationalist governments modified the political and electoral systems in ways that aimed to undermine the Hungarians' political participation. Sections 5.4 and 5.6 discuss these measures as well as their partial revocation later.

5.2 Institutional and discursive constructions of sovereignty

Estonia and Slovakia's specific paths to independence determined that no real consensus was sought or achieved among the opposing political parties, and crucially, between ethnic groups in either country. The power dynamics of the early 1990s and the wide popular support for the more expressively nationalist approaches to statehood catapulted radical nationalists from the democratisation movements into the governments in the first national elections of the independent states in 1992 (Estonia) and 1993 (Slovakia) (Fisher 2006; Metcalf 1996). However, the fundamental boundaries of the political community were already drawn before independence. As such, the boundaries of the political community were set by those who participate in the negotiations that lead to its (re)formulation (ibid.). The very power relations at the time when the boundaries of the political communities in Estonia and Slovakia were defined are crucial for an understanding of political community and the processes by which it is further shaped. I take the institutionalised understanding of the 'sovereign' and the definition of the 'nation' in the Slovak and Estonian states' constitutions as an indicator of the inclusivity both of the underlying normative framework of political processes and the permeability of the boundaries of the political community.

The Estonian and Slovak constitutions set out the bases for their respective liberal-democratic state orders. They include guarantees for fundamental human rights and freedom from discrimination by ethnicity, language, or group belonging. Although declaring all citizens equal, both constitutions exhibit an ethno-linguistic bias, in stipulating that the titular languages have the status of 'state' (rather than 'official') languages.[1] Introducing a privileged status of the majority groups' languages, the constitutions also aim to 'compensate' for the lesser status of minority languages by stipulating minority rights with specific articles. These minority rights do not, however, immediately guarantee minority protection in said realms, but need to be translated into ordinary law; this makes them dependent on the political will of policy makers and their

[1] Language policies are discussed at length in chapter 6. The notion of state language declares one language to be a state institution, often making it an obligation and 'citizen's duty' to speak the language rather than minority languages, as we will see; this is in contrast to 'official languages', which describe those languages that are officially recognised by a state as being widely or regionally spoken also in public proceedings.

interpretations of constitutional law. Importantly, both constitutions provide the normative backdrop against which constitutional law is interpreted: the preambles of the constitutions outline the ideas on the political community as envisaged by their authors. Even though the preamble of the constitution has only symbolic significance and is not legally enforceable, this part of the constitution provides for the interpretation and the spirit in which the constitutional articles are written and the 'identity' of the political community as envisaged in and inscribed into the political structures of subsequent state-building processes.

Decisively, the preambles of the Slovak and Estonian constitutions enunciate different relationships between the state and distinct groups of citizens, while the boundaries between groups are drawn along ethno-cultural lines. The Slovak preamble distinguishes between the Slovak nation on the one hand and the citizens of the Republic, the latter including 'national minorities and ethnic groups', on the other hand; similarly, in Estonia, citizenry ('rahvas') and the ethnic nation ('rahvus') are the two categories used. Both preambles declare a specific relationship of the state to the titular nation, which is not paralleled in the relation of other (minority) citizens to the state. It is the remit of both states to protect the ethno-cultural 'core' nation. Therefore, this should be the concern also of the citizenry as a whole, meaning that all citizens are expected to support the prosperity of the titular nation, its language and culture. This is something that other groups cannot expect for their cultures. As a result, in both preambles the state-owning nation is denoted in explicitly cultural terms. The cultural difference between nation and minorities is acknowledged also by the articles of the constitution that establish the titular language as the sole state language and mirrored by those which refer to minority rights (Põhiseadus 1992, §§ 49-52; Ústava 1992, §§ 33-34). The latter refer to minority difference in respect to language – in the Estonian constitution these are referred to as 'foreign languages' – identity, and culture, and even recognise specific interests emerging from the membership of a national minority.

These articles represent minority rights that aim to protect these groups from cultural assimilation or discrimination. At the same time, they are only vaguely defined, cover only some aspects of group belonging and represent necessary responses to the titular privilege rather than prescribing or implying affirmative action. In so doing, they make unmistakeably clear that minority members deviate from the set standard of membership in the state community. The distinction between the nation and national minorities or ethnic groups means that, although the latter are included into the citizenry, i.e. the state

sovereign, they are not part of the state-bearing nation. Moreover, the symbolic distinction between groups in the preamble becomes tangible where the constitution confirms not only the recognition of diversity, but also a hierarchy between the different cultures in relation to the state. In Järve's words,

> 'one ethnic group has manifested its specific claims to the state in which it establishes itself constitutionally as a single core ethnic nation. Because of this logic, it is legitimate to regard the Preamble as the constitutional pillar of ethnic ascendancy in Estonia' (Järve 2004, p.68).

This hierarchy is particularly pronounced in the Slovak constitutional discourse. In her analysis of Slovak political elite understandings of the terms 'nation' and 'nationality', Nedelsky elucidates the relation of the state-forming nation and the state (Nedelsky 2003). The state, in the interpretation of the Slovak political elite, is the means of a nation to realise its 'right to self-determination'. Nationalities lack this right, as in this perspective they already 'own' a state elsewhere, where they can realise their sovereignty as a part of the core nation (ibid.). As in Estonia, this interpretation of the Slovak constitution is not a politically neutral distinction: rather, it divides the citizenry into two classes of citizens, depending on individual group membership.

While the nation as state-owner features strong relations with the state, nationalities hold weaker ties to it, lacking the right to realise national ambitions through it (ibid.). Distinguishing the state-founder and the citizenry, the preamble thus establishes a power relation between the nation and the citizenry: The former is in the position to grant rights to the latter, but these rights themselves are never constitutionally secure. Though less pronounced in the Estonian preamble, one finds there also a discernable difference in the relationship of nation and minorities to the state.

It will be remembered that both constitutions were adopted without seeking a consensus with the Russian-speaking and Hungarian political representatives regarding either the future of the state in general and the wording and content of the constitution specifically (see chapter 4). While in Slovakia the population in general was excluded from the decision on independence, in Estonia a referendum on Estonia's constitution was conducted in summer 1992; however, only inter-war citizens and their descendents were eligible to vote. The electorate simultaneously rejected a proposal of *Keskerakond* to allow those Soviet-era migrants who had applied for citizenship before Estonian independence to vote in the first national elections of 1992 (Smith 2002, p.78). Essentially, Soviet-era settlers were excluded both from the decision on the future, independent Estonia and from

the decisive first elections of the new state. In both states, group representatives as well as opinion polls in Slovakia and Estonia had made clear that Hungarians and Russian-speakers were hesitant about the specific forms of nation-state that were established (D. J. Smith 2002; Leff 1997). As a result, the groups were *de facto* excluded from the adoption of the constitution, though not explicitly on ethnic grounds. In Slovakia, the Hungarian representatives even proposed an alternative reading of the preamble of the constitution, which was rejected by the National Council (Nedelsky 2009). In Estonia, Russian-speakers who supported independence opposed restorationism (Smith 2002). As a consequence, the fundamental artefacts of the two states represent the outcome of the ongoing political conflicts at the time when they were adopted, and at the same time represented a powerful tool in the hands of the majority group for the process of state-building in the two states. In both countries more recently the constitutional preambles were confirmed in their wording and in their meanings in more recent years,[2] supporting the claim that the imparted interpretation of statehood and state-ownership was not a 'one-off' that emerged from the power conflicts in 1991 and 1992 respectively. These political conjunctures saw only the beginning of a process whereby nationalist discourses, formed in reaction to extraordinary political events, were institutionalised in the foundation of 'normal,' democratic nation-states.

In the ongoing state-building processes, the normative implications of the different groups' relations to the state stipulated in the constitutional preambles are also a resource for the nationalist discourses that have dominated popular political debates in the two countries. They have shaped debates far beyond the explicitly nationalist political spectrum. In particular, the discourse of national self-determination simultaneously purports the cohesion as well as the acceptance of a common fate among all nationals over centuries, serving to establish a 'community of fate', united, besides cultural and linguistic commonalities, by a common, historical destiny. Establishing a direct line of statal existence and a tradition for today's independent Slovak Republic back to the Great Moravian Empire, the preamble of the state's constitution mirrors descriptions in popular historiography of the 9th century empire as the 'First (Slovak) State' (Kirschbaum 1995, pp.23-38), constructing an historical continuity and an ethno-national identity from ancient times to present. Despite the existence of more cautious and less a-historical approaches to history, this view features among the fundamental historical discourses in Slovakia today (ibid.; Gyárfášová 17/06/2009). However, the discourse acknowledges that the alleged

[2] Estonia included a reference to the Estonian language to be preserved and protected by the Estonian state in 2007; as part of the administrative reform in Slovakia in 2001, the constitution was reconfirmed by parliament.

sovereignty of the ancient Slovak nation ceased with its subjection to foreign rule. In Kirschbaum's own words, this meant

> 'that their destiny was not entirely in their own hands. As a result, a new leitmotif appeared in Slovak national life, that of survival' (Kirschbaum 1995, p.38).

In Slovakia's contemporary historical-political discourse, the idea of a 'centuries-long struggle for survival' (again, emphasised in the preamble of the constitution) portrays independence as a necessary and especially precious aspect of the fulfilment of the Slovak nation's destiny. This discourse on self-determination fulfils several functions for the consensus of the political community: It serves to legitimate territorial claims in the 'who-was-here-first'-controversy fought by nationalist historians on the sides of Slovaks and Hungarians (Krekovič 2007); it establishes a narrative of a 'heroic' nation's suffering under foreign oppressors, supporting the claim for today's privileged role in the state as a form of historical compensation and reward (Kirschbaum 1995, p.38); it also severs to justify measures of 'precaution' against representatives of former oppressing powers. The notion of victimisation and uniqueness provides the basis of widespread defensive nationalism in both countries (Noreen & Sjostedt 2004).[3] Supporters of defensive measures argue for the need for protection of their 'small' nation against demands from internal and external 'enemies', for example by constraining the national self-realisation of minorities in the Slovak state (Deegan-Krause 2004b).

Popular Estonian discourses on the nation's history similarly presume an immutable Estonian nation, which has accordingly maintained its unique characteristics over millennia, despite its co-existence with and subordination to other nations who ruled over Estonian territory and people for centuries (Laar 2006; Laar 2005; Hvostov et al. 2004, p.45). Self-portrayals as 'the oldest nation in Europe' (M. Feldman 2001, p.13), a common historical fate, and ancestral territory underlie the fundamental distinction between titular nation and all other nationalities in the country. The distinction becomes politically meaningful, because the concept is decisive for the relation between majority and minority groups, and their respective relations to the state. As Mart Laar, a historian and former Prime Minister of Estonia, puts it: '[…] who else should decide the fate of a country than those who live there and who have been attached by a thousand invisible threads to its culture' (Laar 2006, p.16).

[3] Lauristin & Heidmets 2002 see the transition 'from "ethnic and defensive" nationalism to more pragmatic individualism' or to 'a more civic nation' in Estonia almost complete (p.20; 22). As should become clear in this part of the thesis, I disagree with this view.

This understanding allows the titular nation's upper hand to be understood as a 'natural' condition, while the existence of minority rights can be portrayed as testifying to the titular nation's acceptance of multicultural reality, rather than a consequence of the exclusionary framework of the nation-state.[4] At the same time, the emphasis on the titular nations' suffering is complemented by neglect or downplaying of other groups' suffering and *their* historical memory, as well as of the harm done and crimes committed by members of the titular nation. In both countries, tensions have emerged around issues of historical memory and interpretations of historical developments in terms of injustice and guilt. These ideas have also guided the policies on public commemoration. This has become particularly evident with respect to public monuments dating from the Soviet era, which play an important role in Russian-speakers' historical memory, while for many Estonians they represent the continued and unwanted symbolic presence of a former 'occupier'. In Slovakia, these tensions are illustrated in such varied issues as the controversy on the Beneš decrees, the scandal around school textbooks that downplay Slovakia's role in the deportation and mass murder of minorities, especially Jews and members of Romani communities, during its alliance with Nazi Germany in the early 1940s.[5] Although in more recent years in both states the preparedness to officially acknowledge minority groups' historical suffering has increased, gestures that convey this openness are often limited to the initiatives of individuals.[6]

It can be concluded that the cultural notion of the nation Laar emphasises in his argument is misleading. Although the interpretations of the Estonian and Slovak nations as cultural entities, which have developed through interrelation and interaction, could be perceived as open to minority members, they have been described repeatedly as relations of kin or blood by leading political figures. For example, in the protocol of a roundtable talk to bring together Estonian majority and minority representatives and politicians organised at the European Centre for Minority Issues, the Estonian Minister for Population Affairs Andra Veidemann was paraphrased as saying that Estonian citizenship was essentially based on the concept of *ius sanguinis*, arguing that the 'population of Estonian origin [was] too small […] for keeping its culture and identity alive if a *ius solis* approach were adopted' (Poleshchuk 2001, p.11). In other words, the nation is understood as malleable to a definite

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[4] Such self-portrayals were particularly frequent in relation to EU accession talks, where both Estonia and Slovakia claimed to outrun many other countries within and outside the EU with regard to minority provisions (M. Kuus 2004, p.201).

[5] It is further illustrated by the reluctance of policy-makers to support the introduction of jointly developed history books by the Slovak-Hungarian history commission (Šutaj 23/06/2009).

[6] František Mikloško, a Slovak MP, apologised individually for post-war deportations and repressions under the 'Beneš decrees', cf. *Economist* 21/07/2005; *BBC News* 12/03/2001).

point in history, namely 1940, while changes to Estonian society after that point are not accepted as part of the core nation's history. The Slovak debate presents a somewhat different angle, when as part of calls for the 're-Slovakisation', extreme nationalists claimed that Hungarians in southern Slovakia 'really' are magyarised Slovaks, in a follow-up debate to the post-war re-Slovakisation campaign (Gyurgyik 2002). The idea of an original cultural belonging as opposed to an adopted one suggests that, for example, language is 'carried' by individuals as an ingrained trait rather than as a practice. In both states, the discourses on political membership are based on a selective understanding of the cultural nation, in which hindsight interpretations of what is convenient for today's state-and-nation-building dominate perceptions of history. As a consequence, from the vantage point of the underlying philosophy of the Estonian and Slovak states, a merging of groups into one (civic) nation of equal citizens irrespective of ethnic group membership is neither desirable nor possible; access to and inclusion into the state-bearing nation essentially requires assimilation of individuals in order to safeguard the continued existence of the nation. This has been the declared purpose of the Slovak and Estonian states.[7]

How have these conditions impacted the framing of sovereignty as the property of the titular nation in Slovakia and Estonia? What were the factors that have determined the political participation of minority groups and how have these been changed over time? In what follows, I show that state ownership has become an important resource for the titular group to legitimise its stewardship over the state and its policies, by restricting political membership.

5.3 Institutionalisation of political membership in Estonia

In Estonia, the formation of the political community followed logically from the restorationist narrative on the legal continuity of the Estonian state. Recourse to the political legacy of the interwar republic was ambiguous due to the authoritarian legacy of the 1930s and the consequences that the miscalculations of the strong president had for the Estonian Republic under the Päts regime, which facilitated the Soviet invasion of Estonia in 1940 (Smith 2002, pp.23-26). In order to 'restore' Estonian independence, the Constituent assembly therefore went back to Estonia's original constitution of 1920 and

[7] The discourses on the Estonian and Slovak nations have not been limited to the past, and not only to the glorious past of the titular nation at that. Scholarship on the Estonian discourse on the nation has identified the 'othering' or Russian-speakers as well as 'anything Soviet' as a key aspect of how the identity of the Estonian state has been created since 1991 (M. Kuus 2004; G. Feldman 2003; Merje Kuus 2002b; Merje Kuus 2002a; G. Feldman 2000). In Slovakia, the relation between Hungarians and Slovaks is described not so much in civilisational terms, as is the case in Estonia with relation to Russians, but concentrates on both nations' common history (Šutaj 23/06/2009).

included aspects of Western Germany's post-war constitution, limiting the powers of the president to the role of a mainly symbolic or representative Head of State (ibid., pp.71-72). Importantly though, the political elite reinstalled the regulations and *status quo* of political membership of the late inter-war period, by deciding that only interwar-time citizens and their descendents were entitled to immediate citizenship. Naturalisation was made an option for all other residents of Estonia (with the exception of former military and secret service personnel of the Soviet state) based on the citizenship law of 1938 (ibid., p.72). In doing so, formal membership was not stipulated in ethnic terms. At the same time, Estonian political membership was restricted in terms of group belonging in order to safeguard the 'survival of the Estonian nation'. The threat to the Estonian nation was seen primarily in terms of Soviet-era migration and the consequent demographic and socio-linguistic changes it implied. Soviet predominance has been portrayed in Estonian national discourse as a continuation of centuries-long Russian oppression, presenting Soviet migrants as representatives of this regime. Because it regulates the political participation of Soviet-era migrants, formal political membership has become a cornerstone of Estonian state- and nation-building and political as well as social integration.

Debates over citizenship were already heated prior to actual independence, when the unofficially elected Congress of Estonia challenged the Supreme Soviet – still the official legislative power in 1990. Citizenship policies have been a bone of contention from the beginning of democratisation. Differences emerged between nationalists and Russian-speakers, but also between different Estonian political parties. For example, the Popular Front initially promoted a 'zero-option' of citizenship and proposed various measures to facilitate the quick inclusion of those minority members who wanted to participate in the Estonian state- and nation-building; the Citizens' Committees did not reject outright Soviet-era migrants as future citizens of Estonia, and were open to the inclusion of minority members who were prepared to undergo naturalisation (Smith 2002). In the spring of 1991, the Citizens' Committee began drafting criteria for political membership that aimed to supplement the 1938 citizenship law with a transition period for civil residents in which they would be able to register as Estonian citizens without language or residence requirements (Kask 1994). The change of political context after the Moscow coup in August 1991 rendered impossible the adoption of this regulation or a 'zero-option',

leading instead to the politics of (limited) restoration, which was presented even by many moderates as the only way to go (Smith 2002, p.65).[8]

On 26 February 1992, the Estonian Supreme Soviet re-enacted the citizenship act of the interwar period, which was a 'copy-and-paste document of the law dating back to 1938' (Sarv 2002, p.60). The old law readopted defined the citizenry of the newly independent state. A direct result of the implementation of a law from the pre-War period, only people who could claim to have been citizens of pre-War Estonia or were descended from such citizens received Estonian citizenship automatically. Consequently, citizenship was granted automatically only to citizens of the interwar republic and to their descendents, whether they lived in Estonia or not. As the population of the ESSR was subject to almost constant changes, those who had entered the country after 1940 in their vast majority became residents of an independent state of which they had no citizenship, while simultaneously being citizens of a now defunct state – the USSR (Smith 2002). In practice this meant that about a third of the Estonian residents of 1991 were excluded from the citizenry and factually 'stateless'. Only a small number of Soviet-era migrants were granted Estonian citizenship immediately, as a reward for 'special services to the Republic', in most cases referring to some form of explicit pro-independence activism for Estonian independence.[9] As a result, 454,990 adults or almost 40% of the electorate of 1991 was disenfranchised (Järve & Poleshchuk 2010, p.4).

Immediate options for people without Estonian citizenship were a) to leave Estonia and go to the Republic of the FSU where they or their ancestors had lived prior to migrating to Estonia; b) apply for another state's (usually Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian etc.) citizenship, while staying in Estonia on the basis of a permanent residence permit; c) undergo the process of naturalisation in order to become a citizen of Estonia or, if these three options were rendered impossible by the individuals or were impossible due to legal

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[8] The 'restoration' of Estonia's independence affected mainly the question of political membership. The constitution of 1920 was modernised generally (Smith 2002).

[9] The Citizenship Act allows for a simplified process of naturalisation for those who participated in the elections to the Estonian Citizens Congress and registered for Estonian citizenship before 1990; between 1992-1995 a fast track option allowed the simplified naturalisation of 24,102 persons who had 'supported Estonian independence' by registering with the Citizens' Committees before 1991 (Järve 2009, p.58). Additional to acquiring Estonian citizenship via birth or naturalisation, it can be granted due to 'special services' of particular non-citizens, if the government of Estonia wishes to do so. This has been made use of particularly between 1992-93 in order to 'co-optate' (Pettai & Hallik 2002) leaders of the minority communities from Tallinn and the North-East who were seen as 'moderate' or 'political allies' (ibid., p.520). Not all Estonian politicians, though, agreed with this regulation. As a result the 1995 Act restricts the number of naturalised people on basis of special merits to 10 per annum, bringing this regulation back to its original purpose of benefitting individuals for great achievements in sports, culture and the like (ibid.). As a more recent facilitation, since 2002 naturalisation of disabled people is not conditioned on taking the civic or language exams.

restrictions including naturalisation requirements that could not be fulfilled, the respective persons would d), remain stateless *sine die*. This prospect had already caused alarm among Russian-speakers before the decision on restoration was made, but fears were temporarily allayed after Estonia and Russia had agreed on political and economic relations in early 1991, which promised a timely solution of the problems related to imminent statelessness of many Russian-speakers (Smith 2002, p.57). The disputes on granting citizenship to Soviet-era migrants were particularly fierce due to the question of the future of former Soviet troops. Army pensioners who wanted to spend their retirement in Estonia were, as direct representatives of the former occupying force, decidedly not welcome. Troop withdrawal remained central to the conflicts between Estonia and Russia for several years to come.

Initially, naturalisation was conditional on permanent residence status issued for a minimum of two years before the application, which was counted only as of 30 March 1990; moreover, citizenship was not granted before one year had passed after the application. According to Estonian officials, these steps were to guarantee that only long-term or permanent residents, who could claim to have established long-standing ties to the Estonian state, would be able to adopt Estonian citizenship. In effect, no applicant could receive Estonian citizenship before 30 March 1993. Moreover, the law stipulated knowledge of the Estonian language as a requirement, the exact regulations of which were still to be determined by a separate law (Järve 2009).

Immediately after the adoption of the citizenship act in 1992, the Estonian government began drafting legislation to regulate the status and rights of the enormous proportion of residents who had become stateless and whose political and social status was largely unregulated. This was met with protest from the non-citizen population, who feared that such legislation would only constrain further their rights (Budryte 2005). Fuelling such fears, the Estonian government issued a law that excluded non-citizen permanent residents from standing in local elections in early 1993 (Local election act 1993). When, in June 1993, the government presented a draft act to parliament to govern the status of non-citizens, and a few days later adopted the act, the Russian-speaking population, largely in the North-East of the country (Ida-Virumaa county), took to the streets (Smith 2002). The outrage and fear among minority members were related, among other things, to the potential of expulsion imparted by the wording of the law (Sarv 2002, p.42). The law set requirements for a minimum income to grant permanent residence, which was perceived as a serious threat in times of economic restructuring and mass unemployment.

The protests, becoming known as the 'Aliens' crisis', were fanned by other measures curtailing the opportunities for minority language broadcasting as well as minority-language education (Sarv 2002). Russian-speakers in Ida-Virumaa occupied the large Estonian power plants almost entirely located in areas with a predominantly Soviet-era migrant population, threatening to cut Estonia's power supply. Speakers from the protestors demanded autonomy for the Russian-speaking population in the county bordering Russia. Responding to the seriousness of the conflict situation, the Estonian president, Lennart Meri, refused to sign the law, and called for the Council of Europe (CoE), Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities (HCNM) to observe and mediate in the situation (Sarv 2002). Moreover, Meri convened the Presidential Roundtable of National Minorities, a consultative body to represent the non-citizen minority population and also help mediate between the conflicting parties. In addition, the Estonian government decided to give fast-track naturalisation to selected non-citizens, on the basis of 'special services to the republic', and thus the right to stand as candidates in local elections, in effect moderating the composition of local councils in Ida-Virumaa while simultaneously allowing for some political representation (Sarv 2002, p.46). Naturally, the complex of problems that came as a legacy of the restoration of the Estonian state was not solved. Still, when a new version of the law on aliens was adopted in July 1993 that responded to most of the HCNM's recommendations, and a law regulating the residence permits of former Soviet army service people was passed, domestic tensions relaxed. In the aftermath of the regulation of the status of ex-army pensioners, the eventual withdrawal of Russian troops also calmed ongoing disputes with Russia (Sarv 2002).

Until 1993 the status of permanent residents was based on the 1990 ESSR Immigration Law and has since been regulated by the Aliens Act. While almost fifty amendments have been made to modify various aspects of the law, its general principles have remained unchanged.[10] In general, the law regulates the requirements for obtaining visas and residence permits for both citizens of foreign states and individuals with undetermined citizenship residing in Estonia. In principle, the law does not differentiate between the status and options of, on the one hand, those who have moved to Estonia during Soviet times or were born there but did not apply for another state's citizenship, and, on the other, citizens of other states (both those who have lived in the ESSR partly for decades and those

[10] Many amendments were made as a response to high international pressure, but already the drafting of the law had taken a considerable amount of controversy. While some changes were made upon the recommendation of international actors, not all recommendations were taken into account, resulting in a permanent state of legal insecurity for many non-citizens (Järve 2009).

who moved to Estonia in recent years ('new immigrants')). Most non-citizens and foreign nationals (e.g. Soviet-era settlers) today have long-term residence permits; according to the Needs & Feasibility Report Research in January 2007, 112,536 persons with undetermined citizenship were holders of long-term residence permits, while 13,263 were holders of temporary residence permits (Kallas 2008, p.135). Acquisition of long-term resident status is conditional upon, amongst other things: legal residence for at least 3 out of the 5 years prior to application (this requirement was tightened recently to 5 years of legal residence (Poleshchuk 2009)); a permanent legal income that provides for the applicant's subsistence; and a current place to stay, as well as a residence permit for Estonia. Up to the mid-1990s, stateless persons did not have any international status at all. Only under international pressure did the Estonian state finally issue ID-documents to stateless residents of the country, the Aliens' or 'grey' passports, today acknowledged as a domestic as well as international travel document. The status of foreign nationals is, of course, regulated by the respective home country, with visas processed by home country institutions.

In 1995, a new Citizenship Act replaced the re-enacted law of inter-war Estonia in order to fully align it with the new constitution and other legislation. Without changing the principles of Estonian citizenship, the new act established further and more demanding requirements for naturalisation. These are still effective today.[11] The new requirements integrated all regulations that had been established up to that point by different individual laws and include tightened residence and language requirements. Moreover, an exam on the content of the Estonian Constitution and the Citizenship Act has to be passed in Estonian supplementing the 'oath of loyalty' every applicant has to take. These requirements were strongly criticised by international observers. It was argued that the requirements were far too strict given the current situation of more than a quarter of the population being entirely excluded from the political process, while no supporting measures had been adopted to promote and facilitate naturalisation among the non-citizen population. In 1994-5, the Estonian state had not yet adopted measures to support the acquisition of Estonian language competence or explained how non-citizens would be supported in fulfilling the new citizenship criteria.[12]

[11] Only minor amendments have been made since 1995 with regard to selected, particularly vulnerable groups (Järve & Poleshchuk 2010).
[12] Since the early 1990s it was only thanks to international organisations that some language and citizenship classes were available at all (Budryte 2005; Jurado 2003; Sarv 2002).

By implementing these criteria, part of the radical, nationalist elite hoped to make a large number of Soviet-era settlers leave Estonia; with regard to the future of Soviet-era migrants, Anatol Lieven quotes Former Foreign Minister of Estonia Jüri Luik on the Estonian authorities' hope that 'a third or so will become Estonian citizens, a third may remain here with Russian citizenship, and at least a third will leave' (cited in (Järve & Poleshchuk 2010, p.6). It was only in 1998, and upon strong international pressure prior to Estonia's accession to the EU that the parliament accepted minor changes to the act itself, passing a draft law enabling children of stateless parents to gain citizenship, if the parents had resided in Estonia at least five years prior to the application.[13] Equally benefitting children, language and civic exams taken by non-citizen children attending Russian-language schools are now recognised as equivalents for the language and citizenship act and constitution exams. Requirements regarding the proficiency in Estonian were regulated only when the language act was amended in 1999 and 2000, categorising the different classes of proficiency, required for citizenship and for political participation. Providing for temporary conflict prevention, the situation was far from satisfactory for minority members and international actors. The international actors also continued financing the range of language courses to which the Estonian government was still not prepared to commit its own funds (Jurado 2003). Also, as part of its integration strategy that set in during 2000, the Estonian state has started to actively support naturalisation, as will be discussed in section 5.5. Essentially, however, these measures have not changed the policies of political membership.

When the government responded to the need for comprehensive up-to-date legislation and adopted a new citizenship law in 1995, this effectively *increased* the uncertainty for many non-citizens, rather than stabilising the situation for them. Although the law was much to the detriment of many non-citizens, by 1995 the first wave of naturalisation had reduced the number of non-citizens in the country: between 1992-1995 64,939 persons had naturalised, which enabled them to participate in national elections from 1995 onwards (Järve & Poleshchuk 2010, p.6). As a result of citizenship policies, many stateless individuals opted for citizenship of other states – primarily, the Russian Federation – bringing a potentially powerful external lobby actor into domestic Estonian relations with minorities.[14] While the Estonian state managed to restrict and control access to Estonian political membership, it institutionalised a situation in which a substantial part of the

[13] Children under 15 years cannot apply for citizenship themselves. Prior to the amendment it was stipulated that only parents who were Estonian citizens could apply for citizenship for their children.
[14] By the year 2000, 14% of the non-citizens of 1989 had opted for Russian citizenship (Järve & Poleshchuk 2010, p.6).

population would permanently remain of foreign citizenship or stateless, at least for the time then foreseeable. In so doing, the Estonian state adopted an institutional solution to restrict the participation of those deemed illegitimate to decide on Estonia's future; it also perpetuated the boundaries between the 'nation' and minority members, potentially undermining the latter's allegiance to the Estonian state, in the sense of a self-fulfilling prophecy of the threat scenarios conjured up by the nationalists.

The situation was different at the local level, after the Estonian citizenship regime granted permanent residents the right to vote in local elections after 1996. This also helped ease mounting tensions that resulted from the permanent exclusion at the national level and the restrictive minority legislation that was issued by the national parliament (Järve 2009, p.49). On this basis, in the local elections of 1997 and since then, Russian-speakers could co-determine political decision-making in their municipalities. However, due to the settlement structures, this was mainly noticeable in Tallinn and Ida-Virumaa, and much less so in other places. Various language regulations continued to restrict the right to stand as a candidate in local elections until after 1999 (Järve 2003).

5.4 Ethnic and political participation in Slovakia

After the Velvet divorce, Hungarians and Roma replaced the Czechs as the primary target of Slovak nationalist rhetoric and policies. Protecting Slovakia's sovereignty and territorial integrity against 'internal and external enemies' became a cornerstone of the third Mečiar government's minority politics (Deegan-Krause 2004b). This 'ethnic card' played well with nationalistically oriented voters, and helped the HZDS into power three times during the 1990s.[15] Slovak fears regarding minority rights and minority participation in the decision-making are grounded in the fundamental understanding of nation and nationality that is a constituting element of Slovak nationalism, as discussed earlier. As a consequence of the allegedly inextricable link between nationality and the striving for political self-determination, minority cultural issues are observed carefully to ensure they do not affect what is perceived as the state's sovereignty. In this sense, the Slovak constitution (Article 34, 3) declares that

[15] Vladimir Mečiar was Prime Minister of Slovakia first as head of the VPN June 1990 – May 1991; as leader of the winning party after the first democratic elections June 1992 – March 1994; and lastly, after his party had regained strength despite a lost vote of no-confidence earlier that year, in December 1994 – October 1998. The latter (and only full) election period with Mečiar's HZDS as the strongest government party saw him in a coalition with the far-right *Slovenská národná strana* (Slovak National Party, SNS), led by Ján Slota, and with the small *Združenie robotníkov Slovenska* (Association of Slovak Workers, ZRS). After a decline in popularity, the HZDS and SNS became government members again in 2006, when the winner of the elections, the self-styled social democrats of *Smer – sociálna democracia* (Direction – Social Democracy, *Smer*) invited them.

> 'The enactment of the rights of citizens belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups that are guaranteed in this Constitution must not be conducive to jeopardizing the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Slovak Republic or to discrimination against its other inhabitants' (Ústava 1992).

Purporting to protect the Slovak nation from its potential 'renegade' co-citizens, this passage implies a threat emanating from ethnic minorities *a priori*. This article in the constitution has been interpreted as aimed directly at the Hungarian minority. Again, the point of departure concerning the characterisation of minority interests and identities in such state documents is the underlying assumption about the fundamental relevance of national self-determination for every national group, making the securitisation of minority issues unavoidable.

During the phase of explicitly nationalising policies under the three Mečiar governments, the Hungarian parties were largely isolated from government and other opposition parties, particularly the third Mečiar government of 1994-1998. In many cases on the direct initiative of the SNS, policies focused primarily on the Hungarian minority and their exclusion from political and social processes (Kelley 2003, p.39). The nationalistic governments aimed to change fundamental institutions of the political system, including the electoral system and the structures of public administration, to the detriment of the Hungarian minority as well as of the moderate opposition.

In contrast to the situation in Estonia, members of the Hungarian minority are guaranteed formal participation in the political institutions of the new state. In a system of proportional representation, the settlement structures of the Hungarian minority, which is concentrated regionally in the south of Slovakia along the border to Hungary and in many small towns and villages constitutes the majority of the local population, enables them to elect group representatives into the National Council. As a legacy of the Czechoslovak political divisions along ethnic lines, in the late 1980s, Hungarians generated their own political representation, separate from the Slovaks (Bakker 1997; Öllös 23/09/2009). Constituting around 10% of the population, since 1992, the Hungarians have been represented by minority parties in the National Council (Csergo 2007).

According to the portrayal by the nationalists, the Hungarian political representation was a threat to Slovakia's sovereignty. This was fuelled by the Hungarian elite's discussion of different forms of autonomy for the Hungarian minority and their repeated call for cultural (and, at times, political) self-determination (Csergo 2007; Bárdi 2003). The group also lives compactly, in many towns and villages constituting the majority (Gyurgyik 2002),

making the possibility of the implementation of some form of political autonomy not entirely far-fetched in practical terms. The settlement patterns of the Hungarian minority also enabled its representation at the local level, and helped the minority group send Hungarian representatives of three Hungarian parties into the national parliament on the basis of proportional representation. Between 1990 and 1994, the Hungarians extended their representation among mayors and members of local councils both in numbers and in percentage terms, and since then sthe number has been relatively stable, somewhat exceeding the proportion of Hungarians in the overall population (Csergo 2007, p.42; Kling 2008, p.299). The somewhat disproportionate representation of Hungarians has been explained with reference to a slightly higher than average turnout among Hungarians (Mesežnikov 14/04/2008; Gyárfášová 17/06/2009). Thanks to proportional representation in the national council, Hungarian parties were able to repeat this pattern in national elections (Csergo 2007, p.46): in 1990 and 1992, 14 out of 150 seats were taken by Hungarian representatives, in 1994 it was 17.

In order to secure all Hungarian parties' entry into parliament, the Hungarian parties formed electoral coalitions; in 1994, the three Hungarian parties that existed independently had agreed to form an electoral coalition in order to secure all three parties' representation in parliament. Between 1992 and 1994, one of the Hungarian parties was not represented in the National Council because it had received fewer than 5% of the national vote, while electoral coalitions of Hungarian parties had entered parliament in both 1992 and 1994 (Csergo 2007). In the advent of the 1998 elections, the Mečiar government introduced a decisive step, attempting to undermine the continuous strength of the Hungarian political representation at the national level. The government changed the electoral law, raising the parliamentary threshold for electoral coalitions from previously 7% for an electoral coalition of two or three parties and 10% for an electoral coalition of more parties to 5% per party in an electoral coalition. The aim of the law was to weaken a political opposition still undergoing consolidation, consisting of a number of rather small parties, including three Hungarian parties. The change would have made it very hard indeed for a Hungarian party coalition to enter parliament, as with three parties it would have to get at least 15% of the national vote, while the Hungarian share of the vote was at best around 10% (Deegan-Krause 2004a, p.287, appendix 3). Although it affected the parliamentary opposition in general, the step of the Mečiar government can be interpreted as a direct attack at the Hungarian parties.

Both Slovak and Hungarian opposition parties reacted to this step by forming coalition parties; in the case of the Hungarian parties this was the *Magyar Koálicio Partja/Strana Mad'arská Koalicija* (Party of the Hungarian Coalition, MKP). As a result of this step, although the Hungarian parties lost two seats compared to the previous election period, the MKP became fourth-strongest party in the new parliament and third-strongest in the new government, into which it was invited subsequently (cf. percentages stated by Csergo 2007, p.46). The formation of a coherent single party had also, arguably, made it a more reliable coalition partner in the eyes of the Slovak anti-Mečiar opposition. For the following ten years, the MKP maintained or expanded its share in votes; in 2002 it received 20 out of 150 seats in the National Council. Thus, ironically, a measure meant to weaken the minority party helped strengthen it.

The consolidation of the anti-Mečiar opposition had been aided earlier by a number of other anti-opposition policies, attacking civil society and political opposition to the government's course. Prominently, the attempt to introduce a Protection of the Republic Law in 1996 threatened to bring government-opposition relations to a whole new level of animosity. Purporting the protection of the Slovak Republic against acts that 'undermined the country' and periled its territorial and constitutional integrity or the interests of the republic, the law did not make clear what was meant by the vague wording. Introducing changes to the Criminal Code, if signed by the president, the law would have imposed severe penalties for offenders against the law (Haight 1997, p.108). As such, the law was held by critics to be extremely vague and represented a potential *carte blanche* in the hands of the government.

This law targeted the opposition as a whole. Already before 1996, the nationalist parties had not only played the 'ethnic card' in political discourse, but also repeatedly portrayed the opposition parties as 'anti-Slovak' in an attempt to delegitimise its political opponents. Nevertheless, the political rhetoric shaping the debate on the act clearly showed that it particularly aimed to restrict the movements, political activities and contributions to political debate of Hungarian politicians in particular (Kelley 2003; Haight 1997). President Kováč saw the law similarly, and criticised its potential infringement of 'fundamental human freedoms' (*Slovak Spectator*, 18/12/1996). After the law had passed parliament, the president refused to sign the law. It was also criticised by international organisations as in contradiction to international human and minority rights documents (Haight 1997, p.109). The EU made a clear statement, linking Slovakia's prospective talks with the EU to the revocation of the law (Kelley 2003, p.40). Kelley quotes Béla Bugár, a

leading Hungarian minority politician, in that the international organisations 'had a very clear and absolute role' in the eventual rejection of the Protection of the Republic Law, at a time when the Mečiar government was still receptive to European advice and criticism (ibid.).

In 1996, the Mečiar government also embarked on a major regional and administrative reform. Again, this was widely acknowledged as a direct step towards undermining Hungarian political representation (Mesežnikov 14/04/2008). Since 1989/1990, Slovakia had functioned according to a dual model of administration and political representation, the national government governing from the Bratislava centre against relatively weak local self-government. After the regional-administrative level of government was abolished in 1990, between 1990 and 1993 the local level institutions were gradually strengthened (Buček 2002). In line with the general tendency to centralise governance, in 1996 the Mečiar government introduced two acts on Territorial and Administrative Division of the Slovak Republic and the Organisation of Local Self-Government (Legal Acts 221 and 222/1996). The acts reintroduced the regional level into Slovak public administration, strengthening central government through a

> 'two-tier hierarchical structure of regional and district offices, which are controlled by the government as the supreme body of executive power of the state' (Nemec et al. 2001, p.303).

These new levels of government were not complemented by democratising efforts to make regions and districts another, intermediate level of self-government – the regional administration was instated by the national government, not elected by the regional electorate. The main aim was to make central policy making and implementation more efficient (Nižňanský & Pilát 2001). The second aim, however, was to establish administrative and electoral units which undermine the factual power and political representation of the Hungarians on the basis of the density of their settlement. District boundaries were redrawn in such a way that the previously 38 electoral districts in all of Slovakia were more than doubled to 79 districts (Buček 2002). Decisively, the Southern Slovak regions were barely affected by this, since district boundaries in those areas largely persisted, while districts were made significantly smaller in the other regions. This of course increased per head representation in the northern half of the country, while leaving southern districts larger and therefore often relatively heterogeneous in ethnic terms.[16] In

[16] Although in southern Slovakia, the proportion of Hungarians is increasing the closer a village is to the border to Hungary, in many cases a neighbouring village may be largely inhabited by Slovaks, making individual villages often a 'Hungarian' or a 'Slovak' village; at district level this in many cases is evened out.

effect, Hungarian parties in the regions where Hungarians had settled would need more votes in their districts in order to send representatives to the National Council.[17]

The public administration reform under Mečiar's government in 1996 evoked much criticism. While it had reduced the number of local offices of the national government in the creation of the regional administrative level, this effectively led to an increase in government offices generally, increased public expenditures for the maintenance of these new structures, undermined well established cooperative structures of local governments and negatively impacted socio-economic disparities between regions (Klimovsky 2010, p.35). It was also criticised for a range of democratic shortcomings, particularly by European institutions, namely the Commission, after accession talks were resumed with Slovakia in 1998 (European Commission 1998).

These policies, as we will see below, had a lasting impact on the options for political change towards the more pluralist political system the Hungarian minority would have preferred. However – and perhaps due to the selective character of the policies, and the change to different aspects of the political institutional system in place of a direct attack on the minority – these policies also had unintended consequences, which ironically helped strengthen the Hungarian political representation as well as the consolidation of the liberal-democratic opposition as a whole. I argue that, overall, the policies on practical political membership in Slovakia were essential to the majority nationalists safeguarding the titular nation's upper hand in political decision-making. However, the antagonistic way in which the nationalists impeded the democratic participation of majority members also provided some opportunities for cooperation between the majority and the minority.

5.5 Estonia's social integration policies as an institutional response to societal division

The large number of stateless persons and foreign nationals were a concern not only for international actors who feared the situation could endanger regional stability and impede European integration in the region. Concerns for stability as well as geopolitical security in relation to the Russian Federation and for democratic development led domestic majority actors to call for the adoption of means that would accelerate the naturalisation process and the political integration of the minority. Since the mid-1990s, Estonian academics and experts had warned that Estonia was facing the problem of a 'dual society', which would

[17] Despite these difficulties, the MKP has continuously profited from a slightly better turnout and less volatility of its electorate.

deteriorate if the state further ignored the marginalisation of the 'non-Estonian' population (Lauristin & Heidmets 2002). Although actors that genuinely supported integration were politically in a non-dominant position, international pressure and the direct linking of the citizenship question to Estonia's EU accession helped strengthen the position of the advocates of integration (Pettai & Kallas 2009; Sarv 2002).

The Siiman government (March 1997 – March 1999) mandated Andra Veidemann of the Progressive Party with the position of Minister without portfolio for Population Affairs (*Rahvastikuminister*) and initiated the institutionalisation of the integration process. This step has been decisive for the development of interethnic relations ever since. Under Veidemann's auspices, the first fundamental documents of a coherent integration strategy were developed, in the Minister's view giving the state's approach to integration of non-Estonians a clear objective and perspective (Poleshchuk 2001, p.11). Initially, an Estonian research group in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) developed a first outline of an integration strategy under the title 'Integrating non-Estonians into Estonian Society: Setting the Course'. Under Veidemann, a research group often referred to as Vera-group brought the issue of integration to the fore.[18] The Vera-group, led by the sociologists Marju Lauristin and Mati Heidmets, could draw upon earlier considerations in public discourse of a more accommodating approach to the ethnic minorities living in Estonia into the political and societal community, promoted by moderates in the independence movement (Lauristin & Heidmets, 2002). In 1997, as a result of the debates initiated by the Vera-group, Minister Veidemann appointed members of the Vera-group together with other experts to a governmental commission, entrusted with the task to outline a policy strategy for minority integration (Järve & Wellmann 1999).

Although no consensus was reached as to what the main problems of integration were or how to approach these, agreement did exist between the members of the government commission on the importance of dealing with minority integration (Pettai & Hallik 2002). When the political elites and the wider public began debating integration, disagreement emerged particularly regarding the question of how integration should be understood in the first place. On the one hand, radical nationalists still opposed any changes to the restorationist fundament of the state and argued that even minor support for naturalisation undermined Estonian statehood. On the other hand, Russian-speakers still demanded

[18] The Vera group had initially been convened by the Ministry of Education in 1996 to research social division and problems of Estonia's international integration in relation to the presence of the Soviet-era settlers in society (Järve 1997).

substantial facilitation of formal political integration and the inclusion of Russian-speakers into the political processes (Semjonov 2002). Veidemann left the notion of integration very vague, referring to 'accelerated naturalization, better Estonian language skills, and political integration of Russian-speakers into Estonian politics' while leaving open how this should be achieved, which was interpreted as a potential tactic to avoid pressure from nationalists by some (Budryte 2005, p.84). At the same time, Russian-speakers were not included in the early steps of the integration strategy's development.

Since the first outline of the integration strategy in 1997, four subsequent policy papers document the development of the Estonian approach to integration. The Veidemann-commission developed a first statement on the 'Bases of the Estonian state integration policy on the integration of non-Estonians into Estonian society', which was approved by the government on 10 February 1998 and by parliament on 10 June of the same year (Bases 1998). In the summer of 1999, newly appointed Minister of Population Affairs Katrin Saks responded to the public criticism that had emerged around the 'Bases' document and initiated changes to the original formulation of the integration strategy. The 'Action Plan' introduced new aspects of the Estonian concept of integration that had previously not been made explicit. Most importantly among these, according to Raivo Vetik (who co-authored the state's integration programmes) is the notion of the 'Estonian model of multiculturalism' (Vetik 2002). The 'Action Plan' was again subject to much debate, during which diverse actors such as Narva City Council and the EÜP challenged the promoted understanding of integration (Open Society Institute 2002, p.197).

On the basis of the two extant policy papers, a newly convened committee developed a fully-fledged State Programme: Integration in Estonian Society 2000-2007 (Government 2000, 'SIP' in what follows), approved by the government on 14 March, 2000. Unlike in the preparation of 'Bases' and the 'Action Plan', the commission for the SIP at least formally consulted with the Presidential Roundtable for National Minorities, and thus formally included Russian-speakers' representatives in the development of the programme. The programme was implemented and monitored both by domestic and international experts. Understanding that the problems of naturalisation and society integration would not be solved by 2007, the envisaged time-frame for the SIP, and after intensive debates between commission and parliament, a follow-up programme, the 'Estonian Integration Strategy' (EIS), was approved in June 2008 (Government 2008).

Though with every step important changes were made to the integration strategy, essentially the five documents have maintained the aim of increasing the naturalisation rate, thereby reducing the 'barriers, which hinder many non-Estonians from participating in the Estonian society' (Bases 1998). Whereas the first three documents outlined general policy goals, the SIP and EIS were comprehensive policy programmes that identified specific target groups, stated concrete policy goals and allocated funding to detailed sub-programmes and projects. Both programmes emphasise the importance of continuing the naturalisation of stateless persons. For example, the EIS declares the goal of about 2,100 successful citizenship applications annually for the period of 2008-2013, again primarily targeting children and young people (Government 2008, p.25). Other age or professional groups, however, are once more not in the focus of the programme when it comes to naturalisation.

Apart from target numbers for naturalisation, the programmes also claim to aim at the increase of active participation of non-Estonians in the political and social processes of Estonian society. Already 'Bases' identified increasing alienation of the 'non-Estonian' population as well as their 'isolation in a world of their own language and mentality', a state which, according to leading sociologists in the country, could lead to the development of a segregated society. According to the authors, this was tenable among other things in the electoral behaviour of minority members who voted for 'Russian-speakers' parties', rather than on the basis of ideological preferences, and a lack of positive affiliation of minority members to the Estonian state. The SIP then set the task of increasing the participation of both non-citizens and ethnic non-Estonians in the political structures (Government 2000, p.14-15). It is important to note that the SIP does not conclude that the observed alienation of Russian-speakers from the Estonian state could be related to the specific policies that so negatively affected the minority.

Although it is argued that the integration policies are aimed at increasing minority participation, legal-political integration is only one aspect of the integration strategy. Rather than being concerned ultimately with the participation and democratic involvement of Russian-speakers in political and social processes, the integration strategy responds to concerns of policy-makers to guarantee the country's 'rapid modernisation' in order to prepare for EU accession, hand-in-hand with the protection and preservation of Estonian culture. In response to these demands, the concept of Estonian multiculturalism is elaborated in the programmes. Estonian multiculturalism entails three elements, 1) a strong common core of Estonian culture to which 2) minority individuals accommodate based on

their own will and commitment, while they are 3) free to practice 'minority belonging' in private. According to one of the authors of the programme, Estonian multiculturalism thus acknowledges the 'different historic relationships to the country, their different cultural traditions as well as different aspirations' of Estonia's heterogeneous population (Vetik 2001, p.26). According to Vetik,

> 'every individual's right to choose his/her group belonging and define his/her cultural identity is emphasized' (Vetik 2001, p.17).

However, in the SIP and EIS minority interpretations of Estonian history are explicitly excluded from the 'strong common core'[19] around which society is to be 'harmonised' (Government 2000, p.5).

That minority adaptation to Estonian culture is an essential aspect of integration is emphasised throughout the integration strategy documents. The integration programmes focus on three areas of minority integration: legal-political, socio-economic and linguistic-communicative integration. By far the main emphasis is on the latter, while legal-political integration (i.e. primarily naturalisation) and socio-economic integration (i.e. primarily labour-market participation) are seen as processes that are supported and generated, once linguistic-communicative integration is achieved (Government 2000, p.6). Unsurprisingly therefore, the largest part of the funds were allocated to the sub-programmes 'education' and 'teaching of Estonian language to adults' (ibid.). Brosig calculated that the linguistic component of the SIP received up to 72% of the SIP's overall budget between 2000 and 2004 (Brosig 2008). This emphasis corresponds with the idea that language knowledge is key to, and will eventually generate, integration. The other sub-programmes were dedicated to the 'education and culture of ethnic minorities' and 'social competence'. Interestingly, the latter aims to change the attitudes of Russian-speakers towards the Estonian state, as well as encourage dialogue between minority members and Estonians, highlighting the importance of minority participation in civil society (Government 2000, p.7). However, actual policies in this area were limited to overcoming the Russian-speakers' alleged 'questionable loyalties' by changing 'language and mindset', as the original UNDP integration programme outline had stated. The programmes emphasise the

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[19] The definition of the common core in the SIP is as follows: 'The common core connecting members of society consists of general human and democratic values, a common sphere of information and Estonian-language environment, as well as common state institutions and values based on the knowledge of Estonian history and awareness of the nature of Estonian citizenship and the multicultural nature of Estonian society' (Government 2000, p.5).

change in attitudes and knowledge of Estonian history required from Russian-speakers to politically integrate.

These key goals of the integration strategy are accompanied by an emphasis on civil society development. Essentially, while the task of increasing minority members' *equal* participation in the cultural and civic sphere is emphasised as a goal throughout the range of programmes, the related strategies simultaneously suggest that equal participation is only possible when minority members learn 'how to live and survive in Estonian society' (Government 2000, p.29). The integration strategies are built upon the understanding that this knowledge has to be taught to minority members, rather than developed through social level interaction and self-organisation. Apart from education, the Ministry of Culture's National Broadcasting Strategy initiated a strategy to foster legal-political integration by reducing the disparities in media consumption between Estonians and non-Estonians, and the increased involvement of Russian-speakers with Estonia-based media (Government 2008). Although this is welcomed by the minority members, who particularly appreciate the improved funding situation for minority language broadcasting, at the same time, minority language contributions to the media are rarely taken into account by the Estonian language media (Astrov 17/05/2010; Poleshchuk 18/12/2009). The one-way approach of integration is maintained throughout the programmes.

Both programmes see the main goal of legal-political integration in 'strengthening a common state identity' and promoting the value and appreciation of Estonian citizenship (Government 2000, p.4). Legal-political integration is not designed primarily as the bureaucratic procedure of naturalisation, but aims at unifying society 'around a common core' (ibid., p.13), attempting to set the stage for this process by cultivating individuals as 'loyal' citizens (ibid., p.15). Loyalty is conceptualised as the adoption of the Estonian interpretation of Estonia's history and practicing the Estonian language. The assumption behind these measures seems to be that non-citizens with a positive attitude toward the state are more likely to accept the naturalisation requirements and will eventually become good, desirable citizens. In that sense, the authors of the EIS argue that citizenship alone is not enough for individuals to develop a strong Estonian identity (Government 2008, p.12). The admission that the active involvement of Russian-speakers in social life and (political) decision-making is important, however, remains under-elaborated in the programme and does not lead to the formulation of concrete aims with regard to political, social or civil

society involvement.[20] In order to support civil society integration only four measures of the EIS appear pertinent.[21] All target young people. The financial support assigned to these activities amounts to 6.06% of the overall programmes budget for 2008-2013 (58,670,000 EEK). There are no measures assigned with a budget that target the actual *development* of civil society.

Such programmes are developed by the Ministry of the Interior. The Estonian Civil Society Concept (*Eesti Kodanikuühiskonna Arengukontseptsioon,* EKAK) was initiated in 1999, supported by the UNDP and eventually approved by the Estonian Nonprofit Roundtable, which was active until 2004 (Kübar 2008). The aims of EKAK are to foster, support and promote the self-organisation of society in order to fulfil functions of at least three kinds: a) complementing the state in areas where it is less active (family, neighbourhood, or global responsibilities); b) to foster an intermediate level between individuals and the state that channels and involves non-represented opinions or demands; and c) the communication and fulfilment of national goals among the population (Estonian Civil Society Development Plan 2002; author's categorisation). The concept does not explicitly refer to minority members, or more specific target groups. Similarly, the Civil Society Development Plan 2011-2014 is impressively silent about any concrete measures as to how 'non-Estonian community groups will be encouraged to more actively participate in […] the third sector' (Estonian Ministry of the Interior 2011, p.10). As we will see in chapters 7 and 9, these measures have not had a significant impact on minority self-organisation.

Overall, while the topic of naturalisation is included in the aims of the programme discussed in the beginning of the SIP, in later sections the focus of the programme shifts to emphasising cultural-linguistic integration, i.e. the promotion of Estonian language acquisition among non-Estonians and efforts to raise the 'awareness of what it means to be

[20] This is evident, for example, in the section outlining the EIS's strategy for legal-political integration: The programme sets as a goal to continue the naturalisation process and ensure the involvement of minority members in civil society and other decision making processes in society (Government 2008, p.25). The programme identifies a single indicator for this goal, which is the number of people applying for Estonian citizenship after successfully passing the citizenship exam. The target level for 2013 is that 2,100 people (annually) will have passed the exam successfully. The EIS further states that 'We assume there will be an increasing trend in political involvement among the people with undetermined citizenship and citizens of other countries.' The programme does not specify how this will be supported by the government. Moreover, the assumption appears to be that involvement in civic organisations and political decision-making is achieved with formal citizenship and knowledge of the Estonian Constitution and the Citizenship Act 2, which constitute the components of the citizenship exam, cf. Government 2008, p.25.

