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A Cat's Lick: Democratisation and Minority Communities in the Post-Soviet Baltic

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A cat's lick

**Democratisation and minority communities in the
post-Soviet Baltic**

Timofey Agarin

Моей семье:
Петровне, предкам, Лосю и Носу

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Acknowledgements

In 1977 my parents moved from the Eastern to Central Russia, as in fact many Soviet labour migrant were. But even from Gorky, the Baltic republics looked extraordinarily non-Soviet: Radio Free Europe, Vana Tallinn liquor and Dzintars perfume is what my parents' generation largely associates with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. For the generation of my brother, Baltic states mean different things. He was born on the day when the last youth cohort in my school –including myself–was admitted into the ranks of the Soviet Young pioneers in 1989 and knows little of Baltic Soviet republics. His knowledge is based on the current Russian news, where Baltic states appear in headlines featuring “our oppressed compatriots.” My peers in Russia too, regularly ask me whether it is dangerous to speak Russian in the streets of Riga, and are surprised when I return unharmed from my lengthy stays in Tartu or Kaunas.

Today, it is not easy to be a “Russian” in the Baltic states; it is even harder to do research on minorities carrying a Russian passport. I have been denied a meeting with an state official after he learnt that I was a Russian citizen. There was also a case when a Russian-speaking politician cancelled an appointment because he feared provocation. There were also other much more positive experiences, such as a meeting with a Latvia's Russian-speaking MP, who first inquired what I held of consociationism as a way forward for Baltic democracies. My answer was positively received, I suspect; we shared cigarettes during that meeting. On another occasion, a senior official in Estonia's North East invited me to a drink, when he found out that I bore a Russian passport. I kindly declined, but as a Russian I still believe it was an unforgivable faux pas. A different part of my past hunted me down when I was in South Eastern Lithuania. While awaiting my turn to meet a key figure of Polish community in Lithuania, I engaged in a conversation with other visitors who insisted that I should have *tutejszi* ancestry (which is true), because my appearance gave it away (“your nose is Polish”).

Not only the members of minority communities but of course the Balts—great dozens of them—helped me navigate the Baltic social and political landscapes. I am indebted to them all for their critical insights and support during the past years. During the period of writing many individuals from the Baltic states provided me with advice on my research and encouraged me to pay greater attention to the perspectives of all ethnic communities in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Although it is impossible to mention them all, I would particularly like to express my gratitude to

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Every author realises that many people are crucial for keeping research going while travelling and adapting to new cultural settings. My regular stops in Marburg, Berlin, Winterthur and Zürich were essential in order to see this work in a different light. In the area of Marburg my personal B&B Konrad was welcoming on all but one of my many stays. Irrespective of the time I had arrived from abroad, or the library his doors were always open, lunch provided and Hinterländer chilled for debates on Eastern European minorities. Over the past years, in Marburg and then from Zürich, Jane Dewhurst has invested a great deal of effort in improving my English. Less frequent, but all the more intensive exchanges with Jens Jetzkowitz, Jürg Rüttimann and Jörg Schneider have all found their way into my analysis. Many these debates would have not been possible without Hartmut Lüdtke at Philipps-Universität Marburg. During the years at his chair at the Institute of Sociology, I had plentiful opportunity to debate issues relating to social theory and its application in analysis of social change. All these inevitably resurface throughout this book.

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My decision to take on Baltic studies came after the workshop on Sovietisation of the Baltic States organised by Olaf Mertelsmann in May 2003. The event fuelled my interest in region’s contemporary history and its quasi post-colonial condition. DFG-Graduiertenkolleg “Generationengeschichte” of Georg-August Universität Göttingen supported my research trips into Baltic states, where I could collect much of the data on the Soviet history of the region. Finally, I am grateful for the generous

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Abbreviations

BISS	Baltic Institute for Social Sciences
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe, former Communist states
CES	Centre of Ethnic Studies
CoE	Council of Europe
CP	Communist Party
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
DMSU	Democratic Movement of the Soviet Union
EAKL	<i>Eesti Ametiühingute Keskliit</i> , Central Organization of Estonian Trade Unions
EC	European Community
EMSL	<i>Eesti Mittetulundusühingute ja Sihtasutuste Liit</i> , Network of Estonian Non-profit Organizations
ERR	<i>Eestimaa Rahvarinne</i> , Estonian Popular Front
EstCP	Communist Party of Estonia
EstSSR	Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic
EU	European Union
EÜR	<i>Eesti Ühendatud Rahvapartei</i> , United People's Party
FCNM	Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
FHRUL	<i>Za Prava Človeka v Edinoi Latvii, Par Cilvēka Tiesībām Vienotā Latvijā</i> , For Human Rights in the United Latvia
GNP	Gross National Product
HCNM	High Commissioner on National Minorities
ILO	International Labour Organization
<i>Komsomol</i>	<i>Kommunisticheskiy Soyuz Molodiozhi</i> , Communist Union of Youth
<i>Lašor</i>	<i>Latvijskaya asociaciya v podderzhku shkol s obucheniem na russkom yazyke</i> , Latvian Association in Support of Schools with the Russian Language of Education
LatSSR	Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic
LBAS	<i>Latvijas Brīvo arodbiedrību savienība</i> , The Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia
LCC	<i>Latvijas Cilvēktiesību centrs</i> , The Latvian Human Rights Committee
LDF	<i>Solidarumas and Lietuvos Darbo Federacija</i> , Lithuanian Labour Federation

LICHR	Legal Information Centre for Human Rights, <i>Inimõiguste Teabekeskus</i>
LitCP	Communist Party of Lithuania
LitSSR	Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic
LLLP	<i>Lietuvos lenkų liaudies partija</i> , Lithuania's Polish People Party
LLRA	<i>Lietuvos lenkų rinkimų akcija</i> , Polish Election Action
LLS	<i>Lietuvos Lenku Sajunga</i> , Lithuanian Polish Union
LORK	<i>Latviiskoe Obschestvo Russkoi Kultury</i> , Latvian Society of Russian Culture
LPA	<i>Latvijas Pilsoniskā alianse</i> , Civic Alliance Latvia,
LRS	<i>Lietuvos Rusu Sajunga</i> , Lithuania's Russian Union
LRT	<i>Koordinacionnyj sovet russkih obshchestvennyh organizacij Litvy</i> , <i>Lietuvos rusų visuomeninių organizacijų koordinacinė taryba</i> , Coordinating Council of the Russian organisations in Lithuania
LSDSP	<i>Latvijas Sociāldemokrātiskā Strādnieku Partija</i> , United Social Democratic Workers Party
LTF	<i>Latvijas Tautas Fronte</i> , Popular Front of Latvia
LVAVA	<i>Latviešu valodas apguves valsts aģentūra</i> , The National Agency for Latvian Language Training
LŽTC	<i>Lietuvos žmogaus teisių centras</i> , Lithuanian Centre for Human Rights
LŽTSGGO	<i>Lietuvos žmogaus teisių ir socialinių garantijų gynimo organizacija</i> , The Organization of the Protection of Human Rights and Social Guarantees in Lithuania
MEIS	<i>Mitte-eestlaste integratsiooni sihtasutus</i> , Foundation for the Integration of Non-Estonians
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIPC	<i>Nevyriausybių organizacijų informacijos ir paramos centras</i> , Centre of Support and Information for the Non-Governmental Organisations
NP	<i>Naturalizācijas pārvalde</i> , Naturalisation Board in Latvia
NPLLT	The National Programme for Latvian Language Training
OKROL	<i>Obyedinennyi Kongress Russkoi Obshchiny Latvii</i> , United Congress of the Russian Community of Latvia
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe

PHARE	Poland and Hungary: Assistance for Restructuring their Economies
ROL	<i>Russkaya obshchina Latvii</i> , The Russian Community of Latvia
ROvL	<i>Russkoe obshchestvo v Latvii</i> , Russian Society in Latvia
RSFSR	<i>Rossiyskaya Sovetskaya Federativnaya Sotsialisticheskaya Respublika</i> , Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic
<i>Sajūdis</i>	<i>Lietuvos Persitvarkymo Sajūdis</i> , Reform Movement of Lithuania
<i>Shtab</i>	<i>Shtab Zashchity Russkih Shkol</i> , Headquarters of Protection of Russian Schools
SSR	Soviet Socialist Republic
SU	Soviet Union, also Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
TMID	<i>Tautinių mažumų ir išeivijos departamente prie Lietuvos Respublikos</i> , Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad
TSP	<i>Tautas Saskaņas Partija</i> , National Harmony Party
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
VEE	<i>Vene Erakond Eestis</i> , Russian Party of Estonia
WWII	Second World War
ZPL	<i>Związek Polaków na Litwie</i> , The Association of Poles in Lithuania
ŽTSI	<i>Žmogaus teisių stebėjimo institutes</i> , The Human Rights Monitoring Institute

Foreword by David J. Galbreath

Several years ago, a Russian said to me after hearing of a new doctoral student of mine, “is there anything more to say about Russians in the Baltic States?”. The argument was that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania had been observed from every perspective, as Soviet republics, as transitioning states, and as future member-states. In nearly every case, the issue of minorities has been a major theme ordinarily discussed as a threat or burden.

Several scholars began to engage with this characterisation critically. What could or should Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania do for/with their Russians? Accommodate? Integrate? Assimilate? Lithuania took the accommodation route, where Estonia and Latvia sought an assimilationist narrative hidden under the guise of “social integration”. European organisations only influenced minority policies at the edges. Estonia and Latvia would not let Europeanization stop the “restoration” of pre-Soviet statehood. More apt, the European Union and its member-states were unwilling to let this situation stand in the way of enlargement. Furthermore, these “Russians” turned out to be much more than ethnic Russians, but included Ukrainians, Belarusians, Tatars, Poles and even, in Latvia, Lithuanians. Most of them will be “Russian-speakers” and many of them will have suffered the same fate of many ethnic Russians when it came to citizenship, language and their children’s education. Indeed, when it comes to describing the treatment of minorities in the Baltic States, much has been written.

Yet, the problem with all of these studies is not what they have included but rather what they fail to observe. Namely, these minority communities are not just that which lies at the end of public policy or at the end of accession criteria. They are in fact actors within their own communities. They often speak the “majority” language, especially the younger they are. They own businesses and are consumers, sometimes major ones. They belong to clubs, care about their communities and are generally just as concerned with the state of society as their titular neighbours. In this way, the minority communities are important contributors to Baltic societies. For too long the literature has failed to observe these groups as users, consumers and sometimes voters. It is at this juncture that this book makes its core contribution.

When I learned of a Russian citizen doing research on “Russians” in the Baltic States, I was keen to see the end results. These results sit within this book. Timofey Agarin has been able to complete this study not only because he is Russian, but also because he has impressive linguistic

abilities in all four Baltic languages and is a social scientist at heart. His research was not aimed at identifying majority discrimination, as could be expected, but rather in identifying minority contribution. This book asks a unique question: in what way do minorities contribute to democratisation? I am confident in saying that no other author has looked at the Baltic States in this way.

The research presented herein sits within the area studies and social science approaches to social phenomenon in Central and Eastern Europe. For the author, the Soviet (and sometimes pre-Soviet) history matters to contemporary conditions. Area studies, as an approach, has much to be said for it when looking at the Baltic States. Importantly however, inherent in his research is an underlying assumption that the particularity of area studies obscures more than it uncovers. As the author states in the introduction, echoing the current debates in the democratisation literature, there is no end to democratisation, as the receding liberties for the sake of “national security” illustrates in many of our communities today. States are more or less democratic. At the point that a state stops democratising, we should all be afraid. Contemplating the Baltic region or Central and Eastern Europe as particular regions is clearly becoming increasingly limited in its analytical value. Today we talk about the possibility of bankrupt states, including Latvia but also Greece. We examine political corruption in states like Hungary and Italy. Finally, it no longer makes sense for us to talk about Central and Eastern Europe as somehow plagued by minorities where nearly every state and society deals with insiders and outsiders using similar community building discourses as we hear in the Baltic States.

Thus, the story of minorities in the Baltic States is much like the story of minorities elsewhere. Often, political reform alters political power dynamics as we have seen in ethnic systems all over the world. The end of the Soviet Union and the independence of the Baltic States ended a nation, as the author states. At the same time, many of the Soviet era migrants were in fact nation-builders while at the same time being agents of Soviet control and repression. This book does not make apologies for the Soviet Union but rather talks about the processes that have faced the post-Soviet Baltic States in both a contextualised and universal way. These migrants were often varied in their relationship to the Soviet state, their level of education or potential for social mobility. Many were in the then Baltic republics to work and live in a rather developed area of the Soviet Union. As the Soviet Union changed and the national movements arose in the Baltic States, many Soviet era migrants failed to get involved. On one hand, it paid to not get involved in Soviet politics, as the last seventy years

had shown. On the other, the battle that the nationalists were fighting was not that of the migrants.

Yet, the most striking thing of all is that some minorities in Soviet Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania did join with the nationalist movements. This was especially the case with Russian-speakers in Latvia who played an active role in the Latvian People's Front. Of the three Baltic States, Latvia has had the greatest minority political mobilisation seen in the three left-wing, primarily Russian-speaking political parties that have contested every post-Soviet election. This participation was also seen in the education reform movements, "SOS: Save our Schools", that occurred in 2003–2005. Nevertheless, many Russian-speakers in Latvia still do not hold Latvian citizenship and many older minorities never will. The Latvian education system has made sure that children come out of school being able to speak Latvian. In the end, at least linguistic integration will take care of itself, although the EU and its open labour market may make many of these issues eventually redundant.

Make no mistake, this book illustrates how far the Baltic States have come from being Soviet Republics. For those who are willing and able to learn the national languages, there is easy access to citizenship. A lack of citizenship has not stopped many minorities from having an improved quality of life, at least in material terms, as the economies have grown. Amazingly, both citizens and non-citizens are able to benefit from the EU labour market through the Schengen system. At the same time, Timofey Agarin has also shown light on many of the problems that still face the Baltic states and their communities. Many citizens and non-citizens remain isolated from politics often dominated by personalities rather than policies. Likewise, both citizens and non-citizens are suffering under the strains of the global financial crisis. In the end, this book shows us that civil society can be an engine but it can also just be a way of coping, that democratic institutions can exclude as much as they include, and that minorities are both subjects and agents within the democratisation process.

I am honoured to be writing this foreword for an excellent scholar who I have had the pleasure of working with for several years and welcome you, the reader, to one of the most informative texts on democratisation and minority communities in the Baltic States.

David J. Galbreath
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Introduction

The demise of the Soviet Union (SU) continues to provide plenty of food for reflections on the logic of the transition mechanisms that shape the post-communist social and political order. Students of post-Soviet affairs have been divided over the appropriate methodological approach to change and the paths of democratisation across the region. It remains uncontested that post-communist countries have embraced democracy-building projects. Various schools of post-communist transitology, however, emphasise that not all changes across the region are *strictu sensu* democratic. As is usually the case in the social sciences, different perceptions result from various approaches to the question of democratisation. While some schools aim at understanding the post-communist transition through the lens of the recent past, others examine more recent events, such as political change, economic ruptures and institutional conditions to distinguish varying outcomes of the recent transition.

My research tries to avoid subjective judgements about the place of the Baltic states on the map of civilisations, in Europe or elsewhere. Moreover, throughout the book I emphasise again and again that ideal democracy cannot be installed, or that any one society (or its part) can be truly democratic once and for all. Instead I treat social and political changes in the states and societies as contingent outcomes of structural constraints, dealt with by the actors involved in negotiating the actual and potential changes. This book looks at the changes taking place in the Baltic societies in general and within the minority communities in particular. Throughout the volume, political institutions are treated as inevitable and enduring determinants of changes occurring in the post-Soviet states.

The title of this book is a Scots idiom for a very quick wash or a superficial change. However, those jumping to premature conclusion that I consider democratisation of the Baltic states to be shallow will be disappointed. Throughout the book I argue that since independence the institutional design changed both swiftly and profoundly, allowing for the broad-scale liberalisation of state-society relations. At the same time, I remain sceptical about the impact of democratisation on Baltic societies, both the majorities and minorities. Today Baltic publics have a number of avenues to engage with political, economic and social processes which they did not have under the communist regime, but the available means of deliberation are used by the few people affected. The comparison of the three case-studies allows me to conclude that despite successful institutional democ-

ratification of the Baltic *states*, Baltic *societies* have seen nothing but a perfunctory change of expectations, attitudes and values. If nothing else, this book argues for the importance of a shift in both political entrepreneurs and publics into rational actors interested in dialogue and compromise in order for democratisation of societal processes.

The research for this book made me realise that for many actors, political changes of the past two decades have been the greatest social aspiration and therefore beyond criticism. For many of my contacts across the region, the current political regimes are perceived as being of the utmost benefit for the people affected. Indeed, some of political institutions and the “rules of the game” have been asserted in critical debates. Many others however were borrowed from already established political regimes, or even outlined in a mere negation of the communist past. Unsurprisingly, single party leadership and command economy were first to under a cat’s lick in favour of liberal democratic institutions and market economy. Unconstrained liberalism was another cat’s lick implemented as an antidote to socialist system of extensive control, but without deep roots in society it only fortified asymmetric relations between state and citizen.

Some apologists say, the state and its citizens across Central and Eastern Europe conceded to social contract in which both sides obliged themselves not to intervene into each others’ affairs. Others argue that states, political institutions and processes were hijacked by certain interest groups: elites, businesspeople, nationalists and others. In the sense of this book’s metaphor, accepting the first view would mean to acknowledge that the social actors could not make rational decisions, were unfit for democracy and therefore installed only a different form of undemocratic regime. Subscribing to the second interpretation would come close to saying that political institutions were tailored and used by the group of people, who prevented fundamental changes then and now because of their nepotistic interest. Although enjoying high currency in the Baltic studies, these two positions fundamentally underestimate the impact of the Soviet history on democratisation of the region following 1991. I believe that institutional design of the post-Soviet Baltic states and choices of political entrepreneurs during independence were constrained and even determined by the experience of the Soviet institutions and decision-making.

For my part, I do not have a clear answer on the relations between political institutions and societies in the post-Soviet Baltic. In fact, I am not interested in such speculations because I believe that democratisation is a long-term process and to become “the only game in town” it needs certain structural conditions. What I also see in the Baltic is that political

structures and regulations copied from the West continue to have limited personal relevance for many post-communist citizens. For many members of the Baltic publics this is possibly the reason to see their recent political shifts as a proverbial return to the “West.” For just as many members of Baltic societies, the experiences of the past are increasingly difficult to handle and negotiate them with political institutions in place today. This book discusses whether and to what degree the publics affected by the new, liberal institutions had a chance to negotiate their positions in the new political structures. Did political institutions react to the input from citizens and societies they affect, and if so how?

Importantly, this book argues that the design of political institutions is crucial for successful democratisation. As I discuss throughout this volume, I believe this structural aspect of democratisation has been significantly underestimated in the previous research on Baltic states. I emphasise the legacies of Soviet political decision-making and the impact of the post-Soviet state- and nation-building on the current relations between the majorities and minorities. In addressing the variety of socio-cultural and economic experiences of the members of Baltic societies, I discuss how these issues are reflected in today’s Baltic politics and shape political and social realities. Analysing the progress of democratisation I underline the importance of the institutional context in which this process takes place and focus on the catalysts for socio-political change in the post-communist societies.

Considerable tension remains between the understandings of the nation-state identity and minority social forces among scholars of post-communist politics and societies. However, the effects of nationalising policies remain under the close supervision of the students of minority, migration, multiculturalism and social policy studies. Unfortunately, the causes and origins of minorities’ tacit response to persistent exclusion from participation in institution building of nation-states remain virtually untouched upon by democratisation scholars. To my knowledge no study of post-communist politics and societies has asked whether marginalised groups in general, and ethnic minorities in particular constitute a force advancing democracy. The fact that the very presence of such groups conditioned the Baltic states’ institutional change merits additional attention. My book aims to fill this gap in the scholarship.

1. The challenges of post-communist democratisation

The eclipse of socialist centralism led to the dismantling of the political, social, economic and cultural orientations which dominated the lives of

millions of people in the SU and affected many more across the world. This reorganisation of the political space after the collapse of communist rule in the Central Eastern Europe (CEE) appealed to and reinforced the salience of primordial identities based on narratives of nationhood and ethnic belonging. The importance of “natural” ties within ethnic groups over the social, “chosen” connections has also been continuously emphasised. Of course, in the region of post-communist Europe not all countries have experienced the negative repercussions of nationalist resurgence to the same extent. Nonetheless, in most of the countries elites have effectively mobilised the sense of “ownership” of the state by a particular ethno-cultural group prior to dismantling the communist regimes. These elites were determined to model the re-birth of their nations in accordance with their particular and usually very pragmatic interests.¹

As has been the case throughout history, virulent political and economic ruptures have caused changes in the social structure. The rapid deprivation of broad strata of the population has provided sufficient grounds for the social mobilisation of those who have been denied assets they considered to be inherently “theirs.” At the same time, others felt that the redistribution of resources was unjust based on attributes of the groups affected belonged to. Thus the breakdown of socialist internationalism allowed the previously oppressed “nations” to re-emerge as an easy point of reference for political rhetoric. The case of the post-communist countries has been more than illustrative of possible consequences. Intolerance was on the rise toward those perceived to potentially challenge the stability of the social and political order and, allegedly, the coherence of the national (and hence also of state) identity. Throughout the post-communist world, those referred to as “outsiders” have been spectacularly stigmatised in a wave of national rebirth. More often than not the members of minority groups were the ones to receive this blow.

Remarkably, each and every society in the region was equally prone to express nationalist feelings in order to establish law and order in a particular style at the levels of everyday and official discourse. At the time, most of the post-communist countries were being re-established as nation-states, drawing on criteria of political membership to suit the local majority. Every CEE post-communist society embraced the rhetoric of suffering under the communist regime in order to provide legitimacy for compensatory measures and to promote interests of the state’s “core nation” on the way to a bright liberal and democratic future. How redistribution of political and economic entitlements took place in much of the post-communist world has been examined in remarkable detail over the past twenty years. The impact of the Soviet political institutions on the choices made and

forces unfolding before, during and after the collapse of the SU, however, remained fragmented. Even less attention was paid to groups in post-communist societies, marginalised during the transition to liberal political regimes.

Importantly, some theorists of democratisation argue that the initial period of the process is distinguished by a limited consensus on the goals of transformation. During this period, a complicated set of incentives is mobilised to align the greatest possible number of supporters with given envisaged goals. In a somewhat similar vein, Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan indicate that “in a political system characterized by limited consensus, deep cleavages, and suspicions between leading participants, semi-loyalty is easily equated with disloyalty by some of the participants.”² The politics mobilising this discourse of uncertain loyalty thus face the double task of consolidating regimes *and* societies, because all those marching to a different drummer might be additionally pressured to demonstrate conformity with the newly established rules. Under these circumstances, persuasive expressions of fidelity, such as the abstention from criticism, social integration and/or linguistic assimilation and finally the pledge of allegiance to the state are rewarded by inclusion into citizenry. Thereupon loyalty becomes an issue of secondary importance. On the other hand, those resisting the pressure to abandon their critical views are likely to remain excluded from universal suffrage and, what is worse, are regarded as alien and potentially destabilising elements of society.

In Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, as in many CEE countries, minorities are seen as lacking loyalty by default, despite lasting ties with their states of residence. Some of them are said to endanger cultural uniqueness of societies, territorial integrity of the states or even democratic design of political regimes in their countries of residence. In the majority of the cases minorities’ presence alone is depicted as a challenge to successful re-institution of independent statehoods in the region. Precisely for this reason, this book examines the impact of these groups on democratisation of the Baltic states.

2. Case study: The Baltic states

After re-gaining independence from the SU the Baltic states have shown remarkable potential for socio-political reform and economic development. This has been acknowledged by the international community with an invitation extended to the Baltic states to join the European Union (EU) in the first round of eastern enlargement and NATO in 2004. EU-accession and NATO membership make Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania the

only post-Soviet countries to join these European security organisations in the foreseeable future.

Baltic membership in the EU does testify to credible and lasting democratic trends. The transition in economic, political and institutional spheres is so remarkable that the majority of the Soviet successor states can only hope to achieve similar results in the future. But are the Baltic states *really* democratic? Newspaper head-lines on public rallies commemorating Estonian soldiers fallen on the side of Nazi Germany, the continuing denial of automatic citizenship to long-term Russian-speaking residents of Latvia and regular corruption scandals at the highest political levels in Lithuania might make some believe that these three states are far away from what is understood to be “democracy.”

Critical research needs to clarify the reasons why the post-Soviet Baltic states are considered democracies despite omnipresent deficiencies. Certainly there are many contested issues about democratic regimes in the post-Soviet Baltic states, but how high would traditional democracies rank on the same scale? With regular Neo-Nazi demonstrations in Germany, Britain failing to grant citizenship to parts of its large Gujaraty community and allegations of corruption reaching into the White House, is there any exemplary democratic state? How do we distinguish a democratic regime from an undemocratic one? To what degree do we take into account the institutional design, and to what degree the popular attitudes towards the existing regime? How can we conclude that some societies are more “democratic” than the others?

The analyses of democratisation processes require a comparative approach. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania share a number of attributes which make them comparable within the paradigm of democratisation. They share the decisive historical experiences of the past century, maybe even more than Baltic residents themselves are prepared to acknowledge, with the long experience of the Second World War being just the tip of the iceberg. The movement towards independence has been most remarkable in the similarities between the Baltic states, emphasising the continuity of the statehood tradition from that of the pre-war independent states. The rhetoric stressing the objective of the ethnic nationals to secure their dominant status and guarantee themselves the key role in the process of state-*rebuilding* has been emphasised in the studies of Latvia and Estonia, but similar practices of excluding non-titulars from political influence are equally observable in Lithuania. Although differences in citizenship policies, nation-building strategies and the pace of social consolidation between the communities of “titular nationals” and of mainly Russian-speaking communities of minorities range across the three countries, the

outcomes of political, economic and socio-cultural transformation in the region bear great resemblance. The processes of nation-building have run along the same path in all three states, with linguistic and ethnic identity being imminently important for acquiring political membership.

The processes of state and the nation-building aim at defining the group of individuals making decisions affecting the public. More importantly, while specifying the pool of individuals who are allowed to make collective decisions, state and nation-building are assumed to be properly democratic only in the case that individuals affected by decisions are also eligible to participate in these. The re-building of the Baltic states has taken place to restore pre-Soviet statehood, while institution building aimed at nationalising the states. It was not until the *de jure* independence from the SU that the rhetoric of statehood restoration resulted in nationalising Baltic citizenries. The rhetoric of state continuity was used to legitimise several very divergent claims, one of which was “framing the past as future,” to use the dictum of Vello Pettai.³

Some of the pre-Soviet legal norms were reinstalled in the post-Soviet years: constitutions, citizenship legislation and a number of legal documents were aimed at underlining the continuity of state principle. However, Soviet policies have changed the demographic composition of Baltic societies, requiring significant updates in the legislation to address the status of minorities after independence. The large numbers of non-titulars did not pressure the local legislative bodies to address the different expectations of minorities and majorities. Instead, they suggested ways for future cohabitation in a manner acceptable to the electorate from the core nations and to the international community as following “democratic principles.”

3. A note on terminology: The minority communities

Minorities have a long history of settlement in what are currently Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. While Danes and Swedes were trawling the Baltic Sea coast in the earlier days, German and Jewish communities came later and remained longer. They played an important role in the countries’ histories up until the end of the 19th century. The medieval peripatetic people however, left only a trace of their respective ethnic communities in the Baltic states.

In contrast to them, Polish-speakers have been continuously present in the southern parts of the region, particularly in what is now Lithuania’s South-East and Latgale in Latvia. Russian-speakers however, are relatively new settlers in the region. Starting from the late 19th century peas-

Table 1. Baltic Population by Nationality, Total population and in %

	Pre-Soviet*	1959	1989	2000	2008
Estonia	1,126,413	1,197,000	1,565,662	1,370,052	1,341,000
Estonians	88.1	74.6	61.5	67.9	68.6
Russians	8.2	20.1	30.3	25.6	24.9
Latvia	1,905,000	2,094,000	2,667,000	2,377,400	2,270,894
Latvians	77.0	62.0	52.0	57.66	59.2
Russians	8.8	26.6	34.0	29.58	28.0
Poles	2.5	n/a	2.3	2.5	2.4
Lithuania	2,620,000	2,696,700	3,674,800	3,512,100	3,366,400
Lithuanians	83.88	79.3	79.6	83.5	84.3
Russians	2.49	8.5	9.4	6.3	5.0
Poles	3.23	8.5	7.0	6.7	6.2

Note: n/a – not available. *–Estonia 1934, Latvia 1935, Lithuania 1923.

Sources: Statistical Office of Estonia, Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, Statistics Lithuania, *2000 Round of Population and Housing Censuses in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania*. Statistical Office of Estonia, Retrieved 2008–08–01 http://www.vm.ee/estonia/kat_399/4305.html Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, Retrieved 2008–08–01 <http://www.csb.gov.lv/csp/content/?lng=en&cat=355>

ants began moving onto arable Baltic lands and actively participated in the life of the Baltic provinces while these were a part of the Russian Empire, and then also later, in the social and political life of the independent Baltic states (1918–1944). Prior to the Second World War and the Soviet annexation of 1944 Russian-speakers were only one group among many ethnics in the region, and not even the most economically and socially important one. However, with the Soviet occupation of the Baltic states, particularly after WWII, the region experienced an influx of Soviet citizens as a result of Sovietisation and industrialisation. The last Soviet population census in 1989 indicated that many “historical minorities” of the Baltic states were very small in numbers, while Russian-speaking Slavs were numerous (See Table 1).

The Baltic states regained independence from the SU in 1991 as a result of what is now known as the Singing Revolutions, in which the majority populations played pivotal roles. After independence was restored, many individuals who arrived to the region during the Soviet times returned to their homelands, perceiving the state of interethnic relations in

the region to be tense, for reasons I will discuss in detail throughout Chapter 3. However, there were many who stayed.

Among them, many had lived in the Baltic states for a prolonged period of time and saw the country as their sole homeland, the place where they were born, received an education and led their working lives. In their majority, the group was made up of Russians, Slavs and other heavily russified members of around 200 Soviet nationalities. A significant part of the groups' members have profited from the benefits of Soviet higher education and their respective experiences in the Soviet enterprises. Only a few of them however had mastered the local languages and possessed linguistic skills to communicate with the locals in their languages prior to 1991. The Russian-speakers remaining in the Baltic states represent a highly differentiated group of individuals and consist of a well-educated Soviet intelligentsia, skilled workers and those with only rudimentary skills. What was common to them is the history of their settlement in the region under the Soviet regime, their mother-tongue which was almost universally Russian and their status as non-core ethnic groups in the newly independent Baltic states.

This group of people is at the centre of this book. Although I have been struggling to find a more appropriate denominator for the group members, paying due attention to the vagueness of the similarities, I was unable to find any more suitable term than "Russian-speaker." Of course, this is not unproblematic. "Russian-speaker" was a concept inherently connected to the supremacy of the Russian culture in the SU and was frequently used as a derogatory term when referring to the "uprooted" migrants, factory workers and proletariat broadly. As the prior use of this term reveals, the Russian-speaking community was held together by the primary, or the only language these people spoke and linked them with the Soviet descent. When the SU was delegitimized in the eyes of the Balts, so were the Russian language and its speakers. Essentially, the chosen membership in the community of language did not find sympathy with mobilisation of the titulars along the lines of primordial identities, such as ethnicity, culture and descent.

In effect, throughout the 1990s to be a "member of the Russian-speaking community," meant lacking culture altogether and by default not having any rights to claim one's culture's protection. The evolution of minority rights regimes across Europe in general, and the Baltic states in particular, sees minority groups only in so far as they claim to have distinct cultures. The ambiguity of the definition of minority is at the centre of the recent "linguistic sectarianism" across non-core ethnographic regions in the Baltic states, such as Samogitia, Latgale, Võrumaa and Setu-

maa. One can appreciate that these “autochthonous” groups would potentially receive the status of minority because they lay claims to “distinct cultural make-up.” For the same reason, “Russian-speaking community” is unlikely to ever be treated as minority. Possibly to circumvent this bias the scholars of Baltic politics sympathetic to Russian-speakers prefer to term them Russians.

At times I also use the terms “non-core ethnics” and “non-titulars” to describe the members of what is the minority population in the Baltic states. Similarly, I use the terms “non-Estonians”, “non-Latvian” and “non-Lithuanian” to point to the members of the groups of minority ethnic origin. “Estonian”, “Latvian” and “Lithuanian” is reserved for the members of the majority, whom I sometimes (shamefully following Soviet tradition) refer to as “titulars” or “the members of the titular community of the Baltic states.” Additionally, terms such as “Finn,” “German” and “Ukrainian” are the indication of a person’s ethnic origin. On some occasions, the term minority does not fit, especially when I discuss regions of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania where the overall state minority is actually in a demographic majority. As a result of the political developments in the Baltic states discussed in detail in chapter 4, not all members of the Russian-speaking communities are part of the Latvian and Estonian citizenry, which prompts me to follow convention and use the term “non-citizen” to refer to all Latvian and Estonian residents without domestic citizenship.

4. Structure of the book

The book is divided into nine chapters. The chapters 1–3 set the stage for the narrative of the book and the overall argument, claiming that the experience of the Baltic polities and societies could lead to nothing more than institutional democratisation with only a meagre impact on societal relations. On the one hand, I discuss structural effects of the Soviet policies that disproportionately disadvantaged non-titular residents in the republics in terms of competition for public goods. On the other, I show that the Soviet citizen’s disengagement from political processes later allowed Baltic majorities to use structural resources of the Baltic SSRs to their advantage. The chapters 4–6 focus on the process of minority-making across the region from the dissolution of the SU until 2008, making clear that institutional democratisation took place largely because the majorities saw this fit their group interests. The chapters 7–9 discuss the effects of policies on the members of minority communities. These chapters make clear that democratisation of relations between the Baltic states

and societies gradually came to stand-still because the minorities though affected by the nationalising policies, were excluded from policy-making.

Chapter 1 provides a theoretical introduction into the debate on democratisation that informs my research. I review the major discussions of the process of democratisation, underlining the issues of relevance for post-socialist democratisation. Here I argue that, in spite of the fact that popular engagement with the democratic institutions is important for initial democratisation, only adequate and responsive political institutions allow democracy to endure. Chapter 2 provides a review of the institutional framework and the legacies of civic participation in the Soviet state. The chapter summarises the major developments affecting minorities in the Baltic Soviet republics up until the early 1990s and discusses these in the light of the Soviet nationalities policy. Chapter 3 discusses the establishment of the Baltic independence and the efforts defining these states' relations with minority resident.

Chapter 4 overviews the legal framing of minority groups throughout the 1990s, arguing that states' policies only partially discouraged minorities from participation in political lives of the Baltic states. Instead, political institutions preferred to neglect the presence of non-titulars as an impediment in the process of state-building. The policies changed towards the end of the 1990s and forced minorities to consolidate their identities in the face of increasing ethnic polarisation of Baltic societies, as chapter 5 makes clear. Chapter 6 addresses policies of the Baltic states that sought to improve relations between the ethnic communities in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. In the chapter, I discuss the so-called programmes for social integration of minorities. The members of minorities could do nothing but accept the goals of these programmes as given, because they only reluctantly engaged in or were sidelined in the majority of policy-making issues. The social integration programmes defined states, societies and public spheres as serving and preserving majorities' cultures, pushing minorities out of the public, into the private sphere.

The concluding three chapters discuss the impact of Baltic policies on minority communities. Chapter 7 addresses the linguistic situation of minority groups and underlines that the social life of non-core ethnic communities has grown increasingly separate from that of the majority communities. Chapter 8 further reiterates the point by suggesting that minorities are highly dependent on the structural resources made available to them by the representatives of the Baltic titular nations. The asymmetry in relations between the majority and minority groups determines both the reluctance of majority groups to revise the institutional opportunity structures, and inability of minority groups to even marginally cooperate with

the Baltic core ethnics. The opportunities available for non-titulars to inform policy-makers of their interests are few and have little, if any potential to improve the interethnic relations in the region. Chapter 9 concludes the investigation of minority participation in the Baltic democratisation by discussing the minority engagement in the civic initiatives. The chapter allows me to conclude that the region's minorities have gone to great length to accept even the openly hostile Baltic politics towards non-core ethnics. Throughout the two decades of independence, minorities made many suggestions to political entrepreneurs on how to improve political institutions and processes in "their nation-states." By failing to respond to such claims, state institutions have demonstrated that the Baltic states are about guaranteeing the well-being of the core ethnic groups, not of the minorities.

In conclusion, I review the major arguments of the book, claiming that the accommodation of minorities' interests and the perspectives for their engagement in democratic developments in the region are highly dependent on whether institutions respond to their claims. The context of debates on institutional aspects of democratisation, nation-building and framing of minority communities will allow me to extend a more speculative argument on the importance of the Baltic states in the CEE context. I outline some of the major implications resulting from the study of the democratisation process in the Baltic states for the scholarly debate on the emergence of democracy in societies with weak democratic legacies.

Ultimately, the argument goes that the Russian- and Polish-speaking minorities in today's Baltic states are not as systematically disadvantaged as many minorities across the EU. In many cases, the Baltic political institutions allow for dissenting opinions in public and demonstrate considerable potential to accommodate these. The problem lies with the individual actors—political entrepreneurs, economic and intellectual elites—most of whom are reluctant to accept minority opinions and expressing opposition to majoritarian rule. It is therefore not surprising that the democratic political institutions are being used by the already empowered actors to support majoritarian views and circumvent further institutional transformation. The allegory of a cat's lick applied to Baltic democratisation points out that the change was shallow in its effect upon the actors guiding democratisation processes. Although the political structures have undergone considerable evolution, the changes were not dramatic enough to deter the rent-seeking actors from manipulating the consensus on the rules of the "only game in town."

Notes

- 1 Hale, 2008.
- 2 Linz and Stepan, 1978. p.28.
- 3 Pettai, 2004.

Chapter 1

Explaining post-communist democratisation

The “Third Wave” democratisations encouraged social and political scientists to move on from the previously popular subjects of study, such as the suitability of democracy for a particular nation, to research of the factors sustaining democratic development. During the post-communist transition, the idea of different democratisation patterns in the CEE countries emerged. It substantiated the earlier views that the degree of democracy is not a result of “democratic political culture”, but requires a multidimensional analysis of the processes of transition and consolidation.¹

The recent wave of democratisation, followed by the EU enlargement, has contributed greatly to the popularity of explaining democratisation in the post-communist world by emphasising institutional changes. Certainly, the Copenhagen criteria which had to be fulfilled prior to opening accession talks with the EU largely shaped the candidate countries enactment of institutional change and policy-adaptation through borrowing and implementing good practice. During this time, social scientists across the world were prompted to investigations of particular factors that would provide for lasting democracies in Central and Eastern Europe. Some approaches to the democratisation process focused on the mechanisms of crafting democracies, while others investigated the causal relations between the social conditions and the success of emerging democracies. This chapter outlines the theoretical assumptions, which underlie the argument presented in the book.

1. Consolidation of the democratic regimes

The “classical studies” of Robert Dahl, Seymour Martin Lipset, Giovanni Sartori, Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, as well as numerous others, came primarily from political sociology and examined conditions for stable democracy in the countries of Western Europe and North America, and compared such examples with the cases of other, “failed” democracies.² Subsequently, the “Third Wave” of democratisation saw new scholarship on the rise. Here the differences between Western European democracies on the one hand and Southern Europe and Latin American democracies on

the other were explored in detail by academics such as Terry Lynn Karl, Guillermo O'Donnell and Karen Remmer.³

The numerous cases of “failed democracy” observed throughout the globe demonstrated that, while some democracies have “failed” just after emerging, others retain some semi-democratic features. Democratization theorists have focussed great attention on the two “periods” of democratization, transition and consolidation. However, many argue that the sequencing not only underlies the fundamental teleological fallacy, but also creates the expectation that there must be an ideal form of democracy. With the uncertainties about the future of democratic regimes closely connected to the dangers of reversing the democratic reform, democratic transition and consolidation were subjected to close scrutiny by social and political scientists.

A pioneering study in the field, Seymour Martin Lipset's *Political Man* (1960) was one of the first to demonstrate the variety of prerequisites for democracies to work. In his study, Lipset discusses in great detail the relations between economic development and democracy, reasons why people do and do not vote, and also provides descriptions of class-specific political behaviour in the American context. In an integrative approach to enduring democratic political system, Lipset relates the behaviour of political societies to the individual political attitudes in support of the democratic political system, leaving a powerful imprint on the later studies on democratization and inspiring subsequent analyses of post-communist democratization.⁴

Almost at the same time, studies of “civic culture” advanced an idea that the wealthier and more educated societies were more likely to become democratic, an idea that had previously been expressed in Lipset's writings. The key analyses that are provided by Gabriel A. Almond, Lucian W. Pye, and Sidney Verba on the issue have inspired many subsequent studies of the “Third Wave” democratizations engaged in distinguishing the causes and the effects of democracy.⁵ The assumption is that economic basis is required for development of democracy emphasised the essential precondition for social development that, in the eyes of these theorists, would result in a democratic political regime. The challenge for the theories emerging on this basis was that, by postulating the causal relation between democracy and the socioeconomic development, the discussion could only provide an adequate analysis of differences in the type of democracy, but not of the process of democratization.⁶

The studies on the interdependence of the socio-economic conditions and democracy have been abandoned by the majority of the students of democracy during the democratization of the “Third Wave.”⁷ Instead,

scholarship has been moving increasingly towards conceptualising particular social and economic developments as factors facilitating or obstructing democratic development.⁸ In this context, research on the democratic changes has discerned social, economic and political challenges, each playing a particular role in establishing and promoting democracy. The process of democratisation embraces several “analytically distinct but empirically overlapping stages,” leading from disintegration of the authoritarian regime, towards democratic transition and consolidation of the system, to maturity of the democratic political order.⁹ Such a conceptualisation of the democratisation process allows scholars analysing its integral parts to study the entire process, as well as the sequential succession and path developments of individual political systems.

Observing the initial period of regime changes in the Eastern Europe in 1991, Claus Offe introduces a notion of “triple transition”, which post-communist states had to embrace. In his view, political and economic changes as well as decisions on identity had to take place for democratic transition to be successful. Offe asserts that consolidation of identities should be achieved through the establishment of new rules, procedures and rights, with decisions on the terms and conditions of political power distribution and economic resources concluding the process.¹⁰ He also proposes that a market economy and democracy have to be forced upon a society and kept under close supervision “for a long period of time.”¹¹ But, if Offe regards the prospects of post-communist transition with the great suspicion, warning of the extreme vulnerability of the newly established democratic regimes to the popular support from undemocratic forces, two decades later we must recognise the significant successes of almost all CEE countries as far as democratisation is concerned.

Of course, today we can re-evaluate Offe’s insecurity vis-à-vis post-communist societies, which led him to believe in the necessity of active intervention by international organisations and external, presumably more democratic states, in order to assist in the institutional design of the younger democracies. But even if we consider Offe’s praise for the “constitutional guarantee of citizens’ rights and democratic rights of participation”¹² to be paramount, it appears that a mere institutional change did little to boost the public support for “new politics” and sustain high levels of public participation in post-communist political processes. While the success of the democratic transition can be attributed solely to the modification of the state’s institutions, it also requires changes in participatory attitudes of the entire society. At the same time, transition from an authoritarian regime offers a variety of opportunities to improve the economic

conditions, to express political will and, therefore, to engage with reforms perceived as essential.¹³

The widespread awareness of the economic preconditions for democracy-building comes as no surprise with respect to post-communist democratisation. During the period of late socialism, citizens of the CEE countries had almost univocally assumed the democratising potential of the market mechanisms, but the pain of economic transition left many disillusioned with procedures seen as prerequisites for democratisation. Falling short of these expectations, the economic reforms resulted in diminishing political support for the democratic process among the general public and caused a decline in the acceptance of democracy in the mid-1990s. In this sense, it is hard to disagree with Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan's assertion that,

“in countries with imploded command economies, democratic polities can and must be installed and legitimized by a variety of [non-economic] appeals before the possible benefits of a market economy fully materialize.”¹⁴

The agency-oriented perspective on transition and consolidation has been expressed in probably the most influential comparative work *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* by Linz and Stepan. The authors argue that an investigation of the success of democratic consolidation can be narrowed down to constitutional, attitudinal, and behavioural dimensions of change.¹⁵ Linz and Stepan introduce the criteria of “consolidated democracies”, which stipulate the application of the term to an independent political entity, declaring that “democracy is a form of governance of a state,”¹⁶ making the existence of an independent state a critical requirement for transition and consolidation.

In their comparative study, Linz and Stepan take both the structural and agency perspectives into account in order to emphasise five interdependent arenas where a crafting of consolidated democracy takes place. These include civil, political, and economic societies, as well as rule of law and state bureaucracy, which all present conditions for mutual reinforcement and control for the effective persuasion of democratic political rule.¹⁷ The existence and functioning of all five arenas presents, according to Linz and Stepan, an essential condition for the development of a consolidated democracy, which unfolds on two levels of interaction, involving both public and private spheres of individual activity.¹⁸ Although, as Linz and Stepan emphasise, all five arenas find themselves in a constant mediation, one should bear in mind that the stronger the three societies are, the

better individuals can consolidate democratic rule by improving the efficiency of institutions.

One of the major contributions of Linz and Stepan's analyses was to point to the limitations of structural explanations of democratisation which fail to reflect the nature of agency in crafting democratic institutions. In their approach to consolidation, all three societies—political, economic and civil—are important for keeping the process in continuous motion. In this sense, avenues for expressing common interests and concerns are of critical importance for a change of political institutions to be feasible. The voluntary character of involvement and immunity of individuals and groups to the punitive measures of the state are essential for spontaneous organisation and unrestricted information flow.¹⁹ By emphasising the balance of the individual and collective forces in their impact on democratic consolidation, the theory of Linz and Stepan acknowledges the role of society, although it should be said that, in doing so, it persists in treating this balance as a figure of public discourse, rather than a proper actor in the democratisation process.²⁰

In essence, however, Linz and Stepan, alongside other scholars of democratisation, acknowledge that consolidation is achieved when clear evidence of public support for the government and legal practices indicates that institutional change *has been* successful and *is* desirable.²¹ In particular, the argument in favour of considering the role played by civil society in the democratisation process on par with political and economic actors formulated in the study of Linz and Stepan, fits smoothly into the spectrum of theoretical elaborations and case-studies, such as that of O'Donnell et al.²² Although the perspective of actors in the process of democratisation were prominent in the early studies of democracy, it is the combination and mutual explanatory power proposed in the *Problems of Democratic Transition* that gained wider support in the research on post-communist societies. These considerations indicate that, despite development in the predictable direction of a "more" consolidated democracy, a complex approach is required to explain its course.

The challenges of democratic transition draw our attention to the fact that, while institutions can be in place and function appropriately, it is only with popular approval and support of their existence that we can speak of successful democratisation. Like most theories, approaches to democratisation undertook the painstaking work of creating a plausible narrative framework to explain the causal relation between democracy and factors that facilitate its emergence: the role of agency in support of democratisation, as well as the societal climate for egalitarian sentiment in public and economic development. While the causality is hardly proven

and can be easily questioned, democratisation theories have been relocating the focus of research away from the preconditions for democratisation and towards the vehicles of the process. In such theoretical enterprises, society, state-institutions, and global mechanisms were discussed as the key players.

Of course, each of the approaches has something to contribute to the explanation of democratisation in one or many regions of the world. The research presented in the following chapters argues that all things being equal, political institutions play a decisive role in prompting social actors to choose individually determined action patterns. In other words, throughout the book I treat political institutions as mechanisms of socialisation, teaching people to act as individuals, to be attentive to variety of opinions across society and hence prone to more democratic political behaviour.

2. Democratisation and society

Ever since the debates on democratisation gained high profile, its successful advancement has been constantly linked to “civil society,” while the use of the term has been so extensive that it has come to mean little more than “political culture” in the language of social science. Many political theories insisted that “stronger civil society indicates better democracy,” and thus more successful democratisation. Unfortunately, the efforts to define the term itself have not produced many new aspects beyond what was inspired by Alexis de Tocqueville. Mostly, the debates placed “civil society” in the long line of other fashionable, but contested—and therefore limited in their explanatory power—categories, employed to analyse democratisation. I argue that the countries where significant parts of society were excluded from effective decision-making during the authoritarian rule and which are excluded from participation in political processes today, allow us to study attitudes towards the established, presumably democratic political mechanisms. Essentially, the engagement in political, economic and social processes that require cross-sectoral cooperation and an acceptance of individual equality, provide an indication for bottom-up, as opposed to the general view of top-down, democratisation in post-communist CEE.²³

The bottom-up approach to democratisation identifies the role played by individuals and groups, who by their actions legitimise democratic state polity. These pressure-groups are ultimately conceivable as “civil society” and have taken a specific form in the post-communist countries. While in CEE, as elsewhere, the state relies heavily on individual

participation in order to function democratically, “civil society” requires mechanisms of political accommodation in order to function impartially and enjoy guarantees for the expression and assertion of individual goals.

The use of the term “civil society” was so extensive that it was frequently used alongside other notions, such as “civic culture”, “civic engagement” and “social capital”. For our part, we might want to keep in mind that each of these categories is indeed distinct and contributes to different explanations of partially overlapping processes, all of which can be found within a broader socio-political process of democratisation. All of these have been discussed in connection with examinations of the dynamics of the social and political involvement of individuals, and draw attention to an array of issues. These range from the facilitation of social interactions and interpersonal trust to the origins of institutional change and democracy. Ironically, the successful career of the term “civil society” resulted in its conceptual overstretch, and ultimately obstructed the understanding of the processes it aims to explain.

Many efforts to define the notion of “civil society” not only show how elastic the term is, they also indicate a decisive underlying theme of the *functional* organisation of individuals and groups who unite based on a common idea, interest, or cause. In most of the attempts to come to terms with what “civil society” is, we see it described as a set of individuals involved in social processes for their own and other individuals’ benefit, acting outside both the political and the economic institutions. Despite various and contradicting understandings of what actually makes up “civil society,” it is generally accepted to see it as an agency network. Civil society forms a counterpart to the economic and political structures, in a way providing individuals with an alternative access to functions the state does or would not provide.

Effectively, all of the interpretations somehow indulge in the legacy of the original use of “civil society” by Adam Ferguson, who saw it as representing the realm of civilisation where individuals with different interests interacted.²⁴ Ferguson’s sceptical approach emphasised that rising standards of living and diversification of occupational activities of individuals diminishes their willingness to unite in pursuit of a common cause, and especially to defend their civil liberties, and thus be conducive to despotic rule.²⁵ Somewhat later, Hegel inspired the historicist interpretations of social developments, insisting on a comparable interpretation of “civil society” in his efforts to reconcile the diversification of interests and social life-forms with the enlightened and growingly inert citizenry.²⁶

Unsurprisingly, the most influential interpretation of this philosophical terminology into the language of social analysis comes from Karl

Marx. His major contribution to the interpretation of the Hegelian juxtaposition of state apparatus and social forces translated the binary opposition into the powerful rhetoric of “society against the state.” Marx’s imprint is clearly seen in the recently revitalised Gramscian discussion of what civil society “is” and “does.”²⁷ By providing the point of reference to explain the resurgence of social mobilisation, Marx effectively spelled out the tangible programme for the coercive action of citizens exercising their free will in the public sphere against the state, which guaranteed the realm itself.²⁸ Notably, the majority of the concepts relating to “civil society” mark the basic antagonism, pointed out by Marx, as social and political struggles emanating from the contexts in which they were born. Ironically, all concepts seek to reinforce non-hierarchical, or at least decentralised, power-relations, and thus make possible the consolidation of the forces critical of existing power institutions.

Returning to the historical sense of the term, one of the prominent students of nationalism, Ernest Gellner, defines civil society as

“institutional and ideological pluralism, which prevents the establishment of a monopoly of power and truth, and counterbalances those central institutions which, though necessary, might otherwise acquire such monopoly.”²⁹

Undoubtedly the implication of such an approach presumes a zero-sum relation between the state and civil society but equally underlines the important role civil society plays in promoting communication between the individuals and the state. More recent theoretical studies on the role civil society plays in the process of containing the state’s unlimited influence on the lives of its subjects have similarly pointed toward the informative role of civil society.³⁰ A number of studies on the applied side of the field have subsumed social movements and pressure groups under the umbrella of civil society.³¹ The scholars also refer to ad hoc groups, social activists, and the rest of the crowd pursuing policy change and information of the public as members of civil society.

As distinguished from promoters of ideological programmes that portray civil society as united against the state, social and political scientists who provide a definition of the term conceive of civil society as “situated” between the public and private spheres, organised to collectively pursue the agents’ interests. For example, Michael Walzer presents civil society as designating “the space of uncoerced human association and also the set of relational networks—formed for the sake of family, faith, interest, and ideology—that fill their space.”³² It is easy to see how these

definitions imply the classification of civil societies as groups with different interests and require the structural explanation of social processes. In this sense, civil society is understood in “spatial” terms as an actor that occupies its distinct place in the social structure and is entrenched in a web of mutual dependencies. But does the identification of “civil society” as a collective of individuals project individual autonomy just a step too far? What does the explicit definition of civil society in terms of spatial relation to other “spheres” of social life add to the description of the function of civil society?

In essence, “spatial” definitions take the primacy of political structures and institutions for granted and thus neglect their impact on the organisational possibilities individuals originally have at their disposal.³³ By interpreting interpersonal interaction as necessarily determined by the position of the actor in the social structure, the “spatialists” make it not only impossible to determine the functional characteristics of civil society, but also to isolate the identity of actors.³⁴ This does not mean, however, that civil society understood in this sense does not sufficiently challenge traditional forms of representations. Structural definitions of civil society have proved that the awareness of opportunity framework might be helpful in the critical reassertion of the agency’s autonomy vis-à-vis the social and political constraints. The critics of structuralists claim that they remain inevitably trapped in the logic of social inscription, as has been pointed out by Alberto Melucci.³⁵ For this very reason, approaches to civil society promoting different versions of structural determinism overemphasise the categorisation of civil society activities as dependent on the social assets of individual members. Accepting such a position undermines the explanations of social change from the position of actors, because social structures are already presupposed to determine and limit actor’s freedoms.³⁶

Yet different, functionalist approaches to civil society have proved more effective for analyses of political representation and of the strategic interplay between the institutions and individuals, by emphasising the instrumental character of civil society. Particularly the contributions made by functionalists have been invaluable in comparative politics, where both aspects of civil society—identity and function—have been incorporated. There is particular appreciation for this sort of activity in comparative politics, but also among the groups supporting liberal principles. However, while “an organization [... that] seeks to monopolize a functional or political space of society, claiming that it represents the only legitimate path, contradicts the pluralistic and market-oriented nature of civil society.”³⁷

Here the study of civil society does not immediately imply its inherent positive impact on the development of democracy, as it is the case

in the structuralist representation outlined above. Not only is “civil society” presented as a functional equivalence for limiting the state’s impact on individuals. It also provides individuals with the instruments for collective response in “groups that enable citizens to mobilize against tyranny and counter state power.”³⁸ Clearly, the core argument presented by theorists arguing for the functional role of civil society reflects upon persisting conflict between the institutions of the state and members of society affected by them.³⁹

All concepts of civil society aim at analysing societal organisation, collective action and activities existing aside from, and partially contradicting, prevailing political and economic realities. Despite various shortcomings, all have considerable heuristic value in explaining the increasing pluralism of modern societies.⁴⁰ But as the brief overview of possible applications of the term have shown, the recent popularity of the term was made possible by the synergies between a certain kind of civic activity, democratic political culture, and growing individualist orientations of the public. All these fall under the common understanding of civil society, but represent very different phenomena. Michael W. Foley and Bob Edwards proposed an insightful classification of how the term “civil society” is applied with regard to the distinctive functions it performs.⁴¹

The first of the functions that is attributed to civil society is genuinely neo-Tocquevillean and emphasises its decisive role in the *socialisation* of citizens, labelled Civil society I.⁴² Citizen associations not only allow for new avenues to express public opinion and further their goals collectively, they also instruct other citizens of democratic values and therefore contribute to a more *civic* society.⁴³ Nonetheless, a wider scope of activities usually seen as performed by civil society would include functions that are ideally performed by the social welfare state, and described as the “third” or “voluntary sector.”⁴⁴ The discussions of the impact civil society has on various institutions presume that civic associations are autonomous from the state; to a degree “apolitical.” The emphasis on the expectations and directions of social policy development, which are suggested by this kind of interpretation of the role civil society plays, have led Foley and Edwards to classify this approach as Civil society II.⁴⁵

In both cases, Civil society I as well as Civil society II underline particular contexts in which these notions are applied, mostly in describing political developments or economic strategies that produce “cushioning” effects of state policies on individuals and contribute to the greater interpersonal support of individuals. Larry Diamond, describing the attributes of collectivities to be included in the realm of civil society, lists a catalogue of features these must demonstrate. They should have the features

such as “open, voluntary, self-generating, at least partially self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and be bound by a legal order or set of shared rules.”⁴⁶ The *contestatory function* of Civil society II comes to the fore here, giving “voice to the distinct interests and diverse points of view characteristic of a modern society.”⁴⁷

All debates, however, reflect on the functional aspect of civil society in one way or another, emphasising associational life as the core contribution made to the good of the entire society. The activity of civil society, therefore, is to be seen as a public expression of individual interests and, in particular in the case of post-communist societies, testifies to the specific strategies of civic engagement learnt in the democratic legal setting. Public engagement in political decision-making represents an essential mechanism for continuous democratisation. It *per definitionem* presents a decisive avenue for members of society to inform the government of the practices that must be implemented in order to meet their expectations and increase collective well-being.

Apparently, this is not the case in the CEE democracies. Rather, what we observe throughout the region is something Jürgen Habermas labelled “civil privatism.” This notion describes forms of passive citizenship and social orientation with a characteristically strong interest in the institutional output of a political regime despite low political participation, and is applicable to all spheres of individual activity within the framework of an existing state.⁴⁸ Taking Habermas’ reservations into account, we conclude that although present-day democracy still requires the equality of individuals with regard to their electoral right, the meaning of electoral participation is of a much more limited importance for a popular understanding of democracy.⁴⁹ Rightfully, many democratisation theorists see universal suffrage as a prerequisite for the public perception of democracy as universal and exclusive rule.⁵⁰

The outcome of the “Third Wave” of democratisation showed clearly that not only is the installation of democratic institutions necessary for the development of democracy. Continuing the tradition of conceptualising democracy as a particular institutional design, major studies of the “Third Wave” democratisations offered a tentative explanation of certain issues that facilitate or inhibit effective democratisation: the transparency and reliability of state institutions, the accountability and responsiveness of state officials, the openness and efficiency of available procedures.⁵¹ Richard Gunther and John Higley, in their study of Latin American and South European experiences, make clear that consensus among elites about the goals of transition is required for effective outcomes of democratisation, pointing out the important role played by the individuals.⁵² This

has to be achieved with respect to the rules of political conduct and internal control mechanisms within formal and informal networks, and is essential for the effective resolution of conflicts, and for a convergence of interests.

Measuring democratic consolidation in one society is difficult and therefore invites a focus on the composite parts of this process by disaggregating it into partial problems. In so doing, the students of democratisation break down the overall systemic performance into subsystems that produce a cumulative effect of democratic consolidation, and conduct empirical research more effectively. As in the case of analytical approaches, e.g. of Larry Diamond and Doh Chull Shin, separate analyses of partial trends clarify the differences between consolidated democracies.⁵³ From another perspective, the analyses of “partial regimes,” such as political performance, the commitment of actors involved, as well as social evaluation of civic engagement, underline the procedural character of democracy and allow for a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of new democracies.⁵⁴

Despite the different foci of research, the two possible approaches point to a common research programme: in order to address political processes properly it is essential to evaluate the institutional conditions of consolidation. Thus, systematic analyses of democratisation make clear that political institutions play central role in distinguishing particular paths of state and institutional development, possible through elite action, which in its turn is highly sensitive to social expectations.⁵⁵

The impact civic participation has on policies underlines the importance of political institutions, framing the decision making processes. In all cases, the modelling of civic activities as a part of democratic politicking allows for conclusions about the impact citizens *included* into political community might exercise on policy-making. This is possible through a consideration of their interactions with street-level public officials, electoral behaviour, protest, and petitioning. Unfortunately, resident aliens and individuals disengaged from politics do not have the same opportunities to influence political entrepreneurs and can only expect that their discontent will be considered in policy corrections. However, the interaction between the disaffected and the state institutions could prompt considerable changes in policy.

The activities of civic actors exercise a greater impact on policy-makers, not least because they are formulated as group demands, on the basis of group initiatives. This clearly points out how groups, underrepresented on or even excluded from the political stage could bring their opinions into the “political” society.

3. Civil society in post-communism

The arguments emphasising the centrality of civil society for democratisation show much coherence with discussions on democratic pluralism, which present the latter as attainable within the realm of political interaction. But while the term “civil society” has been successfully applied to specific areas of academic research, explanations of democratisation processes necessitate consideration of the factors that lie beyond the discursive framework and reflect functional equivalents applicable beyond the limits of the Occident.⁵⁶ Underlining the ad hoc expectations of political developments outside of the European context, Chris Hann points out that “civil society debates hitherto have been too narrowly circumscribed by modern Western models of liberal-individualism”, pleading “that careful attention be paid to a range of informal interpersonal practices.”⁵⁷ Following Hann’s argument, more consideration should be given to functional equivalents of the phenomena that we take as indication of an existing “civil society” in the Western context, such as formal structures and organisations, “towards an investigation of beliefs, values and everyday practices.”⁵⁸

Another difficulty for analyses of “democratisation” is imposed by the understanding of what the term “civil society” entails—post-communist citizens are seldom negative about abstract terms such as “democracy” or “civil society.” In practice, however, not only such values, but also much less fundamental democratic practices and institutions enjoy weak public support, indicating that those involved in activities to *change* the aspects of the regime do not undertake these in order for it to become more democratic in the “Western” sense of the word. The goals are usually described in more tangible terms. Universal freedoms and rights are frequently evoked by activists to gain greater recognition and support from the post-communist and Western governments. However, taking “civil society” at face-value inevitably limits the potential of civic actors to engage with institutionalised and informal politics, as well as with collective identities. This latter point especially underlies much of the criticism about the weakness of post-communist civil society.

The scholars of post-communist democratisation have been widely discussing the fact that communist societies had only rudimentary public organisations that were independent of the state, with the majority of trade unions, cultural societies and communications systems relying on the state’s support for existence. In this sense state-institutions, governmental bodies and officials who occupied the respective offices were to a high degree independent from the public under the communist regime. Naturally, it is implausible that unconstrained civic engagement could have

existed under such conditions during the socialist era. Nevertheless, some researchers have suggested that, already in the SU, there existed areas where civic engagement can be seen as performing civil society. These approaches presented social processes in the SU as specific expressions of civil society in the conditions of the totalitarian regime, and included religious and grass-root organisations, the description of which resembles rather dense social networks with high social capital.⁵⁹

In his *Weakness of Civil Society* Marc Morje Howard assesses the major reasons for the limited citizen involvement in volunteer organisations in post-communist Eastern Germany and in Russia. He argues that mistrust in state organisations, persistence of friendship networks and post-communist disappointment are to blame for the current social behaviour and the (absent) civic activism in these countries.⁶⁰ According to his data, a general tendency toward the passive acceptance of political processes “as they happen” in the CEE countries would allow us to see a different type of civil society emerging in post-communist Eastern Europe.⁶¹ I largely agree with Howard on his point that “the weakness of civil society as a distinctive element of post-communist democracy, a pattern that may well persist throughout the region for at least several decades.” However, I do not share his view that further social and political “development would depend largely on the individual leaders, their personalities and ideologies, and their political strategies.”⁶² As the following chapters demonstrate, the weakness of civil society in the Baltic states is largely attributed to reluctance of political institutions to engage with citizens in general, and civic actors in particular. The same could be true in the case of other CEE societies.

Particular attention should be paid here to the nature of “civic engagement.” Ideally it is neither oriented toward power acquisition, nor towards profit accumulation, but aims at formulating and implementing goals not achievable through individual action alone. For civic engagement to emerge, individuals must be aware that they can express their grievances and demands vis-à-vis the state as *collective* interests, which requires mutual “trust” between the democratic state and the individual. In an ideal world, the democratic state would commit itself to parity in its relationship with subjects, above all declaring its “trust” that its constituents would not attempt regime change by challenging its particular aspects. On the other hand, the citizens must “trust” the state to take their concerns and regard their interests seriously. In this framework, any engagement of individuals which influences political decision-making and causes an alteration of the structural framework of relations between the state and its subject can be treated as an activity of civil society.

The responsiveness of the state to the claims and suggestions provided by the individuals who are affected by political decisions, but who do not necessarily have direct influence on their making, allow for conclusions about the relations between the state and its subjects. At the same time, the civic engagement of individuals aimed at improving the opportunities to participate in the decision-making process could be taken as a proxy for their acceptance of the rules of the democratic game and preparedness to contribute to their further development. The degree to which both sides pursue their goals and influence the attainment of their goals within the democratic framework is indicative of the depth of democratic consolidation in post-communist societies.

The pioneering study of Barnes et al developed a “protest potential” scale and showed remarkable dependence between effects of education, income levels, and ideological sophistication on the one hand, and participatory values, levels of acceptance, and preparedness for political action on the other.⁶³ The authors contend that “one element of the ‘New Politics’ is a strong emphasis on broadening opportunities for political participation beyond the established sphere of electoral politics, which integrated to a large extent conventional and unconventional politics.”⁶⁴ These findings appear helpful to analyses of political actions in the communist countries during the last years of socialist regime. Signing petitions, participation in lawful demonstration, joining boycotts, occupying buildings or factories, joining unofficial strikes, and blocking traffic were major tools for contending socialist regimes in the countries of Eastern Europe.

The popular movements leading to the disintegration of the SU had emerged around only a meagre catalogue of issues. The set of demands included adequate representation of popular interests in political decision-making by providing free and fair elections and free-market mechanisms for the control of the economic processes, all taking their cue from the old dictum of “no taxation without representation.” “Consolidating democracy” was frequently reiterated as a penultimate goal prior to and after the collapse of the Soviet socialist system, and described the aspirations of the post-Soviet, in particular the Baltic states.

Importantly, some theorists of democratisation argue that the initial period of democratisation is distinguished by a limited consensus on the goals of transition. During this period, a complicated set of incentives is mobilised to align the greatest possible number of supporters with the envisaged goals. In a somewhat similar vein, Linz and Stepan previously indicated that “in a political system characterized by limited consensus, deep cleavages, and suspicions between leading participants, semi-loyalty is easily equated with disloyalty by some of the participants.”⁶⁵ The exclu-

sive logic of uncertain loyalty can have particularly harmful effects on the consolidation of political communities, where not all of the affected individuals have the full right to participate in national politics.

In the first years, the newly independent states embraced the policies of economic restructuring, state-and nation-building which led to the economic marginalisation and social deprivation of large parts of the local population, and diminishing trust towards political elites and the credibility of democracy as a rule of equals.⁶⁶ As elsewhere across the former Soviet republics, the transition in the Baltic states took the form of a competitive procedure, in which the terms of involvement in the political, social and economic life were renegotiated. Although in the Baltic states the formal equality of social actors with regard to access to political resources was secured, two of the three Baltic states failed to provide sufficient constitutional opportunities for the members of minority populations to change elected officials and choose between contenders for political office.

The study of the patterns of popular support for democratic values in the situation of limited political participation is particularly instructive in those post-communist societies where individuals have experienced economic deprivation and status-loss, and have been held at arm's length from the process of state-building. The strategies of goal-attainment on the part of the populace provide an especially unique insight into the opportunities available for participation in policy-making in societies undergoing democratic transition.

I test the reliability of this assumption by focusing on the group of people who were initially excluded from the automatic right to political participation because they were considered unreliable partners for democratic games and prone to an undemocratic expression of will. Needless to say, the influence of the groups not included in citizenry with regard to the political decision-making process requires an analysis of the institutional framework as well as politics, during, and after, the transition period. By looking at a complex set of issues across the region the following chapters discuss the impact of nation-building and nationalising politics on minority communities in the Baltic states.

Importantly, the investigation of changes in minority politics in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania requires a consideration of political institutions framing the strategies of minority actors expressing group interests. Whether they made strategic choices to increase the leverage of their communities or acted as advocates of external claims, such as those advanced by their "external homelands," their choices and claims were consistently framed by existing political structures of nascent nation-states.

Also, the question has to be raised as to whether minority groups were mobilised to alter their status within the given institutional setting or whether they aimed for other goals, which accidentally resulted in granting them broader group rights.

This discussion has direct implications for analyses of the social response to democratisation in the post-communist context. Throughout the book, democratisation in the Baltic states is treated as an outcome of both agency involvement and structural conditions. The focus of my research on the contribution minorities made to the democratisation of the Baltic states is twofold: on the one hand, I underline the importance of the structural constraints on individual political and civic engagement. On the other hand, I focus on the reasons for political *disengagement* and the use of non-political opportunities by the members of minority groups to advance their interests.

4. Conclusion

My book explores the role played by the Russian-speakers throughout the recent political history of the Baltic states. However, it is difficult to attribute particular socio-political attitudes and activities to individuals of ethnic or linguistic communities, despite findings from the field which may seem seductively suggestive of immediate causal relations. It has been argued in the field of contemporary Baltic studies that the titular nationals have endorsed democratic transition as a value in itself, but they support democracy in their state as a means to legitimise nationalist claims to their territory. At the same time, it has been claimed that the members of non-titular, and, in particular, Russian-speaking minority populations, were unable to develop a “civic culture” in the 1980s.

Luckily, the comparison of the three countries allows more balanced analyses, which show that non-titular populations had a more idealistic assumption of what democratic change was to bring them, and, hence, were more frustrated with the outcome of transition. Although the Baltic societies present a very specific example of the post-communist transition, some lessons can be derived from the region showing the salience of socioeconomic conditions, of the political framing of society, and of the receptiveness of political actors to civic criticisms. These indicate what challenges democratising regimes face and what potential factors exist for a slower pace of democratisation. Not unimportantly, this emphasis presents a visible disconnection between the cultural, social, economic, and political aspirations of particular sectors of post-communist societies, underlining the differences between various groups that turn out to be

essential when cultural arguments become means in the pursuit of political ends.

A note is due on two limitations resulting from the study of the impact democratisation has on minority groups. First of all, in the Baltic states as elsewhere in the post-communist world, the popular engagement of the populace is limited, and, hence, its impact on policy-making is restricted. In order to address this issue, the accommodation of minority claims by the state-actors is conceptualised as dependent on engagement of international actors.⁶⁷ The very same international engagement can also have a direct impact on minority civic groups in the form of institutional, financial, and technological support. I believe, however, that the growing visibility of the minorities in the region and the acknowledgement of minority rights cannot be exclusively traced back to the involvement of international players. Instead, it should be seen as a sign of increasing critical feedback from citizens/residents on political processes in their state.

Secondly, in order to conceptualise the activities of minority populations as dependent upon structural factors (institutions, entrepreneurs) this study assumes that Baltic politics are nationalising with respect to the minority groups resident in their states. The amount of international advising to Estonia and Latvia on their minority policies indicates that international conditionality influenced these countries' institutional design, despite the critical views of national elites. At the same time, the reappearance of nationalist forces on the political arena in these two countries, as well as to a lesser degree in Lithuania, makes it clear that Baltic nationalisms are far from tamed, and are instead dormant, though potentially explosive political forces.⁶⁸

All this suggests that democratic conditionality affected the institutional design of the Baltic states, but that it allows no final conclusion on the interim democratisation of societies, still harbouring (ethno-) nationalist sentiment. My starting point in this respect is the belief that a liberal democratic polity should aim at the implementation of the democratic symmetry principle in order to enable all those affected to participate in decision-making. Expanding this point, I refer to the democratic theory literature claiming that a "democratic state" should apply the autonomy principle to ensure the equality of political rights among all members of the community. These points lead me to consider the regular formalised criteria of political membership to provide little help in explaining the improvement of democratic institutions and in enhancing social integration. Instead, I believe that civic participation on the one hand, and the effective implementation of feedback mechanisms between political institutions and political entrepreneurs on the other, are crucial for an assess-

ment of the extent to which democratic decision-making has been accepted by a society, beyond the mere institutional design.

Needless to say, while the structural conditions may differ, they only frame the settings designed to accommodate the demands of the public for democratic governance. The contention of governance by the electorate only underlines the “formal” aspect of democracy, but not that it has been accepted as “the only game in town, when no one can imagine acting outside the democratic institutions.”⁶⁹ The impact of the affected populace on political developments could be analysed from the perspective of public engagement in the matters influencing individual lives, taking structural constraints and individual resources into account. Further chapters discuss the critical importance of the institutional context in which democratisation is taking place and how the role of society can be accounted for in the study of the process.

Notes

- 1 Carothers, 2007.
- 2 Lipset, 1960; Almond and Verba, 1963; Pye and Verba, 1965.
- 3 Di Palma, 1991, Schmitter and Karl, 1994.
- 4 Lipset, 1968; Lipset, 1959; Lipset and Bendix, 1959.
- 5 Almond and Coleman, 1960; Almond and Verba, 1963; Pye and Verba, 1965.
- 6 Sartori, 1969.
- 7 Dahl, 1989; Di Palma, 1990.
- 8 Diamond, 1999; Linz and Stepan, 1996b; Rueschemeyer, Rueschemeyer and Wittrock, 1998.
- 9 Shin, 1994, p.143.
- 10 Offe, 1991, p.869.
- 11 Ibid. p.875.
- 12 Ibid. p.884.
- 13 Ibid. p.157.
- 14 Linz and Stepan, 1996a, p.29.
- 15 Linz and Stepan, 1996b, p.5.
- 16 Ibid. p.7.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Ibid.p.10.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Ibid. p.245. See also, Evans, Rueschemeyer and Skocpol, 1985; Przeworski, 1991, p.17.

- 21 Linz and Stepan, 1996b.
- 22 O'Donnell, 1993; O'Donnell, 1973; O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead, 1986.
- 23 Schmitter and Karl, 1994, Terry, 1993.
- 24 Ferguson, 1997 [1767].
- 25 Keane, 1988.
- 26 Hegel, 1995.
- 27 Buttigieg, 1995; Gramsci, 1971.
- 28 Green, 2002.
- 29 Gellner, 1994.
- 30 Schöpflin, 1997.
- 31 Barber, 1998.
- 32 Walzer, 1995; Diamond, 1996, p.7.
- 33 Young, 2000 and 1999.
- 34 Foley and Edwards, 1996; Rueschemeyer and Skocpol, 1996; Skocpol, 1985.
- 35 Melucci, 1996.
- 36 Cf. Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991.
- 37 Edwards and Foley, 2001. Pp.229–230
- 38 Cf. Foley and Edwards, 1996, p.43.
- 39 Skocpol, Ganz, and Munson, 2000.
- 40 Cf. Foley and Edwards, 1996, p.5.
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 Putnam, 1993, p.38.
- 43 Tarrow, 1998.
- 44 Foley and Edwards, 1996.
- 45 Ibid. p.42.
- 46 Diamond, 1999, p.221.
- 47 Foley and Edwards, 1996.
- 48 Habermas, 1975.
- 49 Dahl, 1989, p.221.
- 50 Rustow, 1970; Schedler, 1998.
- 51 Haggard and Kaufman, 1997; Przeworski, 1991.
- 52 Higley and Gunther, 1992.
- 53 Diamond, 2002; Shin, 2000 and 2002.
- 54 O'Donnell, 1993; Schmitter, 1997.
- 55 See e.g. Przeworski, 1991 and 2000.
- 56 Hann and Dunn, 1996.
- 57 Ibid. p.3.
- 58 Ibid. p.14.

59 Michta, 1997; Smith, 1991.

60 Howard, 2003, p.26–29.

61 Ibid. p.147–148.

62 Ibid.p.150.

63 Ibid. p.372–376.

64 Ibid. p.531.

65 Linz and Stepan, 1978, p. 28.

66 For the Baltic States, see Dellebrant and Norgaard, 1994.

67 See Galbreath, 2003a; Pridham, et al., 2008; Galbreath and Muiznieks, 2009; Pridham, 2009.

68 See Gelazis, 2003; Hughes, 2004; Kelley, 2004a; Kelley, 2004b; Pettai and Kallas, 2009; Sasse, 2009.

69 Linz and Stepan, 1996b, p.245.

Chapter 2

Ethno-territorial proliferation in the Soviet Baltic

This chapter discusses the policies pursued during the Soviet years in the Baltic region and their impact on political developments during the early period of perestroika. I investigate some of the most salient issues of socialist life by outlining the structural determinants for development of political apathy with minority communities during and after the SU. The Soviet period in Baltic history needs to be revisited in order to provide the background of social processes as diverse as mass political mobilisation of Baltic nationals and the failure to rally for their interests on the part of the Russian-speaking public.

At first glance, the regime support already provides strong explanatory power for the differences in political participation across the Baltic societies. However, it would be wrong to suggest that while all Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians were engaged in reinstalling “their” independence, Russian-speakers in these republics were absolutely disinterested in the events. Nonetheless, it appears that scholars have widely accepted this interpretation of various ethnic groups’ political participation in the Singing Revolutions, and have advanced the stereotype of “active titulars and passive Russians.” In this chapter I discuss the sets of institutional incentives for the Russian-speaking communities in the Baltic states to disengage from political and social activities long before the group was perceived and framed as a minority in the post-Soviet Baltic region. Although the Russian-speaking populations were the most visible agents of the Soviet regime in the Baltic states, they have not played a role generally attributed to them in the analyses of Sovietisation.

Some would notice that I have stolen the title for this chapter from Terry Martin’s article, *Borders and ethnic conflict: The Soviet experiment in ethno-territorial proliferation*.¹ Martin argues that Stalin’s affirmative action policies on the non-Russian periphery of the SU followed the “nativisation of cadres” (*korenizatsiya*) and accompanied the centralisation of socialist federalism between the wars. This chapter shows that “territorialisation of ethnicity” continued after the WWII in the Baltic republics, much along the lines of the Soviet nationalities policy of 1920s-1930s. Crucially, because it followed Stalin’s definition of the nation as a “historically developed stable community with a common language, territory, economic life, psychological makeup manifested in a community of cul-

ture,”² many mistakes made in other Soviet regions prior to WWII were repeated in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. As I discuss in the following, although Baltic publics suffered as an immediate result of the Soviet inclusion, the socialist state promoted the formula “national in form, socialist in content” and empowered titular nationalities at the expense of minorities.³

In a sense, as Yuri Slezkine has remarkably put it, all Soviet nationalities were assigned a room of their own in a large Soviet communal apartment.⁴ So were the Balts after their inclusion into the Soviet structures. However, the Russians occupied a relatively wide and spacious hallway and were able to sneak into other nationalities’ rooms. This was exactly the case with many Russians and other non-Balts in the Baltic states who could only rely on the Union’s institutions for support of their linguistic, cultural, and social needs.⁵ As a result, the members of the Soviet ethnic groups who moved beyond the borders of their national-territorial unit and settled in another nationality’s republic were disempowered and discouraged from participating in politics.⁶ The developments in the Baltic societies over the “years of dependence” provide particularly interesting material for a comparative analysis of later state- and nation-building. This analysis of the Soviet top-down policy implementation and its break-down during perestroika will allow for later discussion of the hierarchical principle in interethnic relations inherited by the independent Baltic states from their Soviet institutions.

