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<p>Tiivistelmä-Referat-Abstract</p> <p>Minority issues have had a great impact on the parliamentary debate as well as on the implemented laws during the period 1995-2003. Latvia became independent in 1991 and during this time the country has been struggling with strong nationalistic feelings as well as a desire to turn its back to Russia. In order to achieve this, the Latvian Parliament stimulated in accordance with the Supreme Council that citizenship should only be granted to pre-1940 citizens and their descendants, with the outcome that more than 40 % of the population in Latvia was excluded from citizenship, most of them Russian-speaking people. According to the theorists Ernest Gellner and T.K Oommen, the theoretical concept nationalism describes the political situation in Latvia concerning the minorities, indicating that in a nation, there can only live one people, sharing the same culture, language and history. Alfonso Alfonsi says that neo-nationalistic feelings are common in post communistic states, as societies that for decades were restricted by authoritarian ideology cannot perceive ideas of modern liberal democracy, and substitute propagated class solidarity with ethnic solidarity.</p> <p>The purpose of the study is to examine citizenship and identity, and evaluate the kind of citizenship policies that Latvia has adopted after having declared its independence. The analysis is mainly a study of the debate in the Latvian Parliament concerning minority issues and the laws implemented thereafter, during Latvia's application period into the European Union 1995-2003. By analyzing the different parliaments and coalition during the period of 1995-2003, as well as the debate and the legal framework during this period, it is possible to distinguish in what way the situation of the Russian-speaking minority has changed. The core to the analysis is the qualitative content approach, which is used to analyze the political debate and the laws implemented within the Latvian Parliament. The political parties of the Latvian Parliament have been the main actors in stipulating laws and regulations in order to discourage or to encourage the Russian-speaking minority from participating as Latvian citizens within the Latvian community. The political program of each party is the source for the party's behavior within the Latvian Parliament, as it establishes the ground for the ideologies and aims of the political parties.</p> <p>Despite the view that Latvia formally fulfills the relevant international agreements, the citizenship issue in Latvia will continue to have an important international political significance. During the period 1995-2003 the Latvian Parliament promulgated various laws, among others the Citizenship laws, the Language Law and the Education Law, in order to decrease the opportunities of the minorities to participate within the Latvian society. These laws demonstrate the aversion of the Latvian Parliament to comply the European Union accession criteria regarding human rights and respect of minorities, and should need a few more years to stipulate the adequate laws before acquiring full EU-membership.</p>			
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