[21] These are: the support for Estonian and Russian-speaking youth activities to increase dialogue between the groups and decrease negative attitudes (Measure V1, 7.1), the related efforts to increase the competence of youth workers in supporting young people's activities (Measure V1, 7.3) and the aim to decrease the 'differences in participation in civil society organisations between people with different mother tongues' (Measure V1, 7.4), Government 2008, p.41; moreover, the aim to involve naturalised citizens in the promotion of citizenship among non-citizens (Measure V 3, 1.1).

a citizen' (Government 2000, p.65). In combination with the SIP's emphasis on providing for the facilities that increase the knowledge of the state language, naturalisation and legal-political integration become a (potential) outcome of the (cultural-linguistic) integration process, but not goals in- and of-themselves. The integration strategy does not aim to facilitate the naturalisation process in itself by changing the criteria for naturalisation or by broadening the understanding of Estonian citizenship as such – for example, by opening the debate on how the Soviet past can be interpreted and what it means for today's Estonian society. Instead, it remains unclear how the more active participation of non-Estonians, particularly non-citizens can be achieved, as no direct measures or imperatives are developed to ensure the non-citizens' inclusion into political or social processes. Overall, in the integration programmes naturalisation has the status of the final outcome of the integration process and a reward for 'becoming Estonian', not a component or an aspect of preceding or parallel political inclusion.

This is not to say that the integration programme has not changed the state's approach to the political integration of minority members. The first documents outlining the integration strategy before the SIP assumed 'non-Estonians'' lack of adequate human capital and skills were responsible for creating barriers to integration, insufficient knowledge of the Estonian language, lack of 'adaptation to the Estonian cultural sphere', electoral behaviour on basis of ethnicity rather than ideological difference, and underdeveloped multiculturalism in the country's North-East (Bases 1998). The early documents also argued that, among Estonians, a 'mental shift' has taken place towards more openness and tolerance, making a change in ethnic relations possible. The SIP is more realistic about problems on the side of the Estonian majority population, acknowledging that obstacles remain since the majority segment of society still does not fully recognise Estonia as a multicultural state and shows an attitude of 'non-Estonians as a problem', rather than a 'development potential' for Estonia or as 'participants in rebuilding Estonia' as the authors of the SIP demand. However, as regards the SIP and also, to large extent, the EIS, these admissions have not been translated into sub-programmes that directly target intergroup accommodation. While some projects exist that aim to raise the 'multicultural awareness' of Estonians (Government 2008; Government 2000; Mätlik 04/12/2009), these are largely limited to issuing information material about traditional cultures of minorities (see for example MEIS 2011; Astrov 17/05/2010; Poleshchuk 18/12/2009). While some minority organisations commend positively on this 'ornamental' representation of minority communities as part of Estonian multiculturalism, the strategies promote a limited understanding of cultural organisation and civic initiative.

As a consequence, Estonian political membership remains restricted by the underlying assumptions about nation- and statehood, group boundaries and the paradoxical goal of an integrated, multicultural Estonia under Estonian hegemony. Legal-political integration predominantly remains a one-way process in which the state sets the criteria for the ideological and practical components of citizenship and rewards conforming individuals by granting citizenship. Unsurprisingly, then, the results are limited. Naturalisation is happening in that the numbers of naturalised residents, primarily children, are growing gradually. Apart from opportunities for Estonian language learning and the distribution of information materials, hardly any facilitating measures are taken to enable more adults to naturalise or – crucially – to participate in social and political agenda-setting and decision-making even without citizenship. Even for Russian-speaking Estonian citizens, no measures are taken that help to include them in the existing political structures or processes. Naturalisation alone, however, does not lead to increased political inclusion of Russian-speakers, as has been recognised even by the expert committee charged with the development and monitoring of the integration strategy (Lauristin et al. 2008).

The process of the development and adoption of the EIS illustrates well that integration policies are subject to political power conflicts, as ever (Korts 24/04/2009). As a result, political participation of minority members has been deliberately undermined.[22] The development of the integration strategy is also a history of missed opportunities: Opinion polls suggest that during the phase of the adoption of the SIP intergroup relations started to relax (Poleshchuk 14/04/2009). Some observers even speak of the Estonian-Russian-speakers' 'honeymoon of integration' (Ehala 2009). Minority representatives argue that the increased talk of integration gave hope to Russian-speakers to expect a better future, especially the facilitation of naturalisation. A review of the changes to citizenship policies and policies of minority inclusion since the adoption of the SIP and EIS however has disappointed such hopeful expectations (Korvalt 19/05/2010; Grigorjan 18/05/2010; Ivanov 18/05/2010).

Generally, the politics of naturalisation, particularly of Russian-speaking Estonian-born residents, and the gradual acknowledgement of foreign-born or ethnic non-Estonians as Estonians is clearly an opening of the political, and potentially national, community. Although the concept of integration, even if limited to one-way integration, is an important

[22] The moderate elite that has supported the opening of Estonian society has been targeted by campaigns against those who are labelled 'red professors' by media and nationalist politicians for their support of the integration process; red referring to 'Soviet', thus imparting that the promotion of integration is dangerous to Estonian society (Grigorjan 18/05/2010; Poleshchuk 18/12/2009; Korts 24/04/2009; Vetik 16/04/2009).

step away from the 1990s' concept of minority dissimilation in the political sphere, the approach does not keep its promise. Political membership continues to be conditional on minority adaptation to Estonian society, especially in the context of the constant 'othering' of minority culture. While the naturalisation via education in Estonian schools, the subsequent issuing of certificates testifying the student's knowledge of Estonian language, history and the Constitution, gradually includes the younger generation, no significant changes were made to facilitate the naturalisation process for adults. This was seen as an effort to avert the perceived threat from the representatives of a former occupying power by many Estonians (Chinn & Kaiser 1996). The belligerence of political rhetoric around the issue of citizenship further dissuaded political opposition to the nation-building project in official politics.

5.6 Slovak regional and administrative reform as a response to minority marginalisation

The Mečiar government's regional and public administration reform had created an unsatisfactory situation for local self-government, democratisation and effective governance, according to dominant – since 1998 – liberal and international actors, especially the EU. Regional administration had not been complemented by a system of regional self-government, so that regional level institutions only executed national-level directives. At the same time, the cooperation of historically aligned municipalities was made difficult by the way the boundaries between regions were drawn.

With this plan, in 1998 the new government responded to external as well as internal demands to resume the public administration and regional reform that had started in 1990, but steered into an undesirable direction by the Mečiar government (Nižňanský & Pilát 2001). Appointing a plenipotentiary and an expert commission in 1999, the issue soon gained momentum and in 2000, a programme was elaborated, stating the main aims of the reform. The overall goal of the reform was to further democratise and institutionally consolidate the Slovak public administration and self-government structures. Key aspects of the reform were a regional-territorial re-arrangement; institutional reform, including the complementation of the administrative regions generated by the predecessor government by introducing regional self-government institutions as well as the 'modernisation' of public administration with regard to civil servants as well as administrative processes; the decentralisation of political decision-making and fiscal competences (Nižňanský & Pilát 2001, pp.219–220). The early steps towards reform were well received by the European Union, whose Accession Agreement of 1999 had repeatedly emphasised the 'key role' the

reform was to play in the accession process (European Commission 1999, p.14); the EU also provided PHARE funding in support of the reform (ibid.).

The envisaged reform touched upon two major issues with regard to political community structuring at the regional and municipality levels, which had an ethno-political side to them.[23] First, territorial-administrative reform bore the chance of redrawing the borders of territorial units and increasing the minorities' share of the respective regional population. This could foster their role in regional as well as national level politics due to numerical strength. Second, with the introduction of self-government at the regional level, the competences of institutions at the national, regional and local levels had to be redefined. This bore the chance of increasing local self-determination on a number of issues, including those especially relevant for the Hungarians' cultural institutions such as minority schooling. Hungarian representatives even saw a chance for renegotiating power division along ethnic lines, and the introduction of a Hungarian region resurfaced again, potentially rearranging the institutional setting for the group's participation in further institution-building.

After the approval of the general goals and the timeline for their realisation and implementation had been approved by parliament, the process slowed down. Disagreement arose around the issue of how many regions should be established, where the boundaries should run, and whether administration and self-governmental regions should be congruent. Suggestions ranged from 4 to 16 regions to replace the existing 8 (Klimovsky 2010). The government coalition favoured a 12 region system, which would readjust both public administration and self-government to the 'historical' regions of established cooperation between municipalities and regions that were disregarded by the existing 8 region system. However, in 2001, the MKP began promoting a 13 region model which included one region with a Hungarian majority. This so called Komarňanska Župa (Komárno parish) comprised the historical-geographical region of the Žitny ostrov in the South West of Slovakia (Šutajová 2008), which includes towns such as Dunajská Streda, with more than 80% Hungarians among the population, and Komárno and Samorín with a population about two thirds Hungarian; this form of organization would have provided for more decision-making autonomy of minority groups at the local levels, a scenario that made part of the coalition government vote against it, together with the opposition parties (Brusis 2002).

[23] This was despite the fact that the reform was not devised in the government programme as a means for interethnic integration, but to foster general democratisation (Buček 2002).

When it became clear that such a region was unacceptable for the coalition partners, the MKP stated repeatedly that it fully supported the coalition partners' 12-region model (Mesežnikov 2001). The support of the SDL' was less clear. Throughout the first Dzurinda government the SDL' had repeatedly sided with the opposition, especially in ethnicised disputes. In the decisive vote, the SDL' voted against its own government coalition's proposal in an alliance with the HZDS and SNS (Nižňanský & Pilát 2001). Preceding the vote, the issue had become increasingly ethnicised. This was partly due to the Hungarians' move to propose its own model for territorial rearrangement, emphasising the political self-determination of Hungarians. Largely, however, it was just the continuation of earlier arguments about regional administration and self-government between different parties. In the immediate advent of the vote in parliament, SNS and HZDS had increased their anti-Hungarian rhetoric, warning that the 12 region model would foster Hungarian irredentism. Eventually, the decision was made in favour of a model according to which the existing eight public administration units were complemented by eight equivalent regional self-government units. As a result, Mečiar's ethnopolitics of the mid-1990s were reconfirmed and continue to shape political power relations up until today. The complexity of public administration reform makes it unlikely that significant changes with regard to regional boundaries are to be expected in future (Domsitz 16/09/2009). The vote did not yet include all aspects of the reform though; decisively, the parliament did not adopt acts regarding the *qualitative* aspects of the reform, i.e. democratisation through decentralisation of both political and fiscal competences (Klimovsky 2010).

The failed reform of the public administration system added to the general state of crisis that the government coalition was in. The MKP threatened to leave the coalition in response to the anti-minority vote of the SDL if the reform was not followed up by substantial redistribution of political power to bodies of regional and local self-government (*Slovak Spectator* 01/09/2001). The EU made the successful continuation of the accession process contingent on the MKP's continued participation in government and on changes to the decision-making competencies of the different tiers of governance (Brusis 2003). As a result of this external pressure, in late 2001 and early 2002 the government undertook several more steps to ensure the devolution of competencies from national to regional and local level governance (Klimovsky 2010). The local levels acquired competencies in the running of local services, including the setting up/closing of schools (and the decision as to a new school's language(s) of tuition), but also on regional and municipal properties and others (Nižňanský & Pilát 2001, p.228). Even though the public administration reform did not foster Hungarian political or functional autonomy, general devolution helped increase

the direct participation in local and regional level decision-making of Hungarians. In this sense, the public administration reform of 2001/2002 reshaped political membership of Hungarians. The minority members have since then argued that the reform has *de facto* increased their decision-making authority also on minority community issues thanks to the numerical strength in certain regions/municipalities (Bérenyi 30/06/2009). Moreover, because interethnic relations are better, and less ethno-politically contaminated at the local level, decisions on community issues can now be taken without the tensions that often characterise national level interethnic policy making. Also, devolution did eventually enable cooperation as part of 'historical regions', even though regional boundaries do not represent the historical regions. MKP politicians have therefore had an interest to press for the reform (*Slovak Spectator* 01/09/2001) and welcomed the changes implemented.

At the same time, the transfer of competences to the regional and local self-governments does not warrant decision-making authority for minority groups on all questions of their particular interest. As responsibilities lie more in the managerial, implementing and control functions and in concrete organization of public services, this does not allow the shaping and designing of policies, for example (Bryson 2008). Legislation on municipal authority over the use of local fiscal revenues and the redistribution of financial means between different levels of government have been criticised equally (Klimovsky 2010; Nižňanský & Pilát 2001); in 2002, the European Commission criticised that the

> '(t)ransfer of responsibilities from state to regional level, however, is not yet proceeding satisfactorily hand in hand with fiscal decentralisation' (European Commission 2002, p.132).

This resulted in many municipalities having the competency, but not the means to act. In the following months and years, fiscal decentralisation continued, therefore (Klimovsky 2010). Decisively, however, persisting problems with the issues of public administration and local self-government are not discussed as a problem of ethnic inequality and exclusion anymore.

From the perspective of interethnic relations and political membership, the regulation of control mechanisms and economic resource distribution at sub-national levels has not changed with respect to majority-minority group relations within the established social order. Likewise, devolution of competencies to the regional governments in the course of the reform has not altered the majority-minority consensus over the institutions of political community nationally. However, the reluctance of parts of government actors to give up

competencies in some policy fields to sub-national communities reserves the opportunity for redistributing resources between regions and coherent organisation of society as a whole. This, theoretically, enables the national government to balance regional differences and potentially enhance social integration at the sub-national level. From the vantage point of minority participation, the problem here continues to lie largely with the ethnic dimension of central state institutions and the remaining problems with interregional redistribution and economic integration of the country's periphery (A. Smith 2000). Overall I concur with Deets and Stroschein who argue that decentralisation and general democratic change have improved the situation of the Hungarians, without moving significantly towards ethnopolitical power-sharing (Deets & Stroschein 2005).[24]

Conclusion

This chapter started with a discussion of the fundamental institutions that determined Estonia's and Slovakia's constitutional orders. While in Estonia formal political membership was restricted from the beginnings of post-socialist independent statehood and political participation of Soviet-era settlers limited as a result of these policies, formal membership was given to Hungarians in Slovakia. I have analysed how in both states institutions were designed to shape political participation along ethnicised boundaries. Following similar routes of nation-state building the institutions of the political system were repeatedly modified, effectively aiming to restrict practical political membership of Hungarians and Russian-speakers. At the same time, in both states policies towards minorities have never been unambiguous, allowing over time for limited institutional inclusion of minorities into the political community. The processes of re-negotiating membership criteria are conditioned by the fundamental design of the political community and in turn condition differences in political participation.

In contrast to the situation in Estonia, where citizenship policies were introduced as a systematic step following logically from the restorationist principle, Slovak anti-minority policies that aimed to restrict the Hungarian group's political power appear less systematic. The Mečiar government did not attempt to ban 'ethnic' parties, for example. Rather, anti-minority measures were wrapped in more general changes and reforms of fundamental political institutions, such as the electoral system, distribution and boundaries of electoral

[24] The reform has not profited other minorities equally well. In its Regular Report 2002, the European Commission criticises that '[i]t appears that in a number of cases the discriminatory attitudes of local communities towards the Roma make proper implementation of the projects very difficult, underpinning and perpetuating the segregation of the Roma minority in some parts of the country' (Regular Report 2002, p.31).

districts, and consolidation of a centralist system of governance. However, as I have argued, these policies were systematic in that they stepwise reduced the access points for representatives of the Hungarian community to participate politically. As these policies also targeted the political opposition to the government as a whole, minority political representation was affected in a double way. However, this effect on the Slovak political opposition became an important structural resource to end Mečiarism, further the EU accession process and thereby bringing in another important ally for general and interethnic democratisation.

Overall, the chapter discussed the political-institutional structures that resulted from, and further shaped, majority-minority interaction in Estonia and Slovakia. The chapter demonstrated how the majorities in both countries were able to utilise the structures provided by the specific historical legacies of intergroup relations, the narrative of national self-determination and the Europe-wide predominance of the nation-state in support of building a state *for* the respective majority group. When the resulting state-building *against* minorities increased the disintegration of society, the constraints of EU conditionality policies became a resource for political actors supporting more liberal forms of state-building. This paved the way for limited majority-minority interaction in the political realm on the basis of minority assimilation in Estonia and supported political strength of Hungarians in Slovakia based on territorial concentration, effectively reinforcing regional segregation. As chapters 7 through 9 will demonstrate, these majority-minority structures as crystallised in the institutions of political memberships were significant for the ways in which minority actors attempted to regain their political agency.

Chapter 6: Minority communities in Nation-building

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter demonstrated how political membership was defined and implemented in the political institutions of the new Estonian and Slovak states, designed according to the requirements of nation-state building. This chapter discusses how these states have been further 'nationalised' by policies that aim to 'complete' nation-state building and to redress perceived negative consequences of existing social diversity as well as perceived historical injustices and histories of oppression (Brubaker 1996, p.9).

The previous chapters have shown that the problematic relations between the two groups are rooted in the difficult historical relations between them; differing interpretations of historical events play a crucial role in interethnic relations. However, in both countries history and memory are but one aspect of the conflict. Decisively, language use and language policies have become the main markers of group belonging and conflict, and key terms in discussions of group 'loyalties'. Language policies are a crucial – often, the central – aspect of nationalising policies, because European state-building, and in particular the recent exercises in nation-state construction witnessed across Central and Eastern Europe, are based on an understanding of nations for which 'national languages have become the most important means of national cultural reproduction' (Csergo 2007, p.5). Moreover, in majority-minority relations across the region, language is the single most important marker of group difference, rather than racial, cultural and religious practices, which often constitute the lines of demarcation in other intergroup conflicts. Language policies have been identified as a central means for governments to integrate societies and establish cohesion amongst their members (Hogan-Brun 2005; Wright 2000). On the basis of the argument of integration, language policies in many countries across CEE were designed to evoke linguistic homogeneity. In many cases, this is phrased not only in terms of integration, but also refers to efforts to prevent disintegration and the potential break-up of a state resulting from minority demands for autonomy, independence, or 'their own' state (Hogan-Brun & Wolff 2003).

At the same time, language is an aspect of social life that is inextricably linked to people's presentation of themselves to the social world as a means of accessing non-linguistic

resources. This is why it has been identified by a variety of social actors and institutions as a powerful tool in the control and interpretation of interpersonal as well as intergroup relationships and belonging (Järve 2003). Varying degrees of language control can be established through linguistic policies and supported through the education system. Where large-scale language shifts are intended by policy-makers, the visibility of minority languages in public and the availability of education in minority languages are both strongly linked with language policy (Hogan-Brun 2005, p.277). This is, of course, even more the case when policies are designed to influence individuals' access to social goods and their degree of participation in decision-making related to social and political issues.

I argue in this chapter that language policies in Estonia and Slovakia can be analysed in terms of three simultaneous processes. Essentially, these are; i) continued state-building, ii) integration within the international system of nation-states and, importantly, iii) ambiguous nation-building strategies, which target titular and minority groups differently. I approach these aspects as follows: In section 6.2, I look at language policies in Slovakia and Estonia as nationalising policies, following the nationalist elites' strategies to ensure titular 'ownership' of the state. These processes made use of regulations on the state language to promote societal integration. Section 6.3 assesses the relationship between the concept of minority rights and regulations of state language use in the context of Europeanisation. Section 6.4 investigates the role that policies addressing interethnic integration have played in the efforts to induce a language shift. I do this by looking at the education policies of the two states. I summarise the findings by indicating the main consequences of language policy planning: the solidifying of boundaries between the groups that works against the logic of society integration.

6.2. Language policy planning in a nationalising state

Language policies in Slovakia and Estonia attest to the centrality of ethno-national criteria for the formation and fortification of the political community. They are grounded in salient identities as well as political legacies from the earlier phases of nation-building that function as resources for nationalist political entrepreneurs. At the same time, efforts to create a unitary nation-state by means of nationalising policies also aim to bring into congruence a diverse population with the idea of the nation-state – that is, to integrate the

population around the titular language as a 'common core'.[1] As part of the nationalist elites' political strategies to manage linguistic diversity, language legislation in Estonia and Slovakia has been designed to alter the different forms of linguistic pluralism found in the two countries in the late 1980s.

With respect to Estonia, in 1989 the Supreme Soviet promulgated laws to foster the processes of nation-building by adopting the Language Law of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic (ESSR 1989). This crucial step provided a symbolic point of reference on the road to national self-determination. The strong link to national sovereignty showed through when it came to issues of language use. Estonia was then among the first Soviet republics, together with Latvia (following Lithuania's lead), to declare the titular nation's language the 'state language' and thereby the (only) official language of the ESSR in 1989 (Kionka 1992, p.165; Misiunas & Taagepera 1993, p.311). At the time, when more than a third of the population had Russian as their first or main language of interaction and most of this section of the population lacked competence in Estonian, many Estonians worried that Estonian would lose its role as the first language for Estonians, with potentially extinction threatening the language in the long-term. In response to this perception, the law was to enable the state to 'accord special attention and protection to the Estonian language' in all formal and public proceedings (preamble of ESSR 1989; see also Budryte 2005, p.73). These policies reversed the status Russian had under Soviet language legislation, when it functioned as the all-Union official language and was sometimes described as the '"second native tongue" of every Soviet citizen' (quoted in Taagepera 1971, p.216). As a result, the attribution of privileged status to the Estonian language constrained the role and use of Russian, as will be discussed later (Adrey 2005, p.458). This caused frustration and disappointment among the Russian-speaking members of the Supreme Soviet (Järve 2002).

In Slovakia, until 1990 the concern with language policies had not been prominent in the VPN, whose activists focused on issues of general democratisation rather than 'national' interests (Harris 2002). Daftary and Gál claim that it was the Czechs' stronger and more visible role in leading the revolution that caused many Slovak intellectuals to submit to demands from nationalists to voice 'Slovak interests' (Daftary & Gál 2003, p.42). Increasingly, Slovak nationalists, with the SNS at their forefront, framed these interests in cultural-linguistic terms and placed these high on the Slovak political agenda. The original proposal for a language act was drafted by the SNS on the initiative of the Slovak cultural

[1] The notion of a common core is particularly and explicitly emphasised in Estonia's integration strategy. However, Slovakia's language policies have repeatedly been justified with similar arguments, as I will demonstrate in this chapter.

heritage organisation *Matica Slovenská* (Mother Slovakia), and was embedded in a campaign that aimed at restoring 'historical justice' in relation to the Hungarians (Innes 2001, p.54; Bakker 1997, p.50). Hungarian representatives responded with their own version of a language law that envisaged far-reaching minority language rights (Csergo 2007). Eventually, the moderate Slovak majority adopted a law that satisfied neither the nationalists nor the Hungarians, but effectively privileged Slovak over other languages spoken on Slovakia's territory and drew a clear line between Slovak and Czech/ 'Czechoslovak'.

As a result of the strength of the moderate majority actors in both countries, the early language laws recognised minority groups and included provisions that were aimed particularly at Russian-speakers and Hungarians respectively. The first Slovak language law allowed for minority language use in official administrative proceedings in the municipalities, where a minority group constituted 20% or more of the local population, a condition almost exclusively fulfilled by the Hungarians (ibid.). Thereby the law acknowledged practices on the ground and prevented the criminalisation of minority language use in public offices in minority-inhabited areas. At the same time, the law did not require municipal offices to be able to *respond* to written or oral enquires in a minority language (ibid.). This ensured that the law avoided the situation where an official was recognising minority languages, 'through the back-door', at the local level. In contrast, the ESSR law constituted a basis for the continued legal usage of Russian on Estonian territory. Although it introduced transition periods, outlining dates by which public offices should fully function in Estonian, the law guaranteed the continued use of Russian within and between local bodies of state authorities, as well as within institutions and organisations whose working language was Russian (ESSR 1989, §36). This provision did not include a deadline, but would be applicable even after other deadlines had been reached. In addition, the Supreme Soviet was given the right to postpone set deadlines for the transition to Estonian in areas where Estonian was not spoken by the majority of residents. While, with hindsight, it seems the codification of language use also laid the groundwork for the activity of Russian-speakers in public life on their own terms to be curtailed, the 1989 law did not exhibit the aggressive measures for promoting the Estonian language and restricting the use of Russian that would characterise later language legislation. Protests of Russian-speaking deputies in the Supreme Soviet attested to the fact that Russian-speakers hoped for the Russian language to obtain the status of second official language. As in Slovakia, the law satisfied neither the minority representatives nor the majority nationalists. However, both early language laws offered a vision for majority-

minority integration that, although based on majority preferences, acknowledged minority language practices and the importance of minority language use for minority group members.

In both laws, the titular language was framed as a means to enable intergroup communication and understanding (Daftary & Gál 2003). The laws' capacities to integrate the populations could not really be tested, however, since majority nationalists pushed for further nationalising policies in the two countries, and minority activists continued to demand their unfulfilled claims for excluded minority language rights. Moreover, the laws failed to establish standards for language use in many spheres, most obviously in education, causing gaps in the legislation and leading to vague provisions that, under the circumstances of growing ethnic tensions on the ground as well as in politics, were interpreted very differently by the different groups.[2] The major importance of the laws therefore did not lie in their practical outcomes – which in any case would be limited by future political changes – but in the psychological effect that the new status of Estonian and Slovak had for the process of nation-cum-state building (Järve 2002; Raun 1995). Growing support for majority nationalism in subsequent years made it increasingly less acceptable to demand minority language rights or question the unique status of the state language.

The role of the titular languages in the two states became even more pronounced with the adoption of the constitutions, which stipulate Estonian and Slovak respectively as the sole state languages. As mentioned earlier, the constitutions did, simultaneously, acknowledge minority language rights; still, particularly in Estonia, subsequent citizenship and naturalisation legislation made the knowledge of Estonian a *sine qua non* for participating in the newly developing society. In Slovakia, the provision of Slovak as the state language was interpreted by the second Mečiar government as an imperative for tightening or replacing legislation that regulated the public display of minority languages. Between 1992 and 1995, both states adopted legislation that was increasingly restrictive with respect to minority language use. Laws targeted the visibility of minority languages on public signage and with regard to names in Slovakia; in Estonia, several legal acts regulated the working language of local and national parliaments and governments, as well as the

[2] The confusion over the role minority languages may or may not play in the public, in particular on public signs and in geographical denominations, was used by *Matica Slovenská* activists who started taking down bilingual signs in parts of southern Slovakia. The *Matica Slovenská* responded to an earlier decision by the Ministry of Interior that bilingual street signs were prohibited, which they welcomed. They were, of course, not authorised to do so, these were actions of bottom-up nationalists (Innes 2001).

command of the state language required of candidates to stand for office.[3] This left Russian-speakers largely disenfranchised even at the local level where, since the adoption of the Aliens Act of 1993, permanent residents were entitled to vote. Estonian officials later admitted that the goal of the restrictive policies of the time was 'to turn the life of Russians into hell' (former general director of the Citizenship and Migration Board, Andres Kollist, in an interview with Peeter Ernits, published in *Molodezh' Estonii* 12/02/00).[4]

As mentioned earlier, 'historical justice' was one of the driving forces for the nationalist elites in both countries; however, this was not the only argument brought forward by the elites to establish the titular language as the only state language. In both countries, majority politicians also reacted to current challenges. In Estonia, the *de facto* status of Russian as the first language in the region of almost a third of Estonia's population was supported by Russia, where members of the political elite accused Estonia of 'ethnic cleansing'. Moreover, Estonia saw itself under pressure from the growing importance of English in particular, the role of which increased rapidly as part of Estonia's international integration. According to Ozolins, then, Estonia saw itself linguistically as well as politically 'between Russian and European hegemony' (Ozolins 2000). Because of this difficult relation, international organisations that attempted to advise the countries on their minority legislation had limited success; the international support for minority rights was seen as 'acting for the Russians' (Mart Nutt, author of Estonia's citizenship legislation and member of the national-conservative *Isamaaliit* (Pro Patria Union) in an interview with Kelley 2004, p.105). In a similar vein, Mečiar accused international organisations of double standards and discrimination against Slovakia in favour of Hungary, when minority rights were at stake (Goldman 1999, pp.159–160). In line with Slovak and Estonian nation-building and even more so in response to such 'external kin-state nationalism' (Brubaker 1996), the Estonian and Slovak national elites geared language policies towards the establishment of linguistic sovereignty over the states' territories.

By 1995, the transition period to introduce Estonian to all public communications had ended. However, the language practices of large parts of the population had not changed sufficiently to enable the functioning of Estonian society in Estonian alone, as the restorationists had hoped it would: in 1995, only 37% of non-Estonians claimed to be able

[3] Among others these were the Local Government Organisation Act 1993, the Riigikogu Election Act 1994 and the Local Government Council Election Act 1996.
[4] This rather vague imperative was accompanied by explicit incentives for Russian-speakers who left for other Former Soviet Republics. The Migration Foundation (later Integration Foundation) granted up to 100,000 EEK to non-Estonian émigrés (V. Pettai & Kallas 2009, p.108).

to speak Estonian (Rannut 2004).[5] The hopes of some majority nationalists that many Russian-speakers would leave the country had also not been satisfied. As a result, many Estonians still considered the Estonian language to be under threat. Moreover, many politicians claimed the restorationist ideology was not sufficiently implemented, since the 1989 language law still recognised Russian in spite of its illegitimate status in the eyes of Estonian nationalists (Budryte 2005, p.73). In Slovakia, majority nationalists had similar concerns as the Estonians. They claimed that the rights of Slovaks to use their language were violated in southern Slovakia due to the use of Hungarian. As a survey revealed in 1993, according to 53% of Slovak respondents there was a 'danger of Hungarianization' (Harlig 1997, p.487).

Drawing upon these sentiments, anxieties, and the mobilisation potential they generated, in 1995 both parliaments introduced new state language laws.[6] Replacing the laws from 1989 and 1990, they left little space for minority language use. The new Slovak law, which forms the basis for contemporary language policies, ruled that Slovak 'shall have priority over other languages used' in the country (SLL 1995, §1,2).[7] More precisely, it stipulated that the state language should be used in all public communications and introduced fines for the violation of the law (ibid. §10). The law tightened existing legislation and *de facto* revoked the changes made to language legislation under the short lived Moravčík government.[8] Particularly disappointing for minority representatives was the fact that none of the Slovak parliamentarians who were present during the vote on the law voted against it, leaving the Hungarian political representation even more politically isolated than before (Williams 1996, p.7).[9] This included those MPs who, a year earlier, had tacitly cooperated with the Hungarian MPs in the interim government and as a joint opposition against many decisions of the Mečiar-governments.

The Slovak law envisaged the potential imposition of fines in cases of violation of the act's provisions, which caused particular anxiety among minority members. In subsequent years the government devised several laws and decrees gradually limiting the use of Hungarian

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[5] This was unsurprising, since the Estonian authorities had not introduced measures to improve minority competency in the state language. Existing programmes were largely prepared by international organisations (Budryte 2005).

[6] This was on the initiatives of *Isamaaliit* from the opposition and the SNS as a government partner, but with much support from other parties, including the more moderate ones.

[7] The amended version can be accessed at the website of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic (SLL 2010).

[8] The moderate interim government (March-December 1994) annulled the laws on names and bilingual street signs, but it did not respond to the Hungarian parties' demands for further minority language legislation (Csergo 2007).

[9] The seventeen Hungarian MPs abstained from the vote, and several Slovak MPs were absent; all other MPs voted in favour of the government's proposal (Williams 1996, p.7).

in public institutions, such as in the reports issued by Hungarian schools, in public displays of language, in ceremonies, and many other cases (Csergo 2007). The lack of direct minority language regulation in the law and of separate, minority language legislation left minority members unsure about their rights; minority representatives argued that the law was a direct attack on its cultural group reproduction and an attempt to undermine its group identity (Wolff 2001, p.24). This problem was addressed by the Dzurinda-government in 1999, which adopted a minority language law, as will be discussed in the next sub-chapter. The Dzurinda-government also did not actively pursue nationalising language policies. Overall it acted in the spirit of the more liberal language law of 1990.

Similarly to the Slovak state language law, the Estonian language act of 1995 declared the 'right to use Estonian' in all public interactions, including those with companies and non-profit organisations (ELL 1995, §4). In line with this right, the law limited severely the opportunities for the use of Russian, the status of which changed from a 'widely spoken language' to a 'foreign language'. More importantly still, it introduced proficiency requirements for employees in a wide variety of occupations and for naturalisation. These language criteria had a strong negative impact on minority participation on the labour market (Hallik et al. 2002; Lauristin & Vetik 2000). The proficiency requirements were applied throughout Estonia, affecting Russian-speakers in areas that were inhabited largely by Estonians as well as in those that were almost exclusively Russian-speaking. The lack of sufficient and effective language courses for Russian-speakers to acquire this proficiency meant that citizenship became unattainable for many Soviet-era settlers who were of undefined or foreign citizenship. This was the case particularly for those Russian-speakers living in the North-East of the country or in Tallinn itself, where in many areas communication took place almost exclusively in Russian.

The proponents of the laws argued that these were necessary to ensure the rights of all citizens to speak Estonian or Slovak respectively everywhere on the states' territories. Moreover, they were proposed to enhance interethnic integration. The preamble to the 1995 state language law declares the Slovak language the

> 'most important attribute of the uniqueness of the Slovak nation and the most precious value of its cultural heritage, as well as an expression of sovereignty of the Slovak Republic and a general means of communication for all its citizens, securing their freedom and equality in dignity and rights on the territory of the Slovak Republic' (SLL 1995).

The law's claim goes beyond the notion of 'nationalising' the state. It purports that the titular language is the tool to integrate Slovakia's diverse citizenry, by offering an instrument of communication between all citizens. At the same time, no measures to improve the generally good command of Slovak among Hungarian citizens were adopted, questioning the incentives for 'integration' (Csergo 2007; Lampl 24/09/2009).

In Estonia, the question of communication between majority and minority members was indeed an issue; as mentioned above, the proportion of Russian-speakers who were proficient in Estonian was small. At the same time, when the law was adopted, the Estonian authorities did not show an inclination to support the acquisition of Estonian language knowledge by Russian-speakers. Language programmes were demanded by minority actors, but existing programmes were limited to the minority members they could easily reach, and entirely run by international organisations, aiming to accelerate the naturalisation of stateless persons and thereby increasing stability (Sarv 2002).

In order to ensure the fulfilment of the Estonian state language law, in 1996 an act was adopted to assert the Order of Realisation of the Control over the Language Act Fulfilment (Order 1996). The law restructured the Language Board, which had existed since 1990 to supervise the standardisation of the Estonian language, into a Language Inspectorate charged with the 'control [of] the language act fulfilment' (Language Inspection 2011). Among other things, it is responsible for issuing penalties for the violation of language requirements in the use of Estonian in public administration, the media, the Defence Forces, and in relation to customers' and public signage, such as in cases where Estonian Literary Standards are violated in the transcription of names. The language inspectorate is a key institution to ensure the enforcement of Estonian as the state language. The Slovak Language Law also envisaged fines for the violation of the language act, which were central to any protests and criticism by domestic minority and international actors. As a consequence, the choice of language, not only in public institutions, but in all spheres of life, represents the acknowledgment or refusal of citizenship duties, as already implied by the state language law. Language use was directly equated with 'loyalty' to the state and to the Estonian and Slovak nations respectively (Budryte 2005; Langman 2002). This also served to delegitimise protest against the legislation, and further undermined minority members' political participation.

In 1998, Estonian language requirements were further tightened when an amendment to the law was adopted that excluded individuals with insufficient knowledge of Estonian from

the right to be elected to local government (Local Government Council Election Act 1996). Despite harsh international criticism and domestic outrage among non-Estonians, the amendment was reversed only in 2001. This reversal was triggered when the OSCE Mission to Estonia, which Estonian officials had long wanted closed in the light of the country's accession to the EU, conditioned its closure on the state's decision to annul the 1998 amendment; additionally, NATO made Estonia's membership conditional upon changing the law (Järve 2003, p.98). However, the local elections of 1999 fell under the 1998 regulations. In response to media outcries against the reversal in 2001, the decision was immediately 'compensated' for by the adoption of another restrictive amendment to the act requiring Estonian to be the language of local government sessions, even in bodies where the internal working language was Russian.[10] It was only with the introduction of the integration strategy that the Estonian state emphasised the need for an active approach to increasing minority members' proficiency in Estonian, though measures were still largely funded by international organisations (Government 2008; Government 2000).

The 'second wave' of state language laws was central to the consequential development of majority-minority relations in Estonia and Slovakia. The laws continued the nationalising policies with regard to state institutions and participation therein; second, the elevation of the state languages was part and parcel of Estonian and Slovak nation-building which distinguished those with 'native' proficiency in the state language from those whose command of the state language was, in socio-economic and interactive terms, limited; third, it set the stage for further integration by conditioning social and political participation increasingly on state language use. As a result, speaking the state language amounted to a citizen's duty, and hence made the inability or reluctance of minority members to do exactly this an act of 'disloyalty' (Langman 2002; Feldman 2000).

In February 2007, the Estonian language act was amended once more, with this revision entering into force in 2008. The act now relates the language proficiency in Estonian to a new 6-level scheme following the Common European Framework of Reference (Eksamikeskus 2011). Apparently introduced to clarify the language situation for 'public servants, employees and sole proprietors', the law requires new proficiency certificates from employees in a number of occupational spheres.[11] In addition, the 2007 amendments

[10] This, as is widely known in Estonia, has led to the practice that unofficial sessions are held in Russian where debates take place, while a short follow-up session is held in Estonian where the decisions are made official (Agarin 2010; Järve 2002).
[11] The question of validity of language certificates was a bone of contention already in 2002/2003, when the Pro Patria Union claimed that earlier certificates acquired to certify an individual's level of language knowledge for naturalisation or employment were issued under doubtful circumstances and required repeated

changed the language inspectorate's legal status, which led to its strengthening, despite ongoing international criticism of the strong role of the inspectorate (Council of Europe 2005a). As part of the law's enforcement since 2008, the language inspectorate checks the employees' proficiency in Estonian, both in cases where no former certificate exists and in those where it does (Language Inspection 2011; LICHR 2010). This has increased the pressure on Russian-speaking employees and contradicted international and domestic criticism of both the adequacy of the established requirements and the practices of ensuring compliance with these requirements (Poleshchuk 2009, pp.99–102). In 2007, the parliament also reconfirmed the normative centrality of the Estonian language for the state, by including the protection of the Estonian language into the preamble of the constitution.

In Slovakia, language legislation was more minority-friendly between 1998 and 2006, and resulted among other things in the adoption of a minority language law in 1999, which will be discussed in section 6.3. With its return to government in 2006, however, the SNS resumed its anti-minority policies, increasingly pushing the language issue. Since the Dzurinda government, under the impact of European organisation, had introduced a minority language law, the Fico government reasoned that a new state language law was needed which would be linked to the responsibility of the Slovak state to safeguard the rights of every Slovak who lives among a minority, even if the latter constituted a local majority (Bocian & Groszkowski 2009). The 2009 language law did not differ significantly from the 1995 version in its direction and general regulation of the state language; however, the law did tighten existing state language provisions and extended their applicability.[12] The law saw one important change with the potential to directly affect minority language use. Fines were reintroduced and tightened, which had been nullified in the original law by a clause in the minority language law in 1999; ranging from 100 to 5,000 Euros, these applied to organisations as well as individuals (SLL 1995, amendment 318/2009, §9a). Although the law reiterates that minority language legislation was not to be rescinded by any of the state language law regulations, this did little to safeguard minority language use outside of contacts with municipal authorities (i.e. the area covered by the minority language law).

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validation (USEFR 2011). Mainly for practical reasons, i.e. acknowledging that the language inspectorate would not be able to conduct all validations of existing certificate within the originally given timeframe, the revocation of the validity of 'old' certificates was postponed until the introduction of new certificates and proficiency criteria in 2007.

[12] It regulated not only public affairs, but also interactions in e.g. transport, telecommunications and postal services, requiring all workers in these sectors to master the state language (318/2009, §1,5). It required cultural performances and programmes that were presented in a minority language to be dubbed or accompanied by another form of translation.

The Slovak government's renewed attempts to bring the majority's claim for linguistic sovereignty into congruence not only in state institutions but also, potentially, in everyday interaction processes shocked minority members. Hungarians saw their situation deteriorate, and in the eyes of many it became worse than it had been in the 1990s (Domsitz 16/09/2009).

The law was interpreted by representatives of the Hungarian group as well as the Hungarian state as an anti-minority and specifically anti-Hungarian move. Domestic and bilateral relations deteriorated at such a pace that the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities (HCNM), Knut Vollebaek, became increasingly involved over a period of several months. His diplomatic statements explicitly pointed to the Slovak government's responsibility to alleviate the potential impact of the law on minority rights:

> 'I expect the Slovak authorities to closely monitor and evaluate the implementation of the State Language Law, particularly with regard to the imposition of fines in order to avoid undue limitations to the use of minority languages. I intend to remain engaged with this and other matters until the balance between strengthening the State language and protecting minority rights is achieved' (HCNM Press release 2010).

It was the new democratic government coalition under Iveta Radičová in 2010 – including the new minority party *Most-Híd* – that responded to the HCNM's demands and enabled the amendment of the state language law in March 2011. Several aspects of the law were revoked, thereby limiting the cases in which fines could be imposed for violations of the act (SLL 2010). However, essentially the state language law remained intact.

Conclusion

The legacy of past relations between the titular nation and minorities on the territory was central to the majority nationalist elites' efforts to nationalise the institutional structures. Still, having the upper hand in politics, moderate majority elite members in both countries did not initially follow the demands from nationalists, who opposed any formal status for minority languages (Daftary & Gál 2003; Järve 2002). The moderate majority parties' stances on language legislation attest to the openness of the situation during the early phases of democratisation (Csergo 2007; Budryte 2005). However, moderate politicians increasingly gave in to nationalist pressure, while in opposition. In government, liberals did not pursue policies of explicit state-cum-nation-building on the basis of language. Although Hungarian and Russian had not been granted official status, the laws did elaborate on the use of these languages. Although the language acts of 1989 and 1990 did

not respond to minority demands, they entailed the possibility of moderate nation-building under the conditions of minority consensus and inclusion. Later policies increasingly restricted minority language use in the public sphere and its public visibility, essentially nationalising, by means of language use, the territory and institutions of the state.

Language policies in Estonia and Slovakia are problematic from a democratic perspective. They reflect the marginalisation of minority perspectives in the decision-making regarding the relations between majority and minority groups. Moreover, the enforcement of the state language across political, social and economic institutions correlates with group-related disadvantages not only in political, but also in socio-economic participation. For labour market participation in Estonia the level of command of the state language has an important, even decisive impact on employability, occupational attainment and wages of Russian-speakers. It is a *sine qua non* for the vast majority of white-collar jobs (Lauristin et al. 2008; Leping & Toomet 2007; Hallik et al. 2002; Lauristin & Vetik 2000). Although the situation of Hungarians in Slovakia is different, and although the command of Slovak is generally good among Hungarians, researchers have argued that the generally low level of social mobility of Hungarian inhabitants in southern Slovakia can be traced back, among other factors such as education and the rural character of the region, to an individual's first language (Adrian Smith 2000). These unintended consequences of language integration contribute to feelings of discrimination among minority members (Bara 21/09/2009).

As a result of these language policies, proficiency in the titular language acquired importance as a tool for social advancement, access to economic opportunities and participation in political process, because from a state institutional perspective and policy regulations alike, linguistic skills were seen as a token of identification with the state at large.

6.3. International involvement in minority protection

The interethnic dimension of language policies in Slovakia and Estonia is not limited to the regulation of the state language. This section looks at the development of policies on minority language use in the two countries in the context of European integration. Already prior to Estonia's and Slovakia's independence in 1991 and 1993 respectively, both states had sought their countries' international integration. Central to their efforts were the memberships in NATO and EU to which these states formally applied in 1994 and 1995;

with independence, both states were immediately admitted to the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE; later known as the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe: OSCE), and joined the Council of Europe in early summer 1993. It was on this basis that both states became subject to increasing international scrutiny, and with regard to NATO and EU also to conditionality politics in order to ensure the states' fulfilment of membership criteria. Between the mid-1990s and 2004, these international structures significantly constrained domestic decision-making in the area of minority policies.[13]

In contrast to the 'first wave' of language laws, the 1995 laws brought significant change for minority language rights, now entirely under the imperative of the notion of state language. Although very similar in their regulation of the state language, the states' approaches to the regulation of minority language use differed. The Slovak language law does not explicitly regulate minority language use at all, creating a heavily criticised legal vacuum (Daftary & Gál 2003).[14] Since the state language law replaced the earlier language law of 1990, and no minority language legislation was adopted in parallel to the State language law, the potential constraints on minority language use were enormous precisely because of the wide use of Hungarian in practice. As demonstrated in the previous section, the wide use of Hungarian was the pretext for the Mečiar-government to restrict minority language use in a range of institutional contexts. The Mečiar-government also did not respond to the institutional tension created by the law, which therefore contradicted constitutional law, as well as a bilateral treaty recently signed with Hungary (Basic Treaty 1995). In contrast, the Estonian law does reflect the need for legislation as a response to the presence of a large and embedded non-titular population. Besides the state language, the law regulates the use of 'foreign languages', which now also include Russian (ELL 1995, § 21,1). The law does not make any explicit reference to Russian, changing the role of the formerly 'second largest native language' in the country to that of any other foreign language (ibid., §10). While the language law allows for the use of minority languages in contact with local level authorities, this provision is limited to towns where at least 50% of

[13] Among the fundamental documents determining the criteria for assessing the two states' progress in questions of minority policies were the EU's 'Copenhagen Criteria', the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), signed by both states in 1995, and the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (ECRML).

[14] The 1995 Slovak State Language Law refers to regulations of minority language use as regulated in legal acts on criminal court proceedings, Civil Court Order, periodical print and other mass information media, the system of primary and secondary schools, Slovak Television, Slovak Radio and the denomination of communities in the language of national minorities (SLL 1995). In several cases, however, these laws still had to be drafted and minority language use was *de facto* unregulated.

the 'permanent residents belong to a national minority'. Since there is no requirement that civil servants speak Russian, ample space is left for practical arbitrariness.

The law further provides for the use of the minority languages as an internal working language alongside Estonian in local governments 'where the majority of permanent residents are non-Estonian speakers'; however, this provision is dependent on the respective local government applying for such status to the national government, and the government's consent to such practice (ELL 1995, §11). These provisions fulfilled the requirements of constitutional law. However, Tallinn is excluded from this provision by law: interviews suggested that the possibility of the Estonian capital being a bilingual city was irreconcilable with the dominant understandings of statehood and sovereignty. Several municipalities in Ida-Virumaa and Harjumaa (the county that includes Tallinn), Narva, Sillamäe and Maardu, have applied repeatedly to the national government, yet no such permission has been granted (Agarin 2010, p.110; Poleshchuk 2009, p.19). The government denied the requests on the basis of what it saw as unfulfilled obligations concerning the full implementation of the right to use Estonian in all municipal communications, which was the precondition to allow Russian to be used alongside the state language (Tomusk 2004, quoted in V. Pettai & Kallas 2009, p.109).

The CoE was critical of the minority provisions in the constitution and the state language law, both of which it considered were in peril of failing to fully protect minority language rights due to the broad scope and intensity of state-language protection. The CoE's Advisory Committee on the Implementation of the FCNM is particularly critical of the rise in the imposition of fines issued on the basis of the violation of the state language act (Council of Europe 2001). It further criticises the lack of clarity with respect to the applicability of the constitutional minority rights due to the use of the term 'national minority', which elsewhere is restricted to Estonian citizens and thus could not be applied in Estonia due to the large number of foreign citizens and stateless persons among Russian-speakers in combination with the high threshold (50%) (CAA 1993).

However, apart from the CoE, international organisations only started criticising Estonia's language legislation in earnest after the 1998 changes. They focused largely on language requirements for political participation rather than minority rights as such, following the overall interest in conflict prevention and political integration rather than minority rights advocacy (Kelley 2004; Sarv 2002; Birckenbach 2000). Consequently, international organisations concentrated on pushing the Estonian authorities to lower the Estonian

language proficiency requirements for naturalisation. In 2001, the OSCE fact finding mission was first to exert direct and strong pressures on Estonia to revoke the 1998 restrictions introduced with the amendments to the language act. The OSCE mission had been stationed in Estonia upon the state's invitation following allegations from the Russian Federation that Estonia pursued 'ethnic cleansing' in 1993, but it was hoped the mission would end quickly (Sarv 2002). Under pressure, keen to have the mission leave, the authorities adopted an amendment to the language law that 'foreign languages' might be used in oral communications between members of the public and state agencies as on the basis of agreement between the two parties, which entered into force in 2002. In contrast to earlier versions of the language act, this article of the law does provide for the legal basis of a common practice in many areas, particularly in Ida-Virumaa and parts of Tallinn, eventually ruling out the absurd situation that Russian-speaking public servants and residents were legally obliged to speak Estonian with each other. Acknowledging these changes, in 2002 the European Commission only criticised minor shortcomings with respect to the use of minority languages in private signs visible to the public, and in its final report of 2003, minority issues were off the table entirely (European Commission 2003; European Commission 2002).

With accession to EU and NATO in 2004, the instruments by which some pressure was exerted on Estonia had ceased to be applicable. In contrast to the 1990s and early 2000s, when the prospective accession had an impact on domestic policy-making, today the situation of minority language related legislation depends on domestic political power relations alone. Yet, the CoE did not discontinue its criticism. In 2005, for example, its Advisory Committee again problematised the

> 'overly large margin of discretion to the individual officials concerned as to whether persons belonging to national minorities may use their language in contacts with authorities' (Council of Europe 2005a, p.7).

When Estonia amended the language law again in 2011, the Advisory Committee of the CoE on the implementation of the FCNM repeated this criticism, arguing that the law was adopted entirely

> 'without comprehensive consultations with minority representatives and without attention to international recommendations for a more balanced approach' (Council of Europe 2011).

The problem international organisations faced with regard to the adoption of their recommendations in Estonia have been not only the lack of tools to sanction non-

compliance, but also the question of a legitimate right to speak on the Estonian situation. Especially during the 1990s, it was the Estonian position that the Estonian government's alignment of its policies with international demands amounted to 'giving in to Russia' (Budryte 2005, p.81; similarly Kelley 2004, p.105).[15] As a result, the Estonian policies of state language primacy have resisted many of the international recommendations for intergroup conflict resolution. Instead, the Estonian nation-state building project led to a rapid decline in opportunities to use Russian in public. Although the sheer number of Russian-speakers in certain towns and regions provides for many social situations that can and do take place in Russian, it has been argued that Russian-speakers increasingly, especially the younger cohorts, use Estonian also between themselves (Council of Europe 2011). Overall, though towns such as Narva, where around 95% of the population are Russian-speakers, will not become the 'festival for Estonians' envisaged by nationalists during the 1990s (Reinvelt 2002), in the medium term we can expect the use of Russian to decrease significantly not only in public offices and official communication, but also that minority-minority interaction across Estonia will increasingly resemble that of migrant communities in other European countries. Developments in societal level interactions support this assumption (Vallimäe et al. 2010). This would contribute in turn to the further differentiation of the Russian-speaking group according to Estonian language proficiency (Vetik 17/04/2009).

The Slovak state language law of 1995 was perceived more critically by the international organisations, which saw it as part of a range of anti-democratic measures which had alarmed international organisations since the second Mečiar government (Fisher 2006). The EU had already issued its first *démarche* to the Slovak Republic, demanding against the background of worrying developments in the democratisation process, economic reforms, and regional cooperation with neighbouring countries, that the tensions in relation to the Hungarian minority in the country were removed (Henderson 2002, p.92). Earlier still, the OSCE had criticised the situation of minority rights protection in Slovakia, but were responded to only by the short-lived Moravčík-government in 1994. Although the

[15] These allegations were unfounded. Despite the critical tone the organisations adopted towards aspects of Estonia's language policies, they have always been concerned with the improvement of the situation on the basis of the *status quo*. As such, they never interfered so much as to suggest a language regime change, i.e. official bilingualism. Such a suggestion was made by Jørn Donner, then rapporteur for the European Parliament, in 1997. He proposed a similar model to that of the Swedish minority in Finland to be introduced in Estonia to foster integration (Budryte 2005, pp.79–80). As Budryte notes, Donner's remarks led to further polarisation in the debates on language and integration. Moreover, they were not only perceived by Estonians as opposed to their own declared approach to integration around the Estonian language rather than linguistic segregation, but also provided the Russian Federation with an excellent point of attack, which was immediately used by Russia in the ongoing border dispute (ibid.). Russia's foreign minister at the time, Sergey Primakov, tried to condition Russia's signature under the border agreement on Estonia's extension of minority rights, among others in the field of languages (ibid.).

Mečiar-governments did seem to signal compliance with some of the international demands, this was by no means satisfactory from the international organisations' perspective and did not follow a comprehensive logic.[16] At least partly this can be attributed to the ambivalent relationship the Mečiar-governments had concerning international integration; there was significant support among parts of the Slovak political elite for Slovakia's integration with Russia rather than the 'West' (Fisher 2006; Goldman 1999).

The controversial language law was one of the reasons for Slovakia's initial rejection from the first round of applicant countries considered by the EU as candidates (Harris 2007). It played an important part in the Europeanisation process as it impacted Slovakia, as the regular demands for a minority language law demonstrated. Europeanisation in Slovakia set in with the change in government in 1998. The European institutions made it very clear that Slovakia had to improve its minority policies if it wanted to become a member of the European Union. The 1999 Minority Language Law was the new government's direct response to this international pressure; however it was equally clear that the status quo would not have been acceptable within the coalition (MLL 1999). Both in opposition and in coalition talks, the Hungarian parties had emphasised the importance of a minority (language) law (Csergo 2007).

The MKP had elaborated their demands for comprehensive minority legislation during the 1990s. With regard to the minority language situation, the party insisted that a minority language law was necessary that responded to all the problems raised by the State language law and would therefore regulate minority language use in official contacts, in formal proceedings in schools, as well as in instruction and textbooks, in press and broadcasting, in minority cultural activities and information thereof, and in social services.[17] The international organisations were involved throughout the whole process of drafting the law. Already on his first visit after the 1998 elections, OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities, Max van der Stoel, had declared:

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[16] Among the steps perceived as compliance with international demands was the adoption of a bilateral treaty with Hungary, which had been demanded by NATO in particular (Schimmelfennig 2000; Basic Treaty 1995).

[17] These demands were developed as part of the Hungarian parties' reaction to the 1995 State language law and were adjusted several times during the discussion process, also in 1999. Eventually it envisaged not only the right of minorities to use their language in official proceedings at the local level, as the 1990 Official language law had done, but also required that local authorities were responsible for guaranteeing that minority members would also be replied to in their language, that minority languages could be chosen as languages of interaction in local office and local council meetings and that official forms and seals could be bilingual (HHRF 11/06/1999).

> 'If law regulates the use of state-language then law must regulate the use of native-languages in public administration as well' (HHRF 15/12/1998).