In this chapter, I argue that the ideological machinery of SU sought acquiescence from the society affected, rather than vigorous support of its subjects—two reasons responsible for the lack of popular support of the Soviet state at the point when it was needed most. Naturally, “Russians,” or to be more precise, Russian-speakers were the most numerous and most dispersed ethnic group of the SU. This fact led many to suggest that if no one else, Russian-speakers were “natural supporters” of the USSR. This view, however, found little evidence during perestroika. As I discuss below, the effects of the Soviet regime on communities of Russian-speakers in the Baltic states worked in the opposite direction. A complex set of mechanisms created conditions for consolidated disinterest of the non-titulars in the fate of the Soviet state.

1. Economic development and the demographic shift

The politics of physical and conceptual conquest, as well as the later consolidation of local elites within the framework of the Soviet ideology of the proletarian state, were reality in the Baltic after 1944 as in other Soviet

republics in the 1920s.⁷ Despite the fact that major debates around the process of socialist progress dated a few decades back, the same policies were applied in other parts of the country and in the Baltic states particularly. When Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were incorporated into the Soviet Union, the policies of control and cohesion applied and testified to the incapability of the Soviet leadership to find effective solutions to local problems.⁸ The failure to recognise the specific situation in the Baltic republics after WWII, where economic development, the formation of a national consciousness, and the definition of territorial integrity took place long before Soviet occupation, points to the general blindness of the Soviet policy-makers toward the problems on the ground.

The Baltic states were finally incorporated into the SU at a time when Stalin was increasingly propagating the idea of the Russian nation as “the elder brother” of all the Soviet nations. At the time, the dispersion of (mostly Slav) specialists and workers into the (mostly non-Slav) national republics was highly encouraged.⁹ Clearly, the Baltic Soviet republics were limited in expressing their preferences to the economic development objectives within the Soviet federation no more than other Soviet republics at that time. The indiscriminate implementation of central directives in the Baltics would suggest that the Soviet government was simply eager to divide the competences between the centre and the republics. Without question, the overarching goals laid in the “flourishing” of the Soviet nations could only take place with the assistance and under the supervision of the “great Russian people,” as Stalin argued in “The Questions of Marxism.”¹⁰

The Soviet Marxist ideology was vigorous in promoting industrial development and a concomitant type of society centred on factory work, social involvement, and ideological literacy. In the early years of Soviet history, these objectives were pursued in various regions of the Union through the policy of collectivisation. Urbanisation was used to allocate labour force for industrial development and was supported by migration from industrially underdeveloped regions of the USSR into the industrial hot-spots.

A number of Sovietologists tend to interpret Moscow’s ambitions to industrialise the Baltic region as an effort to attach it to the RSFSR by a variety of political, economic and socio-cultural ties.¹¹ However, the facts available in the Soviet statistics on the methods of collectivisation, proceedings of industrialisation, and the extent of labour-force migration into the Baltic region suggest a different interpretation.¹² As there is hardly enough evidence of Soviet capacity for forcing republics into the structures of the USSR, one should interpret the policies of economic develop-

ment as the implementation of *social* policies. The Soviet commitment to provide for employment opportunity to every Soviet citizen regardless of its usefulness and labour costs can be seen as the reason for state-sponsored labour migration into the comparatively industrialised Baltic republics after their incorporation into the USSR. In addition, during the first post-war years many migrants moved into the Baltic republics in search of labour opportunities on their own initiative.¹³

In the years preceding WWII, Estonia and Latvia experienced economic growth, with numerous manufactories rising across the countries. At the time, the Estonian economy, although still relying upon cattle and dairy farming, saw a number of cotton, flax and wool mills assuming production in the North-Eastern part of the country. Simultaneously, the country's natural resources such as oil-shale, clay, and limestone allowed for the establishment of fuel and cement industries in the land strip from Narva to Tallinn, whilst Estonian timber was exported both to the East and the West from the growing ports of Baltiski/Paldiski and Tallinn.¹⁴ Similarly, in Latvia the ports of Liepaja, Ventspils and Riga expanded as the demand for exporting the products of the local heavy and light industry rose in the first third of the 20th century.¹⁵ Quite predictably, most of the industrial infrastructure of the Baltic states was destroyed during the early 1940s and farm-production became ineffective as a result of the post-war population decline.

The difficulty of rebuilding the pre-war infrastructure was partially attributed to the demographic change of the Baltic republics due to the turbulences of the First Soviet inclusion (1940–1941) and the German occupation of 1941–1944. Latvia suffered its worst losses during this time with a population decrease during the war years of up to 36%; Estonia lost 33% of its pre-war population, Lithuania 32%.¹⁶ These population losses had to be compensated for by immigration of Soviet citizens during the first post-war years, in order to rebuild industrial facilities and provide the production necessary for the devastated SU. Effective functioning of the industry was only possible when the ravaged infrastructural facilities were rebuilt. In order to accelerate the process, the population of the republics was “restocked” by some 31% of pre-war Latvia, 29% of pre-war Estonia, and 6% of pre-war Lithuania, mainly by Russian-speaking workers arriving from other Soviet republics.¹⁷ Already the first Soviet population census in the Baltic Republics of 1959 revealed significant changes in the demographic structure of the societies, particularly after thousands of the local residents were purged by the Soviet regime and many more “resettled” into inhospitable remote areas of the SU.

The strategies of the post-war economic and political development in the Baltic region have significantly influenced the socio-demographic and ethno-cultural make-up of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in the long-term. The goals of economic development ranged greatly among the three Baltic republics. Their impact on the demographic structures of the respective societies over the time of the Soviet inclusion and post-Soviet state- and nation-building was also very different.¹⁸

Lithuania was the least affected by Soviet labour migration in the aftermath of WWII. The last Soviet population census of 1989 recorded that 79.95% of its 2,712,000 inhabitants were ethnic Lithuanians, with minorities mainly Russians and Poles, both representing less than 10% of the total population.¹⁹ Some argue that the sustained balance of the republic's ethnic composition was an achievement of the local leadership, which prevented industrialisation of the republic's economy and thus the mass labour-immigration.²⁰ Notably, the leadership of the Lithuanian CP maintained that Soviet Lithuania should preserve its traditional agricultural sector as a centrepiece of its economy to contribute best to the economy of the Soviet socialist state. With the lack of industrial infrastructure, Lithuania developed a successful export-oriented economy in the pre-Soviet years. The state effectively supported small farms, producing meat and dairy products for export, which constituted the major source of the national income in the 1930s. With a mere 8% of the population occupied in the manufactures and industry, urban areas remained largely underdeveloped prior to Soviet industrialisation.²¹

The lack of pre-war industrial infrastructure in Lithuania made it impossible to command excess-labour from the Soviet republics to rebuild non-existent facilities. Instead, collectivisation was perceived as an effective measure for restructuring the republic's economy, where the national liberation guerrillas, the so-called *miško broliai* (Forest Brothers, similar groups were active in Latvia and Estonia as *meža brāļi* and *metsavennad*), delivered fierce opposition well into the mid-1950s, supported by the impoverished peasantry. The emphasis of Lithuania's economy on agricultural production resulted in limping industrialisation and thus the lowest-level of per capita investment during the Fourth Soviet Five-Year Plan (1946–1950). Predictably, limited investment contained the republic's economic growth and held immigration to a much lower level than in EstSSR and LatSSR until the mid-1950s.²² Although the rates of industrial production accelerated steeply by the end of the 1950s, the subsequent decades saw an overall decrease in industrial performance. Nonetheless, the (for Soviet standards relatively high) coefficient of industrial output of

60% of the republican gross national product was sustained until the 1980s.²³

Although industrialisation in Lithuania was relatively modest, the LitSSR had undergone significant diversification of its economic system. At the time of secession from the SU, industry and construction accounted for 64%, agricultural production was reduced from 52% in 1959 to the mere 25%, and immaterial production rose to more than 10% of the republic's GNP.²⁴ Contained economic development and the slow speed of industrialisation, on par with persistent natural population growth and availability of human resources in the rural areas, resulted in a limited labour-force migration from other parts of the SU.²⁵ Calculations show that some 1,093,500 Soviet citizens were employed in Lithuania during the Soviet time. Only around 311,000 migrants remained in the republic after the expiration of their work-contracts over the period from 1951 to 1989, constituting a meagre 9% of the republic's population in 1989.²⁶

The relationships between Vilnius and Moscow had been developing in a rather balanced manner thanks to the mediating role of the long-term Secretary General of the Lithuanian CP Antanas Sniečkis. At the same time, Tallinn experienced a series of ups and downs in its relations with the Soviet centre. Similarly to the leader of the Lithuanian CP, the Russian-Estonian Johannes Käbin (or as he was known by his Russified name, Ivan Kebin) remained a servant to the Soviet regime from 1952 to 1978, facilitating agreements between the CPSU and the Estonian SSR. The particular role played by Käbin and other higher echelons of the Estonian CP, including many Soviet-Estonians (or Yestonians, as they were known), had been highly regarded for the effective rebuilding of Estonia's industrial infrastructure. The limited exploitation of natural resources and underfunding for the rebuilding of industrial premises allowed the local leadership to avoid Moscow's direct intervention into the economic development until the 1964 abolition of the republican-based management of labour-migration.²⁷

From 1964 on an increasing migration of industrial workers and technical personnel to Tallinn, Narva and Sillamäe significantly raised the numbers of Russian-speakers in the republic.²⁸ The majority of Soviet labour-migrants stayed in the republic for several years only, living in urban areas within a Russian-speaking social environment. They had little incentive to acquire the knowledge of the Estonian language let alone the opportunity to familiarise themselves with Estonian culture. Over the years of the Soviet inclusion, the percentage of Russians in the EstSSR rose to 30.33%, or 475,000 by 1989, making up some 78.8% of all non-Estonian residents of the country in 1991.²⁹ Despite a high turnover of the

migrant population in Estonia, by 1989 43% of all non-Estonian residents of the republic were born there, and around a half of the non-Estonian residents were living in the republic for over twenty-five years.³⁰

The economic change and demographic shift were even more remarkable in Latvia. The republic's extensive pre-war industrial infrastructure allowed Moscow to send a large work-force into the Latvian SSR in order to "rebuild" the sector in the initial years of the second Soviet inclusion. By 1947, major industrial ventures had been repaired and new industrial complexes, mostly of heavy industry, were planned, followed by migration of some 500,000 workers from the SU in the period between 1945 and 1955.³¹ One could conclude that the Soviet industrialisation plans for the Latvian SSR relied mainly upon Soviet factory workers, who constituted almost 45% of all persons employed in the industry.³² Already in 1959 some 33.8% of Latvia's population were ethnic Slavs, counter-weighted by merely 62.0% of ethnic Latvians.³³ The erection of the second dam on the Daugava and continuous industrialisation of local economy during the same time could only increase dependence of the LatSSR from the Soviet labour-force.³⁴

This might explain the vigour with which "national communists," headed by Eduards Berklavs, tried to decelerate the economic development of the republic. In the course of the education reform of 1958, Berklavs and almost the entire leadership of the republic, including the leader of Latvia's *Komsomol* (Young Communist League), were purged from their positions accused of "national isolationism and protectionism." No wonder then that Moscow-ordered changes in the higher ranks of the republic's leadership contributed little to affirming even the minimal degree of republican autonomy. The later period of the Soviet Latvian history republic was only to continue this trend.

The Latvian CP leader, Arvīds Pelše (1963–1966) and Augusts Voss (1966–1984), undertook little to contain Moscow's policies toward Latvia. Instead, continuous central financial support for investment into the economic sector and the growth of local high-tech, light and heavy industries created a great demand for a labour-force from other regions of the SU. During the 1950–1960s labour migrants arrived to the Baltic republics to settle in the urban areas. Starting with the mid-1970s, however, many immigrants were moving into more rural areas, where the increase in agricultural production required an input from an appropriate work-force.³⁵ Statistical data supports the conclusion of Pabriks and Purs that "on a macroeconomic level, the system of perks and benefits coupled with massive military expenditures, the misuse and exhaustion of resources and decline in productivity was akin to a colony of termites [...]."³⁶

The rapid growth of the Latvian economy required human resources which the republics simply did not have, hence the difference was covered by increasing migration of Russian-speaking personnel. In total, it is estimated that 1,517,800 Russians were employed in Latvia during the Soviet period, many of whom subsequently returned home to leave 445,200 mainly Russian-speaking migrants in the LatSSR in 1989. Altogether, some 906,000 Russians made up 34.0% of the republics population and hence represented 70.7% of the non-titular residents of 1991's Latvia.³⁷

The last Soviet population census of 1989 took place in the context of the transition to independence in the Baltic republics. The situation in Latvia alarmed the titulars, who had almost been reduced to a minority in their own republic with a mere 52.04% of the total population.³⁸ More fortunate was Estonia, where the share of Estonians had dropped to the level of 61.5% in a population of 1,565,662, but still totalled twice the number of Russian residents in the republic (30.3%). The Estonian and Latvian SSRs had undergone a process of industrial revitalisation and rapid growth of tertiary economic structures. Their cost: large scale immigration of Soviet citizens, who took advantage of opportunities for better employment and pay, as well as the better quality of life and social structures available in the republics.

The different levels of labour immigration in comparison with the LitSSR are perfectly explicable by the economic objectives of Moscow's regime and the local government in Vilnius. Slower economic processes in the LitSSR helped sustaining a rather ethnically homogeneous society. As LitSSR's government decelerated industrial development and labour-migration, the titular nationality retained high birth rates and hence could cover the growing demand for a new labour-force. In comparison with its neighbours, Lithuania's leadership was thus the most successful in containing the streams of Soviet migration: In 1989 the clear majority of its population of 3,674,800 were Lithuanians (79.6%), with significant minorities of East-Slavs, i.e. Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians (12.3%) and Poles (7.0%).³⁹

The Soviet statistics on the socio-economic development of the Baltic societies suggest that the swift industrialisation of the economy was paralleled by the rise in the educational level among social groups connected to industrial production.⁴⁰ While similar patterns of social development were observable in other industrially developing regions of the USSR, a number of factors, such as the higher quality of life and career opportunities attracted significant numbers of labour immigrants into the Baltic republics as early as the late 1940s.⁴¹ Only a few regions of the SU

could boast similar living and working conditions, which explains the attractiveness of the Baltic republics for the Russian-speakers from across the Soviet republics.⁴²

Several years on, the established communities of non-titular residents and workers in the region facilitated the integration of the new immigrants where they lived. However, this did not mean that newcomers were required to integrate into the local society. Throughout the Baltic republics, regions with intensive industrial development witnessed the emergence of broad social strata of white- and blue-collar workers among the non-native population. They resided compactly in the urban areas with facilities for consumption of the contemporary culture specific to the Soviet life-style. The Soviet migrants coming for work settled in the areas where their contacts with the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian populations remained limited. Naturally, this urban middle class had little interest in getting to know locals or acquiring skills in the Baltic language.⁴³

Similar social stratification processes were observed in other Soviet republics during the “socialist offensive” and industrialisation.⁴⁴ Many of those arriving were commanded for employment in monocultural work-collectives and were left with little incentive to acquire the knowledge of the republican languages. Arguably, for many Russian-speakers better chances for employment were placed higher on the list of priorities with their immigration than learning the local language. By propagating labour as an ultimate social value, the Soviet regime created a vast class of those who used free education as an opportunity for upward social mobility and obtained employment, social securities, and housing in a region of comparably great economic prosperity.⁴⁵

For many of those migrants arriving in the Baltic republics after WWII, the personal experience of improving individual life-conditions and opportunities in the republics, which undoubtedly performed much better than in the vast majority of other Soviet regions, made this a symbol of economic advancement of *their* country, the USSR. Needless to say, the personal experience of many Soviet time migrants into the region could leave them with no doubts of an advanced character of their home country, the Soviet Union.

2. The making of the Soviet people

Although many Baltic nationals claim otherwise, the Soviet Union was a nation-builder, not a nation-killer.⁴⁶ For decades, Soviet leadership saw its first and foremost goal in empowering many “backward” Soviet nationalities through education and policies of affirmative action, just to mince

them later into the new, Soviet people. The merger of the Soviet nations to form the “Soviet people” was to be accomplished not through the effort of all nationalities of the Union, but mainly through linguistic assimilation of non-Russians into the Soviet mould.⁴⁷

The largest and the most dispersed nationality of the Soviet Union, the Russians, did not fit into the overall hierarchy of the regime. Although excluded from the territorialisation plans, many Russians were promoted to key positions on the Union level and gradually became an instrument of the economic, socio-political, and demographic integration of the state. However, at the level of the national republics, Russian-speakers had limited opportunities for social mobility unless they were well-educated and highly loyal to the regime. The promotion of international solidarity, unanimity on socio-political attitudes and economic goals of the socialist society and “rapprochement” through promotion of a common language was essential for building the multinational state.⁴⁸

One of the means to achieve this was to treat each nationality according to the status of its national-territorial unit, thus limiting the potential for interethnic conflict. Naturally, socialist society was to be free of all antagonism, the ideal to be secured through the implementation of specific policies of bonuses for various ethnic groups. Stalin’s “nativisation of cadres” and later Khrushchev’s “flourishing of nations” are cases in point, when Soviet nationalities were entitled to have a national territorial unit to define and realise their dream of national development. In effect, the titular nationalities in republics were favoured over the non-titular ones; the assimilated non-titular nationalities were favoured above non-assimilated.

The assimilation of non-Russian peoples into the Russian-speaking Soviet culture was not an objective, although the policies favouring Russians remained an issue for discontent between the titular and non-titular ethnic groups throughout the SU. This would have stood in stark contradiction with the underlying principles of the state and, besides, would be unachievable due to the limitations set by the hierarchy of nationalities in the SU. The formation of the Russian-speaking diaspora communities in the Soviet republics can similarly be explained by reference to various issues. These range from the difficulty to retain ethno-linguistic identity outside of one’s non-Russian republic, numeral dominance of Russians in the SU, and hence Russian-language communication between diasporas of different non-Russian migrant communities. One should not forget the obvious benefits of proficiency in Russian for the sake of social and professional mobility. Greater opportunities for Russian-speakers and Russian-speaking bilinguals certainly facilitated the pragmatic approach to an acquisition of the “language of international communication” among

smaller nationalities and in the diaspora.

However, the intergroup communication about the expectations of the future, visions of Soviet history, and past experiences have largely failed among the communities of immigrants and Baltic titular populations. This contributed to the fact that immigrant communities lived separately. Without knowledge of the local language or of the local history migrants could not appreciate what the titular populations held of the Soviet ideological, economic and migration policies. Although the groups of migrant Soviet citizens were exposed to the same ideological propaganda as the Balts, the fact that they garnered positive experiences with respect to Soviet reality led to their becoming a tacit accomplice in cementing the regional dominance of the regime.

In 1959 all Union republics launched “nationwide discussions” “on strengthening the connection of schools with life and on the future development of the system of national education in the country.”⁴⁹ Khrushchev’s theses were set up as a pretext to school reform. The discussions in the Baltic republics largely underlined the opportunities for the children to study in their own language, which would be applicable to both titular and non-titular children, alleviating the necessity for the former to learn Russian, and for the latter the titular language.⁵⁰ Until then, students in schools outside of the national autonomous republics and regions were obliged to learn three languages, i.e. their native language, Russian or the republic’s official language and a “foreign,” i.e. non-Soviet language. The previous Soviet practice of educating children in their native language, *de facto* in the language of their parents, had to yield its place to the choice of parents to send a child to a school with a language of instruction of their liking.

Khrushchev’s propositions were, of course, not uncontroversial. He suggested allowing a choice of instruction language in each republic, so each nationality could have access to school curricula in its native tongue, as Leninist nationality policy had advocated.⁵¹ Understanding school reform in this way would either put an emphasis on the option of linguistic assimilation or on an allegiance to one’s own language and culture. Accordingly, the first option implied the possibilities to advance one’s career, whereas the second one limited chances for improving one’s position in the Soviet hierarchy.⁵² The political implications of reform suggested that the education in the republican languages would be taken away from the jurisdiction of national-territorial units and become subject to the individual choice of each Soviet citizen.⁵³

The education reform, despite having caused a loud outcry in the Baltic republics on the potential decline and even “ghettoisation” of the

Russian-speaking migrants, was implemented by Moscow's iron fist.⁵⁴ The lack of incentives for the Russian-speaking and other non-titular immigrants to acquire knowledge of the local languages has proved to be the major impediment for the acquisition of the knowledge of the titular languages in the later decades. Just as certain, the titulars in the national republics could not afford *not* to attend Russian classes in schools. Lack of Russian language skills would close many doors to them should they opt for upward social mobility, impossible without the knowledge of Russian. At the same time, relieved of the obligation to learn local languages, Russian-speakers were, as Pål Kolstø argues, "in effect cut off from a deeper understanding of the dominant culture of the milieu in which they lived."⁵⁵ These pragmatic and symbolic issues of linguistic preferences played a decisive role for the Baltic publics. All in all, it appears that titular communities had objectively less possibility to avoid the acquisition of Russian than Russian-speakers had in avoiding acquisition of the titular language of the republics.

The long-term effect of the education reforms for the Baltic societies was the differentiation made by the residents between the "natives" and the "others," which convincingly pin-points limited faculty of the Russian-speakers to communicate in the Baltic languages.⁵⁶ Naturally, not only Russians but also the members of various nationalities dispatched into the non-Russian republics to supervise the process of building socialism at the Soviet periphery were affected by these policies. Given the limited availability of minority-language education for their children in the republics, the members of the non-Russian immigrant communities were logically more assimilated into Russian-speaking communities than into titular ones.⁵⁷

Although many Russian-speakers were deployed across the SU to occupy positions corresponding to their education and experience, their predominantly production-oriented education put them in less advantageous positions compared with titular nationals. In the Baltic republics, where the titulars had a more "communication-oriented" vocational training, top-republican officials were either russified, or had a very good command of the Russian language, enabling them to diversify possibilities for co-optation, competition, and concessions.⁵⁸ However, the local elites and political leaders were also subject to "cadre-rotation policies" and were particularly required to prove their allegiance to the ideals of the regime. In this context, the struggle for the promotion of the qualified titular personal into crucial offices acquired a new dimension, although the principle of "Russian staffing" (*obsadka*) remained in force, by and large during the entire time of Soviet rule.⁵⁹

Among the Baltic republics the leadership of the Latvian SSR was in a particularly difficult situation, needing to balance the policies favourable for the republic with those acceptable for Moscow. By 1980 a third of the members of the Presidium of the Republican Highest Soviet were non-indigenous Slavs, while the titular nationals came mostly from the RSFSR and were heavily Russified.⁶⁰ A similar situation could be found in the Estonian SSR, where the Russian-Estonians Kābin, Vaino, or Klausons occupied the highest positions in the Republican Party apparatus since the 1950s. Despite undergoing a process of “re-nationalisation,” the Estonian leadership was not perceived as local, as its members mainly arrived from the Soviet heartland and, as in the case of Kābin, had only rudimentary command of the local language. The situation in Lithuania was much the same as the Lithuanian First Secretary of the CP, was monitored by a Second Secretary, who was of Slavic origin. However, Vasily Kharazov played only a decorative role on the side of Antanas Sniečkus, who possessed the assets in the “areas of substantial experience” for fulfilling his duty appropriately without extensive interference from Moscow.⁶¹

Several details about self-perception of the immigrants in the region need particular mentioning here. The Soviet cadre policy is particularly telling in the context of persisting migration from the labour-surplus Soviet regions into the Baltic republics. Although Russian-speakers occupied important positions in the CPs, in economically advanced regions, particularly in the Baltic republics, Russian-speakers were overrepresented in the lower strata, too. This resulted in the formation of geographically compact ethno-cultural communities in each Baltic republic, with Russian as the major language of communication therein.⁶² As large groups of non-natives arrived in the Baltic states, their interests and needs were met in the communities of Soviet citizens, united by their common experience of their stay in new Soviet republics, memory of lower economic and social opportunities in other parts of the SU and, of course, the language of communication.

No doubt, Russian-speaking immigrants were celebrated as the key asset for success of the socialist economy in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, as they occupied the majority of the central positions in the economic premises rebuilt during the time of the Soviet inclusion.⁶³ At the same time, the majority of the Russian-speaking labour-migrants were encouraged to adjust their political and social attitudes to fit in with the views dominating in the republics, and to concentrate on their economic activities.⁶⁴ Certainly, the lack of motivation to “approach” the members of the titular populations at the new place of residence is easily explained by the significant improvements in the migrants’ quality of life. At the same

time, the rigorous advancement of the Russian language as an “effective accelerator of the drawing-together of nations” at the cost of local idioms damaged the relations between the members of various nationalities.⁶⁵ It appears that the Soviet ideology undermined the very objective it was asserting while developing the civic identity as Soviet citizens, namely “internationalism.”⁶⁶

Both the occupational and residential separation constrained contacts between the local and the immigrant groups. This was particularly felt in those areas where Russian-speakers settled compactly. Lack of intergroup contact left “titulars” and “non-titulars” with only stereotypical opinions of their “neighbours,” imposing additional hurdles to be overcome during interethnic encounters. In the long run, the linguistic heterogeneity of the region did not translate into intergroup contacts and positive group-attitudes, as could have been expected with regard to such great representation of different linguistic groups in each society.⁶⁷ While analyses of “contact theory” suggest that close residence and intensive social interaction lead to a reduction of intergroup hostility and prejudice based on group identity, limited intergroup contacts have resulted in the persistence of group stereotypes in the case of the Baltic republics.⁶⁸

The results of the 1989 Soviet population census only confirm this disturbing trend. They indicate a low level of interethnic contact identifiable from mutual knowledge of the language, the number of interethnic marriages and the like. In the EstSSR 33.57% of the titular nationals could speak Russian as the second language, while only 13.49% of non-Estonians had mastered Estonian in 1989. Due to the slightly different mass immigration and settlement patterns, as well as a result of the specific cadres’ policy in the LatSSR, disparity in the knowledge of languages was deeply entrenched. 65.72% of the Latvians claimed being able to communicate in Russian, and merely 21.12% of non-Latvians to speak Latvian.

However, the fears of denationalisation prevailing in Estonia and of complete assimilation into the Russian-speaking Soviet culture in Latvia appear exaggerated. What is more pronounced is the failure of linguistic assimilation of the Russian-speakers into the Estonian or Latvian communities, rather than overemphasis on Russification of the titulars.⁶⁹ By comparison, 66.43% of the Estonians and 34.28% of the Latvians indicated low or no proficiency in the Soviet *lingua franca*. Somewhat different economic, social and demographic developments in the LitSSR explain the much smaller differences between the linguistic communities regarding the knowledge of the other’s language: In 1989 some 37.36% of the

Lithuanians claimed to know Russian and 33.45% of the non-Lithuanians being able to speak Lithuanian.⁷⁰

In the past, scholars of Baltic history argued that Moscow pursued the policy of denationalisation, meaning the Russification of indigenous populations.⁷¹ The argument however does not hold, as it is based on an implicit assumption about the import of language policies into non-Russian republics and neglects the limited will of the Soviet regime to enforce central control over language policies in the national republics. Moscow's limited vigour, vague definitions of long-term goals, and fairly pragmatic policies towards, for example, the Baltic republics suggest that Soviet officials opted for the strategy of "maximal effect at minimal cost" in many respects. As we will see in Chapters 4 through 6, similar rationale dominated post-Soviet Baltic policies towards Russian-speakers.

Of course, Russian was taught to the local populace and was acknowledged as *the* language of communication between the Soviet centre and the republics. The Soviet cadre policy opened perspectives for titular nationals to occupy important positions in the local apparatus, but there is no evidence of either republican or local officials promulgating Russian as the *only* language of communication in public, or among the public officials.⁷² However, while after the 1958 school reform the members of the Russian-speaking communities could avoid learning titular languages at secondary school, the titulars needed to learn Russian irrespective of their attitude towards the regime or degree of their pragmatism.⁷³ The cumulative effect of institutional coercion, community pressures and opportunist choices led to growth in Russian-language proficiency with both, the titular and other non-Russian communities after the WWII. In the end of 1940s only around 40% of the entire Soviet population spoke Russian, this figure grew to 48.7% of all Soviet population in 1970; and increased significantly in 1980 to 81.9%.⁷⁴

Different figures on the language knowledge of the Baltic residents indicate a need to consider the structural impact of the ideological framework on linguistic proficiency across the Baltic societies. Particularly, extensive use of Russian in the LatSSR prompted many Latvians to shift their language loyalties and discouraged Russian-speakers from learning Latvian. At the same time, where language was not necessary to get by in the everyday, its proficiency remained low. This is what was observed in Estonia, where both linguistic communities had a rather low proficiency in each others' language. Yet again, limited use of Russian language by the Lithuanians made knowledge of Lithuanian essential for employment opportunities in the republic. Curiously, the parity of Russian and Lithuanian languages in LitSSR allowed all residents of the country to develop

more tolerant attitudes towards others' languages. All in all, rational decision in favour of one or another language should not be underestimated.

On many occasions, Baltic émigré historians suggested that during the 1950s—at the time of the dismantling of the armed resistance to the Soviet forces by the forest brethren and in particular after the Soviet crackdowns in Hungary and Prague—Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians came to grips with the idea that their republics were to remain in the SU.⁷⁵ This made even the most anti-Soviet titulars seek avenues for furthering their interests in the new socio-political situation.

3. Dissent and contention in the Soviet Union

As we have seen above, the Soviet state and discourse on social issues had been remote from the aspiration of the individuals who it affected. In the long run it had not only resulted in the conformist standing of the majority of Soviet citizenry towards the policies, but led to the retreat of dissent into the private spaces, making it impossible for the ruling class to identify the issues of contention.⁷⁶

Dissent existed throughout the SU at all times, but it was not until the period of perestroika that dissatisfaction of various social groups was expressed widely and vigorously.⁷⁷ The ideas previously put forward in *samizdat* publications were now openly spoken about in public, with symbolic actions taking place throughout the Union by the people affected by the same Soviet policies. With common experiences, the citizens of the Soviet society could easily find common interests and identify the reason behind the discontent, which resulted from the disinterest of the state in their wellbeing. However, in contrast to the implications of Bunce's "homogenisation thesis," the opinions of Soviet citizens were not levelled completely.⁷⁸ The mobilisation patterns between the nationalities in the Baltic republics can be explained from a different perspective. They had surfaced during the glasnost period, but the swift diversification of goals and the increasing role of mediation between the regime and popular demands indicate that differences existed at an earlier stage. Specific Soviet policies explain the consolidation of the Baltic titulars, as well as the reason for the absence of the Russian-speakers' determination to reject the goals of the national movements more actively.

The logic of the Soviet nationalities policy allowed for the emergence of dissent movements, which sought to advance cultural and linguistic interests in the national republics across the SU and gained particular strength in the Baltic republics.⁷⁹ The Soviet policy promoted ethnic particularism at the national periphery by supporting ethnographic studies,

which were to underline the diversity within Soviet society and were tolerated as expressions of national specificity.⁸⁰ In order to accustom a socialist to the appropriate national context, folklore groups were active in all national-territorial units, focussing on the study of folk songs, pre-Soviet history, and local religions. However, what Soviet authorities saw as expressions of socialist content in the national form for many appeared to be the only way of resisting the disappearance of their nations in the Soviet mould.

In the Baltic republics, ethnographic societies even worked under the auspices of socialist ideology and laid the foundation for later independence movements as early as in the 1960s.⁸¹ With the blessing of the Soviet regime, many folklore movements went as far as to emphasise the specificity of their national traditions and pointed out the danger of Western civilisation and Christianity for their existence. Because both the West and the Church were perceived by the Soviet regime as enemies, even the circles not explicitly praising Soviet authorities for bringing civilisation into their republic enjoyed the support of the Soviet state in strengthening their national identity.

Already in the mid-1970s a number of members of the Russian-speaking communities in the Baltic republics had expressed growing unease with the status of national and ethnic cultures in the framework of the Soviet regime. One of the most prominent organisations, the Democratic Movement of the Soviet Union (DMSU), had been active not only in the Baltic republics, but in other republics as well. The group coordinated activities of dissidents, who asserted that “the road to national liberation lies through democratization of the entire Soviet society.”⁸² Providing for effective and extensive networks throughout the SU, the DMSU alongside other organisations cooperated with the nationally-minded groups of the titular nationals in the Baltic republics and paved the way for the later national awakening.

Actively engaging in the underground movements from the early 1970s, vast parts of the Russian-speaking intelligentsia in the Baltic republics had supported and actively participated in the national revival of both titulars and non-titulars in the region. Many members of the Russian-speaking elites and dissidents believed that the liberalisation of nationalities policies should be initiated. Previous research acknowledged that the principles advanced by the Soviet nationalities policy allowed the Baltic peoples to advance the goals of their nations already prior to perestroika.⁸³ However, the recourse to national rhetoric as an instrument of ensuring ethnic survival would not have been possible without local minorities, *de facto* Russians’ support in restricting the Soviet regime. This leads to the

question of whether or not the SU leadership would have cared to negotiate international agreements on the status of minority groups had there been no Russian-speaking diaspora in the region.

International agreements have additionally influenced the political balance between Moscow and the national periphery. The Final Act of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe was of particular importance. Signed by the SU and 34 other, mainly Western European states in Helsinki on August 1, 1975 it gave a powerful impulse for Baltic activists to focus on the issues that were previously silenced by the socialist leadership. By signing the Act, the Soviet Union on one hand received acknowledgement of its territorial integrity by the Western states. On the other, the Soviet leadership had agreed to respect various rights of individual residents on its territory. This allowed Soviet activists to form so-called Helsinki-groups and to report on the implementation of the Helsinki accord to Western journalists accredited in the SU. These groups thoroughly documented the human rights' abuses and were connected in a network of dissident communities throughout the SU. Starting with the foundation of the Helsinki Group in Lithuania in November 1976 (under the full name, *Helsinkio susitarimų vykdymui remti Lietuvos visuomeninė grupė*) cooperation between the dissidents of the Baltic republics on human rights and related issues was common place.⁸⁴

While the regime failed to reform in the late 1970s, politics of the early 1980s proved reactionary. Glasnost provided a unique opportunity to air resentment and openly criticise Soviet Communism. Overrepresentation of members of the non-titular nationalities in both the top and the bottom social strata in the Baltic republics resulted in the growing perception of the danger for the local, titular nationalities coming from these groups of society. This creeping separation of the Russian-speaking communities from the titulars and Moscow's persisting control of the republican activities had prevented formulating an agenda that united the ethnic groups over common aspirations. It appears that the controversial decisions implemented by Moscow in particular with respect to economic and cultural policies left many of the non-titular immigrants in the Baltic republics as alienated from the general line of the CPSU as the Baltic nationals were. Given the vulnerability of the immigrants' position in the national republics, their disappointment with the Party line also meant disapproval of Soviet reign in the region and, not infrequently, active support of the Baltic independence movements which emerged during the years of perestroika. The students of Soviet affairs have pointed out that the very collapse of the SU was inevitable given the vigour with which the

ideological machinery was implementing the principles, undermining its very own existence.⁸⁵

But did this mean that the new central Soviet government lose its grip on the social and economic processes at the national periphery? It seems that the Soviet authorities did not see expressions of the national consciousness as phenomena outside the nexus of class struggle, the view that indeed challenged regime's chances for survival.⁸⁶ The absence of minority rights in the Soviet nationalities discourse had left only limited space for members of non-titular communities across the USSR. These needed to either integrate into the titular or in the Russian-dominated Soviet culture, but did not have any specific status or protection. The Soviet policies of affirmative action supported the cultural activities of titulars and promoted understanding of national republics as homelands of the ethnic groups whose name they bore.⁸⁷ At the same time, the Soviet state had found no suitable formula to address the cultural concerns of the large groups of non-Russian, non-titular residents in the national republics, and most likely had not even sought one.

The members of the Russian-speaking communities were not granted any guarantees with respect to their cultural or national rights in the republics. Indeed, members of Russian-speaking communities enjoyed the right provided by the Soviet system to be educated in their native language throughout the SU. However, this did not result in any national aspirations of these communities, but further dimmed their expectations of ethnocultural independence. Likewise, the availability of large Russian-language mass media did not promote an individual national consciousness of the migrant group. Instead, the Communist ideology coined the understanding of the Russians in the Baltic republics (as anywhere in the SU) that they were living in their home-country and working for the good of all people of the multinational state. Thus it is not hard to understand the confusion of the local Russian-speakers, who for the most part had arrived in the Baltic believing in the friendliness of the local population towards the SU, but were suddenly referred to as "colonists" and held responsible for the misdeeds of the regime. The reaction of the Russian-speakers to this rhetoric of naming and shaming was too predictable. In turn they accused the titulars of being narrow-minded and backward nationalists.

4. The impact of affirmative action on Russian-speakers

Immediately after WWII, Western scholarship posed the question of when the Soviet system would collapse due to its territorial overstretch and

deficit of human resources. While a zealous drive for industrialisation, strict centralisation of bureaucratic procedures and internationalist ideology determined social development, socialism never gained the human face Soviet bureaucrats had promised since 1920s. Naturally, economic growth and broad distribution of social capital across the society had changed the world-views of the Soviet citizens and would later push the socialist system towards change which it was unable to tackle.

The commitment of the Soviet system to its ideological roots impacted individuals in various parts of the state and highlighted the particular aptness of the Russian-speakers to identify with the Soviet regime. While various interpretations of this phenomenon are found in the scholarship, two major tenants have dominated this discussion, supporting the thesis of the “Russian face” of the Soviet regime. The first major interpretation emphasises the numerical dominance of Russians in the USSR, suggesting perhaps the decisive clue for the explanation of the group’s relative passivity.⁸⁸ The community of Russian-speakers was more able to profit from the socialist regime and accordingly was unlikely to engage in undermining the system that benefited them. Another interpretation advanced the idea of political calamity of the Russian-speakers deriving from the role which was ascribed to them in the Soviet historical narrative, believing that the Soviet republics were saved from the capitalist aggression by the socialist revolutions in which the Russian people played a decisive role.⁸⁹

As a result, large parts of the Russian-speaking communities had an overtly exaggerated view of the contributions made by the Soviet state, socialist regime, “big Russian brother,” and particularly themselves to the development of local welfare. Some researchers have pointed out that ignorance of many Russian-speakers towards the state, policies and fellow-citizens prevented them from developing individualist attitudes, and led them to patronise titular nationals in the Baltic, as was the case in other Soviet republics.⁹⁰ Valerie Bunce argues that the socialist institutions caused a long-term development which was not foreseen by the CP, dividing the powerful, homogenising the weak, and undermining economic base of its legitimacy.⁹¹ The Soviet regime managed to effectively distinguish institutional activities from the individual requirements of the public and reduce political participation to a symbolic action of conformity. While the ideological dictum sounded the support for rapid social transition, political development was measured by economic achievements and the party penetrated the majority, if not all spheres of individual life.⁹²

“At the same time, because of fusion between politics and economics in socialist dictatorships, power was redistributed along with economic resources. Thus, socialist societies became more autonomous and more powerful when bargaining with the party-state.”⁹³

Naturally, republics with greater economic weight had greater leverage. The transition from a communist to a democratic regime emerged first in the Baltic republics, where relatively high living standards prevailed. The Baltic republics were the first to voice their aspirations for more liberties at the end of the 1970s and later in the mid-1980s to intensify the democratic agenda put forward by Gorbachev. While one cannot fully attribute the emergence of the democratic agenda in the Baltic republics to comparative economic prosperity of the region, the shift of acceptable social relations from those based upon subordination to ones preferring negotiation is particularly notable since the mid-1980s.

The differences between the Russian-speaking communities and the titular groups in the Baltic states became of crucial importance. Educational differences and expectations from the occupational career account for considerable variance in attitudes towards the Soviet regime between the groups. These were additionally reinforced by residential segregation and different preferences in cultural matters that resulted from the different role the titular and immigrant groups played in the region during the Soviet time.⁹⁴ The members of the Russian-speaking immigrant communities improved their economic status by moving to the Soviet Baltic republics and enjoyed great social securities under the socialist regime. The members of the titular nationalities resented lack of opportunities and prospects in the Soviet state, although they equally profited from broader availability of higher education, increasing quality of life and the like.

Naturally, the economic devastation of the Baltic infrastructure during WWII required intensive human resources for its rebuilding, which allowed the republics' integration into the economic structures of the SU. The allocation of the key positions in the industry to presumably loyal local nationals or Slav migrants coming from the Soviet heartland further illustrates the power of the Soviet centre over the national periphery.⁹⁵ The futile efforts of the Baltic leadership to halt labour migration and the negligible effect of appeals to consider republican needs and possibilities, rather than All-Union Five-Years plans, made painfully clear who had the final say in the region. The bargaining and compromising of the republican authorities with the central commanders did not improve the image of the central authority either. Issues of national pride and loyalty to one's

ethno-linguistic community sharply distinguished Baltic titulars from immigrant Russian-speakers.⁹⁶ Other issues caused very different reaction of immigrant groups too. For them, political, economic and socio-cultural policies implemented in each republic played an important role in sustaining the well-being of the Soviet citizenry. As a result, contradictory readings of Moscow's role and different perceptions of the common history were formed with the members of the titular and non-titular communities in the Baltic republics.

In total, the system of incentives erected by the state to support its existence led to the formation of interests shared by the Russian-speaking publics which were remote from any expectations of Baltic titulars. Thus, the Soviet regime had nurtured popular political apathy while catering to individual need with provisions for free education, social welfare, and universal employment in exchange for public compliance. Where greater material security and intellectual autonomy prevailed, national sentiment was supported by the republican structures and flourished in the popular opinions, as it did with the titular publics in the Baltic republics. As opposed to Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians, non-titular residents had no political ally in the socialist regime, which failed to provide them with the institutions supporting linguistic, cultural or ethno-national claims.

The change in the ideological line of the CP following the accession of Gorbachev to the post of the General Secretary of the CPSU led to an increase in the civic activities of the titular communities. When criticism of the Soviet social and economic development was allowed, the ideas of openness and restructuring did not fall onto deaf ears within the circles of Baltic intelligentsia. Both the historical materialism and the ideals of proletarian internationalism were subjected to harsh criticism by Soviet dissidents, while Leninist principles of "democratic pluralism" were held high. Desperate for popular support of his reforms against the hardliners in the Communist party, Gorbachev assented to criticism of Soviet socialism and supported national reformists on the Union's national periphery.⁹⁷

Over the course of several years, Communist parties across the range of the Soviet republics were deserted by many adherents of reforms, who then retracted into the dissident movements. Promoting an image of the Party as the sole leader of these social developments and, consequently, changes, many members of the CPSU openly sympathised with the popular movements. The division into reformist and conservative wings of the CPSU resulted in the formation of republican Communist Parties, which attempted to consolidate the reformist forces behind them by putting the national agendas into their programmes.⁹⁸ As Jan Trapans

concludes, what the national fronts had declared a year before was now openly declared by the Baltic Communist leaders.⁹⁹

It seems that the General Secretary of the CPSU underestimated the power of criticism and the extent of popular discontent with the Soviet system as it was. Soon after the beginning of perestroika it appeared impossible to restructure only the economic system while giving the political system a mere face-lift. On top of this, Gorbachev opened the door for potential contesters of political decision-making, allowing for public opposition to the CP. This allowed popular discontent, previously discussed privately, to enter public discourse. Like many other Soviet nationalities, which had their own ethno-territorial units *and* lived on its territory, the Balts could rely on republican institutions to support their agenda with affirmative action programmes. Russian-speakers in the Baltic republics started to lose out on access to crucial political resources. When the national resentment of titulars with Communist rule crystallised in debates about the Soviet inclusion and on possible paths out of the “prison of nations,”¹⁰⁰ Baltic Russian-speakers had no access to the institutions where discussions took place.

5. Conclusion

In the atmosphere of reforms, national identity provided a fresh substitute to the rusty edifice of “proletarian internationalism.” However, active rallying under these circumstances made sense only for those groups that emphasised their national particularity, narrative of history, and cultural traditions outside of the Soviet ideological framework. Here, the titular nationalities of the Baltic republics had strong symbolic legitimacy and stood on firm moral grounds. Russian-speakers in the Baltics and beyond had much less with which to bargain.

The primary objective of this chapter was to show how state policies have influenced the perception of non-core ethnic groups about the time of Soviet inclusion. As I have discussed, the policies of the Soviet regime provided structural incentives for the titular groups to barter with Moscow for greater autonomy, while the Russian-speaking minority was systematically discouraged to participate in political decision-making. In other words, the affirmative action empire empowered the weak by weakening the potentially strong ethnic communities. As I will discuss in the next chapter, the very same mechanisms were used to construct the new, post-Soviet political communities in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. If nothing else, the institutional legacies of the SU were used to empower titulars at the expense of the formerly dominant Soviet group.

Does this mean that the Soviet regime had made Russian-speakers in the region a docile group of tacit supporters of any regime? How deep was the disinterest in political decision-making during the post-War years on the part of this group, and how had Soviet affirmative action lead to weakening the Russian-speaking publics in the Baltic republics? This next chapter will explore these questions in detail. I will refer to the factors of combined deprivation of instruments for the expression of political will, social constraints, and the Soviet rhetoric of cultural self-determination—all impacting the institutional development of the post-Soviet Baltic polities. All this, as I will argue, predisposed the members of the Russian-speaking communities to be spectators rather than actors on the stage of the public battles for political independence of the Baltic republics in the late 1980s–early 1990s.

Notes

- 1 Martin, 1999. On the Soviet nationalities policy see also Martin, 2001; Fitzpatrick, 1999; Hirsch, 2005.
- 2 Stalin, 1936, p. 51.
- 3 Martin, 1998, 1999.
- 4 Slezkine, 1994.
- 5 McAuley, 1984; Gleason, 1990; Hajda and Beissinger, 1990; Schroeder, 1990; Roeder, 1991.
- 6 For the discussion of the inverse side of ethno-territorial proliferation see Lapidus, 1991; Roeder, 1991.
- 7 Zamascikov, 1991.
- 8 Slezkine, 1994, 2000.
- 9 Rywkin, 1990, p.70.
- 10 Szporluk, 1990, p.20.
- 11 Taagepera, 1991.
- 12 Mertelsmann, 2003.
- 13 Brüggemann, 2004; Mertelsmann, 2004, 2005.
- 14 Hope, 1996. p.45.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Misiunas and Taagepera, 1993, p.354.
- 17 Ibid. p.358.
- 18 Agarin, 2003, 2007.
- 19 Lithuanian Government, 1992.
- 20 Vardys, 1991.
- 21 Hope, 1996, p.59

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- 22 Remeikis, 1980, p.63.
 - 23 Lane, 2002, p.75.
 - 24 Vardys and Sedaitis, 1997, p.66. See also, Zamascikov, 1991.
 - 25 See Stanaitis and Adlys, 1979.
 - 26 Soviet Government, 1989. See also, Norgaard et al, 1996, p.170.
 - 27 Mertelsmann, 2003a, 2005.
 - 28 Statistikaamet Eesti Riiklik, 1992; Laigna, 1986.
 - 29 Soviet Government, 1989 Especially, volume 7.
 - 30 Smith, 2002, p.41–42.
 - 31 Pabriks and Purs, 2002, p.32.
 - 32 Dreifelds, 1990.
 - 33 Levits, 1981, p.91.
 - 34 Dreifelds, 1977; Muiznieks, 1987; Dreifelds, 1989.
 - 35 Dreifelds, 1977, p.148.
 - 36 Pabriks and Purs, 2002, p.40
 - 37 Soviet Government, 1989.
 - 38 Soviet Government, 1991, p.36.
 - 39 Lithuanian Government, 1991.
 - 40 Jones and Grupp, 1982.
 - 41 Mertelsmann, 2004.
 - 42 Bohnet and Penkaitis, 1991.
 - 43 Parming, 1980, p.407.
 - 44 Jones and Grupp, 1984; Martin, 2001; Hirsch 2005.
 - 45 Zubkova, 2008; Vardys, 1965.
 - 46 For this point see particualrly, Gleason, 1990; Martin, 2001; Slezkine, 1994; Suny, 1993; Cf. Dreifelds, 1996; Misiunas and Taagepera, 1993; Vardys and Sedaitis, 1997.
 - 47 Solchanyk, 1981.
 - 48 Lapidus, 1991. See also, Deutsch, 1966, p.130.
 - 49 Khrushchev, 1960.
 - 50 Smith, 2003.
 - 51 Solchanyk, 1982.
 - 52 Bilinsky, 1962; Filtzer, 1993.
 - 53 See further Bruce and Korbel, 1976.
 - 54 Smith, 2003.
 - 55 Kolstø, 1995, p.88.
 - 56 Karklins, 1986, p.82.
 - 57 Bilinsky, 1968; Miller, 1977.
 - 58 Lapidus, 1984, p.578.
 - 59 Rywkin, 1990, p.65

- 60 Ціпа, 22.3.1980 and 31.1.1981
- 61 Puzinas, 1973.
- 62 Vardys, 1965, p.335.
- 63 Misiunas, 1990.
- 64 Alexiev, 1983.
- 65 Kowalewski, 1979. For comparison with other republics, see Solchanyk, 1994 and Zisserman-Brodsky 2003.
- 66 Przauskas, 1991.
- 67 Forbes, 1997, 62–113
- 68 Allport, 1954.
- 69 See Taagepera, 1991.
- 70 Soviet Government, 1991. Esp. volume 7.
- 71 Misiunas, 1990; Bilinsky, 1981; Anderson, 1990.
- 72 Smith, 1990; Mertelsmann, 2005.
- 73 Taagepera, 1991.
- 74 Sheehy, 1980.
- 75 Shtromas, 1996, Vardys, 1965.
- 76 The outcomes thereof in the Russian context are discussed thoroughly in Yurchak, 2006.
- 77 Beissinger, 1999. For accounts of earlier dissent in the region, see Alexiev, 1983, Kowalewski, 1979.
- 78 Bunce, 1999.
- 79 Taagepera, 1986, Dawson, 1996; Ulfelder, 2004.
- 80 Hirsch, 1997; Tishkov, 1992.
- 81 Ginkel, 2002; Bennich-Björkman, 2007a, 2007b; Zake 2008.
- 82 Cited after Budryte, 2005, p.51. See also, Bungs, 1991, Zisserman-Brodsky, 2003.
- 83 Muiznieks, 1995; Rudenshiold, 1992.
- 84 Alexiev, 1983; Kowalewski, 1979.
- 85 There is a huge number of publications on the issue, the earliest include Osborn, 1974; Kowalewski, 1980; Bahry and Nechemias, 1981; Solchanyk, 1981; Lane, 1985; Wimbush, 1985; Besançon, 1986.
- 86 See for example, Silver, 1974; Seton-Watson, 1956; Vardys, 1965; Taagepera, 1969; ; Alexiev, 1983; Lapidus, 1984; Shanin, 1989; Allworth, 1990; Bociurkiw, 1990; Dixon, 1990.
- 87 Stukuls-Eglitis, 2002, pp.31–32.
- 88 Dutter, 1990; Shanin, 1989.
- 89 Bahry and Silver, 1990; Friedgut, 1979.
- 90 Karklins, 1986, p.82.
- 91 Bunce, 1999, Especially, Chapters 2 and 3.

92 Ibid. p.130.

93 Ibid. p.131.

94 Kirch and Laitin, 1994; Lauristin and Heidmets, 2002.

95 See for example Kulu, 2003.

96 Lapidus, 1984, p.565.

97 Galbreath, 2005, p.89.

98 LitCP was the first one in the Baltic republics to split off from the CPSU in December 1989. LatCP followed the suit at its 25th Congress in 1990, and the EstCP turned away from the Soviet Communist party in January 1991. Trapans 1990, 1991.

99 Trapans, 1990.

100 As was coined by Sirje Sinilind (1984).

Chapter 3

Baltic perestroika and nation-building

The Soviet policies of centralisation in the political, economic and social spheres had a stark impact on the status and self-perception of both the Baltic titular nationalities and Soviet migrant populations. When these differences were first voiced by the dissident elites in the mid-1980s, the discrepancies in perceptions were seldom explained as simply the difference in experiences by socio-economic strata of the same society. Instead these were commonly described either as a lack of sophistication or as pro-Soviet frames of mind of the non-titulars when discussed by the members of the titular nationalities. When the Russian-speakers were addressing the differences in perception, they underlined these as expressions of egoism and the nationalist attitudes of the Balts. These perceptions had subsequently coined the later discussions between titulars and non-titulars in the popular movements on the future perspectives of the development of the Baltic republics. However, the difficulty in accommodating the interests of the Russian-speakers in the independence movements was not a result of their status as the “proletariat’s fifth column” in the region. Instead they were said to have no vested interest of their own, but represented the will of external states and hence endangered Baltic national interests.

Baltic republics were the major arena where the struggle between the authorities and the citizens for the reform of the Soviet system was carried out during the 1980s. Perestroika and glasnost allowed the members of the titular ethnic groups in the Baltic republics to discuss openly the memories of the past. These ranged from experiences of the interwar statehood to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, from Stalinist deportations to post-war resistance, all symbolising the illegitimacy of the Soviet rule in the republics. This dissent, based on perceptions of the socio-political community gained prominence in the public over the mid-1980s. It called for the restraint of Soviet control over political and economic processes, an end to the “Russification” policies and, most importantly, revision of the official Soviet history of the region.

In the following chapter I will discuss the run up to independence of the Baltic republics from the SU, outlining how the earlier Soviet poli-

cies determined Russian-speakers' disengagement in the process. A discussion of the independence movements will reveal the weakness of the Russian-speakers' position to oppose the exit of the republics from the SU. As we will see, the central government provided institutional opportunity structure to the "owners" of republics, the Baltic titulars, while disempowering Russian-speakers. This chapter discusses the time of re-establishing the political sovereignty of the Baltic republics and the role Russian-speakers played in the process. Overall, I argue that in the long run, the effects of the Soviet nationalities policy explain how republican political institutions thrashed minorities' political activity while propelling Baltic titular communities into the leadership of post-Soviet nation-building.

1. Baltic nationalism awakened

It is commonly accepted that the Soviet regime supported expressions of "national content" in the "socialist form" as highly appreciated forms of internationalism. The nationalist rhetoric emerging during the period of glasnost significantly challenged the ideological foundations of the regime, but it was nonetheless using the structural mechanisms provided by the Soviet policies of ethno-territorial proliferation.

From the mid-1980s groups of citizens started to fill the space that is attributed to civil society in democratic regimes. Acting in line with the objectives of perestroika, they alternatively provided a forum for individuals to take action and further their individual interests collectively. Although the emergence of civil society had taken different form across the SU, the mobilisation of broad social strata in support of the more radical change was most successful where national sentiments were in place.¹ With the Soviet regime tolerating and even promulgating ethnic particularism, ethnic identities remained the easiest way to organise dissent into popular movements.² This helps explain the differences between the emergence of the popular movements in the national republics and the Russian Federation, as well as the activities preferred by the titular nationals and Russian-speaking populations outside of the RSFSR.³

The Baltic cases make it particularly evident that the goals of titulars' national movements had varied greatly from those of the Russian-speakers. Decisively, the popular movements in the region show some degree of unanimity with regard to their goals because they could call for support of the quasi-nation-state institutions of Baltic republics.⁴ The non-titulars were far more undecided about the ends of their activity, reacting to claims from the titular side rather than formulating their specific demands and actions.

At this stage, there was only a limited conflict over the different historical narratives, as all ethnic groups were predominantly occupied with the delegitimizing of the Soviet past. Mutual contestation of different political actors and, above all, of nationalist parties had led to a polarisation of the political spectrum. The race for the nationalist vote resulted in explicit demands for national self-determination of the republics in the summer of 1988. However, it appears that neither the formation of the *Eesti Rahvuslik Sõltumatus Partei* (Estonian National Independence Party) in 1988, nor of the *Latvijas Nacionālās Neatkarības Kustība* (Latvian National Independence Movement) had caused massive reactions of non-titular communities in the republics. Neither the discussions on symbolic actions, nor the restoration of the national flag and the state language, nor the persistent questioning of the Soviet historical narrative and the growing usage of rhetoric referring to non-titulars as “colonist workers” or “occupants” led to the activation of the Russian-speaking communities.

Studies of the late Soviet society reveal that the largest part of the Soviet citizenry was convinced of the peaceful coexistence of all Soviet nationalities and the number of freedoms the USSR brought them.⁵ The Russian-speaking residents in the Baltic republics were no exception. In fact, Russian-speakers in the Baltics were not much different from the titulars, who engaged in the same festivities: in their majority they did not support any party. Although many Baltic émigré scholars assume that non-titular residents of the Soviet Baltic republics were indifferent and passive, they did lead rather active political lives, at least in Soviet terms.⁶ However, in many cases it is only the lack of support *for independence* that drew the attention of research, but not the *general disinterest* in political activities.⁷ While most of the titular nationals had already celebrated the re-introduction of “their” national flag and establishing Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian as the only state languages, most of the Russian-speakers in the region had taken the role of silent observers in the situation.

Nonetheless, it is incorrect to assume the complete apathy of non-titulars in the Baltics. Although the majority did not even aspire to organise political associations, many were active in cultural organisations, when, among others, the associations of autochthonous ethnic groups renewed their existence in the second half of the 1980s. However, the non-titulars in the Baltic republics did not have national awakening movements in any way comparable to those of the titular communities. But the minorities throughout the region had significantly activated their cultural work compared to previous periods in history.⁸ In Lithuania activities of the Karaim and Polish minorities intensified, and the Lithuanian Jewish com-

munity resumed its activity in 1988. Similarly, in Latvia Jewish and Polish associations were established, and in Estonia the Forum of National Minorities was created, including some 20 cultural groups.⁹ The rise in national consciousness among Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians was conducive to the establishment of cultural associations on the part of non-titular immigrants who had joined the popular movements and were welcomed by their nationalist leaders to support independence from the SU.

That said, neither in the rather ethnically homogeneous Lithuania, nor in Estonia, where Russians had been living in the ethnic enclaves of Ida-Virumaa, did the Russian-speaking population engage in the popular front movements *en masse*. At the founding congress of the Estonian Popular Front in October 1988, only 5% of the participants were non-Estonians. The congress of *Sajūdis*, which took place in October the same year, had only 4% of delegates who were non-Lithuanians.¹⁰

By contrast, the *Latvijas Tautas Fronte* (Popular Front of Latvia, LTF) brought together the people of various nationalities, who constituted up to 12 % of the delegates of the congress.¹¹ Unlike in both other Baltic republics, the LatSSR representatives of the Russian community were highly supportive of the LTF, signing an open letter to the Assembly of the Latvian Writers' League with the initiative of establishing a democratic People's Front, an initiative supported by the Russian-speakers. A year later, in 1989, several Russian-speakers were elected to the Council of the LTF, with Vladlen Dozortsev emerging as a member of the Board. Among others, Aleksei Grigorjev was one of the editors of LTF's press-organ *Atmoda*, assisting in the circulation of its Russian-language edition.¹²

Similarly, in Lithuania *Soglasie* and *Vozrozhdenie* were published with the help of *Sajūdis*, which included some translations from Lithuanian publications, but also appealed to the reader by including specific information for the non-titular public explaining the recent developments. The printed issues of the *Rahvarinne Perestroika Toetuseks* (Estonian Popular Front, more commonly known as *Eestimaa Rahvarinne*, further ERR), *Vestnik narodnogo fronta* and *Tartuskii kur'er* enjoyed smaller readership than their Latvian and Lithuanian counterparts, but nonetheless accounted for 15,000 and 20,000 issues respectively. *Soglasie* and *Atmoda* were the most widely-read newspapers not only among the Russian-speakers in the Baltic republics, but thanks to their high circulation—between 20,000 and 50,000 each—throughout the Union.¹³

The popular fronts were representing political rather than other aspirations of the Baltic residents and therefore were clearly dominated by the titulars. At the same time, Russian-speakers had also been united in

organisations which conducted cultural activities by and for the Russian-speaking residents of the Baltic republics. In Latvia, the Baltic-Slavic Society of Cultural Development and Cooperation was established in 1988 and was the first association of its kind in the SU.¹⁴ Although it originally included Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian sections, the latter two chose to form separate organisations at a later point in time. The LTF became the basis of consolidation of the Russian Culture Society of Latvia, with its constituent assembly held on March 4, 1989. At this assembly they declared that one of their goals was to develop “to the utmost the Russian national culture, to intensify traditional Russian-Latvian relations, cooperate with the representatives of all nationalities of the Republic.” In the same key, the Baltic Assembly, the joint conference of the leaders from the Estonian and Latvian popular fronts and from *Sqjūdis*, stated its goals in 1989 and aimed at securing “the civic rights of all national and ethnic groups who live on the territories of our states, as well as to concede them the rights to cultural self-rule.”¹⁵

Different cultural organisations of non-titulars sent partially contradicting signals into the emerging political space of the Baltic republics. However, it would be incorrect to conclude that the Russian-speakers had remained absolutely disengaged from these processes. As documents of the day show, many Russian-speakers have not only tacitly supported the independence of the Baltic republics from the SU, many have joined in the ranks of organisations promoting the development of cultural diversity in the region to the point of creating organisations to further the sentiment of solidarity among Russian residents of the Baltic region. The most prominent example, the *Russkaya Obshchina Latvii* (Russian Community of Latvia, ROL) founded in early 1991, laid out an ambitious programme. It declared that it intended to assist the Russians of the republic to adapt to the conditions of the market economy in a Latvian national state. The well-intended project was, however, short lived and fell victim not to the growing tension between the organisation and the Latvian state (its leaders did not intend to challenge the political powers), but to internal disagreement between the leaders.

So, it appears that the Russian-speaking residents of the Baltic republics had not simply been waiting for Baltic independence to rain down on them. Many had engaged in collective action that aimed at promoting the *cultural* interests of the Russian-speakers in general, and of Russians, Ukrainians, Poles, Tartars and other communities, in particular. The *political* activity of the Russian-speakers, or generally, non-titulars in the republics remained limited. It was not until the organisation of the Citizens' Committees in the Latvian and Estonian SSRs that non-titular com-

munities had reason to worry about their future even if independence of the Baltic republics would be achieved. In Estonia and Latvia, where non-titulars have played a decisive role in supporting the popular movements' accession to and establishment in the political arena, the scenario of ultimate titularisation of the state appeared unlikely until 1991. However, the foundations of the post-Soviet citizenship legislation were shaped by Citizens' Committees, mainly by the titular nationals, at the expense of minority communities who failed to mobilise opposing these steps.¹⁶

The increasingly radicalising rhetoric of the ERR, LTF and *Sajūdis* had led the Russian-speakers to formulate alternative models for the political, economic and social development of the republics. Particularly, claims made by the popular fronts across the Baltic republics in 1989 during the stand-off between the Union's and the republic's authorities led to the organisation of the Russian-speakers "from above."

2. Baltic pro-Soviet movements: The counterforce?

While the Baltic titular populations organised the movements to push for the separation of the Baltic republics from the SU, any popular movements of the non-titular residents of the Baltic republics opposing this drive remained dormant. These sprang mainly in response to the increasingly alienating rhetoric of the national movements and aimed at maintaining Soviet rule under the umbrella of ideological control over the republics while voices urging for the proclamation of Baltic independence from the SU became louder.

In this situation, when prospects for Baltic independence became brighter, the Russian-speakers—it is usually argued—were passive and disinterested in political issues and prospects of the Soviet demise. Although this argument is popular with scholars, its logic appears to be inconsistent.¹⁷ Scholarship studying the role of the local Russian-speakers in the Baltic drive for independence paid much more attention to popular movements. However, very little attention had been granted to the organised opposition of the Russian-speakers. A significant part of the Russian-speaking residents of the Baltic republics had actively supported the separation of their republic from the USSR in the second half of the 1980s, but there was also another option. "Internationalist movements," or interfronts, as these were called, are frequently pointed to claim that the Russian-speakers strongly opposed the separation from the SU and presented a real danger to emergent Baltic polities.

It is true that the interfronts opposed the goals of the popular movements by pursuing the logic of "state-keeping," that is of Soviet

centralisation. The problem was, however, that they lacked the support of the constituency they claimed to represent. Although not everyone was at ease with the idea of Baltic independence, not all of those who opposed the popular fronts supported the pro-Soviet movements. Recent studies by Western scholars suggested that the interfronts were largely recruited from communities of Russian-speakers that were not integrated into the Baltic societies, did not speak or poorly spoke the local language and did not see much profit in upholding national interests in the republic of residence.¹⁸ The majority of those who founded and supported interfronts were Russian-speaking and Soviet-minded rank and file party members, army personnel and retired officers, managers and workers in the large defence enterprises—in short, those who realised that they would lose many of their privileges should the Soviet system collapse.¹⁹

Three organisations put forward explicit political goals in opposing the secessionist drive of the Baltic republics: the Internationalist Movement of the Working People of the EstSSR (*Interdvizhenie*, or further Intermovement) in Estonia, The International Front of the Working People of Latvia (further *Interfront*) in Latvia, and *Yedinstvo-Vienybė-Jedność* (Unity) in Lithuania. Their leadership advocated closer ties with the Soviet authorities and was active in promoting a centripetal agenda through their sister-movements in the republics, such as “The Group for the Maintenance of the Soviet Power” in Estonia, “The United Council of Production Collectives” in Latvia and Lithuania, as well as at the union level.²⁰ Unsurprisingly, the interfronts had similar programmes and political agendas since they were created mostly with the help of Moscow between late 1988 and mid-1989. Mavriks Vulfsons, a member of the LatSSR Supreme Council at that time, described the group of those supporting “continuing association” with the Soviet Union as “mostly Russians who had leading positions in the Soviet Latvia, as well as truly dense Latvian Communists.”²¹

In the LatSSR, Russian-speaking intellectuals participated actively in the social and proto-political independence movements on par with titulars during 1988–1991, though some had different aspirations. Many of the Russian-speaking activists, who were not engaged in pro-independence activities, were seeking democratisation of the SU as a whole. However, when compared to the neighbouring republics the group of supporters of reformed Soviet regime was particularly big in the LatSSR.

Another group of LatSSR’s Russian-speaking *privilegentsia* organised *Interfront* in October 1988, convening its founding congress in January 1989. Negative attitudes to proposals on economic and political decen-

tralisation and the status of the Latvian language, made earlier by the LTF, distinguished *interfront*'s agenda and drew the attention of potential supporters from the Russian-speaking community in Latvia. Apparently, it was more a Soviet-minded than a Russian-inspired movement which used Soviet symbols and opted for the preservation of Soviet centralism.²² *Interfront* strongly opposed the drive toward independence and condemned national, or as it was put then, "cosmopolitan" rhetoric of the People's Front. These were juxtaposed with the cliché "internationalist" slogans known from the Communist programme and Labour Day demonstrations and clearly aimed at head-on confrontation with the LTF.

The state-sponsored nature of the *Interfront* became clear during and after the Congress. This was made obvious by the presence of uniformed Soviet soldiers at official gatherings, demonstrations and meetings, which, for exactly the same reason, had been well organised and visible, although they seemingly attracted the very same pool of individuals.²³ Many participants of the Congress had joined the organisation because they feared ethnic polarisation.²⁴ The main support emanated from the older generation of the Russian-speakers in the republic, in particular those in their retirement, whereas younger people favoured the popular movement.²⁵ Differences in age, and correspondingly, in length of residence in the republic, and in the intensity of ties to Latvia and Latvians can partially explain the variance in the political preferences of various groups within the Russian-speaking community. The expectations that the state serve as a provider of guarantees and services led to fragmentation within the group of Russian-speakers in Latvia.

High heterogeneity of the Russian-speaking population in Latvia did not allow *Interfront* to consolidate the protest potential of the non-titulars. While some had retained faith in the importance of Moscow's control and the leading role of the CPSU in providing necessary resources for the republic's well-being, only between 20 and 30% of the non-titulars in Latvia supported the activities of *Interfront*.²⁶ Even with regard to the compulsory-voluntary participation of the military personnel in the republic, it is unlikely that more than 15% of the residents in the Latvian SSR had stood up for *Interfront*. And even among these, as former supporters of *Interfront* recall, authoritarian tendencies of the leadership and exorbitant bureaucratisation drove many potential supporters away from the organisation.²⁷

The founding congress of Estonia's *Intermovement* took place on March 14, 1989. Like the Latvian *Interfront*, *Intermovement* opposed the restoration of Estonia's symbols of independent statehood: the national tricolour flag and Estonian as the republic's sole official language. The

Congress appealed to Soviet authorities to revoke the laws “destabilising the ethnic situation in the republic” and to outlaw the use of the national flag. Further claims however were made by conservative delegates of the Congress, demanding continuous CP leadership and the removal of the nationalist cadres from the EstCP. The Congress also called for revoking the newly introduced system of economic self-management, or *khoz-rashchet* that aimed at decentralising the state control over industrial enterprises. Some delegates sounded even more radical claims, demanding the inclusion of the areas densely populated by Russian-speakers—including the land-strip from Ida-Virumaa to Tallinn—into the RSFSR’s Leningrad oblast. Not surprisingly, the majority of the claims made at the Congress of *Intermovement* were supported by the head of the Estonian KGB Karl Kortelainen, himself a Karelian-Finn, who vigorously opposed the popular movement, language laws and the economic self-management programme.²⁸ In his note on the speeches delivered at the Congress, Toomas H. Ilves claims that “at least one speaker of the Congress demanded mass deportations of Estonians.”²⁹

The issues raised at the founding Congress of *Intermovement* indicate that its emergence and the vigour with which anti-Estonian sentiment was promoted by the speakers is explained not by the interethnic animosities percolating the previously tight nationality lines. Rather, participants opposed the decentralisation of the Soviet state and the emergence of centrifugal national rhetoric pertaining to the popular movement’s calls for political, economic and social self-determination of EstSSR in the SU. The social basis of *Intermovement* indicates why this was possible: some 65% of the movement’s members were white-collar workers from industrial enterprises located in Estonia, although financed directly from Moscow.³⁰ In the case at hand, the two most powerful (and most famous) leaders of the movement, Yevgeny Yarovoy and Lev Shepelevich were both directors of defence industry enterprises, working under the direct jurisdiction of Moscow. The implications of decentralising the Soviet economy for these enterprises and the economic status of their employees help explain the virulent opposition of the industrial ventures’ personnel throughout the Baltic republics to any reforms. Correspondingly, the leading role of the top-managers in *Intermovement* makes clear that the strikes of industrial workers in Estonian factories in August 1989 were *strictu sensu* work stoppages, ordered by the factory management. Although at their highest point these involved up to 4% of Estonia’s workforce, they appear not to have resulted from popular opposition to language and voting laws, the official pretext to the “strikes.”³¹

Although the leaders of *Intermovement* referred to the *Eestimaa Rahvarinne* as “irresponsible and nationalist,” most of the non-Estonians reacted to their call to participate in the building of a “democratic and socialist society” without considering the nationality principle to be the core political allegiance to the Soviet regime. The fact that popular support for the *Intermovement* was meagre appeared clearly during the elections into the Congress of People’s Deputies in March 1989. Of the 36 seats allocated to the candidates from the EstSSR, only five candidates from *Intermovement* were elected, while the remaining positions went to pro-autonomy candidates of the ERR and CP of Estonia.³² In its best days, *Intermovement* won very limited sympathy from Russian-speakers and was supported by 10% of the non-Estonians in 1989, or some 4% of the population of the Estonian SSR.³³

Of course, the data suggest that the support for *Intermovement* was limited. This has also been observed at the time of the events by the Finnish daily *Ilta Sanomat*. The poll of the Estonia’s residents in the spring of 1989 suggested that less than one third of the non-Estonian population indeed supported the positions of *Intermovement* and the Joint Council of Work Collectives. Although both organisations were very active in making clear the positive effects of sustained connection of the Soviet centre with the working class in general and the Russian-speaking communities in particular, they were supported by only 28.7% of the non-titular population in the EstSSR.³⁴ The EstCP enjoyed a somewhat greater backing of Russian-speakers (32.2%). Estonian-led movements, including the Greens, the Popular Front, and even the Estonian National Independence Party, however, received the greatest support of the Russian-speakers in the republic, accounting for 34% altogether.³⁵

Similar processes were played out in the political arena in Lithuania. A number of organisations were called into life to express the interests of the Russian- and Polish-speaking populations, several of which sought to further the cultural aspirations of the non-titulars in general. Most notably, the *Russki Kulturnyi Centr* (Russian Cultural Centre), the *Russkoe obshchestvo* (Russian Society) and the *Russkaya obshchina* (Russian Community) were established to represent and defend the interests of minorities and to “resolve the interethnic problems which have accumulated.” Similar to the leaders of *Interfront* and *Intermovement*, non-titular members of Lithuania’s political and economic elites were worried about the push toward the declaration of Lithuanian as the official language of the republic and established a movement to counterweight *Sąjūdis*.

Yedinstvo was founded on November 4, 1988, declaring to uphold “the interests and political rights of all citizens regardless of their national-

ity and religious faith.”³⁶ In fact among the interfronts, *Yedinstvo* was the only organisation that not only declared its “internationalist character,” but sought to underline this in its name, which was spelled out in the three most common languages of the republic, *Yedinstvo-Vienybė-Jedność*. *Yedinstvo* mainly united the representatives of Jewish, Polish, and Belarussian nationality, but also smaller groups of regionally dispersed Russian-speakers.³⁷ Frequent reference to the issues of “equal rights of nationalities in the LitSSR” by the leadership of *Yedinstvo* did not prevent them from supporting the socialist mechanisms of production and emphasising the role of the Communist ideology, the Soviet state and the CPSU, thereby defending the interests of the *nomenklatura* rather than its popular basis. Vesna Popovski points out that many Russian-speakers could not see the guarantee of their rights as promulgated by the Russian Cultural Centre in the face of the growing cultural nationalism of *Sajūdis*, allowing *Yedinstvo* to emerge as “the only organisation protecting Russians.”³⁸

At the Congress in May 1989, the leadership of *Yedinstvo* has involved in attacking the Lithuanian “cosmopolitans” with “internationalist” slogans, performing “dramatic appeals to delegates’ feelings,” which finally led to the split between its factions.³⁹ A moderate part of the movement stated its reconciliatory attitude towards *Sajūdis*, supporting the claims for greater *economic* autonomy of the republic. However, concerns were expressed with regard to the future of the Russian and Polish cultures in Lithuania by affiliates of the Russian Cultural Centre. Another wing of *Yedinstvo* was particularly conservative. Its members expressed their loyalty to Moscow, but for the most part they opposed Gorbachev’s economic reforms and political decentralisation, with little interest shown in cultural issues or the rights of citizens, both of which were high on the agenda.

One does not need to study the names in detail to conclude that the conservative wing was largely made up of party hard-liners and of managerial personnel of the all-union enterprises who sought to preserve the system of their social privileges and benefits. While the data on support of the Russian-speakers movements in Lithuania are scarce, the accounts of popular support for *Yedinstvo* indicate that only non-titulars were involved in the organisation. But even in this group, which accounts for a meagre 20% of the resident population in Lithuania, only 13% were in favour of the movement, i.e. less than 3% of the entire republican population.⁴⁰ It is not surprising that neither the organisations furthering a cultural agenda, nor *Yedinstvo*, succeeded in organising a political force competitive with *Sajūdis*, which was already broadly supported by non-titulars in the LitSSR.

This discussion points to several reasons why the interfronts failed to address and assert the interests of the non-titular publics. The top-down organisation, lack of transparency, the view of Moscow as *deus ex machina*, as well as the impossibility of containing decentralisation of the Soviet state had occurred at a time when no popular support could be found for these goals either with the public or with the Soviet leadership. In all the Baltic republics the reformist wings of the local CPs—if not the popular movements—were issued *carte blanche* by Gorbachev and enjoyed support for expressing public aspirations. The kind of public mobilisation of the interfronts, however, points to the fact that they were to some degree coordinating their activities, further questioning the popular nature of these organisations.

For example, printed materials for all interfronts were said to be imported from the RSFSR into the Baltic republics. In a situation of intensive control of goods, this move would have been impossible without the blessing of high-ranking figures with pro-Soviet views. Likewise, the United Council of Production Workers, an organisation opposing the implementation of *khozrashchet*, was founded in Leningrad and then “exported” into Estonia. Doubts aside, unlike the middle-level apparatchik or manager, the average Russian-speaking blue-collar worker in the Baltic republics lacked insight into the implications *khozrashchet* and the decentralisation of the economic and political power would have on his or her life. For this reason, while the interfronts utilised the rhetoric of “proletarian internationalism” to convince the workers of the purely negative impact of the reforms, one can hardly speak of the bottom-up popular mobilisation of these movements.

Especially in the Baltic republics, the devolution of economic processes implied the reduction of privileges ascribed to the Russian-speakers in the region throughout the second Soviet inclusion. Emerging out of resentment with Gorbachev’s agenda, the Baltic Russian-speaking *privilegiatsia* was uneasy about the loss of economic and political say they would face should the Baltic republics become independent. However, their efforts to rally support of the Russian-speakers in opposition to the decentralisation of the regime misfired. Anatol Lieven suggested two possible explanations for this critical moment in the Baltic strive for independence. Importantly, the top-down mobilisation of interfronts took place under the leadership of the managerial staff, trade-union officials and military personnel who—all in advantageous positions—were likely to have been lacking credibility with the Russian-speaking public.⁴¹

Secondly, blue-collar workers at the state-enterprises were ordered to fall in line with those who had previously failed to address their needs.

