National Elites in the Post-national Era: Ethno-politics and Internationalization in the Baltic States.[1]

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Abstract

After the Baltic states had become candidate members to EU and NATO these organizations exercised considerable efforts to bring the political institutions of these countries and their elites' orientations into correspondence with international liberal democratic standards of including minorities into the polity. The paper investigates to which extent institutions and orientations did adapt to the international requirements; and discusses how the national responses to including the Russian minority may be understood as national elites' rational adaptation to insecure environments. A main finding is that internationalization resulted only in moderate liberalization of laws and did not affect the elites' orientations in any substantial ways. A high threshold for achieving citizenship as advocated by the national elites contrasts the liberal notion of creating state identity by 'thin' integration procedures, but opens an alternative way of generating more fundamental trust by 'thick integration'. The element of ethnic exclusion seems to be a necessary political cost of the sad experiences of the past.

Introduction

After the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991 nationalism soared in the three Baltic states Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Democracy and free elections were embraced as the main symbols of their regained independence *and* as an expression of sharing basic human rights with Western democracies. However, in Estonia and Latvia the nationalists' fear of the large Russian-speaking minority groups who had settled there mainly during the Soviet period soon challenged the ideal of inclusive democracy. The unique demographic situation highlighted the incompatibility of Western-style inclusive democracy with the exclusion by the indigenous population of major groups of permanent residents from the political process. Memories of the harsh experiences of the Soviet period led many indigenous citizens to equate universal political rights with providing the large Russian-speaking minority with the opportunity to challenge the political control of a narrow majority. Repatriation back to Russia was not successful and the main dilemma became how to include the minority, whom many regarded as former occupiers, without jeopardizing the newly born nation-state. From the mid 1990s the national elites responded to this quandary by 'thick integration' i.e. assimilation strategies. While at the same time opting for membership in Western organizations with traditions of 'thin integration' of minorities and requiring rather low thresholds for citizenship-status, the elites came under pressure. The solution has been, I argue, a strategy to liberalize only to the extent necessary the laws regulating access to the polity; and at the same time transform the political identities of the minority through scrutinized naturalization.

The basic question here is to what extent the integration strategies embraced by these elites have changed to conform to international requirements. I start by discussing the notion of 'democracy' in multi-ethnic states and then go on to examine the indigenous elites' attitudes to including the Russian-speaking minority in the political process. The next issue concerns how the formal institutions, the citizenship- and language laws, have changed as a result of international pressure. In the last section the persistence of elite-nationalism in a post-national era is examined. Here I ask if the Baltic elites' orientations are conducive to post-national influences and how

their patterns of orientations may be understood as conforming to norms of inclusive democracy propagated by international organizations or have been motivated by rational nationalist calculations of security and material benefits for the new nation states.

Ethno-politics in an international context

Shortly after independence had been achieved on a wave of ethnic reconciliation, indigenous sentiments began to be expressed in the form of exclusionary politics. In Estonia and Latvia, which had inherited large immigrant groups from the former Soviet Union, the national elites' skepticism about the Russian-speaking community's loyalty to the new states stirred fears of political and cultural domination. The indigenous majority in these states questioned the political rights of the many 'illegal immigrants' who had settled there during the Soviet period. The parliaments adopted new citizenship laws with highly restrictive criteria for receiving citizenship, which in practice excluded a considerable proportion of the permanent Russian-speaking inhabitants from the political process. Lithuania, by contrast, where the Russian-speaking portion of the population was much smaller, soon accepted all permanent residents as citizens.

In the international arena the EU and NATO enlargement processes began, and many of the previous communist countries were invited to join these organizations. In the autumn of 1995 the Baltic states had submitted formal applications for EU membership and began negotiating the terms of access. One of the main conditions for attaining membership in these Euro-Atlantic organizations was that national laws should be brought into line with international human-rights standards in general and political rights in particular. For the Estonian and Latvian elites one major challenge was how to liberalize their restrictive citizenship laws, adopted just after independence, without weakening indigenous control over the reborn nation-states. On the institutional level these states gradually approached the requirements set by international organizations. Nevertheless, as the accession process drew to a close with the Copenhagen summit in December 2002, a considerable proportion of the

non-titular nationalities resident in the Baltic states still had not been included in the polity. Why has this process been so cumbersome and slow? The argument is that 'democracy Baltic style' is mainly a 'strategic construct' which has been informed by the elites' nationalist political culture, and therefore is adapting only slowly to the international environment.