He also expressed support for many, but not all of the aspects included into a first draft of a minority language law, as elaborated by the MKP in government. Thereby the HCNM acknowledged that this was only the start of the cabinet's and parliament's negotiations. After the meeting with the High Commissioner, the MKP started redrafting the law, *inter alia* suggesting that a 10% threshold would be more adequate, and would enable many more or less sizable minorities to enjoy the benefits of an MLL. Hungarian representatives also demanded the inclusion of some of the minority provisions regulated by other laws or ministerial decrees (e.g. HHRF 21/01/1999). It became apparent that the minority party envisaged the MLL as a coherent minority law, dealing with all aspects of the minority language, in order to eradicate all vagueness and room for majority language superiority caused by the SLL. In early February 1999, the coalition started its debate on the MLL (HHRF 02/02/1999).

The subsequent period of wrangling within the coalition over the aspects to be covered by the law lasted for more than six months. The nationalist opposition called for Slovaks to defend themselves against such a law, initiating protests and attempting to file a petition. The notorious president of the SNS, Ján Slota, declared that,

> '[i]f Slovaks are forced to learn Hungarian in southern Slovakia, we will resort to extreme measures to defend the country's inviolability' (HHRF 09/03/1999).

However, no 'extreme measures' were taken and the coalition resumed its debates on the minority language law. With the deliberations not progressing at a satisfying pace, pressure of the international community on the Slovak government was increased to adopt the MLL in time. A key date was the meeting with the European Commission set for July 1999, to discuss the country's prospects for EU accession. Several EU, CoE and OSCE officials visited the country prior to this, and these visits were accompanied by anticipated as well as unanticipated visits of the HCNM, whose recommendations even included advice on the specific wording of the law (HHRF 16/03/1999; HHRF 29/04/1999). Eventually an alternative proposal to the MKP's draft was presented to parliament, which was approved by the international monitoring organisations after some recommendations were included into the draft law – the MKP's proposals to amend the draft were not taken into account (HHRF 20/04/1999).

The minority language law was then adopted against the will and the votes of the minority party; still, the international organisations generally welcomed the decision. However, the international organisations also acknowledged that this did not fully resolve some of the key problems of interethnic relations and indicated future support with additional legislation in the field of minority rights to compensate for the MKP's dissatisfaction (HHRF 27/07/1999). The adopted minority language law stipulates the right of all citizens of Slovakia belonging to a minority to use their language in official contacts with their municipality, when their minority constitutes at least 20% of this municipality's population (MLL 1999, §2).[18] Minority members can expect to receive a reply both in the state and the minority language to requests brought forward in a minority language. However, as most provisions are discretionary, the law's wording allows room for interpretation. Crucially, the law states that '[l]ocal administration bodies and their employees are not employed to speak a minority language' (ibid., §7 (1)), which appears to be in direct contradiction to the minority rights the law regulates in the first place. Similar qualifications were made for the MLL's provisions for using a minority language as an internal working language and a language of proceedings in local councils, if all individuals present agree. Even though the law regulates minority language usage, no concrete measures are outlined in the law that would facilitate law enforcement.

The adoption of the law was decisive for Slovakia's accession to the EU. As far as the European Union is concerned, the situation was settled to an acceptable degree. More specifically, the MLL corresponded with criteria outlined at the Copenhagen summit in 1993, opened up the route to sign the European Charter for Minority and Regional Languages (ECMRL) and overall satisfied the standards expected by the European Commission as detailed in the Commission's Regular Report of 1999.[19] At the same time, the Commission does state that

> '[t]he Government has given a commitment that the law will be interpreted and applied so that its provisions prevail (as a matter of subsequent and specific law), over the provisions of the Law on the State Language. It [the MLL] may also need to be complemented in the future with other legislation on the use of minority languages in other areas, notably education and culture' (European Commission 1999, p.17).

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[18] The basis of the 20% margin should always be the latest census.

[19] Also allowed for the adoption of the ECRML. Although the MLL formally complies with the Charter, Harris points out that three limitations of the law imply that the Charter guarantee full minority protection which are said to be protected by the Charter (this includes the Bulgarian, Czech, Croat, German, Polish, Romani , Rusyn, Ukrainian and Hungarian minorities, to different degrees). These limitations are caused by the 20% threshold, which excludes all but the last three groups almost entirely, as the former do not normally constitute 20% of the municipal population in given municipal boundaries; the conflation of minority language use and claimed nationality status; and the fact that the MLL does not complement the SLL in all areas, but only protects minority language use – to an extent – at the local level (Harris 2004, pp.9–10).

The dependence of the law's enforcement on the goodwill of a specific government leaves the law weak at the foundations. The return to restrictive language legislation under the Fico government attested to this. Given the mix of approval and criticism from international organisations, it appears that the law has been rushed through before Slovakia's talks with the European Commission, rather than actually satisfying international requirements. In an attempt to reconcile the law with the requirements of the FCNM, the CoE has proposed to apply a flexible approach where percentages constitute the basis of minority rights, such as the 20% threshold, rather than relying on current census data. The Advisory Committee to the Implementation of the FCNM reminds the Slovak government that this

> 'refers also to areas which have been "traditionally" inhabited by persons belonging to a national minority, [so that] the demographic structure of the area in question could be considered over a longer period of time in order to ascertain the existence of sustainable demographic trends. This is particularly relevant when it comes to withdrawing existing linguistic facilities in certain municipalities, a measure that should be taken with extreme caution only' (Council of Europe 2005b, p.23).

The 1999 Minority language law constitutes the only law that regulates minority language use and is limited to the practices of local level authorities. Neither the Dzurinda- nor the Fico-government pursued the issue of a more coherent minority language law.

It was only after the elections of 2010 that the Radičová-government amended the state language law and improved the minority language law (MLL 2011; Most-Híd Draft 2011). The revised laws now explicitly provide for the right to use minority languages in a broader range of institutional contexts; particularly at the local level, such as in relation to the language of municipal chronicles in largely Hungarian towns, documentation in schools, information materials, catalogues and so on of minority organisations, it is no longer necessary to seek ministerial permission to install a plaque or sign in a minority language in a public place, and importantly, sanctions of violations of the state language law were reduced to cases where health, safety or property rights might be at risk.[20] Moreover, with the revised MLL, the threshold for municipalities to be eligible for minority language rights was lowered to 15%, solving some of the problems emerging from demographic changes of the Hungarian community and allowing other minority groups to enjoy this right as well (Gyurgyik 2002).

[20] Also since 2011, these do not have to provide a full translation of written materials into the state language, but a general summary of the contents in Slovak suffices.

Thus – all disputes and the temporary deterioration of the minority language situation during the four years of the SMER-SNS government aside – under the Radičová-government the minority language situation has improved not only in relation to the Fico government, but can be considered at its all time best. In contrast to 1999, the Hungarian representatives in government cannot be overruled as easily as in the Dzurinda-government due to Most-Híd's stronger position in comparison to the MKP's.[21] Still, the adopted law represents a 'watered down' version of the original proposal of Deputy Prime Minister for Minorities Rudolf Chmel', and was criticised for this by the MKP (MKP 26/05/2011; *Slovak Spectator* 30/05/2011). Nonetheless, head of Most-Híd Bugár described the law a

> 'reasonable compromise that helps stabilise the legal system of Slovakia as directed towards minorities, and thus contributes to the stability of the democratic system in the country' (Bugár, quoted in *Slovak Spectator* 30/05/2011).

Still, this law again failed to regulate minority language use outside of public offices. Essentially it responded to some of the Hungarian minority's oft-raised demands without the involvement of international organisations. Although some majority parties again attempted to play the 'ethnic card', the Minority language law was *de facto* improved from a minority perspective. This indicates the relaxation of interethnic relations on the basis of a minor step away from the majority's claim for complete linguistic sovereignty.

As a result of minority language legislation, minority language provisions failed to regulate most areas of *de facto* minority language use. In particular, they left the areas of minority education, minority language media and broadcasting and public display of minority languages unregulated. These aspects became the subject of language legislation in the early/mid-1990s and later came under repeated attack. Essentially, in both countries, minority language laws have failed to respond to minority demands. At the same time, despite the priority of the state languages in all fields, minority languages are often heard in practice, not least in the media.

The use of minority languages in public is not entirely determined by the state and minority language legislation. An important role for the visibility of minority languages and their continued relevance for maintaining a minority community is played by the media. In Estonia, several (privately funded) newspapers are issued in Estonian and Russian languages in parallel; these are important institutions for Russian-speakers in Estonia, since alternative Russian-speaking media from Russia rarely reflects on the

[21] Whilst in 1999, the Slovak coalition partners did not depend on the minority party's support for the minority law; in 2011, without Most-Híd the three coalition partners hold only 65 seats out of 150.

situation in Estonia and Estonian newspapers often do not take into account concerns and standpoints of Russian-speakers. But also the bilingual newspapers publish different articles in the Estonian and Russian versions. Because of this bias, newspapers in Estonia cannot fulfil the role that Russian-speakers and Estonians concerned with intergroup integration would like them to, namely constitute a platform for exchange and dialogue between the groups and the development of common discourses (Government 2008; Government 2000; Astrov 17/05/2010; Poleshchuk 18/012/2009; Korts 24/04/2009). This is reflected also by continuous stereotyping in the media, in particular when referencing minority group members (Jakobson 17/04/2009).

The limited role the Russian-language print media is able to play in the integration process is even more constrained by the problems encountered by larger publishing companies in recent years. Two Russian-speaking newspapers founded in the 1940s and 1950s in Estonia had to close down in 2009 due to financial problems. Since, according to the state policy, no subsidies can be acquired for print media, the CoE Advisory Committee on the Implementation of the FCNM argued that minority language media are structurally disadvantaged (Council of Europe 2011). Essentially, there are no structures that can support the Russian-language press. In contrast to the decline of Russian-language print media, in recent years – and to large extent thanks to the integration strategy – the Estonian authorities have supported the development of Russian-language audio and visual broadcasting. Since 2007, efforts of Estonian broadcasting organisations have increasingly targeted minority members as an audience. Television programmes in Russian have increased in budget and broadcasting hours in 2009, though they are still acknowledged to be insufficient for meeting the high demand for such programmes. In comparison to press and television, the Russian-language radio station *Raadio 4* must be regarded a success. The channel has existed since 1993 and produces programmes in Russian, but also in Ukrainian, Belarusian, Armenian, Georgian, Polish, Azeri and Chuvash languages. It is listened to nation-wide and an important community institutions; however its impact on majority society is again marginal (Astrov 17/05/2010; Poleshchuk 18/12/2009).

The minority language media situation in Slovakia is very different. The existence of several daily newspapers covering Slovakia in general and local news from southern Slovakia has not caused much political debate. As in Estonia, these media's influence on the general debate in Slovakia is small, but they constitute important community institutions (Lampl 24/09/2009). Minority language broadcasting is regulated by the Slovak acts on television and radio since 1991 which proffer that minority language

broadcasting 'contributes […] to promoting national culture and cultures of minorities living in the Slovak Republic, and to mediating cultural values of other nations' (TV Act 1991; Radio Act 1991). The provisions in the laws are vague, however, and there are no guarantees as to the share in public radio or TV stations or a weekly amount of broadcasting hours. These have always been subject to the policies of the Ministries of Culture and therefore vulnerable, especially under the nationalist governments (see for example Dostál 2007; Dostál 2006; Dostál 2000; Dostál 1998). Under the Fico-government 2006-2010 the radio station Rádio Pátria which broadcasts in minority languages – besides Hungarian also in Rusyn, Ukrainian, Romanes, Czech, German and Polish – faced the threat of closure, which caused protests among the minority groups (Petőcz 23/09/2009). Minority representatives therefore continue to demand institutionalised guarantees for the state support of minority language broadcasting.

Minority language use was regulated in both states even before factual independence. The Estonian and Slovak constitutions proffer minority rights in the realm of language use. Despite the gradual fortification of legislation on language use over the 1990s, in practice there has been some leeway for flexible implementation on the ground, largely in regimes where minority members field the plurality of residents. This was guaranteed first and foremost due to the involvement of international organisations. As we see here, international, and particularly European organisations, took some interest in ensuring some form of minority language protection in these two states. Both the policy steps and the rhetoric of political elites surrounding the legislation were framed by the institutional provisions already in place, which privileged the titular community over the minorities. Domestically, although benchmarks were erected to provide for minority language communities with opportunities for language use, the actions of the majority remained constrained by the characteristics of the institutions in place. The international involvement in crafting minority policies was sometimes strong in its opinions, but remained vague and cautiously avoided recommendations that would be interpreted in a way of granting minority languages the de facto status of second official or state language.

The majority-devised attribution of 'national minority' to some groups but not to others has had a limiting effect for the question of rights of Russian-speakers in Estonia, but were an important resource for Hungarians in Slovakia (Bara 24/09/2009; Petőcz 23/09/2009). As a result, the development in both countries has differed. In Estonia the grounds on which minorities could negotiate their positions on legislation were becoming increasingly shaky: neither institutions, nor policies were devised to accommodate minorities; all the same, the

tokenistic concessions were presented to the publics as 'minority-friendly' legislation. This effectively undermined the very basis on which society integration could be built upon at a later stage. In Slovakia, the codex of policies reflecting on the moderate majority positions allowed some support for the minority language communities. In both cases, linguistic practices on the ground allow for some leeway in the application of legislation, helping ease tensions and at times satisfy (moderate) minority politicians. This in turn speaks of the difficulty of policy implementation and perpetuates the arbitrariness of legal insecurity among both majority and minority members. Yet the institutional framework within which these policies were to be monitored offered only strong support to the notion of state language. This wider perspective indicates that regardless of political actors' own positions and policy choices available, the institutional context – both at the national and the European level – constrained domestic decision making on further integration.

6.4. Language policy enforcement: domestic versus international factors

In both countries state languages were attributed the role of an 'integrating factor' between the citizenry and the state. Slovak politicians, like their Estonian counter-parts, regularly refer to the integrating role of the state language, yet only in Estonia has the government adopted measures to promote the use of majority language among the minority. There, language policies were to be supported by enhancing teaching of the state language, with the view that the minority members would increasingly speak the state language and enhance their political, social and human capital. In Slovakia, in the mid-1990s, education became the sphere of 'integration' in support of a language shift towards the state language. This section looks at the developments of induced language shift in the two countries.

In both countries, there were reasons to support the knowledge of the state language among minority members – support and improved methods for state language teaching were demanded also by minority representatives (Csergo 2007; Sarv 2002).[22] However, while

[22] Interestingly, and very much in contrast to the situation in Estonia in the 1990s, studies show that those Magyars who do not know any or only little Slovak constitute less than 2% of the group (Lampl 2008); according to minority representatives, this affects those elderly cohorts among the Magyars who did not receive Czechoslovak education, and perhaps few cases of individuals who in reaction to the post War policies refuse to speak Slovak (Petőcz 23/09/2009). At the same time, more than 98% of the Magyar population report that they not only know the Slovak language but use it in part or in most of their daily interactions, at work, in school or, particularly in 'mixed' families, even at home (Lampl 2008). Despite the fact that Slovak is widely spoken among the minority community, individuals who have a somewhat limited command of Slovak are potentially faced with difficulties when they are required to interact outside the Hungarian dominated areas. In my interviews, some respondents reported cases where members of the

minority members envisaged assistance in the learning of the state language in order to enable their better participation in society, the states pursued policies of titular language education as part of the continued nation-state-building. In line with the imperative of the Slovak State language law, a shift from Hungarian to Slovak was phased in by the Mečiar-government with the introduction of 'alternative education' in the school year of 1995/96 (Dostál 1998). The concept entails the introduction of Slovak as a language of instruction in certain subjects in schools and classes with Hungarian as the main language of instruction.[23] The alleged aims of this initiative were to foster the functioning of Slovak society and to improve the knowledge of the state language among minority members. Furthermore, it was promoted as a modern form of education in an attempt to raise its appeal with the attribute 'alternative' (Langman 2002). Moreover, the government argued that a good command of Slovak was essential for, and the only way to, success in Slovak society (Langman 2002, p.53).

As demonstrated earlier, the State language law in Slovakia was promoted as a tool for integration. Moderate majority politicians and minority politicians alike supported the improvement of Slovak language knowledge and teaching to minority members, and the latter repeatedly made suggestions as to the development of teaching materials and didactics with respect to the teaching of Slovak as a second language to Hungarian-speakers (Csergo 2007). The nationalist elite showed no interest in these suggestions. Rather, neither the state language law itself nor accompanying policies envisaged further integrative measures, such as in the economic and social spheres or in relation to increased intergroup contact and cooperation. It became very clear that it was not intended to foster interethnic integration; nor did it have the potential to do so. Even without taking into account the xenophobic and anti-minority/anti-Hungarian rhetoric that accompanied the introduction of the law, the lack of minority language regulation and *de facto* curtailing of minority language rights in comparison with the 1990 law – as well as the potential criminalisation of minority language use – set a divisive tone in the relations of majority and minority members (ibid.). Moreover, the government did not introduce any integrative measures that would enable minority members with difficulties in the Slovak language to improve their state language command.

Hungarian minority were faced with hostility because they spoke Slovak with an accent (Golha/Hajdok/Havran 18/06/2009).

[23] To be sure, all students attending Hungarian schools and classes studied Slovak as a second language compulsorily, i.e. as a subject. The new project envisaged a change in proportion of teaching in Hungarian towards an increase in Slovak language teaching (Langman 2002).

According to the Minister for Foreign Affairs Juraj Schenk, in a letter to the HCNM Max van der Stoel on 20 October 1995, via the project of alternative schooling the government intended 'to release the members of Hungarian minority from the monolingual grip'; the Minister goes on to quote from the supporting documents of the ECRML and argues that, in so doing, the reform would contribute to achieving the aims valued by the ECRML, fostering

> 'closer relations between peoples and a better understanding between different population groups within the state in an intercultural basis' (Schenk 20/10/1995).

These arguments were an attempt to convince Hungarian parents to accept 'bilingualism' as the form of teaching they would want for their children, as the government had long claimed that its introduction would depend on the parents' will and only be introduced where there was sufficient demand (Schenk 20/10/1995; Csergo 2007). These arguments did not convince the Hungarian parents. The 'monolingual grip' was largely imagined by the nationalists: the majority of Hungarians lived bilingually on a daily basis (Lampl 2008). Moreover, when 'alternative education' was introduced as a pilot project, in contrast to what the government had announced, parents were not consulted (Langman, 2002; Csergo 2007).[24] The government's policies were embedded into a range of policies trying to gain full decision-making authority over all proceedings in Hungarian schools. This was furthered by the decision that certain subjects could only be taught in Slovak and by Slovak teachers, such as Slovak language and literature, geography and history (Csergo 2007). Here, the state language was used as a direct tool to exert control over the minority group as well as its individual members. On the one hand, it affected individual opportunities to teach these subjects; on the other hand, by implication it suggested that minority members could not be trusted, *per se*, in the pursuit of conveying the teaching canon to students as intended by the government. However, the parliament rejected said bill in July 1998 (European Commission 1998, p.12). It is telling that such policies were pursued by the governments which included the SNS, and yet were of limited concern to the moderate governments.[25]

[24] With the beginning of the school year 1995/96, according to the Minister, bilingual education was to be introduced at 3 secondary schools (out of 21) comprising 363 students and one elementary school with 6 pupils (out of 298). In addition, 29 kindergartens (out of 392) were chosen to have 'bilingualism' introduced (Schenk 20/10/1995; Langman 2002, p.54).

[25] Under the Dzurinda government, the Ministry of Education was assigned a unit responsible for minority education, and relations in this area relatively quickly relaxed and the previous approach to 'integration' in schooling disappeared. The government did not pursue any forms of exerting control and restricting minority schooling. At the same time, the Dzurinda government also did not show much interest in an active approach to the improvement of interethnic relations either, activities in policies to promote multiculturalism and fight

The introduction of 'alternative education' in selected schools and nurseries was met with fierce protest by the Hungarian community. Minority members saw these policies as the first step in a strategy to dismantle Hungarian schooling altogether, and so a serious threat to their group reproduction and identity (Bakker 1997). Already prior to the school year of 1995/96, the Association of Hungarian Teachers in Slovakia and the cultural mass organisation CSEMADOK had organised a petition which was signed by 45,000 people (Langman 2002). In the first days of the 1995/96 school year, parents and more than two thirds of all students engaged in 'strikes', refusing to go to school, and joined large scale demonstrations, partly in reaction to the disciplinary measures against those head teachers who had participated in the petition (Dostál 1998).

The international community was alarmed by this outbreak of protest. Shortly before the school year started, the OSCE's High Commissioner van der Stoel visited the country with respect to the interethnic conflicts linked to the language law, the education bill and the government's general approach to minority culture (HCNM 1995). The High Commissioner expressed his concern about the non-voluntary shift at selected schools and the government's apparent disregard for the protests. He also made recommendations for an impartial study of the 'quality of teaching of the Slovak language in Hungarian schools and the ways to ensure its improvement where necessary' (ibid.). As the letter of the Foreign Minister quoted earlier shows, these recommendations were bluntly rejected by the Slovak government.

Essentially, however, the attempt to introduce 'alternative schooling' was a failed reform. Although the control mechanisms over school proceedings remained in place until the Dzurinda government loosened the governmental grip on minority schools and changed language related decrees, 'alternative education' was not continued. The question of improving Slovak language learning at minority schools is still not solved (Mézes 18/06/2009). The Dzurinda government introduced special sections on minority education in the Ministry of Education, but it did not pursue visible activities between 2002-2006. However, the Dzurinda-government achieved one of its election goals and established a state-funded Hungarian university in southern Slovakia in 2003. While this did nothing to improve the Hungarians' competence in Slovak, it responded to minority demands for

ethnic stereotyping were limited. Such activities were however demanded by international actors (Council of Europe 2000). Despite its official statements in the support of multiculturalism, the Dzurinda government took only few steps in this area. Again, multicultural education has almost entirely focused on the integration of Romani children and in recent years to some extent on the tolerance towards 'new minorities', i.e. migrants who have come to Slovakia recently (Vašečka 20/08/2008).

extended opportunities to receive higher education in Hungarian in the Slovak Republic, to avoid the education migration of young Hungarians to Hungary or elsewhere.

Overall, education policies in Slovakia have been not so much concerned with the improvement of the teaching of Slovak for said reasons of cohesion and labour market success of minority members. Essentially, in Slovakia language policies were never social policies, but were used as a means for the consolidation of the nation-state. This is despite the fact that there is some correlation between group belonging/mother tongue and success on the labour market, as well as with university education (Lampl 24/09/2009). The limitation of 'bilingual education' to a nationalist project has also limited the preparedness of minority members to develop actual bilingual alternatives for minority children. Resistance within the community against bilingual concepts is often backed up with references to the demographic situation and the 'decline' of the Hungarian community. At the same time, in the present situation, parents have to chose between Slovak and Hungarian education for their children, and increasingly make the decision for Slovak schools (Szarka 2008). Although some argue that this is a problem of the Hungarian community itself, and a question of whether they want to maintain their 'identity' or not (Domsitz 16/09/2009), it can be argued that the choices to do so are limited.

In Estonia, the language shift and linguistic integration through educational policies set in even earlier than in Slovakia, and have remained central to policies regulating interethnic relations ever since. In 1993, shortly after the Law on Aliens had begun to stir the emotions in the country, the Riigikogu adopted the Law on Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools. Predictably, this added to the outrage and intensified anxieties among Russian-speakers (Jurado 2003, p.399). The law stipulated the requirements for institutions of upper secondary education (grades 10-12) in state-funded schools that operated in a minority language to move to full education in Estonian by the year 2000; for grades 1-9, it was left to municipalities to decide on the language of instruction in their schools (MEIS 2011). The aim of the law was to enable diglossia reversing policies in a situation where many minority members did not speak Estonian, and in order to complete Estonian nation-state building. Russian-speakers on the other hand interpreted the law in the context of restrictive citizenship and language policies, and as an attack on the minority community as such (Budryte 2005).

The general tone of the debate resembled the government's arguments for the need to guarantee the 'survival of the Estonian language and culture' and to increase Estonia's

security against Russia (Jurado 2003, p.413). It transpires from the early debates on the law that the proponents of the change of language of instruction in secondary education were driven by the aim to 'titularise education' (Agarin 2010; similarly Jurado 2003), and this demonstrates that, in this early phase, advice from international actors including the OSCE, CoE and the HCNM (who raised concerns as to domestic stability in light of the recent protests against the law on aliens and to the compliance with international minority rights standards) were not taken into account (Jurado 2003). Even though the members of the Riigikogu largely supported the move, the adoption of the law did go not entirely smoothly; moreover, once it was accepted by parliament and signed by the president the then Minister of Culture of the Reform Party (*Reformierakond*), Paul-Eerik Rummo, unsuccessfully attempted to delay the deadline, which already in 1993 appeared unattainable (Galbreath 2005, p.171).

Rummo raised his concerns as part of the very limited opposition against the original 1993 law. At the time, the Riigikogu did not include any representatives of the Russian-speaking group due to the impact of citizenship regulations, and the parliament was dominated by the right-to-centre parties which formed its governments. Rummo's concerns were pragmatic rather than a question of genuine opposition to the cause of the law (Jurado 2003, p.413). Similarly, other opponents of the law argued that the pace of the envisaged reform was not feasible, mainly due to the lack of appropriate teaching material and even more importantly because of the shortage of teachers at Russian-language schools who spoke Estonian at a sufficient level that suited teaching purposes (Adrey 2005, p.461). Concerns of Russian-speakers were voiced only outside the parliament and, to some extent, by international organisations.

Despite the rather unrealistic aim stated in the 1993 law, initially the Estonian state did little to address the problems of Russian schools. No coherent measures were taken or strategies developed before the 1997 Development Plan for Russian Language Schools in Estonia to achieve this goal (Asser, Pedastsaar, et al. 2002). The combination of ambitious aims and no strategy led to numerous practical and strategic problems. In light of the lack of adequate teaching personnel and outdated textbooks Estonian experts on education argued that the 'attitude of "wait and see"' was not encouraging to the people involved to 'search for, and implement[…] new models of education' (Asser, Pedastsaar, et al. 2002, p.239). Considerations at the time did not touch upon questions of what was realistically achievable in municipalities where 95% of the population interacted in Russian in all areas of life. In these areas Estonian language practice would largely be limited to school, which

would negatively impact the chances of minority members to participate in the political and socio-economic structures.

While the state was reluctant to introduce a coherent strategy, in the mid-1990s financial assistance through the EU's PHARE programme[26] helped set up several initiatives which facilitated Estonian language learning for Russian-speaking school children and assisted the process of writing Estonian language textbooks. It was not until 1998 that the work of these 'Language Centres' addressed the problems Russian schools encountered during the education reform (Jurado 2003, p.414). During that time the state also began with its efforts to create financial incentives for Estonian teachers to teach specifically in schools in Estonia's North-East (Korts 24/04/2009).[27] Only in 1998 did the state fill 18 posts of 'State language teachers', charged with the task of facilitating the process of Estonian language learning in minority schools (Education Act 1992).

With the Education Act Amendment of 1997, the Riigikogu eventually accepted changes to the Basic and Secondary School law and postponed the date by which Estonian should be the language of instruction in 60% of education at all state-funded secondary schools to 2007. The 1997 specification of the target of the reform, the 60:40 ratio of Estonian language tuition, which permits bilingual education rather than mono-lingual instruction, alleviated concerns of the international actors, who nevertheless remained cautious in their appraisal of an amendment that left it to the municipality or school to decide on the provisions for minority language instructions. These revisions were already embedded in the country's close interaction with international organisations on minority issues. The growing demands for coherent integration policies brought some momentum into the question of minority education.

In this context, an increase in the international financial support available for minority members to learn Estonian was well-received in Estonia, where economic strains started to hit the population and the state hard, and where simultaneously the chance to increase its level of compliance with international requirements regarding minority politics constituted

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[26] Originally introduced by the European Union as pre-accession financial support programme for Poland and Hungary to assist the restructuring of the countries' economies (thus the name PHARE) in 1989, since the adoption of the Copenhagen Criteria in 1993 the programme's aim was redirected to assist CEE candidate countries in their implementation of the *aquis communautaire* and to ensure social and economic cohesion.
[27] This in turn increased the anxiety of Russian teachers with little or no proficiency in Estonian, a situation that was exacerbated by a climate in which using non-state languages had begun to be interpreted as disloyalty to the Estonian state, and limited knowledge of Estonian started impacting minority members' chances on the Estonian labour market.

a bonus the Estonian government did not want to let pass (Jurado 2003).[28] Moreover, as part of its integration strategy, the Estonian government framed Russian-speakers' linguistic integration as a necessary means to overcome social division that, according to researchers, had already contributed to the deterioration of both internal and international relations (Lauristin & Heidmets 2002). Education became one of the main focuses of the integration programme (Government 2008; Government 2000).

The Integration Foundation, a semi-governmental organisation, is charged with the implementation of the states' integration strategy. Teaching of the Estonian language is among the Foundation's central tasks. The Foundation takes a particularly important role in the development of teaching materials, the training of teachers, and in developing the various education programmes in cooperation with international advisors. The Integration Foundation operates in several areas itself, among other things coordinating the activities of corporate tenders or calls for the complete outsourcing of training or other projects. The foundation's own activities concentrate on the development of teaching materials for the language immersion programme, the training of teachers of Estonian as a second language, the support for Russian-speaking teachers in their transition to teaching in Estonian, and the coordination in relation to youth work and other projects; it also co-operates with organisations and projects in the realm of language teaching, such as special and technical language learning for vocational schools (Mätlik 04/12/2009).[29]

In 2008, the Education Act was again amended, putting into legislation the programmatic changes and policy aims of the integration programmes. As a result, two options of partial education in Russian are currently at work in Estonia. First, basic schools (grades 1-9) may instruct in Russian, though Estonian language tuition is part of the curriculum, and ensures also that graduates from Russian basic schools do not have to pass additional language exams in order to be granted Estonian citizenship (Government 2000, p.22-23). Upper-secondary education goes through a process of transition with the final aim of a relation of a 60:40 share of Estonian to other languages of instruction. The decision on the primary language of instruction of a school lies with the local government. Second, the so-called language immersion was introduced in two forms: on the one hand, it is a system where Estonian is gradually introduced as the language of instruction in a number of subjects one at a time from sixth grade onwards (late immersion). On the other hand, a second form of

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[28] In 1998 the Estonian government launched another PHARE programme, generously supported by Scandinavian governments and EU and UNDP and several millions of foreign aid from them to enable the language shift in schools (Government 2000).
[29] Cf. also the project *kutsekeel.ee* (Kutsekeel 2011), which is a support pool for Estonian language learning in vocational education.

immersion is currently practiced, starting with full Estonian education in first grade and gradually increasing the share of Russian language education to 50%. The decision for a gradual shift is partly based on the opposition towards a similar reform in Latvia (Poleshchuk 2009), partly due to the practical problems of the education reform mentioned earlier.

Besides attending 'Russian' schools, children have the option to go to an Estonian school. While this happens increasingly, the process is complicated by the reluctance of Estonian school teachers to accept non-native speakers in their class, as it would 'slow down the teaching process' (Mätlik 04/12/2009). Such reactions show that the ideological and practical problems of the integration strategy are not limited to policy problems. In reaction to such attitudes, the Integration Foundation organises training sessions on multiculturalism and multicultural education for Estonian and Russian-speaking teachers. The success of such programmes has so far been limited, however (Mätlik 04/12/2009; Council of Europe 2001). Still, the initiatives show that the Integration Foundation has, at least on paper, understood the importance of including Estonians in this process and work on and with them as well, a point also emphasised in the current integration strategy EIS (Government 2008). Monitoring suggests that these programmes are not implemented well (Lauristin et al. 2008).

The comprehensive teaching of Estonian to Russian-speaking students in schools across Estonia has significantly increased the number of Russian-speakers who report they have a good command of Estonian (Schulze 2008; Hallik et al. 2002; Lauristin & Vetik 2000). Surveys suggest that substantially more young Russian-speakers born after 1978 speak and write well in Estonian than Estonians of the same age group speak or write in Russian, based on self-evaluation (Kirss & Vihalemm 2008, p.50). The same surveys also show that Russian-speakers are continuously faced with negative attitudes towards the Russian language, including the reluctance of Estonian students to learn the language (ibid.). This has the potential to positively impact the naturalisation rate and to improve young people's chances on the labour market (Vetik 17/04/2009). However, the relative success of Estonian language teaching to these young people stands in contrast to the limited efforts taken in support of other age groups. In particular for Russian-speakers who are in employment, there are few formal or structured opportunities to improve their command of the state language, and those provided for the unemployed have only limited success (Solovev/Dul'neva 31/07/2009). This supports the understanding that the main aim of the Estonian education reform is a long-term language shift, while the integration and

cohesiveness of society around the state language – even if emphasised in the rhetoric – is a subordinated goal of these policies.

Perhaps most important with respect to the educational reform – and decisive for the question of 'integration though participation' – is the fact that the reform has been elaborated without the inclusion of those affected. In recent years, an opposition movement against the reform has picked up the long-standing critiques offered by Russian-speakers' organisations, which have demanded both the improvement of Estonian tuition for Russian-speakers and the continued existence of Russian schooling (see chapter 9 for a more detailed discussion of this point). However, the opposition to the reform is not as fundamental as it may seem. Russian parents have indeed called for a reform in Russian schooling and increasingly, they are warming to specific goals of the current reform (LICHR 2010). Essentially, they have debated questions of the role of minority language instruction in Estonia, the Russian-speakers' linguistic identity institutions, the quality of teaching to Russian-speaking children in both languages, and the chances in the labour market depending on the form and quality of education received. However, these contributions have not been taken into account by the Ansip-governments 2007-2011 and ongoing (ibid.). So far, the government has dismissed the concerns of Russian-speaking parents by arguing that Russian language education will always be possible, as envisaged in the integration programme. However, the role and support minority languages shall receive according to the integration programme does not respond to the demands for comprehensive Russian language education mentioned above, since it is limited to leisure-time activities, such as in hobby groups or so-called 'Sunday schools' (Government 2008; Government 2000).

As a result both of the domestic policy dynamics and European involvement in minority rights protection, communities of non-state language speakers were facing national institutions that were not designed to serve equality, but to sponsor what was framed as national cohesion. In both countries, these policies have impacted the choices minority members make when choosing the language of instruction for themselves or their children. Poleshchuk claims that the share of pupils learning at Russian schools has dropped from 37% in 1990 to 27.2% in 2000 as a direct result of these policies (Poleshchuk 2009, p.82). In Slovakia, there has been a decline between the school years 1990/1991 and 2002/2003 in the proportion of Hungarian language secondary schools (14.29% to 11.36%), of Hungarian classes at Slovak schools (8.19% to 6.86%), and in total the proportion of children of Hungarian background who study in Hungarian (6.93% to 5.84%) (László

2008, p.234). Minority members have perceived these developments as discrimination of their communities. More importantly, they have felt left out of the decision-making process on questions of education. Instead, policies of increased pressure on Russian-speakers continue to dominate in Estonia. In Slovakia, following the acceptance of minorities as historical minorities, moderates and international involvement helped stop similar projects; however, minority members cannot expect much help in the area of social inclusion as a result of their choices (e.g. in language learning). The Hungarian University was one step to somewhat allay the negative results of linguistic diversity under the conditions of continued policies that privileged the state language. Overall, while clearly central to the question of integration, education policies in Estonia and Slovakia have failed to address the issue in a way that would allow this field to play the crucial role in integrating majority and minority groups.

Conclusions

Nation-building in Slovakia and Estonia demonstrates the dynamics emerging from institutional arrangements that favour one national – in this case, linguistic – community, while simultaneously attempting to serve the citizens of the state which speak multiple languages. In order to ensure the leading role of one ethnic community in these two states, language policies were put into place to benchmark group boundaries and at times to regulate access of different linguistic communities to processes of decision making. As I have discussed in this chapter, both states have implemented elaborate legislation to regulate the visibility and use of non-titular and therefore non-state languages.

These regulations need be seen in the specific institutional context of state building where nation building projects were finding it difficult to reconcile linguistically diverse segments of the public. Institutions supporting state building have thus prompted sets of policies which conflict with social realities on the ground and have thus produced unintended consequences. One of these lay in hampering efforts to promote societal cohesion through the means of national language. Scholarship has distinguished policies that aim at assimilation from those that assume a fundamental difference between language groups, and which therefore have no intention to assimilate or integrate, but instead to 'dissimilate' (Brubaker 1996). In Estonia and Slovakia we find that the nationalising policies – which centred around, but were not limited to the regulation of linguistic practices – had an ambiguous twofold effect. On the one hand, the resulting 'nationalising policies of dissimilation' (ibid., p.88) produce the containment of non-titular groups outside

the political space and by no means aim to foster minorities' adaptation to the environment that functions in the titular-language. As I have discussed above, the language policies implemented in the two states fall in line with objectives of state building because they aim at societal cohesion. Yet, the individual actors who are particularly affected by these policies perceive language policies as tools for disrupting the relations between the minority and the majority. Ultimately, language policies in both states sponsored minority marginalisation from social and cultural processes in the countries.

This underlines the second, unintended outcome of language policy planning in a state-building process that is set in the wider context of European integration. The international organisations' involvement was initially based on pragmatic policies of language management in order to avoid conflict escalation, while the question of institutionalising minority rights was not central to the international monitoring process (Rechel 2009). Overall supporting the accommodation of minority communities in the context of state building under the stewardship of an ethnonation, it is questionable whether the improvement of intergroup relations in accession states was on the agenda of European organisations at all (Hughes & Sasse 2003). Within the context of Europeanisation, minority language institutions became a contested field, where language communities were increasingly identified in terms of the linguistic resources available to them, fostering the segregation of communities. Given the breadth and depth of the European impact on domestic policies, it seems that state-building projects in Estonia and Slovakia, much as in other CEE states, focused on minority language communities as a complementary issue in enhancing the institutional capacity of the state. In the nexus of nationalism, language practices and identity, language policies can have unintended effects on aspects such as the linguistic identities of speakers, their capacities to participate in social and political processes, or their strategies to adapt to or circumvent the consequence of linguistic policies. For example, Laitin distinguishes a variety of adaptation strategies, essentially claiming that by far not all of these strategies lead to the assimilation of minority members to state norms (David D. Laitin 2003; D. D Laitin 1995). As we will see in the following chapters, the states' institutional design and domestic policy dynamics – geared in both cases toward enhancing the link between the nation and the state – further invited political actors to play the 'ethnic card' for the sake of success in national politics.

This chapter analysed how the particular paths of state-building discussed in the previous chapter became a crucial resource for, as well as was reinforced by, majority nation-building in the two countries. Majority political actors enacted the normative structures of

state-ownership to expand their political and social dominance and thereby increase their agency. At the same time, this process was embedded into the structures of Europeanisation. While the latter did constrain majority agency to an extent, what they supported was not a change in the structures of majority dominance, but minority adaptation on the one hand, and minority particularity on the other. Essentially, nation-building in Slovakia and Estonia created structures of majority-minority dissimilation and limited assimilation of minorities to the majorities, undermining claims for equal participation in the political, social, economic and cultural spheres. Whereas the normative structures of national self-determination had resurfaced in the late 1980s/early 1990s, and at the time appeared to be open to change, post-independence nation-building and Europeanisation have reinforced and stabilised these structures, making them less susceptible to change and mitigating the contradictions with the cultural structures of democratisation. At the same time they provided alternative structures for minority participation, if not on an equal footing with majority members, as the following chapters demonstrate.

Chapter 7: Russian-speakers' political activism

7.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the heterogeneous formations of Russian-speaking political actors and alternative forms of Russian-speakers' political representation. Section 7.2 looks at those political actors that formed political organisations explicitly aimed at Russian-speakers in order to establish alternative political structures. Section 7.3 examines the structures proffered by the state in order to foster (limited) minority inclusion into the political process. Section 7.4 analyses the continuities and shifts in the political agendas of the Russian-speaking political actors. Finally, section 7.5 discusses the problems of group-based political representation of Russian-speakers in Estonia.

7.2 Formation of Russian-speakers' political representation

Russian-speakers' group-based political organisations

Although Estonians and Russian-speakers cooperated in the Popular Front, many of the political parties and organisations that emerged in 1990 and 1991 did not address all ethnic groups in Estonia equally. *Keskerakond* (Centre Party), the party that claims to be the successor of the Popular Front, has had the most inclusive approach to political representation of the Estonian population; other 'Estonian' political parties of the early 1990s pursued moderate to radical nationalist political agendas, unwilling as well as unlikely to represent Russian-speakers. The developments already foreshadowed the looming policies of restorationism. In response to this situation a variety of Russian-speakers' parties formed which developed from the mainly Russian-speaking counter-movements to Estonia's path to independence. With the adoption of Estonia's citizenship legislation, the structural and institutional basis of the Russian-speakers' parties disappeared, since the vast majority of Russian-speakers were neither eligible to vote nor to stand as a candidate in elections (Thiele 1999).

In order to participate in early state- and nation-building, and despite their formal exclusion from political membership, Russian-speakers aimed to form alternative political structures to represent their interests and preferences in the political processes. Initially, trade unions were among those organisations with the largest Russian-speaking membership, who also

engaged in the political process directly.[1] They were particularly strong in the towns of Ida-Virumaa, and for some time constituted the most important civic-political representation of Russian-speakers, both in terms of membership they represented and the impact they could exert on general political processes (Park 1994; Smith 2002).[2] Facilitating naturalisation was just one of a number of demands raised by trade unions in order to achieve equality for Soviet-era migrants with inter-War citizens of Estonia and their descendents. In the first years after independence, the specificities of the Estonian labour market and its ethnic segmentation between Estonian agrarian and Russian-speaking industrial workers even increased the significance the unions played for the Russian-speaking population. The role of trade unions to represent Russian-speakers waned when from 1993 a number of Russian-speaking candidates became eligible for candidacy in local elections, opening up a channel for Russian-speakers' interest representation at a local level. Since the mid-1990s, unions have witnessed a decline in membership and their role as a social partner in Estonian politics is limited, both because of the general restructuring of the labour market and the radically liberal economic policies of the state. Moreover, the unions have begun to focus on their members' work-related economic demands. Because of these developments, the unions' potential to represent minority interests in more general terms has been negligible (Lagerspetz 2005).

In an attempt to address the lack of any genuine nation-wide political representation, the Representative Assembly (*Predstavitel'noe sobranie*, RA) was formed in 1993. It became the most influential and renowned Russian-speaking organisation of the early 1990s. Founded as a non-elected body to represent the population that was not included into the citizenry, its members insisted that the organisation did not mobilise on ethnic criteria (Laitin 1998, p.277). The RA was acknowledged as the representative forum of Russian-speakers by Estonian political actors.[3] Furthermore, the RA was the only form of Russian-speakers' representation that was regularly included in talks with international organisations, who invited its members to voice the Russian-speaking minority's discontent

[1] In the early 1990s, the trade unions EAKL (*Eesti Ametiühingute Keskliit, Estonian Trade Union Confederation*) and TALO (*Teenistujate Ametiliitude Keskorganisatsioon, Estonian Employees' Unions' Confederation*) replaced the former Soviet All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, which was, however, significantly reorganised. For the first half of the 1990s, trade Unions provided the most important civic structures for Russian-speakers (Lagerspetz 2005).

[2] For example, trade union branches in Narva and Sillamäe demanded to be represented in the Estonian delegation that negotiated the withdrawal of Russian troops (Park 1994); with a 'political strike' and demonstrations the local Trade Union Centre of Narva mobilised against the 1992 citizenship law (Smith 2002b).

[3] For example, recognised as representative of the minorities the RA was an invited member at the Presidential Roundtable on National Minorities and perceived, while a Russian-speakers' organisation, as the 'integrationist' political representation of Soviet-time migrants (Melvin 1995, p.49).

at consultations with the HCNM, the OSCE, the CoE, the EU and American actors who engaged in conflict prevention in the country.

Lacking direct political power, however, the RA's role was limited to contributions to the public debate and minority advocacy, raising awareness of the conflict potential inherent to the state's approach to integration in domestic and international debates and making minority perspectives heard. The organisation supported integration, yet in contrast to the Estonian authorities the RA advocated integration 'through participation, not for participation' (Aleksej Semjonov 2002). The organisation expressed concern that the regulations put in place for naturalisation and minority protection were likely to alienate minority members from the Estonian state. Arguing that integration required the inclusion of minority members' perspectives in the design of political institutions and the state's approach to integration from the start, rather than permitting participation only after certain conditions (including those of citizenship and language knowledge) were fulfilled, was essential for the democratic and peaceful transformation of the Estonian society. In so doing, the Representative Assembly expressed the most important demands of the Russian-speaking community for political change in Estonia, which have since shaped the agendas of minority political representatives.

Given its dependence on the majority political elite's preparedness for dialogue, however, the Representative Assembly remained politically weak. Although the RA was accepted to some extent as a discussion partner by the Estonian authorities, and some of its concerns were mirrored in the recommendations provided by international organisations to the Estonian government, the RA's concerns about minority inclusion and social stability were not taken into account in the elaboration of the state's approach to minority policies. The RA's members proved unable to raise majority political actors' awareness of minority members' feelings of humiliation caused by their exclusion from shaping intergroup integration. Therefore, the organisation's biggest successes lay in that it established a representative organisation that was accepted as a speaker for the minority group, and in its mediating role in the heated situation of the early 1990s, when many Russian-speakers still feared expulsion from Estonia and their legal situation left them very vulnerable (Laitin 1998).

The RA was not the only Russian-speakers' organisation active at the time. Some 'pro-Moscow' groups remained active at the local level until the mid-1990s. One of the few organisations with strong affiliations with the Russian Federation engaging and operating

at the national level was the *Russkii Sobor* (Russian Council, sometimes translated as Russian Assembly, see for example Smith 2002a, p.85)), which, for some time, was the minority organisation that constituted the main alternative to the Representative Assembly (Smith 2002a, p.85). Unlike the Representative Assembly, however, the Russian Council was not invited to cooperate with the Estonian authorities. It mobilised on ethnic criteria and sought the alignment with politics of the Russian Federation, openly championing a close relationship of the Russian community with its kin-state (J. Chinn & Kaiser 1996, p.108). In the Russian elections of 1994, the Council called for Russian citizens in Estonia to support the Russian nationalists of Zhirinovskii's Liberal Democratic Party in the Russian parliamentary elections of 1993 (ibid.; Laitin 1998, p.278). The visibility and influence of the Russian Council as well as of local pro-Moscow groups waned in the mid-1990s, indicating the reluctance of many Russian-speakers to engage in the political games in the Russian Federation, while their own situation depended so much more on Estonian politics (J. Chinn & Kaiser 1996, pp.107-108).

Whereas the RA aimed to establish itself as representative of all Soviet-era migrants and Russian-speakers in relation to the Estonian authorities, the *E'stonskii respublikanskii Soyuz grazhdan Rossii* (Estonian Republican Union of Russian Citizens, ERSGR), has pursued the social protection and promotion of rights of Russian citizens in Estonia. Beside this, the organisation's stated main aim is the 'normalisation of Estonian-Russian relations', 'normalisation' meaning primarily the compliance with bilateral agreements and the adoption of a more pragmatic and friendly approach to the relations between the two countries (International Council of Russian Compatriots 2011). Founded in 1992 (under the name of the Union of Russian Citizens of Narva), the ERSGR is now an umbrella organisation, with member organisations being local Unions of Russian Citizens in Haapsalu, Kohtla-Järve, Narva, Pärnu, Sillamäe, Tallinn, Tartu and Viljandi (though those outside Ida-Virumaa do not appear to be currently very active, ibid.). The organisation has repeatedly mobilised Russian-speakers to take to the streets in support of their demands. In 1997, the Union organised demonstrations of several hundred people in the streets of Narva, seeking social rights and measures especially to fight the high unemployment rate of the region (Reinvelt 2002). Ten years on, the Union still was demanding changes to the Estonian-Russian agreement on pensions for Russian permanent residents in Estonia, an issue complicated by the reluctance of both states to find a solution not to the detriment of pensioners, who are among the population groups worst off socio-economically and who depend on both states' cooperation with regard to social provisions for their subsistence (*DELFI* 18/08/2008; *Narvskaya Gazeta* 28/02/2008). In recent years, therefore, the

ERSGR has focused on the difficulties Russian pensioners in Estonia face, being, as the organisation claims, neglected by both states which both attempt to shift the responsibility for the group to the authorities on the other side of the border. While during the 1990s leading figures of the organisation attempted to represent Russian citizens permanently residing in Estonia in the Russian Duma in order to directly impact Russia's policies on compatriots permanently living abroad, these attempts remained largely unsuccessful (Russkaya Obshchina 2011). Recently, the ERSGR's chair Jurii Mishin adopted Estonian citizenship in order to have access to institutionalised politics and represent the interests of Russian citizens in Estonia.

Russian-speakers' group-based political parties

Until 1995, Soviet-era migrants were excluded from participating in national elections due to citizenship and election legislation. Induced by the first round of naturalisation in 1993-1995, minority party politics gained momentum in the run-up to the national elections of 1995. Naturalisation had brought about a change in the composition of the electorate. The hopes of Russian-speakers increased that political change would be possible on democratic grounds, guaranteed by their formal representation in the political bodies of the new state. In 1994, the Representative Assembly merged with other political organisations to form the *Eesti Ühendatud Rahvapartei* (United People's Party of Estonia, EÜP).[4] The *Vene Erakond Eestis* (Russian Party of Estonia, VEE) was officially founded in the same year. In the 1995 elections, both parties stood candidates in an electoral coalition under the name of *Meie kodu on Eestimaa* (My home is Estonia). The alliance of both parties could claim to represent about 62% of the Russian-speaking electorate, gaining 6 out of 101 seats in parliament (Khrychikov & Miall 2002, p.203). In 1999, the EÜP in a new electoral coalition even increased their share of the vote, if not the number of voters, to 6.13%, again winning 6 seats for the coalition in the Riigikogu, while the VEE did not pass the threshold to the 9th Riigikogu.[5] However, the minority parties did not succeed in sending any of their

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[4] These included the Estonian-Russian Democratic Movement, the Estonian-Russian Business Chamber, the Estonian Chernobyl Committee. The information on Russian-speakers' parties in Estonia described in this paragraph is based on the data provided by the *Eesti Erakondage Ajalugu Instituut*. Although so-called 'Russian parties' or 'minority parties' had claimed to represent the Russian-speaking population of Estonia since 1988, they had been politically insignificant components of Estonian party politics. It was only with the foundation of EÜP in 1994, renamed *Konstitutioonierakond* (Constitution Party) in 2006, by members of the Russian-speaking socio-political elite that minority party politics in Estonia gained some momentum.

[5] In 2000, some members left the EÜR to form their own, *Vene Balti Erakond Eestis* (Russian-Baltic Party of Estonia), which however never took part in national elections, and eventually in 2002 joined the Russian Party of Estonia. Around the same time, the EÜR was joined by several small parties most of which had existed for only a few years previously. Members of the Constitution Party are observed by the Estonian

candidates to parliament after the 2003 elections. Despite other parties and initiatives being formed by members of minority groups, arguably attempting to appeal to the ethnic voting potential,[6] none were politically successful at the national level.

The EÜP's and VEE's success in the 1990s can be related partly to the dynamics of Estonian politics, the structures of which had not yet been consolidated, potentially allowing some space for Russian-speakers in the political arena. Also, after the shocks of Estonian post-Soviet minority legislation, particularly regarding the Aliens law of 1993 and the Language Act of February 1995, passed shortly before national elections, the March 1995 elections also promised at least a slight possibility for change, mobilising Russian-speaking citizens to vote for EÜP or VEE.

Clearly, parties aiming at an ethnic minority electorate are at a disadvantaged position, as their potential electorate is diminished due to the condition of citizenship. While ongoing naturalisation processes increased the number of members of the minority groups eligible to vote in national elections, in 2007, 16.3 % of the population, i.e. approximately half of the minority population were citizens of another state or had undetermined citizenship status, limiting the number of possible voters of 'Russian' or other minority-oriented parties (Needs & Feasibility, 2009: 9). However, evidently, ethnically-based minority parties after their election to the eighth and ninth Riigikogu lost their appeal to the voters *per se*. Khrychikov and Miall estimate that the share of Russian-speakers voting for 'Russian' parties had already dropped from 78 % to 55 % between the Riigikogu elections of 1995 and 1999 (2002, p.203).

During their period of representation in parliament, both parties were able to set new emphases in parliamentary debates, expressing minority perceptions and preferences for political institution building, particularly with respect to citizenship and language legislation and minority education (Jurado 2003). In so doing, for the two election periods, *Meie kodu on Eestimaa* and the EÜP could indeed claim to represent a large proportion of the Russian-speaking citizens of Estonia, giving a voice to minority demands in the legislative body of the young republic. The political initiatives in the Riigikogu aimed at the political inclusion of minority members in Estonia have focused on the formal political inclusion of those members of society who are citizens of another state or do not hold any

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internal secret police, the *Kaitsepolitsei* (Security Police, KAPO), and are regularly accused of having been 'sponsored by the Kremlin' and of 'propaganda work in Estonia' (see for example KAPO 2007, p.8).

[6] According to Berg however most of these parties, initiatives or organisations would reject the label 'ethnic party' (Berg 2001, p.20).

citizenship at all, and on the legislation regulating the criteria for acquiring citizenship status. The two Russian-speakers' factions in the eighth and ninth Riigikogu (1995-1999, 1999-2003) also called for the radical amending of citizenship regulations.

However the Russian-speakers' parties failed to sustain the trust of the Russian-speaking electorate. This was due partly to the internal heterogeneity of the electorate, which was concerned with a range of political, social and economic problems among which the nationalising policies of the Estonian state were just one (Aleksej Semjonov 2002). At the same time, due to differences in ideological orientation, the Russian-speakers' parties were not able to form a strong coherent and sustainable minority representation in parliament (Jakobson 17/04/2009). These difficulties were combined with problems in the leadership and the political strategies applied by the parties, which pursued a confrontational strategy in relation to even moderate Estonian parties (ibid.). This impeded the cooperation with those Estonian political actors who were more open to discuss the terms of integration than the nationalists, or with those who supported similar agendas in educational reform (Jurado 2003). Eventually, the minority parties failed to manage the balancing act between guaranteeing minority representation on the basis of specific minority demands and fostering integration in alliance and cooperation with the Estonian political forces. In addition to the self-inflicted political weakness of the Russian-speakers' parties, fierce anti-Russian and anti-Soviet rhetoric that was aimed directly at the Russian-speaking political representation undermined their legitimacy to influence policy-making in Estonia.[7]

Since 2003, the Russian-speakers' parties have made several attempts to join forces,[8] although since then both Russian-speakers' parties have been politically insignificant, failing to achieve election results of more than 2% maximum. A merger of the Russian-speakers' parties and activists in the national elections of 2011 received only around 5,000 votes, or less than 1% of the vote. Overall, these parties' political successes have been negligible since 2003. This includes their campaigns to build a successful representation of

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[7] Throughout my interviews with Russian-speakers many alluded to direct activities of the Estonian authorities to undermine the group's political representation. According to the respondents, in several election periods Estonian authorities sponsored some Russian-speakers' parties in order to split the electorate (Poleshchuk 14/04/2009; Astrov 17/05/2010; Grigoryan 18/05/2010). It was beyond the scope of this thesis to establish on what evidence these accusations are based.