Particularly, it was made clear that retaliatory measures would be taken by the powerful leadership should one fail to support the interfronts. Job loss and little prospect for re-employment in the well-off Baltic republics were brought into the discussion by the leaders, who, assuming the absence of vested interests of the Russian-speaking personnel, acted counterproductively from the outset.⁴²

While Lieven addresses the failures of institutional incentives in the process of the Russian-speakers' mobilisation, other researchers have blamed various human factors. Particularly, the mentality of the Russian-speakers in the Baltic republics was said to have prevented them from active political steps in transition toward independence. These explanations range from the legacies of the social⁴³ and ideological⁴⁴ policies in the Baltic republics under the SU, to a particular Soviet type of public culture they believed destined to be built in the republics.⁴⁵ It seems however that the lack of prominent and credible leadership and miscommunication between the leaderships of the interfronts and the Russian-speaking public would explain both the passivity of the population at large as well as the expressions of protest frequently mobilised by the conservative leaders.⁴⁶

The ethnic enclaves in the Baltic republics provided both the powerful leadership and dedicated followers to pursue their goals within the Soviet framework of action. Appealing to the principle of territorial self-determination, Russian-speakers attempted to install territorial autonomy in Latvia's Daugavpils region in April 1989. Likewise, in September 1989, the local government of Lithuania's Šalčininkai and Vilnius regions, both densely populated by Russian- and Polish-speakers declared autonomy and demanded to be included in the Soviet federation as a separate national-territorial unit.⁴⁷ The EstSSR had its own example of territorial separation. In 1990 the Interregional Council was called into life by the deputies of the Estonian Supreme Soviet and members of various pro-Soviet organisations in Kohtla-Järve casted an overwhelming vote of over 90% for Estonia to remain in the SU.⁴⁸

The period of uncertainty about the upcoming political developments was nearing its end over the course of 1991. In particular, the referendum on the independence of the Baltic republics cleared the path for the way out of the USSR. The right for participation was extended to all residents of the Baltic states (excluding the soldiers of the Soviet army, who were not *de jure* residents) and provided a full picture of the attitudes present in the societies. Lithuania was the first to hold the vote on February 9, when 90.2% of the residents expressed the wish that their republic leave the Soviet federation. It is estimated that only 28% of the non-titular

population voted against independence here. In Latvia and Estonia similar referenda took place on March 3, with 73.7 and 77.8% of the ballots cast in favour of independence respectively. The estimations have shown that in both republics approximately 45% of the non-titulars had voted against it.⁴⁹ The prospect of Russian-speakers disloyalty and potential threat to independence reemerged in Baltic public discourses many times since this crucial vote, but apparently it has only limited substance. Ultimately, even if all those voting against Baltic independence were to be counted together and could have been consolidated in a major political force, a maximum of 20% of the voting population would find themselves in opposition to Estonia's and Latvia's statehood. As we will see, state-building precluded automatic access of many Russian-speakers to participation in political processes, irrespective of actual or potential loyalty to the new state.

The data provided by the newspaper for exile Estonians *Homeland* suggests that the shift in the opinion of the non-titular was rapid during this period of time. While only 9% of the non-titulars were positive about independence in September 1989, in May 1990 already 25% supported this option, and almost 65% of the non-titulars who took part in the vote cast their ballot in its favour in March 1991. These poll results show that the positive evaluation with Russian-speakers grew seven times over the course of a year.⁵⁰ The support for separation of the Baltic republics from the SU grew extremely swiftly; this trend was confirmed by opinion polls during the same period of time in all Baltic republics.⁵¹

Only a small fraction of the Russian-speaking communities were ardent followers of the interfronts, which heavily relied on Communist ideology and rhetoric and alienated potential supporters. However, while the pro-Soviet forces willingly supported the doomed Moscow putsch in August 1991, the popular fronts pushed for full autonomy and declared *de facto* independence from the SU. Not surprisingly, interfronts and regional communist parties were banned as unconstitutional and as posing a threat to national security in the weeks after independence.

The contents and dynamics of the popular movements and the role played by the Russian-speaking individuals therein indicate that they have expressed little support for sustaining dependency relations between the Baltic republics and Moscow. From this time, the narrative legitimising the nation-building strategies in the Baltic republics diverges greatly from the promises made by the popular fronts to align the Russian-speaking (then Soviet) citizens with the titulars in pursuit of secession and restoration of independence during perestroika.

3. Cultural nationalism of Lithuania's *Sąjūdis*

As was the case for all of the re-emerging states after the collapse of the Soviet Union, on their way toward independence Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania had to be redefined as subjects of international law, in the first place with respect to who should be treated as members of these polities. Given the change in borders of the three states and in the ethnic composition of their populations during the time of the Soviet inclusion, clear criteria were to be put in place to define individuals considered a part of the post-Soviet political community and having the legitimate right to decide on the state's path of development.

During the 1980s the discussions of the impact the Soviet inclusion exercised upon the Lithuanian national community brought attention to issues that had been placed high on the agenda in Estonia and Latvia as well. Members of the Lithuanian intelligentsia shared many views with their Latvian and Estonian counterparts that the Baltic cultures had been severely weakened by the Soviet nationalities policy, especially Russification, by ecological problems caused by Soviet economic modernisation, and by the migration of the labour force from other Soviet republics.⁵² At a much earlier stage than in the neighbouring republics, Lithuanian intellectuals appealed to the national sentiment of individuals and their personal responsibility for the future of the nation.⁵³ Support was also granted by Lithuania's Communist Party which, despite standing on firm ground with regard to the Soviet regime, had profited from the discussions on national history in the second half of the 1980s. Crucially, Lithuanian historians debated the hallmarks of Lithuania's history, such as the Molotov-Ribbentrop-Pact, pre-Soviet independence and Lithuanians' post-WWII resistance.⁵⁴ The discussion which unfolded with the participation of regime ideologists enjoyed support in the CP, as it mainly sought to deconstruct the Soviet interpretation of history without delegitimising the rule of the Party.

The inherent contradictions in this debate appear to have obscured interpretations of the steps undertaken both by the CP and *Sąjūdis* in the following years of the nation-building process. Scholarship rightly emphasised the central role played by the Lithuanian Communist government in adopting hard ethno-territorial policies to consolidate the national movement earlier than the Latvian and Estonian communists could do so.⁵⁵ The emergence of stark cultural nationalist rhetoric resulted from debates on history, which was married to the issues of national identity with socialist notions of modernisation, thus legitimising the local CP's steps towards social, economic and political reforms.⁵⁶

The national historians and philosophers played a significant role by inscribing Lithuania's cultural history into the teleological framework of Soviet ideology. Their involvement allowed traditional Soviet reading of history to be challenged on the grounds of national memory.⁵⁷ This interpretation of the history of the LitSSR appealed to titulars to discuss the alternatives for social developments *within* the Soviet state and, logically argued for pluralism on the political stage. In this situation, the emerging *Sajūdis* was perceived as an initiative for moderate reform by the intellectual authorities of the republic and aimed at national awakening, as stated in the first issue of its press organ *Atgimimas*.⁵⁸ Importantly, the debates on events of the pre-Soviet national history framed the climate of discussions on the future of the Lithuanian nation which members of *Sajūdis* and the CP considered to be highly unfavourable.

In this situation, Lithuania's elites faced a double challenge. On the one hand, adhering to the reformist course was necessary in order to face the powerful pressure in the population for a move onto the subsequent stage of national development. At the same time, this needed to be done without provoking reaction from Moscow and rolling back the glasnost policies. The political decision-making and trading of responsibilities with the central government allowed the transfer of responsibilities for the implementation of political goals into the hands of the LitCP leadership. The differences in the agendas of national communists and leaders of *Sajūdis* were not great at all. Both sides shared the view that Lithuanians need to lay their differences aside and together advance the sovereignty of their state in order to protect the cultural heritage of the Lithuanian nation.⁵⁹ In order to facilitate national accord, the debate in LitSSR focused on the impact the Soviet regime had on national culture, traditions, and language. The enterprise remained strictly an ethnic matter—neither the local CP, nor *Sajūdis* appealed to non-Lithuanians to join discussions on independence.

The expression of national interests faced little political opposition in Lithuania, especially keeping in mind that many members of the Party were also members of *Sajūdis* or supported it. On the contrary, several “patriotic” organisations took an even harder stand on the status of Lithuania in the SU and had particularly opposed any further ties with Moscow and any governmental officials who were affiliated with the Soviet regime.⁶⁰ Members of patriotic groups, such as *Jaunoji Lietuva* opposed the idea of cooperating with the Soviet-time migrants, while *Lietuvos Laisvės Lyga* claimed that all members of the Russian nation, including those residing in Lithuania were to be made responsible for wrongs done to the nation and needed to be deported.⁶¹ In fact, while be-

ing an umbrella organisation similar to Civic Forum in Czechoslovakia, *Sąjūdis* lacked a single political position. Its members were in disagreement on many central issues and unable to find middle-grounds to elaborate a coherent position towards the path of national development. The Vilnius- and the so-called Kaunas-factions in *Sąjūdis* both propagated highly ethnocentric views of a Lithuanian nation. They believed the nation could only survive in a state of its own, and therefore proposed different steps necessary for the development of the national culture.⁶² The draft programme of *Sąjūdis* declared that

“the equality of national rights could be implemented only under condition that the representatives of all nationalities recognise the right of Lithuanians to self-determination [...], territorial integrity, and become acquainted and have respect for the Lithuanian history, culture and language.”⁶³

The support of both groups for a cultural interpretation of nationhood as a community of subjects remembering common grievances of the past and assuming responsibility for the future had two different foci. Discussions in the Vilnius-faction underlined a progressive culture of Lithuanians when compared with the Russians, although at the same time, Lithuanians argued backwards when compared to “European” nations. Discussions in Vilnius localised the Lithuanian nation within the European cultural context and addressed cultural integration of society as prerequisite for the establishment of the fully functioning nation-state.⁶⁴ Most prominently, the founder of *Atgimimas* and its editor-in-chief, Romualdas Ozolas had diagnosed the limits of the Lithuanians’ capacity to identify the changes, required for a gradual modernisation of society and to create social institutions which would preserve Lithuania’s cultural specificity. Ozolas argued in favour of a liberal understanding of nationhood, based upon cultural identity and open for change.

The prominence from the Kaunas-faction argued predominantly in moral categories, which excluded non-Lithuanians as possible partners in the process of nation-building. Romualdas Grigas and Algirdas Vaclovas Patackas advanced the image of the Lithuanian nation as an object in the hands of foreign and internal enemies whose utmost goal was to destroy Lithuanians and their cultural tradition.⁶⁵ This thinking fed from the Lithuanian interwar history and entailed opposition to any non-Lithuanian group residing on the territory of the republic. Importantly the picture painted by patriotic activists from Kaunas allowed the emergence of a

popular view, treating the Vilnius-faction as part of the LitCP and weakening its position in the early 1990s.

However different, both competing fractions of the movement saw a culturally integrated society as a prerequisite for a stable post-Soviet polity. They began to further this integration by legalising the symbols of pre-Soviet Lithuanian state- and nationhood. The ethnic homogeneity of Lithuanian society allowed the republican leadership to advance effectively the principle of territorial representation and during perestroika to openly collaborate with *Sajūdis*. This explains why the LitCP took decisive measures for national consolidation, such as the liberalisation of religious life, legalising the national flag and anthem, and importantly giving Lithuanian the status of state language.

The actions of the LitCP prior to splitting from the CPSU are of high importance. Accounts of cooperation between the LitCP and *Sajūdis* testify to a common practice, when *Sajūdis* recommended an action—it was implemented by the LitCP. In fact, broad social support for *Sajūdis* and the strong moral stance of the movement allowed it to initiate changes to which the Party had to respond. In the analyses of the cooperation between *Sajūdis* and the LitCP, Popovski underlined this moment by arguing that the “[Lithuanian] Communist Party did not have its ideological ally in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, but “at home” and that it had to respond to the issues already put on the agenda by *Sajūdis*.”⁶⁶ As we will see, EstCP and LatCP had much weaker positions in their republics and ultimately lost to Citizens’ Committees because they sought to ally with Moscow leadership, not with the local movements.

The separation of the Lithuanian CP from the CPSU in December 1989 was a result of “politics of small steps” by the Lithuanian Communists, in order to ensure the balance of republican and union powers on the ground. On the other hand, the broad social support enjoyed by *Sajūdis* allowed the LitCP to propose the development of state institutions without explicitly pushing towards independence, which was called for by *Sajūdis*. For *Sajūdis*, independence could come only with reform, which was best achieved in the context of republican sovereignty.⁶⁷ Thus it was necessary to assert greater independence of the republican institutions vis-à-vis Soviet structures, before attempting the separation from the SU. The leadership of both the LitCP and *Sajūdis* shared a view that Lithuania’s independence could only be declared by the government bodies elected under the Soviet republican law. In their view, unity of republican population and cooperation under the Soviet law would lend political steps greater credibility in the eyes of Moscow.

In the context of these debates, the Language Law was passed in January 1989 by the Communist dominated republican Soviet. The decision was welcomed by the leaders of *Sąjūdis*. Given the ethnic composition of Lithuania at the time, nationalists from *Sąjūdis* argued that the next step was the establishment of Lithuanian citizenship as the precondition for *de facto* independence. Despite the seemingly liberal approach of the draft law, as suggested by scholars of Baltic politics, the citizenship issue of the republic was regulated following pragmatic vision. The Lithuanian Supreme Soviet was following suggestions from the moderate Vilnius faction of *Sąjūdis* to act in accordance with the Soviet legislation and avoid confrontations with Moscow. Finding itself under the growing pressure of patriotic Kaunas-faction, it pushed through the framework law on citizenship into effect in November 1989.

A milestone for post-Soviet statehood of Lithuania, the law was no doubt a product of negotiations between the patriots, nationalists and reformed communists. Additionally, the law was much more liberal than the Estonian and Latvian laws on citizenship would be two years later. It contained two potentially important issues. On the one hand, the law confirmed the goal of creating a political community that would bear responsibility for the preservation of the Lithuanian culture. According to this law, Lithuanian citizenship was extended to all citizens of (pre-Soviet) Lithuania and their descendants, as well as to all persons born on the territory of the republic. On the other hand, Lithuanian citizenship was not granted automatically, but provided the option of choosing it over citizenships of other states.⁶⁸ All permanent residents of the LitSSR were able to apply for Lithuanian citizenship, regardless of ethnic, linguistic, religious or other identities they bore. A period of two years was given to decide for all those who wished to legalise their connection with the Lithuanian state, with an effect that at the end of registration on November 3, 1991 more than 90% of all residents opted for Lithuania's citizenship.

The symbolic meaning of the citizenship legislation as a milestone on the path towards independence becomes clear when one considers the debates in the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet elected in March 1990. Three quarters of the deputies came from *Sąjūdis* and the (reformed) LitCP, passing the Declaration of the Republic's independence from the SU on March 11, 1990, the second day of its meeting. Once the movement had achieved its goal, the reform communists and Vilnius liberal intellectuals left *Sąjūdis*, in particular in the face of increasingly nationalist rhetoric at the Second *Sąjūdis* Congress in April 1990. Thereafter, *Sąjūdis* consisted mainly of representatives of the Kaunas-faction, who differentiated the local population into two clear groups, "patriots" and "communists."⁶⁹

These nationalist *Sajūdis* members, with Landsbergis at the top, considered suspending the November Citizenship Law after demands for territorial autonomy by South Eastern Lithuania in September 1989 and particularly in consequence of the Soviet economic blockade enforced on Lithuania in April 1990. While relations with Moscow were already severely strained by the declaration of independence and led to its moratorium on June 23, the changes of the Citizenship Law according to the proposition of the Kaunas-faction would have led only to a further deterioration of the relations between the Soviet centre and the Landsbergis-led *Sajūdis* coalition.

The early implementation of the Lithuanian citizenship law can hardly be seen as a result of the liberal understanding of nationhood in the republic, and even less so as the result of an inherent desire to engage the non-Lithuanian population in the process of nation-building.⁷⁰ In fact, out of the 1021 delegates at the Second *Sajūdis* Congress, 96% were ethnic Lithuanians with a meagre 41 persons representing the different ethnic minority groups of the republic.⁷¹ Additionally, the overriding, “pulsating consensus” between the LitCP and *Sajūdis* generally made for the swift implementation of reforms geared towards independence which ended in “ideological fever” and greater polarisation of the political spectrum.⁷²

The division of the political spectrum hardly contributed to greater liberal aspirations of the Lithuanian political elites.⁷³ Instead, the mutual blockade of leftist (understood in the context of a stronger inclination to seek consent with Russia) and rightist (emphasising the traditional national values and rejecting any connection to the Communist past) forces resulted in the frequent practice of state-regulation of economic and regional processes and, importantly, populist rhetoric. Needless to say, both resulted in the alienation of the non-Lithuanian population in political matters. Despite the fact that the LitCP government passed the Law on the Rights of Ethnic Minorities in November 1989, and guaranteed minorities extensive avenues to participate in political decision-making within the framework of the 1989 Citizenship Law non-Lithuanians remained distant from politics.

In this context, the perceptions of minority representatives of the laws passed and their implementation are particularly interesting. The previous analyses of Lithuania’s development indicate that the non-Lithuanian population, decisively Polish, Russian and Jewish residents, were highly critical of the legislation implemented in 1989 and expected its possible alteration given nationalist rhetoric of both the moderate *Sajūdis* and more radical patriotic organisations such as *Lietuvos Laisvės Lyga* and *Vilnja*.⁷⁴ Although the right to freely develop their own culture and to

enjoy the support of the state for cultural activities had been defined by the Ethnic Minorities Rights Law adopted in November 1989, the step had little effect on the support of minorities for an independent Lithuanian state. Instead, during 1990 the activities of *Yedinstvo* increased in Eastern Lithuania and dissatisfaction was expressed in municipalities with sizeable non-Lithuanian populations, above all in Sniečkus and Klaipeda. More policy decisions were made during the course of 1991. Nevertheless, no break-through in reducing the suspicions of majority and minorities for each other resulted from these decisions in the short-term, although Budryte argues that it “probably did help ethnic relations in the long run.”⁷⁵

Facing an increasingly anti-independence stance in Eastern Lithuania, the region with sizable Russian-speaking and Polish populations, the Lithuanian government amended the Law on National Minorities in January 1991. It included provisions for schooling in the native language of the minorities and the right to use languages other than Lithuanian in organisations and state-offices located in areas with substantial numbers of non-Lithuanians.⁷⁶ However, the law addressed the rights of national minorities without further defining the term. The group was merely defined as “collectivities of ethnicity other than Lithuanian,” “with a different language, religion and nationality [sic].” The rights included those to establish ethnic cultural organisations, to maintain contact with fellow groups residing outside of Lithuania, and to enjoy representation at all levels of government. Furthermore, some specific linguistic rights and the preservation of historical and cultural monuments of the ethnic minorities were provided by the law, as was the right to launch educational establishments in minority languages. All of these were extended and specified in the mid-1990s. Therefore, the Law on National Minorities provided a legal guarantee that the emerging Lithuanian state would accommodate the interests of minorities residing on its territory, but this would be only put into practice if minorities demonstrated loyalty towards the state’s institutions.

This requirement was however difficult to fulfil for the majority of residents in Eastern Lithuania. During the August coup d’état in Moscow, the regional councils in predominantly Polish-speaking districts and the city council in (predominantly Russian populated) Sniečkus supported the hardliners around Gennady Yanayev and Dmitry Yazov. They were suspended from their posts in the aftermath of the failed coup and direct rule from Vilnius was imposed on these regions in September 1991. This step was criticised by local minorities, the Polish Parliament, the Helsinki Foundation and the US embassy in Vilnius. In addition amendments were

made to the Citizenship Law in December 1991. Importantly, they provided grounds for the legal inclusion of all residents of the republic who applied for a Lithuanian passport over the past two years and thus included individuals who were to become stateless on the same grounds in Estonia and Latvia. Controversial amendments however hit ethnic Poles, who resided in the area around Vilnius when it was under Polish sovereignty (9 January 1919–15 June 1940).⁷⁷

After difficult negotiations between *Vilnja* (the political force representing the ethnic Lithuanians in the region), *Lenku Sajunga* (The Union of Poles) and the central government under close observation of Polish and international authorities, the local elections of December 1992 were to determine the political constellation in the local councils in Vilnius and Šalčininkai regions. However, an insufficient number of eligible voters appeared to cast their ballot and elections had to be restaged in early 1993, leading to the belated formation of popular governments in the region.⁷⁸ At the same time, the Law on Election into Parliament was adopted in 1992 by the Seimas (Lithuania's Parliament) granting special provisions for positive discrimination of minority parties. By lowering the vote-barrier for ethnopolitical parties to 2%, Seimas made the presence of non-Lithuanians' political organisations possible in political decision-making and allowed members of the *Lenku Sajunga* to enter into the first post-Soviet Seimas.

As we will see in the next chapters, further steps of including the non-Lithuanian, primarily Polish-speaking community into the political process were required to ensure their political participation at a later stage. Although the other minority political parties gained four (out of 141 seats) in the 1992 Seimas elections, their weight diminished when compared to their representation in the last Supreme Soviet of the LitSSR, where the Polish Union was represented by 8 members.⁷⁹

The comparisons among Baltic states focus on greater nationalist aspirations behind the political decision making processes in the two northern states. As I have argued in this section of the chapter, in Lithuania nation-building was also driven by the majority's nationalist commitment. The nationalist agenda pursued by the leaders of *Sajūdis* not only failed to involve the Russian and Polish speaking minorities into the process of nation-building, the tactics of *Sajūdis* disregarded nationalisation fears of the minority communities in Lithuania altogether. In this light, the limited political engagement of the non-titulars in elaborating political strategies for the accommodation of their interests in the Lithuanians' national state could stem from two issues.

On the one hand, as is frequently suggested in scholarly analyses, Lithuanian minorities were not loyal to the state and the project of national independence from the outset. This interpretation implies that not only the titular nationality, but also non-titular populations in Lithuania were guided by nationalist aspirations: activities of Russian, Polish and Jewish political organisations, efforts to ascribe ethnicity to a particular territory, and their appeals for help from “their homeland states” could confirm this view. On the other hand, there is no contradiction in suggesting that non-titulars in Lithuania welcomed the idea of an independent Lithuanian state, because many saw their cultural interests better represented in an independent Lithuania rather than in the USSR. The limited political engagement of minorities, when held against the majority’s participation, their reactive behaviour to policies that clearly undermined the status of non-Lithuanians and finally cautiousness in the face of patriotic rhetoric of the political forces speak volumes for this view.

Both of these interpretations are in line with the claim made in the previous chapter that the non-titular minorities lacked structural resources to formulate and stand up to their collective interests in the course of nation-building. Furthermore, the case of Lithuania shows that minorities were restricted to support independence only on issues tangent to their cultural interests, much like the Lithuanians had done using the institutions of “their” national republics. This might be an indication of the fact that minorities have copied nationalist aspirations from the titulars to organise their activities, but had no structures to formulate their own goals.

In the following section I discuss similar processes that took place in Estonia and Latvia. It will then become clear that the way for the nationalising policies after independence was paved by the lacking response of the non-titular populations to the nationalising policies of titulars. The discussion of Latvian and Estonian nation-building processes will make clear that there as well, opportunities for political engagement were largely missed by the non-titular communities during the phase when the political institutions of the post-Soviet republics were designed.

4. Estonia and Latvia: The cases of ethnonationalism?

Nation-building in Lithuania had been traditionally treated differently in scholarship allegedly due to the lack of strict nationalist policies. Minority politics in Latvia and Estonia, on the other hand, have been consistently analysed comparatively.⁸⁰ In particular, the negative ramifications of the restorationist policies in Estonia and Latvia have been criticised for “disenfranchising Russians of their rights” or promoting “expulsion of non-

native populations” from the republics’ territories. I do not contest that the implications of restoration have hit Russian-speakers the hardest in both countries. I claim nonetheless, that no attempts were actually undertaken by the *Latvijas Tautas Fronte* (Latvian Popular Front, LTF) and the *Eestimaa Rahvarinne* (Popular Front of Estonia, ERR) to discriminate against the republics’ residents on ethnic basis. Both of the movements faced strong opposition from the Citizens’ Committees and due to this failed to push forward with citizenship legislation while the republics were still *de facto* members of the SU, as it happened in Lithuania. Sound political opposition from Citizens’ Committees was to unfold only after independence was secured and guaranteed, allowing legal steps to be taken for restoring statehood and hence excluding members of migrant Russian-speaking diaspora from automatic citizenship of post-Soviet states.

In both republics the decisive battles were carried out between the leaders of the Popular Fronts and the Citizens’ Committees. Mobilising the rhetoric of democratic inclusiveness and individual choice for the acquisition of citizenship, the Popular Fronts suggested that the forthcoming political communities in the republics would include all willing residents. *Eestimaa Rahvarinne* had underlined its desire to restore the political community of citizens of the pre-Soviet state, thus positioning itself clearly with regards to the Russian-speaking minority in the republic. The *Latvijas Tautas Fronte* had chosen more sophisticated tactics of embracing minority support. It enjoyed the support of the local Russian-speakers, who were reassured of the Front’s support of human rights, though this did not imply granting the opportunity to decide on one’s citizenship.

Discussions on sensitive historical events took place in Latvia and Estonia, as they did in Lithuania. However, the *Latvijas Tautas Fronte* had emphasised aspects of the history common to individuals residing in the republic prior to Soviet inclusion as well as to Soviet-time migrants in order to generate support for independence with both communities. This created expectations amongst Russian-speakers which were not on the LTF’s agenda, especially in the face of the Front’s intention not to give in to the legalisation of any consequences of the Soviet occupation.⁸¹ Keeping their promises vague, the LTF

“generated support for Latvian independence among both the Latvian and Russian population. However, following independence Latvian policies began to exclude Russians from full participation in the republic’s political institutions.”⁸²

As a result of rhetoric mobilising local residents around the idea of statehood restoration and the absence of alternative aspirations from the future political development pushed Latvia and Estonia onto a different path of state-building. While the implications of state-restoration were well-received by Lithuanians in their republic, the fact that the CP represented a crucial mediating force and had to balance demands from *Sąjūdis* with the avenues provided within the Soviet confederation softened the negotiation of citizenship legislation.⁸³

Political elites in Estonia and in Latvia had little to share with regard to the future form of their independent state. The tensions between radical restorationists, the Popular Fronts and local CPs mattered only until formal independence from the SU was achieved and the communist parties were outlawed, together with the interfronts. In the absence of external pressure, the official talks about who to consider a “member of a nation” took place only during the first post-Soviet months. These debates were initiated by the Popular Fronts and pressed by Citizens’ Committees, who expressed “great concerns” for their nation’s future, made Russians collectively culpable for the titulars’ previous suffering and pushed for decolonisation.

The documentation on the terms of citizenship indicates the titulars’ great moral investment to guarantee the survival of both the Latvian and Estonian nations after “the Soviet genocide.” In both countries political forces argued that while the Baltic states were occupied, the Soviet Union violated the conditions of the Geneva Convention, which prohibits deportations of local populations and forced population transfers to other countries. Similar implications of this legal principle however, have also been articulated by *Jaunoji Lietuva* and members of the *Lietuvos Laisvės Lyga*, who called for repatriation of those who came to Lithuania during the Soviet-time.⁸⁴ However, in Lithuania these groups remained marginal when compared to *Sąjūdis*. Decolonisation was taken more seriously in Estonia and Latvia. In Estonia the Decolonisation Foundation was founded by members of the Congress of Estonia (formerly Movement of Citizens’ Committees) to *facilitate* repatriation of Soviet era migrants. The Latvian titular nation however, fuelled by the promises of the Latviocracy which could be deduced from the LTF programme, *resisted* any attempts even to acknowledge that the residence of Soviet-time migrants in Latvia was legal.

The basis for minority rights in the Latvian State was, however, laid fairly early by the Latvian Supreme Soviet once it had adopted the legislation “On the free development of national and ethnic groups and on their rights to cultural autonomy” in March 1991. The law guaranteed all ethnic

groups of Latvia the right to cultural autonomy and self-rule in matters concerning their culture. It also established the rights of ethnic groups to establish national cultural societies and associations and guaranteed the right to address the public through government-controlled mass media, as well as through their own printed media. It stated that national societies had the right to establish and run their own educational institutions while respecting the Laws of the Latvian Republic, its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Furthermore, Article 10 stated that the state will support such organisations by providing them material support to develop their linguistic, cultural and educational facilities. Although potentially effective as a mechanism of regulating the minorities' cultural aspirations, the law exhibited one serious shortcoming: it did not specify the mechanisms of implementation. In addition, the law underlined a certain hierarchy of ethnic groups in Latvia that had not been previously defined.

The preamble of the document stated that "in the Latvian Republic live the Latvian nation *and* the ancient indigenous nationality of the Livs, as well as national and ethnic groups.[emphasis added]" This very formulation suggests that the Latvian nation was of purely ethnic, possibly cultural character since it is juxtaposed to other ethnic groups, such as Livs. Similarly, the definition of "national and ethnic groups" can be interpreted quite broadly, implying that the difference is to be made between those who have an external "home state," and those who do not. Importantly, Article 4 of the document states the responsibility of the Latvian state vis-à-vis the cultural and historical environments of Livs, leaving other, so to say non-autochthonous ethnic groups unmentioned.

As I have mentioned in the first section of this chapter, many Russian-speakers were active in the popular movements in Estonia and Latvia, raising the question as to how the turn towards restorationist rhetoric was so dramatic. Clearly, neither in Estonia, nor in Latvia could the citizenship question be solved the way it had been handled in Lithuania: the perceptions of the demographic threat in the republics influenced the understanding of restoring citizenship so as to continue the ethno-national experience of statehood, interrupted by the Soviet inclusion.

The debates on the legacies of the Soviet past taking place in the years of perestroika also emphasised different aspects of nationhood, in contrast to the situation in Lithuania. While all three republics had to come to terms with the controversial legacies of pre-Soviet statehood, the Estonian and Latvian public debates critically dramatised the demographic and linguistic situation in the republics. This created an image of pre-Soviet statehood which represented the apogee of national development of the two nations.⁸⁵ Indeed, Lithuanian politicians frequently referred to multi-

cultural traditions “inherited” from the Grand Polish Lithuanian Duchy to emphasize the roots of their political community. Latvians and Estonians on their part could only appeal to pre-Soviet regimes which bore clear traits of ethnonational autocracies. In both republics, the discussions over the period between the declaration of independence from the SU in March 1990 and *de facto* independence in August 1991 consequently reduced the possibility of including individuals who were likely to reject the idea of the nation-state in the future.⁸⁶

The Lithuanian legislation left the decision as to which citizenship an individual would acquire to the person and, decisively, laid the time-frame for applications *prior* to the formal acquisition of Lithuania’s independence from the SU. In Latvia and Estonia on the other hand, the passing of the citizenship laws was postponed in order to secure support—or as some had argued, to prevent violence—of the large non-titular populations on the road to independence. The “zero option” for citizenship was not seen as one by political elites. While the popular fronts in Estonia and Latvia were not as popular with the Russian-speaking populations as with titulars, they still relied heavily on the support of the former. Surely, participation of non-titular residents in the two organisations can largely be attributed to promises alluding to the possible endorsement of the “zero option” for citizenship.

Significant differences in mobilisation strategies in both republics and their resolution to clarify the citizenship issue might explain the mixed perceptions of the non-titulars with respect to their future status. The ERR had clearly stated from the outset that Estonian citizenship would be available only for the citizens of pre-war Estonia. The clear position of the ERR resulted from the aggravation of relations between its leaders and at that time still powerful officials in north-eastern Estonia, but it did not result in violence or efforts for secession.⁸⁷

The failure of LTF to make its future policies transparent had long running implications for democratic consolidation of the Latvian society. In the run-up to the elections of the Latvian Supreme Soviet, the leaders of the LTF declared that

“anyone who regards himself as a patriot of Latvia may become Latvia’s citizen. The definition and the criteria for the acquisition of citizenship ought to be each Latvian inhabitant’s personal, voluntary, and conscious expression of will.”⁸⁸

Later the LTF retreated from this position, which undoubtedly frustrated many of those who initially supported the LTF in the elections and shocked supporters while generating a distrust in politicians that would be felt by non-titulars over a prolonged period of time. The leader of the centrist *Latvijas ceļš* (Latvian Way) party in the fifth and sixth Saeima, Andrejs Pantelejevs, later admitted that the rhetorical acceptance of the zero-option citizenship “was a conscious lie in order to avoid human casualties,” as he claims the fight for independence would have led to armed confrontations.⁸⁹ The fear of violent clashes did not materialise in Latvia either in the early, or mid 1990s.

Even before the adaptation of the declaration of formal independence in May 1990, two parties claimed the right to rule the Latvian Republic. On the one hand, the Soviet authorities still had legislative power over the republican decisions. On the other, the local authorities were publicly elected but actually had little control. While Lithuania already passed the Citizenship Law and Estonia commenced legal steps in redefining its citizenry, Latvia’s declaration of independence did not clarify the situation and remained a symbolic step impeding the implementation of other legislative acts. The strong disagreement on the possible solutions of the citizenship issue within the Latvian political elites and the lack of a clear stance on the part of the international community further complicated the situation and postponed an effective discussion of the citizenship-legislation until 1993.

The political regimes installed in Estonia and Latvia have been frequently criticised as having been guided by ethno-nationalist principles. My discussion has suggested that postponing the clarification of citizenship rights of the Soviet citizens after the restoration of independence was a result of antagonism and struggle for dominance between popular movements and citizens’ committees in Estonia and Latvia. The lack of consensus on the body of citizenry among the national leaderships put many members of non-titular communities into a legal limbo until after independence was *de facto* restored.

My analysis demonstrates that political community building in Estonia and Latvia had to take a back seat while nation-building was in progress. Only after independence was secured did state-building start, allowing a more fundamental criticism from the democratic theory point of view. Exclusive projects of nation-building were prioritised over inclusive state-building and aimed at reducing the autonomous decision-making powers of citizenry as much as possible. As we have seen in chapter 2, this policy objective was also at the core of the Soviet political processes. Although many Soviet institutional practices were brushed aside following

the restoration of Estonian and Latvian independence, ethno-territorial proliferation as implemented through Soviet policies was reflected in post-Soviet institutional design. These issues, as we will see in the following chapter, continue to shape the political institutions of independent Baltic states.

5. Conclusion

The account of popular participation points out the difficulties inherent to the debates about nation- and state-building and decisively democratic consolidation in the post-Soviet Baltic states. Unsurprisingly, independence brought little relief to the non-titulars. Some Baltic studies scholars have criticised the process of nation-building as privileging the members of communities, resident in the region at some point in time—before the Soviet inclusion as in the case of Estonia and Latvia, or between 1990 and 1991 as in Lithuania. Efforts of state- and nation-building during the last years of Soviet inclusion, as well as in the post-Soviet years, did not aim at guaranteeing the rights to as many as possible to exercise their political will, not even in Lithuania.

While the Lithuanian authorities had set a transition period when all residents of the republic were allowed to choose on their future citizenship, the Latvian and Estonian Citizens' Committees were vigorously promoting the logic of "one state, one nation, one language." The logic of state continuity, established in Estonia and Latvia, allows the state to deny the right for citizenship to those individuals who were active in so-called "criminal organisations," the CPSU and interfronts included. Restrictions on the right for citizenship were also put on those who participated in the interfronts. This step precluded the participation of members of the Russian-speaking communities in political processes after independence was reinstalled and contributed to this group's further passive stance.

The initial democratic consolidation in the then Baltic republics was a result of popular—i.e. titulars and non-titulars alike—opposition to Soviet ideology. However, while the popular movements of the titulars chose the "return to independence" as their preferred option in coping with the difficulties of independence after Soviet inclusion, Russian-speakers had little option than to cooperate in the process. Without structural mechanisms that would lead their political participation to achieve concrete goals, Russian-speakers in the Baltics did not contest the decisions made by the Baltic governments in the late Soviet years. As much as they were drawn into the decision-making process, Russian-speakers made clear that they would support the new regimes, if these would not dis-

criminate against them outright. Using the structural opportunities of republican quasi-nation-state institutions, Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians had much greater leverage in the process of transforming “their” republics into liberal political regimes. In its course titulars also needed to decide whether to take Russian-speakers on board. Keeping Russian-speakers at arm’s length was the most comfortable solution for political representatives of titulars, nationalists and moderates alike.

As we have seen in this chapter, the initial stage of democratisation did not result in ethno-nationalist policies. Regulations of language use in Estonia and Latvia resulted in discontent with some members of minority communities, but they did not lead to mass protests. In addition, the rights provided (or promised) to minorities were sufficient to dampen open protest by the Russian-speaking and other non-titular ethnic groups.⁹⁰ However, institutional decisions discussed above suggest that choosing a particular approach to nation-building in each state reflected the perceptions of titular nationals and was more in line with the Soviet approach to regulating claims of nationalities for dominance at “their national homeland.”⁹¹

Titular nationals have benefited from the Soviet policies of ethno-territorial proliferation during Soviet rule. They have also effectively used structural instruments to determine the course of “their” country’s development following the dissolution of the SU. So in the case of Latvia, while Latvians only constituted some 52% of the republic’s population, 78% of the citizens were ethnic Latvians in 1995. The remainder were ethnic minorities, a fact that makes the republic actually the most liberal among the Baltic states as regards the inclusion of non-core ethnics in the post-Soviet citizenry. Latvia’s restored citizenship was thus extended to some 38% of the republic’s Russian community, which made up 16% of the entire citizenry. Additionally, many members of the Polish and Roma communities received “restored” citizenship, making “automatic” inclusion for 62% and 90% of these communities respectively. Lithuania provides a point for comparison, where only 14% of its citizens are members of minorities, with overwhelming 86% of the citizens being ethnic Lithuanians. Even more dramatic implications of restorationist policies were to be observed in Estonia, where virtually the entire Russian-speaking community was excluded from restored citizenship. A much more ethnically homogeneous pre-Soviet Estonia had only 3% of the non-Estonian population at the time, which allowed Estonians to completely dominate its post-Soviet citizenry.

It would be a mistake however to expect that if the Russian-speaking community were larger in number, one would observe greater opposition to nationalist politicians. The means available to non-titular

communities to take part in the state-building projects were limited. This however was not specific to political processes in the Baltic republics but was observed across the former Soviet republics.⁹² Institutional framework in which the reform of Soviet institutions took place systematically favoured titular nationals who did not miss a chance to effectively use these tools for their purposes. Limited opportunities available to non-titular groups to participate in political decision-making were further curtailed during the institutionalisation of post-Soviet polities as the ones serving the interests of the titular ethnics.

In describing various activities of the non-titular populations during the period of Baltic perestroika, I referred both to aspirations set forth by political elites and expectations fomented among the members of the titular communities. As we will see in the following chapter, the trend continued during the 1990s.

Notes

1 Dawson, 1992; Muiznieks, 1995.

2 Slezkine, 1994.

3 See also a comprehensive study, Zisserman-Brodsky, 2003.

4 Agarin, 2009; Galbreath and Auers, 2009; Malloy, 2009; Sikk and Andersen, 2009.

5 Harvard Interview Project (1950–1951) and the later Soviet Interview Project (early 1980s) provide the widest possible data about the contemporary Soviet society, as was viewed by the migrants from the SU. The data available makes clear that the majority of the Soviet citizens were unaware of any ethnic tensions in the USSR. See also, Millar, 1987.

6 Muiznieks, 1987; Dreifelds, 1988; Urdze, 1988; Taagepera, 1989. See also, Pabriks and Purs, 2002.

7 Ilves, 1990a; Muiznieks, 1990; Girnius, 1991.

8 Misiunas and Taagepera, 1993.

9 Ulfelder, 2004, p.56.

10 Sajudis, 1988.

11 Muiznieks, 1990, p.51. Also, Stukuls-Eglitis, 2002, pp.317–8.

12 See further Muiznieks, 1995.

13 Chicherina, 1990; Kudryavcev, 1990, pp.6–7.

14 See Antane and Tsilevich, 1999, p.9.

15 Report from the Baltic Assembly taking place in 1989. Cited after Ilves, 1990; Kionka, 1990a, 1990b.

- 16 The citizens and descendants of the pre-Soviet Estonian and Latvian states registered by 1990 were allowed to choose representatives into Congress of Estonia and Latvian Saeima, which pushed for greater independence of republics from the Soviet centre (Taagepera, 1993, p.83).
- 17 One of the welcome exceptions to be mentioned here is the early assessment of the situation by Rudenshiold, 1992, p.623.
- 18 Popovski, 2000.
- 19 See Ilves, 1990. p.100.
- 20 Vulfsons, 1998, p. 71.
- 21 Stukuls-Eglitis, 2002, p. 92.
- 22 Ginkel, 2002, p.57.
- 23 Karklins, 1994. p.424.
- 24 Antane and Tsilevich. 1999.
- 25 Dreifelds, 1996. p.82.
- 26 Kukarina and Tikhomirov, 1991. p.69.
- 27 Ilves, 1990.
- 28 Ibid. p.82.
- 29 Ibid. p.72.
- 30 Taagepera, 1993, p.81.
- 31 Smith, 2002, p.155.
- 32 Taagepera, 1993. p.50.
- 33 Thomson, 1992, p.150.
- 34 Ilta Sanomat, May 3, 1989
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 New Unity Group's declaration, FBIS-SOV-88-234, Dec 6 1988, p.96.
- 37 Popovski, 2000, p.35 and p.140.
- 38 Budryte, 2005, p.101.
- 39 FBIS-SOV-89-116, June 19, 1989. p.92
- 40 Lieven, 1993.
- 41 Lieven, 1993, p.55.
- 42 Popovski, 2000, p.193.
- 43 Galbreath, 2005, p.102.
- 44 Kasatkina, 1996, p.99.
- 45 Taagepera, 1993, p. 141.
- 46 Hallik, 1996. p. 97.
- 47 FBIS-SOV-89-179, September 18, 1989.
- 48 Taagepera, 1993, p.101.
- 49 All data from Trapans, 1991, p.194

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- 50 Homeland, October 25 1989, pp.1–2; October 18, 1989, pp.1–2; The Estonian Independent, May 30, 1990, p.3. and The Estonian Independent, March 7, 1991, p.1, 3.
- 51 Plakans, 1991, Raun, 1991, Senn, 1991. For detailed account of decisive steps on the road to Independence, see Besançon, 1986.
- 52 Dawson, 1996; Smith, 1990b.
- 53 See collection of documents in Liekis, 1993.
- 54 Many publications appearing during the years of perestroika focused on interpretations of relationship between these historical events. See e.g. However the "Naujasis Poziuris I Lietuvos Istorija," (Kaunas: 1989) had expressed the central place occupied by these issues for constructing new historical self-understanding of the Lithuanian nation.
- 55 See particularly Christophe, 1997, Chapter 2.
- 56 Girnius, 1991.
- 57 Biviene, 1991.
- 58 Romualdas Ozolas in *Atgimimas*, 1, 1988.
- 59 See e.g. Donskis, 2002.
- 60 I am grateful to Leonidas Donskis for pointing out to me that “nationalism” was understood in much more inclusive terms in the 1980s Lithuania. From early 1990s “nationalism” came to be associated more with the ethnic and cultural aspects of nationhood as a result of – rather than a reason for – the narrative gaining upper hand in the Lithuanian historiography and politics. Donskis himself distinguishes between (inclusive, liberal) “nationalism” and (extremist, conservative) “patriotism” – the terms I gratefully use here in reference to Lithuanian national awakening. See, Donskis, 2000, 2002.
- 61 Popovski, 2000, p.33.
- 62 Jouzaitis, 1989.
- 63 Sajudis, 1988.
- 64 Ozolas, 1988.
- 65 Grigas, 1991a, 1991b, Patackas, 1989.
- 66 Popovski, 2000 p.55.
- 67 Vardys, 1989.
- 68 Cf. Popovski, 2000, p.57.
- 69 Barrington, 1995.
- 70 See for example Krupavicius, 1996, pp.222–223.
- 71 Sajudis, 1990.
- 72 Describing relations between political forces on the eve of declaration of Independence in Lithuania, Krupavicius coined the words “pulsating consensus.” The expression poignantly describes the balance of moderate

and nationalist political forces in republican leadership, as well in its relation with Sajūdis. See Christophe, 1997; Jankauskas and Zeruolis, 2004.

73 Cf. Popovski, 2000, pp.7–13

74 Budryte, 2005, especially, Chapter 4.

75 Budryte, 2005. p.154.

76 Kuris and Staciokas, 1998, p. 66.

77 Novagrackiene and Jankauskas, 1998, p.26.

78 Ibid. pp. 30–32.

79 Popovski, 2000, pp.155.

80 Aasland, 2002, Galbreath, 2005, Smith, 1996.

81 *Atmoda*, June 22 1989.

82 Ginkel, 2002, p.415.

83 Sinkevicius, 2000. Also, Novagrackiene and Jankauskas, 1998

84 Popovski, 2005p.33.

85 Raun and Plakans, 1990; Laitin, 1996; Kolstø, 2002; Zake, 2005, 2008; Schwartz 2006, 2007; Bennich-Björkman, 2007.

86 See particularly Zake, 2005, 2008.

87 Hallik, 1996, p.101; Poleshchuk and Helemäe, 2006.

88 *Atmoda*, 16.03. 1990.

89 Cited after Antane and Tsilevich, 1999, p.86.

90 Budryte, 2005

91 Chinn and Truex, 1996.

92 See among others, Arel, 2002; Coppieters and Legvold, 2005; Pelkmans, 2006; Fumagalli, 2007; Laruelle, 2007; Pelkmans, 2007; Veinguer, et al., 2007.

Chapter 4

State-building and framing of non-titulars

In the initial years of Baltic independence one of the most persistent topics of discussion in the media and academic research alike was the question of what was to become of the Russian-speakers across the region. Would the group become an instrument in the hands of another state, e.g. Russia, and impede the transition of the Baltic states towards more effective democracy? Or rather, would the group be active in supporting the envisaged transition, guaranteeing the legitimacy of the post-Soviet independence vis-à-vis the former occupation power? Ironically, Russian-speakers rejected both options. That was unimportant however, because for the most part, their opinions went unacknowledged.

In the 1990s and particularly during the time of EU accession, minority roles remained modest. The belligerent rhetoric of the Russian Federation drawing attention to the status of its stateless “compatriots” and attracting international attention, the presence of the OSCE mission in Estonia and Latvia, as well as issues of person transit through the Lithuanian territory into Kaliningrad made clear that while parity in the relations between each of the Baltic states and the Russian Federation was not achievable in the short or medium term, regional stability could be improved by adopting measures to guarantee the local minorities’ involvement in, if not loyalty to, the state of residence.

The dominance of the titular, state-bearing ethnic groups in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia over the increasingly fragmented non-titular communities allowed minorities few other options besides adaption to the new situation. The titular nationalities in the region devised the policy instruments to consolidate their dominant position in societies in the course of the early-mid 1990s. Although no studies of the region elaborate specifically on the “framing” of non-titulars in terms of “minority,” social science studies indicate that Russian-speaking populations in the region looked increasingly akin to a long-standing minority in societies dominated by another group. Because the Baltic popular fronts framed their actions around the issue of potential survival of their nations in the Soviet Union, designing the membership of the political community was essential for Baltic state-building. The Baltic governments had to respond to the

fears of ethnic extinction common among the titulars and reinforced the status of the state-bearing nations, their languages and cultures in the newly independent states.

In order to illustrate the situation in which non-titular communities found themselves at the point of the Soviet demise, this chapter will provide an answer to the question as to whether institution-building in the post-Soviet Baltic region allowed everyone affected by the policies to participate in the relevant decision-making. And if so, what role Russian-speakers played in the process of consolidating political communities.

1. Design of political membership in Estonia and Latvia

The overwhelming majority of Lithuania's residents were a part of the country's political community with the Citizenship Law of 1991. Thus, the Lithuanian state did not need to encourage non-titular residents to qualify for citizenship. In Estonia and Latvia, on the other hand, the building of the political community proceeded in small and painful steps over the entire course of the 1990s, mainly in reaction to external pressures put forward by international organisations. Therefore, a brief overview of Estonia's and Latvia's policies is needed to explain why the issue of statelessness prevails in debates on democratic consolidation of the two societies.

In both countries political forces strove for independence from the SU under the leadership of popular fronts and Citizens' Committees. While the popular fronts were willing to integrate at least some of the Soviet institutions into the new political structures and thus facilitate transition, Citizens' Committees favoured the immediate break with the Soviet state and opposed granting citizenship to migrants, in popular parlance "Russian occupants." The disagreement dragged on well into the early years of independence, resulting in exclusive design of political membership that did not account for the interests of the Soviet time migrants.

The external pressure which prompted Lithuanian leadership to decouple the national consolidation from state-building project was gone when Latvia and Estonia passed citizenship legislations. Lacking external constraints to be considered while designing political institutions, Latvia's and Estonia's elites had only one challenge—that is, to consolidate political communities which would go along with the suggestions proposed. As we will see below, the period of establishing the institutions of independent statehood in the two states largely depended on agreement about who was a part of a national community. The decision was made swifter in Estonia, where the elections into the first post-Soviet Estonian parliament,

Riigikogu, were conducted in 1992. Due to disagreements among Latvia's political entrepreneurs as to who would be allowed to elect the post-Soviet parliament, Saeima, the first elections were held only in June 1993.

After the popular front won the majority of votes in Latvia's 1990 elections to the republican Supreme Soviet, it passed the Declaration of Independence on May 4. The declaration re-established the *de jure* sovereignty of the Latvian state of the interwar years and started a period of "transition to independence." The August 1991 coup d'état in Moscow led to the *de facto* independence of the Baltic states followed by their international recognition. Following that the Estonian and Latvian governments made efforts to reach a primary solution for the citizenship issue and conduct elections for post-Soviet parliaments. While political leadership in both countries favoured the concept of restored statehood, some discussants have argued that the restrictive approach to restoration in Latvia can be held responsible for the delays in state- and nation-building in contrast to the situation in Estonia.¹

Drafting a new Latvian constitution started as early as 1990 by special commission of the popular front. However, the general consensus on the illegitimacy of the Soviet inclusion implied that no institutions elected could issue binding legal statutes as long as Latvia was part of the SU. Radically minded nationalists argued that as long as Soviet (and later Russian) armed forces were stationed in Latvia, the country was occupied and therefore could not ratify state-founding documents, such as the Constitution.

In fact, Latvia had taken the restoration so seriously that the 1922 constitution was formally re-enacted on August 21, 1991 without any significant changes. This meant that no specific references to human and minority rights were made explicit in the document. These issues were, however, regulated by amendments such as the Declaration on the Accession to Human Rights Instruments and the Law on the Rights and Obligations of Citizen and Person of December 10, 1991. In the lead-up to the parliamentary debates on the citizenship issue, the resolution on the "Restoration of the Body of Citizens and on the Main Principles of Naturalization" was adapted on October 15, 1991. The resolution mentions that the registration of those who held Latvian citizenship prior to 1940 and their descendants would need to take place to guarantee their participation in the Saeima elections in 1993.

It was clear that the large numbers of the Soviet-time migrants to Latvia would not be eligible to vote in the founding elections. In the essence, the dilemma of Latvia's political leadership was as follows: on the one hand, they needed to guarantee the survival of the Latvian nation, and,

on the other, to adopt a law that would be in accordance with liberal democratic standards. Fierce debates as to who would be eligible to take part significantly postponed the election. As a result of the disagreement on the issue of citizenship, up until mid-1993 Latvia's Supreme Soviet was exercising its powers until the fifth (first post-Soviet) Saeima was elected. However, as only "original" citizens of the pre-Soviet Republic of Latvia and their descendants were allowed to participate in the election, only 64% of the resident population could express their preferences in the parliamentary elections determining the parliament that would draw-up the final Citizenship Law.²

Delays in electing the Saeima meant that no clear criteria could be set out for the regulation of the status of former Soviet citizens until 1994. Previous resolutions were merely framework documents which did not present any clear criteria for the acquisition of citizenship. On the positive side however, dragging debates increasingly underlined that the basis of the political community would be identification with the past, not with a particular language and culture. However, the discussions around the implementation of the Citizenship Law clearly indicate that "affirmative action of Latvians to compensate them for the discrimination they have experienced in their own country" was the rhetorical lead behind major decisions and the resistance of Latvian political elites to ease the requirements for citizenship.³ International monitoring of Latvia's citizenship legislation also pressured for greater account of international standards and agreements, resulting in the development of what Stukuls-Eglitis refers to as Latvia's "small nation's complex."⁴

The Latvian Saeima finally passed the citizenship legislation in July 1994. The law reiterated the fact that only 1940 citizens were entitled to citizenship, but also laid down rules for naturalisation. It also encouraged Latvian émigrés to return to Latvia by allowing citizens of pre-war Latvia to regain citizenship without renouncing their current affiliation.⁵ Alongside the list of restrictions determining who would *not* be eligible for Latvian citizenship, criteria of the naturalisation process were set up. These included permanent residence in Latvia and command of the Latvian language, as well as knowledge of basic principles of the republic's constitution and of the Law on the "Rights and Obligations of a Citizen and a Person," of Latvian history and of the national anthem.

It was expected that all individuals who did not receive citizenship automatically would either be willing to depart from Latvia, or would swiftly turn to naturalisation offices to apply. To avoid this, so-called "windows" were established to distinguish various groups of eligible citizens according to a certain timetable, allowing some residents to apply

Table 2. Naturalisation in Latvia (absolute numbers, 1995–2008)

<i>Year</i>	Applications submitted	Citizenship granted
1995	4,543	984
1996	2,627	3,016
1997	3,075	2,992
1998	5,608	4,439
1999	15,183	12,427
2000	10,692	14,900
2001	8,672	10,637
2002	8,370	9,844
2003	11,268	10,049
2004	21,297	16,064
2005	19,807	19,169
2006	10,581	16,439
2007	3,308	6,826
2008,	2,601	3,004
2009, 10 months	2,810	1,686
Total	<i>130,442</i>	<i>132,476</i>

Source: Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, Retrieved 2009–12–05 <http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/statistika/index.html>; jsessionid=4CBA1416176CE4EAF55C173AA224C8F1

only after 2003. Naturally, such legislation did not lead to an atmosphere of trust among the non-Latvians towards politicians. Many of these politicians were catapulted into their offices just years earlier, following the promises to grant citizenship automatically to every non-titular resident who applied for it. It appears quite natural that there were no queues to apply for Latvia's citizenship once the procedures were defined and the naturalisation authority started functioning in February 1995. Over the period of one and a half years only 15% of the expected 124,000 persons who were eligible to apply actually did so.⁶

All residents of Latvia were granted favourable provisions of social citizenship (even the non-citizens) with the 1995 "Law on the Status of Former Soviet Citizens who are not Citizens of Latvia or Any Other State." Although social provisions were generously applied with the passing of the Law, non-citizens in Latvia still remained at high risk of unem-

ployment and worse employment, than citizens.⁷ Once again, the insecurity and sensitivity of the Latvian stance on the language issue appeared clearly in the aftermath of the amendments to the Citizenship Law in June 1998, which made Latvian citizenship available for all children born to non-citizens after August 21, 1991.⁸

Much the same was the decision of the Estonian government, which passed the Resolution on National Independence of Estonia during the August 1991 putsch. The Estonian parliament started to prepare the post-Soviet constitution, which was adopted by popular referendum in June 1992.⁹ The Estonian constitution guarantees the protection of minorities as well as social rights for residents who are non-citizens of the republic and guarantees them the right to participate in local elections. The Estonian constitution therefore also refers to the law on Citizenship that the parliament passed in February 1992 on the basis of the 1938 law with amendments from 1940. According to this law, some 900,000 individuals who had Estonian citizenship on June 16, 1940, or who had ancestors fulfilling such a requirement, re-gained their citizenship automatically. The law also provided the Soviet-time migrants with an opportunity to obtain citizenship in the case that they could prove having been active in the Estonian Citizens' Committee prior to independence.¹⁰ On the basis of this legislation parliamentary elections were held for the first time in 1992, which led to a great number of Estonia's residents being unable to participate—in fact only some 60% of those who voted in the 1990 referendum on Independence could elect the members of the post-Soviet Riigikogu.

The naturalisation procedure for some 400,000 Russian-speaking Soviet-time migrants in Estonia was outlined in the document in a similar way as it was in Latvia. In order to start naturalisation procedure a candidate was required to have resided on the territory of Estonia for at least the last two years plus one year of waiting time during application for citizenship, an oath of loyalty to the Estonian state and proficiency in the state-language. The last qualification was put forward to ensure that applicants were familiar with Estonian history and culture at least at the basic level. Naturally, Russian-speakers in Estonia frequently criticised this requirement since; according to the last Soviet population census in Estonia, only 15% of its non-Estonian residents could communicate in the language and lacked opportunities to learn it prior to the implementation of the naturalisation criteria.¹¹

Similar to the Latvian law on resident non-citizens, Estonia had adopted the "Aliens Act" in July 1993. The act included a passage encouraging non-citizens to apply for new residency permits within an established time limit, otherwise they would lose their legal status as residents

Table 3. Naturalisation in Estonia (absolute numbers, 1992-2009)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Number</i>
<i>1992</i>	5,421	<i>2001</i>	3,090
<i>1993</i>	20,370	<i>2002</i>	4,091
<i>1994</i>	22,474	<i>2003</i>	3,706
<i>1995</i>	16,674	<i>2004</i>	6,523
<i>1996</i>	22,773	<i>2005</i>	7,072
<i>1997</i>	8,124	<i>2006</i>	4,753
<i>1998</i>	9,969	<i>2007</i>	4,228
<i>1999</i>	4,534	<i>2008</i>	2,124
<i>2000</i>	3,425	<i>2009, 2 quarters</i>	985
<i>Total</i>			<i>150,336</i>

Source: Estonian Citizenship and Migration Board,
<http://www.mig.ee/index.php/mg/eng/statistics>
 Retrieved 2009–11-25

of the republic. This step created a feeling of insecurity within the resident population, of whom around a third had immediately opted for citizenship of other (mainly, former Soviet) states, particularly of the Russian Federation. Around 90,000 Russian-speaking residents of Estonia collected Russian passports in the aftermath of Aliens Act, because the Russian Federation followed an extraterritorial principle in granting its citizenship to all those who resided on the territory of the former Soviet republics up until 2000. As an effect of mass application for Russian Federation passports, the number of “aliens,” *de facto* non-citizens of Estonia was reduced by around a third with a single strike of a pen. Ironically, this later allowed Estonia to boast having less stateless residents on its territory as a result of legislative steps when compared to Latvia.

The Estonian Citizenship Law was changed in January 1995, extending the residency requirement for those who entered Estonia after 1992 from two to five years. Also, despite protests from the President’s Roundtable on Minorities, the requirements of the knowledge of the Constitution and language proficiency were tightened.¹² This latter institution was created in 1993 with the support of international representations in Tallinn to facilitate communication between representatives of minorities, state officials and members of the Riigikogu. Lacking power, however, it

Table 4. Citizenship in the Baltic states, percent of residents, 2000

	Baltic	None	Russian Federation
<i>Estonia</i>	80.0	12.4	6.3
<i>Latvia</i>	74.4	21.2	0.8
<i>Lithuania</i>	99.0	0.3	0.4

Source: Board of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, 1998, Population Census 2000; Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 2008; Lithuanian Department of Statistics, 2006.

never amounted to anything other than an advisory board, the recommendations of which were rarely considered by lawmakers. Despite the relative uselessness of the roundtable in the eyes of policy-makers, the consolidated pressure of the EU and OSCE resulted in the relaxation of the requirements for citizenship for children born to non-citizens after the restoration of independence in Estonia.¹³ Only in 2000, Estonia further simplified the naturalisation procedure for persons with disabilities and young persons who had passed Estonian language examinations at school, with further amendments to follow. Moreover, the application period for citizenship was also shortened.¹⁴

The citizenship regulations were amended in December 1998 in Estonia and two months prior to that in October 1998 in Latvia.¹⁵ In both countries, the amendments were adopted under international pressure and reflected the balance between the positive effects of guaranteed admittance into the EU club on the one hand and public concerns about the survival of the nations on the other.¹⁶ The amendments also abolished the naturalisation “windows” previously suggested as a compromise solution between the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Latvian law-makers.¹⁷ This time, under the pressure of the OSCE (and as was perceived in Latvia at that point, of the Russian Federation behind it) the window system for naturalisation was lifted, allowing non-citizens to apply for citizenship if they passed the history and language exams.

This was not the end of the story. The right-wing Latvian political party, *Tēvzemei un Brīvībai* (For Fatherland and Freedom) on October 3, 1998, called for a referendum contesting the amendments, giving automatic citizenship to children born in Latvia.¹⁸ *Tēvzemei un Brīvībai* had argued that this step would not guarantee that every Latvian citizen knew the official state language and hence further politicised the issue of the

survival of the state language.¹⁹ The vote showed however that the citizens favoured a more inclusive approach to citizenship in Latvia and turned down the option of withdrawing that piece of legislation.

Admittedly, there were two camps of those who voted in favour of keeping the amendment.²⁰ On the one side, certainly those who craved for putting an end to the OSCE's intervention in what was perceived as Latvian "internal affairs." Others hoped that once the OSCE was pleased with the results, the organisation would turn a blind eye on the stricter Language Law under discussion in the Saeima at the time. The number of voting members of the non-Latvian communities, and certainly the non-citizens who were ineligible to vote, expected that further evolution of minority legislation would start thereafter, leading towards a more inclusive end for the minority populations.

Both Estonia and Latvia had continuously asserted that only the citizens of pre-Soviet states would be able to acquire post-Soviet citizenship automatically.²¹ Of course, around one third of Estonia's and almost two fifths of Latvia's populations were in this case exempted from the right to receive citizenship automatically and were required to undergo a naturalisation procedure. However, instead of loosening up the conditions for naturalisation, both countries were persistent in tightening the regulations. The drafting of the Citizenship Laws in both countries was placed under close supervision of the CoE, OSCE and HCNM following demands of the Russian Federation to monitor possible "human rights' abuses."²²

Restored citizenship, as it was implemented in Latvia and Estonia, emerged as a result of the fierce debates among political elites. It was essential to connect the post-Soviet statehoods with political communities, made up of the citizenry of pre-Soviet republics and suggested the continuity of the "national political memory." The logic of restoring the pre-Soviet nation-state however did not mesh with the calls for democratisation. The shifts in the ethnic composition of the states during the Soviet-time were framed as an acute hindrance for nations' return to the community of European democratic states.²³ In order to legitimise the lack of political steps to include the Russian-speakers into the political community, state restoration was profiled as the only means of realigning Baltic states in the arena of democratic states. Independence was therefore framed as the crucial step in the history of ethnic Estonian and Latvian peoples.

The redefinition of the post-Soviet political communities in Estonia and Latvia was just one case in support of the restored statehood as the best choice for Estonians resp. Latvians. Many scholars point out that the titular nationals had aspired to become "the true masters of their own

country,” nothing more, nothing less.²⁴ Importantly, the debates during perestroika left a decisive imprint on the way the nation-building projects were to unfold, adding a clearly ethnic flavour to the nation-centred discussions at first over the issue of citizenship, than over the role that majorities’ cultures would play in the Baltic political arena.

2. Crafting the status of the state languages

Up until mid-1990s it was possible for the members of minority to get on in their everyday without knowledge of Estonian, Latvian or Lithuanian, while the state institutions and officials were increasingly switching to use the state languages. Therefore in order to perform public functions and/or interact with the state officials, the members of non-titular groups needed to have at least some proficiency in the state language. In this light, the state support for minorities wishing to acquire the skills in Estonian, Latvian or Lithuanian was crucial for decreasing the alienation of non-core ethnics from the political process, as well as state institutions.

Since Baltic independence in 1991 the state languages were profiled as official languages that were to be used in all spheres of public life in the countries. Additional legislations were passed throughout the 1990s-early 2000s to strengthen the status of the state languages. While the cornerstones of the language legislation were set into effect already in the late 1980s, the legislation had undergone significant changes over the 1990s, particularly with the adoption of the new language laws: the Estonian Language Act (February, 21 1995), the Lithuanian Law on the State Language (January 31, 1995), and the Latvian State Language Law (December 21, 1999). In Latvia the new State Language Law appeared also as early as 1995, but because of its highly protective nature for the state language, it had been harshly criticised by the OSCE and other international organisations.²⁵ The Lithuanian Law on the State Language, declares in the Article 9 “All the transactions of legal and natural persons of the Republic of Lithuania shall be conducted in the state language.” In Latvia, the 1999 State Language Law deleted the option, previously mentioned in the Law of 1989/1992 allowing individuals to address public officials in languages other than the state language.²⁶ According to Article 10 of this law “State and municipal institutions, courts and agencies belonging to the judicial system, as well as state and municipal enterprises (or companies) shall accept and examine documents from persons only in the state language.”

These regulations make clear that while the Baltic governments set out to assist the equality of the languages in the public sphere, the prereq-

uisites for the use of languages are defined explicitly only for the state languages. This indicates that from the early days of Baltic independence all of the Baltic residents were expected to have knowledge of the local official language in which correspondence and documentation in businesses, institutions and organizations was to be conducted. At the same time, all individuals occupied in the service industries needed to acquire adequate language proficiency in order to be able to carry out labour and remain competitive on the market.

When in Lithuania the Language Decree was adopted as early as January 1989, it also underlined the similar incentive for non-Lithuanians to gradually switch from other languages to the state language for the purpose of communicating with state-officials. As has been discussed in the previous chapter, the decree “On the Use of the Official Language of the Lithuanian SSR” reinstated Lithuanian as the official language of the republic and stated that it would be the main means of communication between the residents of the republic.²⁷

The new Law on State Language was passed in January 1995, regulating the use of the official language in public life. In defining the use and protection of Lithuanian, however, the law stated that it did not apply in many cases, such as the language of events of religious communities, as well as amongst persons belonging to ethnic minorities. Altogether, the law merely regulated the use of the state language in the public sphere, that is, on documents, signs and in communication between state institutions. It also allowed for the information to be delivered to speakers of minority languages in other idioms, alongside Lithuanian. Decisively, Lithuanian legislation diversifies the approach to the language issue in the country by providing a general framework for language use in the Law on State Language, and special legislation regulated by the Law on National Minorities and the Law on Education. Particularly, the Lithuanian Law on Ethnic Minorities from 1989 in the Article 4 stipulates that “in offices and organisations located in the areas serving substantial numbers of minority with a different language, the language spoken by that minority shall be used in addition to the Lithuanian language.” Polish-speaking communities, for example, appealed to this law in order to secure the use of Polish in local administrations across the South Eastern Lithuania.

Given the high proportion of non-core ethnic residents in Latvia and Estonia, initially the popular fronts, but also the re-established governments aimed particularly at linguistic consolidation of their societies. In Estonia, changes were made to the Law on Language of January 18, 1989, which claimed that it was necessary to protect the Estonian language and declared Estonia to be a monolingual state, making one sole distinction

between Estonian and all other, foreign languages. These changes were finalized in the Language Act, adopted on February 21, 1995, which defined minority language as “a language of a national minority [...] which Estonian citizens who belong to a national minority have historically used as their mother tongue in Estonia.”²⁸ This act amended the provisions of the earlier language law that allowed communication in minority languages. It did not require Estonia’s state officials to speak languages other than Estonian with Russian-speakers, thus strengthening the status of Estonian as the language of the state and also as the only language of communication by the country’s bureaucracy.²⁹

Despite reaffirming its strong commitment to identify Estonian as the official language of the country,³⁰ the right to use minority languages was constitutionally granted in the areas of minority concentrated settlements.³¹ Both the constitution and the Law on Language stated that the government of the localities where resident non-Estonians were in majority might use other languages alongside Estonian. In the case of the municipal bodies, Article 52, Paragraph 2 of the Estonian Constitution permits the use of the language spoken by the majority of the inhabitants, “in localities where the language of the majority of the population is other than Estonian [...] for internal communication.” At the same time, Article 11 of the 1995 Language Act confirms that

“in local governments where the majority of the permanent residents are non-Estonian speakers, the language of the national minority constituting the majority of the permanent residents of the local government may be used alongside Estonian as the internal working language of the local government on the proposal of the corresponding local government council and by decision of the Government of the Republic.”

In practice, however, this provision has never been implemented as the national government has rejected all proposals received with respect to the issue. The application to permit the usage of Russian in Narva and Sillamäe was rejected in 1995 by a decision of the Government, and later again in 1999.³² Importantly, while responding to the pressure of the international community to liberalise the criteria for citizenship, in 1998 the Riigikogu amended the Language Law, the Parliament Election Act and the Local Government Election Act, which then required elected officials to be fluent in Estonian.³³ However, under the pressure of recommendations by the Finnish EU-Presidency, the EC’s second annual report on

progress released in October 1999, as well as more intensively from the OSCE throughout the run-up period to the closure of its mission in Estonia, language proficiency requirements were abolished in November 2001.³⁴

At the same time, Estonian was made an official spoken language of parliament and, a year later in October 2002, made the working language of the local councils and governments, primarily aiming at promoting the use of Estonian in the north-eastern part of the country.³⁵ The measure remained largely ineffective despite activities by the language inspectorate in the region: the majority of the official documents were at first written in Russian, and then translated into Estonian.³⁶ Despite this fact, the Estonian state did not want to back up on the issue.³⁷ My interviews with officials in Narva, Sillamäe, and Jõhvi city councils suggested that in order to avoid necessary discussions in Estonian, the local officials and city-council representatives, in their overwhelming majority Russian-speakers, met in an informal atmosphere to discuss decisions in private *and* in a “foreign” language. These informal meetings were followed up by gatherings in the official premises only for voting, which continued well into 2006.³⁸

The Latvian Language Law of 1992 specifically required all official communication to be submitted in Latvian, which, given the fact that only 20% of non-Latvian population could communicate in the language, presented a serious hindrance for minority participation in public life.³⁹ This law amended the initial 1989 regulation that still allowed the use of the minority language in the public sphere. While the previous law underlined the right of residents’ to use “their” language in communication with officials, the new law enforced the status of Latvian as the sole language for internal communication of the state offices. Introducing three levels of proficiency of the state language, the regulation of the language knowledge required all candidates for state-funded jobs to demonstrate the highest proficiency in Latvian.⁴⁰ This was particularly applicable to individuals running in the elections, who, while registering as candidates, must attach a copy of a certificate confirming their level of knowledge in the state language.⁴¹ However, even in the cases in which a person possessed the certificate, the state language inspectorate on several occasions re-assessed the person’s knowledge of Latvian.⁴² Similarly, on the municipal level, only the use of the state language is permitted, irrespective of the number of non-Latvian language speakers who reside there.

In the beginning of 1995 a new law on language was discussed to promote the use of Latvian and regulate the use of that language in private business, pushing minority languages out of the public sphere completely.

The debate on this restrictive language law continued well into 1999, being severely criticised by the OSCE, the EU and particularly the HCNM van der Stoep, and was passed only one day before the EC announced the list of countries included in the next EU enlargement round. In the face of controversies around the new language law, the National Programme for Latvian Language Training was devised in 1995 to diminish the linguistic segregation of the society and to “promote the evolution of common values.” Needless to say, the programme was aimed at providing training in the official language and giving positive incentives to reduce the use of minority languages in the public sphere altogether.

The comparison of the three states’ linguistic policies and their relation towards the minority population indicates several contrasting issues with respect to the planning and implementation of the steps. Decisively, while the complexity of the ethno-linguistic situation in all three states can not be overestimated, it appears that in Estonia and Latvia this was perceived as a hindrance for the development of independent statehood under the guidance of the state-bearing nation. This perception is clearly reflected in the limited preparedness of the Latvian and Estonian political elites to initiate the state funded support for non-core ethnic communities requiring teaching of the state-language. Although this goal was set on the agenda under the auspices of assisting non-core ethnics in improving their competitiveness in the labour-market, increasing their flexibility in employment and, ultimately, integrating into the Estonian and Latvian-dominated national community, each state failed to develop means that supported the language training for non-core ethnics.

There appears to be little indication that the Lithuanian state was more open to developing new ways of assisting the minorities in adapting to the new conditions in which the Lithuanian language was the one and only means of official communication.⁴³ Even the deputies of Seimas were increasingly coming under the pressure of the language inspectorate for inappropriate use of Lithuanian in the public forum, with some non-native speakers of Lithuanian being particularly targeted for committing an offence on the national symbol, i.e. the Lithuanian language.⁴⁴ Like in Latvia and Estonia, most debates in Lithuania were about visibility of non-state languages in the country and on state documents, in passports and on plaques of state institutions. Discussions continue today revolving around claims which legislation has precedence, the state language laws or the legislation on national minority. Preference for the former would push minority languages out of the public space entirely, while the latter legislation would allow minorities to determine the spelling of their names and use street signs in non-state languages in the areas of their concentrated

settlement.⁴⁵ However, different approaches to language training and the availability of the state programmes for Lithuanian language tuition during the Soviet era somewhat softened the dramatic effect of the language policies on Lithuania's non-titular communities.

3. Language enforcement

The centralist approach to reinstalling the linguistic functionality of the state languages was very much the same across the region. As discussed, language legislation played and continues to play a central role in facilitating the centrality of Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian in the republics' political and social life. Despite the fact that the languages and cultures of minorities are legally protected and enjoy state support, varying demographic patterns and language situations throughout the Baltic states have resulted in quite different outcomes of language regulation. While I return to this issue, the discussion thus far makes clear that the Baltic governments actively promote the knowledge of the state language and tolerate (to a certain extent) other languages.

Some of the consequences resulting from the regulation of the use of languages other than state languages specifically touch upon the representation of non-titular ethnics. In this sense, the candidates running for public offices in Estonia and Latvia have to meet several criteria defining the level of language knowledge as established by law, while in Lithuania such requirements do not exist. However, in all three states minorities have only a limited opportunity to use their native language when communicating with public authorities if these are not Russian- or Polish speakers themselves. The policies discussed in this section of the chapter have aimed at closing this window of opportunity for minority language speakers to use languages other than the state one when in public office.

Since 1991, the Lithuanian Seimas has adopted a number of legal regulations, acts and strategic decisions to regulate the use of Lithuanian in the main areas of public life. Notably, in 1995, the Law on the State Language regulated the use and protection of the state language, guaranteeing its application as the major tool for functioning within all social areas.⁴⁶ Some additional institutions have been put into place to regulate and administer the development of language use in various areas of public life. Most notably the Lithuanian State Language Commission (*Valstybine lietuviu kalbos komisija*), State Language Inspectorate (*Valstybine kalbos inspekcija*) and the County Language Services (*Savivaldybiu kalbos tvarkytojai*) were to monitor language development and use within the minority communities. The Institute of the Lithuanian Language (*Lietuviu*

kalbos institutas) and the departments of language study in the country's universities have been involved in this work.

The most prominent role therein is played by the Lithuanian State Language Commission. Although put into operation back in 1961 as a non-governmental entity under the auspices of the Lithuanian Academy of Science, it was established as a state-run institution in 1990 under the auspices of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania. Consisting of various researchers from the Institute of the Lithuanian Language and university professors, the commission is primarily concerned with the questions of implementation of the Law on the Official Language and initiates the teaching of the language. The State Commission on the Lithuanian Language is in charge of the implementation of the language regulations, and, at the same time, the enforcement is guaranteed by the State Language Inspectorate and municipal language officers.⁴⁷ The Inspectorate also oversees the level of language knowledge by the non-Lithuanians employed in the public sector, however, there has been no indication of punitive measures towards those who were unable to fulfil the requirements.

The Commission has been increasingly involved in broader language policy planning.⁴⁸ The language policy of the Lithuanian State was determined by the State Language Policy Guideline 2003–2008, which consolidated the four language programmes approved by the Lithuanian Government. These include the Programme for the Use and Development of the State Language 1996–2005, the Programme of the Lithuanian Language in Information Society 2000–2006, the Programme for the Replacement of Loanwords by Lithuanian Equivalents, the Programme for the Preservation of Dialects and Ethnic Place-Names 2001–2010. The State Language Policy Guidelines 2003–2008 outlined several areas where state support for the consequential development of the Lithuanian language was to be supervised and supported.⁴⁹ Among the more declarative goals of the document, such as “meeting the requirements of the knowledge based society,” “exhortation of influence on the progressive development of the state-language,” and “controlling the creative use of the language among the public,” the primary aim was to “ensure the functionality of Lithuanian in all spheres of public life.” The framework outlines three major areas where its authors saw the interference of the state as a precondition for successful functioning of the Lithuanian language in the short- and long-run. These include the teaching of the Lithuanian language, standardisation of the language system and use, and decisively, the means to enforce the status of the language.⁵⁰

As early as April 1992, the government approved the State Language Instruction Programme as well as the categories for language knowledge. In light of this, as well as following the Law on the State Language, three categories were established, applicable to individuals seeking employment in the public sector. These range from minimal understanding and capacity to speak on the issues of work of low qualification, as applicable to low-skilled employers in banks, post-offices, police etc. to the third category, implying an ability to carry on conversation on managerial issues and is applied to employees at the highest governmental structures. Importantly, these categories are not applicable to those individuals who have graduated from schools using Lithuanian as the language of instruction, or Lithuanian-taught universities' learning streams prior to 1991. None of the people graduating from these schools after the re-installment of Lithuania's independence are required to pass this examination either.⁵¹

The application of language regulations have also been defined to ensure the transparency of the knowledge of the state language by the public and state employees, with a system of testing being created and approved by the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language. According to the official data, since 1993 a total of 81,160 citizens have taken exams and 69,998 have successfully passed the state-language examination in different categories. Beresnevičiūtė and Kasatkina report in their research that

“the authorities have indicated that the purpose of the law is to establish motivation to learn Lithuanian as the official language of the State; they have also asserted that no one would be dismissed solely because of inability to meet the language requirements.”⁵²

The situation was somewhat different in Latvia after the amendments adapted to the 1989 Law on State Language in 1992, creating the State Language Centre, the State Language Inspection and the State Language Proficiency Certification Commission as a part of the Centre. The State Language Centre was aimed at providing legal support on language issues and supervising their implementation to regulate language use.⁵³ The law guaranteed the right to be educated in Latvian, but it also made provisions for the individuals of minority origin to be educated in their native language.

In practice it meant that other languages, mainly Russian, were allowed to be used in minority schools for instruction where Russian-speakers were in the majority or in the schools which continued to func-

tion following the model devised in the Soviet times for groups of students of non-Latvian origin. This regulation was unnoticed until the later developments of education legislation. Later, however, the 1992 Law was used as a major tool to assist the reform of the linguistic situation in Latvia in the post-Soviet years and to eliminate the parallel use of two languages in Latvia.⁵⁴ In an effort to overcome the situation established by the 1958 School Reform, students (or their parents) would now choose the education stream in their *preferred* language, thus alleviating the linguistic segregation of Latvian and Russian linguistic communities in the long run. Similar steps were enforced throughout the time of independence in order to increase the importance of the Latvian language in various areas of social life, particularly in the state administration.

In 1998 the status of Latvian as the sole state language was confirmed by the Latvian constitution. However, already in 1999 new discussions on the necessity of the new language regulations commenced involving the president, Saeima, international organisations and some local NGO representatives. In comparison with the Language Law of 1992, in the period of preparation of the new law, governmental institutions held consultations with a range of interested actors from Latvian political establishments and international organisations, though few representatives of the minority community were involved.⁵⁵ The law, finally promulgated in September 1999, emphasised different use of the state language in private and public areas of activity, limited the opportunities for communication between its subjects with the state institutions and only spelled out regulations for Latvian.