I use the term 'elite political culture' not as an expression of certain traditions but as a way to denote elite attitudes to democratization that may be rooted in images of the past or that have simply been adopted for pragmatic reasons in response to urgent problems. In an 'ethno-liberal' type of democracy elites will be cautious about granting citizenship to minorities but positively disposed to integrating those minorities into state structures once they have achieved citizenship.

To what extent these attitudes are open to international influence and to what extent they are traditional and 'path dependent' may be viewed from two perspectives. The 'social constructivist' argument is that internationally oriented elites will absorb democratic standards through a socialization process. Accordingly, one may assume that by participating in international bodies elites will tend to develop a 'European democratic identity'. The 'instrumentalist view', on the other hand, argues that national elites will remain 'nationalists' and that positive attitudes to internationalization and participation in international bodies generally represent pragmatic strategies for promoting national interests. In other words, Western-like attitudes and behavior are designed more to serve rational national security goals and material interests than to promote human rights and ideals of ethnic pluralism and integration.

As for institution making, the contrary pressures from indigenous forces wishing to exclude the Russian-speaking minority from the political process and from the international community for inclusive political institutions will produce institutions for participation in these states that I would describe as an 'ethno-liberal democracy', which comes somewhere between an exclusionist 'ethnic democracy' on the one hand and an inclusive 'liberal democracy' on the other hand. The basic idea of an 'ethno-liberal' democracy is that its citizenship laws will set thresholds for achieving citizenship status that are difficult to pass, but once this formal barrier has

been surmounted a member of an ethnic minority is fully accepted as an equal by the indigenous people. As Kymlicka (2001) argues, learning the language of the titular nationality and expressing loyalty to the state is not sufficient for integration in the state--the minority must also have access to state institutions and be accepted as equal players in decision-making processes. Acceptance is not automatic, however, and the national elites' political culture is crucial for the success or failure of attempts to accommodate new citizens in the governing structures. 'Citizenship' is rather complicated to explore empirically since it may go beyond the narrow legal definition of formal rights to include such elements as identity, practices and feelings of cohesion as expressions of the larger phenomenon of 'viable citizenship' (Kymlicka and Norman 2000).

While it is legitimate for the indigenous population and national elites to base citizenship on some fundamental civic competence--, i.e., period of residence, language skills and knowledge of the national history--the question is what criteria will *both* ensure a fair inclusion *and* serve as a guarantee of state loyalty? Relatively stringent procedures for 'naturalization' may serve to alleviate indigenous concerns about citizens' loyalty and promote trust and social cohesion, such citizenship criteria may also be perceived as deliberately exclusionary. This has been the focus of criticism from international human-rights organizations like the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe (CE).

In the following, systematic interviews and reviews of major laws reveal that the elites' widespread reluctance to extend formal political rights and the slow implementation of those rights also has a positive aspect—namely, the elites' rather liberal attitude to allowing those who have achieved citizenship status to hold leading state offices. This means a specific type of ethnic assimilation consistent with an 'ethno-liberal democracy' which the international community has paid little attention to. The Baltic experience with this 'two-step-strategy' of narrow but generous incorporation has profound implications for 'viable citizenship' Baltic style. While such an assimilation strategy is not in line with pluralist ideas of ethnic autonomy, it seems to be the only way of democratic organization regarded as legitimate among the indigenous elites in the Baltic states.

Data and method

The data are taken from official documents, secondary literature and face-to-face questionnaire interviews in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The respondents include parliamentary deputies, administrative officials, the directors of major private companies and state enterprises, and the leaders of NGOs, the judiciary, cultural institutions and local government. In each country 280-315 persons comprising a representative and comparable sample of top political and administrative leaders were interviewed.