[8] In 2007 the former EÜP, which had reconfigured under the name *Konstitutsioonierakond* (Constitution Party) and the VEE started negotiation talks, which almost led to the merging of both parties. However when the congress of the Constitution Party decided that the overall direction of the party's policies should go towards the left, this simultaneously ruled out the option to cooperate with the more conservative VEE. Rather, in 2008, Constitution Party merged with the *Eesti Vasakpartei* (Estonian Left Party) to form the *Eestimaa Ühendatud Vasakpartei* (Estonian United Left Party, EÜVP). For the national elections of 2011, members of the VEE, EÜVP and prominent individuals of the Russian-speaking community made another attempt to unite under the VEE's roof in order to achieve inclusion into political bodies and decision making.

Russian-speakers at the European level. Although the elections to the European parliament were debated among the Russian-speakers' politicians as a route to increase the political influence of the group, even at that level the support for representatives with an agenda strongly aimed at Russian-speakers has gained only around 2% of the vote.

That does not mean that the parties have left the political scene altogether though. They continue to make headlines largely with contributions to the public debate that increasingly appeal to proponents of minority nationalistic views, while issues that concern daily problems faced by non-citizens or non-Estonians generally are increasingly lost from sight.[9] Overall, the main role of the Russian-speakers' parties was with the representation of demands which had been almost completely ignored by the Estonian parties. Therefore, Berg (2001) argues with some justification that while not being ethnic parties in the narrow sense, at least for the 1990s they resembled part of what he calls the 'Russian communal defence' (p.23). Importantly, and another reason for the parties' decline, is that they based their approach on segregationist grounds, in contrast to the Russian-speaking population's preferences for a solution to interethnic problems on the basis of integration with Estonian society and in cooperation with them. The increasingly populist approach of the more prominent political actors of the Russian-speaking minority is also a sign for the crisis of Russian-speakers' political representation and the lack of any sustainable structures. As a long-term observer of political developments in Estonia put it, minority political representation in Estonia 'is in ruins, completely. […] There are no structures' (Poleshchuk 18/12/2009). This is at least the case with respect to parties that promote as their main political goals the improvement of the situation of Russian-speakers.

The crisis and decline of the Russian-speakers' parties do not mean that Russian-speaking voters are excluded from the political process altogether. *Keskerakond* (the Centre Party) has been the main alternative for Russian-speaking voters in national as well as local elections. Although the party's political agenda has never been nearly as explicit with regard to citizenship and language policies as the EÜP and VEE, *Keskerakond* has continuously promoted the alleviation of the naturalisation procedure and initiated several of the improvements on citizenship legislation that were discussed in parliament. Moreover, although *Keskerakond* also responds to a nationalistic electorate, it has openly supported a more flexible approach to Russian language use in public (Sõtnik 04/08/2009; Rosenfeld 07/10/2009). At the same time, *Keskerakond*'s more accommodationist take on

[9] Among the initiatives the Constitution Party has strongly supported is for example the plan to erect a monument for Peter I in the town of Narva (*Megatrons* 05/06/2009).

non-citizens and permanent residents of foreign nationality compared to other Estonian parties is not reflected in its political programme and policies, which do not account for these groups' range of very diverse, but pressing problems caused by their political status and social situation (Poleshchuk 18/12/2009).

Essentially, *Keskerakond*'s success with Russian-speaking voters relies on the fact that overall the party has not engaged in policies that have caused particular outrage among Russian-speakers; that it stands for a centre-left approach which covers a broad range of political and social problems faced by minority members specifically; and that it practices the inclusion of Russian-speakers into the party. Although *Keskerakond* has been generally open to Russian-speakers' interests, the representation of minority demands within the party at the national level and the responsibility to develop legal initiatives on the matter have remained with minority members of the party (Sõtnik interview). Nevertheless, in each election period since 1995, *Keskerakond* has been represented in parliament by 6-7 Russian-speaking deputies, and in 2002/2003 the party sent the first, and so far only minority politician into the cabinet, when Eldar Efendijev accepted the post of Minister for Population Affairs.

Estonian parties representing minority interests

The Russian-speaking electorate is, of course, much more heterogeneous than a single party could account for, as already the diversity of the Russian-speaking parties demonstrated. Other Estonian parties have increased their efforts to attract Russian-speaking voters. Still, the political programmes rarely address citizenship and language issues from a non-nationalistic point of view. An exception was in the late 1990s when the party *Res Publica* (RP), which actively tried to attract Russian-speaking voters, promised alleviations in the naturalisation process. However, it turned out that this was simply pre-election games.[10] Russian-speakers have been very disappointed by RP's performance in minority issues generally (Poleshchuk 18/12/2009). Other parties have hoped to attract Russian-speaking voters by placing Russian-speaking candidates on their election list. In recent years, this strategy has helped *Reformierakond* (Reform Party, RE) to increase its share of the Russian-speaking electorate (Poleshchuk 18/12/2009).

As a result, for several legislative periods, normally two of RE's deputies in the national parliament have been Russian-speakers. However, they have been largely inactive in

[10] *Res Publica* later turned out to have been a project of *Isamaaliit* (Pro Patria Union), which was designed to attract also the less nationalistic parts of the electorate; the two parties later merged (Poleshchuk 18/12/2009).

relation to minority issues or, when they have spoken out against RE's minority politics, such as in the case of the removal of the Bronze Soldier monument in Tallinn, they were entirely marginalised in their own party (Astrov 17/05/2010, referring to Sergei Ivanov and Tatjana Muravjova specifically). Other minority representatives of RE do not show any interest in questions of integration, citizenship or the role of Russian language use in Estonia (e.g. Andrei Korobeinik, member of the XII Riigikogu for RE, Korobeinik 2011). The *Sotsiaaldemokraatlik Erakond*, (Social Democratic Party, SDE) is a supporter of integration policies, but its agenda has not attracted many Russian-speakers so far.[11] This demonstrates that neither the inclusion of minority members into majority parties nor the inclusion of Russian-speakers' concerns in the party programmes or rhetoric of politicians has allowed for changes in the interethnic power division and responsiveness of policies towards minorities' demands. Although this development has enabled some heterogeneisation of the voting behaviour of Russian-speakers, *Keskerakond* remains the party most voted for by Russian-speakers at the national level as well as the one that has the clearest one-party support base (Hallik et al. 2002, p.21).

The situation of minority politics is somewhat different at the local level, buttressing the assumptions of those hopeful that *Keskerakond* could be conducive in changing interethnic relations and politics in Estonia. *Keskerakond* functions as a minority party at the local level in highly minority populated areas. Here, minority members have equally reduced their support for minority political parties and used *Keskerakond*'s channels in order to integrate with the Estonian political structures. Although minority parties have occasionally shown some strength at the local level, and at times formed municipal coalitions, minority voters' preferences overall seem to lie with *Keskerakond*. In recent years, *Keskerakond* has become known for the support it offers young talented Russian-speaking politicians to have a party career, and it has generally played a crucial role at the local level (Novikov 18/05/2010; Rosenfeld 07/12/2009; Sõtnik 04/08/2009). As the ruling party in the Tallinn municipality, the party has introduced some accommodating policies to respond to the Russian-speaking part of Tallinn's population. By staffing local offices with minority members, there is some representation and practical inclusion guaranteed at the local level, enabling minority members to decide on many aspects that concern their everyday lives in their proximity. These opportunities have been crucial over the past 20 years in providing minority members with some say in the political-decision making and

[11] Since the 2011 elections the SDE is represented in parliament by a Russian-speaking deputy also, who in contrast does have Russian-speakers' issues on his agenda whose statements aim to evoke a change in the discourse on Russian-speakers; Jevgeni Ossinovski's website features an interview that the daily *Postimees* did with him, in which he explains his position on integration and Russian-speakers' politics under the title 'I am an Estonian of Russian descent' (Ossinovski 2011).

choice of their political representatives. All this has however taken place without having any impact on the party's minority policies at the national level.

The local level has also offered alternative strategies for integration as, for example, the implementation of local integration programmes shows. Tallinn's 'Civic Peace' programme takes a more accommodationist position on interethnic relations than the national integration strategy (LICHR 2008b).[12] It emphasises the need for practical political integration of Russian-speakers through participation. In this context the municipality has conducted a series of forums to discuss the current state of the integration process, its aims and the obstacles (Vaus 18/05/2009). Unfortunately, although the initiative should be appreciated in general, the debates at these forums have not increased the awareness with regard to the situation of Russian-speakers, since the group's situation has not significantly changed (Grigorjan 18/05/2009). Minority representatives and participants argue that the increased 'dialogue' has not led to policy changes (Kõlvart 19/05/2009). The most important issues concerning integration – citizenship and minority language use in public and in education – need to be solved at the national level.[13]

As a result of the limited structures for Russian-speakers' political representation, many Russian-speaking political activists and civic organisations set their hopes on directly cooperating with state institutions that were designed to foster the practical inclusion of minority members' preferences into the political decision-making. The discussion of institutions for minority inclusion in the next chapter investigates to what extent these institutions were able to channel minority interests and allow them to influence policy making and institution building.

7.3 Minority inclusion and majority-minority cooperation in the political institutions

The Roundtable for National Minorities

The first institution that was established with the aim to integrate Russian-speakers into the development and critical evaluation of policy-making in Estonia is the Presidential Roundtable for National Minorities, established in 1993. The Roundtable has gained the

[12] After the riots in 2007, Tallinn has elaborated its own integration strategy 'Civic Peace' (*Kodurahu, Grazhdanskij Mir*) for May 2007 until September 2009, on the basis of which the municipality continues to work (Tallinn City 2011).
[13] Another example, Kohtla-Järve's integration programme focuses on the support for Estonian language learning for Russian-speaking adults (Solovev/Dul'neva 31/07/2009). While this can facilitate national and socio-economic participation, it remains in line with the state's integration strategy.

trust of Russian-speakers, and has allowed to bring Russian-speakers' views from the periphery of the debate closer to its centre. The Roundtable was initially convened by the Estonian President in 1993 in reaction to great tensions in Estonian society and imminent destabilisation of the country following the 'Aliens crisis'. With this step President Lennart Meri (1992-2001) reacted both to pressure from 'below'[14] and to recommendations from international actors, namely the OSCE Mission to Estonia and the HCNM (Sarv 2002, p.40; Pettai 1999; Barabaner et al. 1999). The Roundtable functioned almost continuously between 1993 and 2006; in 2010, current President Toomas Hendrik Ilves (2006-present) introduced a restructured Roundtable of Nationalities (*Rahvuste Ümarlaud*) under the roof of the Estonian Cooperation Assembly (*Eesti Koostöö Kogu*) (Mätlik 04/12/2009; Pettai 05/12/2009).[15] By and large appreciated by Russian-speaking political actors, the Roundtable is designed as a 'standing conference of representatives of ethnic minorities and stateless persons residing in Estonia and of political parties' with advisory capacities (Statutes 1998). In contrast to the understanding of national minorities deployed in other Estonian legal documents, the Roundtable explicitly claims to represent 'non-citizens', thereby acknowledging that this group also needed political representation.[16] This is one of the main reasons why the Roundtable had something to offer to Russian-speakers. Moreover, up until 1995, when the first Russian-speakers entered parliament, the Roundtable was the only institution that provided for any representation of Russian-speakers in national-level political institutions.

According to its statutes, the Roundtable's main objectives encompass contributing to the building of a stable democracy in Estonia and to work on the 'integration into Estonian society of all people who have linked their lives to Estonia or wish to do so' (Statutes 1998, III.7). It aims to achieve this by resolving problems related to socio-economic, legal (citizenship), and cultural (language) issues, while simultaneously preserving the identity of ethnic and cultural minorities (ibid.). It is unsurprising, therefore, that the convention of the Roundtable helped mitigate the conflictual situation in 1993 and was seen initially as an institution that helps improve the representation of minorities (Semjonov 2002). The Roundtable aims to enable direct participation of minority groups in devising recommendations on political processes and policies. Its design thereby constitutes the

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[14] Four days before the passage of the law in parliament, 10,000 people had demonstrated in the city of Narva, threatening among other things to cut off electricity supply for the rest of Estonia provided by Narva's Baltic Power Plant (Sarv 2002); moreover, the establishment of a Roundtable had been called for by the Representative Assembly (Kolstø 2002, p.147).

[15] The Estonian Cooperation Assembly is a newly established umbrella organisation that aims to coordinate organisations and activities aimed at improving Estonia's 'human capital', in particular the activities are based on the annual UN Human Development Reports on Estonia.

[16] Citizens of other states cannot be members of the Roundtable, cf. Statutes 1998, II. 6.

most direct form of institutionalised involvement of minorities in the decision-making process (Council of Europe 2004, p.22).

The structure of the Roundtable has been changed several times. In 1993, the Roundtable consisted of an expert committee, equally representing the parliament, the Russian-speakers' Representative Assembly and the Estonian Union of National Minorities, which represented non-Russian minorities. In 2002/2003, the Roundtable was restructured in order to include far more minorities than before and to overcome the exclusivity against most minority organisations and groups in Estonia that lay in the expert character of the Roundtable. Therefore in 2003, the Roundtable was replaced by an expert committee, comprised of political actors, academics and heads of cultural organisations of various groups in Estonia, and is complemented by a Chamber of Representatives, which from September 2003 onwards comprised of around 140 representatives of cultural and educational societies (President 2003).

The Roundtable is formally represented by its Plenipotentiary, who is appointed by the Estonian President, as are the other members of the Roundtable's expert committee. The members of the assembly of cultural organisations are in turn appointed by the expert committee. As a result, no member of the Roundtable is elected or delegated by the minority communities directly; thus the character of the Roundtable as represented in its structures is, in the first place, a consultative institution to the President, not a genuine representation of the minority groups. The Plenipotentiary represents the president at the Roundtable meetings and advocates the results of the Roundtable's work with ministries, members of parliament and institutions working on the issues of integration. There are no regulations determining the work of the Plenipotentiary, she or he is free in shaping her/his tasks and schedule. The expert commission is designed as the more active board and has the opportunity to form workgroups and to invite external experts for consultation and debate. During the 1990s and early 2000s, the Roundtable met regularly, and organised conferences and other public events designed to provide space for public debate and, potentially, dialogue (President 1992-2006). Moreover, when active under Meri and President Arnold Rüütel,[17] the Roundtable regularly invited members of the major political parties to attend meetings of the Roundtable and offered consultation. The assembly has the right to develop recommendations for the expert board, which may pass resolutions and recommendations that are then forwarded to the President of the Republic, the Riigikogu,

[17] Rüütel was President of the Estonian Republic from 2001 until 2006.

respective commissions at the Riigikogu working on the issues raised, and the government (Statutes 1998, IV).

The Roundtable provides for a body autonomous from the government, which, while appointed by the President, 'shall be independent in [its] activities' (Statutes 1998, II.5), also from the legislative. Essentially, however, it does not have any decision-making authority. This limitation has been reflected in the Roundtable's influence on state policies. In its work, especially during the 1990s, the Roundtable concentrated on problems of citizenship and naturalisation policies. Furthermore, in workgroups it developed recommendations for political actors and draft laws on individual aspects of minority integration. For example, it worked on the preparation of a National Minority Law, engaged in debates on the future of minority (language) schooling, the financial support for minority associations and their cultural activities and continued the discussions on the status of non-citizens (Šein 1999). From 1998 onwards, the Roundtable particularly focused on the development of a more inclusive approach to integration in general. The fact that the authorities remained largely 'ignorant' in relation to the Roundtable caused frustration among its members. After all, the Roundtable was the only state organ that could claim some representativeness for minorities during the early stage of the integration strategy. In February 1999, the frustration even resulted in the resignation from their function at the Roundtable of four prominent members (Barabaner et al. 1999). In their critical statement on the receptiveness of the Roundtable's recommendations by members of parliament and government, the four members who resigned questioned the relevance and impact of a consultative institution if its views were not taken into account or were even contradicted by the legislative and executive forces and their policies (ibid.). However, members of the Roundtable became part of the expert commission that developed the strategy and programme for the 'Integration of non-Estonians into Estonian society, 2000-2007' (Government 2000, p.4). The suspension of the Roundtable 2006-2010 was noticeable for minority members, despite the already limited influence of the institution prior to this. Especially after 2007, when Estonia was desperate for answers to the many questions the outbreak of violent protests of Russian-speakers had caused, the absence of an official body that included Russian-speakers, and particularly non-citizens, was a missed opportunity of institutionalising an open debate on the problems of integration.

In sum, while the Roundtable proved to be an important tool for mediation in times of imminent tension or crisis in relation to minority issues in the 1990s, its overall importance

as a body providing for minority representation at a high political-institutional level should not be overestimated.[18] Structural limitations make it dependent on the interest of policy-makers in the contributions and recommendations by the Roundtable. So far, there has not been sufficient interest in prioritising the situation of minorities in Estonia in the political process and in taking the minority position seriously on side of the government and MPs. Despite its potential to form a forum for dialogue and practiced integration, the Roundtable was able to develop this only inwardly.[19] Essentially, it is too dependent on cooperating partners in the executive and legislative bodies to exhibit sufficient authority for its recommendations to be heard under current Estonian political conditions. Despite the mediating role the Roundtable was able to play in 1993, during the 2007 crisis around the removal of the Bronze-soldier monument Ilves did not revive the institution. On the occasion of the official re-formation of the Roundtable in 2010, President Ilves presented his view about the role the institution can and should play in Estonian politics. He traced the problems of integration back to the 'different knowledge of history' and argues that the Roundtable's remits were to help change this, in order to allow for all Estonia's human capital value to thrive. This approach represents a substantial change away from the Roundtable's earlier role. Between 1993 and 2006, legal and structural problems of Russian-speakers were seen as the main obstacles to integration by Roundtable members, and were even emphasised by the Presidents Meri and Rüütel (see for example Meri 1995). The 'neoliberal turn' in the President's approach to integration reflects the state's approach to integration that underlies the integration strategy.[20] A statement of the members of the new Roundtable mirrors this approach; moreover, it appeals to the public to 'ensure that Estonia has enough *citizens and denizens* who work and contribute to our society in order to maintain our statehood and its functioning society' (Ümarlaud 2010, author's emphasis). It remains to be seen whether the acceptance of statelessness not only as a fact, but as a part of the aspired integrated society will allow the institution to help increase the Russian-speakers' active participation in state- and society-building.

The Minister without portfolio for Population Affairs and the Council for Ethnic Minorities

[18] The consistent reluctance of the Estonian-language media to report the activities and contributions by the Roundtable underlines its insignificance for much of the public debate. Meanwhile, the Russian-language media in Estonia was far more eager to publish on the work of the Roundtable (Šein 1999; Lauristin & Vetik 2000, p.101).

[19] Semjonov emphasises this in his accompanying note to the Statement of the four members who temporarily resigned from their activity with the Roundtable: 'Indeed, the quality and competence of internal discussions and subsequent recommendations of the Roundtable considerably improved in the course of recent years. The body essentially turned out to be able to create a real mechanism for a dialogue' (Barabaner et al., Statement 1999).

[20] The SIP and EIS emphasise the need to enact all of Estonia's human resources to build Estonia.

The intergroup tensions between Estonians and Soviet-era settlers were very clear to the members of the Popular Front and the first Estonian government during the early phase of 'restoration'. The interim government under Tiit Vähi (1995-1997) introduced the post of Minister without portfolio for Nationalities, *de facto* dealing with interethnic relations.[21] The role of the post however only gained importance in the second half of the 1990s under Siimann's coalition government (1997-1999), formed by the Coalition Party (*Koonderakond*) and the later People's Union of Estonia (*Eestimaa Rahvaliit*). In the context of Estonia's international integration the government adopted the integration of Soviet-era migrants into its programme. Since the 1997 European Commission's report on Estonia's progress for EU accession had demanded the acceleration of the integration process of Estonia's large non-citizen population, the position of Minister without portfolio for Ethnic and Population Affairs was re-installed (Poleshchuk 2001). The international pressure to reduce the number of non-citizens and citizens of other states in Estonia was essential for this decision. The Minister of Population Affairs played a particularly crucial role in the development of the State Integration Strategies from 1998 onwards (see below). The Minister could set some emphases in the debates on integration, especially during the first half of the 2000s, thanks to the centrality of the issue to Estonia's EU integration. After 2004, however, the post lost much of its political force and primarily provided an institution for minority representatives to present their concerns to a government official.

In 2009, the post was abolished when the Social Democrats, who at the time held the post, left the coalition. The responsibilities of the position were shared among the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior. The government argued that in this way it was easier to link integration tasks directly to those ministries, whose responsibilities the different aspects of integration effectively are (Council of Europe 2010). The last Minister to hold the post belonged to the smallest coalition partner (SDE); being a young woman with a relatively short political career and no portfolio, this

[21] The post was initially occupied by Klara Hallik, a historian and social scientist, who is from an Estonian-Russian background and has since accompanied the integration process as an expert in many positions, such as a member of the Roundtable and as a researcher. The post of Minister for Nationalities was installed at a time, when there was a very strong opposition across the political elite to institutionalise politically the question of minority issues. Hallik served as a Minister from April until October 1992. When the conservative-nationalist coalition under Mart Laar came to power in October, interethnic relations became part of the responsibilities of Jüri Luik, who was head of the Delegation for negotiations between Estonia and Russia (*Eesti ja Venemaa vaheliste läbirääkimiste delegatsiooni juht*) and later became Foreign Affairs Minister. His responsibilities for interethnic relations were transferred to Peeter Olesk, who later became Minister of Culture and Education. Olesk's post was again that of Minister of Population Affairs, and as before not endowed with a portfolio. During the mid-1990s, under the Andres Tarand and second and third Tiit Vähi governments the responsibilities of the Minister of Population Affairs did not have a pronounced position in the cabinet, but were covered by the Ministries of Culture. This data is taken from a website on the history of the Estonian parliament, provided by the National Library of Estonia (Meie parlament ja aeg 2011).

meant that she had a difficult standing in the cabinet. As a result of the politically weak position of the Minister, her capacities lay mainly in the communication with minority members on the one hand and the government on the other (Korts 24/04/2009).

The Ministry of Culture is often perceived as the successor institution of the Minister of Population Affairs, because it has established a body that consults with representatives of minority organisations on a regular basis. Already in 2008, the Ministry of Culture had re-launched the Council for Ethnic Minorities under the Ministry of Culture and it has acted as the official contact body for minority issues since then. The Council regained its responsibilities after the government eventually discontinued the post of Minister without portfolio for Ethnic and Population Affairs in 2009. According to the information on the Ministry's website, the Council has three-monthly meetings with the heads of 17 organisations representing primarily traditional-cultural societies of people with minority background to engage in talks with the Minister on the minorities' current (cultural) situation, needs and projects for the future (Estonian Ministry of Culture 2008). These meetings provide opportunity to 'discuss problems [...] and exchange opinions' on Estonian cultural policy (ibid.). The Council, which had existed as a consultation body to the Ministry of Culture between 1997 and 2003, takes an advisory function for issues of minority culture, minority language use and questions of sponsoring of minority cultural and organisational life (Agarin 2010).

The Council 'tries to copy' the Presidential Roundtable, by consulting with minority representatives on issues that concern them (Dusman 16/12/2009). Despite the opportunity for including the demands of minority representatives, again, no direct results are visible in terms of (draft) legislation or provisions so far, and minority representatives are very sceptical regarding the practical use of the Council from the perspective of integration in general (Grigoryan 18/05/2009). It is particularly problematic that the remits of the Council are *de facto* limited to questions of cultural events, Sunday schools and support for minorities' cultural and educational organisations; that is, the Council deals with minority issues in line with the understanding of Estonian multiculturalism, but does not cover crucial issues of political and socio-economic inclusion. Moreover, the Council particularly focuses on issues of smaller minorities, that is not the Russians, thereby significantly narrowing the scope of debate. Decisively, 'it doesn't discuss other [...] integration policies, like citizenship' (Mätlik 04/12/2009). At the same time, institutionalising certain routes for minority representatives to communicate with policy-makers, and particularly by including the idea of the minorities' right to the protection and development of their

cultural identity into the state integration strategy, the Estonian state has responded to the minority's demands for cultural self-realisation in civic organisations and established the current framework for the support of minority cultures.

The social and citizenship issues related to integration are now part of the responsibilities of the Ministries for Social Affairs and for the Interior; moreover, the much disputed aspect of integration in the field of education and in particular the role of Russian schooling in Estonia has always been the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. Unlike the Ministry of Culture, these ministries do not feature advisory bodies that would guarantee the consultation of minority members with regard to questions of citizenship, civil society integration, Russian language education or labour market integration. This is a clear setback from the situation when minority concerns that were discussed with state institutions still included all aspects of integration.

The stronger focus on integration pressured for in particular by Western regional organisations allowed the Minister of Population Affairs to voice the need for integration and coordinate ongoing integration efforts as well as, to an extent, channel minority concerns. In this sense, it was a resource and a tool for the moderate political forces, who emphasised the importance of improved interethnic relations and social stability, such as the Social Democrats (former People's Party Moderates, or *Rahvaerakond Mõõdukad*) (Astrov 17/05/2010). The Minister regularly met with minority organisations of different background (Poleshchuk 18/12/2009; Dusman 16/12/2009). Moreover, the Minister emphasised that integration in Estonia was a complex process that entailed problems of legal status, political participation, cultural diversity, practical questions of language use, social implications and exclusion from access to welfare and societal progress and many more.

> '[T]his office worked like a coordination office between different ministries, and they tried to be involved in different work [at] the state level and tried to support institut[ions at] the local level, including NGOs. But now we have the Minister of Culture only, [and] it's not easy to be as active as […] in integration issues, [the focus is] more on culture events' (Dusman 16/12/2009).

This clearly assigned point of communication and contact for minorities was abolished, which is what minority members regret, even though they did not have great hopes in the fundamental improvement of their situation through the Minister of Population Affairs.

Tanel Mätlik, head of the Integration Foundation and former member of the Presidential Roundtable, partly disagrees:

> '[The abolition of the Minister of Population Affairs] doesn't change very much, because it has been always the same. I don't say it's positive that it's always been the same, [but since 1990] with every change of the office the Minister disappeared and a new office was re-established. […] Which is a very stupid system […]. And now again: when the Ministry of Culture took over [the responsibilities of the Minister for Ethnic Affairs] again they had [to] start from zero. In a way our [Integration] Foundation has been the element of continuity – our role has been always to transfer the knowledge to the new people' (Mätlik 04/12/09).

Despite these practical problems related to the post of Minister in general, the decision of the government in 2009 to abolish post of Minister was read as a negative sign by minority members as well as Estonians involved in integration policies. The importance of the post lay in its existence *per se* and in the attention it drew to the need for continued integration efforts by the state, as well as for the visibility it gave to minority members and to Estonia's ethno-cultural diversity. The Council's work is less appreciated, both for reasons of the symbolic downgrading of communication with minority members (from the position of a Minister to just a council inside the Ministry of Cultures) and because of its less comprehensive approach. The Council's task envisages an 'exchange [of] opinions', but does not transfer any decision-making competencies to the Council (Estonian Ministry of Culture 2008).

At the same time, some minority members point to the extension of base-line funding for organisations that cooperate with the state through the Council and a generally positive trend in the state's support for organisations which are dedicated to maintain minority culture (Lyagu 19/05/2010). Other activists argue that the Council has not played a significant role for the situation and life of minorities in general, and is not likely to do so under current political power relations (Grigoryan 18/05/2010; Poleshchuk 18/12/2009; Rosenfeld 07/12/2009). Thus, despite the support it provides to some organisations, the Council has not engaged visibly in any form of improving the legal framework for minority members' impact on the social or political decision-making. It has also not included the Council's representatives in the agenda-setting of the government's further development of integration strategies, nor helped the minority cultural landscape heterogenise or increase minority organisations' funding situation generally. Overall, the representation of interests of ethnic minorities at government level has been limited, if it existed at all. Decisively, there is no consultation sought by the government with regard to the social and political aspects of minority integration.

In 1998 the government founded the Integration Foundation, which since then has supported the integration process and functions as a separate actor, though it is not independent of the government.[22] The Integration Foundation is primarily a coordinating and implementing body but is also in charge of the development of strategies in the integration strategies' sub-programmes, especially education. In this capacity it cooperates with the Ministry of Education in the fields of Language Immersion as well as minority language education (MEIS 2011). It is also the Integration Foundation, rather than the Ministry of Culture, which coordinates and provides actual support for most minority cultural organisations. Project-based funding is the major form of support for non-governmental and civic organisations, including minority cultural organisations. It is granted to organisations which apply for support both in response to calls for applications and based on the organisations' own initiatives. The foundation also helps maintain the existence of a smaller number of organisations through base-line funding (Lyagu 19/05/2010; Mätlik 04/12/2009). This is rare however; Mätlik, head of the Estonian Integration Foundation, describes the funding situation:

> 'We, as a foundation, which gets reallocations from the state budget, we can't have contracts with NGOs for 5 years or 7 years, because we receive money from the EU for one year only. [Right now, i.e. December 2009] we cannot be sure what will happen in 2011 – the moment of truth will come when the financial agreement between us and the ministry will be signed at some point in January [2011], and then we will know how much we will actually get. That is why we cannot make long-term commitments with initiatives' (Mätlik 04/12/2009).

The situation is made even more difficult by the fact that the Foundation's resources are limited. Given that its task is the integration of a third of the population and the organisation is praised for the fact that it has supported more than 400 organisations and projects between 1998 and 2007, the budget of around 6 million Euros (492,554,000 EEK) for the Integration Foundation's activities in the years 2008-2010 appears small (Estonia.eu 2011). Moreover, the Integration Foundation does not have budget stability, which impedes its ability to act coherently and efficiently. As a result, even a rapid increase in the budget, while staff numbers remain stable, can cause difficulties (Mätlik 04/12/2009).

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[22] Since 2010, the Integration Foundation merged with the Estonian Migration Foundation and now forms the Integration and Migration Foundation Our People (*Integratsiooni ja Migratsiooni Sihtasutus Meie Inimesed*, MISA); it is still well known under the name Integration Foundation. .

The Integration Foundation passes on the problems with its own budgetary planning to the organisations it supports. The difficult situation and lack of planning possibilities is not exclusive to the sphere of integration but shared by Estonian civil society and citizens' self-organisation in general (Lagerspetz 17/04/2009; Jakobson 17/04/2009). However, Russian-speakers' organisations have already limited access to funding and less developed civil society structures to draw upon in order to sustain their activities compared to most Estonian-speakers' organisations (Lagerspetz 17/04/2009); to increase the base-line funding could improve the situation for some organisations, but the institution does not plan to do so in the near future (Lyagu 19/05/2010; Mätlik 04/12/2009).

Overall the focus of the Integration Foundation's activities has remained the same over the past thirteen years; however Mätlik emphasises that in recent years projects that focus on increasing the opportunities for both majority and minority members to meet members of the other group (Mätlik 04/12/2009). He suggests that

> 'it's not that important that they will speak there about integration, maybe it's not even good; it's good if they are doing something together. For example in the field of environment protection, if they do some joint campaign, 'cause it might be an important issue for all people, no matter what their ethnic background is. It's not to avoid this issue of ethnic background and ethnic relations, but rather to promote joint activities, through which they might discover that their ethnic group is maybe not that different, and we see that through these contacts actually the attitudes change' (Mätlik 04/12/2009).

Although the Integration Foundation has increased its activities in this field, this does not mean that questions for example of naturalisation or the support for bilingual media are neglected. Rather, it reflects the somewhat broader approach to integration and the realisation that 'obtaining Estonian citizenship in itself does not solve all integration-related problems' (Government 2008, p.11), which characterises the Estonian Integration Strategy.

The Integration Foundation is the only institution besides the government's cabinet that has a responsibility for the pressing issues of citizenship, minority language use and, importantly, the future of education in both Estonian and minority mother tongues for minority members. Mätlik acknowledges this also:

> 'With help from the EU programmes, this year we launched a call for proposals for different activities [in relation to citizenship issues] and we estimate that five projects will be financed. And maybe this will help to fill this gap. But this is project-based, it's not institutional' (Mätlik 04/12/2009).

The constraints imposed on the Integration Foundation's activities because of its executive function for the State's integration strategy, do not envisage the inclusion of minority recommendations and critique into the development of sub-programmes. The institution is designed as a facilitator of integration and dialogue, not as an institution for dialogue itself. Yet, the Foundation cooperates with minority organisations on specific projects in several thematic and training areas (Mätlik 04/12/2009). Some minority cultural and educational organisations closely cooperate with the Integration Foundation in the production of information material on national minorities and receive training for successful project application and other activities within the range of tasks of the integration strategy (Dusman 16/12/2009; Mätlik 04/12/2009). Particularly schemes which are supported as part of the integration strategy, such as Sunday schools, allow for the professionalisation and further institutionalisation of minority cultural organisation, if under the problematic conditions of lack of possibilities for long-term planning (Lyagu 19/05/2010).

Reviewing the developments of the Estonian state's institutions for minority inclusion it can be stated that from the beginning of Estonia's independent statehood in 1991 the state recognised that the interethnic situation, and the specific aspect of statelessness, required particular attention. When Russian-speakers eventually achieved limited opportunities to channel their interests to the government and state authorities as a result of their protests in the crisis of 1993, this was down largely to international pressure. Similarly, the emphasis on integration in the second half of the 1990s cannot be examined without regarding the considerable influence EU integration had on these policy developments. Despite the limited opportunities these institutions offered to Russian-speakers, minority representatives appreciated the Roundtable and the Minister of Population Affairs as rare channels to communicate minority concerns and demands. Although the institutions discussed in this chapter did not meet the expectations about integration Russian-speakers had towards the state, they had helped to stabilise the tense situation. However, the ruling parties were not interested in making these institutions permanent. The numerous changes to the post of Minister of Nationalities/Population Affairs illustrates this most clearly – it was established due to the 'pragmatic recognition that something has to be done' (Astrov 17/05/2009); it was then revived as a post with a qualified remit for the period of EU accession. The abolishment of the Ministry in 2009 followed logically from the alleged 'mainstreaming' of the integration policies throughout government policies, which made an 'Integration Ministry' appear superfluous. The renewed Roundtable and the Council for National Minorities are unfit to provide for sufficient discussion and, crucially, political

power to shape the debates on integration. The remaining institution, the Integration Foundation, is not mandated to engage in dialogue, lacks decision-making authority, and also the political will to channel Russian-speakers' interests. As a result, the executive as well as the state authorities provide no suitable institution to include the views of the Russian-speaking group.

At the level of parliament, a number of so called parliamentary groups, committees and Deputies' associations and unions exist whose work touches, potentially, upon minority related issues. These include, but are not restricted to, the Cultural Affairs Committee, the Social Affairs Committee and the Legal Affairs Committee. Moreover, the Ida-Virumaa Association, National Minorities Support Group and Orthodox Association explicitly tackle minority issues. However, despite their existence, most of these groups are very silent on minority issues or overall inactive (Sõtnik 04/08/2009). No considerable contributions on minority politics came from these groups, and also their members do not exhibit an interest in them (Poleshchuk 18/12/2009). Again, most Russian-speaking elites interviewed on this question suggest that this is partly due to the understanding among Russian-speaking politicians that there is little hope to achieve their political goals via this way.

7.4 Political agendas of Russian-speakers' representatives

Russian-speakers' political actors were fractioned almost from the beginning with regard to their political demands. During the 1990s, so called 'integrationists', or sometimes called 'loyalists', such as the Representative Assembly, centred their demands around minority rights by attempting to modify or reinterpret existing political institutions. The RA supported the inclusion of minority representatives into decision-making on issues that affected the status and self-realisation of minority members, as well as the state's responsiveness to minority contributions to democratisation generally, without conditioning participation on formal membership and language knowledge. Factions sometimes described by Estonian sources as 'hardliners' or even 'extremists' (KAPO 2009, p.9) such as the ERSGR, were more uncompromising in their demands, championing among other things unconditional citizenship for all Soviet migrants and particularly outraging Estonians by claiming second official language status for Russian. Besides the issue of pensions, the general political demands of the ERSGR include

> 'the right to simplified procedures to gain citizenship for all permanent residents, the use of Russian language as a second official language [in Estonia], proportional

> representation of all ethnic groups in government and administrative bodies, expansion of rights for permanently residing non-citizens in elections to the bodies of local self-government, stipulation of the right of national minorities to public education in the languages of national minorities at all levels of education, as well as the realisation of the inalienable and recognised human rights and rights of national minorities' (Mishin 2002).[23]

At no time, however, has this led to the formation of regionally separatist movements. Clear-cut distinctions are hard to draw, though. It can even be argued that from a perspective based on current interpretations of Estonian political institutions, virtually all parties or political activities rallying for Russian-speakers' rights are considered 'hardliners' in the sense that all Russian-speakers' parties have the elimination of statelessness in their programme, such as the VEE calling for its elimination

> 'as soon as possible within the framework of the European Union, ensuring that all residents of Estonia have equal rights' (VEE 2011).

Similarly, virtually all Russian-speakers' political actors call for the continued use of Russian in public under certain conditions as well as the guarantee of Russian schooling. Although the Estonian authorities have been reluctant to accept any minority demands, differences between Russian-speakers' organisations exist in the framing of these demands and the degree and form of regulation of the minority provisions claimed. The two main political parties of the 1990s/early 2000s have accentuated different aspects of integration and interethnic relations, which are mirrored in their self-representation. The VEE claims to represent the Russian-speaking minority, although on the basis of Russians' and Russian-speakers' century-long presence on Estonian territory. It portrays the group's interests as those of the 'historical' Russian minority of Estonia, hence claims to defend the Estonian Russians' interests in their homeland, while acknowledging that Estonians have a specific relationship to their historic nation-state (VEE 2011). Following this concept, demands for far-reaching rights for the usage of Russian and the facilitation of naturalisation are argued for on the basis of an 'ancestral' right, which however stretches to comprise Russian-speaking Soviet time settlers.

In contrast to the neo-conservative approach of the VEE,[24] the EÜP represented a less traditional approach to minority policies. More strongly than the VEE, the EÜP and its successor parties (*Konstitutsioonierakond, Eestimaa Ühendatud Vasakpartei*) have

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[23] Juri Mishin, then head of the Union of Russian citizens of Narva, in an open letter to the European parliament, the Council of Europe, NATO and other organisations involved in the democratisation and international integration of Estonia, 2002.

[24] In its party programme the VEE uses the term neo-conservative to position itself politically (VEE 2011).

highlighted the socio-economic status of minority members and their formal political inclusion, thus facing the double challenge of political opposition by being a 'leftist' and a minority party (Galbreath 2003, p.39). Moreover, as (self-styled) 'left' party, that is to say emphasising social security and state regulation over the free market and calling for the redistribution of social wealth, the EÜP has focused more on the discrimination against Russian-speakers in Estonia with respect to citizenship and language legislation, and has also attempted to capitalise on demanding more space for the specific 'Soviet' commemoration that has played an important role for Russian-speakers. Overall, all parties agree that Russian and Soviet history are convoluted in a complex manner, and the Russian-speaking group cannot be detached from either.

In order to attain a comprehensive solution for the regulation of the status and situation of Russian-speakers in Estonia and respond to the complicated overlap of problems related to group belonging, citizenship and language competency minority members face, the political representatives in parliament have pursued two legal initiatives that have been discussed more widely among minority activists.

The most systematic legal initiative to provide a coherent approach to minorities' status and position in the Estonian state is the draft law on National Minorities, submitted by two Russian-speaking members of the *Keskerakond* parliamentary faction, Vladimir Vel'man and Mikhail Stalnukhin (Stalnukhin & Vel'man Draft 2003). Prior to the preparation of the draft law, the Presidential Roundtable, of which Stalnukhin was a member, had discussed a potential law on minorities; the Roundtable did not publicly support the initiative at later stages though. One of the main aims of the draft was to streamline Estonian minority legislation with the requirements of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. The Convention had entered into force in Estonia in 1998, but minority activists did not see it fulfilled in the country's policies. Crucial in the context of legal and institutional provisions for minority members is the definition of national minorities, which is fundamental for asserting many minority rights, provided for by the constitution and ordinary legislation. A change of the definition of national minorities would therefore make it possible to prevent or at least mitigate many of the problems that minority members face under existing legislation, and to influence the political structures that determine the situation for minority members' participation in political and social processes. The draft law aimed at such a change, among other things.

Generally, the draft bill was focussed on the social and cultural participation of minority members irrespective of their citizenship status, thus it aimed to eliminate most of the restrictions non-citizens of Estonia face, and to replace the Cultural Autonomy Scheme, which is widely held to have been ineffective (and has also not been made accessible for Russians). The law did not exhibit any concrete amounts of funding or mechanisms for the support of minority culture though. Moreover, the draft bill had a merely declarative character whereby it copied provisions of the FCNM rather than adjusting these to the legal framework of the Estonian Republic, and was potentially ill-suited to address the Russian-speaking minority's complex problems in relation to Estonia's minority legislation. The draft bill contained a number of mechanisms to substantially simplify the status and opportunities of minority members, irrespective of citizenship, and to increase minority participation in society, practice their culture and language on the basis of individual rights (Poleshchuk 2003). Crucially, in its reformulation of the rights of national minorities, the draft law omitted the current official requirement for individuals to be citizens of Estonia in order to be considered a member of a national minority. This appeared to be in line with the understanding represented in the CoE's resolutions on the implementation of the FCNM in Estonia; in the resolutions the CoE repeatedly criticised the discrepancy between the minority protection mechanisms implemented in Estonia and the actual situation of minority members, in particular of those with no or foreign states' citizenship. However, it was unclear whether it was reconcilable with Estonian law (Council of Europe 2006; Council of Europe 2002).

The draft law was not discussed in parliament, and no similar attempt has been made by Russian-speaking parliamentarians since then. Three reasons were decisive for the failure of the initiative for the draft law. The law itself featured numerous shortcomings, particularly in relation to other Estonian legislation. The problem was, on the one hand, the contradiction with Estonian law in general, as the Estonian understanding that only citizens could be recognised as members of national minorities has entered the state's application of the FCNM and, while criticised, was nonetheless accepted by the CoE and other international organisations. Moreover, the authors failed to embed the draft bill in the Estonian legislative framework, specifically to relate it to other laws on minority rights and protection (Cultural Autonomy Act, State Language Law, Law on Basic and Secondary Schooling), as well as Estonia's adoption of the anti-discrimination law which was to be approved soon after the draft minority law had been presented to parliament (Poleshchuk 2003). Besides the legal reasons, the authors' political strategy for the presentation of their draft bill was also flawed. Vel'man and Stalnukhin had initiated and presented the draft law

to the public and parliament without first securing the full support of their party *Keskerakond*. When the draft bill was presented to the legal committee of the Riigikogu with the aim to overcome the contradictions with Estonian laws, it was again left unsupported even by the initiators' own party. Observers of the process argue that 'there was no interest in improving the law' among any of the political parties in the Riigikogu (Grigoryan 18/05/2010).

In a similar attempt to realise constitutional and legal provisions, representatives of the Russian Party of Estonia (VEE) have initiated an application for Russian cultural autonomy within the framework of the Cultural Autonomy Act (CAA) of 1993. The initiative, although originating in and represented by the VEE, is officially pursued by a registered non-profit organisation 'Russian Cultural Autonomy' (RCA). This constitutes the only substantial attempt to achieve a power division agreement, if only in the form of functional autonomy, with the Estonian state. The objective is explicitly embedded into the Estonian legal framework, while simultaneously demanding the extension of the law to cover all permanent residents who wish to practice cultural autonomy. Moreover, the proposal by the RCA envisages changes to the existing CAA in order to include guarantees and expanded opportunities for Russian language usage as a 'language of the Russian minority', particularly in municipalities with a Russian population; expanded opportunities for Russian education as part of Russian cultural autonomy while maintaining state provisions for Russian education at all levels of education; and particularly financial allocations at national and municipal levels proportionally to the Russian population living in the country or municipality (RCA 2011). It is apparent that the RCA's proposal is meant to avoid the pitfalls that many Russian-speakers fear are linked to the cultural autonomy scheme in Estonia, in particular concerning the institutionalisation of mediating bodies to moderate between the Russian-speaking community and the state, and with respect to the peril that the state might withdraw other forms of minority support were cultural autonomy to be established (Grigoryan 18/05/2010; Astrov 17/05/2010; Poleshchuk 18/12/2009).

In their proposal, the RCA argues that Russian cultural autonomy in the envisaged form would allow solving numerous problems minority members are facing today in practicing their language and culture. Among these, the RCA suggests, are the opportunity to establish genuine Estonian-Russian representation in the institutional framework of the state, but at the same time autonomous of the state, even in political bodies and concerning social security. Cultural autonomy is portrayed as a possible form of establishing

interethnic cooperation rather than confrontation. Despite the 'integrationist' wording, the RCA's proposal went further than Vel'man's and Stalnukhin's draft law.

In a first step to establish Russian cultural autonomy, the RCA submitted both an application and a proposal on required changes to the existing cultural autonomy act to the Ministry of Culture. As a letter by the then Chancellor of Justice documents, the Minister repeatedly failed to reply to the application while dealing with other applications for cultural autonomy in a much shorter time period (Ingrian Finns and Swedes) (Jõks 2007). The Chancellor of Justice argued that he could not take a decision on Russian cultural autonomy with the decision being incumbent upon the Minister. He urged the Minister to deal with the initiative, which was seen as a (small) success by the initiators of the move for Russian cultural autonomy. In the emerging exchange between the initiators and the Ministry, which involved litigation over several years, and a later discussion in parliament on the issue it transpired that the government was strongly opposed to Russian cultural autonomy. Initially, arguments against the RCA included formal criteria, which the RCA were said not to have fulfilled. Government officials later had to admit though that this was not the case.

Alexander Astrov, a lecturer at the Central European University, who has closely observed the process of application for Russian cultural autonomy, argues formal reasons did not necessarily play the most important role in the decisions against Russian cultural autonomy:

> 'So with cultural autonomy it was again the Minister of Culture in the end, who explicitly said that there are no formal reasons for the rejection of the application, but [that] at the moment it [i.e. Russian cultural autonomy] was politically undesirable. Because, I think she said that openly, that if this cultural autonomy is created, it can potentially be used by "anti-state forces"' (Astrov 17/05/2010).

It is remarkable how openly Estonian authorities have expressed their deep mistrust towards institutional structures of representation of the Russian community in Estonia, even against Estonian constitutional guarantees and legislation, which includes Russian cultural autonomy as one of the 'historical' cultures of Estonia. According to Astrov, what happened with regard to Russian cultural autonomy is that

> 'the issue is deliberately taken out of the liberal field and it is presented as kind of an emergency political issue, and the moment this is done, [the topic] is out of discussion' (Astrov 17/05/2010).

By means of securitising even those demands from Russian-speaking activists that are founded on fundamental institutions of the Estonian state, the latter has repeatedly legitimised the lack of implementation of several minority rights provisions.

Russian Cultural Autonomy and especially its leading activist Stanislav Cherepanov have not ceased their activities though. In the election campaign for the 2011 national elections the issue was again among the priorities of the VEE (VEE 2011). This is interesting, as the application for Russian cultural autonomy stands in stark contrast to the widely held view among Russian-speakers that the Cultural Autonomy scheme is neither practicable nor desirable from the Russian and Russian-speaking minorities' perspective. While the RCA's proposal for necessary legal changes which accompany the application for Russian cultural autonomy addresses most of the concerns, including the problem that the CAA does not include guarantees for specific amounts of financial support that it currently grants to Estonian citizens only, and that it constitutes a 'trap' for the Russian minority. It is a widely held belief among Russian-speakers that institutionalised cultural autonomy could be used by the state to transfer all minority related responsibilities to the cultural autonomy bodies, which alone would not be provided with the means to sustain all minority institutions (Lyagu 19/05/2010; Grigorjan 18/05/2010; Astrov 17/05/2010). The RCA's proposal also does not address the minority members' concern that has grown out of their experience with minority parties in parliament 1995-2003; many are convinced that the institutionalisation of 'mediating institutions' to communicate between minority members and the state would be prone to malpractice and manipulation (Lyagu 19/05/2010; Kõrvalt 19/05/2010; Astrov 17/05/2010). It is also important to remember that many minority members support integration that is based on all members' inclusion into the political and social community rather than group representation that fosters segregation (Lyagu 19/05/2010; Grigorjan 18/05/2010).

Given the disputes around cultural autonomy in the Russian-speaking community, observers argue that the motivation for the RCA's move was to find out 'how far [they] would get with this' (Astrov 17/05/2010; similarly Grigorjan 18/05/2010), and to demonstrate, domestically and potentially internationally, that Russians in Estonia would not be allowed to practice their constitutional right to Cultural Autonomy. At the same time, the two initiatives represent the attempts of Russian-speaking politicians to circumvent the negative consequences of the Estonian citizenship policies without targeting these directly.

Since the early 1990s, even moderate Estonians, especially in Keskerakond, have discussed the immediate and unconditional naturalisation of all permanent residents (the so called 'zero option' for citizenship). Chapter 5 showed that these debates were to no avail. Even very specific demands regarding individual aspects of the citizenship legislation or measures to change the linguistic requirements for naturalisation, which could effectively reduce mass statelessness, were discussed. An example is *Keskerakond*'s draft bill to abrogate the possibility of revocation of citizenship from naturalised persons who were born in Estonia after 26 February 1992. Under current law, citizenship can be revoked from anybody in case of 'violent action against the Republic of Estonia' (Amendment 2009). In the aftermath of the 2007 Bronze Soldier events, which were framed as anti-state activities by majority politicians, this was a serious concern of many young people.[25] The draft law failed due to the different ideological preferences of the ruling coalition (Sõtnik 04/08/2009). This draft, however, was one of the rare attempts of minority politicians to come forward with minority-related legal initiatives in parliament.

Essentially, all such changes to citizenship or related legislation are perceived as direct challenges to the ideological consensus of the Estonian elite, and therefore of the Estonian state. Despite the categorical rejection of any changes to Estonia's citizenship regime, some political actors still openly demand such changes, as mentioned above.

Because of the demands for an end to statelessness and for official status for the Russian language, organisations such as the ERSGR are seen by the Estonian authorities as challenging the foundations of Estonian independent statehood. Although the organisation has continuously raised social concerns with respect to vulnerable groups in Estonia, it is viewed by the authorities through the lens of the discourse on the 'Russian' threat. It is apparent that the demands raised by the ERSGR differ from demands for inclusion or responsiveness raised by other minority representatives only in degree, if at all. However, the outspokenness of Mishin and other activists representing Russian citizens permanently residing in Estonia has made them the subject also of criminal investigations (Poleshchuk 14/04/2009).

The legitimacy of claims for social security for Russian citizens, as well as stateless permanent residents in Estonia is undermined by the political discourse that portrays these demands as unjustified, and in some cases as 'projects' of the Russian special services

[25] Although the courts did not charge anyone with 'anti-state activism' in relation to the riots, the situation is a far cry from giving legal security to naturalised persons.

rather than based on the needs of Russian-speakers in Estonia.[26] The dismal prospects for activists calling for some form of institutionalisation of Russian beyond the existing level or even 'bi-nationalism' of the Estonian state, and the potential initiation of criminal prosecution, lead other minority activists to keep away from making such claims in public. One of my respondents, whose identity I decided not to disclose in relation to this statement, directly referred to the argument of the Estonian security police in its annual report:

> 'If you read the security police report [from 2007], it clearly states that the "zero" variant for citizenship, official bilingualism and equal rights are projects of the Russian special services in Estonia. And I think, I'm afraid, that it's not only the opinion of our security forces, but that this is a kind of consensus of our establishment. So that's why I'm not to propagate these ideas in public too loudly. […] Of course, 99% of our [work is] related to equal rights […], but I think citizenship is the key issue'.

The assertion of the Estonian state that all demands for equal rights, improvements in relation to citizenship, language and education legislation were steered by Russia's propaganda has undermined almost all attempts of those Russian-speaking activists who worked on an 'integrationist' agenda; attempts to establish dialogue with Estonian political actors, to generate an understanding among them that the current situation is detrimental to social stability and contradicts Estonia's claims and promises of the integration strategy, as well as specific policy recommendations have been rejected by the Estonian authorities. The demands raised by Russian-speaking activists and politicians over the past two decades were elaborated in direct response to Estonian nationalising legislation as well as rooted in the ideas of common statehood of Estonians and Soviet-era migrants that were developed within the Popular Front. The official stance that such demands were based on Russian propaganda dismisses the crucial role of Estonian domestic policies for the generation of these demands; it also neglects that Russian-speakers have their own reasons to organise politically. This neglect makes a solution of the problems unlikely for the near future.

The assumption that boundaries between Estonia's Russian-speaking population and the Russian state are being blurred by virtually all organisational contacts or cooperation is therefore an impediment to much of the political work of Russian-speakers in Estonia. This is even more problematic and becoming increasingly difficult as the withdrawal or denial

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[26] See the KAPO annual report of 2007: '"Projects" that Russian special services have, so-to-say, put on standby – the claiming official bilingualism in Estonia, the zero-level citizenship, the so-called equal rights (that basically means the right to work on any position and in any public institution). These claims have, in one form or another, been made already earlier, most recently at the meetings in Narva during the April events, but not with full force' (KAPO 2007, p.8).

of resources for many Russian-speaking organisations increases their dependence on kin-state support. The Russkiy Mir Foundation, the International Council of Russian Compatriots and the Russian Embassy to Estonia, are among the sponsors of some Russian-speakers' organisations' activities.[27] As a result, the accusations have undermined Russian-speakers' organisations directly by making the funding situation difficult for them. Even the acceptance of support from sponsors who are based in Russia is often portrayed as suspicious (KAPO 2009, p.12). Since Estonia's support for Russian-speaking political and civic organisations is marginal, several of the organisations whose representatives I interviewed did not receive any funding from the state.

Another problem for Russian-speaking activists, the development of a clear political agenda, is also exacerbated by the particular dynamics of the Estonian minority policies. It has been particularly difficult for minority activists to react coherently to policy developments which have changed over time, if only insignificantly and not in character. Initially, Russian-speakers' hopes were high that the negotiations with European institutions in the preparation for Estonia's accession to the EU would allay the hostile language and citizenship policies of the 1990s, and with some reason, as under international influence several amendments to the law on citizenship revised the language requirements for naturalisation as well as the law on local elections. At the same time, the 'compensation' of such legal improvements for Russian-speakers led to the deterioration of rights in other areas. Later, Estonia's signals to further societal integration by implementing a national long-term strategy to alleviate Russian-speakers' disadvantaged position in society led many Russian-speakers to expect improvement of their situation. They also believed that Estonia would not be accepted to the EU while it exhibited outstanding domestic interethnic problems, in which language disputes were a major factor (Kõrvalt 19/05/2010; Grigorjan/Ivanov 18/05/2010; Dusman 16/12/2009). By 2004, when Estonia became a member of the EU and external pressure lifted, the signals were still ambiguous. A second integration programme was in the pipeline, promising further improvements, while the legal situation as such was very much consolidated. In effect, integration and particularly language policies have constituted a 'moving target' for Russian-speaking activists, who have been unsure at what to aim in their campaigns and protests. As a result, hardly any group has engaged in tailored legal initiatives or protest campaigns to change language legislation in Estonia.