A study of this piece of legislation suggests that before becoming an EU candidate country, Latvian political elites were required to correct their stand on linguistic issues. It was made to fit the existing European perceptions, entrenching the relations between the public and the private spheres in the legislation on language use. In this light particular attention was required for repeated efforts of Latvia's political elites to further intervene into the area of language use, going so far as suggesting additional regulation of language use in some spheres of the private economy, such as in the shops and during the internal meetings. Importantly these efforts undertaken in October 1997 have drawn considerable attention from various international organisations, which have monitored the implementation of the legislation in the wake of Latvia's EU accession.⁵⁶

The draft of the 1998 Language Law was tabled, despite severe criticisms of OSCE HCNM, as well as by the EC, noting that the law's provisions "take insufficient account of the distinction between the public and private spheres" and conditions "contravening international legal

standards of human rights, most notably freedom of expression.”⁵⁷ The negotiations with the OSCE and the EU officials resulted in the adoption of the law with corrections, significantly changing its original wording. While the law still stipulated the regulation of language use in the private sphere, the scope of these regulations was only limited to the areas of “legitimate public interest,” allowing for continuous use of minority languages in the private.⁵⁸ The law defined these spheres with respect to the issues of security, well-being, morality and social welfare, also pointing out that security at work and social-administrative monitoring was its focus. In this respect, the law identified the regulations as “corresponding” to the rights and interests of private organisations.⁵⁹ When the time came, the OSCE HCNM validated the law’s essential conformity with international obligations and commitments, repeating similar conclusions in 2000, when corresponding regulations were passed after similar judgement from OSCE and EU.⁶⁰

Policy-making in Estonia was similar. The 1997 *Estonian Human Development Report* noted that having Estonian as the official language of the country should integrate Estonia’s multiethnic society socially and politically.⁶¹ However, as could be observed to date, the language factor has worked only as a segregating factor in the cultural environment. Indeed, since the implementation of the Language Law of 1995 which declared Estonian to be the sole state language and treating all other languages, including Russian, as “foreign languages,” the relations of minorities towards the state language have been distinguished by particular scepticism. Unsurprisingly, the Riigikogu amended the Language Law, the Riigikogu Election Act and the Local Government Council Election Act on December 15, 1998, to establish proficiency requirements in the state language for elected officials from minority groups.

Following these regulations, subsequent amendments were made to Article 5 of the Language Law in February 1999, requiring employees of private companies, non-profit associations and foundations to have proficiency in and to use the Estonian language while doing business in Estonia.⁶² Criticised by international organisations and in particular by the OSCE, the Riigikogu adopted further amendments to the Language Law on June 14, 2000 to bring it into compliance with OSCE recommendations and EU regulations.⁶³ This meant specifically that the language requirements for foreign experts were abolished and the regulations on the private use of language were suspended. The amendment stipulated that,

“the use of Estonian by companies, non-profit associations and foundations, by employees thereof and by sole proprie-

tors is regulated if it is in the public interest, which, for the purposes of this Law, means public safety, public order, general government, public health, health protection, consumer protection and occupational safety. The establishment of requirements concerning proficiency in and use of Estonian shall be justified and in proportion to the objective being sought and shall not distort the nature of the rights which are restricted.”⁶⁴

In September of the same year, the first Estonian language level examinations took place in the Examination and Qualification Centre.

Similarly to the situation in Latvia as discussed above, tightening Estonian language regulations was understood locally as a kind of compensation after concessions were made regarding citizenship legislation. Overall, compliance of Estonia’s and Latvia’s legislators with the pressure from the OSCE and the EC has led some scholars to believe that European influence conditioned the changes in the legislation.⁶⁵ On the other hand, one observes that most of concessions made to the European institutions were fought against by the national legislators, who drew back on dubious arguments to legitimise these decisions to their voters.⁶⁶ Overall, it appears that the international brokers could achieve only as much as national political actors would allow them to negotiate on the way toward EU accession.⁶⁷

4. Internationalisation of minority politics

The emergent minority politics faced difficulties in reconciling the national perceptions of the past and future with those of international standards on granting particular rights to resident minorities.⁶⁸ The goal of rejoining the European community was set out even prior to the Baltic states’ secession from the SU. To allow swift “return to the West,” political elites of the core Baltic ethnics had produced a range of legal acts that resulted in the “nationalising” of the statehoods across the region. Following independence, legal steps were necessary to bring legislation into accord with the standards expected from the candidates for European membership. In order to satisfy the Copenhagen criteria a range of topics related to minority legislation in the countries had to be addressed. Differences in the policies of the Baltic states towards their minorities have been debated in scholarship as resulting from variations in the ethnic composition of the Baltic societies, the length of their residence in the region and

minorities' geographical dispersion. However, there were also similarities in the treatment of the minority populations.

The ethnic bias in the outlook of the political regime led some researchers to suggest that, particularly in the cases of Estonia and Latvia the effects of citizenship policies resulted in a limited form of democratic rule, or as some referred to it, "ethnic democracy."⁶⁹ Drawing back on work of Sammy Smooha some researchers suggested that the principles of ethnic ascendancy, perceived threat to state existence, and diminished form of democratic accountability plausibly qualify Estonia and Latvia for ethnic democracies.⁷⁰ However, Prit Järve argues that despite installing a control system that prevented non-Estonians from participation in formulating the political and legal mechanisms, the country is prone to move in the direction of liberal democracy. This is partially due to ongoing naturalisation processes and individual assimilation of non-Estonians into the Estonian society.

Järve also indicates that these two aspects will equally facilitate the development of the Estonian version of multiculturalism, which is designed to protect the culture and language of the core ethnic group as is declared in Estonia's constitution.⁷¹ Indeed, the Preamble to Estonia's Constitution envisages the state as belonging to one ethnic group, when it reads,

"Unwavering in their faith and with a steadfast will to secure and develop a state which is established on the inextinguishable right of the Estonian people [*Eesti rahvas*] to national self-determination [...] which shall guarantee the preservation of the Estonian [ethnic] nation [*eesti rahvus*] and its culture throughout the ages – the Estonian people [*Eesti rahvas*] adopted, [...] the following Constitution."⁷²

The Latvian *Satversme* (Constitution) does not proclaim ethnic principles, suggesting that it is potentially possible to develop state institutions in a liberal direction. Diachkova, in what she presents as an argument underlining the thesis of ethnic democracy in Latvia, concludes that the Latvian state is committed to the legal equality of individual citizen's rights. It also supports ethnic and cultural communities and thus facilitates naturalisation as well as civic participation of minority ethnic groups.⁷³ Inevitably, she argues, the growing numbers of non-citizens acquiring competence in the state language and naturalising will lead to development of a more civic, less ethnocentric democracy in Latvia.

To my knowledge, there is no publication suggesting that Lithuania could be handled as an example of ethnic democracy. However, Lithuania's Constitution is clearly in favour of the principle of ethnic ascendance. It names only ethnic Lithuanians as founders of the state, stating that

“The [ethnic] Lithuanian nation [*Lietuvių tauta*] having created the State of Lithuania many centuries ago, [...] having for centuries staunchly defended its freedom and independence, having preserved its spirit, native language, writing, and customs [*savo dvasią, gimtąją kalbą, raštą ir papročius*], embodying the innate right of the human being and the Nation [*Tautos*] to live and create freely in the land of their fathers and forefathers—in the independent State of Lithuania, [...] adopts and proclaims this Constitution.”⁷⁴

While in Latvia the processes were similarly entrenched in the concept of state-continuity, in Lithuania as we have seen in the chapters 2 and 3 these were less explicit. However, the ethnic setting in which Lithuanians dominate non-Lithuanian citizens of the country is fairly clear.⁷⁵ Despite the freedom all residents of the LitSSR had to choose citizenship, the demographic composition of society ensured the privileged access to political participation for the titulars while limiting that of the non-titulars.

In these terms, there is a distinct similarity between the three states with respect to choice of strategies for political inclusion, guarantees made to titular linguistic communities and policies enforced to co-opt non-titulars in the process of state and nation-building. Pettai and Hallik suggest that in the case of Estonia a degree of control by an ethnic majority determines the political behaviour of non-core ethnic groups.⁷⁶ This applies equally in the two other Baltic states, where any opportunities for accommodation of minorities need to be defined from the perspective of monoethnic titular state-culture. In both Latvia and Lithuania, ethnopolitical relations are heavily misbalanced in favour of titular ethnics, allowing them to maintain “superordinate power over minority [...] through any combination of the three main mechanisms of segmentation, dependency and co-optation.”⁷⁷ Thus Baltic non-titulars were increasingly perceived as a minority group during the negotiations of states' EU membership and specifically during the period of transposing European legal corpus, the *Acquis Communautaire* into national legislations.

During the run up to EU accession negotiations, national language legislation was scrutinised by international experts and partially changed

as a result. The particular role played by native languages in their relations with other issues of minority legislations has been the focus of analyses by the international community and scholarly experts alike.⁷⁸ Not surprisingly, in Estonia and Latvia the issue of language rights fell frequently into the same category of minority protection as the right for citizenship, both regulations on which the CoE and the OSCE had issued numerous recommendations for change. Crucially, many of them drew attention to the changes in rationale of language legislation. Since Baltic states became OSCE members just a few days following independence from the USSR, the organisation began pressuring Estonia and Latvia particularly to modify their nation-building to account for the complex ethnic composition of their population. Because the state of minority-majority relations were perceived to be a potentially destabilising factor across much of the CEE, OSCE drafted the Copenhagen Document that stressed the importance of liberal democracy and the role human rights play therein.

Two means were available for OSCE to enforce the compliance of Baltic governments with these regulations. On the one hand, there were standing missions in Estonia and Latvia, on the other, the institutions of High Commissioner on National Minorities. Particularly, the HCNM was to exercise “quiet diplomacy” and communicate OSCE’s recommendation to Baltic governments. However, because the concept of “national minority” was not defined in the mandate of the HCNM, the bulk of recommendations from the OSCE could be easily neglected by the governments where no “sticks” for neglect were involved. In this sense, much of the HCNM’s legal advice encouraging power sharing between ethnic groups could be dismissed as inappropriate for the country, or even as violating constitutional principles.

There were three major documents that framed the remit of HCNM’s activity towards the Baltic states. The 1996 “Hague recommendations regarding the education rights of national minorities” stressed the need for mutual bilingualism of majorities and minorities. The 1998 “Oslo recommendations regarding the linguistic rights of national minorities” pressed states to grant linguistic rights to resident minorities thus extending their political and civic rights. And the 1999, “Lund recommendations of the effective participation of national minorities in public life” emphasised the importance of minorities’ visibility in the public service to facilitate relevant agenda-setting.⁷⁹ However, although the HCNM was consistently using both “sticks and carrots” to achieve changes in Baltic policies, the existing legislation prevented significant changes in nation-states’ treatment of minorities. Although some general changes followed the

advocacy by the HCNM, many were subsequently neutralised by amending old or passing new nationalising laws.

The weakness of the HCNM as an institution advising nation-states on behalf of minority groups comes particularly to fore with regard to the general mandate of OSCE missions to Estonia and Latvia. These differed considerably, resulting in somewhat different outcomes. In Estonia the mission was to encourage and facilitate communication between the ethnic communities while working in concert with the HCNM. The mission in Latvia was not required to cooperate with the HCNM, but rather advise government on desirable changes in legislation.⁸⁰ The first HCNM Max van der Stoep thus had limited means to advise policy-makers in Latvia and Estonia, but had slightly greater chances to be heard by the Estonian political establishment.⁸¹ On many occasions, he expressed concerns over several pieces of legislation in Estonia and strictly objected to several principles promoted by the Latvian elites as the foundation of the citizenship legislation. The pressure from the HCNM however largely led to more stringent regulation of language use to ensure the dominance of the state language in the public sphere. These regulations additionally antagonised ethnic communities and thus gradually increased the salience of ethnic identity when participating in the public sphere.

This fact is particularly striking in the face of the titular populations' highly critical perceptions of loyalty of the local minorities towards "their" state. Policy-making with regard to minorities however had taken a different form in Estonia and Latvia than in Lithuania. The former states have implemented legislation which would ensure gradual spreading and strengthening of the titular languages in the public sphere. Lithuania has promoted a shift from Polish or Russian to the Lithuanian language by much softer means, providing additional opportunities for securing the linguistic identity of the national minorities. At the same time, naturally the situation in which minority legislation has been devised and implemented refers back to the limitations imposed by the citizenship legislation on non-titular populations across the Baltic states.

The minority status of the Russian- and Polish-speaking residents of Lithuania was more secure when compared to non-titulars in Latvia and Estonia. The state policies referred to the groups' cultural and linguistic affiliation in official documents addressing and partially securing their group rights. However, despite relatively small numbers of minorities in Lithuania, social exclusion of their members was not precluded explicitly by the policies. Demographic factors, such as the small number of members of the minority groups when counted against Lithuanians, dispersion (mainly of Russian-speakers) across the country and the high degree of

linguistic integration into Lithuanian society were decisive for the relatively fast resolution of controversies concerning their cultural rights. The early acknowledgement of the multiethnic basis of the Lithuanian state too had a positive impact on the consolidation of the country's ethnic communities on the basis of their identity as Lithuanian citizens.

The Lithuanian Law on National Minorities, as discussed previously, already asserted the rights of minorities to preserve and develop their cultural rights, as well as receive education in their mother tongue. Importantly, the law indicated that the language of education in Lithuania's schools for minorities would be the one of their choosing, but also stated that training in the Lithuanian language was essential. In order to help the process, the government was eager to support the training of teachers for minority schools, passing a special resolution on the issue in 1994. Again in support of the minority schools after the revised version of the Law on State Language was accepted in 1995, the Minister of Education and Science issued a decree "On Reinforcement of the Law on the State Language in the Educational Establishments of National Minorities" on April 9, 1996. There the status of Lithuanian was defined as suiting the official communication, leaving minority schools to decide in which language they would operate and communicate with students and their families. In fact, it let schools with Polish, Belarusian, Ukrainian and Russian language instruction develop approaches that best fit local realities and residents' demands.

It appears that in the inter-Baltic context, the Lithuanian state chose the most inclusive minority politics. Without imposing pressure on the speakers of non-titular languages, it provided facilities and opportunities for development of bilingualism of minorities.⁸² A series of constitutional provisions and legislation provided Lithuania's minorities with opportunities to establish and sustain their educational, cultural and religious institutions.⁸³ Lithuania also acceded speedily to international treaties to embed the right to use minority languages in the international legal context, among others European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, both ratified in 1995. Decisively, a number of bilateral agreements between the government of Lithuania and the "external homelands" of local minorities were signed with the Russian Federation, Poland, Belarus, Ukraine and Germany. Significantly, the signing of the treaties took the issue of national minorities in Lithuania into the realm of interstate relations and further away from potential interest of OSCE. During the only visit HCNM paid to Lithuania in January 1993, van der Stoep did not

discover any domestic and international tensions that needed urgent addressing.⁸⁴

The Lithuanian case is highly illustrative at this point. It appears that while political entrepreneurs in Estonia and Latvia have opposed the “internationalisation” of minority rights issues, Lithuanian leadership had profited from connecting its resident minorities with the international security concerns of their external homelands. In effect, all of the states concluding treaties with Lithuania have pledged significant funds for development of education and language training specifically. Internationalising minority issues allowed Lithuanian policy-makers not only to co-opt external financial help for the cultural needs of its minority citizens. Much more important was the perception of the state as a homeland of the titular ethnic group, which underlines the state treaties. The Lithuanian state declared support for minority initiatives, but primarily it was the responsibility of the minority’s external homeland to finance its activities. Henceforth, Lithuania would regularly support minority initiatives but pay far greater interest to ethnic Lithuanians living in the Polish-speaking South East Lithuania and abroad.

The compact territorial settlement of Estonia’s Russian-speaking communities could allow for similar arrangement with the Russian Federation, however, as have been argued elsewhere, because the residents were *de facto* “aliens” to the state, such approaches were not realistic.⁸⁵ Although Estonia failed to accommodate all residents as members of its political community, it addressed differences in the perceptions of ethnic groups early enough to stabilise interethnic relations. The issue of the state language use, a specific occupational structure and educational differences in the largely non-Estonian Ida-Virumaa further aggravated the divisions along ethnic lines. The passing of the law on aliens in the summer of 1993 significantly worsened the situation and led the HCNM to assume the role of an active mediator between the state and minority political actors.

The “Aliens Crisis” proved to be a litmus test for the OSCE’s ability to broker negotiations. Within a period of several weeks the HCNM undertook several trips to Estonia to assuage political leadership in Ida-Virumaa, who demanded greater political rights and staged a referendum on the region’s independence. Although the referendum was declared unlawful by the Estonian Chancellor of Justice, it was to be held to indicate the pluralist nature of minority initiative and receive concessions from the central government. Specifically, during the meetings with the mayors of Narva and Sillamäe van der Stoel collected information on the reasons and motivation behind the move of the region’s political elites and later communicated these to the Estonian national authorities, president and

government. The leaders from Ida-Virumaa made clear to the HCNM that they were neither planning to undermine the rule of law in Estonia, sought secession, nor would press for the implementation of referendum's outcomes. Furthermore, the legal framework of Estonian state left regional leaders with little leverage on state policies in addition to their overall weak position versus central governments. In this sense, the HCNM acted as a negotiator between the strong central state and representatives of the weak minority. Admittedly none of the changes suggested by van der Stoel were reflected in the amendment passed to Aliens Law in June 1994, underlining the strength of the central government in the dispute with the regional political entrepreneurs in Ida-Virumaa.⁸⁶ Overall, the HCNM's engagement had only further consolidated the existing state institutional take on regional political processes, allowing Estonian government to dismiss suggestions for auxiliary regulations for obtaining citizenship, residence permits and non-citizens' passports as inappropriate.

Through temporary suspension of the discussion on the issue of inclusive citizenship, territorial autonomy for minorities and granting of *de facto* cultural autonomy to Russian-speakers in the northeast of the country, the Estonian state reduced the potential for interethnic tensions. Also, by prioritising economic growth to the development of the political agenda inclusive of non-titulars, the Estonian state allowed for some alleviation of the socio-economic disparities between the titulars and non-titulars in the long term. Although the Estonian state did not recognise any languages other than the state language in the public domain, the use of "foreign languages" was tacitly tolerated in the areas of Russian-speakers' compact settlement during the decade of the run-up to invitation for EU membership. At the same time, while signing the FCNM in 1997 Estonia (like many signing countries, in fact) made significant reservations with regard as to whom the Convention would apply. The scope of the Convention's protection was limited to Estonian citizens only, thus limiting the anticipated impact of the document on the Russian-speaking non-citizens of Estonia. Although around 40% of Estonia's residents could potentially profit from support under the FCNM, around 60% of minorities in Estonia were non-citizens or citizens of other states and thus left out of Convention's protection.⁸⁷

From the early days of Latvian independence, this country's political leadership vehemently opposed internationalisation of minority issues. The belated implementation of the Latvian Citizenship Law in 1994 arguably alienated the Russian-speaking community that initially supported the move for Latvian independence. At the same time, many NGOs claiming to represent the interests of the Russian-speaking community have

been closely cooperating with international monitoring organisations. The OSCE's long-term mission in Latvia involved these NGOs' work to recommend changes in general minority related policies, and specifically on citizenship, naturalisation, alien's legislations to the Latvian state.⁸⁸ The assessed issues were as diverse as the lack of automatic citizenship for long-term residents of the state, alienation from political processes and systematic disadvantages for non-citizens to participate in the early privatisation.⁸⁹ The prominence of the Latvian language was frequently pointed out as the reason for growing alienation of Russian minority from political processes in Latvia, prompting HCNM to suggest to President Guntis Ulmanis the establishment of the Consultative Council on Nationalities in 1996. High Commissioner had also resorted to issuing warning to Latvia's governments that the effective solution of the citizenship issue was directly linked to country's credentials as a democratic state.⁹⁰

The Latvian situation appears to be more complex in all respects. Social and political developments following secession from the SU have solidified the fronts between the members of different cultural communities towards each other, though the potential for ethnic tensions has hardly been reduced. The topic of minority rights had remained a decisive obstacle for consequent steps toward social integration in Latvia until membership in the EU was secured in 2002. The major conflict was, nevertheless, rooted in an attitude of the titular population that is "best described as a *social* and *psychological* rejection of everything Russian."⁹¹ However, with the passage of time, the integration of non-Latvian communities into one Latvian society seems to be increasing without suggesting the Russian-speakers' overall assimilation. The members of Russian-speaking communities adapt to the situation mainly through formation of "hybrid identities." These processes go somewhat along the lines observed by David Laitin in the Estonian context, where the quality and quantity of interethnic contacts conditions short-term outcomes.⁹² Despite the policy implementations which, especially in the area of minority policies as David Galbreath and Liz Galvin argue, bear resemblance to Soviet strategies,⁹³ Latvia's ethnic and linguistic groups seem to progressively converge as the number of interethnic contacts grows over time.⁹⁴

More detailed examinations as to how the principles adopted by the Latvian government accommodated the interests of Latvia's non-titular residents are still needed. Elsewhere, Galbreath concludes that continuous reference to minority rights by international organisations and local politicians has created expectations of the Russian-speakers for greater political and cultural rights in Latvia.⁹⁵ In the view of Galbreath, the failure of the national governments to provide concessions to the minority communities

and dissolve the majority's fears of ethnic extinction has resulted in the persistence of controversies on central issues of post-Soviet statehood, such as citizenship, language and education policies.⁹⁶

All the same, non-citizens could freely participate in civic activity, have access to social benefits and conduct business. Both the Latvian and Estonian states have provided a solid base for the minorities' appreciation of their state of residence as "service stations."⁹⁷ Precisely these reasons should be mentioned as rationale behind the limited interest of Latvia's and Estonia's non-citizens to express greater affection for their states of residence. In both cases, albeit by different means, the state has *de facto* acknowledged the status of cultural autonomy for the Russian-speaking communities, which in the short run can explain the growing separation of the cultural groups in the two countries.

While in the short-term the potential for interethnic conflict in the two states has been significantly reduced, as I will discuss in the following chapter, in the mid-term the conditions provided for gaining the knowledge of the state languages are likely to contribute to greater separation of the ethnic communities in the two countries. It remains to be seen, however, whether in the long-run the process of generational replacement will facilitate the change in the attitudes of the non-titular communities towards language, education opportunities and minority-related politics in their states of residence.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter I have discerned several problems that non-titular communities in the Baltic states faced during the 1990s. I have indicated that state- and nation-building in the three countries has largely collided, being envisaged by the majority populations without consultations with the local minorities. The steps taken were, in the first place, aimed at building a political community on the basis of citizenship and in relation to the Soviet past. I further suggested that this logic finds its expression even more so during the 1990s, when all three Baltic states pushed for greater linguistic cohesion of the non-titulars into the communities by defining the terms of acquiring citizenship and the use of language and by providing hard incentives for education in the state-language.

The policies and legislative measures have framed political communities as continuing the legacies of the pre-Soviet past and ensured a high degree of control by the core groups over the minority populations. These policies distinguished the particular role ascribed to the core ethnics in the further development of state institutions as serving the interests of

majority communities. While at first excluded, the largest part of the non-core groups found it hard to engage themselves in the political processes and win back a place on the political stage. Although these are the implicit assumptions in the studies of the minorities' adaptation strategies, the steps defining the group in explicit minority terms by the core nationalities of the Baltic states need to be reconsidered with greater precision.

Undoubtedly, some steps were intended by the titular majorities to improve the linguistic competence of non-titular groups and increase their interactions with political institutions dominated by majorities. As I demonstrate in following chapters, these policy-changes were rarely effective because they never took minority opinions into consideration. Over time, non-titular residents in the Baltic states were effectively marginalised in the nation-building, and then in the negotiations about the design of political institutions.

Starting from the situation described in this chapter, I proceed with a study of the policy steps undertaken to strengthen the status of the state language in the three countries and underline the active policies of regulating minority education. Specifically, I question whether this might be considered an example of systematic exclusion of the non-titulars from political influence or should be attributed to the processes of consolidating the democratic regime around the principles of one cultural and linguistic community.

Notes

1 Cf. Gelazis, 2003.

2 Constitution Watch, 1993.

3 Georgs Andrejevs, in February 1993 Latvia's Foreign Minister on Citizenship Issue. Cited after Antane and Tsilevich, 1999, p.105.

4 Stukuls-Eglitis, 2002.

5 The "transitional provisions" of the 1994 Law. It also provides privileges for residents of Estonian and Lithuanian ethnicity in acquiring citizenship of Latvia.

6 RFE/RL Newswire, 8.4.1997.

7 Aasland and Tyldum, 2002; Poleshchuk, 2001, p.28–30. See Information provided on the website of the Integration Foundation:

<http://www.meis.ee/eng/index.php?newsID=1547>

8 Galbreath, 2005, pp.180–184.

9 Hallik, 1996, p.91.

10 Semjonov, 1999.

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- 11 See Birckenbach, 1997.
- 12 The Roundtable included five members of Riigikogu, five members from Association of Estonia's Nationalities, and five members from Russian Representative Assembly.
- 13 "Estonia amends citizenship law: Naturalization eased for nearly 6,000 stateless children," in *The Baltic Times*, Dec 10, 1998.
<http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/3807/>
- 14 "Protesters gather outside Parliament" in *The Baltic Times* Dec 10, 1998 <http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/3818/>; See also, Ruutsoo, 2000.
- 15 Article 3 of the Latvian Law on Citizenship and Article 5 of the Estonian Citizenship Act.
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<http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/2748/> Retrieved 2009–12–02
- 19 Ibid. p.179.
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- 21 See for example, Bungs, Girnius, and Kionka, 1992.
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- 23 See van Elsuwege, 2008.
- 24 Smith, 1996, Pettai and Hallik, 2002; Smooha and Järve, 2005.pp.71–72.
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<http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/4467/> Retrieved 2009–12–02
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- 27 Sirutavicius, 1998, p.13.
- 28 Articles 1 and 2. See in *Riigi Teataja I* 1995, 23, 334, or online <http://www.eki.ee/keel/langact.html>. In 1993 the Riigikogu adopted the Law on Cultural Autonomy for National Minorities, a successor law of the 1925 document. The text of the Law http://www.einst.ee/factsheets/cult_auton/
- 29 Tsilevich, 2001.

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- 30 Article 6, and 52 Paragraph 1 of the Estonian Constitution, See <http://www.president.ee/en/estonia/constitution.php> and Art 3 para 1 of Law on Language, <http://www.eki.ee/keel/langact.html>.
- 31 Estonian Constitution, Article 51 Paragraph 2, Also this right is stipulated in the Language Act, Article 10 Paragraph 1.
- 32 As based on the statements of the Estonian Constitution Article 52 Paragraph 2 and Language Act, Article 11. "Vtoroj rabochij jazyk" in *Molodezh Estonii sreda* Aug 08 2001 <http://www.moles.ee/01/Aug/08/2-1.php> Retrieved 2009-12-12.
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- 34 The deletion of amendments had been set up as precondition for closing the OSCE mission in Tallinn, which was perceived as an unpleasant reminder of tensions between Estonians and non-Estonians, and between the normative standards of the EU and Estonian legislation altogether. *The Baltic Times*, December 20, 2001. See detailed discussion of the implementation of the Languages Laws in Ozolins, 2003. For critical appraisal, see Tsilevich, 2001. "Proschaj, OBSE!" *Molodezh Estonii* Dec 06 2001 <http://www.moles.ee/01/Dec/06/4-1.php> Retrieved 2009-12-14.
- 35 Ozolins, 2003, p.224.
- 36 "Narvans propose equal status for Russian language" Sergei Stepanov and Erik Kalda in *The Baltic Times*, Aug 16, 2001 <http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/5328/>; "Narva buries bilingual option" Sergei Stepanov in *The Baltic Times*, Sep 06, 2001 <http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/5409/>
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- 41 Article 11 Paragraph 5 and Article 17 Paragraph 4, respectively.
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Chapter 5

Titularisation of Baltic education

The concerns about survival of the titular languages did not disappear with the regained independence of the Baltic States. Ironically, the prospect of EU accession additionally influenced the perceptions of Estonians, Latvians, as well as Lithuanians of their nations' and languages' potential disappearance, giving rise to anti-European sentiments over the course of membership negotiations. Membership in the EU for Estonia and Latvia was strongly connected to fulfilling the directives of the EU on issues where local political elites and their voters were not prepared to compromise. Above all, the issues of political membership, language legislation and the education policies of Estonia and Latvia were closely monitored by international organisations in order to assess their relevance for the accommodation of minority communities in these two states. Lithuania experienced far less criticism in this respect, as it was said to have embarked on a more liberal version of nation-building. This chapter compares three states by addressing the regulations regarding minority education.

To do this, the present chapter investigates constraints imposed on the minority populations in the process of the EU-accession in all three states. Here I discuss the range of policies which strengthened the status of the state language, primarily through reforms of education system. The seminal studies on the issue, such as David Laitin's "Identity in Formation," Volkov's and Apine's "Latvia's Russians' Identity" and Kasatkina's and Leončikas's "Adaptation of Lithuania's Ethnic Groups" all underline the behavioural change of minority individuals, their predilection for integrating into the majority society, and the majority's preparedness to accommodate political realities in their states of residence.¹

Decisively, this was not a result of concerted policies to integrate minority populations into the majority societies, nor was it caused by the growing acceptance of Russian- and Polish-speakers as parts of Baltic societies. During this later period, however, minority groups increasingly developed multilingual skill, thus complying rather than challenging the implicit ideological assumptions of importance and status of national languages for successful life in the Baltic. While the members of non-titular

groups increasingly sought to access public domain and participate in political, social and cultural life of Baltic societies, minorities were still considered the biggest threat to survival of titular cultures and languages. To be accepted as equals by the members of the titular nation, minorities had to speak state languages both grammatically correct and without an accent.

As I discuss in this chapter, education reforms only further secured the dominance of state languages in the public space. Because reforms were generally in line with the previous strategies of nationalising the state and its institutions, many members of the minority used the window of opportunity to profit from potential for social mobility. The sceptics from among the minority communities were ambivalent, trusting that political institutions had finally accepted that Russian-speakers were there to stay. Additionally, many minorities believed that instead of being granted tools for adapting to the situation of titular dominance, majority political actors used all tools at their disposal to perpetuate structural dominance over speakers of non-state languages. This chapter argues that precisely this had happened in all three states.

1. Language teaching

The governments were active in promoting minorities' proficiency in the languages with the means available: specific categories of proficiency have been in place since the early-1990s, state agencies overseeing language development were put in place and school curricula were developed to ensure teaching of the state language to minorities. In this situation, the educational authorities, state-language teachers and textbook writers faced educational and language teaching problems and challenges ranging from the development of new materials for second language acquisition to upgrading the Soviet materials to suit current needs.² This involved the development of a new concept for teaching Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian as a second language, revising the content of learning programmes, providing new curricula, devising novel teaching methods and means of assessment, as well as preparing new teachers.³

As observed by Baltic scholars, the level of bilingualism of the titulars in the Baltic states was steadily declining since the Baltic republics abolished the compulsory study of the Russian language in schools in the late 1980s. On the other hand, the speakers of minority languages, particularly the younger generation, have come to acquire working knowledge of the respective state language. Needless to say, the increase in the use of the state languages in the Baltic states was facilitated by their growing

prestige, but also by the growing requirements of their deployment in the public sphere, and not least by the legal requirements installed.

The Lithuanian government sought to provide adequate facilities and opportunities for individual development of bilingualism, while at the same time being sensitive to allowing minorities to develop their linguistic education. A row of constitutional provisions and legislation provided Lithuania's minorities opportunities to establish and sustain their educational, cultural and religious institutions. The Lithuanian Constitution addresses national minorities on several occasions, among others in the Preamble, with the bulk of additional legislation on National Minorities, on Citizenship, on Education, on the Non-Governmental organisations, on Public Information, on Religious Communities and on Political Parties and Organisations. International treaties to which Lithuania has acceded also include a number of Conventions where the minority language issue is specifically regulated, such as the European Convention on Human Rights and the Fundamental Freedoms (signed in 1993, ratified in 1995) and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (signed in 1995, ratified in 2000).

Decisive, however, have been the bilateral agreements between the Government of Lithuania and the "national homelands" of the minorities residing in the country.⁴ The change in status of the language during the post-Soviet years also corresponded with the steps undertaken by the government to facilitate the adoption of the national minorities to the requirements of the state, following what is generally conceived of as a supportive strategy for language learning. The objective of integrating the members of ethnic minority groups into the mainstream society was accompanied by measures granting minorities opportunities to preserve their identity by protecting their native language and culture.⁵

Since independence, minority language schools have been particularly in the focus of policy-makers. For the graduates of the main and secondary minority schools the instruction in Lithuanian was adjusted in the light of the large scale move of minority students into Lithuanian-speaking areas. Importantly, as has been observed throughout the country,

"in order to enable their monolingual children to master the Lithuanian language quickly and thoroughly, parents from ethnic communities have increasingly started to send them to schools where Lithuanian is the medium of instruction."⁶

This might be explained to a great degree by the fact that individuals of non-Lithuanian origin graduating from compulsory and secondary

schools are considered to be sufficiently prepared to use Lithuanian in their studies in institutions of tertiary education. Likewise, all of the graduates from the Lithuania's schools after 1992 are considered linguistically fit for work or any other public activity. For the graduates, the language examination system has been streamlined, and students who pass their secondary school language examination receive a document equivalent to the certificate of state-language competence for adults. However, as representatives of Polish-speakers in particular claim, the state has consistently neglected the need of its community for central examination in non-state languages such as Russian and Polish.⁷

There are considerable signs of consolidation of Lithuania's society on the basis of the language knowledge, while the different linguistic needs, particularly in the area of education, are continuously addressed in Lithuanian politics. However, as some have claimed, behind the peaceful coexistence of several languages there is an intensive policy of promoting the state language at the expense of other minority, particularly regionally dispersed, languages. Although they have been debated among the members of the minority communities, in autumn 2001, the Lithuanian Ministry of Education officially started to provide bilingual schooling in areas with high concentrations of minority populations.⁸

Overall however, the debate in Lithuania does not appear to be as laden with conflict potential as it is in the neighbouring Baltic states. Although members of the minority communities addressed issues of state protection of the Lithuanian language, in interviews with the author many of the activists affirmed that the Lithuanian state could do more for the preservation of the linguistic rights of autochthonous Polish-speakers and of the Russian-speaking communities. At the same time, in their eyes, the state also had an obligation to ensure that all Lithuanian residents are fluent in Lithuanian.⁹ The representatives of the Polish-speaking community particularly, have argued that there is only a shadow state support for the use of Polish in South Eastern Lithuania. However, the community activists interviewed would not like to challenge the primacy of Lithuanian for the functioning of the state offices in the regions. More so, the representatives claimed that Polish should be recognised as a means of *facilitating* the communication between state officials and the local population, *not* as the region's official language. Because the majority of the Polish-speaking community in the region is highly fluent in Lithuanian, granting Polish the status of an auxiliary language would confirm the multilingual and multicultural nature of contemporary Lithuania and allow minorities to be visible in the public sphere.¹⁰

Similar arguments were also collected in interviews with representatives of the Russian-speaking communities in major cities in Lithuania. These expressions stand out in the light of general support expressed by minorities for the “nationalising” approach to regulations of language use in Lithuania, which have clear assimilationist intentions. At the same time, the members of the minority communities seem to profit largely from the fact that the issue has not become an object of regular politicking. This allowed the ongoing governmental support for minority schools, even if a rather tokenistic one, and thus the approximate equality of linguistic proficiency for minorities and majorities in higher education, the labour market and in competition for positions in the public sector.

While training in Lithuanian was available prior to independence, it was within the framework of Latvia’s independence that the methodology for teaching Latvian as a second language was developed from scratch. The attention of the Latvian government focused on the training of non-Latvians in the state language immediately after independence. Due to the limited proficiency of the local minority populations in the state language and very modest budget for such activities, this was done with the aid of foreign donors. Where large sections of the population were excluded from automatic citizenship, the knowledge of the state language was the precondition to its acquisition.¹¹

One of the major facilitators in the project was the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP), which allowed the launch of The National Programme for Latvian Language Training (NPLLT). The international funding was largely dedicated to tuition in the state language, targeting the residents of Latvia whose native language was not Latvian.¹² The Programme needed to develop a new methodology of language teaching, prepare the necessary teaching staff and draft teaching materials. In these steps the teachers of Latvian in the Russian-language schools were supposed to be the centre of attention as well as other non-titular groups threatened by unemployment due to the lack of language proficiency.

Initially operating under the UNDP aegis, the NPLLT applied international expertise to ensure the availability of language learning opportunities for the minority communities, as well as enabling conformity with the international expectations placed on the Latvian government that it guarantee non-Latvians’ the right to use their native language. While initially the NPLLT aimed at a ten year plan earmarking the goal of training 180,000 adults and the same number of pupils in the language, it had to be enlarged and attached to a specially created National Agency for Latvian Language Training to ensure the implementation of its goals. In 2001 the Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia took over administrative

monitoring, further consolidating the implementation of the Programme. Subsequently, in October 2004 the NPLLT Project Management Unit changed its status to the *Latviešu valodas apguves valsts aģentūra* (National Agency for Latvian Language Training, LVAVA). The Agency's activities were planned in action phases, with an aim to provide the learning of the Latvian language and bilingual education especially for non-Latvian students. Currently, the State Language Policy Programme (2006–2010) and Support Programme for the Latvian Diaspora (2004–2009) are also implemented through the Agency.

Since the mid-1990s, the Soros Foundation-Latvia was active with its project "Open School" that had the somewhat similar incentive of facilitating language training and implementing of methods of linguistic education in minority schools. In extension of its commitment (and responding to the pressure from the international organisations), the Naturalization Board also launched language training courses for citizenship applicants in the early 2000s.¹³ The majority of the non-titular members of Latvian society indicated that this should be read as a sign of the Latvian state reacting to increasing pressures from the international community. However, an increase in minority's passing the exams could be interpreted differently. The local members of the minority tend to interpret the state policies of enhancing the proficiency of non-Latvians in the state language as an indicator of states' preparedness to assist in the national consolidation process.¹⁴ Over the 1990s the strengthening of the status of the state language was undertaken in the constant bid for nationalist votes rather than in order to support minorities.¹⁵ Nonetheless, the provisions made for minorities to achieve better opportunities for competition in the labour market should be acknowledged as tacit acceptance of this responsibility by the Latvian state vis-à-vis its non-Latvian inhabitants.

As discussed, Lithuania had already devised a viable training programme for non-Lithuanians to acquire the skills in the state language prior to independence, and Latvia did so with the help of the UNDP in 1995. The Estonian Government neither possessed a tenable programme for teaching non-Estonians the state language during the Soviet period, nor did it develop the teaching programmes for this comparatively difficult language until fairly late.¹⁶ The European commission made an offer of financial aid via the EU PHARE programme to the Estonian government in 1995. Although the government accepted the offer, nation-wide language training programmes were not offered for three more years.

Estonia responded by establishing a Language Strategy Centre with the purpose of training teachers of the Estonian language, writing Estonian textbooks and organising stays for Russian-speaking school children in

Estonian language summer camps.¹⁷ However, the Centre barely remained active for the period of time of around three years, lacking governmental funding for its activities. Not until 1998 did the Language Centre produce an action plan to help Russian-speakers' schools to accomplish their required transition to full Estonian-language tuition, already set to take place in 2004. Still within the framework of the international funding, on April 21, 1998, the Estonian Government had assigned the Ministry of Education to draw up the task strategy for increasing the capacity of Estonian Language Knowledge with the population.

The European Commission welcomed these amendments and acknowledged Estonia's considerable progress in its subsequent report of 2000. In May 2001, following the recommendations of the European Commission, the government adopted new regulations for state language use in the private sector. The Commission's report of 2001 stated: "Estonia should ensure that in the implementation of this regulation the principles of proportionality and justified public interest are properly respected."¹⁸ As a result, the "Language Teaching Strategy of the Non-Estonian Population" emerged. Subsequently in 2001–2002 the Estonian Language Council studied the conditions of teaching the Estonian language with the result of drawing a "Development Strategy of the Estonian Language" in 2003, which went into public discussion on November 22. Only a limited period of time was available for the corrections of the strategy however, and it was approved by the resolution of the Government on August 5, 2004. The strategy was adopted by the Riigikogu and prioritising the development of Estonian language for the years 2004–2010.¹⁹ The run-up to draft the document suggests that the Estonian Government showed only limited interest in increasing minority's proficiency in the state language. All the same, considerable steps were undertaken to establish the nominal dominance of the State language in the state institutions and in the public sector.

As discussed, Lithuania was particularly proactive in developing a coherent and systematic approach to language regulation and hence training, Latvia was able to devise supporting programmes only with the financial help of the UNDP, while Estonia failed to react even to financial incentive. How can this be explained? The connection between the enforcement of state language use, the question of membership in the political community and the country's general education system comes to fore.

The language regulations range across the three states. Some scholars suggested that the stringency of restrictions was determined by political elites' perception of potential pay-offs in the international and national arenas.²⁰ The first glance at the situation corroborates this view. Lithuania

was in no hurry to push for more rigorous legislation of state language use, because its minority populations did not need to prove language knowledge to acquire citizenship. The connection was far more explicit in Latvia where initial funding of the UNDP was aimed at training in the state language, the knowledge of which was seen as a precondition to inclusion of non-Latvians into the citizenry. Additionally, the training of Latvian language teachers would improve the market value of the state language in the country.²¹ There was a considerable lack of political will in Estonia to undertake any changes despite the studies prepared by local scholars arguing the urgency of such a step.²² At the same time, the Estonian case suggests that language learning was framed as essential for the envisaged national consolidation vis-à-vis international actors.

Thus, among the immediate results of international interference in Estonia and Latvia was the consolidation of the titular community around the issue of the status of the state language and the resources that came with it.²³ Sociolinguists observe similar processes in societies, where language nepotism becomes a pre-emptive response in competition for scarce resources.²⁴ As a result of language enforcement, state languages started losing their importance as a symbol of identity and status and were largely viewed as symbols of resourcefulness. The enforcement of training in the state language and encouragement of minority participation in the public life were positively worded, but were meant for local non-titulars as well as for the international community. Official statements and declarations carefully used rhetoric sensitive to international expectations and minority's scepticism, but effectively prevented consolidation of the minority communities' opposition to education reforms. Formally, they provided opportunities for those who wanted to improve their status; off the record, of course, they meant to further marginalise minority members who were not prepared to dance to the majority's tune.

In all three states the place of the minority in the social edifice was not clearly defined and was barely addressed in all of the documents, strategy papers and framework documents. Hence, the role played by the minority was strongly connected to their upward mobility and perceived in an assimilationist manner, which was based mainly if not solely on linguistic accommodation to the titular language. Indeed, David Laitin has suggested that the choices of the minority populations in the region might be driven primarily by rational choices, determined by aspirations of material well-being and related social advancement.²⁵ For minorities, the aspirations to adjust to the state linguistic policies and seek solutions to the challenges presented by linguistic and hence social marginalisation reflected practical and necessary choices.²⁶ The governmental policy in the

region appears to have channelled minority preferences by streamlining linguistic requirements in various areas of public activity. By connecting minority perspectives for social advancement with proficiency in the state languages, Baltic governments incorporated rational incentives into a coherent approach of “pacifying” the non-core groups into minority positions. Overall, these policy changes have much resemblance to Soviet policies co-opting Baltic titulars into republican bureaucracy.

The analysis of group adaptation strategies to changes in linguistic demands of the public sphere should not only focus on the elusive attitudes of minority communities resulting from their cost-benefit calculations. The range of incentives also included compulsory measures which kicked in when cooptation did not bring the expected fruit. As I argue, over the years of independence the opportunities to receive education in the languages other than the state one were continuously undercut, forcing rather than allowing minority linguistic adaptation. The reform of the educational system assumed a central and active role in the process.

2. Introducing bilingual education programmes

The policies of the Baltic states to place the state languages in a position of dominance in the public sphere point out two competing logics of language use. On the one hand, there lay newly emerging ethno-linguistic tensions referring to minority rights arguments, while on the other, a successful strategy of titularisation of the newly established states. Not incidentally, the two motivations, although competing in the case of the Baltic states, are not mutually exclusive and in fact re-enforce one another. Whilst the formerly disadvantaged languages had regained central status in the process of state and nation-building, political entrepreneurs arguing in favour of the protection of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian have underlined the centrality of language for preservation of the cultural and national communities. To what extent have the dominant elites undertaken measures to provide for adequate protection of the rights of the new minorities who were previously perceived as being oppressive?

The majority of the references to the situation in question have been made from the perspective of the asymmetric bilingualism of the state-bearing nationals at the initial stage of post-Soviet democratisation. As suggested in the previous chapter, minorities were encouraged to adopt themselves to the new situation, without much enforcement from the titular nationalities. Many found ways to preserve their cultures and languages in private while removing them from the public sphere as being *different* members of the Baltic societies. With the range of political

mechanisms at hand, the majorities in the Baltic states could only use this opportune moment to further frame non-core ethnic groups as minorities by installing structural constraints on these groups' opportunity for education in languages other than the state language.

Initially there was a consensual opinion among the Latvian and Estonian elites that education should be permitted in the minority, above all in the Russian language. The shift in policy-priorities has slowly led to the change of this perception in both countries.²⁷ Needless to say, access to education in the minority language is among the most pressing and most controversial issues in various regions, but in the Baltic states it has frequently been interpreted in the context of forced adaptation to the sociopolitical realities as well as in the context of the previous Soviet policies.²⁸ However, in the light of the aspired national consolidation, the declared commitment of the local governments to support the development of multicultural societies in the region have not resulted in the actual steps implemented to strengthen the status of the state language. The analyses of the education reforms in Estonia and Latvia give decisive clues on policies reinforcing the use of the official language in the public sphere by importing the discourse on multiculturalism in order to secure reliable support from the EU. Once again, the tripartite comparison of the Baltic states provides an ample outline of the situation.

The Estonian Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act of 1993 determined the use of languages in general schools. In the basic schools, that is grades 1 to 9, "any language may be the language of instruction," determined by the responsible municipality. However, in the upper secondary schools, grades 10–12, the legislation allows only Estonian to be the language of instruction. In the light of the transition to secondary education with the language of instruction being Estonian only, an amendment to the law was adopted in 2000, where the "language of instruction" was defined as "the language in which at least 60% of the teaching on the curriculum is given." Respectively, even in secondary schools, up to 40% of all curricula can be taught, in principle, in a minority language—which was the case in areas of compact settlement of minorities until the 2007 school year. In addition to the secondary schools, the vocational schools also need to use Estonian as the language of instruction. However, the Minister of Education can decide on the use of other languages as languages of instruction under Article 18 of the Vocational Educational Institutions Act of 1998.²⁹ However, because the participation of Russian-speakers in the political process in Estonia was based on their language skills, the attention of education planners increasingly shifted to the linguistic cohesion of minority communities.³⁰

The provisions for acquiring education in minority languages are the most stringent in Latvia. Article 9 of the 1998 Law on Education does not permit education in languages other than Latvian to be used unless education is taking place in private institutions, at state or municipal education institutions implementing national minority education programmes or at education institutions defined by special laws. Such schools may be an exception and they were relatively few and far between. Hence in Latvia, the law establishes mandatory bilingual education in primary schools (grades 1–9) and starting with the year 2004, all secondary schools as well as all vocational schools had to change to teaching 60% of classes in Latvian, with the rest of the classes in minority languages.³¹

The state was phasing out the state funding for minority schools during the 1990s, but with the 1998 education legislation the Latvian government completely eliminated the opportunities for state and municipal support for complete secondary education in a minority language as of 2004. The strict regulation of the language of education, as well as the prescriptions of the language use in various arenas of public life might explain the change in the ethnic balance in the schools teaching in state languages. Until mid-1990s, the share of pupils in Estonia and Latvia by language of instruction roughly corresponded to the shares of the respective linguistic communities. The changes in favour of state-language education started occurring since the second half of the 1990s. The legal and administrative stipulations provided a growing preference for schooling in the state languages with minority communities and subsequently caused considerable pressure on minority pupils to move into schools with education in the state language.³²

In both Estonia and Latvia, the question of the state's financial responsibility for the education of Russian-speaking minority children has been one of the most controversial topics in the majority-minority dialogue.³³ While Estonia switched the education at the gymnasium level to the state language in 2007, Latvia had already done so in September 2004. As has been emphasised in the public statements on the education reforms in both countries, this step was undertaken in order to facilitate the consolidation of the respective societies.³⁴ However, the policy preferences indicate that by pressing for linguistic integration, legislation actually implemented steps towards societal integration. This goal would be achieved mainly through better knowledge of the official language by the Russian-speaking minorities, but education reforms largely disregarded the diminishing opportunities for minority speakers to achieve full proficiency in their own mother tongue.³⁵

Understandably, the efforts of the authorities to reform education by shifting it to teaching in the state language led to widespread concerns. Specifically, the parents of Russian-speaking pupils stated that the quality of education would deteriorate as a result and that children might be even less competitive in the local labour market as a result. Fear of the deterioration of the quality of education stemmed from the fact that many teachers in minority schools did not feel able to teach in the state language.³⁶ This problem was compounded by the fact that many pupils would not understand the subjects properly even if the teachers had a very good command of the state language—the level of teaching of the state language remained unsatisfactory during 1990s. This was a topic of considerable debate at the advent of the school reforms.³⁷

Consequently, Estonia has been pushing for the transition from a bi-communal education system aimed at providing education in Russian and in Estonian separately towards a unified system that would secure the knowledge of the state language by the end of secondary school. The Law on Language in Estonia permitted the use of foreign languages in education. Already as early as 1993, the Law on Basic Schools and the Law on Upper Secondary Schools prescribed that the Russian-language upper secondary schools (grades 10 to 12) undergo the transition to Estonian as the language of instruction by the year 2000. However, in the year 1997 due to structural problems, mainly due to the lack of appropriate personnel capable of teaching in the state language, the Riigikogu passed an Amendment to the Law on Basic and Secondary Schools postponing the deadline for introduction until the start of the academic year 2007/2008.³⁸

The full-scale transition then started on September 1, 2000, when teaching of the Estonian language began in the first grade classes.³⁹ In this context the Ministry of Education allocated additional funding for Russian medium schools to handle their teaching of Estonian. While the number of hours available for teaching in Estonian ranged broadly, many schools addressed the issue by teaching non-core subjects, such as music, arts, physical education, regional studies, mathematics—in the state language starting from the primary school grades.⁴⁰ As of this amendment, from 2007/2008 all minority upper schools started the transition to Estonian, which in turn influenced the right of members of non-Estonian communities to receive education entirely in their language.

In April 2000, the Riigikogu reached a compromise by adopting amendments to the Law on Basic School and Gymnasium according to which the state will support minority schools if they teach 60% of the curriculum of the upper grades in the official language.⁴¹ The legislation laid the final stone into the foundation of the Estonian multicultural model.

Supported by the OSCE local mission's regular feedback on the models of education and support of activities aiming at the reform of minority schools along multicultural lines, both the international actors and the local politicians were clearly not averse to improving the teaching of Estonian in the Russian-language schools.⁴² Most likely, it was now the availability of international structural funds for social integration that allowed the Estonian government to address the issue more coherently and focus on issues of integrating minorities rather than disregard their exclusion due to their insufficient knowledge of Estonian.⁴³

In March 2002, following work by minority parliamentarians, a new amendment to the Law was adopted. It authorised the boards of trustees of minority schools to apply for the postponement of the language switch slated for 2007, based upon the preparedness of the schools to teach in the state language. While these amendments could not fully dismiss worries about the quality of education, tensions in majority–minority relations in Estonia were defused to a great extent.⁴⁴ However, minority representatives stressed that no stable institutional framework had been created for the preservation of Russian-language gymnasial education in Estonia because the appeals of the boards of trustees need to be approved by a local authority and then the national government.

It is important to acknowledge that members of non-Estonian communities were prompted to acquire knowledge of their language in Estonian schools. It should also be noted that despite the fact that no education is available in full in a language other than Estonian from 2007, up to 40% of curriculum can be taught in minority languages.⁴⁵ Among other issues, the Estonian government provides additional support for the non-Estonians who study in Estonian schools. Non-Russians, who study in Russian schools, can also attend classes which provide them with education about their respective culture and language. However the funding appears to be insufficient so far. The 2003 EC's report encouraged Estonia to ensure the effective and flexible implementation of the planned transition to bilingual education in non-Estonian speaking schools by 2007. In addition, European institutions called on Estonian policy-makers to ensure that the implementation of the language law at all levels respects the principle of justified public interest and proportionality, as well as Estonia's international obligations.⁴⁶

Likewise, Latvian local politicians used the moment of international attention on Latvia's debate about citizenship to abandon the "self-referential discourse on restoring the pre-Soviet policies."⁴⁷ The Latvian government was forced to align itself with European values in order to avoid explicit discrimination of non-Latvians, thus opting for the introduc-

tion of discourse on “ethnic integration.” The rhetoric of Latvianisation and the reversal of Soviet Russification policies were nevertheless implemented.⁴⁸ This was done by two pieces of legislation. In 1998, the Saeima passed a new school language law (*Izglītības likums*) stating that Latvian will become the sole language of instruction in state-funded schools and education in some schools will be in Latvian only.⁴⁹ According to that law, starting in 2004, at least 60% of subjects in tenth grade shall be taught in Latvian while about 40% *could* be taught in the minority language in all minority schools, including schools with Russian as the language of instruction. Schools were required to decide which subjects to teach in what language. Starting in 2007, all grades at the secondary school level were to be taught according to this principle. The reform targeted schools with Russian-language instruction since other minority schools had already been using a similar bilingual methodology since their establishment.⁵⁰

Bilingual education models were introduced in primary education and schools were able to choose between four models of bilingual instruction which differed in the amount of Latvian taught.⁵¹ The models, however, have been criticised because of the short time frame provided to decide on the options by the Cabinet of Ministers and the method of their implementation, all to take place during the summer vacations of 1999.⁵² On the other hand, the Saeima passed the Law on General Education (*Vispārējās Izglītības likums*) in 1999, providing an opportunity for education in the minority language during the state-language programme, particularly in relation to subjects relevant for cultural identity.⁵³ The law, however, stipulated that access to minority language education was allowed and not guaranteed leaving the decision on the issue with the Ministry of Education.⁵⁴ The students and the parents of those affected in the Russian-speaking communities, as well as different groups of Latvian experts, have expressed concerns about the opportunities and guarantees for primary and secondary education in the minority language, stressing the importance of native language education.⁵⁵

From the point of view of policy-makers, the goal of education reforms was to facilitate the linguistic integration of society. This was to be achieved mainly by providing a secure basis for all non-Latvians to acquire knowledge of the state language and, correspondingly, to accustom themselves with the cultural heritage and major principles of the Latvian culture. This was to be accomplished by increasing the importance of the Latvian language in education, leading to complaints by Russian-speaking activists that the integration policy had assimilation in mind rather than the rapprochement of ethnic communities through mutual work.⁵⁶ Russian-speakers’ perception that language teaching is pursued only to facilitate

assimilation was further reinforced by bringing minority education in line with the aims set out in the state programme on society integration.

In Lithuania, education reforms were not on the government's main agenda over the period of time concerned. Since Lithuania's minorities are among those with the highest education rates in the Baltic states, they also demonstrate high levels of proficiency in the state language if compared with the minority populations in Estonia and Latvia.⁵⁷ As opposed to its northern neighbours, Lithuanian education was under much less pressure to provide greater opportunities for minorities to learn the state language: where the rationale behind the Latvian and Estonian education reforms was to ensure the qualitative learning of the state language and hence facilitating linguistic integration of minority populations into the majority-dominated society, the integration in Lithuanian society was perceived more in terms of alleviation of social and income differences, which—at least in the official rhetoric—were not explicitly tied to language proficiency.⁵⁸

Because of the relatively broad scope of teaching of Lithuanian throughout the country, there were different implications for the speakers of minority languages. The numbers of non-titular population to be taught were significantly lower in Lithuania than in Estonia or Latvia. The teaching methods were also considerably different. Effectively, the approach chosen aimed at guaranteeing the possibility to learn the language sufficiently to be able to communicate in it, rather than emphasising the intrinsic value of being able to speak Lithuanian, which was the model deployed in Latvia and Estonia.⁵⁹ In part, the previously available methodology of teaching Lithuanian to the speakers of other languages had allowed for greater flexibility in designing the new curricula and significantly calmed the tensions over language education. Some observers argue that it was also a reason for considerable de-politisation of the issues connected with the language legislation in general, and education reforms in particular.

While the major issues with regard to education were regulated by the Lithuanian Constitution, the Lithuanian government approved the General Concept of Education (*Lietuvos švietimo koncepcija*) in 1992, filling some remaining gaps in the legal framework for minority and education in general.⁶⁰ Over the entire decade following independence, education reforms were constantly being undertaken, gradually changing the process. On 2 July 1998, several essential amendments were added to the 1991 Law on Education (*Švietimo įstatymas*), such as the introduction of a basic 10-year education, admission of school children from the age of 14 to vocational schools, and the like. A further draft law that would amend

these regulations was discussed in 2001, and was published on June 17, 2003 (Law on the Amendment of the Law on Education, *Švietimo įstatymo pakeitimo įstatymas*). This and other legal documents deal with educational matters in Lithuania including the Law on Science and Studies (*Mokslo ir studijų įstatymas*, 1991) regarding the institutions of science and higher education, the Law on Vocational Education and Training (*Profesinio mokymo įstatymas*, 1997), the Law on Special Education (*Specialiojo ugdymo įstatymas*, 1998), the Law on Informal Adult Education (*Neformaliojo suaugusiųjų švietimo įstatymas*, 1998) and the Law on Higher Education (*Aukštojo mokslo įstatymas*, 2000).

These documents present a comprehensive development of the legislation. This corpus of laws grants national minorities the right to hold lessons in their mother tongue and provides for the right to have schooling in the minority language.⁶¹ These laws also acknowledge that general education and non-formal education facilities must provide teaching in the language of the ethnic minority and foster the ethnic minority's culture.⁶² Furthermore, while in minority schools the Lithuanian state language is a constituent part of the curriculum, the teaching process *must* be conducted or certain subjects *must* be taught in the language of the ethnic minority.⁶³

However, the trend of increasing the number of schools with the state language as the language of instruction is similar to that observed in other Baltic states. Not surprisingly, the number of Lithuanian and Polish schools has been on a constant increase, although overall the number of schools has been decreasing. The numbers of those who study in Lithuanian has been consistently rising over the past two decades resulting in less than 10% of students studying in minority language throughout the education system. As of 2000, around 7% of vocational schools, 1% of vocational colleges and less than 2% of university students were educated in a minority language.⁶⁴ In part, classes for minorities residing in the mixed areas have been provided at different titular schools, and the Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad (*Tautinių mažumų ir išeivijos departamente prie Lietuvos Respublikos*, TMID) has supported a number of Saturday- and Sunday schools.⁶⁵ The majority of minorities support Saturday/Sunday schools where children can acquire the knowledge of their native language and take courses on culture and "homeland" history. Among these the Polish, Belarusian, Ukrainian, Russian, German, Jewish, Latvian and Armenian communities are active, but also those of the Karaims, Tatars and Greeks. In 2004/2005, there were 46 such schools. In the school-year 2001/2002, around 90.5% of schools operated in Lithuanian and some 3.7% in Polish, with overall diminishing numbers of Russian schools. To an extent the change was facilitated by

the fact that many schools operating in Russian were merged with the schools of Polish, Lithuanian and other languages, at the “request of students’ parents.” Over the following years, the number of secondary schools has further diminished considerably, mainly due to their merger resulting in a reduction of 296 schools in the 2004–2005 school year. This also resulted in diminishing numbers of minority schools functioning in Lithuania, which in 2004/2005 amounted to only 173.⁶⁶

The overall trend in the changing numbers of schools and the language of instruction has been accounted for by the demographic changes in the country, resulting mainly in the reorganisation of Russian-speaking schools, their merger with Lithuanian, or altogether their abolition to provide space for overcrowded Polish schools. At the same time, the trend that is alarming minority leaders in the northern Baltic states, minority parents’ tendency to send their children to study at the titular schools, has been particularly overwhelming in Lithuania.⁶⁷ In Lithuania no outcry accompanied the increasing move of minority children into schools teaching in the majority language. While the government had consistently emphasised the fact that education in Lithuania was to be carried out in the state language, some of the educational establishments have encountered issues of under-achievement amongst the country’s Polish community in recent years. These represented the greatest bulk of those with low education in Lithuania, competing mainly with the minority traditionally distant from higher education: the Roma.

The meagre debate about the decline of Russian-language education only repeated the opinions of many minority parents that the better knowledge of Lithuanian provided for better social and educational chances of their children. Additionally, many argue that being at ease with the Lithuanian language and culture allow minorities to preserve its cultural identity in a state dominated by Lithuanians. Instead of full-scale education in Russian, Russian-speakers are relocating into Russian-language Sunday schools or extracurricular activities, which are frequently seen as providing assets for cultural links whilst guaranteeing better jobs and higher social status in Lithuania’s society. While social scientists in Lithuania claim that a growing number of minorities in the Lithuanian schools pose a certain challenge to ethnic identification and tolerance in Lithuanian society,⁶⁸ parents and school children affected appear not to see this as a state-sponsored strategy of assimilation. Needless to say, the official rhetoric sees these developments as a form of successful integration of ethnic minorities into the titular society—the rhetoric that is usually employed in bilateral relations with the external “homeland states” of Poland and Russia.⁶⁹

However, as in other Baltic states the success of Lithuanian institutional developments can hardly be assessed separately from the minority settlement patterns, the accessibility of education facilities in the rural areas and the values and social standing of the family, as these seldom reflect the language of instruction. Similarly to the other Baltic governments, Lithuania has disregarded the opportunity for teaching minority languages at Lithuanian-language schools. Particularly in the region where minorities are *de facto* majorities, such as in South Eastern Lithuania, minority language training could have been integrated into the social co-operation model.⁷⁰

The differences in views amongst those members of the majority who favour “thick language policies” and those opting for “thin policies,” as well as lack of attention to minority voices prevent a coordinated approach to the development of bilingual education in Lithuania, just as they do in Estonia and in Latvia. While Estonia currently offers an immersion model for the Russian-medium side-stream schooling, despite providing Estonian as a second language students are often poorly integrated into the overall education system, particularly where the Estonian-speaking environment is missing. The biggest part of minority schools in Latvia has complied with state directives to implement changes in curricula. Arguably, this antagonised the differences between the members of Russian-speaking communities, hardening the lines between those in favour and those against titularisation of Latvia’s education.

All this indicates that the school reforms aimed at ensuring better knowledge of state language with minorities rather than at improving teaching methods and overall competitiveness of the members of minority. However, while generally having reached the objective, education reforms only marginally accounted for regional differences in opportunities for use of state languages by the non-core ethnic groups in Estonia, Latvia, as well as in Lithuania. Crucially, education reforms reinforced the image of state language as being a bastion, rather than the bridge in relations between ethnic communities in the Baltic states.

3. Changes in school curricula

The challenges of devising curricula for the local minority communities centre around two issues. Firstly, the regional approach to development had to take differences in group settlement patterns into consideration and hence reflect on the frequency with which minorities could use their knowledge of the state language acquired. At the same time, language teaching was to be set up to meet the communicative needs of the non-

core ethnic communities. There was a distinct variance in proficiency in the state language, as well as preferences for the language of education among the groups of minorities. The failure of majority political entrepreneurs to take these issues into consideration while devising the new curricula and/or implementing education reforms account for the growing disengagement of non-titulars from political processes and the frustration with state top-down policies on highly sensitive issues in the cultural domain.

The Lithuanian government is providing educational establishments with the opportunity to operate in the native language at the secondary education level and as such supports the endeavours of minorities to sustain their native languages. The Ministry of Education reports that as of the 2001–2002 school year around one tenth of all schools in the country were operating in the minority language (206 as compared with 1953 in Lithuanian).⁷¹ With 80 schools, Polish is the language of instruction at the majority of the minority-language schools; Russian is the language of operation at 61; there is one Belarusian school. Language combinations are used at 65 schools, for instance Lithuanian-Russian, Lithuanian-Polish, Polish-Russian, Lithuanian-Polish-Russian. Finally, a number of schools with mixed instruction in minority languages, such as Belarusian, Hebrew and Yiddish, and German were also established.

On January 16, 2002, The Minister of Education and Science passed a Decree on the Regulation of National Minorities Education, aiming at the regulation of the specific organisation needed for national minorities' education. The decree specified the organisational and financial aspects of the work, introducing special coefficients for financing minority schools in light of the fact that education in minority school is more expensive than when the official language is used. This step has been criticised, however, for being "quite abstract and [...not identifying] concrete measures for achieving their goals."⁷² Especially in light of the chronic underfunding for minority language schools, many minority students tend to choose schools in which Lithuanian is the operating language, since they believe that they can thus gain better knowledge of the state language on an official level.

The representatives of ethnic minorities frequently criticise state policies in the realm of education as depriving the schoolchildren of a truly voluntary choice of language, ethnicity and cultural identity. This argument is particularly salient with the Polish-speaking NGOs. Although the government of Lithuania is undertaking some steps to create a new inclusive civic identity for all residents of the country, they argue, this is

done at the expense of cultural and linguistic diversity of state's citizenry. Polish minority organisations claim that the state is pursuing a policy

“of gradual elimination, or limitation, of the use of the Polish language in public life. Many of the actions of the authorities and politicians indicate that the ultimate aim is to limit the use of the Polish language in everyday relations within the circle of Polish community organisations, or indeed amongst friends and family.”⁷³

Russian and Polish speakers in Lithuania have consistently demonstrated different attitudes in the choice of schools for their children. Whilst Russians tend to favour mainstream education, many Poles are inclined to prefer Polish secondary schools. In Soviet times they had chosen Russian-medium instruction.⁷⁴ As has been confirmed in the interviews with the members of the Polish-speaking community engaged in informal education, in recent years schooling in the native language is perceived as the best condition for the preservation of their national identity and culture. In addition, secondary education guarantees Polish-speaking students an opportunity to enrol in Poland's institutions of higher education.⁷⁵

The changes that have occurred during the last decade have affected parents' attitudes to education, leading many minorities to prefer schools with Polish as the medium of instruction and where Lithuanian is taught as a second language. Arguably, compact settlement of Polish-speakers in South Eastern Lithuania gives them an advantage of sustaining a network of schools with education in Polish. The Russian-speaking community is much more dispersed across the country and for this reason is said to have opted for education in Lithuanian as a precondition for integration into the majority community.

“Members of this community are inclined to have their children educated in Lithuanian schools. Thus, the resident Russians like to foster their own culture and language whilst integrating into the Lithuanian society, as opposed to the Poles who tend to adhere to things Polish.”⁷⁶

Similarly to Estonia and Latvia, models of bilingual education have been introduced throughout Lithuania. Russian-language schools mainly took part in the process, while the Ministry of Education also indicated that Polish-speaking schools were reluctant to participate in projects of this type.⁷⁷ Specially designed curricula and textbooks for bilingual educa-

tion were prepared in order to facilitate the acquisition of the state language by members of minority groups, while at the same time providing them with opportunities to retain their native language during education. In order to “better supply the needs of the changing society and to harmonise, humanise, and democratise the system of education,”⁷⁸ the Ministry of Education promoted the establishment of different models for the schooling of minorities.

In September 2001 the project “Development of Bilingualism” was launched to provide for bilingual education of minorities. Accordingly, five bilingual models with differences in intensity and priorities for language acquisition were proposed for adoption by schools. These models potentially ensure that minority children continue to maintain and develop their mother tongue at a native-speaking level and at the same time, promote Lithuanian bilingualism and literacy in the state language. The implementation of these new educational developments is being steered by the Education Development Centre in Vilnius, who also acted as consultant for those schools implementing the programme.⁷⁹

Despite positive feedback from students and their parents, some of the experts in the field of minority education argued that the models adopted in Lithuania are assimilationist in tendency, leading to transitional bilingualism.⁸⁰ This view is supported by the fact that, currently, classes in tertiary education are conducted in Lithuanian only, hence the pragmatic view that the integrative function of learning in the state language is instrumental and is preferred as a mean of accommodating oneself to the overall demands of society.

“Seeing their children’s future directly linked to success in the mainstream, these parents clearly did not want education to limit their offspring’s chances by offering too much accommodation (i.e. education in the minority languages only).”⁸¹

On the positive side, however, the implementation has been favourably commented upon as providing positive incentives for minorities to obtain access to higher education facilities and integration into social life. It has been frequently mentioned in the discussions over the strategy that the approach largely disregards the regional specifics of the ethnic composition of the population, the accessibility of education and the quality of education already provided.⁸²

The situation with the education of the Roma should be mentioned as well. While included in the special “Programme of Integration of Roma

into the Society of Lithuania 2000–2004” a Roma Public Centre was established in Vilnius in September 2001, whereupon 26 Roma children were able to graduate from preparatory classes in 2002.⁸³ Additionally, the implementation of the programme allowed publication of study materials for Lithuania’s Roma community and supported Roma education more generally. Overall however, the follow up reports on the situation of Roma have attested to only symbolic success.⁸⁴

While there was visibly no contention between the ethnic groups, the issues relating to the state language and the use of minority languages in Lithuania were effectively depoliticised in the early years of independence. The situation in Latvia, however, was radically different. Nonetheless, the political elites in Latvia deemed it necessary to stress that ethnic accord in the country could be achieved only on the basis of the Latvian language. This narrative was thoroughly pursued in the education reform of 1998. It appears that in the short term this goal was not achieved because Latvia’s political entrepreneurs had established dominance of the Latvian language in the public. Rather than seeking dialogue on the role of state language in education, compliance with the top-down regulations was meticulously enforced. As we will see in chapter 7, during the protests of minority groups over reform of education the opportunity for a dialogue was missed and, as a result, the cleavage between ethnic communities in the country deepened.⁸⁵

Latvian and international researchers have emphasised the importance of education reform, but many saw it as badly implemented. However, there was no opposition to the implementation of the language requirements *per se*.⁸⁶ The study by the Baltic Institute for Social Science (BISS) in 2004 indicates that bilingual education was supported by 65% of the teachers and 54% of the parents, whereas only 39% of parents and 22% of the teachers would like to see teaching in Russian only.⁸⁷ It appears that the major reason for conflict is not the transition towards education in the state language, as has been overwhelmingly represented in the media. Rather it was the preparations for transition to “60/40 language teaching” scheme. Particularly telling in this context is the wording of Igor Pimenov, the head of *Latvijskaya asociaciya v podderzhku shkol s obucheniem na russkom yazyke* (Latvian Association in Support of Schools with the Russian Language of Education, Lašor). His organisation “advocates the allocation of a distinguished place for the study of native language in secondary schools to allow schools greater opportunity for choice [in implementation].”⁸⁸ The issue of minority education reform gradually became the force that galvanised political mobilisation of Russian-speakers.

The necessity of reform was already clear for minority groups even though the conflict escalated due to the poor responsiveness of Latvian officials. The BISS study “Integration of Minority Youth” conducted across Latvia suggests that the minority community widely believed that good knowledge of Latvian is necessary for all members of the Latvian society, but also that the major problem with the reforms lay in the head-on approach of the Latvian authorities.⁸⁹ Around three-quarters of non-Latvian respondents in the BISS study state that knowledge of Latvian is necessary in the labour market and for education.⁹⁰ While acknowledging the importance of the Latvian language for career opportunities, at the same time many minority representatives place great value on granting Russian the status of the second state language. Especially in the context of education reforms, the attitudes of many minority representatives reflect the negative reaction towards the ongoing titularisation of the state. Thus, while before the fierce debates 84% of non-Latvian residents supported the idea of Russian being a state language, after the discussions up to 96% expressed their wish to see Russian language granted this status.⁹¹

A number of local experts were equally critical of the roadmap for implementing the education reform. In the debate which took place in February 2004, Brigita Zepa indicated that the period of time for reform towards bilingual education was too short. “[The implementation period] started with the first grade in the year 1999 and is currently insufficient to accomplish the transition into full-scale Latvian-language learning by 2004.”⁹² NGOs representing the interests of Russian-speakers in Latvia, *Lašor* and *Obyedinennyi Kongress Russkoi Obshchiny Latvii* (United Congress of the Russian Community of Latvia, OKROL) among others, expressed widespread concern among non-Latvians that reform will bring severe difficulties into learning for non-Latvian children.⁹³

Meanwhile, the total number of students who studied in the Russian language fell from 154,912 in 1990 to 127,784 in 1996. This trend has continued and in the school year 2001/2002 the figure was 103,350, which constituted 30.67% of all students.⁹⁴ In Latvia there were 725 schools with Latvian as the instruction language and 175 schools with Russian as the major language of instruction. Linguistic preferences in education show a slight but permanent increase in the share of Latvian instead of Russian, especially among first graders.

Much later than its Baltic neighbours, the Estonian government approved the “Development Plan for the Non-Estonian School” in January 1998. This consolidated measures recommended by the Language Strategy Centre for bringing the Russian-language school system in line with Estonia’s national curriculum.⁹⁵ However while Latvia implemented pro-

grammes to provide teaching of the state language from early 1990s, similar programmes were unavailable in Estonia until the early 2000s. Still resembling the strategy of assimilating the minority groups living in Estonia into the titular society, the government indicated that it was willing to distance itself from the previous policy of denying the presence of the minority on Estonian territory.⁹⁶ Estonia's politicians moved onto encouraging Russian-speakers to adapt to the new situation and aimed at providing equal chances for the future perspectives of the majority and minority, based on the knowledge of the titular language.⁹⁷

This step made clear that the same curricula would have to be deployed at all educational levels, independent of the language of instruction. Estonian policy also acknowledged different requirements with respect to the linguistic proficiency for each level of education of minority students. The curriculum suggested the guidelines for instruction and the study conditions, so that graduates of secondary schools with a language of instruction other than Estonian would acquire sufficient knowledge and competence in Estonian to continue education in an Estonian-language medium and higher education. Special attention was paid to equal opportunities for competition in the labour market that should be granted to these graduates. The ability to pass the language test for citizenship was required for graduates of Russian-speaking schools. In short, the curricula for the non-Estonian secondary schools created conditions under which the graduates would be able thereafter to study specialty subjects in Estonian, and hence have an opportunity for social mobility.

One could argue that, after outlining the process of changing the rationale behind the education reforms in Estonia, a clear change in the mood of Estonian political entrepreneurs is clear. Previously pursuing the policy of separation was seen as the most effective means of ensuring a stable society. Over time, as local scholars argue, incentives had to be made for the minority community who—despite the initial expectations of some more radical politicians—did not plan to leave Estonia.⁹⁸ However, the new amendments to the education law have proved that in order to reduce social tensions between the Estonian and Russian-speakers in society, a full-scale programme is required to address the issues of cooperation on the very basis of a common language. The amendments might have reflected the view that the Estonian political elites became increasingly aware of the problem with minority linguistic integration (although not with European standards in the area). However, one cannot ignore that the issues addressed simply offered an instrumental solution to European conditionality⁹⁹ and dealt with the issue using the funds provided by international organisations.¹⁰⁰

During this time however, the Estonian government continued to place great emphasis on its commitment to building a multicultural society, as is spelt out in the National Integration Programme. The more recent developments in the education policy of the Estonian state suggest that, although during the years of intensive monitoring and significant subsidies being introduced into the language training and education programmes, the state has not consulted minority community on its needs. The training of Estonian language teachers to be employed in the education of minority students and the development of programmes and models of education which would suit the requirements of areas where Estonian is rarely spoken on a daily basis have taken a back seat.

At the same time, the outspoken commitment of the state can be observed in the areas of implementing programmes for teaching the Estonian language abroad, support of materials for Estonian-learners with non-Russian linguistic backgrounds and a systematic lack of commitment to ensure minority linguistic rights in the country. The general perception of the minority population in Estonia indicates that while state agencies have demonstrated to the international community, and first and foremost to the European states, that it can adapt to and implement know-how in linguistic education, it is hardly capable of either devising proactive minority education programmes or of achieving any success in the field of majority education to facilitate interethnic dialogue.¹⁰¹

Despite the mass of attention education reforms and the debates surrounding them have received from the local publics, the international community has not entered the debate. Most likely, the lack of interference could be explained by the fact that no international standards exist in this area. The international contribution to Estonian and Latvian reforms, from the European Commission for instance, has been restricted to pointing out examples of successful bi- and multilingual education in other countries and calling for a “constructive approach” to the issue.

The reforms in Estonia and Latvia however have been criticised for their abrupt character and for not taking into consideration the lack of sufficiently prepared teachers, which certainly undermined the quality of education as such. Regardless of the fears of minority populations in Latvia, the Education Laws, passed along with the Language Law envisaged that all minority schools should continue to function according to a bilingual methodology. Ultimately, the implementation of school reform in Estonia has been postponed due to a lack of qualified teachers. So in the end, neither the complete turn from Russian-language education was asserted, nor was the abolition of training in Russian feasible. Nonetheless, while since 2007 all grades of the secondary school throughout the region

should teach according to this principle, the reforms were mainly aimed at schools teaching in the Russian language.¹⁰² This means that within the next decade all members of minority will be fluent in the state language and, following official state terminology, will be considered fully integrated into local society.

Especially in the context of new geopolitical realities, the importance of guaranteeing the dominance of one ethnic group in political decision-making was sought by many members of the majority, especially those who were particularly nationalistically-minded. Some of the groups “did not conceal their more ambitious overall goal: that of promoting the migration of Slavs, termed ‘voluntary repatriation.’”¹⁰³ Still, the strategies of framing the minority community in the Baltic states generally can be reduced to a continuum of steps resulting from an emerging ethnopolitical balance in the countries aimed at guaranteeing the structural advantages for the state-bearing nation in a complex ethnic setting.

Boris Tsilevich, member of the Latvian parliament, also claims that the “promotion of the titular languages is linked with an ulterior purpose: the eradication of Russian as a symbol of the eradication of Russia’s domination.”¹⁰⁴ Particularly in this light, majority politicians would like the state language to dominate in the public sector as much as possible and to ensure its unprecedented role in public offices. This can be seen as playing the symbolic role of retribution for the time of past suppression in the Soviet Union.

The reluctance of the local political elites to promote the use of minority languages in the official domain would be a perfect illustration of the close link between the knowledge of the state language, loyalties to the independent state and reliability in political issues before joining the EU. This situation is not specific to Latvia and Estonia. Lithuania’s Department of National Minorities, the state institution installed to support the use of minority languages throughout the country, is preoccupied with the promotion of the Lithuanian language in the South Eastern, Polish-speaking regions of Lithuania more than with other objectives.¹⁰⁵

The opposition met by the members of minority groups that support education in minority languages indicates that there is much more at stake than fluency in the state language. Much more, titular policy-makers perceive limited language skills as an indication of uncertain loyalty undermining the principle of statehood in Estonia and Latvia. Similar arguments apparently stand behind the ongoing restriction of Polish language on street signs and official buildings in South Eastern Lithuania. More telling are the alarms coming from state language commissions on the impact of youth jargon on coherence (i.e. purity) of state languages. Remarkably, the

speakers of the local varieties of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian in Võrumaa, Latgale and Samogitia are also experiencing pressures from the state language inspectorates. It seems that during the decade of nationally sensitive rhetoric, many political entrepreneurs have internalised the view of language as bulwark against their nation's disappearance and as part and parcel of a security argument.