The respondents answered several questions about their attitudes to minority groups and their international orientations and behavior. The interviews including questions about international relations were carried out in 2000. Comparable elite groups were interviewed regularly (after each parliamentary election) from 1993 onwards. The most recent interviews were made in Latvia and Estonia in the spring and autumn of 2003. For a more detailed description of selection of respondents and methods, see Steen (1997).

Democracy in multi-ethnic states

The challenge for the national elites of Estonia and Latvia was how to build democratic institutions in a nation-state where major groups of permanent residents were excluded from political rights. A polity of this kind has been characterized as an 'ethnic democracy' (Linz and Stepan 1996, Smith 1996). Smooha (2001:24) argues that 'ethnic democracy' is distinct from other types of democracy and defines it as 'a democratic political system that combines the extent of civil and political rights to permanent residents who wish to be citizens with the bestowal of a favoured status on the majority group'. Applying this model to Israel, Slovakia and Estonia, he argues that these ethnic democracies are distinct from both 'civic democracies' and 'non-democracies'[2]. Considerable tensions and many dilemmas will arise because the

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[2] Smooha (2001:86) finds that the three countries have a lot of similarities: 'significant non-assimilating national minorities with affiliation to external homelands, a strong orientation to the West, mixed economies and democratic structures. They are all engaged in nation- and state-building. They see themselves as and are seen by the West as democracies. Yet, all of

'ethnic rules' for organizing the state and society conflicts with the 'democratic rules'. The main quandary is how the majority may retain political control while submitting to procedures permitting participation of large minority groups. These contributions emphasize the exclusion of the minorities and are not taking into due consideration how naturalization processes may give access to the state.

I argue that the political set-up in Estonia and Latvia today represents more a *system for cultural domination of the state by the titular* majority than the systematic institutional exclusion of minorities. In fact residents are allowed to apply for and are granted citizenship after certain naturalization requirements have been met, so that gradually an increasing proportion of the Russian-speaking population has acquired citizenship[3]. How did these institutional changes become possible in a nationalist political culture? To find an answer it is necessary to analyze the political culture of the governing elites and the interplay between informal elite culture and institutional changes. But, first I delve on some aspects related to 'democracy' in multi-ethnic states.

The two-step ethno-liberal democracy

One may differentiate between some main mechanisms adopted by core nationals towards minority groups: *exclusion, restriction* and *inclusion.* The first two are mechanisms for ethnic control and are different only in degree, since the objective of both is to restrain completely or partially the minority from participation in the polity. The three mechanisms correspond to different regimes of representation, 'ethnocracy', 'ethnic democracy' and 'liberal democracy', which in quite specific ways regulate the balance between indigenous and non-indigenous groups in the political, economic and cultural spheres. Thus, 'democracy' in multi-ethnic states may take on four quite distinct forms, depending on how *liberal are formal*

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them assert themselves as homelands of ethnic majorities, aiming to promote the demography, language, culture, identity and interests of their majorities, rather than their citizenries'.

[3] Defining the 'Russian-speaking' part of the population in Latvia as permanent resident Russians, Belorussians and Ukrainians, the non-citizens in these groups constituted in January 2004 19% of all residents in Latvia and 53% of resident Russian speakers. (Source: The Board of Citizenship and Migration Affairs in Latvia).

mechanisms for inclusion and to which extent the *political culture* of the majority group trust the newcomers.

In an *ethnocracy* only the indigenous majority is included in the polity and the national elites totally distrust and systematically exclude minorities from positions in the state by both formal and informal means. In an *ethnic democracy* citizenship requirements are less rigorous but attitudes to including the minority in the state after citizenship is granted remain deeply distrustful. Informal mechanisms of exclusion are widespread. An *ethno-liberal democracy*, I argue, is somewhat paradoxical and characterized by a strict threshold for the acquisition of citizenship; however, those who pass the 'naturalization' test are accepted and considered trustworthy to hold the highest positions in the state. The traditional *liberal democracy* is based on universalistic principles and a low threshold for including minorities is combined with a high level of trust in newcomers. This model applies to minorities and immigrants in most Western states.