[27] These institutions are Russia-based and primarily support activities and organisations that aim at the 'consolidation of [the] Russian diaspora, coordination of activities of public associations and organizations of compatriots in order to maintain ethnic identity, national and religious originality, spiritual and cultural heritage of indigenous nations of Russia' (International Council of Russian Compatriots 2011).

The lack of inclusion into the strategies to foster integration has caused frustration and anger among Russian-speakers. Some minority members reject learning and using Estonian altogether. Grigorjan observes that more and more people say that

> 'we don't want to study the language anymore, language is for conversation! If we were equal, then we would try and learn the language, but if this [Estonian language learning] is happening by force, we don't want it' (Grigorjan 18/05/2010).

Sociological studies confirm that there is a tendency among part of the Russian-speaking population that rejects the form and direction of the integration process altogether, and this group is consolidating, if not growing (Vetik 17/04/2009).

In parallel to such sentiments, some Russian-speakers' representatives have resumed to mobilisation on the basis of ethnic identity rather than groupness due to structural problems. The constraints on minority participation are not only about the protection of the cultural nation of Estonians from mixing with others, but also about the defence against a potential aggressor. This all makes the construction of a 'Russian' identity attractive to some activists, and the most impressive resource Russian-speakers can currently draw upon, through actual contacts with and sponsoring from Russia or through emphasising the Russianness of the group in cultural terms. However, the minorities' support for this degree of segregation and deliberate self-marginalisation entailed in this approach is generally low. Particularly after the April events of 2007, some of the political actors whose agendas have already tended towards segregation have increased their rhetoric and activities aiming to establish a Russian-speakers' identity, rather than attempting to change the approach towards integration represented in the state's institutions. This development is interesting as it does not call for an alignment with the Russian Federation as activists did in the early 1990s, but represents attempts to establish a local Russian-speakers' identity and political defence. Because of the heterogeneity of the Russian-speaking group and because ethnic and linguistic identities vary among Russian-speakers, these political activists play up the Soviet-era collective commemoration, which is an emotional instance that unites large parts of the Russian-speakers.

Particularly during and since the Bronze Soldier crisis, Russian speaking politicians have attempted to ground a 'Russian-speaking identity' on the collective memory of World War II as a signifier and positive foundation of the Russian-speaking community as well as their political representation (Astrov 17/05/2010). Historical memory has crystallised as the central theme of the group-based political identity formation of Russian-speaking activists

since the mid- to late-2000s. While an uncoordinated social movement evolved around the controversy over the monument, some political activists have attempted to capitalise on the existing movement for their own political aims. The movement around the monument had started as a collective commemoration of selective historic memories deviating from the official Estonian state and majority's view. With political actors attempting to put themselves in front of the emerging movement, it was turned into a new form of collective action, characterised by the politicisation of commemoration during the debates 2002-04 and the luridly called 'war of monuments' (LICHR 2008a). To be sure, there had been disagreements about Soviet and Estonian war monuments in the 1990s (ibid.). However, it was in the process of the debates among the Russian-speaking community, and with political entrepreneurs entering the stage, that the very process of commemorating became so politicised. With the demonstrations of commemorators growing with respect to the number of participants and not being met by any action or even attention on the side of the authorities, this was interpreted by Russian-speakers as ignorance towards their cause, adding to their frustration not only with respect to the question of commemoration, but the integration process in general (Astrov 17/05/2010).

Groups that had formed in parallel to the weakly organised movement entered the stage and attempted to exploit the situation and put themselves at the head of the movement, such as Nochnoj dozor. Some of the activists involved are said to have been receiving financial support for their activities from Russia (Tydyakov/Dornemann 19/05/2010; Brüggemann & Kasekamp 2008). Much of the politicisation of the protest was in fact based on direct confrontation between Estonia and Russia, where for the first time in years the media reported widely on the situation of the 'Russian diaspora' in Estonia. Individual local actors in Estonia even stood in close contact with one of the notoriously nationalistic youth movements of the Russian Federation, '*Nashi*' ('Ours'), and received substantial media attention in both countries. Unsurprisingly, minority political activists such as Dmitri Klenski, Dmitri Linter, or Maksim Reva, who have tried to benefit from the protests and the Russian support, have been accused by other activists of trying to impose their own, rent-seeking agenda on the majority of Russian-speaking activists (Tydyakov 19/05/2010; also Astrov 17/05/2010).[28]

[28] Linter and Reva have become known in the context of the monument, when they attempted to unite and lead the loose movement into a coherent actor; other members of Nochnoj dozor however have argued that Linter and Reva were never really part of the movement (Tydyakov/Dornemann 19/05/2010). Klenski is a non-partisan activist who has used numerous platforms and political structures to influence politics over the past fifteen years.

It was in this context that activists who tried to position themselves as leaders of the movement or who were sympathetic to it argued that the 'Bronze soldier' monument in Tallinn, having symbolic importance for many but being placed increasingly under threat by Estonian nationalist attacks, needed a positive foundation to be defended, and attempted to use this foundation also as the basis of a new group identity for political action. In 2006, VEE and ERSGR initiated a discussion on the foundations of which to build the future of the already disputed monument of the 'Bronze Soldier' in the centre of Tallinn.[29] The original argument pursued by VEE and ERSGR was an attempt to frame the monument as a symbol which all people living in Estonia should be able to support, on the basis of anti-fascism. The argument was of course too narrow and one-sided a perspective, unable to appeal to Estonians, who generally viewed the monument in relation to what in Estonian historical discourse is called Soviet 'occupation'. Similarly, earlier attempts to give new meaning to the monument by replacing a plaque dating from Soviet times, which devoted the statue to the 'liberation of Tallinn', with a less provocative meaning referring to 'the fallen of World War Two', had not helped make this a monument that Estonians valued (Burch & Smith 2007, p.919). With the sentiments of Estonians in this matter well-known, the sincerity of the attempt to make commemoration inclusive is therefore somewhat doubtful.

Other activists suggested even less accommodating reasons for the monument to remain in place as a symbol for Russian victory, demanding the acknowledgement of their 'argument' that Estonia 'has always been Russian' (Tydyakov 19/05/2010). Proponents of this perspective even devised claims from their view, including, a year later, the demand for a Russian autonomous region in parts of Tallinn (Dornemann/Tydyakov 19/05/2010; Grigorjan 18/05/2010). Alarmed by these currents among the people demonstrating, Estonian authorities tightened their policies. When the monument central to the debates was removed in 2007, protests erupted in the centre of Tallinn. These, however, were soon suppressed successfully by the police, with follow-up activities, particularly involving the KAPO, helping keep many young people away from organising in any form (Ivanov 20/04/2009).

The debate around the monument itself waned when Russian-speakers, still very angry about their exclusion from the debate on the relocation of the monument, eventually

[29] In a public statement, both organisations appealed to the Estonian authorities to work against the 'ethnic hatred' that had been incited around the monument and protect it as 'practically only remaining symbol for the victory over Hitler's Germany in the Second World War in Estonia. It is a unique place, where on Victory Day all of us – Russians, Estonians, Jews, Ukrainians, Belarusians – can bring flowers to our fathers and grandfathers, the liberators, who have died saving the world from fascism' (Delfi 13/06/2006).

accepted the monument's new location in Tallinn's military cemetery outside of the city centre. However, after 2007, some minority activists attempted to mobilise political support based on the commemoration of the Soviet victory of the Second World War (Astrov 17/05/2010). Moreover, the same activists – most notably Dmitri Klenski, and various political organisations related to him, e.g. *Spisok Klenskogo* (List 'Klenski' on which he stood as a candidate for the Tallinn city council elections in 2009)– who attempted to mobilise on this basis have also worked towards the 'preservation of our national roots' or 'Russianness' ('*russkost"*') (*IA Regnum* 19/12/2010). In effect, these activists play on the overlap of Soviet and Russian (cultural) identity. Despite their visibility though, their impact on policy making is negligible, due to the lack of political structures through which they would be able to channel and bring forward their agendas.

While of course commemoration is an important issue for many Russian-speakers, it is neither the most pressing nor the core issue for them. Similarly, the preservation of their cultural identity is also central for many Russian-speakers, however not necessarily by emphasising their Russianness, but by demanding institutions that allow them to practice and hand down their language and traditions which are not accounted for in the Estonian framework.

The growing role of Russian-speaking political activists in the public debate who mobilise on the mix of ethnic and historical identity is observed with concern by those activists who still try to achieve policy improvements by debating these with representatives of the Estonian authorities. The increasing visibility of political actors who play up the boundaries between Estonians and Russian-speakers is a clear indicator for the weakening of other Russian-speaking political forces that characterised the past decade. It follows from these developments that Russian-speakers have to decide whether to pursue an 'integrationist' agenda, which has been largely unsuccessful, especially after EU accession, or whether to follow a segregationist approach. The next section discusses Russian-speakers' positions on this question and draws some preliminary conclusions about the development of the political representation of Russian-speakers in Estonia over the last twenty years.

7.5 Panacea or predicament? Representation on the basis of ethnicity

Russian-speaking activists in Estonia have engaged with how interethnic relations are shaped through policies, and in political activities and agendas communicated their preferences for the political institution-building in the country. When Russian-speaking

political actors initially cooperated with Estonians in the Popular Front, the questions of the future status of Soviet-era migrants and their language(s) in an independent Estonia were still being negotiated. At the time, most important concerns of Russian-speakers were not interethnic, but had to do with their unpreparedness for the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the 'political bankruptcy' of those groups who claimed to support and defend the rights of non-Estonians (Semenov 1995, p.239). With nationalising policies beginning to shape the role of Russian-speakers in clearly negative terms, minority activists began building political structures to represent their heterogeneous group.

Although the adoption of the restorationist ideology and its implementation in the first legislative acts and constitution generated a very large group of those who were directly affected in their political rights in relation to others, many Russian-speakers assumed this was still a temporary decision and that Estonia would eventually adopt the 'zero option'. Similarly, the leeway for the Russian language in the first law led many Russian-speakers to believe in a continuity of Russian in Estonia. As a result of the Russian-speakers' preferences for a consensus with the Estonians, hardliner positions that sought an alignment with Russia soon declined, and Russian-speakers were politically represented largely by proponents of an 'integrationist' approach to the development of Estonian state and society. Overall, minority attempts to establish political and civic structures from outside party politics to represents their specific needs and interests have not been accepted by the Estonian governments and state officials, or where they used to be accepted, such structures and access points for dialogue have been abolished, reframed or undermined in the second half of the 2000s.

Despite the changes in the development of Estonian policies and the structural changes among the Russian-speaking population with regard to citizenship statutes and Estonian language competence, the overall aims of Russian-speaking representatives have remained largely unchanged. Over the past twenty years, the social and political grievances of the group have not changed significantly. They concern primarily the lack of Estonian citizenship and criteria as well as procedures for naturalisation, the role of Russian-speakers' representation in the representative bodies of the political system, the opportunities for speaking Russian in public and of Russian language education. Although the difficult relations between the Estonian and the Russian states hamper the establishing of a trusting and supportive relationship between Estonians and Russian-speakers, this has not been the primary concern of Russian-speakers in Estonia. Similarly, despite the significance of historical commemoration or 'historical justice' for the exclusion of

Russian-speakers from the political community and the ideology on which the state is founded, this did not use to be of primary importance for Russian-speakers as concern for their political representation. The importance for Russian-speakers of the latter grew only when the 'war of monuments' politicised their collective commemoration to the extent which eventually led to the removal of an important historical-symbolical site of Russian-speaking community representation in Estonia.

Throughout the two decades of Russian-speakers' political representation, the approaches to Estonian statehood in response to the grievances have differed among different actors. Since the 'hardliners' of the early 1990s have disappeared, 'integrationists' dominated the Russian-speakers' political scene. Certainly their understanding of 'integration' has always differed from the official concept. Still, some of these political actors engaged directly with the authorities, attempted to negotiate policies and communicate the group's problems in a non-confrontational way. Others, such as the parliamentary parties, opted for a more contentious way, hoping that they could build on their political strength. Integration was understood by all political actors, decisively, as equal political participation of minority members in building Estonia's state and society. Because of the restrictions of the Estonian elite's consensus on Estonian statehood, based on restorationism and permeating the Estonian political institutions, all attempts to safeguard Russian-speakers' political and social participation constituted a threat to this 'consensus'. They demanded more than Estonians were prepared to give. From the Estonian perspective, where the situation of a third of the population being stateless in the early 1990s and the current number of 8% of the population without any citizenship at all is perceived to be a 'natural' phenomenon rather than a decision made deliberately at a certain time on certain grounds by certain people, these Russian-speakers' demands go far beyond what Russian-speakers can expect, according to Estonians.

Over time, the lack of political membership of a substantial part of the group and the heterogeneity of it not only affected the group's participation in issues related to the questions of citizenship and language use, but their potential contribution to the political process generally. By the late 2000s, the grievance has become much more general: 'Our voice is worth nothing to the government' (Grigorjan 18/05/2010). Certainly this holds even more where minority issues are at stake. The exclusion from decision-making led to the gradual deconstruction of Russian-speakers' group institutions, first of all in the realm of political life, where the political representation of Russian-speakers was effectively undermined until it ceased to provide for actual representation. Moreover, as seen by the

example of Russian schooling, although the naturalisation of increasing numbers of Russian-speakers, their formal political membership did not lead to an increase in their say on minority institutions and minority rights. As a result, not only in political terms, but also with regard to social interaction the Russian-speaking group remained excluded, and minority preferences were increasingly excluded from policy-making. This was despite alleviations in naturalisation legislation. The gradual loss of community institutions, including the right to use Russian in many public interactions, depending on where one lives, and Russian education, in combination with the Bronze Soldier events, increased the perceived threat of cultural assimilation and loss of linguistic and group identity. As a consequence, political actors aiming to represent Russian-speakers increasingly focused on utilising group identity institutions in their political activities.

The benefits and detriments of an 'ethnic' representation are a point of discussion among Russian-speakers and particularly among political activists. They disagree over the question of how much ethnic mobilisation is acceptable. On the one hand there are those who argue that without demonstrating power as a group which is formed along lines that 'Estonians understand', i.e. criteria that mirror the Estonian concept of group-based sovereignty, there will be no change. These political activists are convinced that 'saving the Russians is the Russian's business', as one newspaper article was entitled in 2010 (*IA Regnum* 19/12/2010), suggesting that no change is to be expected if minority members continue to wait until the majority is prepared to give up their privileges. Following this approach, the political programmes that mobilise on the basis of a Russian or Soviet identity, aim at establishing a different consensus with respect to the ownership of the state and the esteem of different groups in the state. Although their aims differ only in degree from the aims of political actors working on inclusion and responsiveness, it is the difference in degree that openly challenges some of the consequences of the definition of Estonian statehood: These more 'radical' groups demand the recognition of Russian-speakers and, particularly difficult for Estonians, of Russians as part of the state-forming entity; claim language rights which would undermine the unique link between the Estonian 'nation' and linguistic sovereignty on the territory of the country; and call into question the idea of continuity of Estonian statehood, by highlighting the Soviet times as part of Estonian and Estonia's population's history.

Although many Russian-speakers do not agree with such a confrontational approach in general and they wish to achieve a compromise with Estonians, increasingly even those people argue that under current conditions, in order to achieve some change, such forms of

ethnic mobilisation are the only way for pushing majority-minority relations into a different direction:

> 'No matter how I sometimes disagree with [people like] Klenski – but let's put it this way: I recognise their utility. Someone has to rock the boat; otherwise it's never changing' (Astrov 17/05/2010).

The understanding behind this reasoning is that minority political activism is noticed by Estonian governments only in cases where the minority representatives appear strong. It is clear to many that the Russian-speakers are not strong politically, and therefore can easily be ignored by the Estonian authorities. As long as substantial parts of the Russian-speaking population are not eligible to vote in national elections, the group will not constitute a political force with which the Estonians must reckon. Therefore, their strength has to be generated out of the group, in the form of a convincing (political) identity.

Many of my respondents expressed the difficulties they had in deciding, whether they supported, in principle, political representation on 'ethnic' grounds. On the one hand, some argue that, as institutionalised politics have not opened up to Russian-speakers significantly over the past two decades, it was hard or even impossible to challenge the established ethno constitutional system including its consequential policies devised in correspondence with the notion of nation-state from 'within', that is to initiate change towards the inclusion of minority members and minority interests into the general spectrum of interests represented in the political arena. Minority representatives even go so far to argue that 'this is how [the political institutions] are structured: not to let this [i.e. the inclusion of minority interests] happen' (Astrov 17/05/2010). A logical conclusion from this perspective is that any significant change would only be feasible if the structures of minority exclusion were to be challenged from outside of mainstream politics, by what would have to be powerful minority representation. The events of 2007 showed the degree of frustration among Russian-speakers. They made many Russian-speaking activists, who had formerly opposed ethnicity- or language-based parties, agree that some form of explicit minority representation is needed (Kõrvalt 19/05/2010).

On the other hand, there are those activists who stress that any form of 'peaceful co-existence' or even integration with Estonian society is possible only if the minorities and the majority engage in a dialogue at all stages of the integration process (Grigorjan 18/05/2010; Dusman 16/12/2009). At the same time, many minority members do not consider it 'European' or 'modern' to make policies on the basis of salient identities, but

argue that ideological orientation should be decisive for a person's political choices (Lyagu 19/05/2010; Kõrvalt 19/05/2010; Rosenfeldt 07/12/2009; Sõtnik 04/08/2009). Sõtnik is convinced that 'the time of ethnic parties [in Estonia] is over' (Sõtnik 04/08/2009). Interestingly, while most respondents who support this view, for ideological or strategic reasons, are close to *Keskerakond*, not all consider the party to offer the means necessary to overcome the minority's problems. Several respondents, including members of *Keskerakond*, declared that ideological orientation can only be the fundament of political choices under what they called 'normal' conditions, by which they meant a system that provides for a stable political representation of minority members. In contrast many expressed their opinion that Estonia's 'political system is absolutely abnormal from the point of view of minorities' (Poleshchuk 18/12/2009). Apart from general doubts about ethnic representation, however, critics of an ethnically defined political representation also directly refer to the experience with the Russian-speaking parties in the Riigikogu 1995-2003:

> 'Activists of the Russian parties then acted only for their own interests, but were not interested in pursuing an ethnic agenda, not to mention achieving any change. […] The Russians realised that they do not gain anything from the fact that Russians are represented in parliament – this does not give anything to the population' (Lyagu, 19/05/2010).

Kõrvalt even comes to the conclusion that

> 'there is no future for a Russian political force, because all possibilities [were] used, and [they were not] used [in a] very good [way]' (19/05/2010).

Overall, minority parties find themselves in a dilemma: on the one hand, their appeal to voters is based on these voters' perceptions of their own situation as being determined by their group belonging and the voters' conclusion that only a group-based party can help solve them. Importantly, although this group is not necessarily framed on the basis of ethnicity or another salient identity, the specific policies of the Estonian state make them *de facto* run along such lines. On the other hand, due to the very marginality of Russian-speakers' voices in Estonian politics, support for a Russian-speakers' party does not offer good prospects. Essentially, minority politics are politics for those who are marginalised, and based on the resources of the marginalised, which is what voters know as well. In my interviews, Russian-speaking representatives frequently expressed the view that ethnicity- or language-based parties capitalise on society's divide, which makes them prone to benefit from the divide they allegedly oppose or try to overcome. So while there is a demand for a political representation of Russian-speakers in form of a minority party, seen by many as

currently the only possible force to bring up minority issues in the realm of politics, the existing parties and other actors are rejected by most Russian-speaking voters as ambivalent political actors, unable even to cooperate among each other and so far unsuccessful in achieving any improvement in the lives of Russian-speakers in the country.

Conclusion

In conclusion, viewed from a minority position, the situation of minority politics and minority members' inclusion into political decision-making is complicated: the political system was set up and has since been developed one-sidedly to the advantage of the majority group and their interests. While during the 1990s, the structures of the political system were still in the process of defining the boundaries of the community, they now appear to be even less open to change than they had been during this time. The lack of sufficient space for minority members to participate in politics, the shortcomings among the minorities' political self-organisation and the ignorance of the state towards politically-oriented civil society organisations as well as the experience of direct attacks against minority group structures has left the group unable to develop sustainable and powerful representation within the existing social and political framework. This situation has left little space for minority members to participate on equal grounds, or, in fact, on any grounds in the political sphere. This form of exclusion makes it hard, perhaps impossible, to initiate change without the help of majority allies who would be committed to improving interethnic relations as well as the situation of minority members and their democratic inclusion into politics. In their evaluations of the current situation and anticipation of developments in the near future, Russian-speakers by and large do not expect the consolidated Estonian political actors to be ready and willing to accept Russian-speakers as equal political agenda-setters or even decision-makers, particularly in the realm of minority issues.

Minority agency has been expressed in an array of Russian-speakers' political activities in Estonia over the past two decades. The minority's political agendas reflect the deliberation of common grievances, a variety of projections for a future Estonian society and state, and changing and conflicting evaluations of the political opportunity structure. Overall, these attest to a very heterogeneous group, which has had difficulties, but nonetheless at times managed to form a collective actor. In their conduct, Russian-speakers have applied several strategies to impact the political structures which determine their status as a non-dominant group. In framing their agendas, some minority activists have aligned their demands with

the deep structures of national self-determination, demanding recognition, rights and participation on the basis of group belonging. Others have attempted to enforce the group's political participation by actualising the resources of democratisation and Europeanisation. In both cases, these have not supported minority participation in the integration process on minority terms. The intersecting and mutually consolidating structures of nation-state-building analysed in chapters 5 and 6 mean that there are currently no viable opportunity structures for meaningful minority participation. Where minority political actors create such opportunities, these are altered by majority adjustments of the institutional frameworks that determine the norms, meaning and sanctioning of action, such as by 'securitising' the minority issue. Minority political activists were unsuccessful in their attempts to build structures which would constitute an alternative for minority members to socially and politically assimilate with the majority or remain socially and politically marginalised. Their agency remains largely reproductive. Minority actors have so far been unable to sufficiently problematise majority-minority relations and therefore their agency lacks the transformative element of social change.

Chapter 8: The Hungarian minority as a political actor

8.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates the political initiatives and agendas of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia. As the discussions of chapters 4, 5 and 6 demonstrated, Hungarian minority members were formally included into the political community and even cooperated with majority parties for several years in government. This chapter examines the foundations of Hungarian political activism and sheds light on the obstacles that hampered the political cooperation with majority actors. Furthermore, the chapter briefly discusses the ambiguous relationship of the Hungarian minority's political representation and the Hungarian kin-state. The chapter concludes by arguing that under current conditions Hungarians do not render possible an alternative to ethnicity-based representation.

The most direct strategy to represent the Hungarian minority in political decision making and agenda setting has been to participate in the legislative and in the executive bodies of the political system. Regional concentration allows minority members to send minority representatives to the national parliament. Even before Slovakia's independence, the Hungarians had organised into 'Hungarian' branches of the *Verejnost' proti násiliu* (Public Against Violence, VPN) revolutionary movement. To date, members of the Hungarian community are said to virtually exclusively support parties whose representatives and members are part of the Hungarian minority and who style themselves as Hungarian or minority parties.[1] Because of this, their participation in parliament has been relatively stable, although no affirmative means exist which would guarantee the Hungarians' participation in national (or local) politics. Based on the provisions of proportional representation, the Hungarian parties benefit from the community's high regional concentration as well as the strong group identification of Hungarians in Slovakia. However, as I

[1] Although this claim cannot be substantiated fully by research, political scientists in Slovakia argue that the election results for Hungarian parties at national, regional and local level correspond with the proportion of Hungarians in respective electoral districts (Gyárfášová 17/06/2009; Mezešnikov 14/04/2008).

argue in this chapter, while this form of inclusion and representation gives Hungarians a good position to pursue their political agendas, their real struggle for political inclusion lies in the question of consensus formation between Slovaks and Hungarians, and the minority's inclusion in the political community.

8.2 Formation and developments of Hungarian political parties in Slovakia

Hungarians and Slovaks formed a caretaker government between the revolution and the first post-socialist elections (Innes 2001). These shared political activities allowed for inter-ethnic co-operation among the more liberal forces in Slovak politics. Initially, members of the joint VPN movement wanted to build on this cooperation in order to institutionalise the co-existence of the different groups. Many Slovak and Hungarian members of the VPN favoured the establishment of a twin-party system, in order to build an (ethnically) integrated party system, while allowing both Slovaks and Hungarians to generate ideas and strategies on their respective communities' needs independently. The idea was to form a Christian-democratic, a liberal and a socio-democratic party with a Slovak and a Hungarian division each. This project failed, however, due to the refusal of the Slovak Christian Democrats to coalesce with their Hungarian equivalent, and because on the Hungarian side no socio-democratic party emerged. Instead, a 'Hungarian' party without a clear ideological standpoint aiming to represent the Hungarian community as a whole, on minority nationalistic grounds, was formed (Öllös 23/09/2009; Csergo 2007). As a result, Slovaks and Hungarians developed a party system that is divided along ethnic group lines up until today.

Despite the formation of group-specific political representation, Hungarian political representation is not homogeneous, but has generated a number of different political parties over the course of the past two decades, which reflect different ideological orientations within the Hungarian community. Generally, however, all parties have the shared aim of ensuring the Hungarians' inclusion into the political community. Many individual movement groups emerged from the VPN movement. Among these were four Hungarian political groups: the liberal *Független Magyar Kezdeményezés*

(Independent Hungarian Initiative, FMK), which became the first party in independent Slovakia in 1992, i.e. the *Magyar Polgári Párt* (Hungarian Civic Party, MPP) – this party defined itself as liberal; the conservative *Magyar Kereténydemokrata Mozgalom* (Hungarian Christian Democrats Movement, MKDM); the movement *Együttélés* (Coexistence), which did not have a specific political ideology but aimed to represent the Hungarian minority as a national group, though it largely represented similar Christian and conservative positions; and the similarly conservative *Magyar Néppárt* (Hungarian People's Party, MNP), which subsequently merged with *Együttélés* in January 1992.[2]

For most of the 1990s, Hungarian political representation involved *Együttélés*, the MKDM, and the MPP. Until 1992, the MPP had been a member of the VPN government. However, with the rise of the nationalist strand of the VPN movement the MPP left, and neither the remaining liberal bloc of the VPN that did not support Mečiar, the *Občianska demokratická únia* (Civic Democratic Union, ODÚ), nor the MPP won seats in elections to the Slovak National Council in 1992, however the Hungarian minority was still represented by MKDM and *Együttélés* (Csergo 2007). In 1994 the MPP joined an electoral coalition with the other two Hungarian parties to form the *Magyar Koalíció* (Hungarian Coalition, MK). This electoral coalition formed the basis for increasing cooperation among the three Hungarian parties in parliament and functioned as an opposition force until 1998. With the change of the electoral law in 1998, which prohibited post-election party coalitions in an attempt to weaken the Mečiar opposition and prevent the Hungarian parties from entering parliament altogether, the MK member parties were forced to form a unitary party, the *Magyar Koalíció Pártja* (Hungarian Coalition Party, MKP). Even though the changes to the electoral system under Mečiar did not force the parties to merge at the local level, the MKP replaced the local branches of the Hungarian parties there also.

The Hungarian parties of the 1990s maintained their idiosyncratic features within the MK and later the MKP by working on inner-party platforms. Programmatic disagreements, particularly concerning the overall approach to relations with the Slovak parties and the Slovak state were mainly fought about internally,

[2] Encyclopaedia of terms and dates related to the Hungarian minority in (Czecho-)Slovakia since 1918 can be accessed on the website of the Forum Institute (Lexikon 2011).

guaranteeing a stable representation of the Hungarian minority in Slovak political institutions. The Hungarian electorate appreciated this by showing strong support for the Hungarian parties in all elections at the national, local and – after 2002 – also at the regional level. The representation by a largely unified political force cannot disguise that the Hungarian minority is ideologically and socially heterogeneous and envisages different scenarios for sharing the state and society with the Slovaks (Lampl 24/09/2009). Thus, the parties of the early 1990s and their successor platforms represented the three most widely supported approaches respectively.[3]

The civic-liberal strand envisaged a solution that involved the 'companionship' of the Slovak and the Hungarian parts of the democratisation movement, and the guaranteed participation of Hungarian representatives in the government of the emerging country. Essentially, the party envisaged a form of 'consociationalism', where certain institutions, among other things a proposed Ministry for Minorities, would be charged with the responsibility for minorities. Furthermore, certain aspects of minority community life were to be left out of general ideological and political disputes, namely the support for minority cultural and civic organisations, minority education, and minority media (Szarka 2004, p.92). At the same time, this was not envisaged as a form of minority autonomy scheme. Rather, the coexistence of Slovaks and Hungarians should be based on comprehensive minority legislation and the cooperation between Slovak and Hungarian political partners, as well as the common understanding that these minority rights were essential for the peaceful and stable development of Slovak democracy (Öllös 23/09/2009; Tóth 23/09/2009; Petőcz 23/09/2009).

In contrast, *Együttélés* argued that, if anything, this scenario could only be a short-term solution, while in the long run the protection of the minority community could only be guaranteed by the educational and cultural autonomy of the Hungarian group

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[3] The Hungarian community was never represented by a party that claimed to represent the political left. In 1995 a small party was founded by a former and excluded member of *Együttélés* and with the strong support of the then Prime Minister Mečiar, who stood as a – very unsuccessful – candidate in the 1998 elections under the name Hungarian People's Party for Reconciliation and Prosperity. In 2001, the party reorganised as Party of Hungarian Socialists in Slovakia (Szarka 2004, p.96). The claim that Mečiar had been involved in setting up one or both of these parties suggests that they were meant as a tool to undermine the success of the three more established Hungarian parties. Apart from this, political scientist and Hungarian activits László Öllös explains that the leftist section within the Hungarian community tended to support the Slovak Communist Party anyway, arguing that there was never a real demand for a new Hungarian leftist party (23/09/2009).

(Szarka 2004). *Együttélés* became known for its concept of the 'partner nation' that aimed to establish far-reaching political self-government of the Hungarians (Csergo 2007). The party based its argument for strong minority interest representation and against the cooperative model envisaged by the MPP at a time when nationalism was on the rise in the Slovak party landscape. It only saw feasible a concept of minority protection that relied on the strength of the minority, not one that depended on cooperative relations between Slovak and Hungarian political forces. When the MPP joined the electoral coalition, it essentially dropped its own political model, at least in the medium term. Szarka comes to the conclusion that *Együttélés*'s concept for a stringent minority block has decisively influenced the power relations between the Slovak political forces and the Hungarian minority representation. On the one hand, it united the Hungarian parties into one strong political force; on the other hand, it circumvented a development that would have allowed the Mečiar-government to pull the rug from under the Hungarian political representation, turning it into a 'hopeless, defensive position' (Szarka 2004, p.94).

The MKDM was the largest party of the three in terms of supporters and from the second half of the 1990s onwards also in terms of influence on the political line of the MK, and later MKP. Among others the last two leaders of the party came from the MDKM platform (Pál Csáky and Béla Bugár). The MKDM has a clear Christian centre-right profile, and unlike *Együttélés*, whose political goals lay almost exclusively in the representation of the minority as such, successfully established the MK/MKP as a political actor supporting the rule of law and market economy as part of Slovakia's democratisation (Szarka 2004). According to Szarka, it is the MKDM which presented the most coherent programme for minority self-government that has been elaborated by any of the Hungarian parties. It was based on general decentralisation and the establishing of comprehensive local and regional administrative and self-government structures, as well as a coherent minority law guaranteeing the minorities' status in Slovakia (Szarka 2004, p.95). Moreover, it emphasised the cooperation with the Slovak anti-Mečiar opposition and assumed a line of compromise with them. Essentially, the MKDM combined aspects of the MPP's and *Együttélés*'s political programmes and developed into a strong minority representation, without resorting to provocative minority nationalism. Although other, one-off political groups among the Hungarians at times advocated more

radical aims, the majority of Hungarians supported parties and factions that aimed to increase local self-government and demanded guarantees for their community particularly under the conditions of increasing political pressure under the Mečiar government (ibid.; Domsitz 16/09/2009).

From 1998 to 2009 the formerly three Hungarian parties formed the MKP. Merging into one party strengthened the Hungarian political representation during this period. In the 1998 elections, the Hungarian representation lost two seats, however at the same time it became the forth-strongest party in parliament. The coalition partners demanded that the MKP dropped its demands for autonomy in order to participate in government, to which the party agreed. Apart from this change, which was largely a change in the wording that so outraged many Slovaks, the MKP pursued the line formerly represented by the MKDM: Although it had dropped demands for minority autonomy, the MKP's legal initiatives and draft amendments still represented the claim for the institutionalisation of coherent minority rights.

After the national elections of 2006, and back in opposition, the MKP faced a number of internal disagreements which eventually led to the split of the Coalition Party and to the formation of a new minority party. The new party under the double name *Most-Híd* (both words meaning 'bridge' in Slovak and Hungarian respectively) brought back some of the heterogeneity of the early 1990s' minority party landscape. *Most-Híd* successfully mobilised the Hungarian electorate in the national elections of 2010, after having been registered as a party for only about one year. In its campaign to collect the necessary signatures of people supporting the formation of the new party, the party had already experienced considerable support. Although in the 'test-run' during the 2009 regional elections the new party only gained two seats in Slovakia's regional councils, whereas the MKP won forty seats, in the national elections of 2010, *Most-Híd* gained 8.12% of the vote, and entered parliament while the MKP achieved only 4.33% and therefore has not been represented in parliament since June 2010 (Pink 2011, p.6). While *Most-Híd* was elected into the national parliament in 2010 and subsequently formed a government coalition with Slovak centre-right parties, the MKP remained the stronger minority party at the local and regional levels, as well as continuing to represent Hungarians in the European

parliament. The electoral success and the support for the new party suggest that the electorate was supportive of some form of change in minority party politics.

Petőcz agrees with the view that the MKP was unable to represent the heterogeneity of the Hungarian population in Slovakia (2009). The heterogeneity meant here does not reflect ideological or socio-economic interests. Even though the MPP and the MKDH supported different political-ideological standpoints, the main differences between the Hungarian parties have always concerned their concepts of minority institutions. The new choice for Hungarian voters is not related to political stances though; this is illustrated not the least by the fact that the split reflected a division within the MKDM wing of the MKP. Internal power conflict grew within the MKP in the aftermath of the end of Béla Bugár's party presidency in 2007. A highly popular politician among Hungarians, and regarded as reasonable and trustworthy politician also by Slovaks (especially since he is a speaker of impeccable Slovak), Bugár's tone in politics is perceived more reconciliatory than that of other MKP representatives (Dostál 2003). Bugár's successor as the MKP's president Pál Csáky pursued a more confrontational approach, trying to move the MKP from a defensive opposition position to a strong minority party. His public appearances and the emphases he tried to set in the political debate, which was increasingly shaped by a triadic conflict among the Slovak political elite, the Hungarian minority and the Hungarian state, worsened the situation and increased the confusion and insecurity about the direction of Hungarian politics in Slovakia both among the MKP's membership, reinforcing inner-party disagreements, and among the moderate Slovak parties (Petőcz 2009). Overall, Csáky was unsuccessful in devising a clear strategy for the MKP in opposition.

Most-Híd's founders declared that the MKP's style of leadership had become unacceptable; they accused former MKP rivals championing radical positions of minority nationalism, and argued that a 'party of cooperation' was needed in order to improve Slovak-Hungarian relations.[4] In turn, MKP leaders called *Most-Híd* the 'party of assimilation' (Petőcz 2010, p.90). While the MKP continues to describe its main objective as 'to protect and preserve the national identity of the Hungarians

[4] *Az együttműködés pártja – strana spolupráce*, the 'party of cooperation' is the party's slogan (Most-Híd 2011) .

living in Slovakia' (MKP 2010, p.1), *Most-Híd* presents itself as party of 'cooperation between Hungarians and Hungarians, Hungarians and Slovaks and […] any other national minority' (Most-Híd 2011). Many observers are still uncertain about actual internal and policy differences; however, currently the MKP's self-portrayal tends towards that of a minority (nationalist) party emphasising power sharing and, at times, segregation, while *Most-Híd* attempts to establish itself as 'integrationist' party, striving for cooperation with majority political actors.

In interviews conducted shortly after *Most-Híd* was founded, Hungarian activists and intellectuals were very critical of the split in the political representation. They feared the weakening of the Hungarian political representation. Essentially, while the electorate was presented with a choice between a more and a less accommodationist strategy, the voters also had to make a very rational choice on the basis of their expectations as to how the other voters would decide in order not to lose the Hungarian representation in parliament altogether.[5] Because of this risk involved in the party formation, many members of the community also questioned the reasons behind the split (Öllös 23/09/2009; Petőcz 23/09/2009, Lampl 24/09/2009; Bara 24/09/2009). Although the leaders of *Most-Híd* are known as less divisive in their public statements and political aims for the Hungarian minority than many of those now remaining in the MKP, many observers are convinced that the divide does not actually run along lines of political programmes and principles, but has more to do with economic interests of different groups of (former) MKP politicians or the 'unfulfilled personal ambitions' of *Most-Híd's* founders (Petőcz 2009, p.90; Domsitz 16/09/2009; Öllös 23/09/2009).

The results of the 2010 national elections support to an extent the assumption that the heterogeneity of the Hungarian community played a role; *Most-Híd's* stance on minority politics opens more leeway for flexible solutions that can represent moderate Hungarian voters from different backgrounds. For some, the MKP under Csáky seemed to transform into a party that capitalised on the divide in society rather than mend it. The political opposition against the Fico-government had also increased the chances that the Hungarians could form a coalition with moderate

[5] As discussed earlier, there is a 5%-threshold for individual parties, while the Hungarian electorate constitutes roughly 10% of all voters.

Slovak parties again, which however seemed less likely with the MKP than with *Most-Híd*. Thus, the Hungarian electorate preferred a political party which would be included in political decision-making, over a rhetorically strong Hungarian party, which was also based on compromising with coalition partners. Another possible explanation for *Most-Híd*'s quick success is the party's leader and popular figurehead Béla Bugár. While the strategy of the party split might not have appealed to the Hungarian electorate at first, the experience with Bugár as head of MKP while it was in the coalition government suggested that government participation of the Hungarians would be more likely for a party under Bugár's rather than Csáky's leadership, especially since the latter had stood out with rather divisive messages towards the Slovaks. It will not have gone unnoticed by the electorate either that the MKP's internal problems have not entirely ceased since the party's split. After the party's major defeat in the parliamentary elections of 2010, the party leadership changed again. Recently elected head of the MKP, József Berényi declared that the party had focused too much on rivalries, internally and with *Most-Híd*, instead of presenting its own assets to the electorate (Minority Report 07-08/2010 2010, p.1).

It is unclear whether *Most-Híd* has much room to experiment in the approach to minority politics, or many real incentives to do so (Petőcz 23/09/2009; similarly Lampl 24/09/2009). Its main asset lies in the accommodationist approach it supports. Although the heterogeneity of the Hungarian community became a resource for a (symbolic) change in Hungarian minority politics, for structural reasons of the party landscape Hungarian voters have so far not had the opportunity to vote on the basis of purely political-ideological or socio-economic preferences. As a result, constituting one major Hungarian party, *Most-Híd* will be equally unable to represent this heterogeneity of the Hungarian community, as were the MK and MKP. Hungarian voters are constricted in their political choices due to the ethnic division in the party system and the clear message from virtually all majority parties not to pursue politics that support the minority community. In contrast to the situation of Russian-speakers in Estonia, however, despite these restrictions the Hungarians in Slovakia have had the chance to directly participate in institution-building, thanks to the opportunities provided by cooperation with majority parties, which is discussed in the next section.

8.3 Co-operation between majority and minority parties

Already before the split of the VPN, most Slovak parties distrusted the Hungarian parties to the extent that they did not want to share political power with them, neither by means of the 'consociationalism' proposed by the MPP, nor at party level, as mentioned in the last section. Still, in 1993 the moderate opposition impeded the adoption of more and harsher anti-minority legislation that accompanied the Mečiar government's increasing rhetoric against internal and external enemies (Csergo 2007, pp.96-97; Deegan-Krause 2004). Despite the preparedness to stop some anti-minority initiatives of the government, the political opposition was divided, not the least over the potential future cooperation with the Hungarian parties should the opposition eventually oust the Mečiar government; the minority question was one of the reasons why the moderate opposition remained unable to unite and to offer the electorate an alternative to the Mečiar-governments for much of the 1990s.

The political disarray and the opposition's paralysis were overcome temporarily with the successful vote of no-confidence against the Mečiar government in March 1994 (Innes 2001, p.243). The moderate interim-government under HZDS defector Jozef Moravčík opted for a 'compromise' between proponents and opponents of cooperation with the Hungarian parties. Moravčík's government did not include the Hungarian parties, but instead relied on their support. Thanks to this dependency, in combination with the interim-coalition's pro-Europe orientation, the government implemented liberal-democratic policies also in the realm of minority rights. Reasons not to include the Hungarian parties in the coalition were down partly to the reluctance of sections within the interim-government to trust the Hungarians with political power, and partly to the hope of being re-elected in the early elections that had been scheduled for October 1994. Popular sentiment, fuelled by the Mečiar opposition's rhetoric, considered the Moravčík government too soft on minority issues.[6] However, the 'Hungarian card' shaped the election campaigns of 1994 (Nedelsky 2009).

[6] This was one, but of course not the only reason for the subsequent re-election of the HZDS into government in 1994, this time in coalition with the SNS: the failure to produce a strong and united political force and the unpopularity of the harsh economic reforms by which the economically liberal

The third Mečiar government (1994-1998) brought a change in the dynamics of Slovak politics compared to the first two Mečiar-governments. While before 1994, HZDS's politics could be described as *ad hoc*, the government began to attune the different policies on curtailing democratic rights as well as increasing authoritarianism (Innes 2001). The discussions of chapters 5 and 6 attest to the overall systematic approach to achieve majority (nationalists') dominance in the political process, particularly after 1996, by modifying the foundations of the political system. The Mečiar-governments' concentrated attacks on political opponents, their 'disrespect for the rule of law, favouritism, corruption, the intertwining of crime with politics, and a confrontational nationalist policy' (Bútora & Bútorová 1999, p.80) eventually helped the divided parliamentary opposition combine their forces and cooperate with the Hungarian parties against 'Mečiarism'. All major opposition parties showed an inclination to improve their relations, particularly with regard to interethnic cooperation; after all, the 1994 interim government had demonstrated that (silent) cooperation between Slovak moderates and Hungarian pluralists was possible without endangering Slovak sovereignty on the side of the Slovak parties or sacrificing all minority interests on the side of the MK/MKP. Trust between the opposition parties increased also thanks to cooperation in the opposition between 1996 and 1998, which in the eyes of the Slovak opposition demonstrated the Hungarian parties' strong, uncompromising support of Slovakia's integration with the West in general, the EU in particular (Henderson 2002).

Eventually, with the defeat of the HZDS-SNS coalition at the 1998 elections, the MKP was invited into the next government coalition. Although not required for a simple majority in parliament, the MKP procured the government's two-third majority necessary for constitutional change, which was important to initiate several of the coalition partners' political programmes. More significantly still, the new government intended to send out a signal to the European Union that the country had left behind the anti-European course of the previous government. The importance of external incentives was the reason why most actors involved were very clear about the fact that the coalition of Slovak moderate parties with the MKP was not a 'love

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parties aimed to signal to Europe that Slovakia was oriented towards Western integration were crucial factors which led to the moderate political forces' loss of political power (Nedelsky 2009; Innes 2001; Goldmann 1999).

match' to begin with. As Foreign Affairs Minister under the Dzurinda-government since 1998, Eduard Kukan said in 2000:

> 'it was also deep in our minds that the inclusion of the [MKP] in the government would improve the standing of Slovakia, the image of Slovakia vis-à-vis our EU ambitions' (quoted in Pridham 2002, p.964).

Disagreements and mistrust among the parties, as well as the Slovak parties' reluctance to leave powerful or symbolically important positions to the MKP,[7] shaped coalition negotiations as well as the early phase of the coalition's governance. Despite these setbacks, however, the coalition was eventually formed and minority demands were included into the government's programme.

The ideological point of departure for cooperation consisted of the Slovak moderates' and the Hungarian opposition parties' support for the liberal-democratic foundations of statehood, particularly as possible common ground to ease tense interethnic relations. The centre-right orientation of the SDK and MKP, not so however of the SDL', as well as the high importance all government parties gave to the goal of EU membership, made policymaking in most policy fields fairly straightforward and allowed disputes between the MKP and its government partners to be limited largely to minority-related issues. In fact, disagreements were much more common between, and crucially within the other coalition partners. As a result, the MKP was regarded as the most stable coalition partner which would reliably support the government's programmatic line; its public support grew even among the Slovak population (Mesežnikov 14/04/2008). The coalition was renewed for a second legislative period in 2002, allowing the minority representatives to continue to shape Slovak policies for another four years. This way, the MKP had a forum to develop and communicate their understanding of interethnic relations from a position that gave them more legitimacy than small opposition parties can usually expect. It is questionable, however, whether the MKP's formal inclusion into the coalition government had led to the group's inclusion into agenda-setting and decision-making, particularly with regard to matters of specific minority interests. Particularly during the second Dzurinda government, several initiatives petered out (see for this point the detailed

[7] MKP leaders claimed a proportional right to one of the three post of Prime Minister, President of the National Council or President of the Republic (Hamberger 2004, p. 118).

account to minority policies between 1996 and 2007 Dostál 1998-2007; Sáposová & Šutaj 2008).

The MKP's *de facto* exclusion from governmental agenda-setting and particularly from decision-making was evident in relation to a number of proposals submitted by the MKP, including the Minority Language Law, the change of the constitutional preamble, regional reform, the reform of public administration, the plan to restructure existing opportunities for higher education in Hungarian, the Minority Law, the Law on Financing Minority Cultures and several others (ibid.; Regelmann 2009). This illustrates the weak position of the Hungarian government actors. The process of drafting and debating a Minority Law was repeatedly postponed, responsibilities shifted among institutions, before it was finally dropped. Other initiatives were overthrown by 'Slovak coalitions' of government and opposition parties, which repeatedly mobilised the narrative of periled sovereignty against the MKP's proposals, such as in relation to the administrative reform of 2001. Although the government showed preparedness to fill the gaps left by the vague wording of the minority rights guaranteed by the constitution, it did not put much effort into the question of how to actually ensure minority participation in Slovak politics. No government strategy revealed signs of a coherent concept of integrating the political community normatively or regulatory, at any level of the political system. The rejection and disregard of the MKP's proposals for policy change do not show a clear pattern. Had all rebuffed initiatives been accepted they would have significantly changed the structural and institutional settings towards a more pluralist conception of statehood. Overall, the MKP's proposals promoted the inclusion of minorities into the political community by aiming at the identity consensus, organisational structure of the political community at different levels, and regulations for minority inclusion in various fields.

The limitations of minority inclusion into the government's decision-making cannot hide the fact that the participation in the Dzurinda government helped substantially increase the minority's representation in political decision-making generally; moreover, and perhaps more importantly, it also set the stage for new interethnic relations both in Slovak politics and among the population. Many minority (and majority) members emphasise that the societal climate significantly improved under

a non-nationalistic government, and given the representation of Hungarians at this level. Eventually, it made Hungarian participation as political partners and members of government acceptable, challenging the frequent portrayals of minority members as 'renegade citizens', potentially threatening the Slovak nation-state (Gyárfášová 17/06/2009). Its performance helped other parties to understand the coalition as a workable political partnership, which was an important precondition for the negotiations of 2010 running so smoothly.

Despite the limitations of the various minority-related institutions at a governmental and parliamentary level, the inclusion of the MKP into government brought changes in the policies towards minorities. Among others, the new government revoked earlier discriminatory policies, issued several laws that *de facto* improved the legal situation of minorities, if only to an extent, and, importantly, changed the perceptions of interethnic relations and their representation in public discourse. Even the idea of a member of the Hungarian minority acting as president of the National Council became conceivable for moderate Slovak politicians, something previously unthinkable (Harris 2004, p.200); Öllös 23/09/2009). It is particularly for reasons of improved interethnic relations in general that many Hungarians praise the times with minority inclusion in the government. Hungarians were formally included into decision-making institutions, some political goals of the MKP were implemented and, as opinion polls of the two legislative periods show, the party was accepted as a legitimate decision-maker even by parts of the Slovak population. Therefore, it is fair to say that the two legislative periods of minority participation in government have temporarily changed the interethnic relations.

The co-operation between Slovak and Hungarian parties was enabled primarily by the overlap with regard to attitudes to basic institutions of liberal democracies, which the moderates and the Hungarian parties shared. These include economic policies, but also certain forms of (limited) minority recognition and rights, and crucially in the Slovak case, the support for the country's membership in the EU. On this basis, Hungarian and moderate parties cooperated and evoked crucial changes in the power dynamics in the country in the early 1990s, in 1994, in 1998 and in 2010. Decisively, the Hungarians' inclusion into government coalitions did not help evoke substantial change where the Slovaks' upper hand in political and social processes was at stake.

However, the strength of Slovak nationalists is the real problem for the Hungarian parties, as the time of the Fico government demonstrated.

Both the 1990s and the legislation period of 2006-2010 showed that the situation for minorities and interaction relations significantly deteriorates when no minority party is in government. Not only does minority inclusion increase minority participation in the decision making generally, it also provides for minority members to feel represented and part, if unequal, of the political community. Mirroring the ambivalent appraisal of the phases of inclusion and exclusion from the formal political process and actual decision making, and the alternating signals from the Slovak moderates, the elections of 2006 and 2010 showed that the Slovak population is still divided over questions of minority rights and minority inclusion into the political community. The change in government in 2006, which put the MKP back into opposition, meant a harsh turn in the rhetoric on minority issues. This did not come as a surprise to many actors involved, as minority organisations and minority representatives, as well as liberally-minded Slovaks had warned during the election campaign that a return to power of the 1990s' governing parties of HZDS and, in particular, SNS would lead to a deterioration of both domestic interethnic relations and bilateral relations with Hungary. While in opposition, the MKP's efforts to limit the negative effects of the Fico-government's minority policies and bilateral politics with Hungary at the European level increased.[8] However, its political impact as an opposition party was again marginal (Berényi 30/09/2009).

When in 2010 the government changed again, the inclusion of *Most-Híd*, a splinter of the MKP established in 2009, into Iveta Radičová's government (2010-2012), the EU was not needed in order to facilitate the interaction between majority and minority parties. It can therefore be read as a long-term consequence of the earlier participation of Hungarian parties in the Dzurinda-government. However, the co-operation 1998-2006 provided a mode for the government under Radičová to continue cooperation between the groups, rather than having to start from scratch.

[8] The MKP repeatedly held talks with the political groups of the European Parliament, particularly the European Socialists, not to accept the strongest party in government, *Smer*-SD, as member of the Socialists as long as it formed a coalition with radical nationalists (Bara 21/09/2009).

For the last twenty years, Hungarians have organised politically around the question of minority rights and minority participation in the political decision-making rather than divided socio-politically. This has allowed the minority community to maintain a coherent political representation for the group. At the same time, this has hampered the representation of minority members' socio-political interests. The ethnic divide of the political system has also enabled majority parties to neglect the representation of Slovakia's minority population in their own programmes. However, socio-political agendas have not been completely irrelevant in the context of majority-minority political interaction. Essentially, majority and minority parties have co-operated on the basis of a shared liberal-democratic agenda. Participation of minority parties in government has improved interethnic relations and reduced tension between the groups, despite the lack of institutionalising minority rights that were demanded by the minority parties.

8.4 Institutions of minority inclusion

The previous section demonstrated that the minority parties' participation in government has not led to significant extension of the minority rights framework of the Slovak state. Co-operation in government has, nonetheless, contributed to the improvement of relations between majority and minority groups. One important reason for this lies in the increase of representative bodies dealing with minority issues at government level under the Dzurinda-government and again under the Radičová-government. This section discusses the changes to the institutions of minority representation at government level, primarily between 1998 and 2006.

During most of the 1990s, political participation of the Hungarian minority and representation of their policy demands was extremely limited. Practical inclusion into the political processes was given mainly through the election of Hungarian parties into parliament, where they constituted an often marginalised part of an already weak opposition. The political system does not provide quotas or other affirmative action for the inclusion of minorities into decision-making. Moreover, no bodies are institutionalised that would ensure the meaningful political inclusion of minorities in 'all matters that concern them', as the constitution demands (Ústava 1992, §34,2(3)). However, since the early 1990s, some formal inclusion is provided by the

Government Council of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities (*Úrad vlády SR Sekcia národnostných menšín,* further Government Council), which was designed to fulfil advisory functions and to guarantee that minority perspectives on draft legislation as well as the concerns of minorities are included into the government's decision-making (Kukan 1994).

During the 1990s, the Government Council failed to ensure minority representation, partly due to its advisory function, lacking powers of veto or sanctioning, should government's policies contradict the needs or demands of minorities, and partly due to its composition. Under the third Mečiar government, only 10 out of the 24 members of the Government Council were members of national minorities, three of these members being Hungarian. Two seats on the Government Council were allocated to members of the Slovak cultural heritage organisation *Matica Slovenská*, while half of the 24 members were government representatives who also had a right to vote on council decisions (Minorities at Risk 2004). Therefore, not only at a time when Hungarian parties were out of government, their national minorities' representatives (along with those of other national minorities) found themselves outnumbered by Slovak cultural and governmental representatives on the very advisory body set up to represent their concerns. Frustrated with the situation, two Hungarian members resigned from the Government Council in 1996, after they had demanded a change in the membership and voting rights proportions of the body for the third time (ibid.). The refusal to establish a body to advise the government on minority issues that could claim to speak for minorities once more demonstrated that the Mečiar government did not accept the minorities' claim that nationalising policies and majority claims for ownership of the state represented an *illegitimate* curtailing of minority participation in society.

The Dzurinda-government gave momentum to the institutionalising of minority inclusion by setting up further governmental bodies and modifying the existing Government Council. The MKP specifically supported minority inclusion by increasing the number of formal bodies assigned with responsibility for minority issues. The government introduced a Governmental Committee and a Cabinet Office for Human Rights and Minorities; in 2002 the Ombudsman for the Protection of Human and Civil rights took up his position, which although cannot take a pro-active

role in minority protection.[9] Furthermore, the Ministry of Education formed the Department for Education on Nationally Mixed Territory and the Ministry of Culture formed a Department of Minority Cultures. Moreover, the State Pedagogical Institute as well as the Ministries of Labour, Social Affairs and Family as well as of Foreign Affairs introduced sections dealing specifically with question of human and minority rights as well as social integration with regard to Roma (Open Society Institute 2002). The inclusion of departments dealing with questions of interethnic integration in several crucial ministries, rather than creating only one specialised position dealing with minority questions, allowed for 'mainstreaming' minority issues and interrelation across policy fields. However, similar to the role of the Government Council and the Deputy Prime Minister, the activities of these other governmental institutions targeting minority inclusion declined also (Dostál 2005). These institutions were criticised with regard to their limited efforts to promote multiculturalism, tolerance and interethnic group interaction.