4. Conclusion

A brief and far from complete overview of the steps undertaken by the Baltic governments could suggest that the degree of cohesiveness of education preferred somehow reflects the numbers of minority in the society in question. Tsilevich believes just that:

“The higher the proportion of speakers of Russian in a given population, the more rigorous the linguistic containment policy: the language legislation is visibly more liberal in Lithuania, [...] more severe in Estonia, and the most restrictive in Latvia, the most ethnically diverse Baltic state.”¹⁰⁶

However, the policies of the Baltic states regarding the implementation of linguistic criteria in the social processes as reviewed in this chapter require qualification by analysing social processes. The state languages are mostly promoted through legislative restrictions, such as language requirements for employment and the prescription of mandatory use of the state languages in various areas. Legal instruments for punitive measures and governmental bodies responsible for monitoring the implementation of the language legislation are also in place.

At the same time, minority languages are implicitly recognised, but there are limited to no opportunities for their use in the public sphere. The practice of implementing language equality tends to be legislatively limited to certain areas, such as the activities of ethnic cultural societies, religious practices and private relations. Some argue that these reactions to language issues are particularly harsh due to their perception as issues of crucial importance for the development of re-established statehood.¹⁰⁷ Others state that, while Baltic linguistic legislation is “essentially in conformity” with the international obligations of the Baltic states, serious criticism is essential when one discusses the implications of provisions.¹⁰⁸ Among these are the clear inequalities of political and social participation between different ethno-linguistic communities in the Baltic states.¹⁰⁹ Language proficiency requirements for the candidates to national parlia-

ments and local municipalities, the prohibition of establishing private electronic media in minority languages or the discrimination against accredited private minority schools in terms of their access to state subsidies have all been discussed in earlier studies.

Importantly however, one needs to establish the extent to which the state is prepared to push minority groups to the line when accommodation with state regulations is at the expense of sustaining their own culture and language. As we have seen in the chapter 4, the state founding documents in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania decree the formal dominance of the titular majority and grant these groups structural advantages over minority populations. The ethnic make-up of the Baltic nations was further strengthened through legislation on language use, while minor concessions were only made in exchange for EU membership and frequently compensated for by other pieces of legislation. Chapter 5 indicates that Estonia's, Latvia's and Lithuania's societies became increasingly split along the ethnic lines. The next chapter will look at the policy steps across the region to conclude whether Baltic societies are ethnically (or otherwise) divided. This will allow me an investigation on the processes of co-optation of minority populations into the structures of domination and how social cohesion was framed in terms of multiculturalist rapprochement.

Notes

1 Apine and Volkovs, 2007; Kasatkina and Leončikas, 2003; Laitin, 1998.

2 See Silova, 1996.

3 Kasatkina and Beresnevičiute, 2004; Hogan-Brun and Ramoniene, 2003.

4 See the webpage of the Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad (Tautinių mažumų ir išeivijos departamente prie Lietuvos Respublikos, TMID) http://www.tmid.lt/index.php?page_id=78 Retrieved 2008-01-16.

5 Hogan-Brun and Ramoniene, 2003, p.36.

6 Ibid. p.35.

7 See, Mieczkowski, 2006; Mackiewicz and Kwiatkowski. 2007; Wspolnota Polska, 2009.

8 Hogan-Brun and Ramoniene, 2005, p.40

9 Interviews with Michal Mackiewicz, Związek Polaków na Litwie, Valdemar Tomaszewski, Member of Seimas from LLRA, Sergej Dmitriev, President of the LRS, Member of Vilnius City Council, and Tatiana Mihneva, Coordination Council of Russian Community Organisations. January 2008, Vilnius.

10 See also, Mackiewicz and Kwiatkowski, 2007.

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- 11 Muižnieks, 2006.
- 12 The official site of the NPLLT, see http://www.lvava.gov.lv/index.php?par_mums 2008–05–14.
- 13 Pabriks, 2004, p.89.
- 14 I would like to thank Nils Muižnieks for bringing this frequently underestimated point to my attention.
- 15 See Silova, 2002.
- 16 Heidmets, 1998a; 1998b, Järve, 1997; Kirch, 2000; Lauristin, 1998, p.18.
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- 21 Jubulis, 2001.
- 22 Kulu and Tammaru, 2004; Verschik, 2005a.
- 23 Birckenbach, 2000.
- 24 Fishman, 1968; 1972; Hornsby, 2009.
- 25 Laitin, 2003, pp.197–222.
- 26 For discussion of competitive assimilation games in the Baltic, see Evans, 1998; Kemppainen and Ferrin, 2002; Bloom, 2008.
- 27 Tsilevich, 2001.
- 28 Galbreath and Galvin. 2005.
- 29 Tsilevich, 2001, p.148
- 30 See, Narits and Mandre, 2002.
- 31 Galbreath and Galvin, 2005.
- 32 Silova and Catlaks, 2001; Kemppainen and Ferrin, 2002; Björklund, 2004.
- 33 “Protesters rally against education reform” Aaron Eglitis in *The Baltic Times*, Sep 11, 2003 <http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/8690/>; “Likbez v Estonii provodjat... latyshi” Aleksandra Moorast in *Molodezh’ Estonii* June 09 2005 <http://www.moles.ee/05/Jun/09/6-1.php> “Smena karaula — prodolzhat li grobit’ v Estonii russkoe obrazovanie Otdel rassledovaniy,” *Vesti Dnja* Dec 14 2005

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- 38 Baltic News Service, September 11, 1997.
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- 44 Tender, 2001.
- 45 Amendment to the Law on Basic School and Upper Secondary Schools of September 15 1993, as amended on March 26, 2002. Article 9.
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- 47 See e.g. Silova, 2006, Particularly Chapter 2.
- 48 Galbreath and Galvin, 2005.
- 49 Section 9 of the Law. See <http://likumi.lv/doc.php?mode=DOC&id=50759> The two education laws (1998 and 1999) are available at the Centre for Curriculum Development and Examinations website (<http://isec.gov.lv/>). The 1998 Education Law

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- 64 Kasatkina and Leončikas, 2003, p.24.
- 65 See the webpage of TMID, http://www.tmid.lt/index.php?page_id=996 Retrieved 2008-01-15

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- 66 Ibid. http://www.tmid.lt/index.php?page_id=963 Retrieved 2008-01-15
- 67 In order to enable their monolingual children to master their titular language quickly and thoroughly, minority parents have increasingly send their children to mainstream majority schools. Consequently, appropriate educational policies that address the changing needs were formulated. See also Kasatkina and Beresneviute, 2004, p.68.
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- 84 HRMI, 2005; Beresneviute and Leoncikas, 2008.
- 85 Zepa and Klave, 2003.
- 86 Zepa and al, 2004.
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- 88 Pimenov as cited in Edgars Orlovs, "Ar piketu nepanāk latviešu valodas noniecināšanu" Rigas Balss, October 23, 2004.
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- 95 Estonian Government, 1998.
- 96 Cf. Lauristin and Heidmets, 2002.
- 97 See Jurado, 2003, p.415.
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- 99 Cf. Poleshchuk and Tsilevich, 2004, p.417.
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- 104 Tsilevich, 2001, p.152
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- 107 Kasatkina and Leončikas, 2005; Hogan-Brun, 2006.
- 108 Hogan-Brun and Ramoniene, 2005; Verschik, 2005.
- 109 Ul'jana Antropova, Ul'jana Kuz'mina, "Nacionalizm v vuzakh Estonii: mif ili real'nost'?" in Vesti Nedeli—Den' za Dnem October 9 2006; Aleksandr Shegedin, "Ravnopravie i diskriminacija" in Molodezh Estonii Subbota November 30 2007 <http://www.moles.ee/07/Nov/30/6-1.php>; "60% narvitjan schitajut, chto prava neestoncev narushajutsja" DELFI.ee December 20 2007 <http://rus.delfi.ee/daily/estonia/article.php?id=17762158> Retrieved 2009-12-07.

Chapter 6

Minority cooptation in the Baltic societies

The previous chapters suggested that political entrepreneurs in the Baltic states have developed language and education policies frameworks to improve minority communities' adaptation to institutions dominated by the titular majorities. Despite this, Baltic political elites have been hesitant to give way to minority populations' demands of greater protection and to allow their full-scale participation in envisaging a common political future. The gap remained between the aspiration to accommodate and the difficulty in addressing the expectations of all minority populations. This underlines the importance that political resources have in ensuring that the greatest possible number of individuals is engaged in the democratic process.

In fact, not until the late 1990s did the Baltic states start to devise a programme to encourage broader participation of non-titular residents in the processes of common state-building and dialogue on viable options for society at large. Paradoxically, however, the mere presence of minorities led Baltic political leadership to acknowledge the potential impact on the states' development in the future. Even though no significant changes were undertaken to allow automatic citizenship for Soviet-time migrants in Estonia and Latvia, the relation between the states, the citizens of non-titular nationality and the non-citizen residents of the country was understood as a significant step forward with the adoption of the programmes for social integration.¹ In Lithuania, the conceptual framework for ethno-politics was also developed to address the different aspects of minority-majority relations and the role the state would assume in this respect.²

The situation in Lithuania was investigated to a much lesser degree, partly due to the fact that ethnic differences in this country were less problematic. However, as has been continuously emphasized in the studies of the Centre of Ethnic Studies (CES) in Vilnius, equality in political membership for all Lithuanian residents is only a precondition for the adaptation of minorities to social processes dominated by the majority population.³ Comparable research on Latvia's efforts of consolidating state and nation-building has also stressed that the means available to non-core ethnic groups for political participation in the first decade after the restoration of independence have been highly dependent on an individual's citi-

zenship status.⁴ Somewhat similarly, in Estonia the availability of citizenship appears to have played a decisive role in strategies of minority relations with the state and their subjectively perceived position in the social hierarchy.⁵ The difference between citizens and non-citizens in the two states, as well as the preponderance of social and economic marginalisation, have prompted the scholarship to suggest that Estonian and Latvian authorities had gone through the full cycle of possible relations with their non-core ethnic groups. Starting with the effective denial of responsibility for its resident non-citizens (1990–1998) to accepting these as minorities in the Latvian and Estonian states (1998–2001), and later to providing them with the means to integrate into a society dominated by the state-bearing national group (after 2001).⁶ The policy steps of the Lithuanian authorities do not correspond to those in Latvia and Estonia. However, like in the other two states, minority groups were largely left to their own devices to adapt policy documents promoting minorities' equal chances to access and participate in political processes.⁷

In this chapter I show how institutions envisage the baseline for minority participation in the social, economic and the political life. Because policy documents reflect on the governments', as well as the majority populations' views of minority participation, it will become clear why non-core ethnic groups have only participated in political decision-making throughout the region to a limited extent. The chapter investigates the background from which both groups undertake negotiations of their status, what presumptions they make about the possibilities available and the outcomes they expect in return.

1. Multicultural in form, national in content

As I discussed previously, communal relations between the increasingly marginalised non-titular groups and the increasingly powerful titular populations have effectively been regulated within the framework of independent statehood. Both the steps enforcing the citizenship and language legislations and the changes in minority education were undertaken against the backdrop of understanding of the Baltic states as sovereign polities of ethnic nations. Previous studies of the rhetoric of the Baltic political entrepreneurs suggest that the perceptions of the majority communities have changed considerably since the Baltic states were short-listed for EU membership.⁸ Throughout the region the potential deficiency of democratic design was brought up in numerous communications between the international organisations monitoring the situation on the ground, NGOs, government officials and local academics. Some analyses suggest that

certain rights were provided to non-core ethnics in the course of the late-1990s as a result of the “conditioned” accommodation of minority rights by international actors.⁹ Many scholars conclude that the “conditioned” response of institutions undermined the non-titular acceptance of decisions made by political entrepreneurs as being made *bona fide*.¹⁰ In addition, the scholarship on social processes across the Baltics suggests that titular nationals came to view European integration as a security issue, fencing them off from the claims of resident minorities and the minorities’ external homelands alike.

In stark contrast to Estonia and Latvia, Lithuania had passed the Law on Ethnic Minorities prior to gaining independence from the Soviet Union. Although Lithuanian governments subsequently amended these regulations several times, the vast majority of corrections were aimed at protecting the link between the state and the Lithuanian ethnic nation, in accordance with Lithuanian Constitution. The Law on Ethnic Minorities and its amendments have established a comprehensive system of tying minority rights to issues of Lithuania’s domestic and internal security by providing mechanisms of social cohesion for Lithuania’s non-titulars. In 2001, a new draft of the Law was passed by the Seimas, prepared by the Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad (*Tautinių mažumų ir išeivijos departamente prie Lietuvos Respublikos, TMID*) and involving consultations with the Coordination Council of 17 national minority organisations accredited with the TMID.

The liberal approach of this law left the decision to be treated as a minority entirely to the person affected, effectively downscaling the state’s responsibility for minority protection. The decision also aroused the attention of some particularly nationally-minded Lithuanian politicians who have alarmed the public that this provision could be misused by those aiming for the fragmentation of Lithuanian society, particularly in light of growing regional sentiment in Western Lithuania, Samogitia (*Žemaitija*). Interestingly, Kasatkina and Beresnevičiūtė indicate that it also raises the question as to whether “the state presumes that non-Lithuanians belong to an ethnic minority until declared otherwise,” which brought about the unprecedented effect of drawing attention to the issue of social integration.¹¹

Importantly, the Law on Ethnic Minorities provides for non-citizens to have full rights as the citizens of Lithuania. It establishes that permanently resident non-citizen ethnic minorities can receive state aid for fostering culture and education, the right of members of minorities to receive information in their native language, as well as to have information signposted for them in the areas of their compact settlement. The law equally

guarantees the right to communicate with political, administrative and judicial authorities of their region in their preferred language.

On June 20, 2002, the Seimas went even further in acknowledging the rights of minorities by amending Article 119 of the Constitution.¹² In an unprecedented move in the region, non-citizens residing in the country were granted the right for both active and passive suffrage at the local level, thus taking a considerable step in the promotion of political participation for all resident populations, including ethnic minorities residing legally in the country, but without citizenship.¹³ This regulation, however, has changed little in the relatively low political participation of the minority groups in Lithuania since the adoption of the law.

The outlined policy-steps indicate that nearly all of Lithuania's minorities were citizens of the state, and the state identifies the problems this group faces as a result of their limited participation in political decision-making. The Lithuanian state treats minorities' limited political participation not as an issue of the specific ethnic population, but rather as an attribute of a particular social group. This was also indicated in other policy-documents and analyses specifically addressing the low representation of minorities in governmental offices. The minority population in Lithuania was generally viewed as a group which lacks interest in organising itself into a sound political force and hence cannot impact political processes that would reflect their specific interests. Nationalist forces in Lithuania interpreted the lack of minority engagement as reflecting the absence minority ethnocultural identities as such, and hence as a successful outcome of state and society Lithuanisation.

Such interpretations were present for quite a while. In 1994 TMID was already organised to address minority concerns and facilitate dialogue between ethnic minorities and policy-makers. TMID was also to supervise and support education in minority languages and to assist in development of non-Lithuanian media. The department was also treated as an official governmental institution for protection of ethnic minority rights. Its main aims were to formulate and implement governmental policy on harmonious interethnic relations, to grant opportunities to ethnic minorities to preserve their identity and to encourage participation in social, political, and cultural life. However, just as in Latvia and Estonia promotion of tolerance and civic education, encouragement for mutual understanding and trust among the people of different nationalities and increase in respect for the cultures, customs, traditions and religions of the various nationalities of Lithuania was undertaken from a position of Lithuanians' dominance.

These steps were taken to facilitate the retention of minority identity as well as the coordination of communities' activities by the government of Lithuania. To this end, the Council of National Associations was established under the aegis of the TMID in 1995, consisting of the leaders of 17 minority communities. The Council is responsible for coordinating minorities' activities and overseeing the implementation of state policies on minorities. The department itself is responsible for relations with the NGOs of minorities and for coordinating the implementation of different projects on cultural matters, as well as the implementation of equal opportunities for ethnic groups. However, because the financial support addressing the cultural and educational demands of minorities was also channelled through the department, the state did keep tabs on activities that challenged patronising relations of TMID with minority NGOs.

Although both the TMID and the Council of National Association were established to provide minority leaders with the opportunity to discuss social, educational and other issues important for minority communities in their relation to the state, there is little evidence of this happening thus far. Over the years of its existence, the TMID's budget had just enough money to support its priority area of work: sponsoring the activities of Lithuanians abroad, which over the years was allocated around 65% of TMID's budget. Remarkably, the second priority was the support of Lithuanian language education in the South Eastern Lithuania (around 18%), whereas integration on non-Lithuanians into Lithuanian society ranked third at best, continuously receiving less than 15% of the department's budget. The remaining 3% of TMID's budget went to projects on Roma integration, which was highly debated in 2004 and has been on the constant decline ever since.¹⁴ Naturally, one can conclude that Lithuanian states were taking the principles of the interstate treaties seriously: as a national homeland of Lithuanians, the state was responsible for Lithuanians at home and abroad, while national minorities living in Lithuania, citizens or not, have to be taken care of by their "homeland" states. As we will see later, this was in fact what Poland and the Russian Federation did.

In both Latvia and Estonia, a range of state institutions were preoccupied with minority integration, above all the Naturalisation Board in Latvia (*Latvijas Republikas Naturalizācijas pārvalde*, LRNP) and the Foundation for the Integration of Non-Estonians in Estonia (*Mitteestlaste integratsiooni sihtasutus*, MEIS). Some observers suggest that these were erected and sustained only with great support by external financial donors.¹⁵ These quasi-governmental organisations were set up to supervise national integration programmes, confirming the governments' rhetorical commitment to international obligations while generally keep-

ing a low profile on any of the real outcomes of integration. The close connections of the LRNP and MEIS to governments indicate that the majority political actors were on the defensive vis-à-vis claims made by the international community, while being content with the political passivity of their minority groups. This becomes increasingly clear when one considers the framework documents which address the integration in Estonian and Latvian society.

The development of the Latvian programme started in April 1998. "The Integration of Society in Latvia: Framework Document" (further, ISL-FD) was adopted by the Latvian government during the period of accession talks with the EU in December 1999.¹⁶ After a period of public debates on the programme, initiated in March 1999, to inform the public of the programme's goals and to collect feedback on the implementation strategies, the national programme "The Integration of Society in Latvia" (further, ISL-NP) was thus developed with some input from the minority communities. With the participation of different institutions—among others the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia, the Naturalization Board, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia and the National Programme for Latvian Language Training—various points of concern were identified.¹⁷

Unsurprisingly, the programme had attracted great interest from the public. However, the governmental feedback on civic input had effectively considered only the issues which were outlined in the framework proper. Thus, issues of regional and sectoral differences in the Latvian society, as well as approaches to the role of language and education in the process, were specifically considered, with the development of a chapter on social integration that reflected on the hazards of social marginalisation present in subsequent versions of the programme. Further progress was made with the meeting of Cabinet of Ministers on December 7, 1999 in developing efficient steps towards the integration of Latvia's society, with an approval of a short version of the programme at the meeting of the secretaries of state just a month later, on January 13, 2000.

The 1999 version of the programme reiterated the principles which emphasised the means of preserving the national language and therefore appealed very strongly to the titular group. Emphasis was placed on a certain view of history and the preservation of the state language. The framework therefore made clear that "The current predicament of the Latvian language reflects the complicated political, economic, ethno-demographic and psychological processes, which have taken place during the course of history in Latvia." Social integration was perceived by the policy-makers as a tool for excluding possibilities for alternative devel-

opment, rather than for investigating the intrinsic reasons for addressing the issue.

The debate in Estonia on the issue of integration was initiated in 1996 by a group of Estonian social scientists, who became known as the "Vera-group."¹⁸ This group of social scientists from Tartu and Tallinn founded a project "to consolidate the existing research on the non-Estonian community and to examine more closely their social integration."¹⁹ In its initial year of existence the team, led by Marju Lauristin and Mati Heidmets conducted a series of workshops funded by the Estonian Ministry of Education to examine a range of issues relating to minority integration. Despite the differences within the group, the first bulk of research with a focus on Russian youth was issued in 1997, indicating a consensus that there was a growing need to start a dialogue between Estonia's ethnic groups.²⁰ It is important to underline that while no policy-prescriptions were made in this stage, the publication of the results demonstrated that the Russian-speaking minority already represented an integral and strategic part of Estonian society.

This coincided with the growing pressure from the EU to see the Estonian government undertake positive policy steps in the direction of integrating its large non-citizen community, particularly in the light of the tightening naturalisation procedure and the implementation of a stricter Language Law in 1995. In mid-1997 the Minister of Population and Ethnic Affairs, Andra Veidemann, appointed several of the key figures from the Vera-project to draft general policy principles aimed at minority integration. The draft-commission was made up only of the representatives of the Estonian-speaking elites, which allowed the minister to present the new integration project not as a result of a bi-communal negotiation. Rather the draft commission envisaged a process of Estonian-dominated formulation of policy for the benefit of the state and dominated by ethnic Estonians.²¹

From within this political consensus and with a clearly Estonian-centred perspective, the commission appointed by Veidemann formulated a draft document by the end of 1997, which was approved by the government in February 1998 and by the Riigikogu on June 10, 1998, as the "Integration of Non-Estonians into Estonian society: The bases of the Estonian's national integration policy"²² (further, the Bases). Though devised without the involvement of the minority community, this brief document was path-breaking in formulating Estonia's relation with its non-titulars.

The document itself was brief but presented a solid foundation for developing the agenda in the future. Starting off with the assessment of the

previous political choices by the Estonian state, this 5-point plan identified the fragmentation of Estonia's population: "Under current legislation, the non-Estonian segment of society is divided into four legal categories—Estonian citizens, citizens of other states, persons with undetermined citizenship and undocumented persons."²³ It also states that while

"Estonia's current policy on non-Estonians and the legislation expressing this policy evolved in a specific socio-political context characterised by the restoration of the independence of Estonia and its emergence from the sphere of influence of its eastern neighbour.[...] By the beginning of 1998 the national and international situation has changed. A mental shift has occurred among the majority of non-Estonians, including the acceptance of Estonian independence as an inevitable fact. Compared to the beginning of the 1990s, the approach of Estonians on issues involving non-Estonians has also developed; attitudes have become more tolerant and open."²⁴

Proceeding to the emphases on the change in the initial situation the draft established that an "appreciable number of the non-Estonians" were "alienated from Estonian society," withdrawing into "their linguistic community and mental world." These statements were followed by the assertion of the loss that Estonia's society has experienced due to the fact that a big part of the minority youth was unable to develop their professional skills and that in the long run this would lead to growing criminal rates and hence the instability of society.

In its essence the document proceeded quite unidirectionally. It states, "the changed internal and external situation requires that Estonia's policy on non-Estonians take a new step forward." The direction in which the process should move was clear from the title of the document, "The Integration of Non-Estonians *into* Estonian Society." The Bases however did little to address the expectations from Estonians, stating merely that the reduction of the number of non-citizens and their participation in the life of the Estonian state were expected. The appeal also clearly read that the integration process will be a challenge to Estonians:

"Integration requires a serious effort on the part of non-Estonians, since language skills and the resulting competitiveness do not come on their own. At the same time it is a challenge to Estonians' openness and democracy. If Estoni-

ans do not understand the need for such development and are not prepared to take steps of their own, there is no point in setting goals for integration. Without a doubt, integration strategy is also a difficult task for the Estonian state and politicians since domestic policy objectives for the development of Estonia as a democratic nation state must be defined."²⁵

Essentially, the minority's attitudes towards the state had to improve in five major areas; language, education, culture, regional isolation and political participation. All these also find their correspondence in the integration programme and mainly addressed the actions to be undertaken by the minority community in order to adapt to the way Estonian society works. Within this framework, the MEIS was established in June 1998, with the main aim of supporting grass-roots integration programmes. Being a semi-private institution, the foundation was put in charge of coordinating the development and administering of funds allocated by the government for the bottom-up integration strategy support.²⁶

Reiterating the goals of the original 1997 framework document, its longer version was passed on March 2, 1999, as "The Integration of Non-Estonians into Estonian Society: The Government's Action Plan"²⁷ (further, NIP). The NIP laid three cornerstones for what would be later known as an "Estonian version of multiculturalism," later embodied by the Integration Programme. Indeed, the NIP called for a full-scale national integration strategy, accentuating an "individual centred approach, common societal core and Estonian cultural predominance." Vello Pettai suggests that "by focusing on the individual, the Action Plan (and hence also the Estonian government) sought to make it clear that the Estonian version of multiculturalism was not based on collective rights or groups."²⁸ Instead, it emphasised the rights of individuals to choose group affiliation and the need for opportunities to freely develop the culture and national belonging of minority groups. Essentially, this is not what multiculturalism is about.

Vello Pettai interprets the state approach as a testimony to the fact that the Estonian part of society "did not have any objection to voluntary assimilation." The members of minority community however could understand the same call as an appeal to the Estonian part of society to accept those who have decided to fit into the Estonian-dominated social framework of the state. This point returned in the document with the reference to the "common societal core," which despite the obvious reference to modern liberal thinking, was seen as being defined in ethnic Estonian terms.

“It is natural that a large part of this common core will derive from [ethnic] Estonian culture; both the state language as well as the dominant language of societal communication is Estonian; the day-to-day norms as well as behavioural patterns which have evolved here must also become part of the common core.”²⁹

In fact, the NIP even went a step further to dispel any illusion in the understanding of Estonia as a multicultural state where different ethnic groups would enjoy equal protection. In the final aspect of the NIP, the issue of cultural predominance of Estonians returned again, now from the perspective of its relation to the state and effectively redefining the role of society as assisting the development of Estonian multiculturalism:

“As a democratic state, the task of the Estonian state is both to support the development of [ethnic] Estonian culture and to ensure the developmental opportunities of minority cultures. *Whereas society may become multicultural, the state is and shall remain Estonian-centred.* The Estonian nation-statehood is manifested in the state’s responsibility for the preservation and development of the Estonian cultural space in a globalizing, multicultural world.” [emphasis added]³⁰

The Estonian NIP, like the Latvian ISL-FD, has upheld the vision of the state as a homeland of ethnic core groups, and the only place where the titular culture and language could be promoted.³¹ As I have discussed, in both countries this point has been reiterated as the only possible way of fitting the legal tradition of statehood restoration with the logic of alleviating the ethnic fragmentation of society. Like its Latvian counterpart, the Estonian NIP has been formulated within the context of growing international pressure in light of EU accession and therefore had frequently been seen as conditionality’s immediate outcome. However, the background to its elaboration—mainly in the political climate of nationalist forces—indicates that the rationale behind its development lies in the greater awareness of social and academic elites about the possible set-backs in the processes of social development.

The Latvian ISL-FD and the Estonian NIP were both devised by members of the titular group and passed in a government dominated by the ethnic majority—two indices of the claim that the political entrepreneurs were in fact reactive, rather than proactive in devising the state approach

to integration. Despite all the similarities of the documents, however, there were considerable differences in the process of drafting. The ISL-FD was mainly understood by members of non-Latvian communities as based upon the values of the (ethnic) Latvian nation, which obviously was unacceptable for the members of the non-titular minority.³² At the same time, the NIP was warmly greeted by some of the members of the Russian-speaking community in Estonia, while strictly opposed by the others. Those opposing it were explicit in their worries of the final steps to “titularise” the Estonian state and assimilate all non-Estonians into the majority culture and to push those unwilling further towards the marginal edge.³³ Although some of the minority proponents of the NIP had shared the same concerns, they also welcomed Estonians’ interest towards the previously ignored non-Estonian part of society.³⁴ In this part of the chapter, it appears that Lithuania had chosen a different approach to its minorities and we will see that these differences were minimal.

2. The instruments of minority integration

Now that we have established the initial steps earmarked by the majority community to integrate minority populations *into* the dominant society, we can proceed with an analysis of the policies implemented and their expected outcomes. In order to do so, it is necessary to assess the persistence of the claims by the titular political entrepreneurs in the three states with respect to the development of the majority cultural domain, as embedded in the integration regulations. At the same, we need to pay additional attention to rhetoric produced for minority consumption. Appealing to both parts of the local audience was a difficult task, however, though it turned out to be much easier because the programmes were also scrutinised by the international monitoring community, which resulted in considerable, if only rhetorical, concessions to minority rights and multiculturalist conceptions of society.

The development of the Latvian integration programme took place in two steps. Initially, the draft was developed and submitted for discussion in society. In the second step, the final draft of the programme “Social integration in Latvia” was outlined, revising the first draft and incorporating the feedback from social debates and discussions.³⁵ The second version, officially drafted from June 1– August 1, 1999, significantly supplemented the original draft, doubling the original length. The Programme distinguishes four thematic fields relevant to ethnic policies and social integration of society, while declaring that

“The integration of society in Latvia is oriented to mutual understanding and co-operation among individuals and different groups in the framework of Latvia’s legal system; it is based on the Latvian language as the state language and on loyalty to the state of Latvia. The goal of integration is to form a democratic, consolidated civil society, founded on shared basic values.”³⁶

Needless to say, these areas do not explicitly define the cultural and linguistic preservation of the (ethnic) Latvian nation and its accommodation of minority cultures. However, significant emphasis is put on the cultural aspects of integration. In a similar vein, reference to the Soviet past of the country already appears in the introduction into the programme, emphasising the challenges for survival of the Latvian language represented by non-titular residents:

“Latvia has inherited more than half a million Soviet era immigrants and their descendants, many of whom have not yet become integrated into the Latvian cultural and linguistic environment, and thus do not feel connected to the Latvian state.”³⁷

Referring to the Soviet inclusion, the document advocates a condemnation of the Soviet period of Latvian history so that the younger generation will acquire the historical consciousness of Latvians. Failure to do so, as is stated, might present an impediment to the integration process. “The Latvian people did not voluntarily choose the Soviet regime and life in the totalitarian system; this must be understood.”³⁸ The reference to the Soviet past within the ISL-NP suggests that integration would need to take place not only on the basis of a common linguistic environment, but would also require a common understanding of the relations between ethnic groups prior to Latvia’s regained independence. In plain words, the Latvian integration programme sought to address the consequences of the Soviet presence in the republic and possibly to rectify the injustices inflicted on the Latvian majority population. The debates around the consequences of the state language regulations have already pared down the “concept of common linguistic environment” to a single and undivided Latvian language, denying any special status even to Latgalian, which was considered a separate language in the Soviet Latvia.

The first chapter of the programme addressed the issues of individual integration strategies, however the second chapter seems to put greater

emphasis on collectivities that needed to be “integrated.”³⁹ It also addresses the measures necessary for creating a society of individuals with equal opportunities, presuming the leading role of the titular group, the Latvians. Again, state language features as the most important tool for social cohesion. The issues of poverty are addressed, as are income disparities, unemployment and the shortcomings of the social security system. Lower education is made responsible for groups’ limited social integration, while the wording of the document suggests that minorities’ lack of language skills and misunderstanding about their role in the Latvians’ state have resulted in their marginalisation.⁴⁰

The third chapter of the programme, “Education, Language, and Culture” stresses the importance of the long-term stability of interethnic relations in the country.⁴¹ The chapter begins with evaluating cultural development, stating that

“Culture is a condition for development of a humane, creatively active, self-confident national character. In order to promote the development of Latvian culture and minority cultures, a unified cultural environment must be created and the cultural dialogue ought to be expanded during the process of integration.”⁴²

Clearly, the Latvian language is conceived as an effective tool for the integration of non-Latvians and Latvians of all generations.

“In implementation of the integration process of society, children and young people make up the most important target group. However, the level of democratic and political education and command of the Latvian language is a determinant in the integration of adults as well. Therefore, the Latvian educational system becomes the most important driving force of the integration process. The educational system must ensure the learning and inheritance of human and specifically Latvian values, and the opportunities to preserve inter-cultural education and the cultural identity of minorities.”⁴³

The ambitious and, hence more controversial approach of the programme to integration aims to safeguard public space, where communication should take place in the common language. The draft stresses that “prejudices and mutual distrust persist in Latvian society.” In this context, the

ISL-FD mentions the lack of appropriate language training for non-Latvians with “many objective and subjective factors hinder[ing the] learning of [the] Latvian language.”⁴⁴ But the phrasing of the ISL-NP states more firmly that the “legislation on language should help to establish a balance and to stabilise the relationship between the state and minority languages.”⁴⁵ These fragments clearly indicate that while the discourse on integration has started, there is only a limited commitment to distribute some of the power resources to minority groups in the processes. Importantly, while the dominance of the titular group already has been established in the Constitution, the ISL-NP was another step toward ethnic understanding of the Latvian nation.

The formulation of the programme in Estonia was also connected with some public debate but was more dependent on the political will of the newly appointed Integration Minister, Katrin Saks. Director of the Soros funded Open Estonia Foundation and responsible for minority integration, Saks had personally facilitated the long-term orientation and extension of the NIP into a full scale integration programme. A newly devised policy required elaborations of measures from various ministries and departments. Distancing itself from the original formula in the NIP, the new programme indicates five areas where integration could be pursued and focuses on three aspects of this integration: linguistic-communicative, legal-political and socio-economic.

The NIP had a very distinct focus on the linguistic capacities of non-Estonians, to which it attributed the failure of political integration and participation, as well as the economic backwardness and social problems of the regions with predominantly Russian-speaking populations.⁴⁶ While the reasons for the regional problems in the north-eastern Estonia could have been obviously reduced to the lack of proficiency in the state language, the problems of legal-political integration, such as high numbers of non-citizens among the non-titular populations, were similarly treated as a mere problem of language-knowledge. In order to promote the numbers of naturalisations—which, incidentally, have been on the decline since the introduction of the naturalisation procedure, reaching an all-time low in 2001⁴⁷—improvement of language training, as well as the expansion of various test equivalencies have been suggested.

The final version of the integration programme presented a quite different version of Estonian multiculturalism which largely reformulated the core components of the initial NIP. Most crucially, the programme has abolished the stress on the ethnic Estonian predominance in the state and emphasised the importance of preserving Estonian culture more explicitly. While Estonian culture was still seen as essential for the existence of the

state, its position was no longer exclusive. The NIP relied on the hierarchy of cultures in Estonia, claiming that the Estonian one was more privileged in relations with the state. The state programme “Integration in Estonian Society, 2000–2007” (further, SIP) made use of multicultural rhetoric to recognise the existence of different cultures in Estonia, which could be misleading for those who anticipated a change of wind in Estonia’s relation towards its Russian-speakers.⁴⁸ Instead, SIP has done nothing less than to consolidate Estonian state nationalism on the ethnic basis.

“In relations with the state [...], the position of [ethnic] Estonian culture is different from that of minority cultures, to the extent that one of the goals of Estonian statehood is the preservation and development of the Estonian cultural space.”⁴⁹

Along with this, the redefinition of the “common societal core” was required to render it less abstract, instead giving it a definite shape which could be implemented in policy-making. It stressed the centrality of Estonian experience, though it used much softer terminology to address the possible grievances of minorities and fit it into the multiculturalism debate. Specific elements of the societal core were now spelt out as “general humanistic and democratic values, common informational field and Estonian-language environment, common state institutions,” all in stark contrast with the presumably non-democratic, anti-humanistic values of non-Estonians.

A set of civic principles was defined mainly in line with the ethnic Estonian understanding of the state.⁵⁰ These included general knowledge of the basic facts of Estonian history, an appreciation of being an Estonian citizen and a conscious awareness of the multicultural character of the Estonian society. While these ideals were in line with the goals of individual accommodation in Estonian society, the final draft went even further by dropping the reference to individualism altogether and emphasising a concept somewhat similar to cultural pluralism. However, because languages and traditions of minorities are not treated as a part of the Estonian core, they are collectively excluded from the public sphere and need to find ways of adapting. The final version stated that ethnic minorities should have an opportunity to preserve their linguistic and cultural distinctiveness, to organise mother tongue education and to participate in state-building through social life.⁵¹

All this indicates that the policy steps envisaged in the integration programmes were primarily emphasising the role of language in independent states. The integration programmes emphasise the importance of

cultural issues for the policy-makers and suggests that the titular political entrepreneurs were acting from a defensive position to ensure the use of titular languages, specifically their development and promotion. The persistent promotion of cultural and linguistic goals in the integration documents supports the findings of the previous analyses that the majority populations in Latvia and Estonia perceived policy changes as necessary from their own subjective positions. The policy-corrections undertaken, firstly, pay lip-service to the equality of all residents of the state by providing them with the same set of rights, while secondly and most importantly ensuring the central place of the titular language in the cultural domain of the state. Do we see similar processes in Lithuania?

The Lithuanian Department of National Minorities appointed a steering committee for the preparation of the *Concept of Ethnic Policy* in 2002. A group of experts, governmental employers, representatives of minorities and social scientists were engaged in drafting the document.⁵² Earmarking the development of state planning on the issues of ethnic policy, this document was based on the analyses of economic, social, cultural and political developments of ethnic relations.⁵³ While conceived as a framework document for a specific ethnic policy document, the Concept aimed at providing specific guidelines for ministries and state institutions for the long-term development of Lithuanian society, while vague notions introduced allowed one to describe the document as addressing the issue of multiculturalism.

Designed in a fragmentary manner, it is comprised of eight substantial chapters that describe the social situation of the ethnic minorities in the country, the process of their adaptation, their education facilities and opportunities for life-long learning, NGO activities, cultural organisations and the problems of discrimination. Focusing on these issues, apparently the main goal of the Concept was to address possibilities for civic participation and the development of the non-governmental sector of minority activity. The Concept indicated the desired development of democracy, prevention of exclusion and the assurance of harmony and dialogue across the diverse groups of Lithuanian citizenry. Interestingly, the introductory remarks of the Concept addressed the minority, as well as the majority groups in society, without explicit differentiation between the citizens and non-citizens of the state.⁵⁴

The Concept was not developed into a policy document because of the resistance of the nationalist political forces taking part in its drafting. Beresnevičiūtė and Kasatkina, however, report that concerning the relevance for the political climate in Lithuania and the scope of activities initially planned, it was not far from what we observe in the Estonian and

Latvian integration programmes. After the introductory overview on the state of minority-majority relations in Lithuania and fragmental description of the existing problems of non-titular groups, the document “deals with evaluation of the forms of political participation, institutional environment of political activities, opportunities for non-governmental organizations of ethnic minorities in civil society of Lithuania.”⁵⁵

The document covers many issues relating to the position of the ethnic groups in the country, the means of their cooptation into state institutions and cooperation with majority populations in the various spheres of social and political life: issues of tolerance and ethnic hatred and its manifestations in Lithuanian society, citizenship, ethnic identity and sustainable development of the latter are covered alongside the local and international obligations of the state. However, while the description is aimed at further developing a legal basis for the state’s relation with minority groups, the recommendations listed in the document only tentatively suggested the adjustment of the legal basis and in the end were not considered by lawmakers.⁵⁶ While the Concept presented some of the activities as absolutely necessary to combat incremental discrimination of national minority groups and socially vulnerable parts of society, the implementation of the ethnic policy never occurred and development was not pursued beyond the draft point. Written in an academic style, it appealed little to policymakers and contained too few statements indicating the urgency for political intervention into the ethnopolitical situation in the country. Instead the Concept has been set aside for future consideration.

As early as 1997, the TMID was additionally pressed to address Roma minority residents in Lithuania. As a result thereof, the country has been pioneering the development of the programme *Integration of Roma into Lithuanian Society, 2000–2004*, followed by the *Roma Integration into Lithuanian Society, 2008–2010*.⁵⁷ Although criticised for developing and implementing this programme without proper consultations with the Roma community and without having explicitly addressed the discrimination of Roma, it has been positively evaluated by the international group of experts as a pro-active step toward reduction of Roma discrimination.⁵⁸

A similar programme was also devised in Latvia in 2006.⁵⁹ Despite regular calls upon the Estonian government to establish institutions and facilitate integration of Roma into society, no policy documents were developed in Estonia.⁶⁰ I will not dwell on these documents in detail, because the Roma in Latvia and Lithuania, as well as elsewhere in the CEE do not only suffer from segregation but from an overall racial discrimination, among others issues.⁶¹ However, the way political entrepreneurs dealt with the problems of Roma community are indicative of an overall ap-

proach to integration of minorities in Latvia and Lithuania. Although the problems of Roma are quite specific, policy documents addressing the Roma community and prevention of this group's social exclusion were devised by the state agencies and were largely at odds with the expectation of community itself.⁶²

The Liv's are another ethnic group that stands out in Latvia for being granted an official status of minority. A special programme had been in place to help this minority develop their culture, keep their language and improve this group's international image. The programme "The Livs in Latvia" was first approved in 1999 and re-launched in August 2008, with the main objective to resist assimilation.⁶³ Remarkably, the remit of this programme grants Livs many financial incentives to learn the Liv language, conduct and participate in cultural exchange programmes (such as summer camps and the like) and support the co-operation of Finno-Ugric NGOs and state officials abroad. The scope of interest and support granted by the Latvian state to this group of around 180 registered Livs standing for a, no doubt, endangered language community of less than 20 language speaker is admirable. These efforts however need to be contrasted with state's commitment to ensure and preserve language rights of around 900,000 Russian-speakers across the country.

3. Diluted outcomes of integration

The previous discussion of the integration programmes indicated that titular political entrepreneurs outlined the measures to address the potential threat coming from the non-titular community in a reactive manner. I will now turn to the provisions spelt out in the documents which, on the surface, endorsed greater inter-communal dialogue in society. The cover of multiculturalism, however, only hid the lack of clarity about the expected outcomes of integration. In addition, the references to a range of issues in search for support from minority and majority communities significantly diluted the overarching aim of the two programmes; the development of mutual tolerance of ethnic groups.

The state programme "Integration in Estonian Society 2000–2007" (further, SIP), suggested that a bilateral process would involve both Russian- and Estonian speakers, though both would interact on the basis of knowledge of the Estonian language.⁶⁴ While both groups were to "harmonise society," both were allowed to preserve their identity and create a common core within the Estonian cultural domain. This consisted of "general human and democratic values," the Estonian language, common state institutions and knowledge of Estonian history. Decisively, the Estonian

language was described as an “attribute of statehood,” not as an ethnic symbol, hence somewhat ameliorating the resounding minority opinion that the programme was aimed at the assimilation of non-Estonians into the Estonian core.⁶⁵

At the same time, one of the major policy goals outlined was the improvement of the linguistic competence of non-Estonians. Though domestically criticised for vagueness in its use of terms and its description of goals, the programme appealed to both nationalist groups and local minority activists, who were no longer referred to as aliens in the Estonian state, but as a part of society.⁶⁶ Strong focus on language adaptation for minorities clearly reflected the fears of the Estonian population that their language might become extinct should so many non-native speakers become well-integrated. Similarly, for minorities the implementation of the integration programme presented a danger for linguistic and ethnic identity. Despite its overall positive intention to remove the barriers for the political participation of non-Estonians, the SIP “gave minorities only one choice, namely assimilation.”⁶⁷

The term “integration” was left undefined, resulting in harsh criticism from the Roundtable of Ethnic Minorities. A member of the Riigikogu, Vladimir Vel'man, criticised the Estonian state for setting goals aimed at the integration of society into one distinct cultural community, integrating individuals or assimilating Russian-speakers into Estonian culture altogether.⁶⁸ The regular integration monitors remarked upon implementation that the major goal of integration was to achieve national reconciliation within the framework described in the national constitution, i.e. within the framework dominated by ethnic Estonians.⁶⁹ While ethnic groups were to be tolerant and to know Estonian history, Estonians had to accept the individual choices of minority members to function within Estonia's political and social framework, run mainly by Estonians.

As in Estonia, the role to be played in the process by the Latvians remained unclear and vaguely defined by the Latvian National Programme. Various aspects of the programme appealed to the non-titular actors, prescribing more than advising in the bi-communal integration process. The ISL-NP claims that “[t]he integration of society will not succeed if it is directed only from ‘the top down’ without active civic participation from the grass roots level.”⁷⁰ However, the key issues of the integration programme reflect a strong top-down political logic, particularly when it comes to relation between the state and society and the role of individuals in the political decision-making process.

Chapter one, “Civic Participation and Political Integration,” introduces the discussion of the role individuals play in the political decision-

making process, consistently presenting conformity to the interests of the majority as an overall goal: “Active civic participation in social and political life fosters the *irreversibility of integration and conformity with the interests of the majority*; it creates unity among the residents of Latvia and strengthens democracy” [emphasis added].⁷¹ The role of individuals in the political decision-making process is initially introduced in the context of the long-term experience of the Latvian state as a home to many minorities, who, particularly in the light of the developing integration programme, are invited to contribute to the discussion on future strategies for societal development.⁷² The ISL-NP indicates that the non-titular minorities in the Latvian state can now assume the role of the advisers to political decision-makers, if they refrain from claiming the right to make decisions on par with the Latvians.⁷³

Two of the three subchapters, “Civic Participation” and “Participation in the Non-governmental Organisations” repeat the strong emphasis on developing a unified society in Latvia, where individuals of different ethnic backgrounds mutually accept their differences, as well as the right of the Latvian people to political self-determination. The document suggests dealing with these issues by means of increasing mutual trust of all inhabitants.⁷⁴ A minority reader would see a definite contradiction in terms here: The Latvians have the right for political determination, while the minorities should accept that their rights are different and trust Latvians to make the right decisions. This is indicative of the state’s intention to support all those members of non-titular communities to integrate into Latvian society by accepting that the state might be receptive to its Latvian citizen, while other residents could be consulted should it be necessary. Naturally, if minorities have “a positive orientation toward naturalization and the integration of society,” as well as the “knowledge on the issues important for the society of Latvia,” they will understand that Latvian state has always made correct decisions on their behalf.⁷⁵ It is thus clear, why the final version of the Latvian document dropped references to intercultural dialogue, unlike the Estonian SIP. Instead, the ISL-NP focused on the benefits of its residents accepting the decisions made by the Latvian state.

A particular role in this process was ascribed to the development of the networks of civil society and active political participation of Latvia’s residents. “Active civic participation in social and political life fosters the irreversibility of integration and conformity with the interests of the majority; it creates unity among the residents of Latvia and strengthens democracy.”⁷⁶ The role of civil society organisations in this process is highly ambivalent as portrayed in the ISL-NP, as these are expected to expand their activities to create a more stable political community. The role of the

NGOs is also outlined and made responsible for “individual participation in the life of society.” At the same time, activity of civil society is expected to support the national and cultural identities of national minorities.

It is highly questionable whether civic participation would diminish the tensions between the official position on the core ideals of the state and the views of minority groups. While the major areas of concern relating to civic participation are outlined in order to address and “overcome alienation of people from governmental and local authorities by maintaining a dialogue between the individual, the society and the state,” most likely the result would be quite the opposite.⁷⁷

Additionally, by stressing repatriation, migration and cooperation with expatriates abroad this section of the ISL-NP particularly stresses the centrality of Latvianness for the narrative of statehood and social cohesion. This is clearly aimed at Latvians abroad, rather than the local non-titular communities, the goal being the establishment of “a unified system which would ease the return to his/her homeland for any Latvian or citizen of Latvia who wishes to do so and would assist in his/her integration in the society of Latvia.”⁷⁸

The lack of bi-communal dialogue on the issues relevant for social integration resulted in non-core groups’ perceptions that their fate had been decided without acknowledgement of their own opinions.⁷⁹ Doubtless, the programmes for social integration in all three countries had quite different meanings for the core ethnics and the minority groups. Minorities were interested in receiving access to local political, economic and cultural lives, but they feared that this would only be accomplished through their assimilation into the majority culture. In this case, it is difficult to distinguish between the real and perceived effects of the integration programmes when discussing the policy decisions and steps undertaken by the political entrepreneurs.

Hence, it makes more sense to analyse integration policies as majorities’ signalling to minorities who would then implement the “real” change. As I have indicated, the programmes invited members of the non-core ethnic groups to engage pro-actively in policy-making by contributing to civic activities, NGO engagement and the like. This was not geared toward the greater exclusion of the non-titular Soviet-migrant population, but in the direction of this group’s enhanced cooptation by the state institutions. The strategy of cooptation was clear during the discussions of the Estonian and Latvian programmes and has been interpreted as an indication of the growing preparedness for compromise by the titular groups. In the case of Estonia’s SIP, an oft-repeated statement from the programme is one which reads,

“integration is expressed in the gradual disappearance of those barriers which today prevent many non-Estonians from being competitive in the Estonian labour market, taking part in educational opportunities available here and participating in local cultural and political life. These barriers are above all connected with shortcomings in knowledge of the Estonian language and local culture, with uncertain legal status and also with fears and prejudices resulting from rapid social changes.”⁸⁰

For Estonians, as the programme stated, it is also essential to change. On their part, successful social integration would require the “retreat of repellent attitudes towards ethnic minorities in the context of recognition of the multicultural model of society” and a “decrease in fear concerning ethnic survival of the national identity and cultural domain.”⁸¹

The programme included four sub-programmes, which largely fell in line with the assessment of the working groups.⁸² Crucially the fourth sub-programme, “Social competence,” focused entirely on increasing civic activity among the public, convergence of Estonian and non-Estonian opinions and the improvement of living standards for those segments of society with special social needs.⁸³ In order to achieve this, media and public information channels would need to facilitate the exchange between Estonians and non-Estonians. Another pillar of the programme, “The education and culture of ethnic minorities” was also taken into consideration when drafting the budget for the measures. However, these two sub-programmes received only 7% and 4.5% funding of the planned budget, respectively. At the same time, up to 81% of SIP’s budget was channelled into two other sub-programmes which aimed exclusively at language acquisition within the non-Estonian community: extensive language training for non-Estonian adults was run with support of the EU-PHARE programme and the re-organisation of the Russian-language education facilities was also carried out.⁸⁴

While the EU generally welcomed the launch and implementation of an integration programme, the EC also reminded Estonia that

“it is necessary for the Estonian government to continue to devote adequate resources and give proper attention to the implementation of all elements of the integration programme. This includes, in particular, the need to ensure a high level of

awareness and involvement in the integration process across all sections of the Estonian population.”⁸⁵

In spite of the mild tone, the critical remark by the European Commission clearly pointed out the overtly intensive focus on minority training in the Estonian language. The programme, through addressing these four sub-areas of competence, did not assess the possible changes in “laws and other legal acts presently in effect in the Republic of Estonia, and on the other hand, mainly addresses state agencies and their sub-agencies, local governments and third-sector organisations.”⁸⁶ However, it did require any institution responsible for a sub-programme to “develop regional action plans in co-operation with county governments and local governments, based on the distinctiveness of the region, and development programmes that had been launched.”⁸⁷

The Latvian ISL-NP also indicates that alienation between the members of society and the state is impeding cooperation between ethnic groups and is an undesirable inheritance from the Soviet times. As is declared in the introduction to the ISL-NP, the complete abolition of the social differences inherited is highly desirable for the successful development of Latvian society. The Latvian programme aimed at forming a democratic civil society united by two common beliefs: the commitment to the independence of Latvia and statehood based on the Latvian language. One of the explanations for the limited social cohesion in Latvia at the time when the programme was drafted was the segregation of Latvia’s information space into one functioning in the titular language, and one in the Russian language. The divisions in the information space, the varying media of communication and the different systems of schooling are seen as catering to different socio-economic and cultural-linguistic groups. While the sections on “Education” declare the importance of schooling for raising the consciousness of the residents concerning independent statehood, the ISL-NP also stresses the importance of creating a common information space in Latvia. The initial draft emphasises that

“there are two sectors of information space in Latvia corresponding to those persons who commonly speak Latvian and those who speak Russian. A segment of Latvia’s population is still influenced by the Russian information space, and Russian sources of information play a significant role in shaping their opinions. Many materials published by several Russian newspapers in Latvia adopt a tone that is sceptical and ironic.”⁸⁸

However, the final version of the programme drops the statements on the separateness of the information spaces in favour of focusing on prospects and possibilities to emphasise common issues:

“The basis for common information space is laid by forming an awareness of common fate. It will foster considerably achievements in the Latvian language learning. Good command of the Latvian language will help to overcome a barrier in receiving information, which exists due to the lack of knowledge of Latvian and an inability to read the Latvian press, or to listen to the radio and watch TV programmes. [...]The existence of press services that reflect a variety of viewpoints should be encouraged.”⁸⁹

At the same time, not only the mass media, but also the academic community were called upon to assist in the process of integration. The final part of the programme outlines the possible areas where contributions of various social sciences are expected and are welcome, and how these should assist social accord in the new situation.

“the integration of society requires a large spiritual and moral capacity; the work of integration encourages everyone to assume a position of being a person who is tolerant, responsive, understanding and open. However, the process of integration also requires concentration on self-actualisation so as to better develop and preserve conviction and mental strength, individual judgement and independent behaviour, when in the presence of people who have different beliefs and values, and with people having another ethnic identity.”⁹⁰

A method for coordinating these broad goals under the auspices of the programme is difficult to imagine. However, political entrepreneurs drafting the document acknowledge the importance of the state in drawing the linguistic communities closer together. The programme remained largely declarative and was ridden with repetition. It also had discernable difficulty in determining both the active role of the majority in social integration and the steps—besides learning the Latvian language, of course—expected from minority populations to create an integrated society. Besides, the drafting committee was not entirely certain as to how to achieve

a compromise between the insecurities of the titular community, despite an obviously fruitful opportunity structure, and the growing assertiveness of the non-titular minority in the country. Overall, the Latvia's ISL-NP was enforced as a compromise between hard-line nationalising forces and those convinced of the importance of due implementation of the framework. Preceded by decisions from different governmental bodies, the Department of Integration of Society was set up in November 2000 within the Ministry of Justice to coordinate the implementation of the document, with the Ministry of Justice commissioned to report to the Cabinet of Ministers on the process of its implementation.

To address these issues the National Programme outlined the importance of establishing the Secretariat of the Special Assignments Minister for Society Integration (*Īpašu uzdevumu ministra sabiedrības integrācijas lietās sekretariāts*). Likewise, the Society Integration Foundation (*Sabiedrības integrācijas fonds*) was established in 2001 in order to facilitate the integration process. The objective of establishing a secretariat was not reached until 2003, when the institution was finally established to elaborate and implement the state policy on integration, but also to overlook the approach to minority rights, development of civil society and elimination of racial discrimination. Both institutions functioned quite successfully, occasionally calling for greater transparency in funding and involvement of minority NGOs into policy-making. However, weak institutional links for the implementation and limited cooperation of the institutions undermined the successful implementation of the programme's goals.⁹¹

The frameworks of integration suggest that the mutual perceptions of minority/majority are likely to acquire a more balanced relation to one another as a result of the programmes' implementation. However, while the signposts of the programmes have opened up many opportunities for all ethnic communities to participate in political decision-making, the minority publics seem unwilling to engage actively. Of all the principle reasons for residents' unwillingness to assume an active part in the life of the Baltic societies, the lack of equal opportunity on par with the titular groups is probably the most frequently mentioned reason.⁹² However, there are also other strictly structural issues at play.

As I have indicated before, the Lithuanian Concept did not call upon national minorities to adjust to Lithuanian views or participate in activities crafting a democratic regime in Lithuania. The Concept did however outline the virtues which would accompany the democratic regime in the country if its citizenry, the non-Lithuanians in particular, engaged in civic activities.⁹³ The Concept in general has not explicitly en-

dorsed the support of minority NGOs and organisations standing in defence of minority groups vis-à-vis the state. Instead, it aimed more at providing minority organisations a framework from which they could address the state in search of financial support. Interestingly, the recommendations of the Concept towards non-governmental organisations were later taken into consideration with the implementation of the governmental policy on expansion of NGO activities.⁹⁴

In conclusion, the social integration programmes overestimated the readiness of members of both titular and non-titular communities to engage in intercommunal dialogue. Crucially, the documents defined integration as a wide concept with a range of components, seeking to co-opt support from different groups of society. The SIP, NP-ISL and the Concept built upon minorities' willingness to support policies which included guarantees for non-titulars to preserve their cultures. At the same time, all three documents reiterated that minorities had to accept that the public sphere was to remain titular and monolingual, co-opting support for policies from the members of majority.

The programmes nonetheless made a considerable concession to non-core groups by recognising their right to potentially participate in decision-making in the country of residence. The fears of minorities that integration meant assimilation were also addressed, in part because non-titulars were guaranteed opportunities of education in their language, at least in secondary or Saturday/Sunday schools. Unsurprisingly, across the region precisely this clause was regurgitated in support of separate schooling streams in the titular and Russian languages. Scholars have previously suggested that the titular groups in Estonia and Latvia perceived of "integration" in fact to mean "separation" of ethnic communities.⁹⁵ Avoiding contact with the members of the minority seems to be the only feasible path for majority communities in the face of, as was perceived, far too many Russians polluting titular languages with impurities.

In my interviews in Lithuania, the members of Russian and Polish communities argued that the reason why social integration programmes never took off in their country was the same.⁹⁶ Thus, we can legitimately conclude here that the programmes did not focus on the measurable outcomes of the integration process, but proposed a model of *de jure* multicultural, *de facto* ethnonational society for the approval of political communities dominated by titulars. This explains the emphasis on strong political institutions seeking to preserve and develop the cultural domain of titulars in accordance with the values of the ethnic core. There were no other clearly benchmarked goals in the integration programmes and of the Concept. Thus, it is clear why state institutions, political entrepreneurs of

the majority and the majority itself did not and could not accept the minorities' option of non-integration.

4. Cooptation as a model of integration

In Estonia, as it was in Latvia, the political steps undertaken by the core national group indicate a crucial incentive for non-titular populations to abandon several discourses, which by the early 2000s had grown to become largely self-referential: from one of ethnic conflict to one of human rights' violations and unfairness in treatment. In the final versions of the Estonian SIP and Latvian ISL-NP, the rhetoric of democratic state-building, national consolidation and civic cooperation prevailed, thus guaranteeing the common reference for both the titular as well as non-titular groups addressed.

The Lithuanian political entrepreneurs failed to scale down the ethnocentric rhetoric of the original draft of "The Concept of Ethnic Politics" and to envisage the contribution of non-Lithuanians to the country's political development. Like similar documents in Latvia and Estonia, the Concept failed to identify the role of the Lithuanian majority—all of which indicates similar deficits of bi-communal dialogue in that country. Based on the previous discussions, it would therefore make more sense to indicate that the "invitation to cooperate," extended to non-core ethnic groups in Latvia and Estonia, was made under conditionality pressure and not without international financial assistance, both factors which were lacking in the Lithuanian case. This might explain why, however ingenuous, the call to non-titulars to assume the role of minority players in Latvia and Estonia was more successful than it was in Lithuania. Not only were Lithuania's minority groups not invited to engage collectively in bi-communal learning processes, they were actually marginalised to geographical regions where they were in the majority, in a sense, to proceed with their own democracy building while not interfering with the majority's work.

The communication bypass and double meaning conveyed by the integration programmes in Estonia and Latvia have hugely determined the relations between the majority and minority groups. Primarily, this concerns the growing upward mobility of representative minority members *after* the implementation of the programmes in Estonia and Latvia, when compared with Lithuania. The changes observed include the increase of minority representation among the political entrepreneurs, downscaling in perceptions of ethnic tensions and the salience of interethnic issues at the institutional level. On the other hand, the research of the local social scien-

tists equally indicates the growing impact of the non-titular political entrepreneurs, civic actors and social elites on greater institutional openness and the development of the political process. This clearly underlines the success of integration programmes in co-opting the members of minority groups.

The brief overview of the programmes suggests that all three of them represented an ambivalent step towards improvement of interethnic cooperation and provided minorities' incentives to integration. All three states equally witnessed the lack of bi-communal dialogue, which yet again pointed out to the members of the minority community that they should play by the "majorities' rules" if they wanted to break out of marginal social positions. The Estonian SIP has also indicated that

"Integration as a whole is directed towards the creation of a balanced and democratic multicultural society, although it is clear that this is a complicated and also contradictory process lasting decades and requiring the long-term and systematic support of the Estonian State."⁹⁷

Interestingly, the Latvian national programme sets a clear framework in which bi-communal cooperation could be pursued, effectively by silencing the opinions critical of the politics and policies of the Latvian state. ISL-NP illustrates this point bluntly.

"[Latvian state does not support] the formation of a two-community state; the model of 'two societies in one nation;' confrontation between elements of society, segregation, marginalisation and forced assimilation; tendencies to ethno-federalism that would undermine the formation of a unified Latvian state; extremism, intolerance and national hatred."⁹⁸

Ultimately, national integration programmes pushed minorities to accept that the ethnonational logic of state institutions will not change. Both the Latvian and Estonian documents opted for communitarian multiculturalism to signal their unwillingness to assimilate minorities, but implicitly allied with the liberal multiculturalist approach by turning a blind eye on individual freedoms to assimilate minorities into the majority culture, language and, crucially social environment. In pragmatic terms, each member of the Russian-speaking community was granted the option of going along the titular road of success, acceptance and self-realisation, or no way at all. The monitoring of integration processes in Estonia indicated

in 2005 that Estonians were irritated by the behaviour and lifestyles of the local Russians, the indicators for which had risen from 46% in 2002 to 59% in 2005.⁹⁹ Increasingly, local scholarship sounded the alarm that the isolation of non-titulars was a threat to social stability in Estonia.¹⁰⁰ However, the intolerance towards minorities was not limited to Russian-speakers exclusively. Before the EU accession, Estonia and Latvia featured as the candidate countries most resistant to the concepts of multicultural society, qualifying by the highest intolerance towards Muslims and the racial minorities among the CEE states. Thus, while the first round of integration programmes drew to an end, it became increasingly clear to all parties involved that neither the SIP, nor the ISL-NP have achieved their ambitious goals of creating societies tolerant to difference.¹⁰¹

As was the case with the previous programmes, Estonia's and Latvia's governments opened up the floor for discussion on the contents of the follow-up documents. In Estonia, the *Strategy for the Integration of Estonian Society, 2008–2013* (further, SIS) was drawn up and distributed among government officials, civil society organisations and international experts. SIS stated that the previous efforts geared towards integration were insufficient and that especially in the area of socio-economic integration of minorities, much more could be done.¹⁰² Estonia was pressed hard by the international community to bring its commitment to multiculturalism more in line with international standards.¹⁰³ Because the SIP's agenda on improving minority's socio-economic status, combating employment and addressing the poverty-related social and health problems among Russian-speakers remained thin, multicultural development was believed to be undermined from an onset.

Despite international criticisms, SIS did not revise any of the previously stated objectives on development of the "Estonian version of multiculturalism." Instead it sought to parallel the situation of Estonia's minority with that of migrants in the Western European states. In referring to the EU's "Common Agenda for Integration—Framework for the Integration of Third Country Nationals in the European Union," SIS framed Estonia as a receiving country of the global processes of migration. SIS introduced the concept of "the new immigrants," and declared that the previous Estonian take on non-Estonians was generally correct and could now be applied to broader categories of non-titular residents. However, as opposed to SIP, SIS dedicated considerable space for monitoring integration outcomes and outlined a set of indicators to be used in future reports.¹⁰⁴ Although the document provided a more comprehensive roadmap and signposts for measuring the outcomes of integration, its implementation was delayed by

mass riots around the removal of the Soviet monument in Tallinn, April 2007.¹⁰⁵

The *Estonian Integration Strategy, 2008–2013* (further, EIS) was adapted by Riigikogu in April 2008. The document continued on the general line of monolingual and monocultural Estonian society, previously established in the SIS and SIP, and in line with the Constitution. However, as we can see throughout the document, international pressures bore fruit with the EIS reiterating issues of human rights, individual freedoms and connecting Estonian values to the values of the European Union.¹⁰⁶ The scope of the strategy was broader, but the primary focus remained on language learning. The programme states:

“The process of integration of the population of Estonia is a long-term one and its ultimate goal is a culturally diverse society with a strong Estonian state identity, sharing common democratic values in which, in the public sector, permanent residents communicate in Estonian.”¹⁰⁷

The EIS emphasises the commitment to a multicultural society already expressed in the SIP and calls on all members of society to engage in contacts with another ethnic group, avoid negative stereotyping and learn the state language.¹⁰⁸ Segregation of cultural domains is further emphasised with respect to educational and cultural integration, calling for more effective teaching of Estonian at all levels and prompting minorities to seek preservation of their cultures outside of the formal education.¹⁰⁹ The EIS equally sticks to the legal-political measures of the previous programme aimed at increasing the naturalisation rates among non-Estonians.

One significant improvement of EIS in comparison with previous programmes is the acknowledgement of Russian-speakers' contribution to Estonian public life and political decision-making. While the EIS notes the persistence of repellent attitudes of the Estonian majority towards non-Estonians, it revealingly appeals to change in these attitudes as one of the goals of the programme.¹¹⁰ In this context, the programme brings forward the idea that neither the citizenship, nor the knowledge of state language are as important for creating Estonian society as is the sense of belonging among the minorities. To this end, the EIS signposts the need for intensification of interethnic communications and the reduction of unemployment among Russian-speakers, but it fails to mention the significant underrepresentation of minorities in the state apparatus.¹¹¹ As before, the EIS grants the Estonians a role of pacesetters in the integration processes, but does so only by reference to the development of an “open” attitude toward non-

Estonians and their involvement in society. Very few aspects of the programme are actually aimed at the ethnic Estonians; the largest chunk of the funding is reserved for the improvement of language skills among non-Estonians.

Estonia's policy towards minorities however was bound to stall because of the structural constraints imposed by the constitution. By declaring the state identity as based on the Estonian values, the constitution effectively undermined all potential interpretations of multicultural society. Equal contribution of ethnic and linguistic communities to societal development is unconstitutional, unless it is about reaffirming Estonian-centric values, traditions and importantly the language. Hence, the emphasis of the policy on state identity, joint activities of ethnic groups and cooperation at the level of local governments were all geared towards cooptation of minority members willing to support Estonianness, while scape-goating all those in opposition as undermining the constitutional foundations of the state.

The EIS was developed as a result of both international pressure on Estonia to address the segregation of its minority community, and the calls of local elites upon the Russian-speaking minority to participate more actively in political processes. The situation in Latvia was even more controversial because local non-citizens cannot participate in political decisions even at the local level. Thus, the lack of representation of minorities remained a serious challenge for democratic consolidation of society and the development of any solution to ethnic segregation.¹¹² In addition, neither the European conditionality, nor the ISL-NP produced the necessary consensus regarding either "integration" or "minority rights" among the titular Latvian public, which hampered the further development of policy on integration. In this light, it is not surprising that there was no follow-up programme when the ISL-NP ran out.

In early 2008, the Secretariat for Social Integration released a draft of "Basic Principles for Social Integration Policy, 2008–2013," but came under significant fire from majority politicians and the media for failing to promote the status of the state language more vigorously.¹¹³ During 2008, the secretariat continued consultations with NGOs and local stakeholders and developed the draft of an updated social integration programme. The draft was submitted for consideration of the government in the late 2008, but apparently it did not appeal to policy-makers as the programme was not prolonged.¹¹⁴ More importantly, the secretariat was reorganised and adjoined to the Ministry for Children and Family Affairs of Latvia in January 2009, putting an end to official rhetoric on society integration in Latvia.

The efforts to continue with the integration programmes were particularly important, because intolerance toward visible minorities in both Estonian and Latvian societies was on a constant rise. The topics dominating public discourse circled around ethnic issues and the discrimination faced by non-titulars from the titulars and vice versa. Estonian, Latvian and also Russian-speaking politicians across the region continuously emphasised ethnic issues to mobilise the electorate and stir up interethnic tensions.¹¹⁵ The review of the integration programmes suggests that despite policy-maker's efforts at creating common understandings about the role of the nation-state, the content of integration and the meaning of minority rights, all of these failed. It remains for further studies to clarify whether the resistance of majority political actors and publics are singularly at fault.

The constraints of space do not allow me to elaborate fully on the impact the debates on the social integration programmes had on the Baltic societies, although I will return to several issues brought up in the following chapters. The debates on "common national core," "national identity" and "cultural differences" gained particularly high currency during the debates on social integration and kept such a profile over the past decade. Due to this, brief discussion of the identity debates seems in order here.

The initial period of post-communist transition modelled the Baltic states and societies into the image of the pre-Soviet polities and relied heavily on the core cultural and linguistic values, something that is said to lie at the centre of the primordial reading of national identities.¹¹⁶ Culture-blind, but not culture-unbiased legislations on citizenship and language use connected post-Soviet political institutions to their pre-Soviet prototypes, but they also, as I have shown up until now, have incorporated essential elements of the Soviet institutional treatment of nationalities: Soviet republics belonged to titulars, were officially run in the republican language, and guaranteed preferred access to institutions to titular nationals. Finally, because integration of Soviet society relied on the language of all-Union state institutions, non-Russians were significantly disadvantaged if they were not proficient in the Russian language. Thick language policies to protect Baltic languages were implemented to shield them from Russian influence, commissions were created to monitor language purity and language inspectorates (commonly known as "language police") were installed to enforce language regulations. These policies fit too well in the Soviet institutional framework supporting titular identities at the expense of resident minorities, and, like the Soviet policies, they were not negotiable.

While political institutions supported nation-building and forged national identities of various kinds, throughout the 1990s discussions in the Baltic societies came to reflect on differences between the members from different ethnic groups.¹¹⁷ Although several studies on the role ethnicity in the post-communist democratisation, regime consolidation and, crucially, social cohesion were produced, generally identity was treated as a given and unchangeable. In the short run, it meant that the identities of all groups were in a state of conflict and needed to be stabilised, as we have seen the topic recurrent in social integration programmes.¹¹⁸ Naturally, empirical scholarly research focused on the role identity plays in political institutions, whether the differences could be alleviated, and if the identities of Russian-speaker would change.¹¹⁹

Titular identities were more often than not perceived as unchangeable and permanent, or at least in no need of changing, while the problems and dynamics underlying identification patterns of minorities were treated as resulting from the “Soviet ballast” and were perceived as alterable.¹²⁰ Very few studies treated majorities’ identity as a product of social construction or as a conscious choice, negotiating past and contemporary social, political and cultural constraints.¹²¹ The conflict of identities turned out to be seen as an issue of security and neatly framed in terms of “state security” during the EU membership negotiations.¹²² The Baltic states’ swift accession to the EU and NATO could do nothing but support the general perception of Baltic Europeanness. In this context the staunch resistance of the majority populations to debates on minority rights and value-liberalism suddenly became a proxy of each and everyone’s ethnonational identity, just as it did during the Soviet perestroika. Ultimately, no one was to challenge the EU’s credentials as minority protector or as a stronghold of democracy. The Baltic politicians, now officially a part of the European political elite referenced just that when dealing with minority claims for “multiculturalism with a human face.”¹²³

Particularly, the research on the progress of the integration programmes in Latvia and Estonia indicates that identities were not negotiable. Officially, titulars’ identities were fixed, while minorities’ were in flux and needed to be shaped by the structural disincentives for participation in public processes as members of the minority. Some were effectively co-opted, while others faced attitudinal difficulties in seeking integration. Limited motivation to acquire the state language and the set of negative collective images about the post-Soviet state and its citizenship was singled out as the most salient hindrance in all of the research on minority identities. At the same time, the emphasis on the ties of majorities with the state was strengthened to a degree that left the members of

minority with no other options but to dissociate from the public space dominated by the majority, or to blend in.

State integration programmes outlined the means for minorities to become accepted by learning the state language and adapting to the structural dominance of the titulars. At the same time, Estonia's and Latvia's integration documents and Lithuania's legislation on minorities strengthened their perceived similarities through the lens of the nationalising policies and their effects on non-state language communities. These two logics decisively influenced the prospects of future bi-communal relations across the region.

5. Conclusion

As I argue in this chapter, the documents aiming at the integration of the Baltic societies address issues relevant to minorities by inviting them to cooperate with the state institutions and majority publics on the terms defined by the majority nationals. On the one hand, the rhetoric of the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian documents suggest that the state-bearing nations in part continue to perceive themselves to be locked in a position where active steps of protection of the national language, culture and nation-centred education are necessary. The importance of the common, (majority-based) cultural values and views of history, the value of linguistic proficiency and the social accommodation of the interests of the representatives of non-core groups all feature strongly.

The rhetoric of the national integration programmes allows me to conclude that perception about the status of Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians in their homeland countries is best described as that of "minoritised majority."¹²⁴ On the other hand, however, I demonstrate that parts of the documents hint at the expected change in the relations between the core and non-core ethnic communities. While both are expected to be involved in shaping nation-wide policies, the role of the titular community is stressed throughout, with clear indication of the fact that the minorities would need to accept to the dominance of the state-bearing ethnic group and its language. Nothing could be a more pronounced indication that non-core groups would need to retreat into the position assigned to them by the majority as the status of an ethnic minority assuming a helping, but not central, role in development of the nation-states.

In the context of the Estonian and Latvian situations, this was no mean feat. The policy-makers provided strong indications of their intention to support the development of minority cultures and the retention of non-core groups' linguistic identities within the framework of the existing

state. A number of studies released since the adoption of the policy-documents, however, have demonstrated that its drafters largely overestimated the degree of political galvanisation of minority groups, as well as the degree of non-titulars' disaffection with the political entrepreneurs of their state of residence.¹²⁵ The minority members, particularly those with no citizenship and no voting rights, have even less incentive to associate with the political process in the country and see it as a tool of the titulars to establish policies which are favourable for the majority group.¹²⁶ While this statement is more applicable to the northern Baltic states with significant numbers of non-citizens, it also has relevance for the estimation of position by the Lithuanian minorities. They face similar difficulties of adapting to the situation of more explicit domination by the national majority.¹²⁷

The focus on the agency of integration could provide for a better understanding of non-titulars' motivation to develop more intensive ties with the state and its institutions. The Baltic political institutions are important signposts for those members of non-titular communities willing to take advantage of integration opportunities. For all those who are not willing or are not prepared to cooperate within the framework of the programmes, incentives are now provided to scale-down their expectations of political participation.

Notes

1 Muižnieks and Brands-Kehris, 2003.

2 Vida Beresnevičiūtė, 2005.

3 See the CES website, <http://www.ces.lt/en/index.php?strid=0& 2008-05-16>.

4 Poleshchuk, 2010.

5 Hallik, 2000; Kruusvall, 2002.

6 Järve, 2002; Jurado, 2003.

7 Cf. Kasatkina, Kadzauskas, and Sliavaite, 2006; Rozenvalds, 2005; Sarv, 2002.

8 Aalto, 2004; Poleshchuk and Tsilevich, 2004.

9 Dorodnova, 2002.

10 Poleshchuk and Tsilevich, 2004.

11 Kasatkina and Beresnevičiūtė, 2004, p.34.

12 The text of the Law: <http://www3.lrs.lt/n/eng/dpaieska> Retrieved 2008-08-02.

13 “The members of municipal councils shall be elected for a four-year term, as provided for by law, from among citizens of the Republic of Lithuania and other permanent residents of the administrative unit by the citizens of the Republic of Lithuania and other permanent residents of the administrative unit, on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot.” <http://www3.lrs.lt/home/Konstitucija/Constitution.htm> Lithuanian Constitution, Retrieved 2008–01–16

14 See e.g. budgeting of TMID’s activities for 2009 in Lithuanian Government, 2009a.

15 See Poleshchuk, 2010.

16 ISL-FD, p.56. Full text of the Framework document http://www.np.gov.lv/en/faili_en/integracija.zip Retrieved 2008–02–14.

17 Approximately 25,000 people engaged in the discussion, some 80 activities dedicated to the public discussion of the Concept and 306 newspaper articles directly related to the conception of the Programme, the final draft reflected diverse opinions on the topic. For an overview of the debates taking place, see

http://www.np.gov.lv/index.php?en=fjas_en&saite=integracija.htm Retrieved 2008–02–14.

18 Pettai, 2003.

19 Järve, 1997, p.64.

20 Järve and Wellmann, 1999.

21 Vello Pettai even argues that “because it had been drafted largely by Estonians as well as passed by the Estonian-dominated government and parliament, it represented what was essentially the predominant Estonian consensus on the issue, a bottom-line position on what Estonians would accept.” Pettai, 2003.

22 See an English version of The Bases on pp.39–42, in Järve and Wellmann, 1999.

23 Ibid. p.39.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid. p. 40.

26 See the website of the Integration Foundation, <http://www.meis.ee/> 27 SIP.

28 Pettai, 2003, p.69.

29 Translation of the original text of the SIP in Pettai, 2003, p.70.

30 Ibid. p.71.

31 Agarin, 2009a; Malloy, 2009b.

32 “Integration faces opposition from Russian parties” Brooke Donald in The Baltic Times Mar 09, 2000

- <http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/1608/>; “Estonian parliament rejects Russian integration bill” Jaclyn M. Sindrich in *The Baltic Times*, Sep 28, 2000 <http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/2670/> On Latvia “Integration finally gets budgeted” Ieva Tuna in *The Baltic Times* Apr 03, 2003 <http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/7880/> Retrieved 2009–12–07.
- 33 See interview with the Member of the Presidential Round Table on National Minorities in Hanon Barabaner “Kuda nas integrirujut? Kak?” in *Molodezh Estonii* October 12 2001 <http://www.moles.ee/01/Oct/12/10-1.php>; “Jazyk kak sredstvo politicheskij bor’by” *Molodezh Estonii*, January 05, 1999 <http://www.moles.ee/99/Jan/05/2-1.html> Retrieved 2009–12–07.
- 34 “Rozhdestvenskie tezisy” Aleksandr Astrov, DELFI.ee December 20 2001, <http://rus.delfi.ee/projects/opinion/rozhdestvenskie-tezisy.d?id=2736718>
- 35 As is stated in The Conclusion of ISL-NP
- 36 *Ibid.* p.4.
- 37 *Ibid.* p. 7.
- 38 *Ibid.* p.10.
- 39 *Ibid.* p. 47–48.
- 40 *Ibid.* p. 41–42.
- 41 *Ibid.* p. 56–59.
- 42 *Ibid.* p.56
- 43 *Ibid.* p.56.
- 44 ISL-FD, p.36.
- 45 ISL-NP p.69.
- 46 SIP.
- 47 Poleshchuk, 2004. See also regular reports at the website of Citizenship and Migration Board, http://www.mig.ee/index.php/mg/est/kodakondsus_ja_migratsiooniamet
- 48 Cf. Malloy, 2009b.
- 49 SIP, P.27.
- 50 Pettai, 2003, p.22.
- 51 SIP, p.74.
- 52 Lithuanian Government, Lietuvos Respublikos Etnines Politikos Konceptija (Vilnius: 2002). See full text of Conception’s draft version, http://www.tmid.lt/old/files/tm_koncepcija.pdf
- 53 Kasatkina and Beresneviciute, 2004, p.58.
- 54 Lithuanian Government, Lietuvos Respublikos Etnines Politikos Konceptija.pp.6–7.