While the early years of independence in Estonia and Latvia (until the mid-1990s) were characterized by ethnic rule, later another type of democracy seemed to prevail, which has much in common with what here is called *'ethno-liberal democracy'*. Here national elites make citizenship thresholds as restrictive as possible while at the same time are largely *accepting* as members of the political community those who managed to pass the test of 'naturalization'. In such a regime the citizenship requirements are still as strict, as in an 'ethnic democracy'. The indigenous elites therefore do not need to be concerned about the new citizens' political competence and loyalty to the state and will accept them as participants in the political system.

During a decade type of democracy changed rather dramatically. Immediately after independence it was important to achieve some degree of ethnic unity. Thus, the rhetoric of the nationalist leaders of the broad People's Fronts advocated equal political rights but exclusion from important state positions for Russian residents. Political arrangements during this short early period in many ways resembled an 'ethnic democracy'. Soon, however, nationalism soared and restrictive citizenship laws were introduced, making it practically impossible for Russian residents to attain

citizenship. This might thus be described as the 'ethnocracy' period. From the mid-1990s onwards EU and NATO membership came onto the agenda and in the course of the internationalization process Estonia and Latvia moved away from 'ethnocracy' and towards an 'ethno-liberal democracy'. This model has much in common with an 'ethno-pluralist' regime as described by Karklins (2000) who emphasizes the combination of transformation of political identities with the preservation of heterogeneity in culture and language. In Lithuania, meanwhile, the more favorable demographic situation led elites to move rapidly towards inclusive citizenship and liberal democracy. Obviously, demography, history and the minority status of the Baltic Russians have significant consequences for variations in nationality policies among the Baltic states.

Demography and democracy

Following large-scale immigration from the USSR after World War II the ethnic composition of the Baltic states changed dramatically. Even before the Soviet period the immigrant element had been quite visible, but the Russian-speaking minority was only one, albeit the largest, among several other minority groups. In Estonia the long-term shift in the demographic composition of the population was quite dramatic. In 1934 the titular nationality made up 88% of the population; by 1989 that proportion had decreased to 62% . Ten years later it had risen again to 65%. The demographic transformation in Latvia was similar. Whereas in 1935 77% of the population were from the titular nationality, this figure had decreased to 52% by the end of the Soviet period in 1989. Thereafter the percentage gradually rose again to 54% in 1993 and 56% in 1999. In Lithuania the indigenous proportion of the population has remained remarkably stable. The proportion of the population comprised by the titular nationality was the same in 1989 as it had been in 1923—80%--and in 1993, it had risen by just one percentage point to 81%. After World War II immigrants from the Russian republic soon became the dominant minority in Estonia and Latvia. They were joined by immigrants from other Russian-speaking republics, such as Ukraine and Belarus. In Lithuania, Russian-speaking residents

constituted only about 9% while the Polish minority formed about 10% of the population.

As Kolstø (1999) argues, ethnic structures in post-communist countries are important, since they put constraints on political action. However, demography as such does not determine the strategies and actions of the state elite. There exist few systematic investigations of the correlation between demography, the elites' ethnic policies and the type of democracy prevailing. The three Baltic states provide an excellent opportunity to test the demography thesis. Lithuania, with a much smaller non-indigenous group, adopted a liberal citizenship policy immediately after independence and, as shown in Steen (2000), the elite has a much less confrontational attitude to minorities than in Estonia and Latvia. Obviously, the demographic situation represents a fundamental context that defines the salience of ethnic issues. Accordingly, one may expect the Lithuanian elites to favor the inclusion of minorities in the political process much more than the elites in the other two countries.