Although the MKP did not receive the position of Prime Minister or President of the National Council, it was assigned with the newly created position of Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights, Minorities and Regional Development (1998-2002), latterly for European Integration, Human Rights and Minorities (2002-2006), which was accepted by then head of the MKP, Pál Csáky. This gave the MKP a powerful role in the political agenda-setting. Even though the position was not endowed with a portfolio, Csáky immediately launched several initiatives to try and improve the situation of minorities, as discussed earlier. Through political activities as well as symbolically, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister seemed to emphasise the vital role of minority policies for the new government (Open Society Institute 2002, pp.477–478); the evaluation of policies initiated by the Deputy Prime Minister earlier in this chapter shows only meagre results though.

Nevertheless, these steps for an institutionalisation of minority protection at the highest state level had an important symbolical meaning. They allowed for more opportunities for minority actors to voice their concerns and appeal to these specific minority institutions, and to both political and civil society actors, who were invited

[9] The MKP had long lobbied to provide for protection from direct minority discrimination (Harris 2004).

to present their causes to the respective institutions. In this way, the organisations themselves provided for an increase in feedback opportunities and greater openness with respect to society's concerns and citizens' participation. As a result the perception of accessibility and accountability for minority issues of the state also increased, as virtually all my interviews in Slovakia testify. Moreover, as holders of prestigious positions, minority representatives were able to make a difference in the tone and the attitude the state showed toward its minority citizens. The work of the Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights and National Minorities illustrates the significance of governmental and state institutions explicitly mandated with the active inclusion of civic and political representatives of minority groups for setting the tone of interethnic relations, and also shows what a difference a minority party representative can make in shaping social and political relations from such a position.

The first holder, Pál Csáky, used this position to initiate draft legislation and intervene in political debates and policy making to defend minority rights in his role as Deputy Prime Minister. His successor Dušan Čaplovič, member of the 2006-2010 ruling party *Smer-SD*, was known for his divisive comments on interethnic relations, rarely representing a conciliatory approach to group relations, and overall appearing as a defender against minority rights rather than of their rights (*Slovak Spectator* 30/03/2009). Minority representatives are convinced that Čaplovič's statements and reluctance to respond to minority demands or complaints have contributed to the deterioration of intergroup relations between 2006 and 2010 (Berényi 30/06/2009; Golha/Hajdok/Havran 18/09/2009). In contrast to his predecessor, recently elected Deputy Prime Minister Rudolf Chmel has emphasised the danger that lies in neo-nationalism across Central Eastern Europe, calling state actors to accommodate their diversity rather than dividing their populations (Chmel 2010). This again attests to the different societal atmosphere, intergroup perception and accommodation the inclusion of moderating political actors can potentially bring. Although this does not guarantee the direct improvement of interethnic relations or the minority's position in social and political life, it makes a noticeable difference in the daily life of minority members as well as in politics.

In addition to the introduction of these posts and bodies by the Dzurinda government, a governmental decree reorganised the Government Council (292/1999 of 04 April

1999); although the Council remained an advisory body with no executive or sanctioning powers, the composition was changed, increasing the number of minority representatives in total and in proportion to government representatives (Open Society Institute 2002, p.478). From 1999 onwards, the new Government Council consisted of fourteen representatives of eleven minorities.[10] It is interesting to note that under the Radičová-government, the Government Council was again expanded.[11] Moreover, since 1999 only the minority representatives have the right to vote on the decisions of the Government Council.[12] The changes to the statutes of the Government Council demonstrated the government's preparedness to ground state-building on a new consensus, which included the participation of minorities in the decision-making. In this vein, between 1998 and 2002 the Government Council actively provided for minority representation at government level. However, Dostál comes to the conclusion that after 2003, the Government Council 'showed very few signs of life and did not pursue any noteworthy activities' (Dostál 2005, p.169).

The legislature has its own minorities-focused institution, the National Council's Committee on Human Rights and Minorities (*Výboru Národnej rady Slovenskej republiky pre ľudské práva a národnostné menšiny,* further: Committee). As an institution formed by parliament and representing parliamentary proportions of political power, the Committee's specific impact on minority policies is dependent on changing power relations (Berényi 30/06/2009). However, in contrast to the times when a nationalist majority existed in the National Council, the moderate parties' majority in parliament between 1998 and 2006 as well as since 2010 has strengthened the position of minority representation in the Committee. The Committee is entitled to invite social, political and cultural activists, researchers or other individuals or organisations involved with minority advocacy or self-help to present their concerns to the Committee, and can initiate debates in parliament.

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[10] These included three Hungarian, two Roma and one representative each of the Czech, Rusyn, Ukrainian, German, Jewish, Polish, Croatian, Moravian and Bulgarian minorities; in 2003 a representative of the Russian minority was included (Dostál 2005; Dostál 2000).

[11] It now includes four representatives from both the Hungarian and Roma minorities, two members each of the Czech, Rusyn and Ukrainian minorities, and one from each of the Jewish (vice-president), German, Polish, Bulgarian, Russian, Croat and Serbian minorities (Vlada 2011).

[12] The government was represented on the one hand by the Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights, Minorities and Regional Development and the Minister of Culture, who acted as chair and vice-chair of the Government Council, and on the other hand by other government officials who regularly participated in meetings of the Government Council; neither the chairs nor the invited government representatives had the right to vote in the decision-taking of the Government Council (Dostál 2000).

Naturally, it does not have any executive or sanctioning powers. While it provides for some openness to minority demands, autonomous influence on decision-making processes is limited by the composition and remits of the Committee.

Despite the limitations of the bodies for minority inclusion, they overall helped increase the debates in minority issues between representatives of majority and minority parties. The improvement of relations at the elite level also impacted the relations of the majority and minority groups at the level of everyday interaction. Károly Domsitz, mayor of Šamorin, a town with a Hungarian majority, emphasised this:

> 'We had 8 years of […] government [with MKP participation], where these problems or these questions [i.e. of interethnic tensions] were not on a daily [basis]; I wouldn't say that we [reached] consensus, but we always found a kind of compromise, so we were able to cooperate' (Domsitz 16/09/2009).

This should be considered an achievement given the fact that no affirmative measures exist, which provide for the inclusion of minority parties into government, and practical inclusion of Hungarians into political decision-making has been limited.

8.5 Variations in the political agendas of Hungarian parties in Slovakia

One of the main problems of the Hungarian political representation, both in opposition and in government, has been that the majority parties were prepared frequently to play the 'ethnic card' in decisions that were related to the relation between the state and the Hungarian minority specifically. This section investigates how Hungarian politicians have framed their political agendas in order to improve the situation of the Hungarian community. Ultimately, all efforts made by the Hungarian parties aimed at changing the fundamental consensus on state-ownership, either by institutionalising forms of power-division or by increasing the responsibility of the state for its minority population. This section supports the argument that the congruence of political and ethnic divisions has hampered the long-term reduction of tensions, such as by institutionalising minority rights.

From the beginning of Slovakia's independence in 1993, Hungarian political parties have worked on alternatives to the logic of the Slovak nation state which established a direct and absolute linkage between the state, the Slovak nation and the Slovak language. Besides working on the Hungarian representatives' inclusion in political decision-making and the responsiveness of policies, during the 1990s the Hungarian political forces had initiated concepts to establish forms of power-sharing to change the foundations of statehood. Together with Slovak opposition parties, the Hungarian parties were excluded from drafting the 1992 Slovak constitution, which paved the way for establishing Slovakia as a single nation-state. In the debates of 1992 prior to independence, Hungarian representatives in the republican National Council expressed their preferences for the future of the Slovak state in a joint proposal to change the draft constitution suggested by all Hungarian parties together, and also by themselves proposing alternative concepts to the Slovak nation-state. As Csergo (2007) elaborates in her detailed study of the political participation of the Hungarian minorities in Slovakia and Romania, the Hungarian parties responded to the Mečiar government's moves with a 'unanimous rejection of the homogeneous nation-state strategy' (ibid., pp.33–34). Unsurprisingly, the proposal by the Hungarian parties was rejected and the Hungarian representatives walked out when the parliament made its final decision on the constitution and its preamble on September 1, 1992, in a demonstration of their discontent with the 'anti-democratic process', as all four Hungarian parties later declared in a statement (ibid., p.33). However, the Hungarian parties differed with respect to their ideas about what should replace the nation-state idea.

Particularly in the early years of Slovakia's democratisation, MKDM and *Együttélés* strongly supported the establishing of a pluralist state which would feature some form of inter-ethnic power sharing. In parallel, all the Hungarian parties, but foremostly the MPP, supported alternative agendas for the political inclusion of Hungarians without necessarily challenging the foundations of Slovak statehood as such, aiming instead at the group's acceptance by the dominant group as equal members of society, and crucially in the political process (Szarka 2004).

Irrespective of the ideological division within the Hungarian political representation, towards the outside it has, for the past 20 years, formed a largely unified and

comparatively successful political force. The common goal of all Hungarian minority parties has been to guarantee equal opportunities in cultural and social matters, particularly education both as a form of cultural group reproduction and as a resource for securing non-discrimination and social advancement of minority members, as well as political participation. The inclusion of the minority's voice(s) into political agenda-setting and decision-making bodies, hence the political community, is central to all parties' agendas, even though some strands favour an even more rigid change to the fundaments of the political system. Öllös, a political scientist and former member of the Hungarian Independent Initiative during the so-called 'Velvet' revolution, emphasises that it is important for the Hungarians

> '[t]o be an *equal* part of the political community, not [an] unequal part. That means that [Hungarians] are respected with all [their] special features, and also [that] they are or could be a normal part of constitutional democracy. And we aren't respected as an equal part of the political community *as Hungarians*. So it would be impossible to elect, for example, a Hungarian president in this country [or] a Hungarian head of the government' (Öllös 23/09/2009).

The minority parties have strived for their inclusion into the political community as an 'equal part' with different strategies. These cannot be assigned to the individual political parties, since for most of the time the different ideological lines were forced to unite under the MK and MKP, which meant that they had to align their ideologies also. For reasons that are related to this specific development, it makes sense to look at the Hungarian political representation – at least after 1998 – as a single political actor whose political agendas have exhibited shifting emphases. In what follows I discuss four main strategies of the Hungarian representation to establish a system of political pluralism: first, the parties proposed the change of the symbolic consensus on state-ownership; second, a territorial-based solution was sought to establish a functional division of responsibilities by increasing minority autonomy in the fields of education and culture, as well as facilitating the implementation of minority language rights in the public sphere; third, the Hungarian parties drafted proposals to institutionalise guarantees of minority protection; fourth, Hungarian parties have promoted minority protection through the introduction of functional autonomies in various policy fields. These initiatives have shaped the Hungarian parties' political programmes at different times, rather than follow chronologically.

Symbolic inclusion into the state-bearing nation

The most fundamental initiative of the Hungarian political representation focused on the change of the ideological consensus on the state-bearing nation. As discussed in chapter 5, the Slovak political community consensus excludes all minorities from the 'state-bearing nation'. When the constitution was adopted, the Hungarian parties suggested replacing the wording 'we, the Slovak nation' of the constitutional preamble by the more inclusive 'we, citizens of the Slovak Republic', a formulation that would allow all citizens irrespective of group membership to be a constituent part of the Slovak civic nation (Nedelsky 2009). The minority parties' attempts to reformulate the understanding of the state-forming nation and to broaden the concept of state-ownership and sovereignty failed, thanks to the Slovak majority's reluctance to share 'their' state. During a constitutional debate in 2000/2001, the MKP seized another chance to discuss the very foundations of the state and challenge the nation-state model, by again proposing a change to the preamble of the constitution. Unlike demands of *Együttélés* in particular, the proposal did not support the inclusion of Hungarians as a 'partner-nation' into the community consensus, but demanded a symbolical turn away from the nation-state model.

The Hungarian parties' proposals did not involve the recognition of minorities as 'owners' of the state, but the change to a civic concept of nation- and statehood in the constitution would require significant changes in the institutional setting, threatening the Slovaks' upper hand in the political community. The MKP's proposal was not accepted in parliament, and apart from the MKP only received the support of the *Demokratická strana (*Democratic Party, DS)[13] therefore failed (Dostál 2002). Despite the preparedness of Slovak moderates to cooperate with the MKP in government, their willingness did not include the acceptance of Hungarians and other minorities as equally constituting part of a Slovak political community. From the perspective of almost all Slovak political forces, the concept of sovereignty, it seems, is 'absolute' and cannot be shared (Öllös 23/09/2009). Politicians representing

[13] For the history of the DS see the statutes of the *Slovenská demokratická a kresťanská únia – Demokratická strana* (Slovak Democratic and Christian Union – Democratic Party, SDKÚ-DS), the DS had formed the SDKÚ coalition party in 1998 together with other centre-right parties of the anti-Mečiar-opposition and merged with the SDKÚ officially in 2006. It was originally formed by the remnants of the non-nationalist wing of the VPN, (SDKÚ 2011).

Hungarians, in contrast, demanded that the political community consensus be made conditional on the approval of minority fellow citizens and that it represent an inclusive consensus that can claim legitimacy and accountability for minorities also.

Territory-based minority rights and division of responsibility for their implementation

In parallel to initiatives that aimed to establish a form of power sharing, the Hungarian parties developed a second pluralist argument of 'community sovereignty' *qua* self-government of the Hungarian minority (Csergo 2007, p.35). The concept encompassed the aims to

> 'maintain […] substate territorial districts in southern Slovakia where Hungarians could use their language in government, territory markings, and public education' (ibid., p.47).

Even though these aims do not question the exceptional role of the Slovak nation in Slovakia as such, they do challenge the Slovaks' *linguistic* sovereignty over the whole of Slovakia's territory. Few Slovaks did not feel alarmed by this concept of 'territorial autonomy' as it was perceived, and few Slovaks put it into perspective by understanding it as a reaction to the Slovak concept of nation-state sovereignty (ibid., p. 52). It is important to note that the concept of community sovereignty did not entail the region's secession to Hungary, as many Slovaks fear. Zoltán Bara, at the time of interview international secretary of the MKP, now a member of *Most-Híd*, speaks for the vast majority of Hungarians in Slovakia when he says:

> 'I'm a citizen of Slovakia, my mother tongue is Hungarian. I have a lot in common with Hungarians, but I don't want the Hungarian state here. There are people who want it, but practically everybody knows – and every politician knows – that [in order] to have 'Kosovo' here, you would need 10,000 dead people. Nobody wants that here in Central Europe; it's not an issue' (Bara 21/09/2009).

The concept of community sovereignty also does not strive for the *territorial-political* autonomy of the Hungarian minority over parts of southern Slovakia. Apart from the fact that this would be impractical, since most districts where Hungarians live are ethnically mixed, it would also contradict the political line at least of the

liberal or moderate Hungarian political actors, who support a cooperative relation to the Slovaks, politically and socially.

During the debate on administrative reform in 2000, the MKP demanded the establishing of an administrative region that allowed for the special status of the Hungarian minority, namely in the *Komárňanská župa* in the South-West of the country.[14] This was not related to *political* dominance, but aimed at the facilitation and increase of minority rights throughout 'minority regions' (ibid.). The idea to establish such a region was disputed even among the Hungarian community, as it could have institutionalised unequal relations also between Hungarians who happened to live in this region and those who did not (ibid.). After all, Hungarians constituted a local majority in many municipalities which were located in the East of the country and would thus not have been included into a potential 'Hungarian region'. As a result of the rejection of the Hungarian proposal for administrative reform in 2001, minority actors started re-framing their goal of community sovereignty in less provocative terms, demanding the strengthening of local level self-government, as discussed in section 5.6. The devolution of competences to the local level benefitted minority members also in communities where they did not constitute the majority; however, it did not regulate 'minority interests' directly.

Institutionalisation and extension of minority rights at the national level

In order find a solution to the reoccurring problems of the Hungarians with regard to the right and opportunities to use their mother tongue in public, maintain community institutions and safeguard support for their cultural and civic activities, minority politicians attempted to promote a comprehensive minority law. In 1998, the demand for such a law entered the government's programme (Dostál 2000). In 1999, Deputy Prime Minister Csáky's drafts for a minority language law envisaged a comprehensive solution, regulating not just minority language use, but also minority education (Dostál 2005). The minority language law which was eventually adopted did not have the potential, and was not designed, to redefine and specify the relationship between the state and minorities as such. Still, the Dzurinda government

[14] Already in the early 1990s, the FMK had discussed an alternative scheme for re-structuring Slovakia's districts into smaller units which would allow for several administrative units where the Hungarian minority would (nearly) constitute the majority (Šutaj & Šutajová 2006, pp.20–24).

had included the minority law into both government programmes in 1998 and 2002. Over the two legislative periods the responsibility for coherent minority legislation was transferred from the Ministry of Culture to the Deputy Prime Minister and it even became a government priority of the second Dzurinda government. Parallel plans for legislation on the financing of minority cultural activities and minority language broadcasting were incorporated into the minority law proposal rather than regulated separately. This provided for more coherent legislation in this realm and would have established a legal environment that would have fostered the development of the Hungarians' ethnic identity and at the same time improve their status. However, the deadline for a comprehensive minority law was repeatedly postponed, reflecting frictions among political actors regarding the general breadth of the law as well as the specific provisions; in 2005/2006, a plan for such a law was not included into the annual government's programme anymore.

To avoid a situation where no minority law would regulate even the cultural support for minorities, a bill on financing minority culture was prepared by Csáky in 2004 (Dostál 2006). The principal objective of this draft law, according to its supporters, was the introduction of a certain degree of independence in the decision-making process on minority cultural activities. Csáky's proposal, presented to parliament in 2005, however, envisaged the creation of a new central administrative body that would have been tasked with managing the financing of minority cultural activities. While the alleged aim was to make planning in the field of minority culture possible, and to grant more security to the minority groups by increasing the independence from changing governments and their preferences, critics point out that the idea of the introduction of a central body was in conflict with the idea of independence (Dostál 2005). The conflicting logics of the demand for autonomy from the state as well as for accountability of an overseeing administrative body indeed causes a dilemma for the Hungarian demand for functional autonomies, which has not been solved. The second problem with the law was the significant increase in the funding for minority culture that it envisaged. Whereas the budget for minority cultural activities had totalled in around 80 Million Slovak crowns in 2003, Csáky's proposal suggested, without further justification for the massive increase in financial means, that 0.15% of the state budget to be at the minorities' disposal, which in 2004 would have added to approximately 350 million SKK or more than four times as much as

the previous year's amount (Dostál 2005). Bara argues that this constituted only a very small amount of the budget of the Ministry of Culture, which amounted to about 5 billion SKK (Bara 21/09/2009). Eventually, the proposal was rejected by parliament, including the coalition partners of the MKP, and no new attempt to devise a law on the status or the financing of minority culture has been made so far.

The proposal did not have very good prospects for being accepted by the Slovak coalition partners or parliamentary opposition. The motives behind the move at that time are therefore not entirely clear. It can be speculated that the law was aimed at responding to the Hungarian minority audience rather than realistic policy making, particularly in the face of the lack of success in this matter during seven years in government. This would have been in line also with the MKP's programme for the second Dzurinda government, which focused on symbolical moves, particularly emphasising questions of historical memory, such as the debate on the 'Beneš decrees' and Hungarians' 'collective guilt', as well as the debate on Hungary's campaign for dual citizenship for members of Hungarian minorities, rather than policies aimed at improving the actual situation of minority members (Dostál, 2006). On the other hand, the draft does reflect the demands of the Hungarian community's political representation that aimed at compensation for the disadvantaged position of minority culture in comparison to the titular nation's culture. *Most-Híd* included both a comprehensive law on national minorities, which should secure their status and prohibit the 'majorisation' of minorities, and a law on the financing of national minority cultures into their election programme for the national elections of 2010;[15] moreover, it demanded that the government establish a Government Office to Promote the Culture of National Minorities (*Úrad na podporu kultúry národnostných menšín*) (Most-Híd 2010, pp.24–26).

Even without the substantial increase of funding for minority culture the implications of a comprehensive minority law go beyond mere symbolic minority recognition. The salience of cultural self-expression for ethnic minorities in the country would solidify demands for a new, multicultural consensus rather than merely express acceptance of the multicultural reality, as current minority legislation does. It is all

[15] The Government Council for National Minorities has resumed the debate on these initiatives in 2011 (Government Council 2011).

the more important to acknowledge this, since the majority parties were prepared to include the plan for this law into the government programme, signalling their readiness to discuss Slovakia's multicultural foundations. Essentially, the framing of minority legislation that is based on the right to cultural self-realisation, in contrast to demands based on territorial concentration has been the more promising route for the Hungarian political representation.

Functional autonomies

The development of the attempts to establish a minority law and related draft legislation also reflect a change in the strategy of the Hungarian political representation away from forms of national level power sharing towards 'functional autonomies' that regulate selective areas of minority interests (Bara 21/09/2009). Similar to the MPP's vision, functional autonomies would establish certain areas, in particular education and cultural activities, as outside of the daily political debate and allocate a guaranteed sum to this area. Bara refers to the policies of the Fico-government when he explains which problems the Hungarian parties hope to solve with cultural as well as educational self-administration:

> 'There's a huge amount of EU funds, and if three hundred schools are supported [with these funds] and no Hungarian school is supported, then of course this created problems. [With functional autonomy in minority schooling the minorities] could quarrel between themselves, but that would not be a national issue, so the Ministry […] could not create a political problem out of that' (Bara 21/09/2009).

Such a solution would then represent the state's wish to safeguard and sustain minority culture and minority education irrespective of changing governing parties' political preferences. Functional autonomies would also allow for some decision making authority over minority issues for the minority community, even when no minority party is in government. The University of Komárno that was established by the Dzurinda government was seen by many Hungarian politicians as an example for issue-specific self-administration (*Slovak Spectator* 09/08/2004).

Even though minority representatives have focused on the advocacy of minority rights and inclusion of Hungarians and other minorities into the Slovak political

community, when demanding the introduction of functional autonomies, these are also linked to the solution of socio-economic problems the Hungarians face specifically (Bara 24/09/2009). The latter are related to the regional development of Slovakia's southern periphery, the continuously lower percentage of Hungarian university students compared to Slovaks, a 'brain drain' of well-educated Hungarians from southern Slovakia to Bratislava, Hungary, the Czech Republic or elsewhere in Europe, and problems related to the employment structures of Hungarians (Lampl 24/09/2009). It is for this reason that the devolution of competences to the local level in the administrative reform under the Dzurinda-government was so much appreciated by Hungarians.

Interviews demonstrated that there is a widely held fear of the rapid decline of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia (Bara 24/09/2009; Petőcz 23/09/2009; Tokar 17/09/2009; Golha/Hajdok/Havran 18/06/2009). Demographics demonstrate a constant decline in the number of people who identify as Hungarian in national censuses since the 1960s (Lampl 24/09/2009; Gyurgyik 24/06/2009). While in 1991 10.76% of Slovakia's populations declared Hungarian nationality, in 2001 the proportion was 9.66% and in 2009 9.47% (RegStats 2011; Gyurgyik 2002). The demographic data alone does not identify the reasons for the decline, and the question of identification in censuses has been a controversial issue for minority members since the post-war years, if not earlier (Petőcz 23/09/2009). Minority representatives claim that some minority members were afraid of revealing their group belonging, due to the experience in the immediate post-war years and under Communism (ibid., Gyurgyik 16/04/2008). Between 7-10% more people declare Hungarian as their mother tongue than as their nationality, which is taken by some in support of the argument that fear of disclosing ones group belonging plays a role (Gyurgyik 2008, p.198; Gyurgyik 2002). However, the idea dating from Communist times that 'to be successful you have to go to a Slovak school' (Bara 24/09/2009), and put more generally, that to be successful one has to adapt to the majority society, enjoys increasing popularity among minority members (Lampl 24/09/2009). The Hungarian parties have acted in response to this fear. In order to maintain group institutions, as well as to 'protect and preserve the national identity of the Hungarians living in Slovakia' (MKP 2010), most initiatives of the Hungarian parties have directly focused on the maintenance and elaboration of the institutional structures

that support minority language and culture. For the same reason large parts of the Hungarian community and also the Hungarian parties strongly oppose any changes to the Hungarian educational institutions in particular because of the understanding that this will accelerate the decrease in people declaring Hungarian identity (Mézes 18/06/2009).

Not all minority activists are entirely contented with the strong position the Hungarian parties have taken in the field of minority schooling, as well as in other policy fields, though:

> 'The various groups within the Hungarian community have different needs, different desires; from [the] point of view [of the language of instruction] for example, the Hungarians who live among Slovaks, in mixed marriages etc – they would appreciate bilingual schools' (Petőcz 23/09/2009).

Petőcz argues further that bilingual schooling is rejected downright by all Hungarian political actors, including parties and civic organisation, because of the fears that this would mean the end of Hungarian education, and potentially of the Hungarian community in Slovakia. Taking into account the aims of the introduction of bilingual schooling during the 1990s, these fears cannot be cast aside entirely. Moreover, there is a strong part among the Hungarian community that supports a narrative that suggests that the Hungarian community in Slovakia is 'in danger' (MKP 2010) of becoming extinct (Gyúrgyík 24/06/2009). The Hungarian parties' strong support for Hungarian language education in particular has perpetuated the situation for Hungarian or 'mixed' families, who have to decide whether to send their children to schools with either Hungarian or Slovak as main language of instruction. Increasingly, parents opt for Slovak schools (Szarka 2004). The sociologist Zsuzsana Lampl argues that this is not necessarily a reaction to the decrease in opportunities for minority instruction, but follows parents' wishes that their children learn Slovak well (Lampl, 24/09/2009).

The example of minority language instruction illustrates the dilemma of the Hungarian community and their political representation: On the one hand, the political strength of the Hungarian parties is conditional on strong positions on minority issues, such as language use, education, culture, political participation; on the other hand, strong positions cannot account for the community's heterogeneity

with respect to the members' different realities and also their different ideas about the 'coexistence' with Slovaks in the country and in their local communities.

Overall, the constant ethnicisation of issues related to (southern) Slovakia or the Hungarian minority hampers the work of many who try to develop practicable solutions for the improvement and sustainability of good interethnic relations as well as regional development (Öllös 23/09/2009). Indeed, a range of problems have hardly been discussed publicly or between Hungarian political and civic actors thanks to the focus on defending existing rights under the nationalist governments of the 1990s and 2006-2010. Among these are questions that shape the situation of the Hungarian minority and their relation to the future of southern Slovakia's regional development, Slovak-Hungarian bilateral inter-state relations and the difficult and conflicting historical memories of Hungarian and Slovak citizens of Slovakia. The debates on these issues happen almost exclusively in research institutes, and small initiatives such as the Slovak-Hungarian history commission, aiming to initiate dialogue on the common history of Slovaks and Hungarians (Šutaj 23/06/2009). The diplomatic escalation of interstate relations with Hungary under the Fico-government, which were often embedded in or triggered by disputes about collective and official commemoration, did not contribute to the two countries' rapprochement. The election programmes of most major parties during the elections of 2010 either neglect interstate relations as well as minority politics entirely, or refer to these in purely negative terms (Mesežnikov 2010). Even the minority parties' programmes for the development of Slovak-Hungarian relations do not elaborate on questions of reconciliation or reduction of tensions as such.[16] On this basis it will be hard to pursue politics of rapprochement or reconciliation, in order to overcome the deeply ingrained antagonisms between majority and minority, as well as between the two states, which have had a negative impact on the situation of Hungarian minority members in Slovakia.

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[16] The former government parties *Smer-SD*, L'S-HZDS and SNS merely refer to the need to tackle 'pan-Hungarian chauvinism and extremism' (*Smer-SD*), and political revisionism. This is also the approach of the KDH. The SDKÚ-DS simply refers to 'friendly relations with Slovakia's neighbouring countries', but does not pick up the deteriorated relations between Slovakia and Hungary specifically. The SaS is the only 'Slovak' party that outlines in more detail the need for reconciliation. Most-Híd and its partner OKS focus on the development of interstate relations within the framework of the Visegrád Four, that is together with the Czech Republic and Poland. The MKP emphasises the cooperation with Hungary in relation to the minority as well as Hungarian-Hungarian relations, that is the relations between other Hungarian minority groups in Romania, Ukraine, Slovenia, Serbia in particular (Mesežnikov 2010).

Nevertheless, much in contrast to the Russian-speakers' parties in Estonia, Hungarian politicians were able to use the opportunities offered more effectively and adjusted their demands to what was deemed an acceptable agenda for the moderate majority parties. Simultaneously, throughout their political initiatives all parties have maintained a clear line that challenged Slovakia's unitary nation-state model. As a result of the Hungarian parties' initiatives, if often essentially thanks to the pressure from the EU, Slovakia established central institutions that demonstrate the state's responsibility for its national minorities, and decentralised the responsibility for selected policy areas to the local level. The ability to frame these policy steps as in line with Slovakia's liberal-democratic foundations allowed their adoption. However, in the long run the Hungarian political representation has continued to support a change in state ideology. Because this is unattainable given the persistent interethnic tensions, pragmatic political strategies focus on the cooperation with Slovak moderate political actors and gradual policy change on the basis of anti-discrimination policies as well as institutions of limited affirmative action. At the same time, the existing, hard-fought institutions of minority protection and self-administration, such as the Minority Language Law and the Hungarian University in Komárno, constitute achievements, which form the basis of future negotiations, as was demonstrated by the amendments to the Minority Language Law under the Radičová government. This suggests that a gradual ease in tensions and support of the stepwise introduction of minority institutions can also be expected in the future, if minority parties are able to participate – even if only to limited extent – in political agenda-setting and decision-making.

8.6 Minority - kin-state relations

The dilemma of the coherent and strong political representation of Hungarians is made even more complicated by the difficult triadic relationship between Slovakia, the Hungarian minority and the Hungarian state. In contrast to the Russian Federation, Hungary's interest in the situation of the Hungarian minorities in Hungary's neighbouring countries has been an enduring aspect of Hungary's foreign policies after 1920, when Hungarian irredentism flourished and was eventually satisfied with the border revisions of 1940, following the Second Vienna Award

(Zeidler 2002). During Communism, the Kádár regime did not pay much attention to the issue though, adhering to the 'façade of socialist brotherhood' (Waterbury 2006, p.487) and believing in the 'automatic resolution of the issue based on the principle of internationalism' (Bárdi 2004, p.62).[17] With the beginning of post-Communist state- and nation-building, Hungary declared 'responsibility' for the (cultural) well-being of the Hungarian minorities living outside Hungary. The first post-Communist prime minister József Antall often referred to the '15 million Hungarians' who live within Hungary and 'beyond the border' that his government worked for, rather than to just the 10 million Hungarians who make up Hungary's population proper (Ieda 2004).[18] Over the past two decades, this fundamental claim was translated into several legislative initiatives, which were highly disputed in the homelands to the Hungarian minorities, both by the minority and the majority. Moreover, there are close relations between Hungary and the Hungarian minority in Slovakia due to the financial and organisational support Hungary provides to the kin abroad on the basis of the Slovak-Hungarian Treaty on Good neighbourly Relations and Friendly Co-operation between the Republic of Hungary and the Slovak Republic ('Basic treaty') and the Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Hungarian Republic on the Mutual Support of Ethnic Minorities in the Field of Education and Culture in December 2003 (Dostál 2005), as well as the 'Status Law', which caused a lot of controversy.[19]

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[17] Although the government remained largely passive in relation to this issue towards the countries of residence of the Hungarian minorities, from the 1960s onwards, increasingly specialised committees such as of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Hungarian Association of Writers began working systematically on the situation of the Hungarians abroad. Several documents acknowledged the deterioration of the situation for the minorities in neighbouring countries and indicated that, while a domestic issue of the respective states, it was also a matter of Hungary's foreign policy (Bárdi 2004, p.65).

[18] The Hungarian phrase that is used for denoting the external minorities is '*határon túli magyarok*', which translates 'Hungarians beyond the border' and represents how the minorities are framed in the Hungarian discourse (Waterbury 2006, p.485).

[19] The so-called Status Law of 2001 envisaged a range of (financial) benefits and free movement as well as temporary labour permits and 'ethnic Hungarian cards' to persons 'declaring themselves to be of Hungarian nationality' while being citizens of one of Hungary's neighbours (Status law, status law book. pp.508-528). As such, the law directly affects the status of citizens of neighbouring states. Hungary did not consult with these states before the adoption of the law, causing protest and outrage in the affected countries (Kovács 2005). These policies were seen by neighbouring states as efforts to effectively modify Europe's approach to states and nations (Fowler 2004). Indeed, it seemed to confirm the fears of Slovak nationalists that Hungarian irredentist claims were not a matter of the past. In their support for the status law, the Hungarian party Fidesz asserted that '[w]e couldn't choose the borders, but we can rise up and transcend this division' (Zsolt Németh of Fidesz, quoted in Waterbury 2006, p.498) and even argued that members of the Hungarian minorities in neighbouring countries should not leave their places of residence, as this 'would diminish the reach and breadth of the

The controversy on the Status law was followed two years later by a half-hearted referendum in Hungary about issuing dual citizenship to the Hungarian minorities abroad. The referendum was initiated by the World Federation of Hungarians, a US-based non-governmental organisation that is not well integrated with domestic politics in Hungary, but attempts to establish itself as a representative of all Hungarians around the globe (Kovács 2005). The initiative collided with the interests of both the Socialist government and the Conservative opposition. The opposition party Fidesz, a right-wing conservative party which has increasingly mobilised on a nationalist agenda (Rajacic 2007), however, decided to jump on the bandwagon and support the initiative against the government. The Hungarian debate was very much shaped by the government's position that Hungary could not cope with an anticipated 'influx' of Hungarians from neighbouring countries or the availment of benefits to minority members abroad on the basis of citizenship.[20] As a result, the referendum did not get much support, when only 37.49% of the entitled population took part (Rajacic 2007, p.649). From the outside, this result was read by some as a message to Europe that Hungary had decided to follow the path of Europeanisation (Kovács & Tóth 2009; Kovács & Tóth 2007), to its neighbours that Hungary did not want to continue playing with the fears of irredentism and to the minorities abroad that they were seen by Hungary as citizens of their states of residence (Fox 2007).

When Fidesz regained political power in Hungary in 2010, the citizenship issue soon resurfaced in government policies. Again without consulting neighbouring states' governments, and this time without a referendum, the government introduced dual citizenship for members of Hungarian minorities abroad (Kovács & Tóth 2009). Observers have argued that the law has very few real consequences, because most entitlements and right to free movement are regulated by the Status law as well as by common EU membership of Hungary as well as Slovakia, Romania and Slovenia.[21] Still, the move was met by particularly harsh criticism from the Slovak government,

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Hungarian nation' (Waterbury 2006, p.498). In so doing, the Hungarian government enacted the Hungarian 'sense of mission' that had shaped the irredentism of the inter-war period (Zeidler 2002) and simultaneously supported their concept of a Europe of nations rather than states (Navracsics 1997), which could again be seen as subtle attempt to temper with the borders by Slovakia.

[20] The Status law was designed to hold the balance so that those who, for example, claim benefits under the rules of the status law would be 'more than tourists, less than citizens' (Waterbury 2008, p.223)

[21] Even for Ukrainian citizens of Hungarian 'nationality', three quarters of whom are holders of the 'ethnic Hungarian card' on the basis of the Status law, the law does not change much (Shevel 2010).

who quickly threatened that members of the Hungarian minority who were citizens of Slovakia were to lose their Slovak citizenship should they decide to assume Hungarian citizenship (*EurActiv* 27/05/2010). In 2011, a number of Slovak citizens who applied for dual citizenship are reported to have lost Slovak citizenship as a result of the modified Slovak citizenship act, which is due to be reviewed again (*Slovak Spectator*, 27/09/2011; *Slovak Spectator*, 15/08/2011; *Sme*, 27/05/2010).

The citizenship debates were observed with mixed feelings by Hungarians in Slovakia. In interviews, members of the minority insisted that since 2004 – that is, since both Hungary's and Slovakia's accession to the EU – dual citizenship is not necessary. While some still appreciated the idea of a formal expression of what they described as their Hungarian identity, they argued that this was not about a connection to the Hungarian state, but to the Hungarian 'nation' (Golha/Hajdok/Havran 18/06/2009; Bara 21/09/2009). In this context, minority members in Slovakia criticise Hungarians in Hungary for the lack of understanding and historical knowledge about neighbouring countries and the situation of Hungarians who live there. The failed referendum in 2003 then became a turning point in the attitudes of many Hungarians in Slovakia towards Hungary. For example, Bara argues that the referendum was ill-advised from the start, as it demonstrated the ignorance of the proponents of the referendum concerning the offence it caused in relation to the Slovaks. Moreover, the Hungarian minority members in Slovakia took offence by the domestic debates in Hungary about the allegedly 'millions of Hungarians [from abroad who] will come and abuse the social security system' (Bara 21/09/2009). Perceived by the Hungarian minority in Slovakia as domestic political games and a clear signal of rejection from their kin, these events have led many members of the minority community say that 'they are still Hungarians, but they do not expect too much from the Hungarian government [anymore]' (Bara 21/09/2009).

The developments around the 2003 referendum were in contrast to one of the Hungarian state's foreign policy doctrines. Since 1990, Hungary's controversial foreign policy towards its neighbours and in particular towards the Hungarian minorities in these countries was officially guided by the idea to preserve a Hungarian nation and its identity beyond the borders of Hungary. The Hungarian

government also declared the so-called 'Antall doctrine', which stipulates that all decisions regarding Hungarian minorities should be taken only upon their consultation and their inclusion into the decision making process (Bárdi 2004). While this resulted in Hungarian minority representatives from, for example, Slovakia to be present at many events organised by political actors in Hungary, this doctrine was not always adhered to. At the same time, incidents of close relations between Hungary and the Hungarian minority in Slovakia caused outrage among domestic majority actors.

Since 1998 at least, the main strategy of the MKP and particularly *Most-Híd* has been to increase the representation and inclusion of minority members into institutionalised policies and seek common grounds with the moderates within Slovakia, rather than seek the alignment with the Hungarian state. However, mobilising a strong external ally can also bear important assets in intergroup power relations. In the context of minority politicians' efforts to improve the legal grounds for minority language usage in public and official proceedings, Hungary has repeatedly supported the minority at the international level to pressure Slovakia into adopting minority policies. Moreover, the support from Hungary particularly for educational and cultural institutions and organisations has been indispensible for Hungarians. Öllös, a political scientist at the *Fórum Kissebségkutató Intézet/Fórum Inštitút pre výskum menšín* (Forum Minority Research Institute, FKI) in Šamorín, is convinced that

> 'Without the help of Hungary this [i.e. the Hungarian minority's] culture would not exist here. It's very difficult to [demand from the] Hungarian minority parties to criticise Hungarian politics. They know very well that without the help of Hungary it's over. They will cooperate with any Hungarian government – no other way' (Öllös 23/09/2009).

Hungarians in Slovakia are aware of the balance they need to strike with regard to their relations to Hungary. Majority nationalists have continuously claimed that minority political activities have aimed to undermine Slovak statehood and gain sovereignty for the Hungarian group instead. Öllös argues that

> 'That's our main problem: here's a constant fear of changing the border. This fear is strengthening [even among] politicians who know very well that there is no real danger of changing the border in this country. Hungary and Slovakia are members

> of NATO, European Union, so it's absolutely impossible […]. But it is very important in Slovakia […] and the majority of the political elite cannot imagine a different Hungarian strategy because they cannot imagine it about themselves. […] They cannot imagine a country in which citizens of different nationality live – and the country is functioning' (Öllös 23/09/2009).

As a result of this difficult situation most efforts of the minority's political representation to alter the legal situation of Hungarians in (southern) Slovakia have been portrayed by Slovak nationalist politicians as attempts to alter territorial sovereignty. In response to the antagonistic situation in Slovakia and the fear of the Hungarian minority of their community's rapid decrease, minority political representatives have maintained a balanced relationship to the Hungarian state. They agree that it would be foolish to disassociate themselves from the kin-state, as this is expected to politically weaken the minority; moreover, the support for minority education and culture that comes from the Slovak state has proved to be unreliable, particularly under a nationalist government. Essentially, however, it is unlikely that the Slovak nationalists would discontinue playing the 'ethnic card' – after all, much of their political success is based on the antagonism with the Hungarian minority and Hungary as a strong 'enemy' (Mesežnikov 14/04/2008). Hence, while it has made the situation of Hungarians in Slovakia difficult at times, these cannot be changed without decisive reconciliation at the bilateral level. The crucial resources Hungary provides for its kin abroad cannot be discarded off by minority members, and the latter do not want to disassociate from Hungary either.

8.7 Discussion

Given the relative success of the Hungarian political parties, there has never really been a question whether an alternative to ethnicity-based political representation is feasible for Slovakia's largest minority. The Hungarian electorate has supported this view since 1992. The main reason for this lies in the absence of a political strategy for minority support and minority recognition in the agendas of Slovak political actors. Károly Domsitz, the mayor of Šamorín, argues that 'there will be never a Slovak government the aim of which would be to strengthen the identity of the Hungarians living in Slovakia' (Domsitz 16/09/2009). However, interviews have shown that there are parts among the Hungarian minority who regret this and would

wish for a situation where politics were not 'ethnicised'. Especially the students who were interviewed in the fieldwork conducted for this study argued that they did not want to be monopolised by an ethnic political representation, or by nationalist governments in Hungary for that matter (Zachar 22/09/2009; Tokar 17/09/2009; Golha/Hajdok/Havran 18/06/2009). These young people expressed their regret for a situation in which they see themselves forced to vote on the basis of their ethnic belonging, but also did not see a feasible alternative under current conditions.

In general, the minority representatives who were interviewed for this study – without exception – are convinced that only a strong group-based representation can ensure that minority issues are not entirely dismissed by the dominant political forces. Kálmán Petőcz, politician of the MPP between 1992 and 1994, former ambassador to Switzerland for Slovakia and researcher at the FKI in Šamorín, insists that

> 'I think that the Hungarians cannot achieve anything without demonstrating power. Slovaks wouldn't take them seriously until they really show that they are strong' (Petőcz 23/09/2009).

Petőcz's argument suggests that the formation of a single Hungarian party in 1998 was a necessity for the minority on its own accord in order to be able to constitute a strong political opponent to Slovak nationalism. The argument is understandable from a perspective that focuses on the Slovak nationalists. As József Berényi, former head of the National Council's Committee for National Minorities and now MKP-leader, argued,

> 'The situation is the following: […] the international organisations see that there is a need to increase the minority rights, but the government proposed a decrease. Then we are opposing; then there is a debate; then somebody [suggests] a "compromise", which [effectively means] some decrease, but not everything [the government had initially suggested will be abolished]; and then the media is pushing us to accept, because this is a "compromise". And we are saying that no, this is a decrease, we want to have the same as it was before – so not even an increase but just to keep it – and then we are labelled radicals and extremists because we are not ready to accept compromise' (Berényi 30/06/2009).

Confronted with the nationalists' strategies to undermine existing minority rights, it is essential for the minority's political representation to have a clear standpoint on the

minority rights situation it advocates. The situation is less clear with respect to majority moderates.

Over the past twenty years, the Hungarian parties have oscillated between conceding to their own and their electorate's heterogeneity and the consolidation of one party as the strong representative of the community. The Hungarians' continuous attempts to achieve a comprehensive solution of the problematic interethnic situation by establishing various forms of functional autonomies were exploited by Slovak nationalist politicians to further fuel fears among Slovak of a border change or the Slovaks' loss of sovereignty over southern Slovakia. At the same time, the strong position of the MKP was moderated in the negotiations of 1998, and it was the more moderate *Most-Híd* that was supported by the electorate to enter a coalition with the Slovak centre-right parties. The strong position of minority party actors during the election periods of 1997/98 and 2009/10 offered a starting point for negotiations and to develop more acceptable agendas, without demanding that the minority parties sacrifice too many of their central political aims. In relation to the Slovak parties, it can therefore be argued, the political strength of the Hungarian parties was crucial to allow the Hungarian representatives the degree of participation in agenda-setting and decision-making that it has maintained since 1998.

Conclusion

Overall I argue that the strength of the Hungarian political representation under the conditions of Slovak nation-state-building can be attributed to a large extent to the continuity in the political agendas of the Hungarian political parties and the persistency of their representatives, who at the same time maintained enough flexibility to adjust to changing contexts. The clear agenda for the protection of the Hungarians as a historical minority allowed for overlapping understandings of statehood promoted by majority moderates, thereby fostering cooperation. Furthermore, minority representatives have successfully used their far-reaching political positions as a starting point for negotiations with majority parties when this seemed feasible. The lack of alternatives for the Hungarian minority members at the ballot box and the certainty that the Slovak parties are not interested in minority issues has allowed the minority parties to maintain a political representation for the

majority of Hungarians in Slovakia. At the same time, the strength of the minority parties has also meant that there is no need for majority parties to develop their own minority policy concept.

In order to increase their own group agency, Hungarians in Slovakia have successfully fallen back on the normative, socio-structural and socio-psychological resources and schemas that shape intergroup relations in Slovakia. The majority of Hungarian political actors frame their activities in accordance with the norms and regulations of national self-determination and 'cultural identity' that both resonates with and reinforces majority structures of meaning. This is enabled by the specific context, which allows the regional concentration and strong networks of minority members to grant access to the political structures. The experience and legacies of intergroup conflict on the side of majority and minorities has undermined minority political activities that go beyond reinforcing segregation though. Minority actors are aware of the lack of feasible scenarios of interethnic integration among the majority group. As a result, alternative scenarios for group agency and intergroup relations have to take a back seat, while worries over future developments weigh heavily in the generation of minority political agendas. Also in the context of democratisation and Europeanisation, Hungarians are much better equipped to actualise these resources, than Russian-speakers in Estonia.

Chapter 9: Societal level activism of Russian-speakers in Estonia and Hungarians in Slovakia

9.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the developments in Russian-speakers' and Hungarians' societal-level activism. The discussion focuses on those organisations that are directly engaged in the field of inter-ethnic relations or working towards the improvement of the minority groups' situation in relation with the state and the majority population. Section 9.1 provides a brief outline of the problems of research and available studies on the topic of minority organisations outside the political sphere, and it indicates related characteristics and problems of societal level organisation and co-operation across group boundaries. Sections 9.2 and 9.3 analyse the Estonian structures for minority support and the way minority members have organised in order to use these structures to channel minority interests to the state authorities. Section 9.4 looks at recent developments in Estonia, which have led to the frail, but nevertheless real stirrings of social movements, triggered by specific developments in Estonian politics, but supporting a more general agenda of increasing minority participation in socio-political processes. Section 9.5 discusses the situation in Slovakia, which differs from that in Estonia in many respects. Hungarians have successfully established sustainable structures for societal level minority organisations, which provide structures for the minority to act as an interest group. At the same time, efforts to engage in co-operation across majority-minority group boundaries have not brought about significant results. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the differences and similarities in the problems the groups in both countries face.

9.2 Societal level organisation of the Russian-speaking and Hungarian minorities in Estonia and Slovakia

For the Hungarian and Russian-speaking minorities' formation as political actors and groups in both countries, the late 1980s/early 1990s was a phase that was decisive for the emergence of group structures and organisation in both political and social processes. The end of the old political-institutional order in each country, including the respective minority rights schemes in each, and the simultaneous attempts of increasing sections of the majority groups to institutionalise majority preference in the political and societal system, helped strengthen minority demands for the protection of their cultural identity and a place and support for minority interest representation. Similar to the lack of political structures to represent their minority interests, in the early 1990s minority activists had hardly any structures for civic, cultural or other forms of minority organisation in which to engage. The Soviet and Czechoslovak authorities had successfully undermined mass civic activism, and had pushed activities that can be counted under the broad, 'civic' label into the underground, or otherwise keep them limited to activities within the party and communist organisational structures. Minority cultural activities were not prohibited, but were limited to activities within the realm of 'nationalities policies' (Evans 2006; Baker 2002).

Consequently, in the early 1990s there was a need in both countries to establish structures of societal level minority organisation. In both countries, minority activists soon saw themselves forced to engage in the defence of their membership in society, contradicting many of the goals supported by majority cultural organisations. As Károly Tóth, activist in the democratisation movement and currently director of the Hungarian Forum Minority Research Institute in Šamorín (FKI), recalls, politics and the development of societal level organisation were coterminous at the time (Tóth 23/09/2009). When the HZDS and SNS were in government, and under the Dzurinda government also, relations between the state and society level organisations were often antagonistic. The Mečiar administration went to great lengths to hamper organisations that took a critical stance towards the government (Demeš 2001). Some authors have even argued that it was '"thanks" to the Mečiar era [that] the NGO

institutional system was (and is) more organised with much more co-operation among NGOs' (Mészáros-Lampl & Tóth 2003, p.3). Lagerspetz, Rikmann and Ruutsoo have argued that in Estonian democratisation, the concept of civil society has played an important role: not so much in terms of society's bottom-up organisation, but rather in the relation between state and societal organisations. Here there was a 'division of labour' in which social welfare functions were transferred to non-government organisations. In this process,

> 'the desétatization scenario gives political decision makers the upper hand, as they will be able to define the "state orders" to be carried out by NGOs. In this, the question of the civil society's potential in counteracting the widening alienation from democratic process has been left aside' (Lagerspetz et al. 2002, p.75).

These different backgrounds have impacted the development of society level organisation differently; in particular, the developments of civic, social, cultural and interest representation and organisation have shaped the interethnic integration of society differently in each case.

Despite a common interest among both majority and minority activists, the 'ethnicisation' of political processes in the early 1990s also affected the institutionalisation of society level democratisation and channels for society's interest communication. The increasing political and social divide between majority and minority members in both countries was soon mirrored in the segregation of emerging civil societies, not only with respect to the representation of culturally defined, salient group interests, but also with regard to organisations aiming to provide correctives to state politics, bottom-up activities of the minority groups, and the establishment of a sphere for organisation largely independent from state institutions. Although minority members do participate in or cooperate with majority organisations in general, such as in social organisations or with regard to leisure time activities, this happens much less in the other direction (Tóth 23/09/2009; Mézes 18/06/2009; Mesežnikov 14/04/2008; similarly for the Estonian case Lagerspetz 17/04/2009; Poleshchuk 14/04/2009). Generally, although there are no studies available that research the interaction between majority and minority groups at the societal level, sociologists researching civil society developments in Estonia and Slovakia estimate that few connections exist between majority and minority elements

of society level organisation (Lampl 24/09/2009; Tóth 23/09/2009; Lagerspetz 17/04/2009). This situation is illustrated, for example, by an official 'comprehensive' study on Slovakia's civil society, which did not take into account a single Hungarian organisation (Tóth 23/09/2009).[1]

With respect to interethnic interaction, the situation is similar in Estonia: The Centre for Civil Society Study and Development at Tallinn University confirmed in 2009 that there were no comprehensive studies of the co-operation between Russian-speaking and Estonian societal organisations (Lagerspetz 17/04/2009; Tanel Vallimäe 17/04/2009).[2] Existing co-operation between majority and minority organisations, according to the activists interviewed during my fieldwork, is limited largely to research and policy organisations working on interethnic problems, and more often than not they are initiated from the outside, such as through incentives provided by EU project schemes (Ivanov 18/05/2010; Grigorjan 18/05/2010; Tóth 23/09/2009; Lagerspetz 17/04/2009; Mesežnikov 14/04/2008).

Unsurprisingly, given the status of Soviet-era migrants in Estonia after 1991, scholarship has emphasised the marginal role Russian-speakers played in the generation of Estonian civil society (Lagerspetz 2005). Recent studies, however, have challenged this view, arguing that Russian-speakers have indeed contributed to democratisation (Agarin 2010). Outside of trade unions, however, co-operation in civil society between majority and minority members has been very limited, and has

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[1] The contributions in the annual review of Slovakia's democratisation processes edited by the research institute and think tank *Inštitút pre verejné otázky* (Institute for Public Affairs, IVO) in Bratislava do not feature Slovak-Hungarian co-operations between societal organisations either; the contributions mention specific activities with respect to other, more socially excluded minorities, such as specific initiatives that target or are organised by members of the Romany communities in Slovakia, as well as anti-racist initiatives (Demeš 2001). Initiatives that aim to reduce tensions between Slovakia and Hungary, as well as domestic problems between Hungarians and Slovaks are referred to merely as spontaneous reactions of individual public figures to rising tensions and 'situations […] threatening to undermine civil society in Slovakia, such as the unsolved assault on ethnic Hungarian student Hedviga Malinová' (Strečanský et al. 2007, p.558)

[2] The researchers at the Centre indicated that such a study was envisaged for the future; indeed a study under the title of Survey report: Russian-speakers' civic organisations and Estonian civil society: Parallel worlds or quiet integration? was published in 2010 (Vallimäe et al. 2010). The authors of the study come to a generally more positive conclusion for the prospects of Estonian 'civil society' as a sphere of integration rather than 'parallel worlds'; however, this evaluation is based primarily on the increased use of Estonian language in Russian-speakers' organisations and the impact on promoting and teaching 'tolerance' (see especially the conclusions on ibid., p.33); overall the study demonstrates that the issue of integration is of upmost importance for the majority of Russian-speaking organisations and thereby contradicts dominant public perceptions of the Russian-speakers (ibid., pp.36-37).

not been much encouraged by existing civil society development strategies, as discussed earlier in the thesis (Lagerspetz 2005). Those initiatives that bring individuals from the majority and minority groups together are commented upon very positively by the participants; however, such initiatives – often carried out in co-operation with the Integration Foundation – only reach a very small proportion of the population (Mätlik 04/09/2009; Solovev/Dulneva 31/07/2009).

The limited interest of actors in cooperation across ethnic boundaries is mutual, despite the affirmations by majority and minority members of their preparedness for dialogue (Gyárfášová 17/06/2009; Dornemann 19/05/2009). This poses a continuous challenge to interethnic dialogue, even though many minority activists find alarming the ethnicisation of social and political processes that precipitated the disintegration of common efforts of majority and minority activists of democratisation. This chapter shows, among other things, that the lack of interaction further constrains the already limited opportunities for society level dialogue on issues of interethnic integration, as well as the strategies deployed in society level minority organisation.

9.3 Umbrella organisations as channels for minority participation in Estonia?

In the absence of more immediate solutions to the problems of the provision of general minority interest representation, minority members interested in practicing their cultures made efforts to establish suitable structures to enable them to sustainably finance and engage in minority activities at the societal level, primarily in the form of unity under umbrella organisations. Since the early 1990s, the state supported minority cultural activities as part of its approach to Estonian multi-culturalism, of which the *traditional* minority cultures were a constituent part. The limited notion of multiculturalism, however, entails that the more general demands of minorities generated in minority social and cultural organisations were systematically undermined. Sections 9.3 and 9.4 look at the resources available to minority organisations and the constraints these mean for all activities that attempt to modify the dominant multiculturalist 'consensus'.