55 Kasatkina and Beresneviciute, 2004, p.58.

56 Ibid. Pp.46–50.

57 Lithuanian Government, *The Programme Integration of Roma in Lithuanian Society 2000–2004* (Vilnius: 2000). Lithuanian Government, 2009c.

58 ECRI, 2005c; Beresneviciute and Leoncikas, 2008.

59 ECRI, 2005b; Latvian Government, *The National Programme Roma in Latvia 2007–2009* (Riga: 2006).

60 ECRI, 2005a.

61 See more recent discussions, Cashman, 2009; McGarry, 2009; Nikolic, 2009; Salamun, 2009; Tremlett, 2009; Vermeersch and Ram, 2009.

62 Normunds Rudevics, the President of the Cultural Association of Latvian Roma and the Latvian MP, had continuously made an appearance in the Latvian press. He criticised that money allocated for the study of Roma could be better spend be used instead for the improvement of Roma living conditions. (Neatkariga, 18 August 2003); claimed that the Roma integration program proposed by the Secretariat of the Special Assignment Minister for Social Integration did not take into account cultural traditions of Roma and emphasised the need to support Roma family business in various fields (Chas, 3 April 2006), and claimed to have developed Roma integration plan, which Minister of Integration failed to consider (Vesti Segodnya, 16 April 2007).

63 Latvian Government, 2008.

64 SIP.

65 See Integration Foundation, *Integration Monitoring* (Tallinn: Institute of International and Social Studies, 2000).

66 SIP, p.23.

67 Malloy, 2009b, 239.

68 ‘Razrabatyvaetsya programma integratsii nekorenogo pokoleniya’, *Molodezh Estonii* Subbota, November 13, 1999.

69 Integration Foundation, *Integration Monitoring* (Tallinn: Institute of International and Social Studies, 2002).

70 ISL-NP p.13.

71 Ibid. p.13.

72 Ibid. pp.14–15.

73 Ibid.

74 ISL-FD, p.14. Section ‘Goals’

75 ISL-NP. p.15.

76 ISL-NP p.13.

77 Ibid.. p.14.

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- 78 Ibid. p. 34.
- 79 “Estonians want non-Estonians to leave” The Baltic Times/BNS Sep 14, 2000 <http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/2537/>; “Ethnic policy in Latvia on downward trend” Anna Pridanova in The Baltic Times Jul 12, 2001 <http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/5185/> Retrieved 2009-12-08.
- 80 SIP,
- 81 Ibid. Section 3.2. p.17.
- 82 Ibid. Section 6.
- 83 Ibid. p.75.
- 84 See Brosig, 2008.
- 85 European Commission, Regular Report, 2001, p.23
FD,
- 86 SIP, P.24.
- 87 Ibid. p.25.
- 88 ISL-FD, p.46.
- 89 ISL-NP, p.96.
- 90 Ibid. p.104.
- 91 Zepa, 2006, p.21; Zepa et al., 2006.
- 92 Vetik, 2000; Zepa et al.,.
- 93 Lithuanian Government, Lietuvos Respublikos Etnines Politikos Konceptija.. Pp.27–28.
- 94 Ibid. p.29.
- 95 Silova and Catlaks, 2001; Silova 2002; Schulze 2009a, b, c.
- 96 Interview with Tatiana Mihneva (President of the Coordinating Council of Russian Community of Lithuania, Vilnius, January 2008) and Michal Mickiewicz (President of the Union of Poles in Lithuania, Vilnius, January 2008).
- 97 SIP,p.17.
- 98 ISL-NP p.9.
- 99 Intergation Monitor 2002; 2005.
- 100 Aalto 2003; Zepa et al 2004.
- 101 SIS, pp.4–7;
- 102 SIS, p.3.
- 103 Among others, see ECRI 2005a, b.
- 104 SIS, pp. 73–77.
- 105 See Estonian Government, 2007.
- 106 EIS, pp.3–4.
- 107 EIS, p.4.
- 108 EIS, p.9.

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- 109 EIS, p. 19.
110 EIS, p. 12.
111 EIS, pp.7–8.
112 “Integracija – zadanje dlja vsego pravitel’stva: Oskar Kastens” Igor Vatolin in Chas. Aug 14, 2007.
113 Latvian government, 2008a.
114 LatvianGovernment, 2008b, 2009.
115 ECRI 2005a, b.
116 Gellner, 1983; Raun and Plakans, 1990.
117 Szporluk, 1994; Melvin, 1995; Kasatkina, 1996; Christophe, 1997; Laitin, 1998; Smith, et al., 1998; Skulte, 2005.
118 Jakobson, 2002a; Kronenfeld, 2004; Tammpuu, 2004; Rodins, 2005; Rose, et al., 2005; Skultans, 1997; Orr, 2008.
119 Dickinson, 2005; Schwartz, 2006b; Smith, 2008; Ehala, 2009.
120 Vihalemm, 2007; Vihalemm and Masso, 2007; Davydova, 2008; Vihalemm, 1999a, b; Viires, 1999; Vihalemm and Masso, 2003; Purs, 2004; Vetik, et al., 2004; Raun, 2009.
121 Notably, Donskis, 2002; Apine and Volkovs, 2007; Silova, 2006 all follow this thread in narrative.
122 Jundzis, 2001; Berg, 2002; Kuus, 2002; Aalto, 2003; Made, 2003; Rindzeviciute, 2003; Galbreath, 2005b; Astrov, 2007.
123 Interview with Igor Ivanov, Founding member and activist of the Young People’s NGO ‘Siin’, Tallinn, April 2008.
124 Kymlicka, 2007, pp. 185–86.
125 Kasatkina and Leončikas, 2003, pp.26–73; Galbreath, 2005; van El-suwege, 2004; Zepa et al., 2006 Esp. pp.54–65.
126 Comparatively: Zepa and Supule, 2006. The case of Latvia: Zepa et al., 2006; Zepa and Karklins, 2001. The case of Estonia: Poleshchuk, 2004; Kirch, Tuisk, and Talst, 2006; Lagerspetz., 2005, pp. 33–40.
127 Leončikas, 2007.

Chapter 7

The Language of alienation

In this chapter I discuss how the majority and the minority communities' perceptions play out in the context of social interactions. As I demonstrate throughout this chapter, limited opportunities for social mobility for certain linguistic groups in the Baltic states have been conducive for a limited amount of intercommunal dialogue between the titular and non-titular ethnics in the Baltic states. The dialogue, as I demonstrate, is mainly based upon the stereotypical representations in the media and the belligerent discourse of elites in both communities.

I also suggest that the members of minority communities have considerably changed their views on their states of residence, as well as of the majority communities from the 1990s through the early 2000s. However, the representation of non-titulars in the local media suggests that the communities, although existing side by side, have a rather shallow experience of interethnic dialogue. I outline several reasons for this. The lack of political will to accommodate many of the minority claims in the framework of Baltic legislation discussed above had complicated the situation and continues to impede solutions to interethnic tensions. I then discuss how the position of minority groups is viewed by majority populations and by minorities themselves, as is taken from public opinion research. While comprehensive data on perceptions of minority communities by the majorities is not available for the Baltic states, studies of minority groups' image in the regional media are abundant. These indicate the reasons why the Russian-speakers had limited engagement in political processes in the Baltic states between 1991 and 2004. Finally, I discuss the consequences of the linguistic segregation of the Baltic societies, taking the mass mobilisation against school reform in Latvia and the removal of the Soviet soldier monument in Estonia, as well as the reaction of respective governments, as examples of non-existent communication.

The current chapter addresses the question as to how structural constraints imposed by language legislation conditioned differences in opinions of different ethnic communities. I take proficiency in the state language as the indicator for persisting social inequalities across the region,

providing the foundation for the intercommunal tensions in each of the Baltic societies.

1. Minorities' proficiency in the state language

Issues of language use, such as teaching through the medium of a minority language and linguistic proficiency as a prerequisite for integration into the Baltic societies, have been constantly at the centre of attention in both the minority and majority populations. The research on the political consequences of regulating language use across the region leaves no doubt of the titular languages' importance for the functioning of the Baltic societies. However, representatives of minority groups have consistently criticised the regulatory aspect of linguistic policies in the Baltic states.

However, the data from the official sources of the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian republics clearly suggests that over the years of independence the members of non-titular communities have improved their knowledge of the titular language and increasingly use it as the first language in communication with other people. Although the official Estonian position states that over the past years the interest of the non-Estonian population in acquiring the skills in state language has grown, the monitoring of the integration process in the country suggests that it effectively halted in the early 2000s.¹ Prior to that, the language skills of the minority population had constantly been on the rise with 67% of adults and 92% of young people claiming proficiency in the Estonian language in 1999. Overall only 42% of resident non-Estonians declared (any) knowledge of the state language in 1989; by 2007, the numbers had risen to 83%.² These numbers have been growing over the past decade, but the level of proficiency among the adult non-Estonian population is still considered to be insufficient to compete with Estonians in the labour market on an equal basis.³ It is also frequently mentioned that the language skills of non-core ethnics are most often far too low to allow them to cope in the Estonian-speaking environment in everyday situations.⁴

Different schemes were provided by the Estonian government to improve the language proficiency of the minority population. The programme "Interest," operating 1999–2005 was particularly successful in language training while providing a refund of the language learning fees for the candidates who successfully passed the language examination.⁵ The information collected from those applying for the refund suggests that more than half of those would use the language training to gain access to citizenship examinations. Only around a third of those seeking financial support stated that they were simply improving their knowledge of Esto-

nian.⁶ The reports suggest that around 11% of the students were enrolling in these courses in order to access higher education in Estonian high schools. This data clearly indicates that at that time there was an insufficient number of educational establishments functioning in languages other than Estonian *and* that the language training at minority schools could not sufficiently prepare graduates to study at the university level in Estonian. More recent research on education facilities in Estonia corroborates these earlier findings, although there is general improvement in the levels of state language knowledge with minority students.⁷

The data provided by the language learning facilities in Estonia also indicates some curious reasons for non-titular residents to acquire and/or improve knowledge in the state language. Around half of those taking advantage of the course were individuals with undetermined citizenship and had passed the language test at the lowest level.⁸ Most certainly, these course participants had sufficient levels of state language proficiency to apply for Estonian citizenship before attending the courses and could be considered “integrated” into Estonian society, following the state definition of integration.⁹

The increasing proficiency of non-titulars in Estonian comes particularly in the face of diminishing knowledge of Russian by the younger generation of Estonians, while the growing number of Russian-speakers in the country who declare active knowledge of the state language. At the same time, Estonian social scientists indicate that minorities favour the state language to communicate with their Estonian peers or when addressing individuals in public.¹⁰ The survey of the process of integration, “Integration Monitoring,” suggests that some 45% of the students in Russian schools who have been studying Estonian, indicate that they gain only basic skills in the state language. The lack of opportunity to apply the knowledge gained undermines the overall language skills of the Russian-speakers and ultimately results in the loss of Estonian knowledge.¹¹ The 2007 TIES study of minority youth additionally indicates that Russian-speakers residing in the country’s capital are more likely to have better knowledge of the language, but have less opportunity to use it due to the lack of Estonian-speaking networks.¹²

The study “Mina, Maailm, Media” indicates that although the highest level of self-reported language proficiency is among 30–54 year olds, this is also the group that has the fewest contacts with Estonian-speakers.¹³ At the same time, the report by Ernst & Young, prepared in cooperation with the Integration Foundation, clearly demonstrates that the group of 15–19 year olds use the Estonian language the most (around 93% declare active regular use), with the elder age cohort (20–29) declaring the second

most frequent use of the language and contacts with speakers of Estonian.¹⁴ On the basis of the data collected in the TIES study in 2008, Jennie Schulze reports that Russian-speakers have used Estonian even more widely since.¹⁵

Integration monitoring has not failed to indicate the inherent drive of the non-Estonian groups in the country to acquire knowledge of the state language without having also learned to identify with the state of their residence.¹⁶ On some occasions, the reports suggest that studying the language would facilitate the application for citizenship, as well as create more opportunities for participation in Estonian society.¹⁷ The non-Estonians, as is positively emphasized in these reports, seem to be willing to contribute to the development of the Estonian state and show positive attitudes and behaviours towards the Estonians, as well as towards Estonian society.

On the part of Estonians, however, as is repeated in the monitoring results, there is only a limited preparedness to identify the non-core ethnics as potential contributors to the country's development. The last point is corroborated in the studies of Russian-speakers' attitudes.¹⁸ Considerable doubts have been raised by local observers examining whether the limited willingness of non-Estonians to engage in the life of civil society is determined by their beliefs in the state's disinterest in their fate, by perceived alienation from the titular ethnic group, or should be explained by some other means. As had been stated in the mid-term report on the integration process, "non-Estonians do not perceive a clear interest from the state towards their prospects nor do they feel Estonians accept the multiculturalism that has developed in society."¹⁹

"Integration Monitoring 2005" indicated that the Estonian youth have a very fragmentary picture of the ethnic minorities inhabiting the country because they have limited contacts with non-Estonians. Generally, Estonian youth believe that the integration process should affect non-Estonians only without requiring any steps to be undertaken by the Estonian majority.²⁰ The research also indicated that Estonian society is perceived by many young people as guaranteeing the place and survival for one ethnic group, i.e. Estonians, in which Estonia's minorities should be prepared to assume an inferior social status.²¹ For members of the minority community residing in areas dominated by Estonians, this is increasingly becoming a reality.²² The same view appears to be unacceptable in regions such as Ida-Virumaa, where non-Estonians are clearly the demographic majority.²³

My interviews with members of minority NGOs in 2006 have confirmed, members of minority groups themselves consider ethnic Estonians

to occupy the higher position on the social ladder by the mere fact of their belonging to an ethnic majority group.²⁴ Thus they envision that the best way of improving their social status is only by acquiring skills in the titular language. The studies of relations between Estonia's youngsters in the aftermath of the 2007 Bronze Night events additionally suggest the decreasing preparedness of Estonian-speakers to engage with Russian-speakers throughout the country. Russian-speaking youth on the other hand, are found to be more willing to entertain contacts with Estonian-speakers. However, the findings are alarming in so far as the titulars appear to be more resilient in blocking interactions with non-Estonians in informal situations.²⁵

In Latvia the results of the population census in 2000 showed that 79% of the population speaks the state language, a dramatic increase from the 50% in 1989. This, however, does not indicate that the use of Latvian expanded at the expense of other languages, mainly Russian. The study "Ethnopolitical tension in Latvia" conducted in 2004 states that

"communication between ethnic Latvians and local residents of other nationalities usually takes place in Russian, because Latvian language skills tend to be much worse among Russians and people of other non-titular nationalities than are Russian language skills among ethnic Latvians."²⁶

The "Language," a research by the Baltic Institute for Social Science (further, BISS) assessed the efficacy of the state language programme between 1996 and 2004. The authors argue that the titular nationals almost exclusively use the state language to communicate with other ethnics. A great number of the non-titular, non-Russian populations in the region, such as local Poles, Ukrainians, Jews and Germans still deploy Russian as the major tool for communication among each other and with Latvians.²⁷

The "Language" also indicates that each of the ethnic communities in Latvian society predominantly employs the language of their own group for intragroup communication. The data suggests that over 90% of Latvians and Russians use their respective language at home,²⁸ while at the same time the non-Latvian minorities are employing their Russian-language skills for daily communication at home and at work.²⁹ In this light, it is of course alarming for the titular community in Latvia to see that after almost a decade of independence a large part of the non-titular community is still "separated from the Latvian-speaking environment." The BISS study shows that up to 10% of surveyed non-Latvians, when reviewing their language skills, admit that they do not know the state lan-

guage at all, while 43% indicate a “very poor” level (the lowest level of language skills in official testing terminology). At the same time, the 2004 survey shows that eight years after the introduction of the state language programme in Latvia, less than half of respondents (47%) have a “more or less free command of the Latvian language.”

An important difference in terms of language knowledge and use is visible in terms of generational differences among non-Latvians. The members of the younger age group (15–34 years old) estimate their knowledge to be very good, but they are counterweighted by the majority of population in the age-group 50–74 who have no command of Latvian. A somewhat similar trend is observed with respect to Russian-language skills among ethnic Latvians. However, one should note that titulars still claim to know the Russian language better than non-titulars know Latvian: 73% of Latvians declare a good command, 23% poor skills, and 4% do not know Russian at all.³⁰

Nonetheless, the use of the state language has been noted to increase gradually over the past years. A number of BISS analytical reports suggest that in the period of 1996–2000 non-titulars use Latvian at work and on the street much more often, showing a rising tendency from 9 to 23%, and 21 to 23% respectively.³¹ Between 2000 and 2003, the attitudes of minority groups towards the Latvian language have been constantly improving, growing from 29% of respondents who responded that they “enjoyably” speak Latvian in 2000 to more than a third (38%) stating the same in 2003.³²

Minority populations constitute only a marginal part of Lithuania, which could explain their somewhat different level of proficiency in the state language. Indeed, the results of the national population census in Lithuania (2001) suggested that while accounting for merely 16% of the population, minorities have from “good” to “very good” knowledge of Lithuanian. The most striking difference can be observed between the autochthonous minorities and the Soviet-era migrants: the majority of Polish-speakers residing in South Eastern Lithuania and an Old Believer’s community in Northern Lithuania demonstrate “very good” proficiency in the language and hence are considered to be well-integrated in official terminology.³³

The regional settlement of Polish-speakers predisposes the members of the group to choose a more protective attitude to their language, even in the face of this group’s high levels of state language proficiency.³⁴ As local surveys indicate, Lithuania’s Poles tend to use their native language more frequently for everyday communication, as well as with respect to communication with public officials.³⁵ They also send their chil-

dren to Polish-speaking schools more frequently than Russian-speaking minorities choose Russian language schools.³⁶ Today, however, while Polish-speaking school-students are educated in their mother tongue, only a limited number of Lithuanian Poles continue to use the higher education institutions of their country. This accounts for the plummeting levels of higher education among the Polish-speaking community, which is lower than among any other ethnic group in the country.³⁷ The distinct ethnic composition of South Eastern Lithuania also has implications for the distinctiveness of the Polish-speakers who, residing in compact communities, enjoy significant opportunities for linguistic favouritism.

The members of Lithuania's Russian-speaking community demonstrate far less linguistic cohesiveness. This is particularly clear from the observations of the educational behaviour of Russian-speakers, who tend to send their children more frequently to institutions where the language of instruction is Russian, and only where schooling in Russian is unavailable, in Lithuanian. The results of these educational preferences, as I discuss in chapter 5, have gradually led to a growing decline in the number of schools providing education in Russian over the past decade. While especially in Southern and South Eastern Lithuania many individuals demonstrate active bilingualism or even trilingualism, there is growing evidence that linguistic preferences have been changing over the years of independence from Russian towards Lithuanian and Polish. Some researchers even go as far as to argue that the lack of strict linguistic cohesion and enforcement policies of the Lithuanian state have over time resulted in the improvement of "the prospects for social integration and the promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity."³⁸

Some Russian and Polish-speakers also send their children to be educated in Lithuanian language schools. Once again, the differences between the ethnic groups are striking: While up to 33% of Russian-speakers indicate that schooling in Lithuanian allows their children to attend a better university in Lithuania, only 9% of Polish-speakers agree with the same statement. The agreements of the Lithuanian state with Poland and Polish governmental programmes supporting ethnic Poles abroad allow Lithuanian (and also Latvian) Poles to gain education free of charge in neighbouring Poland. During my interviews many representatives of the Polish community suggested that such opportunities for geographical and social mobility encourage many parents of Polish-speaking children to emphasise education in the mother-tongue in order to improve their children's future employment opportunities.³⁹

It appears that the funding provided by the Polish state for the regional development of South Eastern Lithuania plays a key role in this

respect. Since signing the interstate treaty in 1994, Poland has provided considerable financial support for schools with Polish as the language of education by offering materials, supporting student exchanges to Poland and generously financing the infrastructural development of minority schools. Poland's quasi non-governmental organisation, *Wspólnota Polska*, is particularly active in advocating state support for minority education and throughout the years was monitoring the fulfilment of the interstate treaty by the Lithuanian authorities. In addition, *Wspólnota Polska* draws up suggestions for the Polish government to allocate financial resources into regional infrastructure and support Polish-speakers education in Lithuania.⁴⁰

Poland's calls to establish a Polish-language university to improve the education situation in South Eastern Lithuania were at the heart of contention for nearly a decade and provided a rallying point for Lithuanian radicals. Finally, Białystok University was granted permission in 2007 to establish a branch in Vilnius and train specialists in economics and informatics.⁴¹ Arguably, the move was endorsed by the Lithuanian government due to the considerable "brain drain" of Polish-speakers who, throughout the 1990s-early 2000s had moved to Poland, where they could receive university degrees free of charge and frequently did not return to Lithuania.⁴²

The Lithuanian state however continuously sought to undermine the opportunities for Polish-speakers to migrate to Poland for education purposes. During the term of Zigmas Zinkevicius at the head of the Ministry of Education (1996–1998), teaching of Lithuanian was intensified in Polish language schools, while the number of subjects with obligatory teaching in Polish was reduced.⁴³ In addition, the Polish language exam was scrapped from the list of obligatory subjects in secondary school exams and was made optional, causing significant protests across the country and in Poland proper. In a move that is supposed to improve Polish-speakers' proficiency in Lithuanian throughout education system, the Ministry of Education removed (native) Polish language from the list mandatory examinations at the primary school level as of 2010. These regulations went hand in hand with the promotion of Lithuanian in all minority schools, which now will be obliged to conduct all written communication with the students and their parents in the state language. One could interpret this push as a top-down effort to enforce the status of Lithuanian in a traditionally Polish speaking area, especially given that the move came after the general education and particularly language teaching in the South Eastern Lithuania were evaluated positively in the early 2000s.⁴⁴

The lack of a concentrated settlement of Russian-speakers in Lithuania brings about different results for the same reasons: parents are prompted to send their children to Lithuanian schools in order to facilitate their linguistic and social integration into the mainstream society through education facilities. In interviews with members of the Russian-speaking community in Vilnius, it became apparent that opportunities for higher education in Russian abroad, i.e. in the Russian Federation or in Belarus, do not present an attractive prospect in the long-run.⁴⁵ While education in Polish and in Poland might bring Lithuanian Polish-speakers greater assets in the context of the European Union, Russian-speakers recognize that higher education in their native language does not bring them strategic advantages in Lithuania. Other observers suggest that it is

“mainly the more educated strata of the minority population that favour Lithuanian-medium schools for their offspring. These parents clearly see their children’s future as being directly linked to success in mainstream society, and thus do not want to limit their chances in this regard by offering them too much accommodation (i.e. education in minority language alone).”⁴⁶

Russian is still spoken by the widest majority of the population, i.e. up to 90%, and is very closely followed by Lithuanian at 83%.⁴⁷ These numbers also suggest that the majority of Lithuanian minority residents is proficient in the state language and are even in favour of the centralised language examination for graduates of all schools to ensure formal equality in employment. The reasons mentioned most often in this context include instrumental attitudes, e.g. job opportunities and equal chances in the labour market, but predominantly indicate idealistic reasons such as raising the level of competence, unifying the country, etc.⁴⁸ Kasatkina and Leoncikas suggest that the members of minorities are not only declaring their preparedness to acknowledge the central role of the Lithuanian language but also to support this by various means.⁴⁹

As elsewhere in the Baltic states, Lithuanian minorities demonstrate a complex set of linguistic loyalties which do not correspond to their ethnic identities. In fact, Lithuania’s two largest linguistic minority groups, Polish and Russian, demonstrate positive views towards the state language, and representatives of the smaller national minority groups indicate that there is a particular affinity of these groups for their “titular” language. While the population census indicates that over the years of independence the spread of the state language is increasing in Lithuania as in

the other two Baltic states, various ethnic groups demonstrate different levels of proficiency and a range of reasons for acquiring the state language. Polish-speakers mention idealistic reasons for the knowledge of the language—for instance, “a citizen of Lithuania should know the Lithuanian language,” as well as note that “the language of Lithuanians is important to avoid being cut off from society or to be accepted.”⁵⁰

My discussion so far indicated that those parts of the minority populations across the region that have opted for accommodation with the dominance of the state language have done this by acknowledging its importance for social mobility, not for idealistic reasons. The next part of the chapter demonstrates that the limited opportunities for communication between linguistic communities cannot solely be tied to proficiency in the state language. The majority members’ lack of will to take minority claims seriously has perpetuated the linguistic divide in the Baltic societies. The cleft between the communities in each state is particularly visible from the analyses of the media produced for different language communities.

2. The Russian-speaking information space

The individuals from minority communities have been continuously improving their proficiency in the state languages since the mid-1990s. However, as I have also made clear, the reasons for language acquisition frequently do not converge with the expectations of the titulars, who would like to see minorities learning the state language for intrinsic reasons, as a way to identify with a nation-state and its language policies.

Minority populations in the region acquire language skills for pragmatic reasons, among others, because the state language is necessary for social advancement and the improvement of economic status. The research of language use in urban areas provides a wealth of data confirming that members of the minority can rely on services and social networks functioning entirely in their native language.⁵¹ One of the areas in the public domain that sustains the relative autonomy of the minority linguistic communities’ social interactions is the media. From the media resources in minority languages, non-titulars collect information about other ethnic groups in their country, form opinions on political issues and express their expectations to an audience with the similar rhetorical repertoire. Nonetheless, local scholarship indicates that the reference of minority groups to the information in their native language largely impedes national accord and hinders social consolidation.⁵² This topic recurred forcefully during the mass protests against education reform in Latvia, 2004, and the April 2007 events in Estonia.

While no restrictions on language use exist in any of the Baltic states in the field of printed media, the situation regarding the electronic media in Estonia is markedly different from that in Latvia. The Estonian Language Act states that, during broadcasts, “foreign language text shall be accompanied by an adequate translation into Estonian.” The radio broadcasts “aimed at a foreign language audience” are explicitly exempted from this requirement.⁵³ Arguably, the term “foreign language” was a significant improvement when compared to pre-war Estonia’s Language Law of 1934, where all languages except for Estonian were termed “alien.”⁵⁴

The 1994 Broadcasting Act requires that at least one of the two public *Eesti Raadio* channels air “in a foreign language,”⁵⁵ naturally applying to the broadcasts in the language of the Russian minority. However, the Estonian Language Act, amended in 1997, limits the volume of “foreign language” news and live programmes on both public and private television which can be broadcast without translation into Estonian, to no more than 10% “of the volume of weekly original production.”⁵⁶ In Latvia, the share of broadcasts on private radio and television channels in languages other than Latvian must not exceed 25% of the total amount of daily broadcasting.⁵⁷ As for public television and radio, the first channel must broadcast exclusively in the state language, whereas the same law allows for up to 20% of broadcasting in “foreign languages” on the second channel.⁵⁸ In practice, these regulations not only constrain the freedom of expression in non-state languages, they also effectively prevent minorities from establishing their own electronic media broadcasting in a “foreign language” from within the country.

As has been argued by minority activists, the legal regulation of language use in the media effectively restricts access to information from official channels on Latvian and Estonian current events and redirects minority members to sources providing information in their language.⁵⁹ While these language limitations do not affect cable and satellite broadcasts, many members of minority communities are limited in access to information aired regularly. This encourages them to seek information in their language from sources located outside of their country of residence, predominantly from the Russian Federation.

The Russian Federation is an active player on the information market in the Baltic states by supporting a range of media broadcasting from outside the region. Despite targeting Baltic Russian-speakers, broadcasts from the Russian Federation dedicate much more of their air-time to information on the events in Russia proper than on political and social events in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The digests of the events in the

region are more often than not presented in a language containing generalisations and mild (but distinct) accusations, depicting Baltic events in a negative light and at times openly fanning the hysteria on sensitive issues, such as interethnic relations.

In Lithuania the situation differs slightly, although insignificantly. The Lithuanian Ethics Commission, the Radio and Television Commission, the Council of Lithuanian National Radio and Television and the Foundation for the Support of Press, Radio and Television oversee the broadcasting in minority languages. While the members of the Ethnic Commission and other institutions are appointed by the media industry, as well as by various public non-political organizations, public interest and reflections on minority issues appear to be highly politicised in Lithuania.⁶⁰ Over the past decade, the amount of radio broadcasting in minority languages has been diminishing down to half an hour per day in Russian and fifteen minutes in Polish. The changes have left minority members without full-scale state-funded broadcasting services in their native languages due to curtailed funding. While previously the daily news was broadcast in Russian on state television, this practice has been discontinued due to lack of financial support by the state, leaving only private regional television companies to broadcast programmes in Russian, Polish and Belarusian. On a broader scale, Lithuania's minorities have access to 35 newspapers and 6 magazines in their languages: 31 of them are published in Russian, 7 in Polish, 1 in Belarusian and 2 in German.⁶¹ However, the "newspapers in Russian, for instance, are written in bad Russian; they depend on the information from the press of Russia and largely the reviews of this press. The same may be said about other minority press."⁶²

Despite the persistent calls for establishing national Russian language channels to inform the minority publics of the current political and economic events, such projects have not been considered in any of the states. While local media research suggests that television is the most popular and hence most influential mass-media throughout the region,⁶³ the local journalists argue that the current amount and quality of Russian-language programmes is "working not for, but against integration" of ethnic communities.⁶⁴ For example, percentages of the titular community in Latvia that follow radio and TV programmes in their language *only* are 84 and 85%, respectively, while for the Russian-speaking community in Latvia these numbers are 78 and 85%, respectively. Even in the case of printed media, up to three-quarters of all non-titular respondents in Latvia indicate that they never read papers in the state language, a number significantly higher than those unable to speak Latvian.⁶⁵ All of these observations demonstrate that at present, not only are language issues at play,

but when it comes to the minority taking notice of the media in another language, other factors are also of significant importance.

Studies of the media in Lithuania suggest that the extent to which minority members turn to information resources in the state language depends on their success in adapting to their position in society, the quality of the media and on the perceptions that they encounter in reports on the issues of concern to them.⁶⁶ Tadas Leončikas suggests that the more a group is integrated into society, the more its views on social and political events and preferences for information sources resemble those of the majority. He also stresses that the differences in presentation of the issues such as the integration of Lithuania into Europe impacts the preferences of the Russian- and Polish-speakers for different media sources.

In reviewing Lithuania's Russian-language press Birute Sinočkina indicates that despite the fact that some essential differences in the majority and minority press persist, current publications in minority languages have a clearly distinguishable audience.⁶⁷ The country-wide press in Russian such as *Respublika*, *Litovskij kurier*, *Ponedel'nik* and *Obzor* caters to those in search of an alternative interpretation of political events, minority and majority alike. At the same time, the local and regional newspapers, such as *Klaipeda*, *Slovo*, *Vesti Šal'či*, *Švenčionskij kraj*, *Nalšios Žinois*, *Kurier Wilenski*, *Vilnius* and *Sugardas* mainly address the issues of interest for the residents of particular towns and regions, and are also read by local Lithuanians.⁶⁸ One of the interesting observations Sinočkina makes with respect to the press in minority languages in Lithuania is that frequently Russian-language publications are also paralleled by Lithuanian versions of the same material (e.g. *Lietuvos rytas*, *Respublika*, *Klaipeda*, *Ponedel'nik/Pirmadienis*, etc.) The content of the Russian-language publications, Sinočkina suggests, focuses mainly on people with limited knowledge of the state language. However, they also have a clear appeal to Lithuanian older readership and those residing in areas of compact minority settlement.⁶⁹ In general, however, she predicts that with the growing number of Russian-speakers proficient in Lithuanian, the amount of Russian-speaking press addressing national and local issues will be declining, while the publications providing a digest of the news from the Russian Federation will keep their place in Lithuanian media landscape.⁷⁰

The Lithuanian context questions the assumption made by the media analysis in Latvia and Estonia, namely, whether the preference for a particular language of information depends solely on the language proficiency of an interlocutor.⁷¹ Interestingly, the research in Latvia and Estonia stresses that, although minority populations only have limited access to the media in their own language, they rarely resort to the news coverage in

the language of majority. The local research see this as the reason for minorities' alienation from the state institutions and majority populations, but the style of coverage and information provided suggest that there is a more fundamental mismatch between the media spheres.⁷²

Particularly, the research on media in Latvia has detailed and addressed various differences found between Latvian and Russian-language sources. Similar conclusions are drawn in "Ethnopolitical tension in Latvia." Here the BISS includes an introductory remark that "the audience of the mass media in Latvia is divided up between those who read, watch and listen in Latvian and those who read, watch and listen in Russian."⁷³ Importantly, the majority of Russian-speakers in Latvia use the mass media from Russia, with television being the media with the largest audience. BISS analysts thus suggest that "the attitudes of many Russian-speakers in Latvia are closer to the attitudes that are expressed in the Russian media, as opposed to the official views of the country in which these people live."⁷⁴ However, the situation might be somewhat mitigated by the fact that some 7% of Russian respondents and some 8% of other non-Latvians taking part in the survey indicate that they read at least one of the Latvian-language national newspapers (most frequently, *Diena*) regularly.

Despite the meagre impact of the titular language press on minority communities, the difference in references to the printed media is not as pronounced as one would expect. Both parts of society in Latvia are only rarely interested in each others' newspapers. The Latvian audience favours the state-centred and somewhat more conservative *Latvijas Avīze* and *Neatkarīgā* (23% and 12%, respectively). Russians and other non-Latvians read *Vesti Segodnya*, *Subbota*, *Chas* and *Telegraf*,⁷⁵ all much more critical of the political events in the country and standing more in defence of minority interests in Latvia.⁷⁶ On several occasions, local researchers have effectively blamed Soviet linguistic policies for creating linguistically bipolar societies in the Baltic states. Pabriks notes that

"precisely because of the linguistic inability to access the mass media operating in Latvian, the political orientation and attitudes of Russian speakers differed and continue to differ from those who were bilingual or whose native language was Latvian."⁷⁷

"The difference can be characterized in a way that most of media in Russian present cynical views about the state as such while media in Latvian on the same issues only criticize the authority, institutions or particular politicians."⁷⁸

However, critical studies of the Russian-speaking press in Latvia increasingly suggest that the journalists working for these papers are less interested in the unbiased presentation of the situation in Latvia, but act more under economic pressures and hence are more responsive to incentives from the financial donors to their publications. The Latvian journalists frequently argue that Russian-speaking publications enforce the situation where two information spaces exist separately.⁷⁹ This allows Latvian journalists to speculate on Russian business interests in Latvia's Russian-language media and on the anti-Latvian interests within the Russian-speaking community.⁸⁰

It is therefore not surprising that the results of media content analyses of the leading Russian- and Latvian-speaking newspapers conducted by the Latvian agency "Mediju Tilts" in 2004 indicate that the majority of comments about the "other" nationality were presented in highly emotional and frequently negative terms.⁸¹ The report concludes that the Latvian-language press still struggles with accepting the Russian-speaking community as a part of Latvia's society: Russian-speakers are frequently referred to in the context of "occupation," "repressions" and the Russian state. Overall, the frequent parallels drawn between the Russian-speakers of Latvia and the Russian state have no positive connotation in the Latvian-speaking press, although Russian-speakers who have mastered the Latvian language are presented in a more positive light. On the other hand, the Russian-speaking press transmits a negative picture of the situation in Latvia. It does so by distinguishing Latvia as the country of residence, rather than a political system. In this sense, politicians and the government more often than not are seen as representatives of the titular nation, of Latvians, but not of the residents of Latvia. Media studies in Estonia suggest that the situation there is similar to that of Latvia,

"it is natural that the media can be of two kinds: the Estonian-speaking and the Russian-speaking. [...] There is a reason to presume that they are acting differently in covering rather sensitive society issues and especially the relationship between the Estonian- and Russian-speaking communities residing in Estonia."⁸²

Two decisive points with respect to the media in that country have been noted in media studies since the mid-1990s. Firstly, the media reflects the ethnopolitical gap between ethnic groups, with public information channels being instrumentalised by various political and economic actors for their purposes.⁸³ Media research in all three states points to a

clear difference between the media in minority and majority languages, which cover the same events. Some have interpreted the difference as a result of politicking by majority groups, and the “circumstances inhibiting integration are often found particularly in the attitude of Estonians.”⁸⁴ The Estonian-language press addresses the issues of high concern for the majority society, but it is equally successful in disregarding the opinions and concerns of the minority as has been observed during the period of EU-accession, EU-referenda and education reforms.⁸⁵ This point has also been mentioned in the studies of Lithuanian and Latvian dailies.⁸⁶ The experts of the Legal Information Centre suggest that in Estonia

“ethnic minorities in most of the cases appear as the ‘source of problems.’ The most common theme is lack of language knowledge, high number of persons without citizenship, former military servants that are not entitled for the residence permit, refugees etc, those issues are very often presented in a negative way [...]”⁸⁷

In Latvia too, “the publications are often tedious and negative vis-à-vis the other socio-linguistic group.”⁸⁸

Secondly, a study by the Legal Information Centre for Human Rights (LICHR) points to another issue with respect to interethnic relations as reflected in the Estonian media. The report suggests that the Estonian-language press is self-sufficient in gaining access to information and frequently provides analyses based on commonly held views and stereotypes, which are often negative towards the Russian-speaking part of society. The majority media mainly ignores ethnic minorities as authoritative sources of information and opinion, preferring to use the opinions of authorities “to speak on their behalf.”⁸⁹ The Russian-speaking media, on the other hand, frequently re-prints Estonian-language articles for their readership and therefore figures as a means of communicating the Estonian point of view to minority readers.⁹⁰ This is also a common practice in Latvia and Lithuania, where the sources from the majority media are often used as a source of information alongside interviews with political leadership. Some observers suggest that this “can be interpreted as the approximation of the two communities where Russians seem to be faster adjusting to the Estonian-dominated power distribution model”⁹¹ The Latvian scholarship however, pointed to the same facts to claim that the local Russian-language media was lacking democratic credentials in.⁹²

After all, what are the differences between the ethnic minority and majority populations which media reinforces? “Ethnopolitical tension in

Latvia” argues that the minority media feeds off the conflictive perceptions without great investment in a critical approach to commonly held views such as “the Russian language in Latvia is endangered,” “there are differences in culture” or “political actors and ethnic policies are to be blamed.”⁹³ Additionally, the perceptions of victimhood within the minority community have established the perceptions of a continuous latent conflict, which is transmitted and enforced in the media, as a later study by Zepa et al argues.⁹⁴ The results of “Monitoring of Estonian Media 1999–2003” also suggest that similar topics dominate the Russian-speaking media, leading it to be highly critical of Estonian politics, the implementation of the integration programme and the reform of Russian-language education. However, as Estonian media research indicates, the

“Russian-language journalism is frequently reproached for the inadequate fulfilment of the functions of minority media: non-Estonians do not get a picture of what is taking place in Estonia by reading Russian-language newspapers, Russian-language newspapers are not loyal to the direction chosen by the Estonian state, non-Estonians do not read local newspapers and instead prefer Russian television channels, and other such deficiencies.”⁹⁵

These criticisms however misjudge the acceptability of the information provided in the Estonian-speaking media about the social and political processes, which are interpreted in an ethnocentric manner and lack the basic reporting skills for helping mutual ethnic stereotypes to disappear.⁹⁶ The situation in Latvia has also been discussed in the same manner. The Russian-speaking media is much more involved in presenting the political events in the country to its readership, but, in addressing the much larger population of politically disenfranchised residents provides plenty of interpretation of the current political events. While the Russian and Polish-language press in Lithuania has not been accused of the same deficits, it is also highly critical of the policies of the state and points frequently to perceptions of the titular majority as sources of policies.⁹⁷

The role played by the minority media throughout the Baltic states has been quite similar, acting “primarily as a ‘watchdog’ that barks and bites but does not wag its tail so easily.”⁹⁸ However, the criticisms expressed in Estonia’s and Latvia’s minority media towards political developments were particularly unwelcome. The media of Lithuanian minorities, in avoiding a head-on confrontation with the majority perceptions was also accepted as a necessary instrument for the criticism of democ-

raphic processes in the country. As I demonstrate, the minority media in all three countries encompasses some measures to urge their readerships' integration into the overall society, and in providing criticism of political decision-making it supplies the majority community with opinions of minorities. It is the receptiveness to criticisms by the majority that differs considerably across the region—this explains both the number of publications operating solely in the minority language, as well as the numbers of their majority readership.

While the images contained in the Baltic media offer different ethnic communities specific perceptions of each other, the receptiveness to criticism appears to be higher with the members of minority communities. With the exception of Lithuania, the majority appears to have demonstrated only limited preparedness to view the opinions expressed in the minority media as worth considering, or even as acceptable. The majority media, as indicated in media monitoring, tends either to ignore the opinions of minority representatives or dismisses these as being aimed at delegitimising the political, economic and social developments in the respective country. Markedly, Estonian and Latvian-language media studies suggest that this is done to avoid critical reference to the issues perceived by the majority communities in these two states as central for nation and state-building, i.e. the status of citizenship and of the state language. The Lithuanian media on the other hand, despite continuously propagating some ethnocentric attitudes and its disregard for minorities' special needs, has effectively avoided collective negative references to communities and therefore still enjoys high credibility as a source of information for non-Lithuanians.⁹⁹

The differences in perceptions of the mainstream discourses in the media have initially surfaced in the studies of researchers from minority communities. Valeria Jakobson's 2002 study "The Role of the Estonian Russian-language Media in the Integration of the Russian-speaking Minority into Estonian Society" examines Russian-language media in Estonia, and for the very first time unveiled the general perception among the Estonian research community that the Russian media is nothing more than the Russian Federation's propaganda outlet. Jakobson prominently challenges the perception that the Russian language media was homogeneous, undermining the earlier view that all Russian-language publications were separatist and isolationist entities. Instead, she points out that the belated and half-hearted efforts of society integration hamper the development of the Russian-speaking group identity. The state's failure to identify minority's role in institution building undermines the evolution of the Russian-speaking community and leads to fragmentation of community. Jakobson

claims that the Russian-language press in Estonia does not mediate between the majority and minority communities, but rather trades in its voice and loyalty for spontaneous opportunism, antagonising political issues of high currency. The overview of the media landscapes in Latvia and Lithuania could indicate similar presumptions made by the titular researchers and parallel Jakobson's conclusion in that the media in these two states is not an active ideological, but a reactive informative player.

The difference in the focus and tone of media indicates only some of the reasons for minority representatives to avoid referring to the information provided by the state language media on social and political issues. The knowledge of the language features centrally in the study of media preferences of minority communities throughout the Baltic states. Indeed, the government does not support the dialogue between the ethnic groups through the media and/or finance channels to provide information in the tone and language easily accessible to non-titular populations in any of the Baltic states. I argue here that the type of attitudes towards minorities in general and the criticisms of state- and nation-building specifically can be made responsible for minorities' unwillingness to turn to the majority media for information. One might believe that among other reasons, many minority speakers could not but resort to the information provided to them in their language to avoid encounters with views "scapegoating" "their" cultural-linguistic community as a whole.

Considered in the context of an overall "fragmentation" or "division" of societies, the reaction of Russian-speakers in Estonia and Latvia presents a rational strategy to avoid the stamp of collective guilt when reading the majority press. As I will demonstrate in the next section, the perceptions of different ethnic groups differ considerably and pose a serious hindrance for intercommunal dialogue. Overall, the inferior position of minority groups *and* the majorities' lack of preparedness to take their perceptions and criticisms seriously will point to the essential deficits of the democratisation process.

3. Language sabotage? Minority/majority dialogue

Despite the differences outlined here, it would be a grave generalisation to conclude that there is a state of ethnic conflict in the Baltic states. The data available to date suggests rather that the tension between sociolinguistic groups result from differing perspectives on the ethnopolitical situation. As I discuss in the following, antagonistic perceptions have become widely accepted in Baltic societies, contributing to the consensus that societies are "divided" along cultural-linguistic lines. One of the side ef-

fects of minorities' accepting existing structural inequalities was the increasingly positive evaluation of the state language by non-titulars in order to be accepted as integrated and considered socially competent. At the same time, majorities grew less tolerant of non-state language use in the public space, less receptive of minorities' views and as a result, increasingly intolerant towards non-titulars.

State policies placing the focus on individual responsibility for language acquisition have prompted many speakers of minority languages to choose the information space less dismissive of their group identity. Socially vulnerable members of the minority, those residing in the areas of compact settlement and those simply dissatisfied with the political processes in their country were left to their own devices to acquire knowledge of the state language. Thus, large groups of minorities with similar needs had only limited opportunities to develop skills in the titular languages and to prove themselves "socially competent" in the sense of the Baltic majority societies. Not only did it lead to growing separation between the minority and majority linguistic communities, but was also reflected in the emergent media presentations of each other, further exacerbating the problems of ethnic relations. There was of course considerable difference between the approaches of the three states to the issue of linguistic proficiency with the minority populations. By and large, the policy documents on social integration have determined how linguistic competence would be interpreted in the context of minority-majority dialogue.

Surprisingly however, while the perceptions of linguistic communities across the region are largely negative, titulars and non-titulars appear to have a rather positive view on the state of the interethnic relations when it comes to their personal experience. Latvians estimate relations with the Russian-speakers in their country to be on average good, while Russian-speakers estimate these as being slightly better—the source of disparities are, however, different in each case.¹⁰⁰ The main reason for feelings of injustice on the side of the Russian-speakers clearly stems from the issues of citizenship and education policies, while for Latvians the use of their language and the "restoration of historical truth" appear to be of the highest importance.

In "Ethnopolitical tension in Latvia" the researchers suggest that the main differences in opinion between the two linguistic communities in the country are based on the prevalence of the ethno-cultural issues in political discourse. The views of the Latvian majority, that claims of Russian-speakers are illegitimate, are supported by references to legislation granting equal, full citizenship rights, to opportunities to improve their knowledge of the Latvian language and to the availability of education in minor-

ity languages.¹⁰¹ Throughout the survey analyses, the minority communities are said to understand their own position as being inferior to that of Latvians, but nonetheless hoping that Latvian society will stay unified. The results however, also point out that all residents of Latvia, irrespective of their ethnic identity, are striving for a common prosperous future within the framework of one society with many nationalities.¹⁰²

The study also finds a strong belief among all respondents that the political elite are increasingly separated from society and particularly from the Russian-speaking community.¹⁰³ Young people participating in focus group discussions stated that Latvia is an ethnocentric country, because the “state not only fails to listen to other parts of society [i.e. minorities], it is essentially based on the idea that there is no need to hear the views of those other parts of society.”¹⁰⁴ In this lies probably the greatest challenge for the future development of Latvian society, where two ethnic groups have quite contradicting views on the path of development that Latvia should take, as well as the decisive difference in opinion as to the role their ethnic group should play in the process of democratic consolidation.

The studies of the representation of minority groups in the Lithuanian mass media have indicated that national newspapers usually proceed with portraying some members of minority communities as not integrated into the mainstream society, frequently as criminals or socially unreliable elements.¹⁰⁵ This indeed indicates that the media, a significant source of information for the Lithuanian population, creates a stereotypical picture of minorities, confirming the distressing beliefs about the behaviour of members of non-core ethnic groups and emphasising minorities’ status as an inferior part of society. Elsewhere, Beresnevičiūtė also argues that stereotype-driven relationships with minorities contribute to the development of social distance between the individuals and lead to the separation of ethnic communities.¹⁰⁶

Stereotypes obviously impede the consolidation of Lithuanian society. They also considerably reduce the preparedness of the titular nationality to accept minorities as equal partners and contributors to societal development. In the same key, Arturas Tereškinas examined the representation of Russian, Polish, Roma and Jewish minorities in the largest Lithuanian daily, *Lietuvos rytas*. He concludes that the reports of positive events in the Lithuanian daily limit themselves to mentioning the name of a person, without indicating his/her affiliation with the minority group. However, negative reporting usually does not go without a reference to a person’s national identity.¹⁰⁷

More recent research conducted by the Centre for Civil Initiatives in Vilnius reveals the image of national minorities in the Lithuanian press

covering the three of the most read dailies (*Lietuvos Aidas*, *Lietuvos Rytas*, *Respublika*). The analysis suggests that mass media presents the communities of the Poles, Jews and Roma most negatively. The news on the members or communities of national minorities frequently portray them as groups of socially unprotected citizens, or as groups alien to the state, dismissing most of their problems to be related in first instance to their national background and overtly politicised issues of culture.¹⁰⁸ In all three dailies Roma

“are depicted as criminal, socially unsecured community, of whom the state and the society on the whole should take care. The Polish community is presented as the only one ethnic group of Lithuania that is clearly and publicly defined and it defines itself as national minority, and which constantly insists on demands such as “special status” and ‘rights of minority.’”¹⁰⁹

The members of the Russian community are presented as the most integrated ethnic group. They are frequently referred to as being bound by close cultural ties with the Lithuanian majority, although with a set of distinct “great nation problems,” which do not result from the status of ethnic, cultural or linguistic minority.¹¹⁰ Beresnevičiūtė also claims that these attitudes consolidate the basis for background expectations from certain minority groups, instigate the development of different stereotypes and hinder integration of the minority communities into Lithuanian society.¹¹¹

This point is reflected in my own observations of the different treatment of ethnic groups in Lithuania by political institutions, and in particular of the attitudes transmitted through the Department of Nation Minorities. Many of the problems addressed by the department have been identified as typical of an ethnic, but not a socio-cultural (Roma), linguistic (Russian-speakers) or regional (Polish-speakers) minority group, hence limiting the public perception of the additional help required for minorities to be able to effectively cooperate with the majority society.¹¹²

Estonia’s approach to the issue of interethnic communication embraced the concept of “social competence” in connection with the linguistic abilities of an individual as a prerequisite for one’s suitability for society. “Social competence” was defined as a

“person’s ability to function adequately on all levels of social life. The state programme treats social competence as a

key factor in people's ability to organise on the basis of common interests (to be carried out in the third sector) and changes in the availability of objective information and attitudes in society (to be carried out in the field of the media and public opinion)."¹¹³

As some observers argue, the “selective highlighting of certain features of social competence tends to label those Russian-speakers as being in a presumed state of social incompetence if they do not speak adequate levels of Estonian.”¹¹⁴ While the Estonian concept of interethnic dialogue focuses entirely on reference to language acquisition as a panacea for the range of needs in social situations, the Latvian document on social integration attempts to improve the situation of those on low incomes and in poverty. As discussed in chapter 6, the Latvian integration programme aimed at providing residents with basic knowledge and information on their possibilities to participate in the local community and the labour market, developing skills necessary for social participation, obtaining membership in NGOs and facilitating co-operation with local authorities.¹¹⁵

From the point of view of minorities, the document's primary goal is the subordination of multicultural dialogue towards the goal of creating a monolingual society where the minority community does not distort the majority's linguistic space. Similar support of the Lithuanian state for training in the state language had suggested that only those members of society proficient in Lithuanian could be considered adapted and claim assistance to improve their social status. Remarkably, the study of Lithuanian ethnic groups by Kasatkina and Leončikas suggests individual perception of social segregation as the sign of marginalisation, which leads to an “infantile attitude towards civil society.”¹¹⁶ While I return to the issue of minority civic engagement in chapter 9, the observation made by the Lithuanian scholars underpins the structure of incentives for intercommunal dialogue and cooperation.¹¹⁷

Opportunities for language use and knowledge patterns differ according to a locality's ethno-linguistic composition.¹¹⁸ The best documented results refer to the studies of areas with compact—mainly remnants of the Soviet industrial areas—minority settlements, mainly Russian-speaking groups in Latvia and Estonia. There are also vast settlement areas in Lithuania, where minority languages remain largely self-sufficient with little contact with titular communities.¹¹⁹ Located in the larger townships such as Vilnius, Klaipeda and Visaginas, but also in rural areas across South Eastern Lithuania, members of non-Lithuanian communities have

demonstrated different patterns of language acquisition, as well as different reaction to state policies of linguistic titularisation.

Throughout the Baltic states some regions exist where non-core ethnic groups constitute a majority of the local populations. Eastern Lithuania has a particular place in this respect, because Lithuanians here represent a minority and hence the knowledge of the state language is not required for effective organisation of daily life by the local Polish-speaking community. The research of the Centre for Ethnic Studies pointed out that while a positive attitude towards the state language has been dramatically increasing among the minorities throughout the country since 1991, the situation is somewhat different in eastern Lithuania. However, even in the regions with overwhelming Polish settlements only 6% of the population indicate that they have no knowledge of Lithuanian.¹²⁰ Those who are not proficient in the state language indicate that they do not intend to learn the language because they “do not need it,” “it is hard to learn” or they are “too old.” The main obstacle here, as in the other Baltic states, is not the limited time for attending courses, but the lack of motivation to learn and the opportunity to practice.¹²¹

The situation is mirrored in the other Baltic states and refers to two tendencies of linguistic adaptation across the region. On the one hand, younger members of the minority communities have been receptive to the titularisation policies and have acquired skills in the state languages at schools. At the same time, the accommodation with the new situation was particularly hard for the members of the older generation, who lacked the motivation and essential skills for learning.¹²² The younger generation has been intensively exposed not only to the teaching of the majority language, but has also had to face limited chances for social mobility if they were not proficient in the state language. In order to be successful in the new social and political settings, many had to adapt to the official monolingualism policies of the public sphere to boost their chances for upward social mobility.

Does this allow for the conclusion that there are different opportunities for social mobility and hence the views of the state in the Baltic societies are running along the lines of linguistic communities? The studies of minority groups in Estonia and Latvia suggest that the primary difference between the titulars and non-titulars lies in the languages they employ everyday and hence determine a range of their everyday choices.¹²³ Interestingly, this statement might be supported by the fact that the overwhelming majority of Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians declare their mother tongue to be the state language. At the same time, more than half of non-Russians in the region declare that they are native speakers of

the Russian language. In Latvia, Russians see Russian as their mother tongue almost in all cases, but only 36% of non-Russian minorities see the language of their ethnic kin to be their mother tongue, and only 6% declare Latvian to be their mother tongue.¹²⁴ Hence, the groups of non-titular non-Russian minorities have a greater resemblance to the members of the Russian-speaking community and clearly distinguish themselves from Estonians and Latvians in this social context.¹²⁵ Non-Russian minorities in Lithuania also appear to align more with Russian-speakers than with Lithuanians when choosing an education path, developing interpersonal networks and implementing strategies of adaptation.¹²⁶

One would expect that when members of different ethnic groups use different languages and do not communicate with each other often, there would be a precedent of linguistic segregation. Indeed, the situation has on occasion been described by local observers as a “linguistically and politically highly divided society.”¹²⁷ When the steps of ensuring the rights of minorities to use their language to communicate with officials, make use of education in their mother-tongue and receive information on the internal developments of the country of residence are not supported by affirmative action policies, the compartmentalisation of the linguistic communities is likely to continue and possibly increase.

The state policies for tuition in the state language have also affected the younger generation in the non-core communities. The vast majority of the non-titulars, however, were too old to profit from such measures despite being subjected to “pragmatic political considerations” in the early 1990s. For these people, the decision of national elites, such as the reduction of statelessness in Latvia and Estonia, and social inclusion in Lithuania, did not retranslate into social dialogue and further aggravated the impact of linguistic fragmentation.¹²⁸ Simultaneously, the lack of motivation to address specific minority needs in acquiring knowledge of the state language and the belated implementation of language training programmes in Estonia and Latvia—where language proficiency was also more tightly tied to the criteria of political membership—have alienated large parts of the minority populations from participation in political process.¹²⁹

The reasons for the linguistic separation of media landscapes in the Baltic state are therefore apparent, if not self-explicatory. The media of the different linguistic communities transmits entirely different cultural, social and importantly, political imagery. The Russian-speaking media effectively plays on the stereotypes about majorities, something that goes hand-in-hand with the linguistic difficulties of establishing an intercommunal dialogue. In the absence of interpersonal dialogue, strengthening media as a forum for interethnic dialogue is central to the improvement of relations

between the groups and dissolution of mutual stereotypes. The results presented here suggest that the divided informational space in the Baltic societies only further solidifies the difference in perceptions of the same events. As Ilze Šulmane suggests,

“the more integrated society becomes, the less the Russian language media in Latvia will assume the role of a militant opposition. Then Russian media will become typical minority media which satisfy the cultural needs of various groups in several languages.”¹³⁰

The results of the media analyses presented here fall neatly together with the debates on language regulations by the titular nationalities to undertake cultural planning in “their” homelands. All this puts groups of speakers of minority languages in a situation of limited opportunities for the use of minority language(s) and has been conducive to the linguistic separation of ethno-linguistic communities. Thus, for many members of minority groups, developing asymmetric bilingualism in the state language and acquiescing to a partial assimilation into the dominant society were the only solution to avoid marginalisation.

4. Consequences of linguistic segregation

The state language has become one of the central issues during state- and nation-building since the early 1990s, resurfacing later in the framework programmes for social integration. Throughout that time, the reasons for language acquisition and use by minority groups has remained determined by their expectations of social mobility and not their growing acceptance of the political and social dominance of the titular groups. In response to the state policies of linguistic titularisation, the centrality of linguistic proficiency for social and political participation and the lack of preparedness for dialogue, minority populations have had to accept adaptation to “linguistic favouritism” as essential for all further cooperation with the members of titular communities.

While the political actors have failed to encourage cooperation between the minority and majority communities, throughout the region these efforts have been successful on the local level. Among others, the efforts of integrating the representatives of minorities within city councils and on the local political arena have been implemented throughout the Baltic states, but were not visible at the national level. Some of the most notable positive developments in this regard included the development of special

framework documents addressing the issues of minority integration at the local level.

These actions were partially successful due to high representation of minority groups in the city councils and the involvement of minority representatives of as consultants. Although social integration remained a concept within the domain of Lithuania's nationalist politicians, language study centres were established. During the 1990s minority representatives in municipalities prompted programmes for language training throughout South Eastern Lithuania and in towns with significant numbers of Russian-speaking residents. In Latvia the city of Ventspils adopted an integration programme and created a non-citizen's Advisory Council that supported the work on the local integration concept in 2000. Liepaja's city government similarly established a working group promoting the integration of minority and majority communities locally in 2000. This group prepared a draft of the city's integration programme. Kohtla-Järva, a largely Russian-speaking city in North Eastern Estonia, has its own integration centre, providing information on citizenship acquisition, funding for minority NGOs and language training. The City of Tallinn established a Department of Social Security and Integration in the city administration and had also aimed at developing a local integration programme after the 1999 local elections, when minority representatives occupied numerous posts in the city government. The work on the programme has ceased after the departmental staff was publicly condemned for the embezzlement of public funds, although further evidence suggested a political motive behind the story, which emerged from a rival Estonian party.¹³¹ The work on the programme, however, was resumed following the 2007 unrest in Tallinn.

Similar evidence can be derived from the work of the consultative organs of the Estonian and Latvian governments, such as the presidential Roundtable on National Minorities in Estonia in 1993, and the Consultative Council of Nationalities at President's Office in Latvia in July 1996. Both the council and the roundtable included representatives of different ethnic minorities, as well as members of the parliaments, to facilitate dialogue between ethnic communities and to discuss minority related issues. Neither of these organs was perceived as successful, having lacked any effective links to legislature and being able only to recommend changes on various policy issues.

While some observers attribute the reluctance of central authorities to grapple with regional needs and developing regional approaches for the alien populations, it seems that lack of communication should be made responsible for setbacks. Top level political elites obviously had little

interest to engage in dialogue with minorities and opted out of negotiations that could significantly contribute to the integration of non-titulars into the public sphere, at least on the local level. Slightly more successful were the efforts of municipalities, where non-core ethnics were highly visible as a part of the administration. Their active take on developing methods of alleviating the social disparities of their home communities has been frequently criticised from the national centre, but no doubt their work bore an imprint of success.

Limited preparedness to openly admit short-comings in planning and implementation of policies by the central authorities suggests that the ethnic principles increasingly became less important in the public. Instead, the affected individuals differed in their attitudes towards the existing institutions and subjective perception of individual profits these offered for the co-opted. By demonstrating a consolidated response to the fact that it would mainly be through the increased importance of the state languages in the social life, political elites have established some stability. Minority populations on the other hand, were less and less engaged in the process of bargaining for their linguistic rights, and focused on more general issues of recognition.

The rallies of the Russian-speakers over Latvia's education reform and protests in opposition of removal of the so-called Bronze soldier from downtown Tallinn illustrate the only means of recognition available for the disempowered minorities. Popular sentiment was brought to the attention of the titular communities during the protests by members not heard from since the period of national awakening in the late 1980s. In their course, non-titular communities, NGOs and politicians aimed to secure the remaining rights for public visibility of non-titular populations. As could be expected, the criticism came from activists in the Russian-speaking community who had organised various protest activities near the Latvian Saeima building and in the close vicinity of the seat of the Estonian parliament and Tallinn city administration. These protesters engaged in picketing, demonstrations and strikes.¹³² While it seems obvious that the governments did not make any concession to pressure from minority communities, it is worth examining the signals political entrepreneurs sent to both the titular and Russian-speaking observers and participants of the events.

Throughout the 1990s, the Latvian government and minorities assumed almost directly opposing positions on the public expression of dissent by Russian-speakers. The government's view was that, before learning more Latvian and pulling themselves out of their economic and social exclusion, minority groups would not express much discontent.¹³³ For the minority representatives the issue of native language education

was the primary means of achieving proper equality, irrespective of all other opportunities the state provided. Hence, the issue of school reform could definitely mobilise the minority, as they perceived reforms as a way of rendering them not more but less competitive in the labour market.¹³⁴ The rallies amassed in Riga brought together an estimated 50,000 people on 1 May 2004, to protect the Russian-language schools and to protest against the reform.¹³⁵ A solution to this confrontation could only be found if the government and the minorities established a constructive dialogue, something that had been lacking in the period since independence.

At the height of this opposition, the All-Latvian Congress of Supporters of the Russian-language schools was convened on March 5, 2004, where the stance of the minority leadership was reiterated once again. The opposition to the decisions of the political leadership became the “normal” stance for many of the defenders. The speakers were generally outbidding each other in the extent of the claims for the protection of the Russian language in Latvia. In effect the final resolution made three statements which in and of themselves had little to do with language reform. While including the demand to continue teaching in Russian language, the resolution also demanded the elevation of Russian to the status of state language, as well as granting Latvian citizenship to all non-citizens of Latvia. Similar claims were repeated at numerous protest meetings in Riga and other cities throughout Latvia, highlighting that the protest was not merely about the language of education.¹³⁶ As I have discussed previously, most of the Russian-speakers were in favour of greater emphasis on the state language in education, in other words, they were already co-opted. The protests were about the praxis of decision-making and the terms of dialogue between Latvia’s ethnic communities, and ultimately against the “take it or leave it” arguments of the government.

Regardless of the pressure exercised by the members of the minority community, the Latvian President announced the implementation of the Education Reform on February 13, 2004. At the same time, the international community, the EU, OSCE and CoE included, affirmed that Latvia’s reforms and the language requirements were in-line with international standards.¹³⁷ These comments extended by the international organisations, however, did not alleviate the tensions between the two linguistic communities. Instead the differing perceptions of the situation around the implementation of legislation prompted a deeper divide in the reporting on political events in the Latvian press.

Latvian newspapers consistently stressed the importance of the steps made for the existence of their nation while the Russian-language press continued its opposition to any reforms, fuelling the uncompromis-

ing stance of Russian-speaking readers. The Latvian population was more concerned with the survival of their language, whence all the arguments around integration resulted in heated debates on the terms of inclusion. At the same time the Russian-language press applied a discourse on minority rights, which should be guaranteed by the Latvian state, the legitimate guardian of all residents of Latvia.¹³⁸ Printed and electronic media routinely accused Latvian officials of having Nazi sympathies. In 1998, one of the leading Russian dailies, *Komsomolskaya pravda* waged an attack on one of Latvia's biggest exports, sprouts. With the slogan, "Buy Latvian sprouts and help the SS," it brought "Latviophobia" in the Russian Federation and Baltic Russian-speaking communities to a new height. Although there is no clear evidence whether such rhetoric was sponsored from the Russian centre, was a result of targeted blackmailing of the Latvian state by the liberal Russian press or fed off the long simmering resentments of Latvia's Russian-speaking communities, similar cover stories were printed during 2004.

When in 2006 the gathering of Russian-speakers around the Bronze Soldier monument attracted a great deal of attention in Estonia's and Russia's press, the ground was fertile for populism. Following a clash between Russian-speakers and ethnic Estonians at the statue, the area around it was monitored by a Russian youth group, known as *Nochnoi Dozor*, who claimed protection of the monument.¹³⁹ The mass mobilisation of Russian-speakers in Estonia's capital was unprecedented, as the protests gained momentum only on the grounds of titular's hysteria over the issues of the past.¹⁴⁰ Indeed, as the colourful discussion on the (web-) pages of the Russian language press in Estonia suggests, the Bronze Soldier Crisis was not initially seen as a case of interethnic tension.¹⁴¹ Instead, the Russian-speaking community viewed the monument as the only symbol left of their presence in Estonia's public space, while ethnic Estonians attached a stigma of occupation to the statue.¹⁴²

The difference in media resources informing Estonia's ethnic communities was essential. Different discourses on the run-up to events and on the views of minority groups attempting to find negotiation strategies and avoid conflict with the Estonian state came to the fore. Naturally, both sides sought to gain as much political capital in favour of their group's view as possible. Russian-speakers inevitably tuned into Russia's information channels, where the democratic deficiencies of the Estonian state were talked up yet again. At the same time, Estonian authorities did not approach local Russian-speakers and left those who were able to follow Estonian-language debates overwhelmed by the belligerent rhetoric of

Estonian nationalists, outbidding each other in proposals for the decolonisation of Estonia's capital.

Pressured to uphold the constitutional right of Estonians for a national state, authorities responded by accusing Russia of inciting ethnic riots. Both the Estonian President and the Foreign Minister noted that the coverage of events in the Russian media was "biased," without conceding to an inherent anti-Russian bias in discussions around the Bronze Soldier in Estonian language press. No doubt, Russia's media emphasised police brutality, but the Estonian press did not even engage with protestors, denying their voice any legitimacy.¹⁴³ Even more disturbingly, despite the fact that only a tiny fraction of Estonians were affected by the events of the April Crisis, they attribute an immense symbolic meaning to it.¹⁴⁴

In large part, the rallies around the monument of the Soviet soldier indicated that the integration of society was a flop. While younger minorities have better knowledge of the state language, demonstrate greater potential to compete with members of the titular nation and in the medium-run are better equipped to move into key social positions, they are unlikely to be taken seriously by the members of the majority political elites. The success of intercommunal debates thus stalled because the members of majority were isolating themselves from the Russian-speaking voices over the 1990s and 2000s, perceiving most, if not all, minority claims to be illegitimate. Naturally, the new generation of titular political and social elites came to perceive such a state of interethnic relations as normal and anticipated that the opportunities granted to minorities to cope with the changing socio-political situation were enough to keep the lid on interethnic tensions. The Bronze Night events proved them wrong.

The April Crisis had an additional effect on research of interethnic relations. A wave of research that followed the mass protests painted a grim picture of interethnic relations in Estonia and questioned the overall democratisation of social relations. The TIES 2007/2008 study indicates that Estonians prefer avoiding the members of the Russian community, be it at work, place of residence or during their free time. Overall, Schulze states that "there seems to be a desire among Estonian respondents to socialize within their own ethnic group to a greater extent than is true of Russian respondents."¹⁴⁵ In his analyses, Martin Ehala claims that the number of Russian-speakers with attitudes and values converging with those of "Estonian" fell considerably, from 46% in 2002 to 27% in 2008. The number of those cooperating with Estonians on pragmatic grounds but disillusioned about their own chances in Estonia had risen from 20% to 33%.¹⁴⁶ At the same time, Estonians perceive ethnic conflict more sharply than before. The proportion of those who were ready to tolerate, but did

not want to have contacts with Russians rose from 28% in 2002 to 40% in 2007, resulting in a decrease of integrative attitudes among the Estonian public down to 36% from 53%.¹⁴⁷

Undoubtedly, media has played a crucial role in solidifying the perceptions of group opinions in Estonia and Latvia. If anything, it seems that democratic consolidation in these societies could stand a chance only if running along the lines of ethnic communities. The mediascapes however, also suggest a dynamic relationship between the institutionalisation of the majorities' dominance and the discursive construction of intercommunal tensions. A variety of means for ethno-linguistic separation were available for non-core ethnic communities to ensure the existence of self-sufficient minority societies. The lack of preparedness by majority groups to discuss issues of direct and, as these two cases indicate, urgent concern for Russian-speakers have stalled interethnic dialogue .

Whether the media, operating in two different languages and perpetuating antagonistic discourses, stood a chance of successfully mediating opinions of minorities and majorities remains to be clarified in further research. What is clear at this point is that titularisation of state institutions made improvement in interethnic relations incredibly difficult, but it seems there was no effort to decrease the salience of identities and seek negotiation between groups. The separation of ethnic communities, as I discussed in this section, is particularly visible in the conflicting images of opposing ethnic groups as presented in media and reflected in public opinion.

While there are means available that could improve the communication between the ethnic groups, the media analyses suggest that in order for the members of linguistic minority communities to adapt to the situation, their acceptance of the structural dominance of the state-bearing nations was paramount.

5. Conclusion

The debates of the titular majorities about the minority's insufficient knowledge of the state language have reinforced a commonly shared belief within communities about the inferiority status of those members of society who are not proficient enough in Estonian, Latvian or Lithuanian. As is obvious, the emergent consensus on the necessary "common societal core," based entirely on the linguistic dominance of the state language, has over the period of independence slowly outscored the debates on the sensibility of these requirements for the effective functioning of the public sphere. This perception caused a limited understanding of minorities'

contributions to the transition of the Baltic states towards more democratic political regimes and about their place in public altogether.

The studies referred to in this chapter explain the marginality of non-core ethnics in the region based on their reluctance to see their state of residence as a protector of their rights. As a result thereof, many fail to apply for citizenship, lack linguistic skills in the state language and as a result are highly disadvantaged in terms of social mobility. To a large extent minority communities in the region have been marginalised by the pro-active policy steps of the state-bearing nationals to enforce the dominance of the state language and hence, ethnic core communities.

In this respect, the self-segregation of minority communities could be the most dazzling outcome. However, the continuous emphasis on the importance of the state language by Baltic political elites undermines the equality of chances to participate in social, political and other activities for different linguistic groups. As I show, the lack of compromise by the state-bearing communities in terms of linguistic accommodation of non-core ethnics limits the opportunities for inclusiveness by the evolving social and political regimes. In the next chapter I focus on the political engagement of minorities in the region to point out that in these areas as well, the processes of social exclusion exert adverse effects on intercommunal dialogue.

Notes

- 1 Cf. Integration Foundation, <http://www.meis.ee/eng/adults> and Ernst&Young, 2005.
- 2 Korts and Kuldjärv, 2008.
- 3 Open Society Institute, 2002, p.241.
- 4 Integration Foundation, 2005.
- 5 The practice of refunding the exam fee continues to this day. Integration Foundation, <http://www.meis.ee/eng/Foundation/completed/Interest Retrieved 2008-05-23>.
- 6 See Integration Foundation, 2006.
- 7 Lindemann, 2008.
- 8 Integration Foundation, 2006.
- 9 Integration Foundation, 2005.
- 10 Proos, 2000.
- 11 Integration Foundation, 2002; 2005.
- 12 Schulze, 2008a, c.
- 13 Kalmus, Lauristin, and Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt, 2004.

- 14 Ernst&Young, 2005, p.26.
- 15 Schulze, 2008a.
- 16 Integration Foundation, 2002.
- 17 Ernst&Young, 2005; Hallik, 2000.
- 18 Korts, 2009; Poleshchuk, 2005.
- 19 Ernst&Young, 2005, p.5.
- 20 Integration Foundation, 2005.
- 21 Ibid., p.40.
- 22 Poleshchuk, 2006.
- 23 The results of monitoring suggest that even the individuals of non-Estonian descent indicating the slightest accent in speech face decline in application in comparison with the Estonian on a regular basis. Around two thirds of non Estonians indicated that they do not have equal opportunities with the Estonians. LICHR, 2006, p.9.
- 24 Author's interviews in Narva and Sillamäe, May 2006.
- 25 Schulze, 2008a, d; Korts, 2009; Lahmus, et al., 2009; Vihalemm and Kalmus, 2009.
- 26 Zepa et al, 2005, p.31
- 27 See comparatively, Zepa, 1998; Zepa and Klave, 2004.
- 28 Zepa et al, 2005.
- 29 Zepa and Klave, 2004.
- 30 Zepa et al, 2005, p.31.
- 31 Zepa et al, 1996, p.6.
- 32 Zepa and Klave, 1998; 2004.
- 33 Lithuanian Government, 2002; Marcinkas and Sakocius, 2002; Pileckas, 2003.
- 34 Jouzeliuniene, 1996; Kasatkina, 1996.
- 35 However, one should keep in mind that the majority of the public officials in the areas of compact settlement of the Polish speakers in Lithuania are also Polish speakers and in their vast majority representing Polish electoral action, the party of the Polish minority. Kasatkina and Beresneviciute, 2004, p.41 following.
- 36 Lithuanian Government, 1995; 2002.
- 37 Lithuanian Government, 20002.
- 38 Hogan-Brun and Ramoniene, "The Language Situation in Lithuania." p.355.
- 39 Interview with Michal Mackiewicz, Zwiasek Polakow na Litwie. January 2008, Vilnius.
- 40 The summary of investments made by organization into Lithuanian education can be found on the website <http://www.wspolnota->

polska.org.pl/index.php?id=galinw. Restoration and structural support for Polish schools in South Eastern Lithuania constituted the main focus of work, due to limitations of interstate treaty and Polish state regulations. Among others, Polish state committed itself not to provide financial support to projects without involving the Lithuanian government to prevent tensions between the Lithuanian and Polish residents of Lithuanian republic.

41 See the website of Białystok University, Vilnius branch
<http://www.wilno.uwb.edu.pl/index.php>

42 „Filia Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku w Wilnie – najlepsza dla maturzysty“ *Kurier Wilenski*, May 16, 2009.

43 Kuris and Staciokas, 1998. See also “Ar populiari lietuviu kalba Rytu Lietuvoje?” *Jurate Palionyte in Lietuvos Rytas*, May 29, 1998.

44 Saugeniene, 2003.

45 Interview with Tatiana Mihneva, Coordination Council of Russian Community Organisations. January 2008, Vilnius.

46 Hogan-Brun and Ramoniene, 2004, p.360.

47 Website of Lithuanian State Language Inspection, <http://vki.lrs.lt/> Retrieved 2008-05-22.

48 Kasatkina and Leončikas, 2003, pp.145–175.

49 See study-based analyses in Kasatkina, 2004; 2007.

50 Kasatkina and Leončikas, 2003, pp.71following.

51 Kasatkina and Leončikas, 2003; Saugeniene, 2003; Zepa et al 2004; *Integration Monitor*, 2005; Kasatkina, et al., 2006; Schulze 2008c.

52 See Volkov, 2007.

53 Estonian Language Act, Article 25 Paragraph 3.

54 See Language Law 1934, Chapter 2, “The use of alien languages and languages of national minorities at offices of state institutions and local governments.” The 1995 Language Law states in Para 2 “A language of national minority is a foreign language traditionally used in Estonia by Estonian citizens of a national minority as their mother language.”

55 Broadcasting Act, Article 35 Paragraph 2.

56 Article 25 Paragraph 4 and Paragraph 2.

57 Radio and Television Law 1995, Article 19.

58 Radio and Television Law 1995, Article 62.

59 Tsilevich, 2001.

60 Zukauskienė, 2005, p.19.

61 See the website of TMID, <http://www.tmid.lt/tautines-bendrijos-lietuvoje/ziniasklaida/spauda/>

62 Žukauskienė, 2005, p.24.

- 63 Kouts, 2004, p.5. Zepa et al, 2005, p.71.
64 Aleksandr Shegedin, political observer of Estonia cited in Järve and Wellmann, 1999, p.20.
65 Zepa et al, 2004, Zepa and Klave, 2004.
66 Leončikas, 2004.
67 Sinočkina, 2007.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.p.134.
70 Ibid.p.142.
71 See Jakobson, 2002; Kouts, 2004a; LICHR, ed., 2006; Sulmane, 2006.
72 Zepa and Supule, 2006, pp.64–78; Zepa et al., 2006, pp.74–131; Beresneviciute and Frejute-Rakauskiene, 2006; Korts, 2004; Madsen, 2006.
73 Zepa and al, 2005. p.34.
74 Ibid. p.34.
75 Ibid.
76 See e.g. Sulmane, 2006.
77 Pabriks, 2003, p.86.
78 Ibid. p.100.
79 As reported in Ibid. p.73.
80 Kruks and Sulmane, 2005, p.137.
81 Mediju Tilts, 2004.
82 LICHR, 2006, p.4.
83 Zepa and al, 2005, p.36.
84 Kouts, 2004b, p.12.
85 LICHR, 2006.
86 Zepa and Supule, 2006, p.37; Leončikas, 2004.
87 LICHR, 2006, p.9.
88 Zepa and Supule, 2006, p.36.
89 LICHR, 2006, p.9.
90 Ibid. p.10.
91 Hallik, 2006, p.20.
92 Kruks and Sulmane, 2005; Sulmane, 2006.
93 Zepa and Supule, 2006, pp.45–51.
94 Zepa et al., 2006, pp.74–132.
95 Kouts, 2004b, p.7.
96 Tammpuu, 2004.
97 Beresneviciute and Frejute-Rakauskiene, 2006; Leončikas, 2004; Sinočkina, 2007.
98 Kouts, 2004b, p.16.