It has been argued that in states with large minorities the feeling of struggling for political survival and preserving ethnic control is a main concern among indigenous people (Smooha and Hanf 1992, Butenschön 1993). The emergence of an ethnic type of democracy is thus a consequence of demographic proportions. Several authors argue that states with large ethnic minorities give rise to an ethno-centric political culture among the elites, and this has certainly been a crucial factor in shaping an exclusionary type of democracy in the Baltic states (Linz and Stepan 1996; Smith 1996). The fear among national elites that large minority groups would exert a strong influence on the nation-state building process immediately following independence arose from feelings of uncertainty about the survival of their own culture and led to the formation of ethno-centric democratic institutions.

The demographic structure in Latvia and Estonia, where two large groups perceive themselves as ethnically and culturally different, is not the same as what Horowitz (1985) calls 'centrally focused systems' where multiple ethnic cleavages produce groups opposing each other and competing for state power on equal terms. The pluralist approach argues that the preservation of distinct ethnic identities may encourage overall political integration through consensus making institutions.

Lijphart's (1977) 'consociational' type of democracy, based on equal rights and power sharing describes states with compromising politics embedded in legitimate political institutions, e.g. Switzerland. What characterizes Latvia and Estonia after independence is more the political domination of a non-indigenous minority by an indigenous majority with little political organization or mobilization by the minority group. Ethnicity is not, however, a major factor in explaining socio-economic differences among ethnic groups (Aasland and Fløtten 2001). May be because of rather equal rights in the social and economic spheres, there have been few instances of serious political confrontation. Paradoxically, while the absence of ethnic pluralism has distorted democratization lack of social and economic exclusion of the Russian minority may have mitigated the demand for political representation and thereby sustained rather peaceful ethnic relations in the Baltic states.

A comparison between Estonia and Latvia, with their large Russian-speaking minorities, and Lithuania, where that minority is rather small, offers an interesting opportunity to test how differences in perceived 'structural threat'--i.e. an 'unfavorable' ethnic demography--may influence the elites' orientations towards including the minority.

History and ethnicity

Democratization and ethnicity policies in the Baltic states cannot be understood without taking into consideration the post-war experience of Soviet occupation. Smith (1999) argues that post-Soviet indigenous elites initiated distinct types of national policies. The first was 'de-Sovietization', whereby the national elites removed people and institutions affiliated with the communist regime and potentially loyal to Russia. The second was a three-stage process of ethnic policy formation in which the indigenous elites attempted to 're-create' the titular national identity by 'essentialising', 'historicising' and 'totalising'.

Essentialising entailed separating and purifying certain traits that demarcate the indigenous group, such as language, while *historicising* involved re-inventing the past by focusing on both tragic events, such as deportations, and the glorious periods of the nation's political and cultural history. Lastly the elites *totalise* by using ethnic

markers as objective characteristics that divide the population into 'in-groups' and 'out-groups'. This type of nationality policy results from the elites' belief that a homogenous society is the best strategy for the nation-state.

Thus, the minority groups were given the option of migration, exclusion or assimilation. The pluralist option was ruled out. By the end of the 1990s, however, these nationality policies were increasingly coming under pressure from the international community. The elite's 'totalising' strategy could not be continued and was replaced by a strategy of gradual assimilation. The choice of strategy was closely connected to the status of the Russian-speaking population as a minority or immigrant group.

The Baltic-Russians – immigrants or minority?

Voluntary re-migration back to Russia appealed to very few, and exclusionary policies quickly came under attack from international institutions. As Pettai (2001) states, from 1997-98 onwards the Estonian and Latvian governments pursued a new ethnic policy, after experiencing the negative effects of exclusionary policies, and worked out comprehensive programs for 'integrating' Russian-speakers into society. As Pettai remarks, this was mainly a shift in the political discourse, whereby so-called 'illegal immigrants' (those who entered during the Soviet period) came to be regarded as 'long-term residents' but still as immigrants. The failure to define the Russians as a national minority continued to rule out a pluralist 'multinational partnership state' and 'assimilation', attainable only by passing restrictive naturalization barriers, became the only option to join the political community. Lithuania, with its relatively small group of non-indigenous persons, avoided this dilemma and chose an inclusive citizenship strategy from the beginning.