In the early 1990s, Russian-speakers were confronted with the hostility of the political elite and the open declaration of plans to make life in Estonia undesirable for Russians/Russian-speakers expecting them (*de facto*) to leave. Based on this expectation, the political situation in the early 1990s did not make minority members expect much accommodation for cultural interest representation from the political elite of the time. Across Estonia, and in parallel to equivalent organisations set up by the Estonians, minority members gathered in local clubs to engage in traditional cultural activities, celebrate these, and set up structures to teach traditional cultural practices to other members of the respective communities (particularly the children). From the early 1990s onwards, local clubs started organising in umbrella associations, facilitating the interaction between, as well as joint projects of, the different clubs/communities. One of the first umbrella organisations of this kind is the *Rahvusvaheline Rahvuskultuuride Ühenduste Liit* (Union of National (Ethnic) Cultural Communities, LÜÜRA). Founded in 1993, the organisation includes 53 member organisations, engaging in cultural activities from at least 19 national backgrounds.[3]

In the following years, minority members have established many more such individual and umbrella organisations and associations, including the *MTÜ Russki Dom – Estonia* (Russian House – Estonia); the *Eestimaa Rahvuste Ühendus* (Estonian Nationalities Association); the *MTÜ Eesti Mitmekultuuriline Assotsiatsioon* (Estonian Intercultural Association); the *MTÜ Ukraina Organisatsioonide Assotsiatsioon Eestis* (Association of Ukrainian Organisations in Estonia); the *Ida-Virumaa Integratsioonikeskus* (Ida-Virumaa Integration Centre); *MTÜ Vene rahvuskultuuriliste organisatsioonide ühendus Sadko Eestis* (Union of Russian Ethno-Cultural Organisations in Estonia 'Sadko'); *Vene Haridus- ja Heategevusühingute Liit Eestis* (Union of Russian Educational and Charitable Societies in Estonia). These umbrella organisations unite between 13-35 member organisations. Moreover, there are a range of smaller umbrella organisations within which smaller minority groups such as the Dagestani, Belarusian or Georgian cultural and educational organisations cooperate, or unite (for example) Russian-speaking educational organisations that operate as 'Sunday schools' within the state's

[3] These include Russians, Ukrainians, Mordvins, Belarusians, Armenians, Georgians, Ossetians, Kabardins, Tatars, Turkmen people, Koreans, Setos, Uzbeks, Chinese people, people from Angola, Kazakhs, Lezgian people, Talyshi, Buryats, cf. (LÜÜRA 2011).

integration framework (*Vene Kultuuriseltside Assotsiatsioon Ruthenia* or Association of Russian Cultural Societies 'Ruthenia') (Etnoweb 2011).

To date there are 265 national cultural organisations and 19 umbrella organisations registered with the Estonia state, according to the website of the Integration Foundation (MEIS 2011).[4] They engage in the fields of general cultural activities, folklore, literature, music and the arts as well as language-based activities, proffering classes on subjects to improve the participants' knowledge of their mother tongue. Larger organisations, such as LÜÜRA, regularly carry out festivals of traditional and more modern forms of national culture, fostering the exchange between minority groups, whose *lingua franca* is, in most cases, Russian, despite the various group allegiances of the members (Agarin 2010; Grigorjan 18/05/2009). Increasingly, minority organisations use Estonian as their working language (Vallimäe et al. 2010); websites and the information materials of the minority organisations are in most cases available in Estonian, and in some cases information in Estonian is now more detailed than in Russian, e.g. on the websites of organisations such as LÜÜRA or *Eestimaa Rahvuste Ühendus* (ERÜ 2011).

The overall aim of these organisations' activities is to provide minority groups with the space for practices which are not considered part of the 'common (cultural) core' of Estonian society and thus is not made a priority in the state's responsibility to provide support for cultural activities. Some of the organisations claim to stand in the tradition of Russian-speakers' organisations from the 1920s and 1930s (for example *Vene Haridus- ja Heategevusühingute Liit Eestis*). While the cultural minority organisations' focus is on generating opportunities for minority practices, these organisations also try to impact the overall representation of minority culture in Estonia, by lobbying for this at the state level, and by establishing spaces and opportunities to discuss current issues of interest or concern for minorities. In this

[4] Currently, 204 national cultural organisations are listed on the Ministry of Culture's website today, together with 21 umbrella organisation and a range of associations not members in an umbrella organisation, as well as related associations, organisations and Sunday schools working in the field of national cultures (Ethnoweb 2011). Information on the number of these organisations as well as the organisations themselves is not easy to acquire, as many exist as small clubs without any publicly accessible representation, and not all of them are officially registered or receive funding on a regular basis, which would enable to trace the number of organisations, as well as more general information on them through these activities (Lagerspetz 17/04/2009). No additional or updated information could be received by the author through email enquiries to the MEIS and Ministry of Culture; therefore the information on the website, despite potentially being inaccurate, has to suffice here.

way they communicate difficulties and constraints of the current minority rights and protection framework to the authorities, as well as build structures of exchange, organisation and support for the minority groups in the country (Lyagu 19/05/2010; Grigorjan 18/05/2010). The organisations are funded in part by the Ministry of Culture, the Integration Foundation and local municipalities.

Many activists work to the idea of preserving, deepening and handing down the knowledge of their culture, celebrating particularly ethnicity-/cultural group-based, traditional forms of cultural self-expression as ways to promote integration. Aleksander Dusman, chairman of the Ida-Virumaa Integration Roundtable and head of the Ida-Virumaa Jewish Community, argues that the strengthening of minority national identities is a crucial aspect of the integration process. He is convinced that the restoration and development of a minority cultural identity helps members of a former majority (Russian-speakers) to learn to understand the 'perspective of the Estonians' during Soviet times (Dusman 16/12/2009). At the same time, the promotion and information about minority cultural activities among Estonians would enable majority members to understand that the minorities' aims in practicing their cultures are not so different from their own interests after all (ibid.). These organisations therefore welcome policies that promote diversity and multiculturalism and actively participate in the political actors' initiatives in this field, particularly in Estonia, where ethnic diversity is promoted along the lines of traditional national cultures (such as the state integration strategy). In turn, these organisations' representatives do not generally perceive integration and accommodation with majority society as detrimental or threatening to minority members and their collective interest in preserving a cultural minority identity. Rather, integration is considered a problem for Estonian society generally, which can only be solved on the basis of the minority's co-operation with the majority. The simultaneous provision for and support of cultural diversity in society, which minority representatives demand, should be enabled by the state to help each group follow its own priorities (Lyagu 19/05/2010; Dusman 16/12/2009).

On this basis, proponents of this approach seek to cooperate with state institutions and drive inroads into policy-making through minority cultural interest representation at state level, such as in the Ministry of Culture's Council for National

Minorities. Selected minority organisations are supported by the state through cooperative structures in several thematic and training areas, as indicated in section 7.2, for example with the Integration Foundation (Mätlik 04/12/2009). Minority cultural and educational organisations closely cooperate with the Integration Foundation in the production of information material on national minorities, and receive training for successful project applications and other activities within the range of tasks of the integration strategy (Dusman 16/12/2009). Particularly, schemes that are supported as part of the integration strategy, such as Sunday schools, allow for the professionalisation and further institutionalisation of minority cultural organisation (Lyagu 19/05/2010).

Refraining from supporting demands concerning the status and inclusion of minority members into political or social life beyond the thematic field of minority national cultural activities gives them more leeway in cooperating with the state than organisations with an explicitly political agenda (Kõrvalt 19/05/2010). Hence, cooperation between minority umbrella organisations and the state has not helped channel minority demands in fields outside of (a limited notion of) minority cultures into the political agenda-setting and decision-making.

Aware of this situation, 201 minority organisations – some of which are regularly included in the Ministry of Culture's Council talks, some of which are not – have joined forces and formed the *Eestimaa Vähemusrahvuste Esindajate Koda* (House of Representatives of the National Minorities of Estonia, EVEK). The organisation was formed in response to the Bronze night events in 2007, brought on by the lack of political structures for Russian-speakers to express their discontent with policies and the demand to be included in political processes. The organisation aims at the

> 'protection of the rights of national minorities in Estonia and their representation in all structures of the state and municipal levels of government and in the judicial system of the republic as well as in various public organisations' (EVEK 2007).

EVEK claims to be authorised to represent the Russian-speaking community at various levels of government, officially convening around 200 minority interest and umbrella organisations, including some of the large cultural umbrella organisations such as LÜÜRA (EVEK 2011). Based on the support of those organisations, EVEK

aims to form a political representative body following the example of the Representative Assembly in the early 1990s. EVEK unites a certain spectrum of Russian-speaking activists and organisations, which coordinate their political position and work under the umbrella organisation. Many members of EVEK have been involved in earlier political representation bodies, such as the Popular Front, the Representative Assembly and cultural organisations, favouring the 'integrationist' approach to minority policies. Many of them are prominent figures of the Russian-speaking community; some of them have for years participated, in various functions, in the Presentation Roundtable talks or the Ministry of Culture's Council of Ethnic Minorities and taken part in numerous initiatives, organised either by the state or by minority organisations.

While it has successfully organised conferences to unite minority activities, repeatedly appealed to the authorities, and engaged in informal talks with state representatives, Rafik Grigorjan, head of the organisation, regrets that the Estonian authorities do not acknowledge EVEK as a formal contact body on the grounds that the organisation was not formally elected by 'all' minority members, which of course is – not only under current conditions – impractical (Grigorjan 18/05/2010). This is a popular argument of the Estonian government, in effect serving to disregard most political initiatives by Russian-speakers as unauthorised.[5] With regard to EVEK, it is striking that EVEK unites many of those organisations and individuals who have, for years, been invited by the state bodies to 'discuss' minority integration; at the same time, these bodies refuse to acknowledge EVEK as a legitimate representative body of Russian-speakers in Estonia (Grigorjan 18/05/2010). Thus, although EVEK is not recognised by the authorities as the Representative Assembly was – at least for some time – a number of its board members participate *de facto* in the institutional structures for minority inclusion. Essentially, the lack of recognition of EVEK by the authorities means that the main representatives consult with state and government bodies on the basis of an invitation from the bodies to participate, not on the basis of

[5] To be sure, this view is to some extent by Russian-speakers' organisations, which are critical of the approach EVEK pursues and who argue that many organisations have asserted themselves as *the* Russian-speakers' representation (Dornemann 19/05/2010). Similar to the Russian-speakers' political parties, the civic organisations engaging in political activities have indeed in many cases competed for acknowledgement by the authorities as *the* contact and representation of the group rather than cooperate with each other; other organisations have rejected the co-operation with the state altogether (Tydyakov 19/05/2010).

a claim for legitimacy as the representative organisation of a (large) part of the Russian-speaking population acting on its own accord. In this way, the state maintains control over the process and avoids situations in which it would have to accept EVEK (or any other minority organisation) as a partner in dialogue.

Despite its powerless role in the consultations, EVEK continues to meet and discuss with state and local government institutions in order to voice minority interests and views in the sparse forums offered. In contrast to the state, Tallinn's local initiative for integration has been more open towards EVEK as an organisation. Despite a number of meetings and conferences, the Civic Peace strategy (Tallinn City 2011), which was initiated after the events of April 2007, has not so far resulted in significant improvements of majority-minority relations in Tallinn. As part of the strategy, regular forums that have been held since 2007 about three times per year to analyse the problems and develop strategies how to improve the situation of interethnic relations. According to minority participants at the forums, no new strategies have been developed and analysts as well as political actors have mainly repeated the results of earlier studies and not developed any strategies for action (Kõlvart 19/05/2010; Grigorjan 18/05/2010; Ivanov 18/05/2010; Vaus 18/05/2010).

The deadlock of the integration strategy with regards to institutional change is one of the reasons why EVEK's main efforts currently concentrate on its consolidation as part of the civil society structure and as the central organisation of Russian-speakers' civil and political activities. Currently EVEK still lacks the structures and organisational support that would enable the organisation to form a more powerful representation of Russian-speakers generally. Meanwhile, no other organisation is able to fulfil the role of civic or political representative of the Russian-speaking community, which could potentially be included into decision-making processes by the authorities.

9.4 Problems of dependency – Minority organisations and the state

The interaction between minority organisations and the state is important because of the participatory function it carries – however limited this may be. It also serves to ensure the financial and organisational support that societal level minority organisation is dependent upon. Minority activists aiming to optimise the *status quo* situation of their organisations therefore primarily focus on improving their support base and demanding more guarantees in the current framework for the support of minority interest representation. In other words, activists advocate the increase and improvement of the distribution of funding as well as organisational support for minority cultural activities. This section discusses the problems that result from the dependency on this form of state support by focusing on the examples of selected minority organisations.

In order to increase their representational legitimacy and organisational power, minority organisations have united their forces in umbrella organisations, which fulfil a double function in the institutionalisation of minority cultural support. On the one hand, they enable minority organisations to channel and potentially strengthen the bottom-up communication of problems, needs and demands from minority organisations towards the state and coordinate their work for autonomous minority organisation (Grigorjan 18/05/2010). On the other hand, the Estonian state appreciates such organisations because they facilitate the granting and distribution of funding by the state in so far as they reduce the number of contact persons and so optimise communication and top-down channelling of regulations and provisions for minority support (Mätlik 04/12/2009). As a result, ministries and other state institutions in both countries cooperate primarily with umbrella organisations. This means, in turn, that organisations not yet under the wing of an umbrella organisation have more difficulties sustaining their activities (Jakobson 17/04/2009).

While the distribution of funding is organised mainly through the umbrella organisations, the state still monitors the activities of individual projects funded by national or EU funds. Since 2006, all funding granted as part of EU project schemes are part of the state's budget for public funding. Tanel Mätlik, head of the Integration Foundation, explains, that 'That means […] all sources of finance will be agreed between the government and us' (04/12/2009). Umbrella organisations do not have the rights of bodies of functional cultural autonomy, even though they have the

responsibility for distributing resources and coordinating the co-operation of member organisations. The extended and growing role umbrella organisations play in the funding of minority activities has caused some problems for the group's ability to establish structures for their cultural activities due to political reasons. While some activists expect umbrella organisations to allow some autonomy for individual organisations, in practice umbrella organisations do not necessarily solve the problem of the activists' lack of control over the type of activities that are being funded by the state. Rather, they tend to shift the question of distribution and compliance from the expectations of state institutions to those of umbrella organisations, acting now as a first controlling body that accepts member organisations and individual projects on the basis of their experience with the requirements state institutions impose on minority cultural initiatives. Many Russian-speakers believe that organisations, which have leanings to political organisations or engage publicly in political criticism or protest, have difficulties sustaining their cooperative relationship with the state institutions (Kõrvalt 19/05/2010; Grigorjan 18/05/2010). Viewed from this perspective, appeals by umbrella organisations to their member organisations to comply with the non-confrontational approach towards state institutions the former promote can be read as forms of discipline and control over member organisations (Lyagu 19/05/2010).

Due to the Integration Foundations vulnerable position in relation to the government (see section 7.2), minority organisations have had continuous problems with the long-term planning of their activities. Many minority activists in Estonia nonetheless appreciate the funding that is provided through the channels of the Integration Foundation thanks to the existence of the integration programme (Lyagu 19/05/2010; Dusman 16/12/2009). At the same time, they are also worried that funding for minority activities is linked to the existence of the integration programme (the current programme will end in 2013). Some activists claim, therefore, that the importance of the programme lies in its existence rather than in its content (Lyagu 19/05/2010). This view is telling in that it appears to confirm not only minority members' different, sometimes contradictory reasons for criticising or advocating the integration programme's aims and implementation, but also that, without the integration programme in place, there would be hardly *any* structures for the support of minority members' cultural self-realisation and participation.

The lack of legal guarantees regulating the financing of minority cultural activities is generally detrimental to the organisations' autonomy from the state. Some autonomy from state supervision is given in the form of funding provided by alternative sources, in particular kin-state funding, through foundations or in form of direct support. International initiatives, such as the Open Society Foundation and its local Open Estonian Foundation (*Avatud Eesti Fond*, AEF), have provided funding for organisations that focus on the social inclusion of minority members rather than their cultural minority interests. The AEF has provided project-based funding for a range of initiatives, also in the area of interethnic integration and specific problems of the country's North-East (for example, the AEF sponsored projects in relation to social exclusion and HIV/AIDS, which is a serious problem of the deprived areas of the Eastern periphery). Other AEF projects include the mentoring programme for teachers at Russian-language schools, which helps Russian-speaking teachers who are learning Estonian to acquire the language competence necessary for their specific needs and interests (AEF 2011). Besides assisting the integration process in this way, the AEF regularly holds competitions for project funding. Again, this does not allow minority organisations to plan effectively any long-term strategies.

The practical relevance of external funding for minority activities is high but incalculable; as minority citizens have no decision-making power in their kin-state or in other states that provide funding, funding cannot be enforced. Minority representatives in Estonia and Slovakia also emphasise the importance of support from the minority's home state both to fulfil its democratic responsibility to represent all citizens' interests, including cultural ones, and to increase the minority members' feelings of belonging to their home country. In the absence of an alternative structure for minority funding, representatives have – so far, unsuccessfully – advocated the development of more sustainable institutions that would guarantee the maintenance of organisations working in the realm of minority culture as well as minorities' broader, socio-cultural interests. The extension of base-line funding for minority organisations is at the core of the negotiations of many minority organisations with the Ministry of Culture's Minorities Council (Lyagu 19/05/2010).

An illuminating example of the problems that the dependency on project based state funding cause is provided by the Tallinn-based Taekwondo-Union (*Eesti Taekwon-*

do Liit) and Youth Association Generation (*Pokolenie/Põlvkond*) operating under the sport union's roof (Taekwondo Union 2011; KOOS 2011). The Taekwondo-Union is a young people's umbrella organisation which coordinates internationally successful Taekwondo Clubs in ten Estonian towns, and is the Estonian representation at international championships. In parallel to traditional martial arts, the Taekwondo-Union has also organised celebrations of minority national culture, including national dances, music and theatre. Today, the umbrella organisation coordinates the work of a number of national minority culture clubs, and has more recently expanded in yet another direction: among other things, in the Generation club young people engage in charity clubs working with the poor and needy in parts of Tallinn, also organising lecture series for other young people on topics of their choice. A member of LÜÜRA, the Taekwondo-Union has organised large projects where its different member organisations cooperate, such as combined young people's martial-arts- and national-minority-festivals, hosting several thousands of guests from around the globe (Kõlvart 19/05/2010; LÜÜRA 2011).

Mikhail Kõlvart, (former) president of the umbrella organisation, emphasises that the members of the various initiatives under the Taekwondo Union's roof have always understood their clubs to be 'Estonian', not 'Russian,' organisations. The Taekwondo clubs in particular have always attracted Estonian youngsters as well thanks to Kõlvart's active support for an inclusive approach in his work. Still, Kõlvart says, he is often confronted with the authorities' 'accusations' of leading a Russian organisation:

> 'I thought of having an Estonian organisation, because we participate in the World championship, we have Estonian flags, the Estonian anthem, sometimes [we win a] gold medal for Estonia, so for our country. They say we are Russian' (Kõlvart 19/05/2010).

Being assigned the 'Russian' label complicates attempts to secure funding, despite the member organisations' visible and popular activities. While the organisations' cultural, sporting and social activities have received project-based state funding, the club that organises lectures and discusses current themes is excluded from funding. In this context, Kõlvart recalls that

> 'One high-level [person] from the Ministry of Culture [said to me], of course not in the official talks, but in private: "What support do you [expect], if you have [a] Russian organisation?"' (Kõlvart 19/05/2010).

Kõlvart attributes his organisation's difficulties with funding partly to the fact that he is publishing articles criticising the state's minority policies in the Estonian media and has always been outspoken in his views on integration. Moreover, he suspects that his election as a member of Tallinn city council on *Keskerakond's* list, marking him as an opponent of the current government, might also have played a role. Interviews with representatives of other Russian-speaking organisations revealed that, particularly after April 2007, the labelling of 'Russian' organisations was applied to organisations and individuals already outspoken on politically disputed issues, particularly in the realm of integration policies (Poleshchuk 18/12/2009; Rosenfeld 07/12/2009; Ivanov 20/04/2009).

An organisation that became subject to the investigations of state services - on similar grounds as the accusations against Kõlvart's organisation - is the Youth Association *SiiN/Zdes'* ('Here'), a Russian-speakers' youth organisation which portrays itself as anti-fascist (SiiN 2011). The organisation *SiiN* both directly addresses Russian-speaking young people and explicitly aims to work on integration, albeit with an understanding different to the dominant, Estonian approach. *SiiN* is a follow up to the 'Creative Youth Union' that existed in Mustamäe between 1995-1998 (Mustamäe is a district of Tallinn with a Russian-speaking majority) and the subsequent struggles to set up a Youth Centre in the capital (Ivanov 20/04/2009). *SiiN* was founded in 2001 as a project explicitly focusing on Russian-speaking young people, with a membership in 2009 of around 500 young people who regularly or occasionally participate in the organisation's activities (Ivanov 20/04/2009). Ivanov explains that, when he founded the organisation, he was convinced that

> 'if nothing will be done for Russian youth in Estonia, soon [we'll have a] very dangerous situation. […] I knew: other Russians in Estonia know even less than me [i.e. about their own situation and the state's integration policies] – [there was a] need for an information centre for Human and Children's rights' (Ivanov 20/04/2011).

While starting off with the idea of empowering Russian-speaking young people, enabling them to stand up for their own interests and make their own demands, the

organisation now offers a broad range of activities, primarily in teaching debating and writing skills and working to foster more democratic and tolerant attitudes. *SiiN's* goals go beyond creating space for Russian-speaking young people to develop their own projects; many projects initiated by the young people aim to increase minority visibility as well as participation and access in the public sphere, for example by organising flash mobs to draw attention to their concerns; other projects directly aim at achieving recognition of and tolerance for diversity – for example, *SiiN* is a member of the Council of Europe's 'All Different – All Equal' initiative. Despite a lack of attention or a positive reception by the Estonian state, the organisation has received funding from the state in the past, and is still to some extent supported by the municipality of Tallinn as well as foundations and donors in other countries and the EU (Ivanov 20/04/2009).

However, after April 2007, when riots broke out in the centre of Tallinn involving around 1,000 young people (Brüggemann & Kasekamp 2008, p.436), *SiiN* faced serious problems with its funding situation (Rosenfeld 07/12/2009). After the April events, Mark Siryk, a young man who was the local representative of '*Nashi'* (Ours) - the nationalist youth organisations in Russia,- was identified as a member also of *SiiN*; the Estonian security police suspected also the organisation *SiiN* to have relations to Russian nationalistic forces (KAPO 2007, p.20; LICHR 2008, p.21). After the April events, several young people's organisations, as well as their individual members, were subject to Estonian Security Police investigations (*Kaitsepolitsei*, KAPO), which involved KAPO inquiries with teachers on the membership of schoolchildren in Russian-speakers' youth clubs and their potential involvement in the riots of April 2007 (Kõlvart 19/05/2010; Ivanov 20/04/2009; Poleshchuk 14/04/2009). While this has happened mostly under the pretext of the involvement of individual members of such organisations in the demonstrations or on accusations of holding contacts to organisations in Russia, it has affected large numbers of people who have not been involved in any of this, causing insecurity among many of them and deterring Russian-speakers from engaging in activities that are not solely focused on 'singing and dancing', and therefore accepted as innocuous 'minority interests' by the state (Astrov 17/05/2010; Poleshchuk 14/04/2009).

As a result of the allegations and investigations, *SiiN* lost its financial support from state institutions (*Postimees* 01/08/2007). The organisation also lost its funding from international or foreign state organisations in Europe. This was a consequence of the Estonian state insisting, in relation to other states' funding, that *SiiN* was involved in anti-state activities (Glaß 09/06/2010). This was despite the fact that even the four prominent individuals charged with inciting the protests and riots, including Siryk, were cleared of all charges by court (LICHR 2008). To date, *SiiN* has not recovered from the cuts in funding and the withdrawal of sponsors due to the accusations, despite the fact that no member of *SiiN* was found responsible for the riots or events around these (*Postimees* 01/08/2007). Moreover, the allegations of involvement had momentous effects for *SiiN* in and of themselves. Russian-speaking activists claim that these accusations deterred minority members from participating in *SiiN's* activities specifically, and Russian-speaking young people's organisations that engage in activities aimed explicitly at Russian-speakers generally (Ivanov 20/04/2009). Many young people have stayed away from the organisation, fearing that by participating they might become subject to state authorities' accusations as well (Ivanov 20/04/2009). While the details of *SiiN's* or some of its members' involvement into the riots of 2007 cannot be established here, it can be said that *SiiN* is well integrated into the existing structures of Russian-speakers who support an overall integrationist approach (Kõlvart 19/05/2010; Grigorjan 18/05/2010; Rosenfeld 07/12/2009). The organisation also participates in local-level integration activities, such as Tallinn's integration strategy Civic Peace.

Crucially, it is difficult for minority activists to identify what is considered by the authorities to be 'political activity' or 'protest', and what requirements an organisation needs to comply with in order to receive state funding without encountering the problems Kõlvart's and Ivanov's organisations currently face. Several of my interview partners have claimed that Russian-speakers in general have been very cautious and reluctant to engage in any activities in the aftermath of the April events. Policy changes that facilitated the revocation of citizenship status from the naturalised, the formerly stateless, or from citizens of Russia have made the potential consequences of activities that are perceived as 'anti-state' by the Estonian authorities tangible. The control of minority civic and political organisations increased after 2004, and did so again after April 2007. This development was paralleled by a

decrease in the preparedness for dialogue with minority organisations on the side of the government and state authorities.

The situation was different during Estonia's run-up to EU accession, when the requirements for compliance with international expectations regarding the formal inclusion of minority perspectives into policy making and international organisations' efforts to facilitate the reduction of intergroup tensions had allowed for more consultations between state and Russian-speakers. In this process, thanks to its embeddedness in international networks, one organisation, the *Inimõiguste Teabekeskus* (Legal Information Centre for Human Rights, LICHR), was able to position itself – at least temporarily – as an organisation that the Estonian authorities could not ignore. The LICHR is among the most important and most renowned civic organisations in Estonia working on the facilitation of political change, even though it is not an organisation that aims at directly political representation. Since 1994, the LICHR has provided minority advocacy and has been the leading minority institution independently monitoring Estonian legislation and policy implementation from a human rights and international-legal perspective. It has a wide international network and cooperates, among others, with the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, the OSCE, the CoE, and the United Nations Human Rights Committee (LICHR 2011). While it has successfully drawn the attention of scholars and minority rights protection institutions across Europe to the situation of Russian-speaking non-citizens in Estonia, the organisation's advocacy activities towards the state have remained without direct legal response. National political actors have repeatedly taken up invitations of the LICHR to engage in the exchange of opinions, particularly on the integration process during EU accession; occasionally, the LICHR has cooperated with the former Minister of Ethnic and Population Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture and others after 2004.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the LICHR gained both national and international recognition as a major institution supporting the integration process in Estonia, when the centre organised roundtable meetings, inviting representatives of the Estonian government, minority representatives and members of European institutions to discuss and potentially negotiate further steps in the recently initiated integration strategy. The LICHR attempted to establish a continuous dialogue and achieve

inclusion of Russian-speakers into the discussion of the aims and steps of the integration strategy, as well as in a long-term perspective to make the Estonian political elite sympathetic to the argument for the importance of Russian-speakers' inclusion into agenda-setting and decision making (Poleshchuk 2002; Poleshchuk 2001b; Poleshchuk 2001a). It seized the opportunity in the years preceding Estonia's accession to the EU, which linked to the increased attention European organisations then paid to interethnic stability and compliance with human and minority rights criteria of the accession countries. However, these efforts did not induce genuine dialogue. Poleshchuk, author of the LICHR roundtable reports, recalls that 'by the third roundtable meeting, participants were merely repeating their earlier statements', and no party was prepared to accommodate the other (14/04/2009). This experience is shared by many activists from other politically-oriented groups, who claim to have attempted to initiate dialogue with the authorities; the state's refusal to change its approach to citizenship and language legislation left minority members feeling unable to change their own position, which in their view already constituted a sensible solution to ongoing problems (Grigorjan 18/05/2010).

The LICHR stands out among the NGOs in that its work is shaped by the synergy of the legal support for minority members, the expertise from monitoring policies and the co-operation with ministries and other political actors. The organisation's main focus is on legal activities. In its capacity as a legal advisory organisation it has, for example, defended many of the persons charged during the riots in Tallinn in 2007; it has also been leading constitutional court cases related to linguistic discrimination of Russian-speaking inmates in Estonian prisons and cases of arbitrariness of the Estonian legal framework with respect to minority members' equality with majority members. The organisations' publications engage with the individual, that is human rights perspective on Estonia's minority-related legislation and has been cautious not to touch upon the issue of group-based rights.

Although the results of the LICHR's work are of political significance, it is not a political organisation per se. In contrast to the organisation's self-portrayal and the foci of its work, the Estonian national authorities have repeatedly argued that LICHR is a political organisation in an attempt to undermine its reputation as an observer and analyst, particularly after 2004 (Poleshchuk 18/12/2009; 14/04/2009; KAPO

2009). The LICHR's director, Alexei Semjonov was a founding member of the Representative Assembly and a member of the Presidential Roundtable for National Minorities between 1993 and 2006. The Estonian authorities have made serious allegations against Semjonov, claiming that he and his organisation were acting 'for Russia'. In the Security Service's (KAPO) Annual Report of 2009 this is highlighted again. Referring to a visit of the head of the Department of Foreign Relations of the Moscow City Government, Georgiy Muradov, to the Russian embassy in Tallinn, the KAPO report asserts that the (secret) aim of the visit was to consult with local Russian-speakers how to form a political list, with Semjonov as the leader. The report then claims that Semjonov was an 'understandable' choice,

> 'as he is a person dealing with the subject of human rights from the position of Russia and his activity is being financed from Moscow. According to the annual report of the Legal Information Centre for Human Rights, financial support from the Embassy of Russian Federation formed nearly half of the total support to their projects in 2008' (KAPO 2009, p.12).

No such list was created and therefore (the KAPO report claims) a promised 'motivational package of over 10 million EEK' was never transferred (ibid.). As with earlier allegations against Russian-speakers, it would go beyond the purpose of this thesis to investigate the details of the events that are referred to here. At least two aspects are striking, however: first, the fact that no such political organisation was created was not explained by the authorities by the simple argument that Semjonov has always emphasised that he was not interested in a political career (Poleshchuk 14/04/2009). Second, the problematic situation of receiving funding from the Estonian state for organisations that have maintained a critical attitude towards aspects of Estonia's democratisation is not taken into account by KAPO (LICHR 2011). These two aspects once again demonstrate the vulnerable position of Russian-speakers' organisations in relation to the Estonian state.

Conclusions

The dominant approach of minority organisations to state-society relations in the sphere of voluntary activism mirrors the general 'desétatisation' that Lagerspetz, Rikmann and Ruutsoo (2002) identified with respect to societal level organisation in Estonia in general: Many societal level actors welcome the funding that supports

their work and aim to increase these in order to optimise their situation. At the same time, this situation 'depoliticises' the relations between societal actors and the state, by making minority organisations fulfillers of the state's strategy for Estonian multiculturalism while leaving aside those society level activities that have the potential to develop alternative scenarios for interethnic relations – and state-society relations more generally (Agarin 2010). As a consequence of the de-politicisation of state-society relations, political organisation in turn becomes an undesirable aspect of societal level organisation. This is reflected in the funding situation of as well as in the co-operation of state institutions with those Russian-speakers' organisations that have attempted to change the situation of minority members by helping the state understand the group's problems and overcome alienation from the integration and democratisation process.

9.5 Stirrings of a social movement of Russian-speakers in Estonia?

In recent years, in the absence of political and civic structures to channel minority discontent, two grassroots movements were generated by Russian-speakers in Estonia. This section analyses their backgrounds and the reasons for their failure or political weakness.

In recent years, Russian-speakers' activism has been most visible in relation to the widely debated events around and in the aftermath of the so-called 'Bronze Soldier Crisis', or the 'April events' of 2007. Said crisis unfolded around the relocation of a Soviet-era monument and small cemetery of war victims in the centre of Tallinn, which had become a 'locus of identification' for Russian-speakers, who used the monument as the site to commemorate the 9 May, or 'Victory Day', following this tradition from the Soviet period (Burch & Smith 2007, p.914). The demonstrations of commemoration had grown over the early 2000s, after the luridly-named 'war of monuments' increased. Disputes over the commemoration of various groups who fought in the Second World War had developed over the 1990s, and grew in significance when small groups of Estonian radical nationalists set up a monument of an Estonian soldier from the second World War depicting Nazi symbols, and a

plaque commemorating the attempted fight 'against Bolshevism and for the restoration of Estonian independence' and similar monuments (ibid., 913). The statue was removed by the Estonian government, then concerned about its international reputation, in turn causing outrage among the Estonian radical nationalists. Following a widely supported argument against 'totalitarianism', the government came under pressure from other, less radical strands of the nationalist spectrum of society, which demanded that if symbols of Nazism were removed, those of Communism would have to be removed too (ibid.). This sentiment was picked up during the election campaign of 2007, when Prime Minister Andrus Ansip of *Reformierakond* acted against both the coalition partner *Keskerakond* and the Tallinn city government, under whose jurisdiction the monument stood, by issuing legislation that entitled the government to remove the Bronze Soldier from the centre of Tallinn (Brüggemann & Kasekamp 2008, p.435). Ansip's strong stance on the monument issue, and his eventual decision to remove it, are held as main reasons for the victory of *Reformierakond* (ibid.).

By April 2007, Russian-speakers had become active, but largely in an unorganised way and without any clearly defined agenda or strategies. However, they appeared in the streets and voiced their protest and discontent with the government's plans to remove the monument in an unprecedented manner. Young people organised a 24-hour vigil to protect the monument, which had also been spattered with red paint by anti-communists (Burch & Smith 2007). In an unannounced move, the government fenced off the site on 26 April 2007, started with the excavations of the corpses. It was in this context that even larger crowds of people gathered around the monument, estimations suggest around 1,000 people (Brüggemann & Kasekamp 2008, p.436; LICHR 2008). In the evening, the crowd of mostly young people moved to the old town of Tallinn, which is in walking distance to the monument site, and began destroying car and shop windows and looting shops. The next morning the government decided to immediately relocate the monument, which led to further protests. These included many Russian-speakers using 15-minute car-honking as a form of civic disobedience, co-ordinated by word of mouth; riots occurred in Tallinn for two more nights, and were eventually suppressed by the police (ibid., Ivanov 20/04/2009). The events came as a shock to many people living in Estonia, especially

since the country is considered to be a 'peaceful' one; the non-violent path to independence in 1991 is referred to in this context.

While some organisations had existed and mobilised in parallel to the events, and a number of activists and political entrepreneurs attempted to exploit the large scale mobilisation for their own political benefit, most protesters were in the streets due to informal mobilisation of private social networks, not because of overtly political mobilisation through organisations. The unwonted way of mobilising collective action, however short-lived in the shape it took at its peak in April 2007, makes it particularly interesting to observers of Russian-speakers' activism in Estonia. In the aftermath of the Bronze night, the idea of an emerging social movement could be heard frequently (Sõtnik 04/08/2009). While the collective action of Russian-speakers around the events does carry characteristics of movements, a common agenda is hard to identify. Moreover, those predicting a more sustainable minority rights movement have, so far, been proved wrong.

In subsequent years, demonstrations to commemorate the fallen of the Second World War have taken place, but so far no new riots erupted in connection with them. While some attribute this to the suppression of protest at state level, processes among the minority groups also need to be taken into account (Lauristin et al. 2008). Unsurprisingly, the 'minority nationalist' views promoted by some put off many moderates among the supporters. While many also distance themselves from the riots, seeing them as indecent behaviour or fearing that the rioting of some mislead youngsters could have negative repercussions for all Russian-speakers, large parts among the Russian-speaking group still feel that, as soon as their former 'silent' and tolerated form of claiming public space became politicised, the public space was taken away from them. Moderate views also regarding the question of commemoration are still expressed by some activists in the civic sphere; however, many protesters have so far withdrawn completely, or continue their commemoration practices without expressing contention (Grigorjan 18/05/2010; Astrov 17/05/2010).

This does not mean that contention has disappeared. And although sociological studies argue that many Russian-speakers' 'anti-Estonian (state)' attitudes are very much protest attitudes, these could turn into more lasting politics of contention in

times of renewed direct action against highly valued institutions of Russian-speakers (Lauristin et al. 2008). With the second integration programme in place for a few years already, promising a number of improvements with regards to funding minority activities, it remains to be seen to what extend they will have been realised at the end of the implementation period 2013. Crucially, the disappointment with minority policies is represented not only among 'minority nationalists'; also the moderates' expectations towards the Estonian state have not been met, leaving large parts of the Russian-speaking community neither satisfied in their demands regarding social access, political participation and cultural rights, nor provided with any structures to support their cause. Alexander Dusman of the Ida-Virumaa Integration Roundtable is convinced that in case of ongoing separation of majority and minority in all fields, 'the "Bronze night" will repeat again and again', with uncertain outcomes (16/12/2009).

Concern about possible, future riots is what leads politicians and experts to engage in discussions on how to avert the expression of minority discontent in this form (Dusman 16/12/2009; Korts 24/04/2009; Vetik 17/04/2009). Public debate during and in the aftermath of the events has emphasised the Estonian-Russian conflict and has given much attention to the organisations and political activists who claimed to represent the movement and appalled many Estonians with their views. A small number of academics and experts made the effort to study these events more thoroughly, portraying the events from other perspectives. Some scholars tend to view the 'Bronze Soldier Crisis' in connection with the study of commemoration and the politics of memory, seeing these as being of primary importance to Russian-speakers, as many observers do (Sõtnik 04/08/2009). One group of authors thus embeds the events in larger, non-minority related debates on the 'crimes of communism' or 'new states coming to terms with their pasts' (Brüggemann & Kasekamp 2008); others focus, more narrowly, on the Estonian debate on the representation of history and memory in the public arena (Ehala 2009). Yet other scholars explain the events by recurring to the international and/or domestic political situation, i.e. the tensions between Estonia and the Russian Federation, or the relations between Estonia and its minorities (LICHR 2008).

While memory and collective commemoration, as well as the political tensions between Estonian and Russia, undeniably play an important role in the course of the debates and events, some authors also draw attention to the counter-intuitive fact that the largest part of protesters in the demonstrations of 2006 and 2007 were young people, not veterans or the direct descendents of those who fought in the war, nor those born in Russia (ibid.). In most Estonian sources this is explained by reference to 'Russian influence and propaganda' through the Russian media or the infiltration of Russian-speakers' organisations (KAPO 2007, p.8); I argue, however, that this explanation disregards domestic reasons for the eruption of conflict among young people in particular, and fails to provide a comprehensive understanding of minority activism.

The same can be said, ultimately, about perspectives that interpret minority-majority relations as largely unproblematic. Ehala, for example, terms the late 1990s as 'honeymoon' of Russian-speakers and Estonian-speakers, and the years 2000-2004 as years of 'integration' (Ehala 2009). This view, I suggest, is in danger of underestimating the discontent of Russian-speakers with their situation and with their role in Estonian society, even in times when surveys indicated a significant accommodation of Estonians and Russian-speakers with regard to their values.[6] For some parts of the Russian-speaking population, the situation as well as their chances in society improved as a result of the softening of minority policies, particularly under international leverage and in the economic boom which also positively affected the group. However, this could be called an improvement only in comparison to an earlier, less satisfactory condition: this in no way indicates that the present condition is wholly 'satisfactory.'

The 'years of integration' were characterised by policies and rhetoric of integration, which entailed the promise of significant improvement of the social situation for the minority population. However, this promise was not kept. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, many Russian-speakers expected that the process of EU accession would significantly improve the situation for Russian-speakers (Kõlvart 19/05/2009; Ivanov 18/05/2009; Sõtnik 04/08/2009; Jershov/Bogdanova 23/04/2009). Yet, they were

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[6] Ehala speaks of identity rather than values, the understanding of which he, however, leaves undefined (Ehala 2009).

disappointed (Grigorjan 18/05/2010). Finding that Russian-speakers were still not included in decision-making processes or accepted as equals with Estonians in society, and that group belonging continued to determine their chances in society, EU accession came as a setback to the group. When in 2007 the first integration programme was coming to an end, and its implementation had not been satisfying from a minority perspective, a sea-change in minority politics was not to be expected from the new integration programme that was being worked on at the time.

What had become clear in the eyes of many Russian-speakers was that, irrespective of their accommodation with the majority society or their activities as a group, they were not heard or responded to by the government. This only appeared to be confirmed when the authorities continued to ignore the increasing mobilisation. To be sure, collective commemoration as part of a 'traditional' practice among Russian-speakers had been performed without attention by the authorities for years, but also without policies undermining or prohibiting the demonstrations. Brüggemann and Kasekamp (2008) suggest that this can be seen as part of a process of 'democratising history'. But, although a tolerated form of expressing group-based values in the public sphere, these demonstrations were also never *more* than tolerated. Decisively, when since 2006 a political agenda was tied to the collective action around commemoration and memory, the authorities no longer 'tolerated' the demonstrations.

The politicisation of the movement did not (only) take place in the form of minority political entrepreneurs attempting to shape the mobilised individuals into a more coherent political force. Instead, I argue that, over the course of events, a shift took place transforming a loose and unorganised form of collective commemoration into a politicised form of collective contention. The collective commemoration had turned into the expression of the clear statement of Russian-speakers that '*we are here*' (Astrov 17/05/2010). It was the ignorance with which the authorities reacted to this statement that caused outrage among Russian-speakers, eventually leading to their escalation. It is crucial to understand that the government's decision to move the monument, which had become the focal point of the early stirrings of Russian-speakers self-empowerment, without consulting any minority representatives did not

take place in a state of 'honeymoon' of state-minority relations.[7] On the contrary, it fell on top of the experience of unchanged minority policies, almost two decades of exclusion from decision-making, and newly disappointed hopes; the direct rejection of Russian-speakers' collective expression of the importance of the monument to their group thus added humiliation to exclusion.

This is not to argue that the politicisation of the monument is the result of the government's decisions alone. Instead, politicisation was very much a process taking place within the minority group itself. With minority party politics in ruins, civic-political activities undermined and unacknowledged, and forms of cultural practice being limited to those matching the Estonian concept of the minority, these demonstrations became a place to express the subsurface discomfort with precisely the alleged accommodation, and be present as a group with values and interests not represented in politics and society.

> 'It [i.e. the monument] was a place where they [i.e. the Russian-speakers] could come, show off, what you do at state events actually, and the Estonians do that in the Opera hall and televised and all the rest, and the Russians did it this way, because what was important to them was that they did it themselves, no one was telling them […], and in this way it kind of grew in significance' (Astrov 07/05/2010).

In other words, Russian-speakers viewed the treatment of the monument as symbolic of the treatment of their group in Estonian society: Though in the centre of the capital, the monument was only tolerated, never accepted, by the dominant group. Its removal therefore expressed symbolically, and ultimately practically, the wider containment of minority self-empowerment. At the same time, the protesters have not been able to frame their demands with regard to this desire for their inclusion into the decision-making based on their belonging to the place and to society. Instead, they were viewed as mobilising on the basis of anti-Estonian politics of memory, and some of the most visible political activists tried to exploit exactly this divide.

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[7] It is widely agreed that most Russian-speakers were open to discussing the relocation of the monument in general, but demanded there be a dialogue between the authorities and Russian-speakers' representatives on the circumstances of such relocation. The acceptance of the monument being in its new place, expressed in the annual events of commemoration there in recent years, supports this.

The frail stirrings of what could have become a social movement thus faded without being able to develop, both as a result of suppression and the lack of sustainable action frames. It remains unclear exactly how the discontent that has remained unanswered will be channelled and expressed in the future, as these protesters continue not to have access to institutional proceedings and cannot draw upon functioning minority political structures to represent their interests. On the other hand, observers agree that it was the 2007 events that made Estonian-speaking experts and politicians working on integration realise that 'something had gone wrong' (Dusman 16/12/2009; Korts 24/04/2009). Recent years, however, have not witnessed a significant change in *the approach* to integration, but rather in the *rhetoric* of those responsible for integration policies and implementation. While many of my respondents agree that the integration strategy in place may have the potential to include a part of the Russian-speaking population, and there are signs that this is an ongoing process for certain segments of the group (Lauristin et al. 2008), they also fear that if no genuine shift in integration policies is taken in the near future, large segments will continue to be 'left out'. This, they argue, makes it likely that more riots will take place.

The weakness of the political representation of Russian-speakers has again become clear in relation to the development of a visible, but relatively small and politically weak movement that opposes the form and specific content of the reform of Russian-language schools. Over the past five years, the future of Russian-language education in Estonia has become one of the issues most discussed among the Russian-speaking community. Responding to the ongoing exclusion of parents, teachers and students from the decision-making on the Minority School Reform (LICHR 2010), a small but active movement has evolved. The movement is relatively heterogeneous, supported by grassroots and local parents' initiatives, established minority representative bodies, as well as Russian-speakers' parties and the Russian-speaking members of mainstream parties. Besides these local and individual supporters, the movement has also generated an organisation aiming to channel and represent the Russian-speakers' perspectives in the process. The organisation *Russkaya Shkola v E'stonii* (Russian School in Estonia, RUSHKE) was formed in Tartu in reaction to the (later realised) plans to close Tartu's Russian-language secondary school, and has since been transformed into a nation-wide association, working from Tallinn.

Although the fear of linguistic assimilation and loss of mother tongue is an important reason for some people to oppose the reform, the general idea of the reform is received increasingly well by the Russian-speaking population (LICHR 2010). Criticism and protest focus primarily on the form of implementation of the reform. RUSHKE and other organisations and individuals of this small movement tend to criticise the fact that most decisions concerning the fate of Russian schooling in Estonia are made without consulting and accommodating the concerns of parents, or the population in general (Ossinovski 2011). Moreover, in the state's refusal to engage in building a compromise between the demands of Russian-speakers and the state's programmatic direction, activists see the constitutional rights of minority members violated. They argue that, although the parliament had made changes to the original law on basic and upper secondary schooling (Schools Act 1993), allowing for the schools to choose their primary language of tuition, this was circumvented by Tartu City authorities and led to the closure of the oldest Russian-language secondary school in Estonia, causing insecurity among parents, pupils, teachers and employees (Postimees 09/09/2006). Thus, while identity issues play a role for many, minority activists and politicians frame their argument against the changes in the educational system. They make these arguments not on ethnic grounds, but instead on the basis that they are excluded from decision-making on issues that directly concern them, in many cases from being citizens of Estonia, e.g. by an appeal to 'democratic values'.

While the protests and initiatives are still ongoing, judging from previous interaction of minority representatives with the authorities, prospects for their inclusion in decision-making are limited. The negative signals the ill-prepared reform sent to minority members and the rigidity with which Former Education Minister Tõnis Lukas for *Isamaaliit* (Pro Patria Union) (2007-2011) has pushed through the reform's implementation have left minority members very vulnerable. Minority activists feel their fears of assimilation have been confirmed, and that the reform is aimed to abolish Russian schooling altogether, especially since the only Russian-language schools in Loksa and Rakvere were closed in 2009 and 2010 respectively (LICHR 2010).

It is still too early to tell whether the movement around the school reform will be able to consolidate itself, become a strong actor, and develop a mobilising appeal to the Russian-speaking community. Experience with earlier attempts to achieve change has left minority members frustrated and disillusioned; this is reflected in many Russian-speakers' perceptions of RUSHKE and their assumptions about the movement's prospects. Moreover, as the government has already begun implementing the dismantling of Russian schooling, the minority demands assume an ever weaker position.

The government's reactions to the expressions of general protest around the Bronze soldier event, as well as the movement around the school reform, are characterised by the ignorance of Russian-speakers' concerns. In a similar vein as the efforts to build political representation for Russian-speakers, these movements are declared illegitimate and even criminal.[8] In effect, societal level organisation of Russian-speakers has been acceptable for the Estonian state only as part of the 'division of labour' with regard to Estonia's strategy for multiculturalism. As discussed in earlier chapters, the latter does not entail a comprehensive strategy to increase interaction and co-operation between the groups. Rather, it depoliticises societal level activities. As a result, group interaction is depoliticised also, which impedes the debate on and the overcoming of intergroup antagonisms. It is a consequence of this Estonian approach to integration and multiculturalism that neither the strategy to form umbrella organisations in order to enhance group representatives' legitimacy and pursue a coherent minority agenda nor the formation of a collective minority actor on a single issue has succeeded in establishing a societal level representation for the Russian-speaking minority. Despite the failure of all such attempts to date, minority organisations continue to cooperate with state institutions in the fields where they can, that is minority culture. While this in effect stabilises the system, many minority activists do not see an alternative to co-operating with the state in this realm, since it is the only support they get from the state. In light of the amount and complexity of the problems of interethnic integration in Estonia, this is not much.

[8] Public opinion polls suggest that the majority of Estonians saw the riots in Tallinn in 2007 as criminal acts, while most Russian-speakers interpreted them – even if many did not agree with the means – as acts of protest against government policy (Lauristin et al. 2008).

9.6 Parallel structures of societal activism? Minority organisations in Slovakia

This section examines the developments in the organisation of Hungarian cultural activities in Slovakia and the emergence of structures that exist largely separate from or in parallel to other Slovak societal level organisations. The chapter does not cover the interaction of Slovaks and Hungarians *within* organisations; it only alludes to questions of interaction between majority and minority organisations outside the realm of minority-related issues.[9]

The development of societal level organisation in Slovakia only really set in after 1989. Initially on the basis of Czechoslovak law from 1960, which was replaced by a new law in 1990, the first foundations were formed in order to support the generation of societies and associations, charity and grassroots organisations. This was also the case for Hungarian organisations. One of the first Hungarian foundations was the *Márai Sándor Alapítvány* (Sándor Márai Foundation) set up in Dunajská Streda in 1990.[10] The foundation has focused on conflict resolution, human rights and interethnic relations in the Carpathian Basin. As part of its activities, the Foundation has led research projects on these issues and organised conferences as well as trainings to promote and facilitate interethnic dialogue (Lexikon 2011). In 1993, Hungarian activists set up the *Fórum Alapítvány* (Forum Foundation), aiming to promote and strengthen the civic sector in Slovakia (Lexikon 2011). The *Fórum Alapítvány* facilitated the establishment of a large number of regional branches of the Foundation, which co-ordinate the local projects of Hungarian minority members. It also acted as a programme initiator and co-ordinator; for example, it organised regional meetings of representatives of majority and minority groups as part of a Slovak-Hungarian Dialogue programme 1993 and initiated 'multicultural weekend programmes for families' in the capital Bratislava and in Košice, a large town in the east of the country, between 1993 and 1995 (ibid.). The *Fórum Alapítvány* also

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[9] Interaction within organisations that do not focus on ethno-cultural activities or on questions related to minority policies is normal for many minority and majority members, especially where minority members are also a local minority and live largely 'integrated' with Slovaks on the basis of common interests that are not related to minority policies, while co-operation functions on the basis of the common, Slovak language (Lampl 24/09/2009; Golha/Hajdok/Havran 18/06/2009).

[10] For a list of the foundation's activities between 1990-2000, see (Hunčík 2001).

initiated the establishing of the *Fórum Kissebbségkutató Intézet/Fórum inštitút pre výskum menšín* (Forum Minority Research Institut, FKI) in Šamorín in 1996, whose activities will be discussed in more detail below. Said foundations were established largely by activists within or close to the Independent Hungarian Initiative (FMK) (Tóth 23/09/2009; Öllös 23/09/2009). The task of these organisations was to research, strengthen and support Hungarian minority organisations with an interest in Slovakia's social and democratic development, the regional development of southern Slovakia, and the community formation of the Hungarian minority as a group. As Károly Tóth, current director of the FKI, puts it,

> 'They wanted to create a local civil society, to generate local community [formation] and [organise] civil society' (Tóth 23/09/2009).

This is still the remit of the *Fórum Intézet* (Forum Institute) in Šamorín (Fórum Intézet 2011). The Forum Institute unites the FKI (founded in 2002), the *Fórum Információs Központ/Fórum informačné centrum* (Forum Information Centre, FIK) and the *Fórum Régiófejlesztési Központ/Fórum centrum pre regionálny rozvoj* (Forum Regional Development Centre, FRK) (both established in 1999, FIK 2011; FRK 2011). It functions as a 'hub' for Hungarian society-level organisation and co-operation, and provides the most important interface between the Hungarian minority community and the state.

The Information Centre FIK informs about processes related to society level organisation and provides services, training and connecting activists and organisation primarily in southern Slovakia. It co-operates with other minority institutions, for example, to provide training in project management and related skills required for work in non-governmental organisations, thereby aiming to make Hungarian civic and social activism sustainable for the future (Tóth 23/09/2009; organisation's website). The work of the FIK has led, among other initiatives, to the formation of a new *Občianske fórum* (Civil Forum) in 2007. The aim of the association is to identify problems faced by Hungarian organisations in Slovakia, increase the networking between individual organisations and inform about funding opportunities and so on (Občianske fórum 2008). The Regional Development Centre FRK engages mainly in research and think-tank activities in the support of southern Slovakia's regional development. In its capacity as the leading institution on the issue, it has co-operated

with the Ministry of Regional Development, and has also worked closely with the Hungarian parties (Öllös 23/09/3009). The FRK is also involved in cross-border co-operation and develops and implements projects within the Euroregion framework (FRK 2011). These activities entail close co-operation with partners in Hungary, but also in Romania, Ukraine and other countries in the region.

The work of the Minority Research Institute FKI is particularly important, as it works in three directions, making it the single most important civic institution for the development of interethnic relations in Slovakia. First, the FKI supports the development of local initiatives and the growth of Hungarian civil society in Slovakia by producing original research and research output on the Hungarian minority, providing structural and organisational support in the setting up of initiatives and constituting a meeting point for activists through conferences. Second, the FKI is one of the very few minority organisations in Slovakia cooperating with and recognised as a partner on interethnic issues by Slovak civil society organisations and state institutions; it also aims to contribute to the development of Slovak civil society generally. Third, the FKI's political and sociological research and co-operation with actors in Slovakia, Hungary and other countries with a sizable Hungarian minority is designed to feed into its function as a minority think tank for the active development of Hungarian civil society and the Hungarian community (Öllös 23/09/3009; Tóth 23/09/2009).