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- 99 Beresnevičiute and Frejute-Rakauskiene, 2006; Beresnevičiūtė and Nausėdienė, 1999.
- 100 Zepa and al, 2006
- 101 Ibid.
- 102 Ibid, Zepa and Supule, 2006. The results are replicated in the study, Zepa et al., 2006.
- 103 Zepa et al 2004, p.23.
- 104 Zepa et al 2004, p.9.
- 105 Beresnevičiute and Frejute-Rakauskiene, 2006; Beresnevičiūtė and Nausėdienė, 1999.
- 106 Beresnevičiūtė, 2003.
- 107 Tereskinas, 2003.
- 108 Cf. Zukauskienė, 2005, p.20.
- 109 Cf. Also Beresnevičiūtė and Nausėdienė, 1999.
- 110 Madsen, 2006.
- 111 Beresnevičiūtė, 2003.
- 112 Interview in the TMID, January 2008.
- 113 SIP, p.64.
- 114 Downer, 1998, p.9.
- 115 Agarín, 2009a.
- 116 Kasatkina and Leončikas, 2003, pp. 147–158.
- 117 Hogan-Brun and Ramoniene, "Changing Levels of Bilingualism across the Baltic."
- 118 Hogan-Brun, 2005; Pisarenko, 2006; Verschik, 2005.
- 119 Šliavaitė, 2003.
- 120 Kasatkina and Leončikas, 2003.
- 121 Ibid.
- 122 See for the Lithuanian case, Beresnevičiūtė, 2005; Latvian situation is presented in Apine and Volkovs, 2007; Pabriks, 2002. The case of Estonia in Vetik, 2000; 1999.
- 123 Laitin, 1998; Kasatkina and Leončikas, 2003; Apine and Volkovs, 2007.
- 124 Zepa, 2004.
- 125 Kirch, Tuisk, and Talst, 2006; Pisarenko, 2006.
- 126 Kasatkina and Leončikas, 2003, pp.86–97.
- 127 Pabriks, 2004, p.144. Kouts, 2004b, p.8.
- 128 Cf. Pabriks, 2004, p.146.
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- 134 Interview with Stab activist, Dmitri Katemirov, September 2006.
- 135 "V Rige na Vselatvijskuyu manifestaciju v zashchitu russkih shkol sobralos' do 50.000 chelovek," *Regnum*, January 05, 2004. <http://www.regnum.ru/allnews/255880.html> Retrieved 2006–09–17.
- 136 "Demonstrations fade to a dull roar" in *The Baltic Times*, Sept 02, 2004 <http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/10833/> Retrieved 2009–12–07.
- 137 See interview with Ilze Brands Kehris, the Head of Latvia n Human Rights Centre in *The Blatic Times*, "Looking out for human rights in Latvia" Nov 10, 2004 <http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/11332/>; "S nacmen'shinstvami v Estonii i Latvii vsjo v porjadke" DELFI, BNS July 02, 2004 <http://rus.delfi.ee/daily/estonia/article.php?id=8136025> Retrieved 2009–12–07.
- 138 See the reports on the regular activities of the Russian community in Riga on the website of Stab <http://www.shtab.lv/main.php> Retrieved 2008–08–05.
- 139 Brüggemann and Kasekamp, 2009.
- 140 Lehti, et al., 2008; Ehala, 2009.
- 141 Smith, 2008.
- 142 Astrov, 2007.
- 143 See analytical reports LICHR, 2007;Poleshchuk, 2009. Estonia's Russian-speaking portal was bursting from the comments on the topic between the May 2006, when the first tensions around the monument arose to May 2007, when the Estonian authorities resolved the tensions. For a snapshot of debates at its different stages see, "Estonija segodnja, kak Germanija do vojny" Dimitrij Klenskij in *Rus.delfi.ee* Sept 15 2006; "Pochemu ja ne verju vlasti" Aleksandr Astrov in *Rus.delfi.ee*, May 16 2007.

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Chapter 8

Minority representation in social structures

In the previous chapter I have outlined the reasons for which to consider the Baltic societies to be linguistically divided. However, the difference between the ethnic, cultural and linguistic groups in the Baltic societies probably would not have been perceived as sharply, were minorities not underrepresented in the key social, economic and political positions. In this chapter, I discuss the differences between the majority and minority communities in terms of their representation on the social ladder, economic status and the extent to which they form a part of the political elite.

The review of the differences in the social status of the majority and minority groups allows me to identify the structural limits of minority participation in political processes. This will also allow me to spot the differences that are potentially impeding intergroup dialogue and hence the democratic consolidation of the Baltic societies. The theoretical framework of my book suggests that the differences in social status are likely to cause greater propensity in the disadvantaged groups to see democracy as being of no relevance to them personally. The overall objective of the chapter is to investigate minority engagement with social issues that might provide reasons for intergroup tensions and/or conflict. The low number of minority representatives among political elites and minority overrepresentation among underprivileged strata of society condition the majority's perceptions of this group. In order to assess whether the limited political participation of minorities should be interpreted as a result of their lacking acceptance of the post-Soviet polity, this chapter investigates whether minorities are excluded from effective influence on developments in their states of residence.

Firstly, I discuss the differences in employment as indirect consequences of Baltic language policies, which, while not being discriminatory, facilitated the initial decrease of non-core ethnics employed in key socio-political positions. Secondly, I investigate whether the ethnic fragmentation of societies in the initial years of independence could be blamed for the limited representation of minorities in public office. Finally, the discussion of political representation of minorities demonstrates that the political forces of minorities are marginalised and are not seen as possible

contributors to democracy building in the region. This will serve as the basis for my outline of the spheres of activity in which the members of minority communities could continue their engagement, which I undertake in the last chapter of the book.

1. Employment and social status of non-titulars

A knowledge of state languages has gained critical importance over the years of Baltic independence. Above all it is language proficiency that has differentiated members of the various ethnic groups in their social status and opportunities for mobility. In this part of the chapter, I discuss the differences in employment between minority and majority communities across the region, suggesting that specific employment of minorities during Soviet times and the post-Soviet policy changes have had a twofold negative impact on the changes of the social status of minorities.

The members of majority groups tend to attribute the inferiority of minority positions in the social structure mainly, if not exclusively, to the non-titulars' lack of willingness to adapt to the majority's visions of state and society. The representatives of minority communities, on the other hand, are sensitive to their ability to influence change in state-building strategies since the demise of the SU. Tentatively, however, both groups acknowledge that some of the disparities in the status of minorities and majorities result from the policies of titularisation of the Baltic states.¹

The differences in the distribution of different ethnic groups across various sectors of employment were noted by local scholars early.² Particularly in the framework of debates on social integration, the inequality of distribution of social resources was considered as a serious impediment to the development of the social and political activities of minority communities in the region.³ So far the studies have indicated that there is potentially a great risk of social exclusion for minority members, despite the fact that all ethnic groups are represented in different sectors of the economy. Aasland and Fløtten investigate the processes of minority adaptation to socio-economic and political changes and draw attention to the fact that social inequalities leave a remarkable imprint on opportunities to engage in economic, social and civic activity in Latvia and Estonia.⁴ What might give a slight indication of Latvia's non-titulars' alienation from political processes and the state in general is the fact that members of the core ethnic group dominate the legislative, state services and the ranks of specialists of various kinds, while non-Latvians dominate in the production and service areas.⁵

The situation in the Latvian and Estonian labour market could suggest that the linguistic communities prefer different occupational fields as judged from the data available at higher education facilities. The detailed investigation by Aasland more cautiously puts forward that, as far as unemployment rates are concerned, there is hardly any difference between citizens and non-citizens who are mainly non-Latvian.⁶ However, the reservation is made in this study with regard to non-Latvians' concentration in the urban areas and particularly dense settlement in the Latvian capital, where employment conditions appear to be more favourable. Similarly to Aasland, Artis Pabriks also uses the ethnic representation of minority communities in the economy and business as a proxy for minority exclusion from active engagement in the Latvian economy.⁷

As in the other two Baltic states, Lithuania's minority members tend to work more in the private sector. The research by Kasatkina and Leončikas indicated that there are no statistically significant differences in the income level among ethnic groups, despite the fact that the majority of non-Lithuanians assess their status to be lower than that of Lithuanians.⁸ As authors observe, in Lithuania the minority population tends to overemphasise the negative changes in their social status since Lithuania regained independence. Indicative of this fact is the estimation of the social and symbolic disparities which are treated as a given by minority members in Lithuania while at the same time their personal situation does not suggest either a lower status in society or worse working conditions.

The research of Kasatkina and Leončikas indicate that an absolute majority of non-Lithuanians have non-formal relations with Lithuanians, i.e. have Lithuanians among friends and within family. This fact allows many to conclude that at least on the everyday level this facilitates the adaptation or at least identification with the Lithuanian part society by the minority. In this respect there are no differences between Polish and Russian-speakers. However, the groups are represented differently in the mass media; marriages between Lithuanians and Russians are more frequently discussed than those between Lithuanians and Poles.⁹

While research on the structure of occupation in the private sector is virtually non-existent in Lithuania, there are some success stories in the businesses of minority individuals, in most cases Russian. As had been indicated, while the Russian-minority is not seen in the media as a traditional minority of Lithuania and frequently is taken as a proxy for Lithuanians, the lives of successful Russian businessmen are widely covered by the media. However, at the everyday level, some prejudice remains towards members of minority groups. This trend is reflected in the study of economic elites, issued in the daily *Verslo Zinios*, which focused on eco-

conomic and business issues and prepared special supplements on specific fields and branches of economics. The analysis of the surnames of general directors, general managers, presidents and/or chairpersons of boards of the most successful enterprises in Lithuania, including public and private companies and personal enterprises reported in the daily suggest that per 20 success-stories with Lithuanian surnames, there are two usually of Polish or Russian origin.

In the case of Latvia, following Artis Pabriks, individuals with Latvian names most often manage enterprises funded by the state budget. Their administrations are also largely staffed by core ethnics,¹⁰ while companies in the private sector have a distinctly mixed ethnic structure. Pabriks suggests that there is a significant part of private sector enterprises with an overrepresentation of the minority population in Latvia, including the ethnically mixed management of companies.¹¹ At the same time, Pabriks concludes that, compared to a number of companies employing mixed collectives of Latvians/non-Latvians, many companies are ethnically homogeneous, which, in the long run prevents the mobility of employers not proficient in the state language.¹² Because these employment opportunities are specifically for less qualified individuals undertaking either manual labour or work in retail and service, it is not surprising that minority representatives are recruited through higher education institutions which provide professional training rather than academic instruction.

Prior to the implementation of the education reforms in 2004, many minority students started their professional career by pursuing education in these facilities, providing service in their mother tongue. This to a degree limits their occupation opportunities to companies less stringently applying state language regulations. At the same time, higher education facilities which aim exclusively at members of minority populations in Latvia take up the function of “containers” for personnel that, despite long-term professional and/or teaching experience, have limited opportunities for occupation in state-funded institutions functioning in the state language only.

Artis Pabriks sees four possible scenarios explaining the different preferences of minority members in Latvia for parallel education establishments and hence for the separation of Latvian-speakers from non-Latvians in the labour sector.¹³ Firstly, he argues, some establishments are aimed especially at the educational requirements of national minorities, such as RIMPAK Livonia and the Baltic Russian Institute. Secondly, while state-financed universities use only the state language for education, many private institutions employ bilingual education. Thirdly, Pabriks argues, national minority representatives who prefer to study in private

institutions are likely to be attracted by the socio-cultural factors of studying in a suitable cultural and linguistic environment. Finally, some biases can be observed during the entrance examinations into state institutions when it comes to the questions of history and Latvian culture. These exams are easier to pass for the students who studied in Latvian and place additional hurdles for the entrance of non-Latvian students. Irrespective of these facts, at the period of study, Pabriks concludes, the levels of educational attainment are comparable between the ethnic groups in Latvia and do not testify to marginalisation of non-core ethnics.¹⁴

Similarly to Latvia, the numbers of young Russian specialists graduating from higher education facilities have been constantly growing in Estonia. However, as in Latvia, Estonia's non-core ethnics, despite being skilled labourers, are highly dependent on the acquisition of higher education in the Estonian language or opting for facilities teaching in "foreign languages." There are no state-funded universities in Estonia which could cater to non-Estonian residents' expectations to be educated in subjects like humanities in Russian. The proportion of specialists among the employed Russians of Estonia is growing mainly thanks to graduates of the private universities and colleges such as *Sotsiaal- Humanitaarinstituut* and the like.¹⁵

The study "Labour market flexibility and employment security" conducted in 2001 under the auspices of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), concluded that the graduates of universities and colleges not funded by the state, i.e. *not* functioning in the state language, have limited job flexibility.¹⁶ The differences in the language of higher education are directly translated into the differences of occupation and particularly the linguistic environment at the place of work in Estonia. The occupational disadvantages of non-Estonians are also manifested in lower average wage as compared to those earned by Estonians. The Estonian Labour Force Surveys conducted since the mid-1990s continuously state that the chances of an ethnic Estonian reaching the higher wage quintile were more than two times higher than those of non-Estonians.¹⁷ The ILO also reports that even the knowledge of Estonian does not facilitate non-Estonians' labour competitiveness on the market. For example, in Tallinn the unemployment rate among non-Estonians with fluency in the state language was two times higher than the average unemployment level of ethnic Estonians. The 1999 ILO report suggests that younger non-Estonians with secondary, vocational and higher education have up to three times higher risk of unemployment than their Estonian peers with similar educational backgrounds. The likelihood of unemployment grows dramatically for non-Estonians in the ages of 30–40 years with higher

education qualifications, reaching six times the rate of the Estonians.¹⁸ Although the research also identifies the fluency in the state language as a possible explanatory factor in this dissonance, the variation in earnings is obvious across all age groups of Estonia's society.

As one easily recognises from the data reported on Estonia and Latvia, there is a clear difference in ethnicity and the knowledge of the state languages, which over the period of economic transition have translated into differences of social status. The opportunities for social mobility appear to be clearly limited for members of the non-core ethnic groups in the two countries. Social marginalization of minority groups appears to dominate the regions where successful employment is dependent on proficiency in the state language.

The inequalities between the minority and majority populations are not limited to Estonia and Latvia. While the levels of employment between the Lithuanians and members of minorities do not vary significantly, the figures for unemployment separate the two groups considerably. Unemployment figures also indicate significant differences among three of the Lithuania's major ethnic groups. In 2002, unemployed persons comprised only 12% of Lithuanians, a number significantly lower than among minorities. The Polish community is particularly vulnerable to the structural impact of unemployment, as is indicated in the report of the Department of Statistics.¹⁹ Among Polish-speakers in Lithuania almost 18% are unemployed, but this number is even higher among Russians, running at over 20% of the potential labour-force.²⁰

In fact, the situation is quite surprising as Lithuania's Russians also demonstrate higher educational attainments than other ethnic groups, but are affected the hardest by unemployment. This particularly confuses the comparisons of implications higher education has on the economic status of minority groups across the region.²¹ The numbers of employed in Lithuania closely replicate the ethnic composition of society with Lithuanians comprising 82% of all those employed, Poles and Russians—7% each. However, the data on the employment *structure* by profession groups and ethnicity indicates that the higher the professional category, the higher the rate of Lithuanians employed therein. Likewise, traditionally concentrated in the agricultural areas, Lithuanians and Poles comprise 89 and 7% respectively in the sphere of agriculture, reflecting the proportions these groups have in the overall social structure in rural areas. One tenth of unskilled workers comprise Poles, 7% Russians and 79% Lithuanians.²² What is clear from the data is that individuals of minority origin have a considerably higher probability of being affected by unemployment than ethnic Lithuanians, are unlikely to occupy positions on the upper part

of social ladder and are overrepresented in the bottom part of the social scale.

Although studies of minority representation in the labour market were conducted in Estonia and Latvia, there had been only a limited interest to the issue in Lithuania. However, despite the quite limited scope of research on the issue of ethnically specific employment, tendentious relations between the members of different ethnic groups in employment have been identified.²³ While there are various reasons for this, the scholars of the Centre for Ethnic Studies argue that the tendency towards “ethnic closure” exists as one of the forms of adaptation on non-Lithuanians in Lithuania.²⁴ Some studies suggest that “ethnic closure” could be interpreted as a testimony of a division in the Lithuanian society running along ethnic lines. Others tend to see ethnic separation as a result of limited willingness on the side of Lithuanians to engage with the members of other ethnic groups.²⁵ The interpersonal contacts usually represent the actual network of personal social relations but not the assessment thereof. This is particularly indicative in statements such as

“all respondents tend to deny premises of mono-ethnic relations; however in reality it is quite common that primary relations are transformed into secondary relations. Therefore, it should be emphasised that the tendency observed in professional relations regarding ethnic closure is not dominant as open and ethnically diverse relations prevail.”²⁶

Kasatkina and Leončikas claim in their “Process and Context of Adaptation” that at least one fifth of their respondents throughout Lithuania indicate that it is important to belong to the titular nationality if one would like to be successful in the labour market. Likewise, those minority members who claim to have experienced discrimination because they were not ethnic Lithuanians have stated that this had happened to them in the sphere of employment.²⁷

Comparable to the results presented by Pabriks for Latvia, Okuneviciute-Neveauskiene, Gruzevskis and Moskvina determined that Lithuania’s minorities predominantly work in monoethnic collectives and in the private sector. This indicates that the recruitment procedure in Lithuania follows the broader social context of minority-majority relations. The results also indicate that the economic integration of non-core ethnics in Lithuania proceeds through different occupations, is highly dependent on knowledge of Lithuanian and is predetermined by territorial mobility.²⁸ The majority of the monoethnic labour collectives, however,

are found mainly in the areas of compact settlement of minorities: Russians and Tatars in Vilnius and Visaginas, Poles in Šalčininkai and Jewish minorities in Vilnius and Klaipeda. This fact in particular leads some of local researchers to suggest that “groups with a higher social status include higher proportions of Lithuanians. [...] In business and professional environment open and ethnically diverse relations prevail.”²⁹

Vida Beresnevičiūtė suggests that the sectoral and ethnic fragmentation of the labour market is somewhat conducive to the persisting marginalisation of minority individuals following their belated efforts to integrate into socioeconomic structures during the initial years of transition.³⁰ Likewise, in her ethnographic research on a concentrated minority settlement in Visaginas, Kristina Šliavaite concludes that the success of social inclusion is largely dependent on minorities’ flexibility. Only if minority members are actively adapting to the new socioeconomic environment can they avoid remaining in the lower social strata, guarantee social mobility for their children and gain access to structural resources for social advancement.³¹

The studies of the Estonian and Latvian labour markets claim that language regulations had the greatest effect on rising levels of unemployment among minorities. The Lithuanian case further suggests that despite minorities’ fluency in the state language, local, non-core ethnics face greater adaptation difficulties to the changes in the labour market. Hence, while the social mobility of those lacking fluency in the state language needs to be explored in greater detail, the difference in employment opportunities between the minority-majority in the regions with a high minority concentration would provide better insights. As Kasatkina and others have repeatedly underlined in their studies of Lithuanian society, differences in opportunity structures and resources between the minority and majority groups could be effectively alleviated only if members of minority communities were positively discriminated in the competition with the speakers of the state language.³²

The discussions in Estonia and Latvia have focused almost entirely on the issues of language proficiency of non-core group members. Many of the questions on minority participation in public life taking place in Lithuania have not surfaced in debates on the situation in Latvia and Estonia. Kasatkina and Leončikas suggested that only when the political and legal issues of minority accommodation are resolved, can the majority populations start perceiving of the minority as an equal partner in the economic and social developments of society. In this sense, Lithuania’s minorities were in a much better position to be accepted as partners in state development when contrasted with Latvia’s and Estonia’s non-

titulars. As we will see in the next section however, minority representation in public offices remained low across Latvia and Estonia, as well as Lithuania.

2. Russian-speakers in public office

As we have established in the previous section of the chapter, Russian-speakers are overrepresented in the lower strata of Estonian and Latvian societies, as well as in private business and entrepreneurship which are not, or only fragmentarily, affected by the regulations on language knowledge. Some argue that the language legislation proscribing obligatory proficiency in the state language for employees in certain fields outside of public domain is to be blamed for this. Other observers also suggest that the reluctance of Baltic political entrepreneurs to allow more effective representation of minorities was more decisive.³³ This part of the chapter investigates how the persistence of strong social networks, primarily functioning in the state language, impact opportunities for the upward social mobility of minorities as well as minorities' access to key social and political positions.

During the time when the institutions of the Baltic States were reorganised, the representatives of the majority ethnic groups made many initial policy-decisions. Since state institutions have been operating in the state language, this has *de facto* reduced the opportunities for employment in the public sphere for minority ethnics despite the absence of discriminatory regulations. In one sense or another, some argue that ethnic favouritism "served as an additional alienating factor between the ethnic Russians and the restored state."³⁴ Additionally, an applicant's knowledge of the state language served as the criteria for employment. "If a potential applicant speaks without accent, any discrimination on the ethnic basis is virtually impossible."³⁵ One could, of course, assume that evaluation of the ethnic composition of the public institutions in the region would make clear whether non-core ethnic groups are disadvantaged as to gaining access to decisive institutions.

In "Ethnic proportions" Pabriks reviews the ethnic background of the individuals employed in the state institutions in order to assess the differences in access to the key positions between Latvia's groups. The author concludes that the share of Russian, Ukrainian and other minorities among those employed is significantly lower than their share in the citizenry would lead one to expect. He suggests that it is due to the limited number of applications from non-Latvians for these positions. Pabriks also goes on to state that even fewer applicants from a minority background

were hired to the respective positions due to “the applicant’s level of professionalism and knowledge of Latvian [which] determine job selection.”³⁶

A comprehensive investigation of the various employment areas undertaken by Pabriks provides an overview of the professions where differences in the employment of Latvians and non-Latvians occurred. He concludes that the minorities are underrepresented in many district councils and administrations despite their high representation among the residents in these districts, both among permanent residents and citizens.³⁷ From the data obtained, Pabriks suggests that there is only a small probability that the number of minority representatives among the residents of the electoral districts influences the ratio of minority representation in the administrations.³⁸ Also, in the analysis of the ethnic composition of all Latvian 35 courts he states that while 307 judges are employed in these, only 23 of them are of minority descent.³⁹

“Upon reviewing the ethnic representation proportionality index in the surveyed districts and cities, the first conclusion is that minority representation is very uneven and disproportionate. [...]Concerning the Russian minority’s proportionality index in Latvia’s districts and cities when looked at together, out of 22 districts and cities, there are 6 administrations where Russians are represented more than their proportion among the citizens of the districts in question. On the other hand, in 16 districts one can observe the opposite situation—Russian representation in the administrations is less than their corresponding ratio.”⁴⁰

In a subsequent study, “In Defiance of Fate,” Pabriks comes to the conclusion that “non-ethnic Latvians at large are passive applicants for the positions in the state institutions.”⁴¹ Observing a clear underrepresentation of members of minority communities in governmental institutions and administration, Pabriks argues that, given the representation of minorities in various occupational sectors in Latvia, as well as their distribution across social strata, there is little support for claims of “ethnic” discrimination. He also suggests that in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, prison authority and police, as well as in some state enterprises, such as the Latvian Shipping Company (*Latvijas kuģniecība*), Latvian Railways (*Latvijas dzelzceļš*), Latvian Telecom (*Lattelecom*) and Post (*Latvijas Pasts*) minorities are overrepresented.

Overall, in Latvia different ethnic groups occupy different economic segments, leading Pabriks to suggest that minorities are not explicitly discriminated against in the labour market. Instead, what is observed in Latvia is sectoral and socio-economic stratification, which leads to economic asymmetry between the ethnic communities.⁴² Pabriks claims that the Latvian labour market is characterised by a lack of qualified personal. Pabriks' statement that the "lack of Latvian language skills and the relative sustainability of the Russian language environment hinders minorities', especially ethnic Russian, involvement in the state universities" makes clear that it is not the lack of professional qualification that impacts labour markets the most. Rather it is the discrepancy between minorities' linguistic skills and language regulations in higher education and at the place of work that explain asymmetric economic relations between the groups.⁴³

Arguably, the limited employment of non-core ethnics in Latvian public offices exacerbates the minority perception that representation is lacking in the government. In Lithuania, the titulars also prevail among legislators, senior officials, clerks and specialists, comprising around 88% in these groups. The Poles comprise 4% in each of the said groups and Russians 5%.⁴⁴ The same situation can be observed in Estonia, where representatives of the minority occupy only a small number of positions in the state apparatus. Despite the election of the first Russian-speaking representatives into the Riigikogu (1995) and repeated submissions of amendments calling for the liberalisation of language and citizenship legislation there, no changes were achieved, which still limited non-Estonians' access to key socio-political positions.

The reluctance of politicians to change these requirements is reflected partially in the studies on integration monitoring. The 2002 and 2005 reports suggested that Estonians and non-Estonians have fundamentally different attitudes with respect to the participation of non-Estonians in the Riigikogu, the government and defence forces. While non-Estonians appeared to support greater involvement in these institutions, Estonians consistently favoured limited participation.⁴⁵ The study of the distribution of non-Estonians across different employment sectors has not been conducted by the state in detail since integration monitoring in 2005. However the TIES 2008 study indicates that non-core ethnics are likely to find employment in transport, communication, commerce and the police or rescue service, as well as in positions as service-providers, mid-level specialists or specialists with subordinates.⁴⁶ The job opportunities in the sector of public administration and in state services remain limited for non-Estonians.⁴⁷ The long-term comparison of the data for the period 2001–

2006 presented in “Minority Rights in Estonia and Latvia” continue to corroborate earlier findings:

“A disparity between the rates of unemployment among ethnic Estonians and non-Estonians—by a factor of two on average—persisted throughout the years. In 2007 the unemployment rates among Estonians and minorities were 3.6% and 6.9% respectively. Individuals aged 15–24 faced a much more complicated job market situation than other age groups. Whereas the unemployment rate among citizens of Estonians in 2007 was 3.9% it reached 8.3% among non-citizens. The rate was lower among the stateless people (8.1%) than among Russian citizens (9.8%). [...] Minorities are overrepresented in the low-quality workforce, especially in Tallinn.”⁴⁸

Two issues point to the similarity in the logic of employment in the state institutions in all three countries. Firstly, as is indicated in the overview of the Latvian and Estonian integration processes and in the studies of employment in Lithuania, the centrality of language knowledge for employment in public office limits access to many governmental posts for the members of non-core ethnic groups.⁴⁹ The existence of access barriers suggests that proficiency in the state language was not seen as a mere token ensuring an individual’s connectedness with the state. Instead, language proficiency was seen as a symbol of accepting the dominant position of the core ethnic group in state institutions, as is observed by the critics of these regulations.⁵⁰ This mismatch indicates in the first place that insufficient efforts were made by the local governments to ensure equal opportunities in all segments of the labour market for all state residents.

Secondly, while the centrality of the state language has been gaining acceptance with the members of minority community, those who oppose the view have presented considerable criticism with regard to regulations of language use in public offices. Thus the minority was limited to participating in social life as a way of securing the decisive share of majorities’ representatives in key social and political institutions across the region. This was the case in Estonia and Latvia, but also in Lithuania, where, with the exception of the areas of compact settlement of minorities, public offices were to be run exclusively in the state language. For many members of minority communities, following the stringent regulations on language use meant an additional difficulty of accessing higher social

status, making it difficult to establish connections with those already in the upper part of the social ladder.

I have argued that the differences in social status between the ethnic communities in the Baltic are the result of regulations on language use. The mainstream interpretation of disparities between the groups however claims that the speakers of non-state languages were less fit for economic developments post-1991. Most studies conducted during the 1990s claim that the socioeconomic differences between the core and non-core ethnics in the region have developed as a result of transition from industry towards a service-oriented economy. Most remarkably, this view was supported and promoted by the state integration programmes in Estonia and Latvia in particular.

The parity between the different ethnic communities was considerably aggravated by the imposed restrictions on language use and, especially in Estonia and Latvia, with regard to terms of political membership. The authors of the Estonian integration monitoring suggest that the combination of these factors and difference in socioeconomic positions between the Estonians and non-Estonians *prior* to transition have significantly influenced the preparedness of minorities to join in and to participate in social and political processes of an independent Estonia.⁵¹ Reflecting on one of the main goals of the Estonian Integration Programme, the authors conclude that the initial underrepresentation of minority groups in governmental positions further discourages non-Estonians to naturalise and take an active part in political decision-making. Similar opinions were reflected in the study of Latvian social processes.⁵² Both the Estonian and Latvian surveys point out that the members of majority ethnic communities see the underrepresentation of minorities in state positions as a result of non-titulars' overall political passivity.

Minority representatives list different opinions. The overwhelming part of the non-Latvian respondents surveyed by the Latvian Naturalisation Board in 1997 indicated that they would like to formalise their relation to the Latvian state. The reasons for them *not* to do so are connected mainly with the procedure of naturalisation.⁵³ The low number of applications can be explained by insufficient command of the state language, insufficient familiarity with Latvian laws and history, the lack of necessary information and a too expensive fee for naturalisation.⁵⁴ The research on Estonia cites more pragmatic reasons such as reluctance to serve in the national army, the option to travel to Russia without a visa, as well as the general passivity among non-citizens.⁵⁵ More recent studies of Latvian non-citizens have argued that persisting statelessness in Latvia can be explained by the non-citizens' growing alienation from the state, as well as

the frequent perception of the conditions for receiving citizenship of Latvian Republic as being unjust and degrading.⁵⁶

In interviews with the members of the Russian-speaking community, the distrust of the Russian-speaking public towards the state was cited as the main reason for reluctance to apply for citizenship in Latvia.⁵⁷ In Estonia my interview partners claimed that many members of the Russian-speaking community see no reason to opt for Estonian citizenship as long as they can reside in the country with a residence permit. In plain words, the behaviour of non-citizens in both countries indicates that citizenship is not considered to be legal proof, or even a marginal indicator of the person's allegiance to the state.⁵⁸

Despite the fact that some policies relating to minority issues in the Baltic states were amended since the late 1990s, there is little evidence to suggest that over the past decade non-titulars have enjoyed better access to employment in the public sector. While the governments shifted priorities from the importance of official languages for state-building to linguistic proficiency *per se*, communication between the majority and minority communities did not significantly improve. To this effect, the technocratic approach to social integration across the Baltic states perpetuated the previously institutionalised inequalities between various language communities.⁵⁹ The dominant position of Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians in political institutions and agencies of "their" states remained a bottom-line for cooperation with minorities who continued to experience difficulty in accessing political processes.⁶⁰

The social and economic elites of minority communities in the Baltic states found it hard, if not impossible, to see ways of engaging in political processes on terms dictated by majority political entrepreneurs. This comes on top of the difficulties in social advancement, lack of minorities' visibility in political institutions and lack of acceptance from the representatives of majority ethnic groups. After being alienated from the political process at the initial stage of independence by the Balts "titularising" "their" states, many members of the minority populations do not participate in politics, as they consider these unimportant for their personal well-being. Unsurprisingly therefore, minority representation in state and municipal institutions have remained minimal over the past two decades. Effectively, a successful career in any area of public service, in the state sector or in the legal professions presupposes near-native knowledge of the state language and participation in the social networks of the titular nationals in order to secure access to key posts. Such candidates from among the minority groups were and remain few and far between.

Altogether of course, there were some incentives for non-core ethnics to seek employment in political institutions, but for many the game was not worth a candle. The effort required to gain access by acquiring linguistic competence, mobilising necessary support and standing up to majorities' unwillingness to accept non-titulars as public officials was too great. However, while the biggest part of the Baltic minority communities was alienated from politics, some community representatives have advanced well in politics. In the next part of the chapter, I discuss how minority communities were represented in elected positions and whether they were able to contribute to the development of policies in their state of residence.

3. Minority political representatives

Twenty years after independence, many members of minority communities across the Baltic states have opportunities to participate in the processes of direct democratic choice. However, no significant representation of non-titulars in the party landscape in these three countries can be observed. The different foci of activities by minority and majority politicians suggest that the representation of minorities' concerns in the political sphere is far from adequate. Although strong minority parties are largely absent, this does not necessarily mean that minority interests are not represented at all. More recent developments in Baltic politics suggest that even though the means to engage in social and political processes are made available for minorities, participation in these needs to take place on terms dictated by majority communities. This part of the chapter discusses how the salience of ethnic issues continues to influence representation of minority interests in Baltic politics today.

Since the restoration of Lithuanian independence, there have always been representatives of the minority communities elected into local, republican councils, as well into regional administrations. In the Lithuanian case, Russian political forces were not consolidated until relatively late, but political parties and movements represented the interest of the Polish-speaking minority throughout the period of Lithuania's restored independence. A mixed majoritarian proportional electoral system in Lithuania allowed representatives of ethnic minorities, even if they did not collect 4% of the votes, to enter the Seimas. However, with the amendment of the Elections Law in 1996, the threshold was raised for a single party to 5% and for an inter-party coalition to 7% of the vote. This reduced the number of minority representatives in the parliament. Although some minorities argued that the step was aimed at preventing their representation, the

Lithuanian debate (allegedly) was not aimed at the ethnic minority, but at the representatives of the Lithuanian public. As it was argued in the Seimas then, it was necessary to “end the practice of representing three Lithuanians by five political parties.” However, the threshold for minority parties was abolished to tighten the electoral competition, eliminating the opportunities of smaller parties to concur with bigger political alliances.

The representatives of the Polish minority in Lithuania established political organisations much earlier than the Russians-speakers. In May 1988, the *Lietuvos Lenku Sąjunga* (Lithuanian Polish Union, LLS) was established in response to the increasingly Lithuanian-nationalist rhetoric of *Sąjūdis* and mainly sought to protect the cultural rights of Lithuania’s Polish population. Among other goals, the LLS stated that it was interested in extending the facilities whereby members of the Polish minority could receive education in their native language. This agenda attracted many voters in the 1990 election to local councils in the Šalčininkai and Vilnius regions, where Poles constituted the absolute majority of the population. These regions, like South Eastern Lithuania in general, were traditionally distinguished by their agrarian structure, low levels of income and low percentage of individuals with higher education. Therefore, the emerging rhetoric of re-Lithuanisation of the region caused a high sensitivity among the local Polish-speaking population for the preservation of its cultural rights.

The Polish minority was the first to form a political organisation registering the Polish Union in 1992. In 1994, it was transformed into the *Lietuvos lenkų rinkimų akcija* (*Akcja Wyborcza Polaków na Litwie*, Polish Election Action, LLRA) which successfully took part in the elections. Further, in 2002, the *Lietuvos lenkų liaudies partija* (Lithuania’s Polish People Party, LLLP) was registered, though it was only able to achieve representation at the municipal level. Kasatkina and Beresnevičiute maintain that

“the Polish minority is nearly exclusively represented by the [LLRA]. Although the lists of other political parties, especially those which run for the mandates in “Polish” areas, include Polish representatives, local Polish people tend to support the [LLRA], which is distinct in its pro-Polish rhetoric.”⁶¹

Until its Fifth Congress in August 1994, when the LLS *de jure* became LLRA, the organisation had no political arm and was merely a social organisation. As a political party the Lithuanian Polish Electoral Action

had goals very similar to those of the Union itself, representing merely a political alternative and striving to guarantee equal rights to all Lithuanian citizens, irrespective of their ethnicity. Despite the efforts of its leadership, the LLRA failed to consolidate the representatives of the Polish-community, who also ran on the lists of other parties in the local elections of 1995. Although the LLRA came out with 68 mandates in the 1995 local elections, in the Vilnius, Šalčininkai, Švenčionys, and Trakai regions, since then the support of the voters has been consistently declining. The results of the municipal elections in the Vilnius region demonstrate that the higher the turnout of voters, the lower the support gained by the LLRA, despite the fact that Polish-speakers account for more than 60% of the whole population in that region. In the 1997 municipal elections, 22,155 voters cast their ballots for the LLRA, which comprised 77% of the whole electorate of that constituency, resulting in the party having 23 mandates in the Vilnius Region Municipality Council. In 2000, 20,559 persons out of 31,831 voted for this political organisation, comprising 64% and giving 20 seats in the Council of the Municipality to the LLRA.⁶²

The LLRA in the region of Šalčininkai has achieved similar results, receiving 20 seats in 1997, 18 in 2000, and 17 in 2002. These changes could have been determined by the long period when the party was represented in the local government but unable to fulfil the promises previously made to the electorate. The ethnic breakdown of political representatives on the municipal level indicates quite clearly that Polish-speakers do not tend to support ethnic political parties in all regions. Some observers take this as an indication of the fact that the LLRA had been consistently losing its political status within the Polish community.⁶³ However, it could be more legitimate to suggest that voter preferences are not defined by factors of ethnic allegiance. Instead issue-oriented voting and preference for parties with a regional agenda have developed across Lithuania.⁶⁴

Additionally since the Seimas elections have proved less successful for the LLRA. The party received 1,85% votes in 2000, 3.8% in 2004 and 4.79% in 2008 and was unable to pass the 5% electoral threshold. Each time however, at least two representatives from the single mandate districts could go to Vilnius (Waldemar Tomaszewski and Gabriel Mincewicz in 2000; Waldemar Tomaszewski and Leokadija Počikovska in 2004; Waldemar Tomaszewski, Michal Mackiewicz and Jaroslaw Narkiewicz in 2008). In the municipal elections in February 2007 the LLRA received 5.42% of the vote, being represented by 6 councillors in local government of Vilnius city, 20 in Šalčininkai, 19 in the Vilnius region, 5 in the region of Trakai and 3 in the region Švenčionys. During the period of 2007–2009 the LLRA could nominate the Mayor of Vilnius, Arthur Ludkowski.

The focus on the regional, rather than ethnic issues explains why the LLRA continuously received proportionally more votes than the size of its voting minority group in the geographical locality.⁶⁵ Simply, voters prefer the party with a clear regional appeal and a dense network of supporters, which encouraged local Lithuanians, Russians and Belarusians to vote for this political organisation. In Vilnius City the LLRA holds a lower, though stable backing of the electorate and receives somewhere around 9% of the votes.⁶⁶ At the same time, it can be expected that the Polish-speaking candidates in this region have also been nominated on the lists of other political parties. This particularly highlights the fact that even in the region with the highest concentration of the minority population, the preferences of the electorate shift towards the parties running on particular platforms and are not tied to ethnic representation.

The party consolidating the interests of the Russian community only emerged as a political force in 1995. *Lietuvos Rusų Sąjunga* (Lithuania's Russian Union, LRS) was seeking to unite Russian voters and to represent their interests in the Seimas and the higher authorities of the state. Some 30 different cultural organisations were united under its roof to represent the interests of the ethnic group in their social, economic and political life. Another part of the Russian-speaking minority that was keen to organise politically but was significantly less successful on the political scene was the Alliance of Lithuanian Citizens. Originally registered in 1996, it was later transformed into the *Lietuvos tautinių mažumų aljansas* (Alliance of the Lithuanian National Minorities) and achieved no representation in Seimas. Both of the mentioned organisations failed to pass the electoral threshold and send representatives into the Seimas in 1996. Not until 2000 was the LRS able to collect sufficient votes to be represented in the Seimas by three MPs. In 2002 the *Politinė partija Rusų aljansas* (Russian Alliance) was registered as a local party in Klaipėda and took part in the municipal elections.

In comparison with the LLRA, the political organisations of the Russian-speaking minority are less successful with the electorate. If, in municipal elections the LLRA receives 50 mandates in total, both Russian parties receive only 10–20 mandates. Several explanations are possible in this case. On the one hand, the turnout of the Russian electorate in municipal elections (as in other elections) is lower than that of Poles. On the other hand, these two organisations might have failed to define clearly the objectives of their activity and they are not active enough in attracting their potential electorate. The fact that the Russian population is geographically more dispersed with the majority living in urban areas may be an important factor, as it is more difficult to reach the necessary backing

of voters. The Russian-speakers tend to support parties based on the principles of their programmes, among which the left-wing parties dominate.⁶⁷ As I suggested in my discussion of the Polish vote in Lithuania, the case of Visaginas also indicates that there is a trend among Lithuania's Russian-speakers to vote for programme-based parties that include members of Russian origin rather than ethnically formed political groups. In 1997, the Alliance of Lithuanian Citizens received 2,174 votes out of 7,415, i.e. 29%, and was granted 9 mandates in the Council of Visaginas. In 2000, this political party received 3 mandates and in 2002 it did not reach the required threshold of 4%. The situation in Vilnius is quite similar. In 1997, a coalition of the two Russian parties received 10 seats in the city council. It was also represented in the council after all subsequent elections.

Although the Lithuanian Seimas has consistently had representatives of ethnic minorities, their proportion is significantly lower than the ethnic composition of society. While in the Seimas of 1990 representatives of ethnic groups accounted for 14% (19 seats), since 1992 the national parliament has been growing more homogeneous, representing more ethnic Lithuanians than minorities. The number of Polish-speaking parliamentarians decreased most significantly from 8 in 1992, to 3 in 1996.⁶⁸ Some favour the interpretation that the change in electoral behaviour

“could be the fact of changing strategies for participation in elections, i.e. from trying to compete in small parties to forming inter-party coalitions and integrating members of ethnic minorities into other existing political parties.”⁶⁹

However, it is clear that over the first decade of independence the opportunities for the representatives of ethnic minorities to be elected and receive a seat have significantly decreased also because of political interference. Problems such as the gerrymandering of electoral district borders and the active redirection of the political agenda from ethnic issues to social ones have been noted.⁷⁰ This also indicates that the absence of minority parties in parliament or other electoral bodies does not immediately indicate the passivity of the minority—in fact, the relation between the central government and municipalities in Lithuania allows a great number of instruments for local minority representatives to influence policy-making.

In part this had resulted from the differing perspectives of representation in the minority communities themselves. Kasatkina and Beresnevičiute argue that the “main characteristic of the political parties of ethnic minorities is that they are mainly regional (i.e. represent the areas

densely inhabited by representatives of national minorities) or marginal.”⁷¹ For example, the Russian electorate is mostly spread across the cities of Lithuania and usually comprises a small part of the whole number of the electorate. There are few constituencies where Russian electors would have enough votes to support their candidate. For this reason, the representatives of Russian political parties are particularly successful where they are able to consolidate themselves with majority representatives and create a Seimas coalition with the other major, predominantly left-wing groups.

The Polish-speaking minority on the other hand is compactly concentrated in the areas where the LLRA is running local councils, a fact that popularises their activities and improves their chances to win seats in the Seimas. More obvious examples of interethnic relations in the country, however, can be seen in the cases of electoral districts inhabited mainly by ethnic Lithuanians. For example in Šiauliai, Kaunas and Kėdainiai, non-Lithuanians were elected into municipal and national representative organs, indicating that voters orient themselves not towards ethnic belonging, but at the electoral platform of the candidate.

As has been indicated by the members of city councils in interviews with the author, minority members can pursue their interests while being represented on the lists of the majority political parties. The main reason for this being that political mobilisation according to ethnic principle in Lithuania is viable only on the issues where minority interests are vested and clearly distinguishable from the interest of the majority. However, as it appears in Lithuania, support of the minority groups for the majority political parties was conducive for ethnic divisions in the party landscape. This position was perceived positively by both majority and minority parts of society, suggesting that interethnic relations in the country were undergoing considerable normalisation.

The LLPA and LRS ran on a common platform during the European Parliament elections in June 2004, though they failed to pass the electoral threshold of 7%, collecting only 5.74% of the vote. In 2009 however, the LLRA alone received 8.46% of the vote, which sent Waldemar Tomaszewski to Strassburg. Prior to the EP elections, Tomaszewski also ran for the presidency in the elections of May 2009, receiving 4.67% of the vote. He ran on a platform that opposed “Lithuanisation” of Polish names and favoured the re-privatisation of land in the Vilnius region: both issues of high salience for the Polish electorate. Overall however, while the status of political representation of minority communities reflects the overall depoliticisation of Lithuania’s society, politics are largely dominated by the titular parties cooperating with national minority representatives.

The percentage of non-core ethnics among Estonia's electorate is comparable to that of Lithuania. However, the representation of the Russian-speakers in the Riigikogu has been weak since the independence. Since no special registration rules or restrictions on the establishment of minority parties exist in the country, a number of so-called "Russian parties" have sought representation of minority interests in Estonia since the establishment of independence.

No Russian parties were present in the first post-Soviet Riigikogu due to the minimal number of non-Estonians in the citizenry at that time.⁷² In 1995, however, several Russian political parties, such as *Vene Erakond Eestis* (Russian Party of Estonia, VEE, later renamed *Vene Balti Erakond Eestis*, Baltic-Russian Party of Estonia) and *Eesti Ühendatud Rahvapartei* (United People's Party, EÜR) were founded and ran as the coalition "Our Home Estonia," receiving 5.87% of the vote, which corresponded to 6 Riigikogu seats out of 101. A similar practice during the run up to elections in 1999 allowed the parties to stand separately, but the EÜR gained only 8.13% of the vote and a meagre 6 seats during the elections.⁷³ Since then, the representatives of the Russian-speaking minority have failed to pass the required electoral threshold in both the 2003 and 2007 elections: the EÜR collected 2.2% and the VEE only 0.2% of the vote and were both left out of the parliament.⁷⁴ Nonetheless, 6 minority representatives were elected through the lists of (Estonian) mainstream parties.

Thus, the representation of Estonia's minorities at the national level through party presence in the Riigikogu is very limited. However, electoral unions of non-Estonians have much greater influence at the local level, mainly in Tallinn and in the Ida-Virumaa region. The longitudinal comparison suggests that even in local elections, the parties focusing explicitly on minority issues lose their appeal to the electorate. Over the past decade, the local minority electorate has been repeatedly avoiding voting for the parties with a clearly minority-oriented agenda and has expressed support for alliances under the stewardship of Estonian political elites. Once again, in comparing the situation in Estonia to that of Lithuania, the expectation that minority populations would start playing an active political role if sufficient numbers of them were to naturalise, was not met.⁷⁵

The elections for the city council of Tallinn, a city with a high resident minority population, have demonstrated that Russian-speakers do not necessarily vote for Russian parties or names. In the elections of 2002, the two electoral unions of Russian-speakers received 8.4% of the vote despite there being around 40% minority residents in the city.⁷⁶ However, there has been a trend of growing representation of minority groups in the mainstream Estonian parties such as *Keskerakond* (Centre Party), which allows

them to collect high numbers of votes from both ethnic groups. However, even in the minority dominated Ida-Virumaa region, the voters elected the candidates running on the lists of main (Estonian) parties to promote their interests more efficiently at the national level.⁷⁷

Some local observers indicate a form of minority voters' fatigue with the ineffectiveness of minority parties, while defending group interests at the national level. Others point to the awareness of the limited efficacy of parties that profile themselves explicitly on a minority agenda and take in the constant opposition of Estonian-led parties, which still prefer to ignore proposals aimed at policy changes emerging from the "Russian parties." Interestingly, the comments in the Russian language Estonian daily tend to see the failure of the VEE as a fear among Russian-speakers to affiliate themselves with a "Russian organization" in contemporary Estonia. In this context, the EÜR provided a better choice by positioning itself as a "Russian-speaking party."⁷⁸ In the 2007 Riigikogu elections the VEE and Constitutional Party (formerly the EÜR) ran, but were unable to pass the electoral threshold.

As demonstrated by the Lithuanian example, Estonian Russian-speakers tend to prefer a variety of parties and not solely parties with a clear and indivisible minority agenda. While the Lithuanian majoritarian electoral system makes sense for an ethnic vote only if the parties are explicitly "minority parties," the Estonian electoral system suggests greater opportunities for successful participation in policy-making if elected through majority party lists.⁷⁹ Since 2003, minority voters continuously supported those minority politicians who ran on the platform of "Estonian" parties, in the expectation that they would achieve greater influence while in the office.⁸⁰ In this light, the "Estonian" parties have started to pay particular attention to recruiting minority politicians to their lists in order to attract minority voters.⁸¹ As Järve observes, "Citizens with a minority background are also joining mainstream parties in considerable numbers, an obvious change compared to the beginning of the 1990s when some Estonian parties sought to remain ethnically 'clean.'"⁸²

Raimo Pomm indicates in his study of the Estonian case, that despite the fact that Russian parties agreed on a common goal, they could hardly elaborate a comprehensive political programme.⁸³ At the same time, the Estonian parties were successful in co-opting Russian-speaking elites and voters by bringing up issues of concern for Russian voters, such as the problems of statelessness and social exclusion.⁸⁴ However, the issue of political membership has not been a focus of the political agenda in any of the three countries to an equal degree. Estonia, for example, has allowed all its residents, regardless of their citizenship, to vote in local elec-

tions, although non-citizens were not allowed to run for an office. In localities with large non-Estonian populations, notably Tallinn and Ida-Virumaa, the state allowed a certain degree of local autonomy by allowing local paperwork to be done in Russian, stipulating that only communication with the centre be held in the state language. This was similar to the regulations made by the Lithuanian state with respect to its minority regions.⁸⁵

A special solution for Estonian non-citizens allowed them to vote for political parties in local elections and hence acquire at least some say in policy-making at the local level. Unlike Estonia, Latvia continues to resist granting voting rights for resident non-citizens, legitimising it by claiming this would further blur the boundaries between citizens and non-citizens.⁸⁶ In this respect, Nils Muižnieks argues that this might be particularly indicative of the dispersed settlement of the non-Latvian community in the country and its particularly high visibility in Riga, which—should the resident non-citizens be allowed to vote—would immediately change the political landscape of the local governments.⁸⁷

Unlike in Estonia and Lithuania, where the influence of parties representing minority interests has consistently declined, Latvia's non-titular community has grown more politically active since 1995. Four major parties have appeared on the political horizon to represent the interests of the minority community, though they all reflect very different political orientations.⁸⁸ The special provisions made by the Saeima Election Law facilitate the favourable representation of ethnic minority candidates even if they run on the lists of Latvian parties.⁸⁹ In Article 23, the voting procedure described allows citizens to choose particular candidates from one electoral list and at the same time vote against others. Although this regulation was largely formed in correspondence with the electoral regulations of pre-Soviet Latvia, today it seems to encourage ethnic favouritism while voting and hence reinforces ethnic partisanship.⁹⁰ Clearly, this regulation disallows Latvian ethnic parties the inclusion of minority members on their lists, as is the case in Estonia, and facilitates the confrontation between the majority and minorities in Latvia's politics. Hence, as was stated by Pabriks, the comparison of the share of candidates and those elected according to their ethnic origin does not suggest that the relative increase of minority participation in elections necessarily increases their share among the elected officials.

In Latvia, the *Tautas Saskaņas Partija* (National Harmony Party, TSP), *Latvijas Sociālistiskā Partija* (Latvian Socialist Party) and *Līdztiesība* (*Ravnopravie*, Equal Rights Movement) were mainly supported by Russian-speaking voters.⁹¹ Importantly, in the 1998 elections the parties

and movements representing minority population formed the coalition *Za Prava Čeloveka v Edinai Latvii* (in Russian, *Par Cilvēka Tiesībām Vienotā Latvijā*, PCTVL the Latvian, For Human Rights in the United Latvia, FHRUL) to win 14.8% of the popular vote and occupy 16 seats in the Saeima. In the 2002 elections the FHRUL improved their position to 19% of the vote and 25 representatives in the parliament.⁹² By being perceived as a pro-Russian party and opposing the 2004 education reform, the FHRUL collected the majority of the Russian-speakers in the country, which accentuated the differences between ethnic communities.⁹³

The FHRUL has periodically raised issues related to statelessness, the use of minority languages in public life, including in the media, and has repeatedly proposed ratification of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Though the convention was eventually ratified in 2005, the vast majority of the coalition's suggestions have been systematically rejected by other parties. The FHRUL continued to be one of the popular parties during the period of legislation, partially due to its persistent demands to allow resident non-citizens to vote in local elections.⁹⁴ However, this overwhelming popularity at the local level, particularly in Riga, was not translated into electoral support in the 2006 elections, where only 6.03% of the electorate voted in its favour.

Somewhat differently, *Tautas Saskaņas Partija* (TSP) sought to address the issues of potential interest for Russian-speaking voters, such as citizenship and state language use. The TSP was established in 1993 as *Saskaņa Latvijai–Atdzimšana Tautsaimniecībai* and supports issues that address some of the grievances of the minority populations and hence is very much comparable to Estonia's *Keskerakond*. In appealing to minority voters, the TSP has a considerable number of ethnic Latvians in its leadership and attempts to profile itself as “the only Latvian party where Latvians and Russians are working together.”⁹⁵ In 2005, the party joined the alliance *Saskaņas Centrs* (Harmony Centre, in Russian, *Centr soglasiya*) winning 17 seats in the 2006 Saeima elections, thus becoming the fourth largest party in Latvia's Parliament. While still representing the interest of the minority population, *Saskaņas Centrs* is the second largest opposition party after FHRUL, and is naturally excluded from ministerial posts in the Latvian government.

Alliances between the parties representing the majority and the minorities in Latvia currently appear to be impossible. In any case, they are highly dependent on party leadership which are heavily conflicting, as they generally represent directly opposing views of state-building. Thus there is a limited preparedness of the Latvian majority parties to cooperate with the minority parties. With no implicit majority-minority power-

sharing arrangements at the national level, the representatives of the Russian-speaking community are not perceived as loyal to Latvia and are frequently excluded from inter-party dialogues at the national level. This in part explains the impossibility of appointing a higher ranked minister of minority descent in Latvia. While the FHRUL has been supported by a considerable number of voters in the 2002 elections, the party was not included in negotiations for government positions.

In Estonia minority parties did not enter parliament after the elections in 2003 and 2007. Similarly to Latvian situation, the government coalitions were formed without the mainstream *Keskerakond*, which represented large sections of the Russian-speaking electorate, despite it holding nearly a quarter of the votes. In part, the situation has been interpreted as a projection of everyday beliefs into the realm of politics, with minority/majority parties holding nearly opposing views on the geopolitical orientation of Latvia and Estonia, education reforms, changes in citizenship, language policies, etc. The elections for the Saeima (2005) and the Riigikogu (2007) after the heated debates on education reforms, the development of the integration programmes, and the consequences of the EU membership stressed the growing propensity of non-core ethnics to vote for mainstream parties, whose focus is on minority social problems rather than merely promoting a minority agenda.

In this context however one must note that minority communities in Latvia have been consistently voting for “their” parties, partially due to the closer ties between the issues of political representation and the perceived reasons for the socioeconomic disparities between ethnic communities. As I suggested earlier, the large number of political regulations in the areas of social, economic and cultural development in the country are perceived to be made from a position of majority and with limited (if any) consultation with local minority representatives. As had been argued by Pabriks, possibly what continues to mobilise the ethnic vote on both sides of the community is a different understanding of the meaning of some central political regulations (such as citizenship), support for the minority community (among others in education), and socio-economic issues of interest for minority voters.⁹⁶ This is corroborated by the fact that the “Russian parties” in Latvia receive votes very closely reflecting the share of non-Latvians among the citizens.

The difficulties and problems of non-core ethnic communities in Latvia and Estonia are comparable, but it appears that they are more severe in Latvia:

“non-citizens have no voting rights whatsoever, minority schools are undergoing rigid changes which the government has consistently refused to negotiate, only the state language may be used in contacts with authorities and there are employment restrictions for non-citizens.”⁹⁷

This fact also explains the diversity of the interests represented by the range of the parties explicitly working on a “minority agenda,” such as *Saskaņas Centrs* and FHRUL, or addressing the social agenda and supporting the initiatives of “minority parties” proper such as *Latvijas Sociālistiskā Partija* and *Latvijas Sociāldemokrātiskā Strādnieku Partija* (United Social Democratic Workers Party, LSDSP).⁹⁸ However none of these political parties have been included in governing coalitions or could effectively advise Latvia’s government in changes of policies on the issues of greatest concern for their electorate: criteria for citizenship, linguistic regulations and the improvement of social guarantees for disadvantaged non-Latvians.

Although, as can be argued, support along ethnic lines has started to recede in the Baltic states over the past five years, it is still too early to speak of the full shift from minority voting. It appears that over the past decade minority voters in Estonia continue to shift their preference towards the issue-oriented platforms of parties that include representatives from both the minority and the majority. Minority political entrepreneurs that are prepared to cooperate with majority politicians on their terms are increasingly accepted into the ranks of existing (Estonian) parties. At the same time, the Latvian political landscape seems to be undergoing a period of consolidation around issues connected to the political representation of minorities in the state apparatus and their role in state development. It remains to be seen however whether the combined effect of minority marginalisation from decisive social and economic spheres will be retranslated into the political participation of non-core ethnics in the social sphere, as is visible in Lithuania.

4. Conclusion

The present chapter underlined some crucial aspects of social fragmentation in the Baltic societies. I make clear that minorities in the region have experienced difficulty in gaining access to key social and political positions in the region. They also have difficulty in being accepted in positions from which a status change of the minority community as a whole would be feasible. This clearly draws a line of comparison with the statements of

Baltic social scientists, who allege that Russian-speakers have difficulty with competitive political regimes writ large. As I have discerned in this chapter, obvious constraints are placed on the members of minority communities in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, perpetuating structural inequalities in access to key social positions, upward social mobility and the improvement of political status. The structural impact of titularisation limited representation of minorities in key socio-political positions throughout the region.

As discussed, the representation of the Baltic minority populations in positions of influence on social, economic and political policy changes was marginal and could not challenge the dominance of the titular communities in the public domain. The discussion in this chapter indicates that over the past decade the main issues on the agenda of minority political parties have slowly been turning away from criteria of political membership and regulations of language use. However, as I have argued, despite representing around one fifth of the elected members of parliaments, representatives of the minority parties have been continuously marginalised in Estonian and Latvian political processes. However, the issues related to social protection and in support of policies addressing the members of both minority and majority communities gained some prominence. Unfortunately, even the activity of the parliamentary representatives of minority populations in all three countries have failed to assert any meaningful changes in state policies relating to non-core ethnics in the region. On a broader scale therefore even the members of the minority actively participating in political processes did not see their claims accommodated, even if these merely aimed at the improvement of relations between ethnic communities.

Many non-titular residents of the Baltic states have been excluded from automatic membership in the political community, have been affected by policies of post-Soviet nation-building and have had to accommodate to a marginalised social status and limited possibilities for mobility in the social structure of the Baltic societies. The only two means to obtain participation in the political sphere, activation of social networks and engagement in the non-governmental organisations, failed to secure a greater inclusiveness of political regimes as their recommendations to local policy-makers were otherwise unwelcome.

Notes

1 Noorikoiv, et al., 1997; ILO 2001; Arro, et al., 2001b

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- 2 Hansson, 1992; Martinsons and Valdemars, 1992; Drobizheva, 1993; Rostowski, 1994.
 - 3 Muiznieks, 1995.
 - 4 Aasland and Fløtten, 2001.
 - 5 Aasland, 2000.
 - 6 Aasland, 2002, p.63.
 - 7 Pabriks, 2003, p.123.
 - 8 Kasatkina and Leončikas, 2004
 - 9 Ibid.
 - 10 Pabriks, 2002, p.23.
 - 11 Ibid. p.41.
 - 12 Ibid. p.43.
 - 13 Ibid. p.38.
 - 14 Ibid. pp.44–48.
 - 15 Integration Foundation, 2005, p.4.
 - 16 ILO, 2001.
 - 17 European Union, “European Union Labour Force Survey.” See, http://circa.europa.eu/irc/dsis/employment/info/data/eu_lfs Retrieved 2008–01–30.
 - 18 See for example, Saar and Unt, 2006.
 - 19 Lithuanian Government, 2002.
 - 20 Cited in Kasatkina and Leončikas, 2004, p.26.
 - 21 Ibid.
 - 22 See Ibid.pp.25–29.
 - 23 Andriukaitis, 2006.
 - 24 Kasatkina and Beresneviciute, 2004; Beresnevičiūtė, 2005; Lithuanian Government, 1995.
 - 25 Juska, Poviliunas, and Pozzuto, 2005; Poviliunas, 2005; Žukauskiene, 2005.
 - 26 Kasatkina and Beresneviciute, 2004, p.19.
 - 27 Kasatkina and Leončikas, 2004.
 - 28 Okuneviciute-Neveauskiene, Gruzevskis, and Moskvina, 2007.
 - 29 Žukauskiene, 2005, p.28.
 - 30 Beresnevičiūtė, 1999.
 - 31 Šliavaitė, 2003.
 - 32 Beresnevičiūtė, 2003; Kasatkina, Kadzauskas, and Sliavaite, 2006; Kasatkina and Leončikas, 2004; Leončikas 2007; Poviliunas, 2005; Šliavaitė, 2003.
 - 33 Poleshchuk and Tsilevich, 2004.
 - 34 Pabriks, 2003, p.111.

- 35 Ibid.
- 36 Interestingly, Pabriks also indicates that “Another possible factor limiting the number of minority applicants is that want ads for vacancies at state institutions appear only in the official (Latvian-language) print media, which is not read by most members of minority groups.” Ibid. p.113.
- 37 Pabriks, 2002b, p.16.
- 38 Ibid. p.17.
- 39 Ibid.p.26.
- 40 Ibid. p.22.
- 41 Pabriks, 2003 P.113.
- 42 Pabriks, 2002a.
- 43 Ibid. p.100
- 44 Kasatkina and Leončikas, 2004.
- 45 Hallik, 2005, p.83.
- 46 Lindenmann, 2008b.
- 47 Integration Foundation, 2002, p.7.
- 48 Poleshchuk, 2010, p.97–98.
- 49 Integration Foundation, 2005; Ministry of Social Security and Labour, “Equal Community Initiative Programme for Lithuania;” Pabriks, 2002a.
- 50 See Poleshchuk, 2006.
- 51 Integration Foundation, 2002.
- 52 Pabriks, 2002a; 2002b; Zepa et al., 2004; 2005
- 53 Zepa, 2001a.
- 54 Zepa, 2001b, p.93.
- 55 Jurado, 2003, p.93.
- 56 Cf. Zepa et al, 2004, Zepa et al., 2006.
- 57 Interviews with Boris Tsilevich, Member of Saeima, and Dmitri Katemirov, Shtab, December 2007.
- 58 Tammpuu, 2006, pp.30–32; Volkov, 2007.
- 59 Pettai, 2005, p.23.
- 60 See Semjonov 2010.
- 61 Kasatkina and Beresneviciute, 2004, p.53
- 62 Central Electoral Committee of Republic of Lithuania, http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/rink/w3_paj_isl_new.pip_e Retrieved 2008–01–30.
- 63 Krupavicius, 1998.
- 64 Following the successful profiling of the LLRA as a regional party, Lithuania has witnessed the emergence of another, this time Samoigitian-Lithuanian regional party in the run up to 2008 Seimas elections. See “Zhemajtijjskuju partiju vozglavil Skarbaljus” ru.DELFI.lt Apr 20, 2008

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- 65 Interviews with the representatives of the LLRA in the regional branch in Šalčininkai. August 2009.
- 66 See the website of the city administration, <http://www.vilnius.lt/newvilniusweb/index.php/88/?mid={lt;3;1}> Retrieved 2008–01–30.
- 67 “Kak partii nacmen’shinstv pojdu v Sejm” Konstantin Ameljushkin and Oleg Erofeev in ru.DELFI.lt Jul 23 2008.
- 68 Central Electoral Committee of Republic of Lithuania, http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/rink/w3_paj_isl_new.pip_e Retrieved 2008–01–30.
- 69 Žukauskiene, 2005.
- 70 Interview with Sergei Dimitriev, President of the LRS, January 2008.
- 71 Kasatkina and Beresneviciute, 2004, p.37.
- 72 Galbreath, 2005, p.116.
- 73 Ibid. pp.117–18.
- 74 Estonian National Electoral Committee, <http://www.vvk.ee/> Retrieved 2008–02–03.
- 75 Hallik, 2002.
- 76 Out the total of 63 mandates Estonian National Electoral Committee, <http://www.vvk.ee/k02/tulemus.stm> Retrieved 2008–08–03.
- 77 Poleshchuk and Helemäe, 2006.
- 78 Moledesh Estonii, <http://www.moles.ee/99/Mar/09/2-2.html> .
- 79 Galbreath, 2005, p.134.
- 80 Evas et al, 2004.
- 81 Poleshchuk, 2010, 56–62.
- 82 Jarve, 2008, p.18.
- 83 Pomm, 2003.
- 84 Ibid.
- 85 Berg, 1999.
- 86 Antane and Tsilevich, 1999, p.55
- 87 Muiznieks, 1997.
- 88 Auers, 2003.
- 89 See online, http://www.likumi.lv/ALikumi/saeima_elect_valid.htm Retrieved 2008–08–03.
- 90 Jarve, 2008, p.18.
- 91 Galbreath, 2005, pp.135–141.
- 92 Latvia’s Central Election Committee, <http://www.cvk.lv/cgi-bin/wdbcgiw/base/saeima9.GalRezS9.vis> Retrieved 2008–08–03.
- 93 See, LETA, March 5, 2005.
- 94 Galbreath, 2006.

- 95 See party's website,
<http://www.saskanascents.lv/index.php?text&id=62&level=1> Retrieved
2008-08-03.
- 96 Pabriks, 2003, p.110.
- 97 Jarve, 2008, p.12.
- 98 Ikstens, 2006.

Chapter 9

Minority engagement in civic initiatives

The overview of the political processes taking place in the Baltic states made clear that opportunities for non-core ethnics to take part in both social life and political decision-making throughout the region were limited. In the previous chapters I have discussed the linguistic separation of non-core ethnics from the titular nationals of the Baltic states, as well as the exclusion of non-titulars from political developments. In this final chapter, I make clear that other means of minority participation in public life have equally been circumscribed. This chapter addresses the participation of minority communities in civic networks and demonstrates that even their expressions of the explicitly non-political agenda are treated with caution. While civic participation is widely treated as a way of facilitating policy-changes and fostering responsiveness in the state towards the causes of marginal groups, these objectives found little welcome with Baltic political entrepreneurs.

In all three Baltic societies only a small part of the minority communities are represented among the political and social elites. While Baltic scholars do not see this situation as resulting from discriminatory practices on the ground, the lack of political representation of minorities undermines their capacity to communicate their specific expectations to those who make political decisions. Even more importantly, in public discourse minorities of the region are not seen as viable contributors to developing social institutions. Thus, they have been consistently marginalised from the governing coalitions throughout the region. The overall limited representation of minorities in public office and among political elites, coupled with their relative autonomy from the information space of the titular nationals, suggests that there could be many issues of contention that do not surface in the debates on development. In this context, the civic initiatives of the minority community representatives can provide a proxy measurement for these groups' contribution to the increasing plurality of the society in which they reside.

Civic initiatives are generally accepted as playing a mediating role between governmental bodies, the civil community they represent and groups that are underrepresented in the political, social and cultural estab-

lishment. In the Baltic context, where the minority populations have limited representation in politics, civic groups have a rare opportunity to suggest improvements or corrections to policy development. This is why the number of minority NGOs throughout the region is great. While the numbers of those engaged in the activities of the minority NGOs is considerably smaller than the size of the minority group itself, a great number of issues are covered by the civic organisations of minorities. Is there a specific explanation for this phenomenon?

Though many minority residents of the Baltic states have only limited opportunities for conventional political participation, this does not exclude them from the effects of the politics. They have seen their elected representatives being marginalised by majority politicians at various levels of government. This marginalisation makes it difficult to identify what means were left for the non-titular groups to inform policy-makers of the changes necessary to accommodate their group-interests. In this chapter, I argue that many members of minority communities engaged civic groups to further their political, social and cultural interests. Despite their engagement however, they were rarely supported by political entrepreneurs in their state of residence and frequently had to change the focus of activity to be accepted by political actors. This very change also indicates that although democratic institutions might be in place, there is still a very limited understanding of how democracy works throughout the region. By emphasising this, the final chapter makes clear that in order to prevent the stalling of the democratic project in the region, a fundamental change in relations between political institutions and the populace affected needs to occur. In turn, this change would increase the inclusiveness of the existing political regimes.

I start by making clear why the Baltic states' civic initiatives fail to play the role expected from these groups. Although civic initiatives are seen as facilitators of democratic learning for states and societies alike, across the Baltic states the work of civic groups lacks any demand. Secondly, I describe the groups of minorities who aim to support their fellow citizens in their adaptation to the economic and social changes taking place throughout the region. In the third part of the chapter I discuss the specific initiatives, which balance the lack of state interest in certain issues of social interaction between the majority and minority. Finally, I look at organisations that critically reflect the state policies and provide advice to policy-makers as to the changes necessary to alleviate socioeconomic and other differences between the majorities and minorities. While the preliminary observations suggest that the number of civic organisations is

fairly low in all three states, I conclude this chapter by discussing the reasons for the limited activity of minorities in civic initiatives.

1. Civil society in the Baltic states: An oxymoron?

The account of the democratisation process and the contribution made by social actors provided in the following takes many issues into consideration. It also takes many aspects for granted. The basic assumption of my analytical approach of how social actors, limited in their political rights, contribute to the democratisation of society and state relies partially on the conceptual framework of “civic engagement.” I treat “civil society” as a second order predictor that makes clear what the democratisation process requires and what outcomes it brings. If unconstrained by two other forces, the impartiality of the state apparatus, the voluntary character of associations and the self-determination of individuals all strengthen democratic pluralism and are conducive to the democratic consolidation of societies. Put simply, I treat “civil society” as an indicator of changes in social and political environments that are conducive to establishing non-hierarchical relations between the state and the individuals affected by its policies. In doing this so far, I pointed out the areas of cooperation between individuals and the state that contributed to greater bottom-up democratisation. On the other hand, throughout the previous chapters I argued that strengthening the democratic regime horizontally is possible by “participatory ethos,” which emerges out of interpersonal ties, the building-up of trust and increased connections between individuals.

The common activities of individuals within the framework of civil society are said to increase interpersonal trust with an overall effect of promoting an exchange between the members of society and political institutions.¹ The discussions of the impact civil society has on various institutions presume that civil associations are autonomous from the state, to a degree “apolitical.” When considered from this point, the organisations of Baltic minority groups could well fit into the framework, as these unite both citizens and non-citizens, and politically active and passive members of the minority community.

In the context of the Baltic societies, it would be fairly natural that the civic activities of minorities would only fall into the category aimed at civic processes, which emphasises the expectations and directions of social policy development. These activities of minority populations are best described in the terms coined by Foley and Edwards, “Civil Society I” and “Civil Society II” (further, CSI and CSII, respectively).² In both cases, CSI and CSII indicate the particular context in which these activities ap-

pear and describe social activism as amortising the effects of state policies on individuals.³ There is no doubt that civil society can be a “resource” for the government, because it pursues collective interests and is distinct from political and economic groups.⁴

Scholars agree that the state is balanced out by Civil Societies I and II. Though each of these functions in different fashion, both are working towards improving the relationship of an individuals’ interactions with the state, and not the other way around. In this sense,

“[t]he political role of civil society in turn is not directly related to the control or conquest of power but to the generation of influence through the life of democratic associations and unconstrained discussion in the cultural public sphere.”⁵

Instead, CSI assumes the function of socialising individuals into better citizens and CSII that of helping citizens to develop alternative mechanisms to cope with state-policies. It must be noted that both perform functions distinct from political activities. An example may be citizen initiatives to assist others in adapting to the changed political, social and economic realities by aiming at poverty reduction and the re-inclusion of persons into labour market. Overall, civic actions substitute for a lack of state-responsiveness, outsourcing of tasks previously assumed by the state and the handling of issues such as social work and the support of cultural activities.

In the Baltic states almost all of the civic initiatives belong to areas which fall roughly into the domains of CSI and CSII. The limited responsiveness of the Baltic political elites to the initiatives of the minority populations facilitates a specific form of civic engagement. The activities of the organisations aiming at supporting fellow citizens in their adaptation to political and social changes have been taking place at two different levels. Firstly, the organisations facilitating the learning of democratic practices have been engaged in issue-oriented work, such as the representation of individuals’ interests. Secondly, organisations coordinating and facilitating communication between the grass-roots activities, formalised organisations and the state have been emerging over the past decade. Some argue that this reflects the need for the civic organisations to seek steady connections with policy-makers and grant-givers in order to secure permanent funding along with the acknowledgement of social contribution with the local community and political elites.⁶

To this end, the Baltic governments developed policies to assist the development of civil society. The Latvian Concept of Civil Society De-

velopment (*Pilsoniskās sabiedrības koncepta attīstība*), the Estonian Civil Society Development Concept (*Eesti Kodanikuühiskonna Arengukontseptsioon*) and comparable action plans developed in Lithuania were advanced for the states' cooperation with NGOs. However, the documents outlined only vague concepts and guaranteed no particular steps to be considered by the Baltic governments to respond to or accept any policy advice from the citizenry. In this context the statement of the Latvian government was indicative of the fact that only at the level of policy implementation can NGOs assist the state. Similar statements are not obtainable from Estonian and Lithuanian policy-makers. However, the treatment of civic activities by officials of the two countries does not suggest any different understanding of cooperation: only NGOs assisting the state in policy-implementation and not interfering in policy-making are treated as partners.

Quite distinct from the NGOs involved with the state institutions are the civic initiatives of minorities supporting fellow citizens. These have emerged as "self-help" groups during the initial years of independence and are now largely dependant on state funding. Since many have developed lucid networks of activists, they seek to balance the state policies of cultural homogenisation and titularisation of the Baltic societies. In his observation of the minority NGO landscape in Latvia, Arturs Jansons suggests that the "situation [observed can be treated] as an initial period in the process of national minority formation, where self-identification from ethnic groups to national minorities is characterised by many organisational and political cleavages."⁷ In their study of minorities in six European countries, Mikko Lagerspetz and Sofia Joons have analysed the activities of ethnic minority organisations in Estonia as a way of constructing and reconstructing cultural and personal identities. The authors conclude that minorities are active mainly in cultural organisations to sustain their cultural specificity, without engaging with policy-related issues.⁸

Some could suggest that while my focus on civic organisations is limited to the study of *minority* NGOs, the unwillingness of politicians to take such activities seriously is rational and legitimate because minority ideals frequently conflict with, or even endanger, the political regime in the Baltic states. In the previous chapters I have presented the reasons for which the representatives of majorities might consider Russian-speakers to be potentially dangerous for the Baltic politics. But the lack of conformity to mainstream politics should not be mixed with lack of loyalty. Failure to distinguish the two might indeed explain states' lack of responsiveness to the claims of minority residents. However, it does not change the understanding of democratisation, as both increasing the institutional respon-

siveness to public input and committing the public to abide by the anti-majoritarian rules. As a result thereof, the development of civil society is hampered by the lack of institutional accountability to individual collective action and the failure of groups to consolidate their work on the majoritarian political agenda.

Admittedly the third wave, post-communist democracies failed to install the anti-majoritarian rules of the game which make them different from past democratisation waves.⁹ Failure to counter the majoritarian institutions also determines why civic initiatives in post-communist societies rally on a broad set of ideologically-laden issues in search of supporters. Previous studies of the Baltic civic groups suggested that the NGOs in the region mobilise membership by rallying around the most salient identities of their members.¹⁰ As is described throughout this book, it appears that membership in a cultural, ethnic or language community would have great potential as the central feature of individual identity. Unsurprisingly, much of the research on civic groups in the Baltic states concludes that ethnic belonging is a particularly strong mobilising force for civic groups in the Baltic states.¹¹

Local social science research envisages the major difficulty for local NGOs that promote the cultural and linguistic identity of their group members results from the monoethnic background of their members.¹² There is no doubt that the members of these groups could profit more in terms of social capital if they were to cooperate with the NGOs of the majority. The question remains whether such cooperation could allow minority NGOs greater leverage on political decision making. Specifically, the work of the civic groups representing minority interests is treated as non-existent and counterproductive in all three states. Such a kind of state-society relation can barely suggest any effect of democratic learning on the part of the state institutions since independence.

It is in this context that one can better understand the reasons for the persistent mutual distrust between the minority populations and the state institutions across the Baltic. While the surveys conducted by the Naturalisation Board of Latvia in 1997 suggested that there are reasons connected to insufficient command of the state-language and the lack of trust toward state institutions,¹³ later studies cited reasons more pragmatic, such as the general passivity among the non-citizens.¹⁴ Similar conditions are mirrored in Estonia as well. The studies of the Civil Society Institute in Lithuania¹⁵ also suggested that the cause of the unexpectedly low interest of local minorities in civic initiatives and political participation is mainly to be sought in the non-responsive character of the national politics.¹⁶

Rikmann and Lagerspetz have suggested that the passivity of Russian-speakers is different from the analogous passivity of the economically weak groups of the titular populations.¹⁷ The researchers interpret the general political passivity of minorities as a result of their disillusionment with the political system, which has failed to provide them with the channels for participation needed to bring their causes closer to policy-makers.¹⁸ Previously this disinterest as Poleshchuk has argued, encouraged governments to opt for “squeezing” the members of minority populations out of the country.¹⁹ With the development of the (in this case, Estonian) integration programmes, a certain willingness to advance non-titular populations’ interest was indicated. However, the shift in governmental priorities to guarantee the representation of minorities among the citizenry did not cultivate an efficient representation of non-titulars’ interests.

Increasing the civic activities of minorities, as well as facilitating their participation in various NGO projects, appears to have been aimed only at channelling their activities into a predictable direction to allow better surveillance of their project work and hence better control of their actions. In this light, Jansons observes quite distinctly that the Latvian government has failed to acknowledge the contradiction between sponsoring the unconstrained expression of national interests by minorities and the political incentives to discontinue the use of minority languages in state institutions by halting the funding of minority schools.²⁰

There are, of course, several explanations for the reasons why civic engagement across the Baltics heavily relies on salient identities. “The underdeveloped civil engagement networks, fragile civil values and the non-functioning public space” could be one, accounting for the lack of citizens’ experience with responsive political structures in the past.²¹ It seems however that the continuing focus of political institutions on primordial identities as unchangeable characteristics of individuals is a result of both the lack of previous experience with the individual representations, as well as with the institutional accountability of diversity.

As discussed in the previous chapters, decision-making at all levels of political institutions is extremely favourable to members of one cultural community. This naturally leads different groups to rally around issues that guarantee the greatest attention from political institutions, i.e. around cultural issues. On the other hand, civic activities throughout the Soviet and post-Soviet years of Baltic history proved effective only when groups rallied around allegedly incontestable ideas, such as ethnic, cultural or linguistic identities. The continuous success of such groups in member-recruitment, acquisition of funding and gaining attention in public spaces alleviated the need to negotiate the terms of participation in civic initia-

tives. More importantly, the recurrent successes of activities on such an agenda did not allow the question of whether such identities were changing to emerge in the first place. Consequently, civic groups with a focus on ethnocultural issues did not require citizens to consider their perspective on societal power relations. Indeed, they may have even discouraged their members from an overall change of attitude towards cultural issues. The case of the Baltic states is instructive particularly because political institutions claim to be culture-blind but in fact feed off the differences between ethnic, cultural and linguistic communities. In doing so, political institutions suggest that all cultural issues are ultimately political, as is any civic activity touching on the issue of minority culture.

The differences in practitioners' views aside, common scholarly understanding of the impact "civil society" has on relations in society is that it improves the responsiveness of political institutions to input from social actors. The investigation of Baltic politics and society in the previous chapters shows that the engagement of members of minority communities in different types of social and political initiatives have not informed Baltic policies. Minorities' input was fruitless to a large degree due to the failure of state institutions and policy-makers to assess their impact and consider their expertise as essential. At the same time, the civic activity of minorities in the region suggests that at least parts of the minority populations are prepared to engage proactively in political processes and to help political institutions to fulfil their functions more effectively. A number of organisations are also in place undertaking policy-evaluation and advising in policy-making, even though apparently political elites do not take these as expressions of social will but as criticisms of the foundations of statehood. In many analyses, even the activities of the NGOs supporting native language learning and the sustainment of cultural traditions of minorities vis-à-vis the increasingly nationalising states are treated as militant and anti-democratic for their lack of restraint in the criticism of political processes.

However it is hard to see where in the Baltic states the activities of the minority NGOs contradict democratic principles or undermine the ideals of participatory democracy. In many cases, specifically those members of the minority who have no political rights in Latvia and Estonia are distinguished by their civic cooperation with fellow residents. They may assist others' learning of democratic practices, help fellow ethnics to adapt to the cultural environment or suggest policy correction through analytic work. Unfortunately, it is also difficult to see which policy-changes were undertaken by the Baltic governments in response to information provided

by the members of these civic groups, suggesting only limited learning effects on the side of the Baltic political entrepreneurs.