As Kymlicka (2001:78) remarks, the nationalist Estonian and Latvian elites have 'grudgingly accepted' more liberal citizenship laws but remain unwilling to acknowledge the Russians as a national minority, hoping that the Russians will come to see themselves as immigrants and become assimilated into Latvian or Estonian society. This coincides with Laitin (1998)'s characterization of the Baltics as national

unitary states taking precedence over the multi-nation federal state based in territorial autonomy. The federal option simply could not be combined with the nation-building project.

Once these states adopt assimilation policies and gradually accept the Russian-speaking community as citizens, does the label 'ethnic democracy' remain valid? Smith (1999:80) defines an ethnic democracy as a state where 'the titular nation has secured an institutionally superior position and status for itself – in the political legislature, education, the law courts and in public administration – in part by successfully depriving the Russian settler communities of particular rights and through state language policies'. As Kymlicka (2001) argues, even if the Russians learn the titular language, express loyalty to the state and are permitted some cultural autonomy, the long-term effects for state integration may be serious if they are not allowed access to state institutions and accepted as equals in decision-making processes. The Baltic leaders would argue, as shown later, that Russian minorities are not deprived of political rights but may have opportunities and careers in politics and the state administration on condition that they are assimilated and become an integral part of the state body. This is the type of state I described as an 'ethno-liberal democracy', where minorities are accepted as equals on the condition that they are 'naturalized' i.e. socialized into the national political norms, and become trustworthy members of the new nation-state. Consequently, these states will be unwilling to support pluralist political institutions, such as ethnic quota systems in politics, administration and education, seeing them as conducive to sustaining dual political identities and casting doubt on the minority's loyalty to the state. Thus, the main instruments of the assimilation strategy were restrictive citizenship laws and also little state involvement to support schools with Russian as the language of instruction.

The political culture of integrating minorities

What, then, is the political basis for the assimilation strategy? According to Smith's (1996) 'ethnic democracy' thesis, the national elites deeply distrust the Russian minority and want to exclude them from the political process and state positions. Such attitudes are hardly compatible with an assimilation strategy. However, assimilation policies are consistent with the 'ethno-liberal type' of democracy. Thus, one will expect attitudes to Russians to be skeptical but at the same time to entrust that 'naturalization' will have positive effects when it comes to adopting national norms. In the following I first look at elites' fears, asking whether elites perceive Russian culture as a threat to the national culture and whether they regard Russo-phones as loyal to the nation-state. Then, the question is to find out the extent to which elites want to include the minority by granting citizenship to permanent residents and allowing these people to hold leading positions.

A threatening Russian culture?

The Soviet Union was in many respects a multi-cultural state, and state policies at least to some extent encouraged cultural diversification. On the other hand, the Russian language had a dominant position and the Russian cultural influence was strong. Many feared that what they called the 'Russification process' would over time extinguish the national sub-cultures in the republics. This fear of subjugation of the national language and culture was a major driving force behind the Baltic independence movement at the end of the 1980s and today some Baltic nationalists still argue that Russian culture is a threat to their national culture and language. However, as Table 1 shows, a large majority of the survey respondents disagreed with this perception.

Table 1: Russian culture as a threat. 2000 and 2003. Percent.

	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	D/K N/A	N= 100 %
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*		
Estonia						
2000	1	4	60	35	0	281
2003	3	8	55	33	1	271
Latvia						
2000	2	6	67	24	0	285
2003	0	5	71	24	0	280
Lithuania						
2000	1	7	61	27	3	315

Statement: 'Russian culture is a threat to the national culture of this country'.

More than 90% of the elites in each of the Baltic states more or less disagree that Russian culture is a danger. Obviously, the elites do not fear Russian culture any longer and the fact that such a large majority of elites hold this opinion is rather surprising given the political rhetoric often used about the risk of losing national identity owing to the large share of Russian-speakers. Furthermore, there are only negligible differences between the countries and these tolerant attitudes are stable.