The FKI's own research focuses on questions of conflict resolution, multiculturalism and nationalism, but it also engages in the documentation, historiography and cultural anthropology of the Hungarian population in (southern) Slovakia specifically, and in the Carpathian basin more generally (Fórum Intézet 2011). In its capacity as a facilitator and centre for interethnic dialogue and co-operation, the FKI regularly holds conferences to debate issues of Slovak-Hungarian domestic and bilateral relations or questions of multiculturalism. In this context, there is a close connection to the members of the Slovak-Hungarian historical commission that aims to develop between the two communities a dialogue on history in order to facilitate long-term reconciliation (Šutaj/Homišinová 23/06/2009). Moreover, many Hungarian and non-Hungarian researchers at universities in Bratislava, Nitra, and Komárno co-operate closely with the FKI to support the academic debate on

minority issues and provide analyses of current social and political developments (Lampl 24/09/2009; Öllös 23/09/2009; Gyurgyik 24/06/2009; 16/04/2008). Furthermore, there is some limited co-operation with Slovak think-tanks such as the IVO Institute for Public Affairs, the Open Society Foundation in Slovakia (Nadácia otvorenej spoločnosti) and the *Centrum pre výskum etnicity a kultúry* (Centre for the Research of Ethnicity and Culture, CVEK) in Bratislava, to name just a few, though such co-operation is project-based or even limited to one-off conferences and workshops (Petőcz 23/09/2009; Vašečka 20/08/2008).

The FKI also functions as a 'minority think-tank' (Öllös 23/09/2009). In this context, researchers at the FKI have authored the programme of the MKP (Hungarian Coalition Party) in 1998, and have continuously co-operated with Hungarian parties on political aims and strategies to improve the minority situation in Slovakia (ibid.). The FKI has been cautious to remain an independent, non-partisan organisation, even though individual members have, at times, been active in local politics. Moreover, a long-term researcher at the FKI, Kálmán Petőcz, accepted a diplomatic position under the Dzurinda-government and the position of Director General of the Government Office of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights and Equal Treatment (*Úrad vlády Slovenskej republiky – Sekcia l'udských práv a rovnakého zaobchádzania*) under the Radičová-government. Overall, the FKI has made an effort to remain outside of the political process, but individual co-operation partners have also sought more direct routes into the political system of the Slovak Republic (Öllös 23/09/2009; Tóth 23/09/2009).

In 2009, the FKI has become directly involved with civic mobilisation when it initiated the formation of the Roundtable of the Hungarian Civil Society in Slovakia. This was a response to the limitations of the formal political representation of the Hungarians after mid-2006 and the weakness of the Hungarian political opposition in face of the increasingly nationalist policies of the Fico government. Based on the good organisational structure and internal co-operation of Hungarian societal level organisation, in January 2009 about 50 organisations representing civic activists and various segments and interest groups from the Hungarian population formed the Roundtable of Hungarians in Slovakia (*Okrúhly stôl Mad'arov na Slovensku*). Recognising the limitations of political parties, however, these civil society actors

aim to function as the political representation of the Hungarian community proper, independent of fluctuations in political power relations, and to critically support the Hungarian parties (Kálmán Petőcz 23/09/2009).

Petőcz, one of the main initiators of the Roundtable, explains why he is convinced a civil society representation in the political sphere is necessary:

> '[The Roundtable] was created exactly because there was a need to articulate the views, the opinions and the interests of the Hungarian minority as such, the Hungarian minority as a societal community in Slovakia. [...] In the time of the creation of the Roundtable, there was only one party and we needed [...] a forum that should represent or just voice the opinions of the Hungarian civil society in Slovakia' (ibid.).

The immediate trigger for the formation of the Roundtable was the Fico-government's plan to amend the Slovak State Language Law. However, it has also acted in relation to other policy changes, such as the regulation that a Slovak citizen who accepts the citizenship of another state will lose their Slovak citizenship (see *aktuálne.sk* 31/05/2010). Although the roundtable's main objective is to 'increase co-operation and dialogue on the future of the Hungarian community', and to oppose the 'process of assimilation' (Tóth 2009), the organisers particularly felt the need to respond *politically* to political developments under the Fico government (Petőcz 23/09/2009). The government's decision to amend the State Language Act from 1995 and (re-)introduce further constraints to minority language usage and penalise this in certain cases was met with petitions condemning the effect the law would allegedly have on minority members as well as on interethnic relations in the country, and a direct address to the President of the Republic not to sign the amendment to the law. In response to the amendment to the Citizenship the Roundtable planned to take the regulation to the Constitutional Court.

Articulation of the Hungarian community's opinions aims to establish a dialogue with the Slovak community, and particularly its political elite. It is meant as a step towards increasing and easing interaction between Slovaks and Hungarians, which at all levels of social and political life is relatively rare. Moreover, the Roundtable has only partly followed an agenda that has focused less on the outside and the channelling of the Hungarian community's perceptions, opinions and demands to the

outside; at the same time it aims to develop further the Hungarian community in order to strengthen it. The initiators of the Roundtable argue that discussion within the community was limited, and although there had been some debate on community issues within the MKP, there was a lack of engagement with the topics of assimilation, regional development, and education in the community itself (Petőcz 23/09/2009). Whereas other organisations exist that function as an umbrella platform for Hungarian civic organisations working on more specific matters of NGOs, such as the Civil Forum mentioned above, the Roundtable is intended to encourage a debate about the future of the Hungarian community among the whole Hungarian group (Petőcz 23/09/2009).

Apart from its regular activities, the roundtable has organised protests that received the active support of large parts of the Hungarian community. Most visibly, it was involved in the organisation and support of a rally against the Language Act in Dunajská Streda in September 2009, which was attended by around 10,000 protesters (BBC News 02/09/2009). While majority parties criticised the protests as minority-nationalistic, the Roundtable representatives are eager to frame their protest in democratic terms:

> '[…] it's simply in a democratic country […] quite natural […] that if you feel that your rights are taken away, […] you have to defend your rights. That's a basic rule of a democratic society: that you simply have to stand up for your rights, because if you don't do that, then you cannot expect any kind of positive change' (Petőcz 23/09/2009).

The Roundtable was recognised as the representation of the Hungarian community and a serious civic-political actor by the Fico government, and its representatives repeatedly met with the Minister of Culture and other government officials to discuss planned legislative changes. The Roundtable representatives also consulted with representatives of international organisations such as the CoE and the OSCE, who have accepted the Roundtable as a contact partner for issues concerning the minority situation in Slovakia (Petőcz 23/09/2009; Tóth 23/09/2009; Öllös 23/09/2009). The Roundtable is actively supported by the work of other NGOs and by professional and cultural organisations. Although these other organisations also engage in the public debate on political issues, they normally do not engage in direct action for political change, but communicate preferences for political change to the political

representation of the minority community (CSEMADOK 2006). The Roundtable is the only Hungarian organisation in Slovakia that functions as a political representative and aims to foster the inclusion of Hungarians in the decision-making on matters that concern them specifically (cf. *aktuálne.sk* 31/05/2010). Overall, the roundtable has been successful in that it established an efficient and well-organised representation, and was able to quickly build channels to communicate their concerns and demands to governmental representatives, even under adverse conditions (i.e. with the SNS in government). In its work the Roundtable has successfully mobilised already well-developed structures of Hungarian civil society and coordinated existing links and contacts with the authorities. Despite its mobilisation potential, the Roundtable has been less successful in evoking policy change during the time of the Fico government.

The relative success of the Roundtable and the many activities of the individual organisations at the *Fórum Intézet*, in particular in comparison to the developments of societal level organisation of Russian-speakers in Estonia, must be seen in the context of the development and funding situation of Hungarian organisations in general. During most of the 1990s, these foundations (both Slovak and 'Hungarian') depended largely on foreign and domestic donors, and their situation became increasingly difficult under the Mečiar-governments. A law of 1996 limited the use of financial means in an attempt to weaken the potential of the foundations (Green 2002, p.460). The efforts by the Mečiar-government to undermine its political opponents, however, even led to a strengthening of non-governmental organisational development. Foundations, associations, societies and individual organisations that supported a broad liberal-democratic agenda constituted an important factor enabling political change in 1998 (Bútora & Bútorová 1999). Hungarian organisations were part of the 'Civic Campaign – O.K.'98', a broad, non-partisan association that promoted democratic change in Slovakia, by which they meant, among other things, the electorate's increased awareness of political processes and the importance of participation therein, and the aim of increasing 'civil society's' impact on public debate (WMD 1998). However, although Hungarians and Slovaks shared many goals in 1998, the co-operation within the network was also limited to these goals and did not result in the long-term integration of civic initiatives (Tóth 23/09/2009; Mesežnikov 14/04/2008).

The situation for civic engagement and societal level organisation improved when the democratic Dzurinda-government entered government (Demeš 2001). The Hungarian community also benefited from this development. Moreover, a number of policy decisions allowed for the extension of funding opportunities for minority educational and cultural activities. The most important development here was the adoption of a follow-up agreement between the Hungarian state and Slovakia to the Basic Treaty of 1995, which was adopted after the disputes on the Hungarian 'Status Law'. A bilateral Treaty Between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of the Hungarian Republic on the Mutual Support for National Minorities in the Areas of Education and Culture (*Dohoda medzi vládou Slovenskej republiky a vládou Mad'arskej republiky o vzájomnej podpore národnostných menšín v oblasti vzdelávania a kultúry*) was adopted in 2003 (Dohoda 2003). Most of the funding from the Hungarian state is channelled through the *Pázmány Péter Alapítvány* (Péter Pázmány Foundation, PPA), which constitutes the largest foundation in Slovakia. In 2005 it allocated grants in the realm of 183,930,000 SKK (over 6 million Euros) and convened own projects whose costs amounted to around 8,646,000 SKK, or a total budget of 192,576,000 SKK (almost 6,4 million Euros) (Strečanský et al. 2007, p.548). In 2009, the foundation received around 3,694,000 € from the Hungarian state (PPA 2009). The main activities of the PPA lie in the support of institutions and schools that provide education in Hungarian. As part of this work, it supports additional training for teachers, provides scholarship for students at Hungarian schools, funds the development and purchase of teaching materials, and runs competitions, programmes for outstanding students, summer camps (Strečanský et al. 2007). Moreover, it allocates funds to initiatives that fall into the realm of minority education and culture (Golha/Hajdok/Havran 18/06/2009).[11]

The Hungarian state is also the major patron of the *Selye János Egyetemért Alapítvány* (János Selye University Foundation), which supports activities of the Hungarian university in Komárno. It is also one of the largest foundations in

[11] These smaller initiatives often aim to 'offer something of interest to Hungarians' in order to keep especially young Hungarians in Slovakia; this is a reaction to the tendency that many young Hungarians leave Slovakia and go to the Czech Republic, Hungary or western Europe in order to study, and often stay there. 'We don't want them to feel there is nothing for them here' explains Katalin Hajdok from the student organisation *Vox Juventae*, who organise competitions for projects that are related to the Hungarian minority in Slovakia, funded mainly by the Pázmány foundation.

Slovakia, in 2005 with a budget of 83,846,000 SKK (around 2,8 million Euros) (Strečanský et al. 2007, p.548). The treaty between both states however ensures that education also of the Hungarian minority remains the responsibility of the Slovak state. Funding from Hungary therefore does not directly sponsor these institutions or regular education, but supports extracurricular activities and individuals – this applies to the PPA also (Tóth 23/09/2009; Golha/Hajdok/Havran 18/06/2009).

The funding of minority activities was further facilitated - to an extent - by a Slovak law that enables individual and corporate tax-payers to designate 2% of their taxes to societal organisations or to a state fund acting in the support of non-governmental organisations.[12] Although the system has many flaws, such as lack of transparency and in 2003 was still not very well known among Slovak tax payers (Mészárosné-Lampl & Tóth 2003), today non-governmental organisations of various types benefit from these funds. As a result of this situation, the cultural and civic organisations of the Hungarian community have become increasingly independent of the state, which enables them to extend community structures and support minority institutions, even under adverse conditions, such as under nationalist governments.

This has not always been the case. During the 1990s, funding opportunities on the basis of the Hungarian state's kin-support were considerably fewer. The general constraints on non-governmental activities and foundations specifically during the 1990s affected Hungarian organisations also. This affected Hungarian press, publishing and broadcasting; commemoration; live culture; and minority projects. Under the Dzurinda-government these cuts were immediately revoked, and the funding for minority culture in these areas amounted to approximately 80 million SKK per year; in 2006, this sum was doubled to reach 160 million SKK, but was immediately cut back to 80 million SKK by the Fico government Dostál 2007, pp.180-181). As discussed earlier in this thesis, the MKP had tried to introduce a funding system that guarantees reliable support for minority cultures, but failed with their legal initiative. As a result, minority funding from the state left the future of minority cultural activities conditional on government preferences. At the same time, this has not taken the shape of controlling minority activities as it has done in

[12] The original law envisaged 1% of a donor's income tax, after an amendment to the legislation this was raised to 2% (Mészárosné-Lamp & Tóth 2003, p.2).

Estonia. With the exception of the two years under the HZDS-SNS government, there has always been support for minority cultural activities from the state.

The single most important and largest beneficiary of state funding for cultural activities is CSEMADOK. As mentioned earlier, CSEMADOK was founded as the *Csehszlovákiai Magyar Dolgozók Kultúregyesülete/Kultúrny zväz maďarských pracujúcich v Československu* (Hungarian Workers' Cultural Union of Czechoslovakia) by Communist Czechoslovakia as the Hungarian organisation in the National Front. Since then, the organisation saw several name changes, but has kept its abbreviation CSEMADOK. Since 1993, the organisation is formally called *Szlovákiai Magyar Társadalmi és Közművelődési Szövetség/ Maďarský spoločenský a kultúrny zväz na Slovensku* (Hungarian Social and Cultural Association in Slovakia) (CSEMADOK 2011). The organisation provides Hungarians with (limited) structures for their co-operation. Today, many national cultural organisations of the Hungarian minority organise within the structures of CSEMADOK, which functions as an umbrella organisation for local CSEMADOK clubs (ibid.). CSEMADOK lists 419 such local member organisations on its website and claims that almost every Hungarian inhabited village in Southern Slovakia has their own CSEMADOK club (Mézes 18/06/2009). While the organisational structure of CSEMADOK has remained in place, and was reworked according to the demands of postcommunism, to date its relation to the state is unregulated. Local, regional and national level boards of CSEMADOK function as interest representation bodies towards the political actors, who in turn engage with the political framework for minority protection directly. Regional and national umbrella organisations also communicate with local, regional and national level policy-makers to secure funding for the preservation and development of minority cultural activities. In this sense, CSEMADOK has laid particular emphasis on the co-operation with the MKP in the past, to which it had good connections and relations; many leading individuals in CSEMADOK have at some point in their career been engaged in the Hungarian party politics or vice versa (ibid.; Öllös 23/09/2009; Berényi 30/06/2009; Mézes 18/06/2009).

Despite the links to the political structures of the minority, and also the state, CSEMADOK itself is not an organisation working directly to change political

settings; its main aim is the promotion and development of Hungarian culture among the Hungarian community in Slovakia, in co-operation with other (national) minorities in Slovakia and in the region associated with Hungarian culture, the Carpathian basin (CSEMADOK 2011). Similar to the situation in Estonia, the main purpose of the local CSEMADOK organisations is to provide structures in which minority members can follow their cultural interests, that is those interests that are not covered by Slovakia's general cultural politics, and provide space for 'non-core nationality' culture. The organisation attaches

> 'utmost importance to maintaining and developing the national identity of Hungarians in Slovakia the preservation and cultivation of their national culture, traditions and mother tongue as well as providing the possibility of institutional education in their mother tongue from kindergarten to university education' (CSEMADOK 2006).

Its activities are devised accordingly.

CSEMADOK also provides for structures that encourage co-operation in other minority-culture related areas, such as minority education and the support for the Hungarian language in Slovakia. CSEMADOK has close ties with the organisations of Hungarian teachers and of Hungarian parents in Slovakia, and numerous events of CSEMADOK are co-organised with them (Mézes 18/06/2009). The *Szlovákiai Magyar Pedagógusok Szövetsége/Zväz mad'arských pedagógov na Slovensku* (Association of Hungarian Teachers in Slovakia) is primarily a professional organisation for teachers at Hungarian schools in Slovakia, which was founded in 1990 (SzMPSz 2011). It provides support, including teaching materials, to Hungarian teachers. Its main aims are related to the promotion of a sustainable Hungarian language education in Slovakia. Moreover, it has been the co-ordinating body of activities that aim to improve the teaching of the Slovak language to Hungarian students. The organisation came under increasing pressure especially during the third Mečiar-governments 1994-1998, when several head teachers lost their jobs because they refused to comply with the implementation of the state language law in their schools, as discussed in chapter 6. In this context, the *Szlovákiai Magyar Szülők Szövetsége/Združenie maďarských rodičov na Slovensku* (Association of Hungarian Parents in Slovakia) was formed in 1996 in order to provide for a strong interest representation in support of Hungarian language education in Slovakia and is one of

the biggest minority organisations in Slovakia (Mézes 18/09/2009).[13] The SzMSzSz was the main organiser of the school strikes in 1996. The organisation benefits from its close relations with CSEMADOK (ibid.).

The dominant position of CSEMADOK raises concerns among some minority activists. Their criticism is that the majority of minority activities are organised through or in co-operation with CSEMADOK which, in the eyes of these critics, undermines the diversification of Hungarian cultural organisations. Hence, while they do not criticise CSEMADOK's activities directly, they are interested in Hungarian minority culture not to be perceived as streamlined activities but acknowledged in their heterogeneity (Zachar 22/09/2009; Tokar 17/09/2009; Golha/Hajdok/Havran 18/06/2009). This critique reflects the similar situation with regard to the minority's political representation of community diversity. Tóth adds,

> 'There are [a few] big organisations, like CSEMADOK, the parents organisation, the teachers organisation […] and the Fórum Intézet, and most of them are related to the party [i.e. MKP] – and not only on the personal level, but the are members of the MKP. […] Our goal [i.e. at the Fórum Intézet] was totally different, we wanted to create a local civil society that could generate a local community and get something started' (Tóth 23/09/2009).

Even though the 'local civil society' that Tóth refers to has not yet evolved, overall, the Hungarian community has managed to create organisational structures for minority activities at the societal level. Support from the Hungarian state in particular, as well as the existence of several large foundations since the early 1990s, has enabled Hungarian activists to organise community structures that are at least partly autonomous from the state and its fluctuating minority policies. In this way, societal level organisations could absorb some of the effects of detrimental policies. The situation for minority activists is far from satisfactory though. Even though the Hungarian state's foreign policy goals include the support of the Hungarian minorities abroad, minority members have no means to enforce this support. The impact of the constraints of the support from outside Slovakia were felt in the context of the financial crisis after 2008, which hit Hungary hard and early, when the Pázmány Foundation provided significantly fewer funds for the minority (Bara

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[13] According to head of the organisation Rudolf Mézes the membership numbers cannot be determined; the vast majority of parents whose children attend Hungarian schools and classes, however, are members of the organisation (Mézes 18/062009).

24/09/2009; Domsitz 16/09/2009). Increased and/or guaranteed domestic support for minority activities could help improve the situation for societal level minority organisation and also help respond to minority members' demands that 'their' state – i.e. Slovakia – should take the responsibility for its minority population. Doing this, the state could also facilitate the diversification of minority activities and the integration of majority and minority organisational structures at the level of societal organisation.

Conclusions

This chapter discussed minority activities at the societal level that deal with questions related to the minorities' status and options to participate in society. It specifically looked at civic initiatives that aim to provide for channels of communication between society and state institutions. Developments in this sphere have been very different in the two countries. In Estonia, civic activities of Russian-speakers have failed to establish functioning structures of co-operation at the societal level; many efforts have been deliberately undermined or rejected by the state authorities. Functioning structures are largely limited to the support of narrowly defined cultural activities that fit the Estonian model of multiculturalism. However, these structures are too dependent on the goodwill of policy-makers to be able to develop sustainable structures that would guarantee their development in the long-term. The increase in base-line funding for some organisations is a positive development, however under current conditions it is still linked to means of control and 'co-optation' (Pettai & Hallik 2002). In contrast to this situation, structures that have existed already prior to Slovakia's independence, such as in CSEMADOK, and the active involvement of the Hungarian minority in the democratisation movement have allowed the minority to set up structures, which it has developed and expanded ever since. In neither state have the societal level structures been able to substitute the lacking or limited political inclusion. In Slovakia however, it has succeeded in providing support for and fill gaps in the resources available to minority institutions, and was able to offer alternatives to either the assimilation to Slovak majority society or the alienation from Slovak society altogether. However, the minorities' bottom-up organisations in both countries have not been able to reduce the relevance of group antagonism in both the state institutions and intergroup relations in general.

In both countries, minority actors have aimed to improve their relation with the majority group by transposing the cultural schemas of 'national-cultural identity', which were institutionalised *for* the support of majority nation-state-building to enable their own group agency. The political institutions of diversity promotion in both countries provide structures, however limited, for minorities to foster intergroup co-existence on the basis of social segregation. The structuration of intergroup relations however has very different outcomes for the two minority groups.

In Slovakia, the segregation of Hungarians is enabled by the array of normative and institutional resources by which both the Slovak home state and the Hungarian kin-state support the maintenance of group boundaries. At the same time, increasingly, the social practices of group members question these group boundaries. It is in this context that the interlacing structures of segregation become a constraint for minority participation in Slovak society. Since the deliberation of alternative structures for integration has been neglected, segregation continues to be the most viable resource for Hungarians in Slovakia, while those group members, whose routines supersede the firm group boundaries, are currently caught between segregation and assimilation. The recent attempts of the minority roundtable to deliberate on the future of the Hungarian community in Slovakia, and majority-minority interaction more broadly, represents an attempt to again determine more strongly the group's agency.

In Estonia, the normative structures of firm (cultural) group boundaries and the policies that support minority dissimilation could potentially serve to engender segregation. However, as this chapter showed clearly, the Russian-speaking minority lacks other structures that would help the development of strong ties between the group's members and increasing autonomy of these structures from majority dominance. The normative-cultural structures of restoration have undermined all attempts to reframe the Russian-speaking group as a legitimate participant in social and political processes. The limited availability of socio-structural resources for Russian-speakers that could foster sustainable community institutions, such as the Hungarians in Slovakia are able to maintain, has left the group without significant structures of group reproduction. The gradual opening of political processes and restrictive forms of inclusion into the Estonian political community discussed in

chapters 5 and 6 mean that individual assimilation became a viable option for some members, while all claims for segregation led to further marginalisation. Minority actors in Estonia who oppose both assimilation and segregation have, more strongly than Hungarian in Slovakia, promoted integration as an alternative to the two on the basis of the provisions of the liberal-democratic state. The agency of the Estonian majority however enabled alteration of the democratic structures, repeatedly undermining minority participation, at the social level just as at the political level discussed in chapter 7, by enacting the structures of 'securitisation'.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

10.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter aims to pull together the threads that were laid out in the first three chapters of the thesis and elaborated in the empirical study detailed in chapters 4 through 9. I begin by emphasising the contributions the study has made to the broader research on interethnic relations in Central Eastern Europe. I move on to recall key arguments by discussing the benefits of the theoretical approach chosen for the study. I discuss how the theoretical backdrop of my research is reflected in the layout of the thesis and recall why the methodological approach – a double case study – was applied (10.2). In section 10.3, I discuss the impact minority agency has had on institution-building and group formation drawing from the main findings of the two case studies of Slovakia and Estonia. Section 10.4 identifies interesting aspects for future research that would build upon the results of the present study.

10.2 Contributions to understandings of interethnic relations in Central Eastern Europe

The main purpose of the study was to shed light on an aspect of interethnic integration in Central Eastern Europe that has been understudied, namely the role of non-dominant ethnic groups in shaping intergroup relations. Estonia and Slovakia are cases in point for the complex, and partly conflictual processes of state- and nation-building in the face of ethnic diversity and unequal interethnic power relations. The study thereby sought to respond to the gap left by the volume of literature concerning ethnic group relations in the region. The primary focus of existing literature has been to identify the ways in which state policies have designed the institutional framework for minority accommodation and how the integration of CEE states with international structures has constrained domestic policy making on the issue. It is argued in the introductory chapter that this literature has portrayed minorities largely as passive objects within the process of integration, victims of oppressive states, or else rational elite actors in the process of conflict escalation or resolution. My study contributes to scholarship on interethnic relations in CEE by focussing primarily on the agendas and strategies of minorities as political and social group actors. The creative responses of these actors to the disadvantageous structures of the nation-state bring to the fore an important factor that (co-)determines the trajectories of interethnic relations. Structurationist theory, which is elaborated in chapter 2, reminds us that agency is embedded in the structural contexts from which it evolves. In line with this

theoretical approach, the main contribution of the study lies in its analysis of minority group agency in terms of agency's *dual* relationship – in the sense that agency modifies the very structures in which it is embedded – to the normative and regulatory institutions, and the structures of interaction with the majority group.

Structuration theory has inspired the thinking about integration that forms the foundation of the research study. The approach was selected first and foremost because it offers a theory of agency that avoids both purely behaviouristic and voluntaristic understandings of social action. Only in this way, I argue throughout the thesis, is it possible to account for the dynamics of interethnic relations. Hence, non-dominant groups are conceptualised as heterogeneous actors who adjust to and resist structural constraints in parallel processes simultaneously, and re-interpret institutional constraints, enacting these as resources to support their own agendas. As my study demonstrates, this does not mean that political and socio-economic structures cease to limit minority group action. The 'dialectic of control' (Giddens 1984) however means that the creative forms of engagement with the political and legislative institutions have the potential to re-direct the course of intergroup relations. Decisively, structuration theory proposes that the particular actions of socially positioned actors – whether institutional actors like the state or group actors – 'take their final shape in the process of interaction itself' (Mouzelis 1991, p.198, quoted in Stones 2005, p.101). It follows that integration (and disintegration) can never be fully controlled by any given actor in the interaction process that shapes interethnic relations.

In order to account for the centrality of interaction between the minority groups and their institutional and structural contexts for the dynamics of integration and disintegration, the empirical study was divided into two parts (part II and III). In this respect the layout of the thesis follows the (analytical) distinction between the structural contexts of minority agency and the social action of the minority groups. Chapters 4 through 6 offer an analysis of the normative and legislative institutions that form the interpretative and regulatory contexts for interethnic relations in Estonia and Slovakia. These chapters focus on the states' institutional frameworks for state- and nation-building and their embeddedness within the international context, both aspects which have been analysed in previous studies mainly in terms of their constraining impact on group interaction as well as domestic decision-making. The current study builds purposefully upon, as well as extends, the existing work concerned with these elements of interethnic relations. It emphasises especially the historical background and normative framework of group antagonism and

elaborates on how these have been drawn upon by political actors to institutionalise and extend majority dominance in the political processes.

Chapters 7 though 9 account for the responses to these contextual factors by minority actors. Shaped by arguments detailed in theories of social movement and collective action (outlined in chapter 3), part III of the thesis examines the political and societal level actors associated with and formed by the Russian-speaking and the Hungarian minority groups. These chapters analyse the action frames that guide the strategies of minority actors in their interaction with state institutions. As demonstrated throughout these three chapters, the frames entail the interpretative schemes minority members deploy in order to explain their current situation, develop scenarios by which to generate alternative relations between the ethnic groups, and mobilise support for their actions. The discussions linked to both case studies show that minority actors are far from homogeneous in terms of their overall composition, with different actors utilising different strategies both simultaneously and at different times. Furthermore, actors can pursue multiple parallel framing and action strategies in an effort to use efficiently the limited structural resources available to them in their interactions with the dominant groups. Overall the chapters argue that minorities have been far from passive; rather, they have altered the conditions of interethnic relations by addressing the political-institutional framework as well as by attempting to increase minority 'actorness.'

Much of the theoretical originality of this study is owed to structuration theory. This theory enables us to understand the 'dialectics of control' and encourages the analysis of minority agency. As a theory of processes rather than causal relationships, structuration theory allows us to understand better, why majority-minority interaction in Estonia has further marginalised Russian-speakers *despite* their many attempts to establish structures of participation at the political and social level, while it has engendered limited minority participation in Slovakia. However, the applicability of the theory to empirical research is limited, both in general and in the specific context of this thesis. As has been criticised in the debates on structuration theory since the 1980s, 'for Giddens, every "instantiating" moment is one of unspecifiable change and the unexpected' and he cannot 'answer "when" questions' (Parker 2000, p.107; cf. also Held & Thomson 1989; Mouzelis 1995; Archer 1995; Stones 2005). This critique points to the need to make structuration theory applicable for empirical research, which has also been highlighted in the present thesis. In addition to the limitations of structuration theory mentioned, the theory's highly abstract concepts and language also limit its explanatory power for understanding situational social action;

however, its abstract language makes the theory suitable as a meta-theory with which to reformulate minority agency and social action as dual and relational capacity to impact social processes.

In order to overcome the limitations of structuration theory and analyse when minority agency in Estonia and Slovakia becomes 'historically consequential' (Parker 2000, p.109), my study revisited discussions and reformulated, from a structurationist perspective, core concepts from nation-state-building, nationalism, ethnopolitics, assimilation theory and social movement studies. This enabled empirical research of minority activism and institutional change, however reflecting the structurationist understanding of structure-agency. Essentially, it is the dual relationship of structure and agency that structuration theory proposes, which captures the process of social integration as dependent on (minority) agents' actualisation of societal structures in the interaction with majority agents and highlights the interdependency of majority and minority agency for social change.

The empirical findings of my research allow for some generalisability of the dynamics of interethnic integration in post-Communist CEE. Slovakia and Estonia were chosen as well-researched post-Communist country cases in which non-violent interethnic tensions have characterised political and social developments of the past two decades. The primary bases for the comparison were the following structural and institutional similarities which are relevant for the trajectories of (potential) integration. First, the histories of interethnic relations between Estonians and Russians/Russian-speakers, and Slovaks and Hungarians respectively, are related to long conflictual histories of oppression and enmeshed in the specific histories of national movements, communism and post-Communist nation-building in CEE, impacting the normative discursive institutions of group relations. Second, both states are officially conceptualised as the 'property' of the respective titular nations, which in turn generates boundaries between titulars and non-titulars and establishes a power relation between them. Third, Russian and Hungarian 'diasporas' more broadly have been a key focus of studies in this area; these minority groups are also among the largest in CEE, so that their (partial) exclusion from political and social processes can have notable effects for the social stability of the home country. Fourth, both minority groupings have 'kin-states' in neighbouring countries with which the home countries of Slovakia and Estonia have difficult relationships; this allows fears of geopolitical security threats to surface frequently and influence domestic decision-making. Fifth, both states are embedded within the structures of post-Communist international (and specifically EU) integration – the institutional demands for democratising interethnic relations have

constrained domestic policy-making according to the foundations of the international minority rights framework. At the same time, both minority groups differ in particular with regard to how they are conceived of by the Estonian and Slovak states. While Hungarians are framed as a 'traditional' or 'historical' minority in Slovakia, Russian-speakers in Estonia are conceptualised as 'new' minority or 'migrants'.

Overall, the comparison of two cases – which are similar enough, but also different enough – has showed that the different conceptualisations of minorities play a role in how minority groups can establish themselves successfully as political and social collective actors and how, in turn, they are being responded to by their home state. At the same time the analysis demonstrated that this is by far not the only factor determining minority actorness and the dynamics of integration. In the next section I discuss other key factors impacting integration in Slovakia and Estonia identified by my research.

10.3 Minorities' impact on the structures of integration

The theoretical discussions in chapters 2 and 3 proposed that a concept of integration which seeks to investigate the impact of minority activism on interethnic relations needs to be based on a participatory understanding of the term. Moreover, such a concept necessarily has to refrain from defining integration in terms of its (desired) institutional and structural outcomes. I have pointed to the limitations of studies which focus on outcomes based on, for example, changes to domestic minority legislation as an institutional response to external pressures. Ultimately, such studies tend to ignore the creative and autonomous agency of minority members, since they determine from the outset what integration is, rather than recognising that the actors involved have a role in shaping their mutual relations. In the light of this, the present study analysed the opportunities and limitations of non-dominant actors' participation in institution-building in order to determine whether integration can take place, or is indeed aspired to by the participants in the process. My discussion of minority activism in chapters 7 to 9 demonstrates that the existing minority agendas and strategies say a lot about the ideas minority members have in relation to how interethnic relations should be shaped and how their current state is perceived by the minority actors. Furthermore, the responses minority members receive for their efforts from state institutions and majority actors indicate the larger problems that underlie the limits of integration in Slovakia and Estonia today. Essentially, the question these chapters – and ultimately the overall thesis – asked is how the participation of minority actors and their interaction with majority actors is characterised in the two countries.

The strategies that minority actors deployed in the two countries bear similarities in some respects but differ in others. In general, all minority strategies discussed here have, in one way or another, aimed to challenge 'nationalising' statehood of the Estonian and Slovak institutional frameworks. Although alternatives to the unitary nation-states were discussed by minority members and more democratically-minded majority members, especially during the early phase of democratisation, majority nationalists soon won the upper hand. In reaction to the nationalising policies implemented in both countries during most of the 1990s, the minorities formed their political representation based on an opposition to nationalising policies, demanding the inclusion of minority members within the political community of the respective state and the elaboration of an institutional framework that would reflect the needs and demands of minority members.

Particularly in the early 1990s, both minority groups claimed far-reaching minority rights and even recognition as a 'partner nation', as seen in the case of some Russian-speakers' demands for adopting Russian as a second official language in Estonia and the plans for power-sharing in Slovakia. Their primary aim was to allay the impact of the nationalising policies which was detrimental to the minorities' participation in and their chances to benefit from democratisation. However, not all minority actors agreed with the radical idea of two equal 'nations' to inhabit the common state. Sharing the desire for the renunciation of the 'nationalising' state with the radical minority actors, others developed scenarios that would accept the minority population as equal citizens, rather than equal nations. This second notion of pluralism was not based on the equality of groups, but the democratic argument that all members of society should participate meaningfully and equally in the decision-making on common state institutions; this argument nonetheless entailed that the legal framework reflected the state's responsiveness to the interests of its minority citizens. For Russian-speakers and Hungarians this approach to majority-minority relations emerged as the dominant argument during the course of the last twenty years. Both forms of pluralism were developed in direct relation to the states' nationalising strategies and the minorities' fears of losing their community institutions, such as minority language schooling and the right to use the minority language in public. More importantly perhaps, the minority demands emphasised the equality of minority and majority members of society, claiming the right to participate in the decision-making in general, and in relation to issues that concerned minority members specifically.

These demands elicited limited response due largely to the general politicisation and securitisation of ethnicity, as demonstrated in relation to the frequent play of the 'ethnic

card' when minority issues were at stake in the political decision-making. The group belonging of a political actor became increasingly decisive for their ability to make legitimate claims about state institutions, as seen for example in the debates on the possibility of a Hungarian speaker of the Slovak parliament. Institutional change that would have increased the decentralised and autonomous decision-making or the minority's formal participation in political processes was undermined, as in the case of Slovakia's 1996 administrative and regional reform and Estonia's citizenship policies. In political practice this ethnicisation meant that contributions to the political debate and political demands in the realms of linguistic, educational and cultural questions as well as issues related to historical memory – in other words, the areas that according to the fundamental institutions of the Estonian and Slovak states were essential for forming the nation and determined the exertion of national sovereignty, as discussed in chapters 4 through 6 – became non-negotiable in terms of minority demands. The institutional framework of the two states provided the normative and regulatory basis for the politicisation of ethnicity. They ranked the claims of the titular nation to 'national sovereignty' higher than interethnic democratisation or conflict resolution, especially until the change in Slovakia's government in 1998 and Estonia's implementation of the integration strategy from 2000 onwards.

Integration in Slovakia

The discussions of chapters 7 though 9 have showed that minority actors in both countries have attempted to de-politicise ethnicity for the reasons discussed above. However they have deployed different strategies to do this in relation to differing political contexts. In Slovakia, the political change of 1998 brought the Hungarian Coalition Party (MKP) into government and enabled significant change to majority-minority relations. At government level, minority representatives were recognised as formally legitimate actors, at least symbolically. The position in government and the co-operation with Slovak political forces made the MKP moderate their political demands vis-à-vis the coalition partners and the state in general, by agreeing not to strive for territorial-based autonomy. The MKP did not cease its demand for an institutional solution to the, at times, precarious situation of the existing minority institutions. Since 1998, the political representation of the Hungarian minority has increased the coherence of their political agendas, and made efforts to establish functional autonomies in order to take certain minority institutions, primarily education and culture, out of the everyday politicking. Essentially, while hoping to 'de-politicise' ethnic belonging, the Hungarian representatives still wanted a political solution to the difficult relationship between the ethnic groups. Although this strategy failed to a

large extent even with the MKP in government, the Hungarians were able to increase their decision-making authority in the second stage of the 2001 administrative reform – albeit on the basis of a general democratic argument of decentralisation rather than a group-based argument – and in relation to the foundation of the Hungarian University in Komárno.

The discussion in chapter 8 showed that the Hungarian minority has continuously mobilised an ethnic representation in order to protect the minority's position in the Slovak nation-state and defend the specific interests of minorities that are produced by the nation-state. The mobilisation has worked, because the Hungarian electorate was aware that without a minority party the prospects for minority institutions in Slovakia were very limited. The relatively even split of the Slovak majority population into nationalists and moderates has provided a political resource for the minority political actors: in order to form a government in 1998, 2002 and 2010, moderate Slovak parties have depended on the MKP and *Most-Híd*. The existence of a coherent and comparatively strong minority representation has also meant that the Hungarian population has not had the chance to vote on the basis of socio-political interests rather than ethnicity. However, while the political divide along ethnic lines persists, the recent success of *Most-Híd* has allowed the minority to send less divisive signals to the majority and repeatedly achieve limited change of the institutional framework.

My analysis of the political strategies of the Hungarian minority has shown that overall its coherence as an actor, whilst moderating its demands in order to enable co-operation with the majority on issues of specific minority concern as well as in general politics, has allowed for gradual change in the institution-building of the Slovak state. Even though minority demands are still highly disputed also among moderate Slovak political actors, the Hungarian minority has become increasingly incorporated within the institutional framework of the state. The involvement of civic actors has further helped voice minority demands as part of the ongoing democratisation in Slovakia, such as in the activities of the recently established Civil Society Roundtable or the continuous work of the *Fórum Intézet*. Overall the situation in Slovakia has demonstrated gradual change in the institutional structuring of ethnic group relations. In turn, the guarantees for minority institutions, however limited, have maintained the structures that provide for an alternative to the assimilation of Hungarians to the Slovak nation-state as envisaged by majority nationalists. This was further supported by the Hungarian state, which has contributed to the sustenance

of minority institutions in Slovakia to the extent that minority members claimed that 'without the help of Hungary, this culture would not exist here' (Öllös 23/09/2009).

The coherent aspiration of the Hungarian minority to be part of the Slovak state *as* a minority however also gradually alienates minority members who live in both Slovak and Hungarian communities. Essentially, the ethnic divide of the political sphere has undermined the ability to vote according to socio-political preferences, and between 1998 and 2009 Hungarians did not even have a realistic choice to support an alternative to an exclusively ethnicity-based minority party. It is these constraints within the organisations of the Hungarian minority that have generated increasing demand for a political representation that promotes integration rather than segregation. Parts of the Hungarian cultural and civic organisations and societal level minority representation have elaborated ideas for the increase of Hungarian participation in the decision-making process, especially on issues of minority concern such as southern Slovakia's regional development, minority language education and the teaching of Slovak to minority members. As long as the political situation does not allow minority concerns to be taken into the general consensus of the political community, minority parties will consider themselves forced to maintain a strong minority position. This in turn is likely to impact the political and social choices of those minority members, who would prefer more institutions that support the reconciliation and accommodation of minority and majority citizens and more opportunities to practice, for example, bilingualism. Ongoing 'assimilation' of the Hungarian minority to Slovak society partly reflects such choices, as discussed in chapters 6 and 9. The dilemma of gaining political strength out of a strong political position on minority issues however has left Hungarian political actors hesitant about the further moderation of their demands. The situation is likely to continue as long as there is no strong Slovak political partner to co-operate with Hungarians or to represent Hungarian demands, and as long as underlying tensions between the groups are not reduced.

As argued in chapter 8, the permanence of a strong minority party is also likely to maintain a situation in which the Slovak state and 'Slovak' parties do not see the need to develop responsibility for minority members. The politicisation of ethnicity has therefore limited the choices of the Slovak electorate, not just those of the Hungarians. Over the past two decades it was parties of the (neo-)liberal-conservative and Christian spectrum that have showed preparedness to co-operate with the Hungarian parties. The Dzurinda- and Radičová coalitions have increased their support for minority cultures such as the Hungarians and the Ruthenians on the basis of shared ideas about the infringement on

aspects of individual liberties expressed in the nationalist governments' minority policies. They have devised policies that are said to negatively impact for example the Romanies, as well as having generally lowered social security and increased, for example labour market flexibility, private funding of health services (CVEK 2011; Pažitný et al. 2007; D'urana et al. 2007). Voters critical of liberal economics who support interethnic accommodation have difficult decisions to make at the ballot box. Overall, the politics of ethnicity in Slovakia have limited Slovakia's democratisation especially, but not only, with respect to intergroup relations.

Integration in Estonia

The situation in Estonia differs greatly from that in Slovakia. As chapters 7 and 9 show, where minority strategies to co-operate with the state and majority actors were discussed, minority members have attempted to de-politicise ethnic relations by 'de-ethnicising' politics. Since the failure of the political representation of the Russian-speakers' parties, if not before, most minority citizens have supported Estonian parties according to both their socio-political preferences and the stance the different Estonian parties represent with regard to minority. This process was paralleled by the societal level strategies of the greater part of minority organisations to de-politicise ethnicity, by co-operating with state institutions in the realm of ethno-cultural interests. Chapter 9 demonstrated that many minority representatives at the societal level refrain from relating their cultural demands to questions of political decision-making and participation in the socio-economic agenda-setting. Russian-speakers have established cultural organisations since the early phase of Estonia's independence onwards. However, it was not until 1997 and the introduction of the Council for Ethnic Minorities as well as the elaboration of the integration strategy that their activities however have become an explicit aspect of the Estonian consensus on statehood.

As discussed in sections 5.4 and 7.2, the integration programme was enabled by the limited liberalisation of state-minority relations under the impact of European and international conditionality policies. Although the Estonian state allowed for minority inclusion in the political community on the basis of naturalisation since 1991, it was only in the late 1990s that this became deliberate state policy. The fundamental arguments for inclusion however were not the democratisation of majority-minority relations and the reduction of social exclusion. The 'modernisation' of Estonia as a liberal state that does not 'waste' its human resource capital and enables social stability and geopolitical security in relation to the

Russian Federation. The state integration programme also entailed and elaborated the Estonian approach to multiculturalism. It argued that multiculturalism allowed for the inclusion of minority members and responsiveness to those minority demands that were seen as legitimate by the state, namely the support for their activities in the realm of national culture. Many minority organisations have used these structures in order to increase their impact on decision-making, at least in cultural issues. However, co-operation in this realm has limited the Russian-speaking minority's political actorness as such. As demonstrated in sections 9.2 and 9.3, Russian-speakers' organisations are often sanctioned for the political activities of their members and do not receive funding for activities that challenge the *status quo* of majority-minority relations.

My discussion of both political and societal level organisations of Russian-speakers has identified two fundamental problems in the relation between the state and minority organisations that raise political or social demands. On the one hand, the 'division of labour' between state and not elected representatives, which limits the political claims of societal level actors, thus the de-politicisation of state-society relations. On the other hand, the politicisation of ethnicity has shaped the political sphere. As a result, in the political as well as in the social sphere, minority attempts to bring political demands into the debates with state authorities and majority political actors – for example by organisations like the Legal Information Centre for Human Rights or the umbrella organisation EVEK – are either 'securitised' or dismissed. Essentially, from the Estonian elite's perspective, minority politics cannot be discussed by and with minority members, since first, politics are in the realm of the state and separate from society, and second, minority issues are matters that touch upon state security and majority sovereignty, and are therefore taken out of the normal political deliberation.

In contrast to the Hungarian community, Russian-speakers' resources to sustain community institutions and create alternatives to the 'integration Estonian-style' are very limited. The funding system that channels EU funds for societal level activities through the state; the problems for organisations that receive funding from the Russian Embassy in Tallinn or from foundations that are located in Russia – these conditions have additionally undermined Russian-speakers organisation and their political or civic representation. Both minorities share, however, the problem of limited dialogue with majority societal level activists and majority political actors. The Estonian integration strategy has enabled increased opportunities for minority and majority members to interact on the basis of the Estonian language and some societal level initiatives. However, because of the complexity

of the de-politicisation of state-society relations and the 'securitisation' of minority affairs, such initiatives are unlikely to evoke change in relation to the obstacles of intergroup dialogue. The lack of institutions that allow Russian-speakers' discontent to be heard in Estonia and the clear signs by state officials that no change is to be expected in the approach to integration means that protest is likely to be channelled by movements or protest activities in the future. Recent developments in the political agendas of parts of the Russian-speaking minority mean that these movements may emphasise segregation rather than integration. In Slovakia, protest movements are unlikely to occur; both majority and minority structures give minority members some choice with regard to their preferences for social relations. However, in Slovakia as well as Estonia the question of minority-majority tensions will remain a decisive factor of political and social relations, for as long as the underlying obstacles to intergroup dialogue are not included in society's deliberation, facilitated by the political framework.

Throughout this thesis I have demonstrated that the Hungarian and Russian-speaking minorities in Slovakia and Estonia are far from passive and their activities are not limited to either accepting the *status quo* nor resuming minority nationalism and ethnic mobilisation. Only the Hungarian minority has managed to exert meaningful and direct impact on the institution-building in Slovakia. However, Russian-speakers in Estonia have also at different times over the past twenty years achieved limited recognition by the state's institutional framework. The integration programme, while largely enabled by international actors and on the basis of the unchanged 'consensus' on the Estonian political community, responds to some of the minority's demands, if mainly indirectly. The Russian-speaking societal level actors in Estonia have used and extended existing structures of minority cultures and attempted to use these in order to evoke intergroup dialogue on the basis of de-politicised interaction. Increasingly, however slowly, minority members participate and interact with majority members in the social sphere. Individual group members have also attempted to achieve political inclusion of the Russian-speaking group, by bringing minority positions into 'Estonian' parties. In this way, minority members have helped provide alternative structures for the political and social marginalisation of Russian-speakers, which has shaped most of the past two decades. However, actual policy-making during the same period has created expectations that individual based inclusion could bring about responsiveness to group demands unrealistic. While in Estonia minority members can now opt between assimilation and marginalisation, in Slovakia the alternatives are assimilation and segregation. Existing community structures have served to absorb some effects of nationalising policies. Essentially, in both states the opportunities for interethnic

relations to develop according to the participatory understanding of integration outlined in the first part of the thesis seem very far off.

10.4 Directions for future research

In this final section I suggest some areas that promise fruitful elaboration of some questions that were generated by my own research study.

The discussion in the concluding chapter in particular highlighted the divergent relations minority politics had in both states with the spectrum of (neo)liberal political actors. The ability of Hungarian minority actors to frame their own agendas in terms of decentralisation, democratisation and reduction of the state infringement of individual liberties stands in stark contrast to the lack of success of Russian-speakers. The latter have sought support for their agendas also on the basis of democratic human rights, but failed due to the control majority actors aimed to maintain over issues of interethnic relations, despite the general support for the decentralisation of society issues. In turn, Estonia's integration programme is based on the mobilisation of human capital for Estonia's (economic) future. This economic argument has been a driving force of the integration strategy, much like the programmes for immigrant integration in other countries. In Slovakia, questions of interethnic relations and tensions have never been related to the prosperity of Slovakia, at least not in the rhetoric of majority actors. This converse relation generates interesting questions about the relation between (economic) liberalism and minority participation, and to what extent the background histories of minority existence in a country play a role.

The categorisation of different 'types' of minorities – historical/indigenous vs. new/migrant – has played a part in this study throughout the fieldwork and the analysis of international and domestic documents. It is a crucial resource for the Hungarian minority both in the domestic debate and at the international level, for example within the EU institutions. My interviews have shown that many respondents in Slovakia were critical about my approach to compare Russian-speakers, who count as an immigrant minority, with the Hungarians. It was clear to them, as it is within many of the legal frameworks in CEE and other European states as well as in international agreements and conventions, that historical minorities should enjoy the same rights as titular nations, while this could not hold for migrant minorities. The Russian-speaking minority in Estonia is of course a specific case, since it consists of both 'historical' and 'migrant' members. Essentially, the case of Russian-speakers shows clearly that the distinction between historical and migrant minorities is

difficult to maintain. The policies of Estonia and Slovakia have also showed that most problems for minorities arise from the nationalising policies of the state rather than the question of how many generations in the state of residence a minority member can produce. Given the increasingly questionable distinction, especially in an ever-integrating Europe, future research could usefully look into the question of how this distinction constrains the democratisation of societal relations and the integration of society's members. Moreover, such research could be utilised to further develop the literature on European integration. The distinction between migrant and historical minorities is essential for many western European states also. Future research could make valuable contributions to the question of how Estonia and other new members of the EU have impacted minority policies in 'old' EU member states.

The directions for future research have also indicated that Estonia and Slovakia are but two cases where interethnic integration is a disputed field. The participatory approach to intergroup integration has contributed valuable insights about the obstacles to integration that are based on institutional or structural analyses, which can help understand processes of integration in general. Like most research studies this PhD thesis raises far more questions than it can answer in the limited space. Nonetheless this final chapter highlights the important contributions of my study to scholarship on interethnic integration in post-Communist Estonia and Slovakia.

Appendix A

List of respondents

	Name	Position; organisation	Place of Interview	Date of Interview
Estonia				
	Gulnara Roll	NGO Lake Peipsi, researcher	Tartu	19 March 2009
	Vadim Poleshchuk	LICHR, legal analyst, researcher	Tallinn	14 April 2009; 18 December 2009
	Valeria Jakobson	NGO OMOS; researcher (social communication)	Tallinn	17 April 2009
	Mikko Lagerspetz Tanel Vallimäe	Tallinn University, Centre for Civil Society Research and Development, researchers	Tallinn	17 April 2009
	Raivo Vetik	Tallinn University, sociologist	Tallinn	17 April 2009
	Igor Ivanov	Youth organisation SiiN	Tallinn	20 April 2009; 18/05/2010
	Deniss Jershov, Olga Bogdanova, Olga Rodionova	Youth organisation EUYA	Tartu	23 April 2009
	Külliki Korts	Tartu University, researcher	Tartu	24 April 2009
	Tauno Võhmar	Mayor of Jõhvi	Jõhvi	16 July 2009
	Jevgeni Solovev, Jelena Dulneva	Mayor of Kohtla-Järve, assistant to the mayor	Kohtla-Järve	31 July 2009
	Olga Sõtnik	Parliamentarian in Riigikogu, Keskerakond	Tallinn	04 August 2009
	Tanel Mätlik	Head of Integration Foundation	Tallinn	04 December 2009
	Vello Andres Pettai	Tartu University, researcher	Tartu	05 December 2009
	Igor Rosenfeld	Member of Keskerakond Tartu, author	Tartu	07 December 2009
	Aleksandr Dusman,	Ida-Virumaa Roundtable, chairman of the Jewish community in Estonia	Kohtla-Järve	16 December 2009
	Alexander Astrov	Lecturer CEU Budapest	Tartu	17/05/2010
	Rafik Grigorjan	Chairman of EVEK	Tallinn	18/05/2010
	Novikov	Deputy mayor of Lasnamäe/Tallinn, Keskerakond	Tallinn	18/05/2010
	Margus Vaus	Tallinn municipality, responsible for Koduraha strategy	Tallinn	18/05/2010
	Mikhail Kõrvalt	Chairman of Taekwondo-Union and youth organisation Generation; member of Tallinn City Council, Keskerakond	Tallinn	19/05/2010
	Roman Ljagu	Head of umbrella	Tallinn	19/05/2010

		organisation Ruthenia		
	Sergey Tydyakov, Klaus Dornemann	Organisation Nochnoj dozor	Tallinn	19/05/2010
	Martin Ehala	Tallinn University, researcher	Glasgow	12/02/2008
Slovakia				
	Juraj Marušiak	Slovak Academy of Sciences	Bratislava	April 2008
	Zuzanna Poláčková	Slovak Academy of Sciences	Bratislava	April 2008
	Jozef Kiss	Slovak Academy of Sciences	Bratislava	April 2008
	Grigorij Mezešnikov	IVO Institute, analyst	Bratislava	14 April 2008
	Lászlo Gyúrgyík	University of Komárno, researcher	Komárno	16 April 2008; 24 June 2009
	Michal Vašečka,	CVEK, analyst	Bratislava	20 August 2008
	Vladimír Bilcik,	University of Bratislava	Bratislava	August 2008
	Ol'ga Gyárfasová	IVO Institute, analyst	Bratislava	17 June 2009
	Rudolf Mézes daughter, 2 parents present	CSEMADOK, Association of Hungarian Parents in Slovakia	Galanta	18 June 2009,
	Péter Golha, Katalin Hajdok, Jozef Havran	Vox Juventae, Hungarian students organisation	Bratislava	18 June 2009
	Marika Homišinová, Štefan Šutaj	University of Košice, historians	Košice	23 June 2009
	József Berényi,	Parliamentarian MKP	Bratislava	30 June 2009
	Károly Domsitz	Mayor of Šamorin	Šamorin,	16 September 2009
	Gejza Tokar	Former Vice-President of Hungarian student network	Bratislava	17 September 2009
	Zoltán Bara,	International Secretary, MKP	Bratislava	21 September 2009; 24 September 2009
	Pál Zachar	President of Hungarian student network	Šamorin	22 September 2009
	László Öllös	Forum Minority Research Institute, political scientist	Šamorin	23 September 2009
	Károly Tóth	Forum Minority Research Institute, director	Šamorin	23 September 2009
	Kálmán Petőcz	Forum Minority Research Institute, former diplomat, political scientist	Bratislava	April 2008 and 23 September 2009
	Zsuzsanna Lámpl	University of Nitra, sociologist	Bratislava	24 September 2009
Germany				
	Michael Glaß	Project coordinator Central Eastern Europe, Rosa-Luxemburg-Foundation	Berlin, Germany, telephone interview	09 June 2010

Appendix B

Plain Language Statement

1. Introduction

- The research working title is Social integration processes in Estonia and Slovakia.
- The research is being conducted by Ada-Charlotte Regelmann, a PhD student at the Department of Central and East European Studies, University of Glasgow.

2. Details of involvement in the study

- Participants agree to be available for at least one face-to-face interview with the researcher.
- Interview length can be flexible, but should not be under 30 minutes.
- The researcher may request that interviews be recorded (audio only) in order to facilitate data gathering and subsequent data analysis. Participants retain the right to decline the researcher's request to record an interview.

3. Potential risk to participants arising from involvement in the study

- It is not envisaged that there are any risks to participants arising from involvement in the study.
- Participants retain the right to discuss any fears about potential risks that might arise from involvement in the study at any point before, during or after the interview. Should this occur will researcher and participant agree on further procedure.

4. Benefits to the participants

- Participants have the right to request an electronic copy of the thesis once the examination process is completed. It is hoped that participants will find the results of the study interesting.

5. Procedures aimed at protecting confidentiality

- The data collected will be analysed by the researcher alone.
- Interview recordings and transcripts will be held by the researcher and stored in a secure location.
- Participants are offered the opportunity to remain anonymous.
- Throughout the interview, participants have the chance to decide whether they may be quoted on any statement made during the interview.

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