This is where the investigation of minority NGOs in the Baltic states makes an important theoretical contribution to studies of democratisation in countries undergoing the consolidation of their political regimes. The post-communist democratisation and implementation of feedback mechanisms from individuals to NGOs, and later to state institutions, could have been considered indicative for learning of the democratic practices along the entire line of political decision-making. At the moment, participation in policy-making seems to make no sense in the majority of cases because even those actively participating are unlikely to see their accumulated knowledge retranslated into policy-changes through civic engagement. As a result, the political institutions across the Baltic are poorly if at all accountable to any representatives of the minority and can be easily manipulated to impose further restraints on the state's responsiveness to society's needs.

2. Minorities' cooperation with the state

To date minority NGOs have focused on the types of activity specific to the demands of their cultural community. These have been left unfulfilled by the state and hence require the personal engagement of like-minded activists. Groups that provide tutoring in native languages and enable the celebration of specific minority traditions allow activists to disseminate information on recent developments in their communities and "external homelands," extend advice and practical aid, manage educational activities and raise funds, as well as provide emotional support for the members of the minority group. In this sense, the members of minority communities encompassing voluntary activities are also indirectly related to the self-perceptions of the entire community. Such NGOs assist their individual members in achieving equal footing with the dominant ethnic groups of the Baltic societies.

In Estonia the organisations that "teach," through socialisation, the members of minorities about the democratic practices for more active civic participation have had a long history. One of these, *Eesti Ametiühingute Keskliit* (Central Organization of Estonian Trade Unions, EAKL) was created in 1990 as a voluntary organisation to replace the Estonian branch of the Soviet Labour Confederation, which at the time claimed to represent around 800,000 members in Estonia. However, within a few years the number of trade union members had dropped but was still estimated at an impressive 350,000 individuals, constituting around 45% of the labour

force. These members were organized into 30 unions, but since independence the share of persons organised into labour-related associations has continuously diminished.²²

Similarly, *Latvijas Brīvo Arodbiedrību Savienība* (The Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia, LBAS) is the nation-wide trade union confederation with around 160,000 members. Founded as early as 1990 in an effort to differentiate itself from the Soviet-type trade unions, the LBAS is in fact the biggest NGO in the country. In cooperating with local and professional trade-unions in Latvia and Europe-wide, the LBAS seeks to protect the interests of its members at the national and international levels, and also works jointly with its sister organisations. Trade unions in Lithuania are also well established, although these are much less centralised and have fewer members. *Solidarumas* and *Lietuvos Darbo Federacija* (Lithuanian Labour Federation, LDF) are the most numerous ones, uniting around 75,000 employees country-wide.

The analyses of trade-union membership throughout the region suggest that the number of members is continuously dwindling, as they rely heavily on the workers of large-sized industrial plants, particularly of those where many Russian-speakers are employed. As a result, the trade-unions are barely visible in small- and medium-size enterprises and also less prevalent in the service sector. Lagerspetz suggests that for the Estonian case, due to differences in the occupation structure, it is fairly natural to see that the share of organised labourer among the ethnic Estonians is much smaller than among the minority citizens and non-citizens.²³ This statement seems also to apply to the Latvian and Lithuanian cases.²⁴

Beyond activities in the labour-unions, the activity of non-core ethnics throughout the Baltic States seems to be rather marginal. At least, the scholars studying NGOs in the region suggest that the cooperation of minorities with the state outside the sphere of labour-related activity remains low. However, despite these statements, many also indicate that the participation of minority populations in non-governmental organisations has not been thoroughly inspected.²⁵ Lagerspetz et al indicate that “whereas the NGO sector in general has expanded rapidly during the last ten years, the number of Russian speakers’ organisations has definitely remained lower.”²⁶ This particularly reflects the availability of umbrella organisations, which coordinate the activities of civic groups in all three countries. Besides the representation of the professional interests of minority groups, civic groups in the region only adequately address aspects of cultural life. In this context, the establishment of the umbrella organisations coordinating the activities of the NGO sector throughout the region has been pivotal in channelling the specific responses of civic initiatives in the direction

envisaged by policy-makers.²⁷ In order to facilitate contacts between state institutions and the groups representing minority interests, both Estonia and Latvia have established advisory bodies to compensate for Russian-speakers' limited access to political life and to engage them in the process of policy-making.

Since July 1993, a *Roundtable on National Minorities* has been in place in Estonia, representing a standing committee of ethnic minority representatives, including non-citizens of Estonia. This organ had been created to promote stability, dialogue and mutual understanding between the different ethnic and status groups in Estonia. However, its success was hampered by the lack of binding decision-making power for addressing issues relevant to minorities. Priit Järve suggests that "the Roundtable was effective in providing a forum for dialogue and thus defusing the potential for violent ethnic conflict," however this function had limited effect on minority groups.²⁸ Instead, membership in the Roundtable should be endorsed and appointed by the President, "taking into consideration the need to have as many different national minority associations and political parties represented as possible,"²⁹ but without clear reference to the extent of differences in opinions represented among its members. On May 23, 2003, the structure of the Roundtable was changed to include more than 100 representatives of minority groups. The Roundtable meets only several times per year to provide mere advisory notes to president, which further reduces the ability of the organ to react to minority concerns. The ability of the organ to reach consensual decisions is further constrained by a limited budget, which additionally disempowers it as a tool of advocacy for minority NGOs. On the regional level, some consultative institutions were also established although to a considerably smaller effect. Since 1995 a Roundtable of National Cultural Societies was created in Ida-Virumaa, including 22 cultural societies of minority groups and regional Estonian societies.³⁰

Finally, the Estonian Ministry of Culture established the *Cultural Council of National Minorities* in 1997 as an advisory body aimed at assisting in decision-making on linguistic and cultural issues relevant for national minorities' education, the distribution of financial aid and assistance for NGOs in submitting grants to access international funds through various semi-public funds, such as Integration Foundation.³¹ The *Roundtable of Non-Profit Organisations* was created as a loose umbrella organisation to represent the array of the interests of Estonian NGOs. Beginning with its establishment in 2001, the roundtable of Estonia's NGOs has been engaged in the representation of minority organisations and functions as a

primary means of acquiring the funding for running cultural, linguistic and social projects.³²

The funds provided are genuinely sparse and based on project-related applications. Monitoring of these activities suggests that the representatives of minority organisations are constantly challenging the effectiveness of allocating funds on this basis. Importantly, monitoring of NGO activity also points out that the Estonian state, while recognising the need for the cultural development of minority communities, reserves for itself the right to discontinue the financial support of these groups. This seems to deviate from the official line of supported activities and therefore creates the conditions for a limited engagement of minorities in the area.³³

By treating minority-oriented social work as merely social work projects, the Estonian state sends a clear signal to the active part of the minority community to mind its own business and not to interfere with issues falling in the domain of state responsibility. A number of organisations surveyed by Lagerspetz and Joons have been classified as participating in the more general project of “minority building,” corresponding to the expectations of the government and international organisations but not extending any initiatives that might be challenging to the state approach of dealing with minority populations.³⁴

In Latvia, an equivalent to the Estonian Roundtable was created in July 1996 under the auspices of the President, under the name of a *Consultative Council of Nationalities*. Including representatives of 11 different ethnic minorities and members of the Human Rights Committee of the Latvian Parliament, the council was mandated with gathering, distributing and discussing information relating to minority issues. Interestingly, the council was also used to develop guidelines and recommendations for the government in the handling of minority issues. However, after the election of Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga as President of Latvia in 1999, the activities of the council were suspended.³⁵

In 2003 a different organ with a similar mandate as the Consultative Council was called into life under the roof of the Ministry of Integration Affairs. The Latvian establishment greeted the council positively, conceiving it as a cooperative hand in dealing with troublesome minority groups. Local experts however, have assessed the work of the council as being generally top-down-oriented and largely ineffective because it focused on the dialogue with minorities exclusively from the majority’s perspective.³⁶ Latvia’s National Human Rights Office, which was created in 1996, also works as an independent state institution and is responsible for carrying out certain human rights’ observations, comparable to those of an ombudsman.³⁷ Essentially, the organisation was transformed into an om-

budsman in 2007, and remains commissioned to investigate complaints falling into the human rights spectrum.³⁸ However, from the website of the office it appears that minority rights or advocacy for particular human rights of minority populations in Latvia do not fall into the main area of the office's activity.

In December 2004, the *Latvijas Pilsoniskā alianse* (Civic Alliance Latvia, LPA) was founded to further the goals set out in the integration programme; mainly to increase civic participation among Latvia's population in political debates and social processes. The LPA is an umbrella NGO working closely and with the discernable support of the Secretariat of the Special Assignments Minister for Social Integration. It is sustained in its activities by funds coming directly from the government and therefore also accountable for its activities to Latvian authorities. While located in Riga, it also has a network of local centres throughout Latvia providing information for local activists and organisations seeking funding and assistance for their work.

Around 70 NGOs are listed as working closely with the LPA, which allows the organisation to improve the legal and financial environment for the NGO sector in the country. It also assists in the development of NGOs in order to provide more efficient advocacy of the public vis-à-vis state institutions and financial donors. While apparently the LPA is dedicated almost entirely to work with NGOs and organisations of various kinds, it seems to be directly controlled by governmental incentives regarding the development of civic initiatives in the country. In providing information about the ongoing EU projects, national legislation, funding opportunities, education and training of NGO activists, it also carries out or initiates research initiatives on behalf of the government to assess the processes taking place in Latvia's civic sector. This comes to the fore in the LPA's activities aimed at advocating the interests of Latvian NGOs versus the state, in NGOs co-operation with ministries and inter-governmental councils, but also in its expertise and recommendations in policy-making in Latvia.

The stewardship of the Latvian government in assisting the NGO developments in the country might appear in a positive light. However, the activities of the groups covered by the umbrella organisation assisting in acquisition of project-oriented funds have only a limited scope of activity and hence are minor in their effectiveness. Importantly, the foci of governmental interactions with local civic activists seem to be clearly limited to cooperation in providing affirmative support to governmental goals and incentives. The studies of the NGO sector conducted in Latvia—*Civil Society in Latvia in 2004*, and the like—have all pointed out that while the

number of NGOs in the country runs as high as 12,000, these organisations are only marginally supported by the state and are monitored in their activity during fund-acquisition.³⁹

The NGOs applying for state budget grants are required to follow a range of educational incentives, present materials on the role of national minorities for society in general and their group in particular and work on the preservation of national minority cultures and traditions.

“The financial support provided by the state stimulates rapid capacity-growth among the national minorities’ NGOs as well as development of solid organizations *loyal to the Latvian state*, which are capable of recruiting new members and successfully managing the available funds to efficiently meet their main mission, i.e., social integration as set forth by their statutes.” [emphasis added]⁴⁰

One of the functions of the Secretariat for Integration, and specifically of the Department for National Minorities Affairs, is coordinating state support for the general and specific activities of the NGOs of national minorities. Remarkably, applications from these organisations are considered mainly within the framework of “delegating the functions to NGOs, [...] which actively strive to foster social integration and to inform the general public on the activities and incentives undertaken or ongoing in the area of social integration.”⁴¹

Janis Ikstens, in his analyses of the NGOs in Latvia, suggests that passivity of civic initiatives results from a particular type of “party-based democracy” evolving in Latvia, which leaves only a marginal space for civic intervention in policy-making and delegates the implementation capacity to local NGO activists.⁴² This particular view of the role civic initiatives play in the process of teaching fellow citizens about democratic practices is also reflected in the reasons for supporting the NGO sector by the Latvian government, which was reported to have accounted for around 20% of the organisations’ financial resources in 2003.⁴³

In Estonia an umbrella organisation *Eesti Mittetulundusühingute ja Sihtasutuste Liit* (Network of Estonian Non-profit Organizations, EMSL) was established in 1994 to foster development and provide support for the Estonian NGOs. While the umbrella organisation works toward increasing public awareness and advocates the interests of its member groups, its main focus of activity lies with the improvement of relationships between the “third” and the public and business sectors in Estonia. This is particularly done by brand-making of different NGOs and supporting many of the

civic activities within the framework supported by the Estonian Ministry of Interior, hence aiming at the overall stabilisation of society-state relations. In this sense the EMSL works in three directions; assisting in legislative development to further regulate the relations between the NGO and the public sector, supporting NGO activists in their networking capacity and assisting member organisations in their contacts with state officials.⁴⁴ Remarkably, among the member organisations of the ESML only a very small number of minority organisations are represented, with no major actors specifically acknowledged for their civic impact on Estonia's society listed.⁴⁵ The situation observable in Estonia is therefore very much comparable to that of Latvia, where an umbrella organisation is assisting a number of local NGOs in implementing the goals envisaged within the action plans for particular activities, passed by various ministries and supported by governmental funds to implement distinct policy guidelines.

Lithuania's *Nevyriausybių organizacijų informacijos ir paramos centras* (Centre of Support and Information for the Non-Governmental Organisations, NIPC) was also initiated as a governmental initiative in 1995, functioning under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice ever since.⁴⁶ Established with help of the UNDP and the Open Society Foundation, it is mainly funded with the support of international donor organisations. The NIPC supports NGO organisations in their activities, strengthening the connection between the state and society and presenting the interests of third sector groups to the institutions of the Lithuanian state. The range of goals declared on the website of the NIPC corresponds with those envisaged by the LPA and ESML in the neighbouring Baltic states. However, it remains proactive in informing policy-makers of the grass-root initiatives through organising "active dialogue in the academic and research fora," which aim at bringing the ideas emerging from civic activists into the discussions of the Seimas and the Lithuanian Government. The NIPC also entertains standing contact with Lithuania's NGOs working on a wide range of issues, including those not directly addressed in the governmental plans for funding during a particular fiscal year. This allows the NIPC closer cooperation with civic initiatives at the local level, and hence makes it more innovative in its approach to channelling the demands for additional cooperation between the state and social actors.

While being more active in this respect and somewhat clearly indicating greater openness for social dialogue, the Lithuanian state has been continuously outsourcing its responsibilities in dealing with minority issues to the NGOs of non-core ethnics. The function of the umbrella organisation coordinating the minority NGOs in Lithuania is fulfilled by the Department of National Minorities (TMID). The TMID not only coordi-

nates the acquisition of finances for running new projects, but also distributes the means for projects related to sustaining the culture of non-Lithuanians in the country. The Department is responsible for the protection of minority rights and assisting them in developing the projects aimed at safeguarding their national identity and cultural heritage. It also includes a steering committee to advise the government of necessary changes in relevant minority legislation. Overall, the department is mainly preoccupied with the transfer of governmental funds to the NGOs promoting the issues of cultural awareness and linguistic competence of minorities.

At the same time, this state-led approach to sponsorship of the NGO engagement with minority groups severely challenges the understanding of what civic activity should stand for. On the one hand, the minority organisations are offered a number of channels to participate in decision-making on cultural issues. Their high dependence on state funding and support are clearly tied to affirmative action vis-à-vis the state policies. In Estonia, as is the case in Latvia and Lithuania, minority organisations have only a limited potential to be granted financial support for work not directly related to the governmental priorities for a given fiscal year. In all three countries, minority NGOs are encouraged to undertake activities supporting, rather than criticising the state policies pertaining to non-core ethnics.

It is up to the civic groups proper to decide on the variations of their engagement and the type of cooperation with state institutions. When the biggest bulk of funding for their actions depends on state institutions, international donor organisations and is constantly under the review of governmental bodies, the NGOs easily risk losing funding for their activities. This suggests that the organisations of non-core ethnics only have the opportunity to be accepted by the state and public officials as partners in policy-making if they resort to an uncritical treatment of political decision-making. As a consequence, the NGOs focus primarily, if not solely, on minorities' concerns related to language, religion and culture as supported under the terms of ensuring national accord, proclaiming the multicultural character of society and sustaining a culture of conformity.

3. Civic initiatives supporting co-ethnics

Among the civic organisations of minorities in the Baltic States, the groups functioning as advocates of the cultural and linguistic rights of different ethnic groups are particularly visible. Many of these organisations are also included in the register of NGOs sponsored by the state in

their activities to sustain the cultural distinctiveness of minorities in a linguistic and cultural environment dominated by the titular ethnic group.

Civic initiatives aimed at balancing out the state's effect on minority populations provide the backbone for the mobilisation of local minority populations to address policy-deficiencies. They also serve to recommend changes to the prevalent relations between the Baltic states and minorities on their territories. However, although only a few organisations deal directly with issues related to minority rights throughout the region, many groups are involved with work addressing minority communities directly by providing education in and about the issues tangent to minority groups. Some of the cultural NGOs in the region act much more independently than one can glean from their regular activity reports. As they are connected to different international donors and are capable of mobilising the financial support of the local minority populations, many of these groups are addressing cultural issues of relevance for their ethnic communities.

Across the region many organizations represent the cultural and linguistic interests of their ethnic group vis-à-vis the state of residence. Minority engagement in activities related to sustaining the cultural specificity of their groups in Estonia was assisted by the state by reinstalling the Cultural Autonomy Act, which allowed minority groups to create schooling in their native language and to opt for state support for the purposes of retaining their cultural specificity.⁴⁷ However, while the Cultural Autonomy Act remains open only to Estonian citizens, a large number of non-citizens are also granted the possibility of creating their own organizations for the representation of their interests in accordance with the Law on Non-Profit Organizations, passed in 1997.⁴⁸

Many of the organisations dealing with minority cultures are now members of the *Estonian Union of National Minorities*, which grants semi-official recognition for minority NGOs. For the largest minority in Estonia, Russians, *The Union of Slavic Educational and Charitable Societies in Estonia* is the prevalent cultural organisation, uniting more than 20 groups under its umbrella. Besides the Union, a number of other organizations also represent the educational and cultural interests of ethnic Russians, including the Russian Culture Union, Tartu Russian Culture Society and the Union of Teachers of Russian Schools.⁴⁹ These and other umbrella organisations are particularly involved in educating the younger generations of minority children in the language of "their" ethnic community and have been receiving some support from the Estonian state through the Integration Foundation.

What is particularly telling in this respect is the fact that for many of the non-titular non-Russian NGOs the working language remains

largely Russian. Hence the general policy of the Estonian state to sponsor the fragmentation of the minority communities into speakers of different languages was particularly aimed at formerly russified non-Estonians. These groups, most often representatives of the Ukrainian, Finnish, Jewish and German communities, are assisted in contacts with “their” homelands. Similarly, the more recent preferences of the Estonian government assist with the financial support of non-Russian minority NGOs in their cultural activities, such as the organisation of Sunday schools where their languages and basic traditions are being taught. Cultural festivities and exchanges with representatives of diasporic organisations from other countries have been encouraged through the Integration Foundation.

In Lithuania, minority organisations have been active in channelling their activities at the preservation of the traditions and culture of their kin in the Lithuanian environment. Among the organisations of minority communities, the Polish and Russian-speakers are the most active ones. Both the Russian and Polish-speaking communities have special facilities to conduct their cultural activities in *Dom kultury polskiej w Wilnie* (*Vilniaus lenkų kultūros namai*, Polish House) and *Dom nacional'nyh obshchin* (*Tautinių bendrijų namai*, House of National Cultures) respectively.⁵⁰ Similar premises are also in place in Kaunas⁵¹ and Visaginas,⁵² where members of minority organisations can conduct meetings, provide Saturday and Sunday classes for younger members and also conduct their regular meetings.

The Polish-speaking community is particularly active in the Vilnius city municipality and region, and it has its own umbrella organisation which coordinates the activities of its member groups, *Związek Polaków na Litwie* (Association of Poles in Lithuania, ZPL). The ZPL was formed in 1989 to consolidate the interests of the Polish-speaking minority in Lithuania and now counts around 8,000 members. Mainly engaged in educational, cultural and economic activities, the ZPL also defends the civil rights of the Polish minority. It is recognised as the largest Polish organization in Lithuania and is particularly active in organising meetings of Polish-speakers from Lithuania and abroad and publishing journals, such as *Nasz Czas*. Similar to the ZPL, *Koordinatsionnyj sovet russkih obshchestvennyh organizacij Litvy* (*Lietuvos rusų visuomeninių organizacijų koordinacinė taryba*, Coordinating Council of the Russian organisations in Lithuania) works with the organisations and coordinates the activities of the Russian organisations in the country, although it also engages in the activities of other Russian-speaking minorities.

Besides the most active Russian and Polish organisations, Jewish, Romani, German and Tatar cultural NGOs are also clearly present on the

landscape of culturally aware groups in Lithuania. While many of these groups are predominantly occupied with social work within their ethnic communities, they also provide services and support the activities of their members to facilitate their integration into the dominant society. In her assessment of the work conducted by these NGOs, however, Beresnevičiūtė suggests that it would be appropriate to define “the majority of these organisations in terms of self-help organisations,”⁵³ playing a role of safekeepers against assimilation.⁵⁴ However, as Beresnevičiūtė observes, there are distinct types of NGOs in Lithuania, which either represent group interests opposing the dominant approach of the state to their minority group or assume and support the roles ascribed to their groups by the majority community.

A pilot research study of ethnic minority NGOs conducted by the CES in 2003 suggested that many of the issues regarding the work of minority cultural organisations can be clearly traced to the “closed” nature of the associations.⁵⁵ The majority of NGOs surveyed in the study have indicated that the organisations’ activities consisted mainly of cultivation of ethnic consciousness, traditions specific to their ethnic groups and connectedness to and patriotic feeling towards their “external homeland” through the organisation of events “traditional in their form and contents and addressed to quite passive elderly groups.”⁵⁶ In her analyses of the civic activities by minorities in Lithuania, Žukauskiene sees these organisations’ “ethnocentric orientations” as a result of their closed memberships, since the groups are oriented towards the maintenance of ethnicity, culture and tradition.

Monoethnic membership in these associations can also be explained by these organisations’ reactive stance to the cultural and linguistic policies of the Lithuanian state.⁵⁷ While the state continuously failed to provide efficient training in the issues essential for minorities to retain their cultural specificity, such as native language schools, history of the national minority community etc., these NGO groups have been providing similar schooling services to the members of their community on a voluntary basis. Clearly this determines the relations of representatives of these organisations to other members, who are seldom of different ethnicity. Therefore the NGOs oriented at providing skills in minority languages do not work as agents for the protection of human rights and interests of non-core ethnics, but merely assist the members of their cultural communities in educational undertakings.⁵⁸

In this respect, the fact that Lithuanian legislation does not provide for a definition of national minority not only raises a sensitive issue for members of large ethnic communities, such as Poles and Russians, but

also of the ones experiencing “difficult relations” with the state, such as Jews and Roma. Both the Lithuanian government and the Department of National Minorities consider only those ethnic groups who file an appeal for the registration of a minority NGO to be a national minority of Lithuania and therefore do not provide any positive support for the groups that have failed to register a minority NGO.⁵⁹ However, the registered NGOs are supported in their activities and cultural programmes by the Department of Ethnic Minorities and also receive additional financial help. Around 300 NGOs representing 20 ethnic communities were operating in Lithuania in 2007, including 62 Russian, 52 Polish, 32 German, 26 Jewish, 21 Belarusian, 13 Roma, 32 German, 5 Greek, 12 Tatar and numerous other organisations.⁶⁰ However, in their vast majority—around three quarters of the NGOs—the organisations limit their activities solely to cultural activities, with only around 5% of them dealing with issues of education. At the same time, around 10% of the organisations also address the issues of concern with their ethnic group and are developing a particular agenda in assisting members in coping with these tasks, such as unemployment, social protection, religious needs, sport activities and adult education.

Similar issues were on the agenda of minority organisations in Latvia, where a great variety of minority NGOs have been in place since the early years of independence. Work aimed at the consolidation of groups with similar interests in cultural issues has been dominating the debates in civic organisations, leading to the creation of a number of umbrella groups that represent the various interests extended by the minority NGOs throughout the country. The initial efforts to consolidate the Russian-speakers in the country were undertaken in 1991, when *Russkaya obshchina Latvii* (Russian Community of Latvia, ROL) was founded. Due to the fact that the interests of Latvia’s minorities were highly divergent at the time and were continuously diversifying over the 1990s, the ROL became only one of many associations representing the interests of non-Latvians’ NGOs. Until 2004, the ROL was the largest organisation of minorities in Latvia.

The programmatic statements by the leaders of the organisation emphasised “Russianness” in the broadest manner possible to include all possible affiliates, a strategy which seems to have paid off until recently. The ROL was particularly known in Latvia for conducting various activities to preserve Soviet heritage in the country, such as commemorating the Soviet soldiers fallen during WWII and celebrating the (Russian/Soviet) Victory Day publicly. Local research suggests that these actions made it particularly “acceptable to the people whose identity is linked with those of the ‘Soviet people.’”⁶¹ The ROL is also known for sustaining positive

relations with the *Russkoe obshchestvo v Latvii* (Russian Society in Latvia, ROvL), led by Tatyana Favorska, who incidentally also co-chairs the ROL. Both of the organisations are critical towards the relations of the state to minorities in Latvia.⁶²

These and other organisations trace their memberships to the times of cooperation with the Latvian Popular Front, preserving much of their infrastructure from the early days of Latvia's independence. Particularly, *Latviiskoe Obschestvo Russkoi Kultury* (Latvian Society of Russian Culture, LORK) is worth mentioning here. The LORK maintains a long-standing cooperation with various societies fostering Russian culture in Latvia, such as the *Pushkin Society of Latvia* and the *Alexander Men Foundation*, both of which promote the reconciliation of different religious groups in Latvia. These organisations usually trace their existence back to the years of pre-Soviet Latvian statehood and have close ties to the Old Believers' community of Latvia, which sustains a regional centre in Daugavpils in the *House of Melety Kallistratov*.⁶³ Naturally, the long-term contacts with the Latvian society and connections to pre-Soviet cultural activities allow these organisations to sustain collegial relations with the Latvian cultural elites. There is also evidence of close cooperation between the Old Believers' communities and state institutions such as the Ministry of Integration and the Ministry of Culture.⁶⁴ The organisations with connections to the Old Believers community and those based in Latgale have enjoyed better acceptance amongst the members of the majority society, assuming the role of advocacy groups and influencing political decision-making. These organisations include groups popularising Latvian citizenship, urging Russian non-citizens to naturalise and providing support in political activities in civic networks.

One of the most recent efforts to consolidate the Russian-speaking community in the country has resulted in the creation of the *Obyedinennyi Kongress Russkoi Obshchiny Latvii* (United Congress of the Russian Community of Latvia, OKROL) in 2004. Interestingly, in discussions with its members it became clear that the formation of the association was only possible on the tide of the school reform and subsequent protests. However, the issues addressed by the group suggest that significant mobilising potential existed prior to these political events.⁶⁵ As an umbrella organisation it has both collective and individual members, with an approximately around 50,000 individuals being involved.⁶⁶ The OKROL was initially created to address only issues related to education reform, leading to a great number of differences among its individual members. Some of its members stressed the importance of sustaining their ethnic identity as a basis for further cooperation with various state institutions, while others

emphasised religious beliefs and particularly the importance of Orthodoxy, thus creating a common core for identification of all Latvia's Russian-speakers.

Despite the dominance of members of the FHRUL party, the OKROL declared itself an apolitical organisation at its founding congress and refrains from references to political programmes while continuously emphasising the demand for granting the Russian language the status of a second state-language. These issues have all been on the agenda of the FHRUL, who also advocates for additional support of the economic activity of minority groups, since these are considered, also in the rhetoric of OKROL, "severely disadvantaged" by regulations on language use in Latvia.⁶⁷

Until the protests of the 2004 education reforms, Russian-speakers' NGOs were considered to be moderate in their claims and were perceived by local analysts as working with the Russian community, but not interfering in general policy-making issues. However, the mobilisation against the education reform also saw the rise of tensions and an increasing expression of positions undermining Latvia's state institutions. These were asserted through the organisation known as *Shtab (Shtab Zashchity Russkikh Shkol*, Headquarters of Protection of Russian Schools). Some of the Latvian observers claim that the *Shtab*

"used the education issue as a tool for a populist critique of Latvian democracy in general. Its militant name, strong links with Russia, and slogan 'Russian schools are our Stalingrad' suggested that the civic ideals of cooperation and dialogue had been replaced by resentment and isolation."⁶⁸

Supported by the FHRUL, *Shtab* conducted activities such as politicised hunger strikes, public protest actions and calls for school boycotts, all of which were perceived as deeply controversial not only by the Latvian community, but also by many Russian-speakers.⁶⁹ *Shtab* was also known to cooperate with *Lašor*, which was established in 1996 with the goal of protecting the interests of schools with Russian as the major language of instruction. In April 2000, *Lašor* prepared an appeal in which it called for changes in the Latvian Law on Education to stop the transition of state-supported education being conducted solely in Latvian.

Many Russian-speaking minority NGOs were involved in opposing the school reforms and thus gaining greater visibility and the support of the Russian-speaking communities. Some of the organisations involved were preparing policy-related papers and analyses to advise the govern-

ment of the possible corrections to be made during the implementation of education reforms, and continue to do so in the aftermath of protests.⁷⁰ The proposals of advocacy groups such as *Shtab* and *Lašor* were dismissed as being irrelevant for policy-making or even denoted as radical and anti-Latvian in their rhetoric.⁷¹

It is in this context that the engagement of civic leaders from the minority community gained the momentum to refocus from a generally analytical approach in working parallel to the state, to a more reactive engagement in coordinating the activities of its member-groups for which state support was guaranteed. One of the most renowned organisations in this respect, *Koordinatsionnyi Sovet Obshchestvennyh Organizatsii* (Coordination Council of Social Organisations) was established by fifteen minority organisations in 1999, and expanded to unite 23 groups by 2000. Despite its overall focus on assisting fellow members in coping with the effects of those policy changes that address social rather than political issues, the Council is perceived in the Latvian community as being extremely radical, harbouring considerable anti-state sentiments.⁷² The civic groups advocating changes in the citizenship and language regulations form the core of the Council include the ROL, ROvL and the Latvian Human Rights Committee.

Some non-Russian minority groups are also engaged in the activities of the Council, such as Ukrainian and Belarusian organisations that provide social support for members of their ethnic communities. Since 2000, the Council has been involved in several initiatives, perceived by the Latvian majority to be political in nature, such as the collection of signatures for minorities and non-citizens' rights in the preparation of an "Appeal to the UN, CoE, EC, OSCE." When some 57,000 signatures were collected and submitted to the Saeima in June 2000, the main ideas presented were in grave contradiction to what Latvia's political entrepreneurs were prepared to accept. These included various claims referring to the cultural and political rights of minority populations in the country, the insurance of the possibility to use national minority languages in communication with the officials in the areas of compact settlement. The most prominent call was to the Latvian government to ratify the Framework Convention on National Minorities and grant the right to vote in municipal election to all non-citizens resident in the republic for 10 years.⁷³

While the council is highly critical of the direction of political developments in the country, political activity does not appear to be a viable option for all of them. Several Russian minority organisations, such as the ROvL, the Baltic Slavic Society and the Association of Russian Cultural Officials consider the preservation of the infrastructure and environment

of the Russian culture to be their major objective.⁷⁴ Naturally, these organisations were also involved in the protests against the school reforms and expressed their concern about the future of the Russian language in Latvia, leading them to be classified as “radical” by the members of the Latvian-speaking community.⁷⁵ In many cases, the claims of these groups were interpreted as questioning the decision-making authority of the Latvian politicians and the direction of state’s political development altogether.

As was observed in Estonia over the past years, organisations providing social work and networking for minority groups on the issues of sensitivity for state officials have also been branded as radical and anti-state in their orientations. For example, the NGOs providing social work with Russian-speaking youths are dependent on governmental funding to proceed with their activities and have continuously faced difficulties when suggesting even a spurious connection between the overall state-minority relations and the precarious social and economic status of their major target groups. In Estonia, the youth organisation *Siin*, which mainly works with Russian-speaking youth, has been continuously marginalised as a partner in policy-making. Later, *Siin* was even presented in a negative light by the local press after speaking up about the adverse effects of language regulation on the younger generation of Russian-speakers in Estonia in 2004.⁷⁶ Similarly, in Latvia the efforts of organisations (that otherwise focus on sports education in Riga’s Russian-speaking schools) to draw attention to the connection between the school reforms and numbers of school drop-outs have also resulted in funding cuts for the group’s activities by government-related donor organisations in 2005.⁷⁷ My research in Lithuania did not suggest any similar actions by the local or national governments in the country. However, the members of various youth organisations in Lithuania suggested that the groups working mainly with minority populations are closely observed by groups addressing majority youth problems under the pretext of the increasing competitiveness for governmental funding.

The discussion of the civic networks established in the Baltic States under the guidance of the Baltic governments mainly suggests that the activities pursued by the groups are, more than anything, supporting the state in the fulfilment of its functions within the scope of the social policies adopted. This points to the fact that, while civic engagement might also be proactive, such as in the case of NGOs propagating the minorities’ culture to the members of their communities, and innovative, as in the case of the organisations helping empowerment in changing political settings, the activities of minority NGOs are limited in their effectiveness. While

the NGOs discussed in the second part of this chapter were discerned as undertaking project-related work corresponding to policy-preferences, it is natural to expect that the tensions around the cultural and linguistic regulations would cause the greatest activity by non-core ethnics in the region. This expectation has been confirmed in this part of the chapter.

With regard to the NGO activities of the minority groups ensuring the preservation of cultural and linguistic identity of their group members, I have outlined their particularly vibrant activity over the past decade. However, while discussing the issues of contention brought up by minority NGOs, I did not uncover any policy responses to the initiatives of the advocacy groups. The lack of policy-response to the issues of relevance for minority groups in the region once again indicate the Baltic governments' hesitance to accept the members of the non-political public sphere as partners in policy-making and thus fail to create a more inclusive political community of responsive and responsible citizens.

4. Minorities' engagement in policy advising

The activities of civil society aim at socialising individuals to make them fit into the changing socio-political and economic environment, as well as providing them networks on which they can rely in times of hardships. Besides this, there is another function of civic engagement which aims at providing street level expertise for state and policy-makers to address the issues of public concern more effectively. In this sense, "Civil Society III" describes the activities that aim at "teaching the state" to function responsibly towards the individuals its policies affect.⁷⁸

This aspect of civic engagement is particularly important in societies undergoing consolidation vis-à-vis its democratic commitments and elaborating a more inclusive and responsive relation between the state institutions and the individuals these serve. Some of the scholars argue that all civil society networks in one way or another promote inclusiveness and mutual respect. The recent debates on the contributions made by civil society to assist in the establishment of egalitarian rule suggest that only when civic networks are able to create and facilitate effective links between the political community and state institutions can the society be properly termed democratic. It is in this context that "civil society" can be seen as performing *public or semi-public functions* previously fulfilled by the state and suggesting some policy changes which would lead to the state re-assuming these functions.⁷⁹

Needless to say, civic activity teaching the state to perform its functions better makes several presumptions which are not necessarily

found in all political regimes. Firstly, the assumption here is that the civic actors teaching the state abide by the rules of democracy and hence accept democracy as the only appropriate political method, meaning that policy-changes introduced should strengthen democracy, not undermine it. The second assumption being made is that political institutions are prepared to work together with civic organisations to improve the political participation of the citizens affected and hence create a more inclusive political regime responsive to the individuals affected by the decisions made. And finally, the assumption that however democratic the political regime and the accessibility to political decision-making may be, further improvement is always possible and worthwhile.

This final point requires further emphasis with regard to the post-communist states. The interaction between state and society was previously under the full control of the ideological apparatus, mirroring the conditions of a tutelary transition. Political developments in the post-Soviet era however required some public consent and also allowed minimal criticisms of the choices made by the political elites. Whether the failure of state-builders, political entrepreneurs and policy-makers to respond to the impulses of civic initiatives is in itself an impediment for successful progress in democracy-building will be made clear in this part of the chapter. However, the analyses of the activities by minority populations criticising, and hence informing the state of changes suggest that throughout the region the responsiveness of the policy-makers to the input from the “Civil Society III” is very modest.

One of the most renowned organisations providing an independent assessment of policy-making and policy-implementation in the region is Estonia’s *Inimõiguste Teabekeskus* (Legal Information Centre for Human Rights, LICHR) created in 1992. This NGO has been active since 1995 as a non-profit organization, emerging from the initiative of several individuals and with support from several Danish organisations: the Danish Centre for Human Rights, Minority Rights Group-Denmark and the Information Centre on Eastern Europe, Copenhagen University. Although largely sustained in its activities by foreign donors, some Estonian NGOs are also involved in close cooperation with the LICHR including the Presidential Round Table of the National Minorities and the Representative Assembly of Non-Citizens of Estonia.

Founded to “promote constructive dialog and to enhance the awareness about human rights in the Estonian society,”⁸⁰ the LICHR provides legal advice to minority citizens and non-citizens of Estonia and collects, analyses and disseminates information regarding human rights. It is highly visible in the international arena by cooperating with a number of Euro-

pean experts in the areas of human rights and minority-related issues. While the NGO sustains close contact with the Estonian Government and the Riigikogu, the political parties, NGOs and numerous educational and cultural civic initiatives of minorities in Estonia, it seems to occupy a rather marginal position in the landscape of NGOs. Instead, the LICHR aims at influencing public opinion on the topics of integration of non-Estonians into Estonian society and works together with organisations facilitating the on-the-ground processes of alleviating differences between the Estonian and non-Estonian populations in the country.⁸¹

Latvijas Cilvēktiesību centrs (Latvian Human Rights Committee, LCC) is another well-known organisation which is prominently engaged in the issues concerning citizenship, education and language legislation. It was established in 1993 with a goal of promoting human rights and tolerance in Latvia through constant monitoring, research, advocacy, legal aid and training of a younger generation of activists.⁸² The LCC was also involved in data collection and following-up legislative decisions, policy-making and case monitoring in various human rights areas, including activities regarding social integration in Latvia. Over the recent years, the LCC had been specialising in the monitoring of places of imprisonment and addressing issues tangent to human rights and the integration of society, including minority-related issues and issues of interethnic tolerance, which “represent the most important problem areas of human rights in Latvia.”⁸³ In its work, the LCC particularly places emphasis on the education work with the individuals affected and organisations involved in the issues of human rights’ violations by publishing reports, research papers and information material about the situation in Latvia both locally and internationally. Human Rights Reports are also published annually by the LCC providing analyses of the developments and challenges of legal changes in Latvia. These allow international observers, local media, the public, and state officials to access independent information provided on minority issues in the country. The LCC also provides daily digests of the local media with a focus on the issues related to the integration processes.

Although the LCC specialises in providing expert advice for the government, parliament, the media and educational establishments, it is not acknowledged as particularly helpful by the Latvian government. The LCC reprimands the government and local authorities for their inappropriate conduct with respect to domestic issues, such as prosecution, the work of the security police, courts and law-making. Such actions foster an image of the organisation as a critic of the governmental policies and thus an unwelcome advisor in issues regarding minority policies in Latvia. By additionally being involved in advocacy for policy changes, at various

times LCC members have been involved in the institutions of the Latvian state and in work-groups on issues of justice and media regulations, as well as with the Secretariat of the Special Task Minister of Social Integration Affairs. Since the founding of the LCC, it has continuously opposed policies related to ethnic minority groups implemented by the state institutions. While expressing concerns on the scope and direction of the Social Integration Programme, the LCC has been advocating for the regulation of Latvia's relation with its minorities, specifically contesting bans on several professions for non-citizens. In the course of its regular monitoring in 2001, the LCC identified 19 professions where non-citizens were discriminated against in comparison to the citizens of Latvia. In 2003, the LCC advocated for the equality of rights for all of Latvia's residents to be advanced by naturalisation regulations and for the inclusion of new citizens in elections to allow for more responsive political processes to begin in the country.

Similarly to the *Latvijas Cilvēktiesību centrs, Lietuvos žmogaus teisių centras* (Lithuanian Centre for Human Rights, LŽTC) has been working in the field of human rights protection since 1994.⁸⁴ It was founded by private persons to develop expertise on human rights' education and implemented numerous projects and activities in the field. The work of the LŽTC aims at the development and dissemination of information about the internationally acknowledged standards of human rights, with a particular focus on the European dimension and the relevant steps in the promotion of tolerance and the safeguarding of diversity. The LŽTC had also been involved in the capacity-building of the social and ethnic groups vulnerable to recent social, economic and political developments. The group has also consistently provided consultations to the Lithuanian authorities on how to improve the human rights' standards at the national level. Through its public work the LŽTC has also utilised the academic community in Lithuania to address the issues of concern for non-Lithuanians which result from the nationalising policies of the state. It has also been engaged in the debates on issues of minority rights, specifically after the adoption of the FCNM in Lithuania.⁸⁵

Another organisation, *Žmogaus teisių stebėjimo institutas* (The Human Rights Monitoring Institute, ŽTSI) works explicitly with local organisations on developing social awareness and participatory ethics with their members.⁸⁶ While the LŽTC addresses the issues of concern with the affected public, the ŽTSI promotes the development of democratic societal structures by monitoring and enforcing human rights policies, raising awareness of the causes and consequences of human rights violations and by advocating for legislative and policy changes from a legal point of

view. The work conducted by the ŽTSI mainly focuses on law enforcement agencies and law-makers, which are considered to require greater changes in their attitudes in order to advocate the principles already proscribed in Lithuania's Constitution.

The ŽTSI carries out the same work that the LCC in Latvia does by specifically addressing the rights of the imprisoned and those charged with a criminal offence, as well as by following up on issues of discriminatory treatment. Another organisation in Lithuania working directly with the issues of human rights and focusing additionally on the rights and protection of social guarantees is the *Lietuvos žmogaus teisių ir socialinių garantijų gynimo organizacija* (The Organization of the Protection of Human Rights and Social Guarantees in Lithuania, LŽTSGGO). By monitoring the performance of various state and public institutions LŽTSGGO investigates breaches in the areas of human, minority and social rights. This organisation, founded during the Lithuanian EU accession in 2000, has been involved in the investigation of complaints by citizens who appealed to state institutions to eliminate violations of social rights. The LŽTSGGO has also been involved in policy advising on the improvement of the legislative acts of the Ministry of Justice and the Seimas.⁸⁷ Finally, it needs to be mentioned that, despite the fact that in Lithuania several organisations work on the issues of human rights and investigate the concerns of minorities, they only marginally touch upon the problems of the Russian and Polish-speaking communities. On the whole, the issues covered in the activities of the LŽTSGGO, ŽTSI and LŽTC address only the social problems of particular minority groups in Lithuania, i.e. Roma, and also address a wider scope of issues of individual rights.

In many cases, the expertise provided by NGOs addresses only the framework dimensions of the minority groups in the country, allowing for—if promulgated—the overall improvement in relations between the state and society. The same applies for the activities of the Estonia's LICHR and Latvia's LCC and Lithuania's NGOs, which are working on a range of issues, but are gaining only marginal acceptance and acknowledgement by their respective governments. As I have briefly described, these organisations address issues which are tangent to but not explicitly limited to minority rights. Nonetheless, even the framework in which these organisations operate does not grant their analytical approach greater recognition from the local governments. Despite the fact that these NGOs are not working directly with minority individuals and therefore provide a more balanced evaluation of the possible policy-changes, it appears that the analytical opinions and reports provided by these civic organisations are not taken into consideration by Baltic policy-makers. Although they are

funded through European institutions and structural funds, as well as by the international organisations sponsoring the development of the democratic participation such as Soros and Open Society Foundations, it appears that their expertise in democracy seems to be considered inadequate by the authorities.

The organisations whose activities allow them to be classified under the label of CSIII, or, in the Baltic context, as analytical NGOs, are stressing cooperative functions. They indicate various associations that bring about change in a state's policies and attitudes towards its citizens. Clearly this function of civil society implies that members of the social community do not only challenge existing power relations and, in some cases, undermine the legitimacy of state authority, *but* also perceive changes in the existing framework as possible and collective activity as sensible. As has been demonstrated in this part of the chapter, however, in the largest number of cases observed throughout the region, the activities of the advisory, analytical organisations advocating policy-changes to accommodate the needs of minorities have not been considered (so far?) by the institutions responsible. Therefore, while CSIII is mainly about the interaction of citizens with "street-level bureaucrats," the more appropriate description of the work provided would need to address the incentives for change in policy-implementations with regard to all individuals affected.

The model addressing the impact of the members of minority communities on policy-making in the region can be applied in the majority of case-studies where civic engagement of members of the political community is focused, but not limited, to group-activity within NGOs. The change in the practices, as can be observed in this brief review of the NGO landscape in the Baltic states, also requires an open institutional framework flexible enough to accommodate social feedback and acknowledge the presence of the deficiencies in the current policy. In the region under consideration, civic initiatives enjoy only a limited welcome by the political entrepreneurs and are more likely regarded as disturbing actors than as facilitators of better governance.

5. Conclusion

The previous chapters of the book have outlined the overall negative impact of institutional change on the opportunities available for local minorities to voice their opinions *and* be heard by the (majority) political entrepreneurs. This chapter, I believe, has clearly indicated that the participation of social actors in the making of state policies was hardly welcomed,

and was treated as unworthy of the attention of the politicians in the Baltic region.

I have argued that the analysis of engagement by non-state, social actors points to significant difficulties for speaking of the ongoing democratisation of the Baltic societies and political institutions: while policy-feedback mechanisms exist in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, they are hardly ever employed during policy-making. Instead, policy-makers belittle the potential for civic actors' contribution to the democratic development of the Baltic states. In addition, by keeping tabs on civic initiatives state actors have previously undermined the democratisation of social relations between the majority and minority in the Baltic societies. The existing political institutions and the established practice are likely to ensure that such a situation persists in the future.

The investigation into the civic engagement of minority populations has shed light on the overall hesitance of policy-makers to consider these as reasonable and worth pursuing. The key policy documents were developed to sponsor the development of NGOs and non-state funded organisations both, to assume the function previously provided by the state-institutions and to teach minorities to cope with the changing political, economic, social and linguistic environments. However, the activities falling into the direct responsibility of the civic initiatives have been consistently circumscribed. The lack of political will to accommodate the claims advanced in the civic networks by the minority members of Baltic societies, who have otherwise no opportunity to interfere in political processes, further testifies to the marginalisation of non-titular communities.

Many NGO activists point out that so far Baltic policy-makers have been effective in curtailing civic initiatives that might be conducive to democratic development. Instead, non-responsive political institutions cultivate the political passivity of citizens and sponsor uncritical attitudes from among the majority and minority communities towards their state of residence. As a result of the continuous marginalisation from social, economic and political processes and neglect of minorities' civic initiatives, the members of minority communities are increasingly disillusioned with the work and potential of public institutions. They are also less likely than core ethnics to protest against such actions by authorities even if they considered their treatment unjust.⁸⁸

I have collected extensive support for such explanation of NGO activities in interviews with the members of the Russian-speaking community organisations throughout the Baltic States. More frequently than not, the point was raised that many members of the minority community see no reasons to cooperate with state officials in pursuit of funding that would

only limit their activities. Frequent parallels have been drawn between the responses of the state to the vibrant educational activities accomplished by minority communities' members since the regained independence and to the political preferences of minority communities. Rarely were the initiatives proposed by minorities considered for promulgation or supported by the majority political entrepreneurs. It is hardly surprising that the lack of responsiveness of political institutions is leading to declining trust in elected representatives, who are more likely to disregard any issues of contention than to act on behalf of the minority communities.

All in all, the members of the minority communities are indeed pursuing a range of activities, which fall into the framework of teaching fellow citizens to be more civic. However, these also support the members of their ethnic communities in everyday necessities, such as assisting in the adaptation to the new political, economic, social, linguistic and, not least of all, cultural environments. There are also organisations which pursue the aforementioned goals as being essential for the ongoing democratisation of the state and its policies. Through civic initiatives, they are "teaching the state" by providing analytical digests, reports and public opinion surveys. In a political system open to learning and improvement, policy-makers could be expected to take the know-how generated by civic activists as a foundation for policy-improvements. There is little indication of this happening in the Baltic states.

If nothing else, the poor preparedness of policy-makers to allow minority involvement in democracy building throughout the region can be treated as an indicator of ethnic favouritism and/or of the nationalising logic of the Baltic states. This not only limits the absorption of democratic values by minority populations, but also makes clear to all actors involved that civic engagement is futile unless it is affirmative of the role of political elites and uncritical of the dominant policies. Neither of these aspects has been distinguished as an attribute of a healthy and sustainable democracy elsewhere in the world. I return to the question of how this dilemmatic relation could be addressed in the conclusion of my book.

Notes

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- 2 Foley and Edwards, 1996, p.42.
- 3 Tarrow, 1995, 1998.
- 4 Cohen, 1994, p.ix.
- 5 Ibid. p.x.

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- 6 Lagerspetz, Rikmann, and Ruutsoo, 2002.
 - 7 Jansons, 2003, p.124–125.
 - 8 Lagerspetz and Joons, 2004.
 - 9 Howard, 2003; Tismaneanu, 2007.
 - 10 Žukauskiene, 2005; Orr, 2008; Uhlin, 2009.
 - 11 Orr, 2008; Uhlin, 2006.
 - 12 Žiliukaitė et al., 2006.
 - 13 Zepa, 2001, p.93.
 - 14 Jurado, 2003, p.93.
 - 15 Civitas, 2007; Mačiulytė, 2007; Mickūnas, 2008.
 - 16 Ramonaite, Maliukevicius, and Degutis, 2007; Žukauskiene, 2005.
 - 17 Lagerspetz, 2004.
 - 18 Lagerspetz, 2004, p.38.
 - 19 Budryte, 2005, p.37.
 - 20 Jansons, 2003, p.125.
 - 21 Žiliukaitė et al., 2006, 280.
 - 22 Seeder, 2003.
 - 23 Lagerspetz, 2005.
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 - 26 Lagerspetz, Rikmann, and Ruutsoo, 2002.
 - 27 Lagerspetz, 2004.
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 - 29 See: http://www.president.ee/eng/institutsioonid/rahvusvahemuste_ymarlaud.html?gid=11437. Retrieved 2008–06–27.
 - 30 http://www.vm.ee/estonia/kat_399/4305.html. Retrieved 2008–06–27.
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 - 32 Lagerspetz, 2004, p.93.
 - 33 Lagerspetz, 2007.
 - 34 Lagerspetz and Joons, 2004, pp.64–68.
 - 35 The Official Website of the President of Latvia (<http://www.president.lv/index.php?pid=210>) does not mention the Consultative Council of Nationalities. Retrieved 2008–08–03.
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 - 37 <http://www.vcb.lv/eng/> Retrieved 2008–08–03.

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- 38 <http://www.tiesibsargs.lv/> Retrieved 2008-08-03.
- 39 Ikstens, 2002; Vilka and Strupiss, 2004; Ijabs, 2006; Orr, 2008; Uhlin, 2009, Vilka and Strupiss, 2004.
- 40 <http://www.integracija.gov.lv/?id=527&top=441&sa=520> Retrieved 2008-08-03.
- 41 <http://www.integracija.gov.lv/?id=524&top=441&sa=519> Retrieved 2008-08-03.
- 42 Ikstens, 2002.
- 43 Vilka and Strupiss, 2004, p.32.
- 44 <http://www.ngo.ee/245> Retrieved 2008-08-03.
- 45 <http://www.ngo.ee/115> See, Membership lists. Retrieved 2008-08-03.
- 46 <http://nisc.lt/lt/about.php> Retrieved 2008-08-03.
- 47 National Minorities Cultural Autonomy Act, passed by the Act of 26 October 1993. See Riigi Teataja I 1993, 71, 1001), <http://www.legaltext.ee/text/en/XX00038.htm> Retrieved 2008-08-03.
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- 55 Beresnevičiūtė, 2004.
- 56 Žukauskiene, 2005.
- 57 Ibid.
- 58 Kasatkina and Beresneviciute, 2004.
- 59 Interview in the TMID, January 2008.
- 60 Žukauskiene, 2005, p.27.
- 61 Ijabs, 2006, p.81.
- 62 See <http://www.politika.lv/index.php?id=3944> Retrieved 2008-06-27.
- 63 Pazuhina, 2007.
- 64 Ibid.
- 65 Interviews with members of the OKROL, September 2006.
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78 Kasatkina and Beresneviciute, 2004, p.197.

79 Taylor, 2006.

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Conclusion

Baltic democratisation: A cat's lick?

Over the past 300 pages, I have discussed various aspects of political change in the Baltic States with specific emphasis on the role of state institutions and citizen participation in the processes of policy-making. The discussion of the ways in which the expectations of minority populations have been addressed in the Baltic states have demonstrated the limited inclusiveness of the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian, but also generally of the post-communist democratic political process. The context of debates on democratisation and state-building did not allow for a more speculative argument on the implications of these developments for democratisation in the region. In the conclusion of my book, I outline some of the major repercussions resulting from the study of the democratisation process in the Baltic states for the scholarly debate on the emergence of democracy in societies with weak democratic legacies.

Firstly, I address the issues connected to the role of minority groups in the democratisation process in the Baltic states. As I indicate in the first chapter, various kinds of civic engagement allow different avenues for the individuals excluded from participation in political decision-making to take part in the processes of institutional development. However, throughout the recent Baltic history individual and collective engagement has been not only taken for granted, but was also discarded as useless. The limitations on participation of minority populations undermined their impact on the political developments in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Secondly, I discuss some of the implications of limiting the involvement of social actors in political processes. By revisiting the outcomes of institution building in the Baltic states, I underline the critical importance of legacies in devising the local democracy models. While pointing out some of the issues, I argue that the contradictions inherited from the past are still in place. Although these are subtly blending with a variety of political experiences of EU conditionality, Soviet legacies and the pre-Soviet experiences of statehood, I argue that on many occasions the lack of learning from the past has inhibited a more positive development of the relations between the post-Soviet political institutions, titular publics and the minority groups in the region. At the time, joining the

Western European security alliances, such as NATO and the EU, allowed European organisations to press for a revision of the Baltic ethnocentric perceptions of nationhood towards the more civic side of the scale. Now that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are equal partners in the European processes (although they claim not to be taken seriously enough), the relations between the state and society in the region are dominated by constraints of majoritarian institutions. There is a striking tension between the groups favouring pluralist-participatory and majoritarian governance in the Baltic societies.

Finally, I return to discussion of the democratisation. Here I situate the Baltic states in the framework of present-day democratic development. While some of the considerations of the regional dynamics suggest that the Baltic states have successfully achieved the primary goals of democratisation, I point out that on many occasions these were possible only because of international interference and result from the countries' eagerness to the join the imaginary West. Institutional changes in post-communist societies examined in this book suggest that pro forma democratisation did not strengthen the anti-majoritarian sentiment of the population affected. In other words, there is some potential for the new authoritarian experiments appealing to primordial identities and using powerful populist rhetoric.

As my research points out, while the danger of potential fall backs into undemocratic practices exists in all three states, post-Soviet political institutions in the region are not less democratic than they are in the Western European states. The changes of institutional structures across the region, however, failed to sponsor the democratic credentials of the Baltic populations. As I argue below, this is the result of citizens' perceptions about democratic political institutions and the value of diversity, in the political arena and beyond. All this speaks for the choice of my metaphor of a cat's lick, pointing out only partial success of Baltic democratisations.

1. Minority and majority in the making

My book began with an argument that critical attitudes of citizens and all others affected by political decisions play a crucial role in the institutional democratisation. I have stressed the conceptual implications for the study of the role played by minority populations in democratisation processes. The main contribution made by the fringe groups in this context consists of their critical perceptions of political processes as providing incentives for policy-changes. This aspect of minority input into main-stream political processes is comparable to what civil society "does" to politics and

falls together with the contribution made by pressure groups on the consolidation of political regimes. Hence, the minority contribution to democratisation, specifically that brought about through engagement in civic groups, sponsors the diversity of opinions in the public arena, which supports the democratic credentials of the state and assists state institutions in becoming more responsive to the demands of those affected by its policies. Decisively, popular acceptance of democracy and engagement in civic activity are not limited to members of the political community, but are open to all members of society affected by political decisions and interested in changing the way it touches them personally.

In this regard my study of the Baltic states has also addressed the situation where the members of minority communities are rather passive in organising civic initiatives and/or would be unable to influence political decision-making even if they were active. Civic engagement in general requires individual awareness of the opportunity to express grievances and demands *vis-à-vis* the state as a collective interest. If one would take the degree to which civic actors and the state pursue their goals and, at the same time, respond to mutual demands to distinguish the relation between the democratic state and consolidated society, the Baltic polities would not score well. The failure of the Baltic institutions to react to the activities of their subjects (citizens, non-citizens and permanently resident foreign nationals alike), in particular to the initiatives of minority groups, suggests that criticism of state policies is not regarded as contributing to furthering democratisation.

Minorities' expertise was rarely taken into consideration in launching policy-changes and was frequently dismissed as not suiting the anticipated direction of policy-development. Baltic minority residents have not had a chance to learn to "trust" the state as a result of this institutional resistance to incentives brought about by civic initiatives. Instead, the members of minority communities in the region have had to come to terms with the decisions of policy-makers who rarely demonstrated willingness to respond to their concerns. Especially if civic activities were treated as collective expressions of individual anxieties, the engagement of minority groups by the majority-dominated state institutions would indicate their responsiveness. Rather, the failure of the post-communist Baltic states to respond to and take into account the diversity of public interests suggest that policy-makers have learnt too little about democratic political practices, and too much from authoritarian ones. This is not surprising given the length of the non-democratic experiences as compared to a two decade period of democratic rule.

My review of minority politics in the Baltic states suggested that these were made to meet majorities' expectations more so than to liberal democratic norms. As I have demonstrated, by placing critical assets for policy-making and policy-alterations in the hands of majority communities, political changes in the Baltic states have been dominated by the rationale of state titularisation. The institutional design of the Baltic polities, as well as the initial steps aimed at accommodating the diversity of interests in the political realm were not inclusive of opinions expressed by minorities. In the struggle for Baltic independence, debates on the design of political membership, regulations of language use, education reforms and, ultimately, on issues relating to social integration have been conducted with only fragmentary participation of minority communities. Rather, they were dominated by national, state-bearing majorities and were fought out as internal struggles between different groups of majority elites, with the exclusion of representatives of Russian- and Polish-speakers.

Before the *de jure* independence from the SU, some of the opinions from minority groups were taken into formal consideration by majority elites, though this was not the case after August 1991. Responding to the negative incentives of the majorities, non-titulars in the Baltic states could only disengage from political activities, just as was the case before independence. Therefore, participation in political processes or being active in civic organisations was merely a sign of conformity with the existing regime. In part, this is what is happening in the Baltic states now. Minority civic initiatives that recommend policy-changes, criticise current policies or even support fellow citizens in coping with the effects of policy decisions, are not always discouraged outright. Most frequently, it is simply not taken seriously by all of the sides that it aims to affect—state institutions, the political entrepreneurs of the majorities, as well as the members of the minority publics themselves. Naturally, only limited incentives persist for the members of minority communities to engage in activities by challenging and even informing policy-makers of the changes perceived as necessary.

In this context, the activities of minorities in the region have remained tied to issues that have no implications for policy-making and therefore are ultimately non-political. This completely deflates them as civic activities and further perpetuates the weakness of civil society. In these circumstances, the members of minority communities who have been continuously dispensing their rights to assist in decision-making have learnt little about relations between the state and society specific to democratic regimes. Even in those cases when minorities' initiatives did

cause changes in state policies, these changes were not presented as made following societal feedback, but rather as decisions made by political elites to meet the interests of the majority community. Could the members of non-titular communities have learnt any lessons from the processes of minority opposition to Education Reforms in Latvia in 2004, or in the aftermath of the Bronze Night in Estonia in 2007? Considered from the point of view of non-titular populations, none of these expressions of popular discontent have had the desired effect. Rather they supported minorities' view that both the Latvian and Estonian states will not respond to any criticism and opposition, particularly if these are expressed by Russian-speakers.

Under the conditions of absent or negative state response to civic input there is only a meagre chance for the members of the Baltic Russian-speaking communities to develop closer ties to the state in which they reside. Engaging in projects and informing policy-makers of the changes aspired to also seems senseless, which results in mass disengagement from issues of politics. Instead, civic initiatives are likely to degrade into dense social networks, in which the people involved help one another to cope with the adverse impact of policies on their personal lives. Not surprisingly, since EU accession the members of minority communities in the Baltic states have been particularly active in organising themselves in different NGO groups. These promote awareness about minorities' cultural and linguistic heritage and provide social support to the marginalised members of their communities.

The recent social integration programme in Estonia and the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion in Lithuania make direct use of these civic groups for policy purposes. Baltic policy-makers have outsourced some of their responsibility for the integration of minorities to members of non-core groups and as such co-opted NGOs as instruments of neoliberal minority politics. At the same time, the range of policy documents provides instruments to monitor minorities' activities in the non-profit sector by granting some NGOs public funds for their projects, while withdrawing financial support from "uncomfortable" others. In doing so, Baltic policy-makers have once again instrumentalised the swelling minority leadership to further the cohesion of ethno-cultural fringe groups. By sponsoring activities more akin to social networking than civic participation, these policies have effectively provided non-core ethnics with an incentive to remain uncritical of the majorities' political choices.

There appears to be a decisive discrepancy between the commitment of Baltic policy-makers to strengthening civil society and the policy-changes that undermine the critical engagement of Baltic residents. For

civil society to feature as a guarantee of healthy democracy, it needs to function, without institutional constraints, as a watchdog over political entrepreneurs and the general public. As I have demonstrated in chapters 7 through 9, the critical activities of Russian-speakers are constrained by more than rigid political institutions. The failure of majority societies to consider the issues and claims of minority representatives to be of any relevance for titulars themselves indicates a deep cleavage between the groups which is unlikely to be alleviated in the near future.

As I have discussed, in many cases the type of political regime and the state institutions in the Baltic states are so tightly connected with the majority group that minority groups cannot possibly engage the one without addressing the other. Hence, the critical engagement of minorities faces multiple challenges in the process of determining and articulating demands, as well as pursuing their collective goals, because these are always challenging the set of Baltic political institutions. From this point, if Baltic political entrepreneurs could distinguish between the criticism of political performance from criticism of institutional structures of the Baltic states, it would be much easier to accommodate the policy-input from minorities. Ultimately, most of the issues minority groups across the region resent are the same ones that made titular populations chafe for the past two decades.

In my book I examine only the (lack of) responsiveness from political institutions to the claims of minority groups during the entire period of the post-Soviet independence. As we have seen in the chapter 2, the Soviet state also dealt with dissenting opinions by denying them an institutional response. The examination of current institutional response to challenges of development in the Baltic states leads me to conclude that political institutions continue to impede greater democratisation across the region. The failure of the Baltic political leadership and publics to make institutions accountable to alternative opinions and/or install mechanisms preventing the majority from highjacking policy-making does not mesh well with provisions of democratisation theory.

2. Institutions as tools of democratisation

The initial discussion of the impact civic activities can have on policies has underlined how political institutions and political entrepreneurs could profit from them. In both cases, the modelling of civic activities as a part of democratic politicking allows conclusions about the impact citizens might exercise on policy-making. This is possible through the consideration of their interactions with street-level public officials, electoral behav-

ious, and the use of protest or petitioning. Unfortunately, resident aliens, individuals disengaged from politics and those whose activities are disregarded do not have the same opportunities to influence political decision-making and can only expect that their discontent will be considered in policy corrections. However, as I argue throughout the book, the interaction between non-core ethnics and the state-institution has not resulted in significant policy-changes. Not even the activities of civic actors have had a significant impact on policy-making. Was this because their demands were formulated as requests from the group that was excluded from the politicking?

My research suggests that the people affected by, but excluded from the democratic dialogue of the Baltic states failed to contribute to democratisation because they—as a group—were perceived as a disturbing factor in the *status quo* between groups. I have underlined the importance of distributing resources for participation in political decision-making among as many individuals affected as possible. However, as I have pointed out, political institutions in the Baltic states were created by and are continuously dominated by the nationalising rationale. In discussing how the structural resources of the state were envisaged by the majority political entrepreneurs in terms of nation-states, I underline that the participation of non-core ethnics was minimal.

My comparative perspective on the policies of state- and nation-building in the Baltic states has emphasised the lack of provisions both encouraging non-titulars to participate in these projects, but also decreasing their sense of alienation from engagement in the state building. In fact, not until the late 1990s had the Baltic states devised national integration programmes to encourage minorities' participation in political processes and address their perception of alienation from the state more consistently. The contribution of minorities in determining the outcomes of political decision-making had to be kept to a minimum to allow an ethno-nationalist rationale to prevail. My book puts forward the narrative of state-building suggesting that the mere presence of minorities in the Baltic states led political entrepreneurs to acknowledge their potential impact on democratisation and thus forego non-titulars' participation.

Despite limited participation in Baltic policy-making, the members of Russian-speaking communities have nevertheless played an essential role in both nation- and state- building in the region. The fact that parts of the local populace were excluded from decision-making at the earlier stage of nation-building and were later further marginalised in political and social processes indicates that the Russian-speaking communities were essential as catalysts of institutional development. While some changes in

the perceptions of titulars have led to corrections of the original social and political policies and recognition of (some of the) Russian-speakers' interests, non-titulars are still featured as unreliable and unwelcome political partners. Although, particularly in the wake of EU-enlargement, political leaders of the Baltic states have presented some guarantees for individual and social rights for the members of non-core communities, the political rhetoric surrounding these decisions suggests that even these were not made to make minorities' lives easier. Instead, political decisions were made as guarantees for the majority populations that the Baltic states are and will remain the property of the titulars.

The post-Soviet state- and nation-building in the region has taken place under the influence of exclusive nationalising rhetoric, but the tensions between the ethnic groups never amounted to violent conflict in the Baltic societies. Practically, this has meant that although the influence of many individuals who did not belong to titular ethnic groups was limited, the excluded never resorted to violence in an attempt to claim greater rights and take part in the formation of the "imagined" national community. The lack of violent conflict in the region has allowed some researchers to state that the Baltic states have implemented only a limited concept of democracy at home, citing the highly-debated provisions of political membership and rights adjacent to citizenship status.

Many recent studies have shed decisive light on the relation between state institutions and minority individuals. The contributions to the study of the post-communist Baltics could not claim that non-core ethnics did indeed embody political culture, which would have inherently contradicted the institutional design established. Instead, scholars have increasingly neglected to note that political membership in the state-community is essential for the analysis of relations of the state towards an individual, but not vice versa. Thus, the Russian-speaking minority groups in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have coped quite well with the nationalising logic of state building. How could this happen?

My research suggests a tentative connection between current practices and the past experiences of Soviet institutions, which had formed both the top-down logic of state relations with the individuals it affected, as well as the strategies employed by individuals to avoid institutional impact on their personal lives. It is in this light that concerns should be raised about the participation of the Baltic titular publics in the process of democratising "their" polities. As I demonstrate throughout the book, state institutions have consistently promoted the interests of the majority group in framing Russian-speaking communities as minorities, assuming the tacit consent of those positively affected as a sign of agreement with the

overall direction of transformation. However, state institutions in the Baltic states have also failed to develop strategies of negotiation with the groups of titulars requesting even tougher nationalising logics to be implemented. Likewise, while the governments of the post-communist Baltic states have implemented institutional reforms, the societies affected were not always willing to embrace the new practices. Social disparity left many aspirations from transition unfulfilled, while at the same time growing individual liberties have allowed expressions of dismay in regard to the political, economic and social reforms. Understanding the cultural group-rights of majorities as being in need of safeguarding prevailed in discussions on policy-issues, but no bottom-line consensus was reached on how social actors could cooperate with political decision-making institutions.

This observation of institutional rigidity makes me conclude that the mechanisms of leverage available in democratic settings were never established in the Baltic states. This is precisely the reason why the input for policy-changes emerging from politically redundant members of Baltic societies could never emerge as a challenge to the existing *status quo*. The long-term outcome of the democratisation process in the region remains to be seen. However, if members of the post-communist Baltic societies had instruments to check institutional performance for democratic credentials, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania would be much further down the road to democracy. While my research suggests that the minority communities have used the most of the tools at their service to contribute to advancing democracy in their states of residence, the majorities have had many more opportunities to suggest broader democratic change.

Certainly, the practices of institutional crafting appear to be of high importance for a functioning democracy, but, as I argue, democratic *institutional* design results from the social aspiration that these are the best among other possible solutions. The institutions framing Russian-speakers in the Baltics as a minority group also framed core ethnics into passive publics, ready for tutelage. As I argue with regard to the Baltic independence movements, the processes of democratisation in the region were set in motion by the general dissatisfaction of many citizens with their status in the social and political edifice, and hence conducive to social, economic and political changes.

The collapse of the communist regimes testified that social factors are at least as important for change in political processes, as they are responsible for the instability of political institutions. However, mass participation in actions challenging the existing *status quo* and led by expectations of greater responsiveness of political institutions is not to be seen

in Estonia, Latvia or Lithuania. These activities require organisation and mobilisation, free information flow and critical individual engagement which are all freely available but are not activated by the Baltic residents. As we have seen, the Baltic state institutions have prevented even the members of the titular publics to influence policy-making and ultimately press for greater institutional change. Thus, one of the missing links is one of institutional response to public demand to be able to help in defining and crafting an effective democracy.

It seems that in the region, the state continues to exercise a “paternalist dictatorship over needs” in providing its citizens with the goods, services and freedoms they consider essential. In so doing the state apparatus secures its political authority and is unlikely to be challenged. But the years as a part of the Soviet Union should have taught locals better that the combination of paternalism and coercion leads to passive compliance and negative legitimacy of politics. The Soviet state became an association of technocrats who regulated individual lives, choices, and fulfilled essential needs only when facing penalties. Ultimately, paternalism could not ensure the dominance of one social group under communism. The question remains whether the discourse of democratic liberalism can downplay the inherent inequalities between the groups of Baltic residents and prevent state institutions from greater responsiveness towards the people they affect.

While in communist societies, political authority was embodied in the party-state which claimed a monopoly of authority and the leading role as sole representative of the people, the analysis of this book demonstrate that the instrumental role of the socialist state as the means to accomplish the objectives of the ruling elites have largely remained in place during the Baltic democratisation. For the post-Soviet citizen who had nothing but a lifelong experience with an undemocratic regime, suspicious treatment of critical attitudes and dislike for collective decision-making remained a part of the mindset.¹ Regularly, the process of democratisation would see citizen demand for democratic responsiveness of institutions to outstrip what institutions are ready to provide, thus allowing a gradual move toward more democracy. On the opposite side of the scale, when citizens demand less democracy than institutions already offer, incipient democratic change stalls or moves toward less democratic political regime.

This book provides an illustration of how these processes panned out in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. As I have discussed in the introduction and in the chapter 1, democratisation is nothing different from a movement toward more or less democratic state-society relations, which however, does not depend on citizens' demand alone, but reflects the rela-

tionship between citizen demand and institutional response. Inglehart and Welzel consider “shifts toward more or less democracy [to] follow the logic of reducing the incongruence between citizen demand and institutional supply of democracy.”² We have observed significant changes in the institutional opportunity structure in all three states, but have found only insignificant transformation of popular attitudes towards political structures as a result of post-communist democratisation.

3. Implications for studies of democratisation

The support for democratisation throughout the CEE was remarkably unanimous in the 1980s, but the political and economic performance of post-communist regimes brought about many unexpected effects. Socio-economic development in the initial years of transition had challenged the social conditions of the populace, resulting in various degrees of support for a new, democratic regime.³ The mixed feelings of the post-communist public about the initial outcomes reflect the ruptures of the turbulent transition years, as well as the not so quickly forgotten promises of the socialist regimes. Current research shows comparable trends in support of both present-day and previous regimes and the Baltic states are not exceptional in this respect.⁴

The collapse of the Soviet communism teaches us several important lessons regarding the regime domination, collapse and transition. The most important one is the ability of regime to endure despite a clear absence of popular legitimacy, confounded on the illusion of mass consent manufactured by the political elites. Crucially, the system remains fully functional if the political class can convincingly claim to exercise power and authority over citizenry defined by appealing to dichotomous categories, distinguishing “us” from “them.” Secondly however, and particularly as Baltic history demonstrates, when a regime is externally imposed elites’ prime imperative is to present themselves as legitimate representatives of their people. The years of Soviet inclusion produced a generation of political entrepreneurs skilful in making political capital out of their ethno-cultural and linguistic identities, equipped with the slogan of “return to Europe” many have transformed into Europe’s political elites.

These processes underline a double logic. On the one hand, copying of the EU standards dominated political rhetoric, while at a deeper level, the adjustment often proved formal and perfunctory. Unsurprisingly, benchmarking the new rules of the game became less a priority and democratisation of state-society relations remained rather limited following the EU accession in 2004. As elsewhere in the CEE, domestic issue pre-

vail over European and global ones in envisaging the outcomes of democratic transition in the longer run, but it is remarkable how little of EU's liberal democratic values have taken root in the Baltic societies.

In general, a political system can become institutionally democratic with the installation of competitive elections and multiple political parties, but the institutions alone do not produce a functional democratic political system. Rose, Mishler, and Haerpfer pointed out, that the institutions are nothing more than "the democratic hardware," which nonetheless requires the "software" that suits various system components.⁵ The students of democratisation and the policy-makers have long recognised that the opinion of the citizens affected by the democratic institutions about political performance is a key component of such software.⁶ However, because the acceptance of democracy does not necessarily cause the rejection of authoritarian views, the declared preference of some citizens for democracy cannot be equated with unconditional or unwavering support for the current path of political development.⁷

Of course, conclusions made by Rose, Mishler and Haerpfer urge reservations as regards the expectations of new political regimes in post-communist Europe and point to possible dissonances between the understanding and implementation of democracy. However, many social scientists examining public responses to post-communist transition adopted the realist approach of Winston Churchill—arguing that any regime, however undemocratic, will survive as long as it is considered better than the other options available. This tacit assumption of social and political scientists led to the examination of *to what degree* and *how* local populations support the new regime. And, to a lesser degree do they question the reasons they support it?⁸ While political processes necessarily reflect the demands and expectations of members of society able to decide on the overall direction of democratic developments, it is by understanding the social context in which these are formulated that one can effectively study the processes of democratisation.

Luckily, we do not have to evaluate hundreds of possible definitions of "democracy," as has already been done by David Collier and Steven Levitsky, who analysed the variety of meanings attributed to the word throughout post-communist Europe.⁹ Their study shows the ambiguity of the references to this term made in CEE societies. In another academic endeavour, Janos Simon has attempted to cluster the ascribed meanings of "democracy" around such notions as "institutional," "socio-economic" and "liberal-individualist."¹⁰ Both these and numerous other studies have been successful in showing that individuals in newly democratising societies interpret "democracy" as broadly as members of "tradi-

tional” democracies do, making clear that the “ideal democracy” does not exist—neither in this region, nor elsewhere in the world. It remains uncontested, however, that the members of post-communist societies do enjoy greater freedoms and civil liberties now than before, that they benefit from the greater transparency of state-institutions and have on average improved their living conditions and quality of life.

The scholarship on the third wave of democratisation argued consistently that citizens’ support for democratic changes involves favourable orientations to democratic ideals and practices.¹¹ The regime change generates the conditions of uncertainty about the stability of political institutions, which together with the limited experience and sophistication about the democratic decision-making might lead citizens to embrace both democratic and authoritarian political attitudes concurrently.¹² Certainly, social insecurities have multiplied disproportionately since the collapse of communism and Baltic independence, but so too have the liberties of all individuals, producing a cumulative feeling of disparity between those individuals who have improved their status and those who have not.

Despite substantial differences among and within the Baltic societies, the prospects for democratisation remain bright. This is not to say that the transition could not go better. The very same acknowledgement leaves many members of the Baltic minority communities dissatisfied with the results of transition and continues to cause wide-spread criticism on the tide of the recent EU-accession. As I have argued throughout the book, this public mood in the Baltic states could be attributed to many legacies of the past, reducing their explanatory power to minimal causality.

Another interpretation would emphasise the positive effect of the Soviet past, such as an atmosphere of caution towards radical change, scepticism towards the decision-making process in politics and the social atomisation preventing Baltic residents from more active participation in radical politics. I, instead, chose to point out how the development of relations between the groups of minorities and majorities was framed by political institutions, and how non-titulars in the Baltic states have interacted with these. Clearly, the results of democratic development in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are not encouraging for those members of non-core ethnic groups who would like to have a greater say in political decision-making. Neither could the members of Russian-speaking communities be happy with the radical shift in their status from the “dominant Soviet nationality” to a minority in what many have been perceived as a fringe Soviet republic.

Nonetheless, I hope to have made it clear in my analysis that it is problematic, even counterproductive to speak of various degrees of de-

mocracy. To focus on the dissatisfaction of non-core ethnic groups in the Baltics with the current state of affairs would neglect the central role of democratic institutions in crafting the liberal rule of law. In this discussion of the process of institutional framing of non-core ethnic communities, I address both the perils of exaggerated expectations associated with democratic transformations as well as the role even disenfranchised minority groups can play in enhancing the democratic process. In doing so, I seek to bridge the divide of democratic theory between institutionalists and participatory democrats who have interpreted the preconditions, the process and the outcomes of democratic change differently.

The specific situation in which this dispute developed – the decline in popular political participation throughout the “democratic” world during the 1970s – produced a new wave of democratic theories which have not found their way into the scholarship of the Baltic democratisation. Then, the decline in political parties’ membership and the increase in non-electoral, non-conventional participation in the “West” has had implications for the development of new approaches to democratisation. Some moderate theorists maintained that proper participatory democracy is likely to remain “a Quixotic dream,”¹³ whilst pessimists have even warned of its inherent dangers.¹⁴ Ever since, the studies of democratic culture have received great interest in scholarship as these addressed public assertions of institutional dominance and caused political structures to change. In my research I demonstrate that a democratic political regime is the result of a complex interplay between the citizens and the state.

In my book, I demonstrate how the members of the previously dominant ethno-social groups have been marginalised in the process of democratisation in the Baltic polities. Institutional responsiveness to public demands and to the demands of minority groups has to this point been insufficient to ensure stability in the relations between the democratic commitments and nationalising policies of the Baltic states. Although the liberal goal-oriented activity of the Baltic residents is clearly apparent, the impartiality of the Baltic law- and policy-makers is only meagrely ensured, even if European institutions acknowledge them as democratic. The lack of exchange between the political institutions and the publics these affect still demonstrates considerable potential for improvement.

Notes

1 Mishler and Rose, 2002.

2 Inglehart and Welzel, 2005, p.187.

3 Mishler and Rose, 1997.

4 Rose, Mishler, and Haerpfer, 1998.

5 Ibid., p.8

6 Almond and Verba, 1963; Eckstein, 1966; Norris, 1999.

7 Dalton 1994; Finifter and Mickiewicz 1992; Hahn, 1991.

8 Mishler and Rose, 2002. An exception in the line Hesli, Reisinger, and Miller, 1997.

9 Collier and Levitsky, 1996.

10 Simon, 1998.

11 Rose and Mishler 1994; Shin 1999.

12 Lagos 1997, 2001.

13 Pennock, 1979, p.468

14 Huntington, 1975.

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