One explanation for this finding may be that Russian culture is now regarded as weak and as overshadowed by the dominant national culture now that this has been successfully established. Many Russophones complain that Russian-speaking schools do not get enough resources from the state and that this is undermining equal treatment of the two cultures. This may very well be the case and is not advantageous to cultural pluralism. However, given that a large proportion of the population speak Russian and hold a Russian identity, these widespread attitudes are more likely to bring about elite acceptance of cultural pluralism, whereby indigenous and other cultures are allowed to exist side by side, although not as equals. If the Baltic elites

do not regard Russian culture as a threat, this removes a main argument from the nationalists' political rhetoric. The data indicate that Baltic leaders are not negatively disposed to some form of multicultural society. However, practice has shown that they are not willing to actively support an education system based on linguistic diversity.

Actually, the self-confidence in the robustness of their indigenous culture expressed by the elites indicates that language legislation is a vital aspect of successful nation-building. As Järve (2002) argues, the Baltic language laws combine a goal of 'ethnic containment', in which other ethnic groups are systematically disadvantaged, with a rationale of managing linguistic diversity. While ethnic containment was prominent in the first phase of nation-building, safeguarding state control by the titular nationality, the pressure from internationalization has made linguistic pluralism in schools and in the administration a primary issue. Bilingualism in schools has been accepted in practice— from 2004 on, 60% of the subjects in Latvian secondary schools are taught in Latvian and 40% in Russian (Council of Europe 2004). This would probably not have been accepted, even by the most liberal elites, if the initial period after independence had not seen the successful establishment of only one official state language.

State loyalty

The integration of minority groups into any state must be based on a certain level of loyalty to the state authorities. After independence the indigenous population questioned the loyalty of the Russians living in the Baltic states and many feared that under certain conditions they would operate as 'fifth columnists' under the influence of Russia. Brubacker (1996) argues that a certain type of relationship, a 'triadic nexus', exists between the minority group, the new nation-state and the external national homeland, inherent in 'diasporic politics'. If the core nation is perceived as politically and culturally weak, the national leadership has to compensate for the colonial past and for the support to the diaspora community given by the external homeland, Russia. Thus, exclusionary nationalist policies instigated a sense of

responsibility among external homeland elites for monitoring the political and social rights of Russians in the near abroad. In turn, such activities may be seen as threatening by the national elites, leading to deterioration in the relationship with the minority group[4].

One important question is how this 'triad connection' has influenced the national elites' image of the Russian minority. If fear of Russian domination is widespread one would expect national elites to be skeptical about the loyalty of Russians. As shown below, there is still some way to go before elites fully trust the Russian minority but the percentage of trustful elites is higher than expected, especially in Estonia.

Table 2: Baltic-Russians' loyalty to the state. 2000 and 2003. Percent.

	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	D/K N/A	N= 100 %
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*		
Estonia						
2000	4	52	41	2	2	281
2003	4	42	47	4	2	271
Latvia						
2000	2	19	68	8	3	285
2003	2	25	62	6	6	280
Lithuania						
2000	5	53	35	1	6	315

Statement: "Russians who live in this country are fully loyal to our state"

In Estonia and Lithuania a considerable proportion, 46% - 58% percent, agree that Russians are loyal, while in Latvia the proportion is only 21% - 27%. Here about

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[4] One should note that the Russian authorities were also criticized by international organizations. This was probably quite an effective strategy and made Baltic elites feel less provoked and more co-operative, although they often complained that

two-thirds are skeptical. The attitudes of the Latvian elites correspond with other studies indicating that the general level of trust is lower in Latvia, not only in Russians but in institutions and other leaders as well, than in other Baltic countries (Steen 1997). Another explanation is that the higher proportion of Russian-speakers living in Latvia makes the national elites here more negatively disposed towards them; however, over time these suspicious attitudes have been somewhat reduced. Demographic differences cannot account for the fact that Estonian leaders are considerably more trustful than the Latvians. The relatively high proportion of Lithuanian leaders with little trust in Russians illustrates that experiences under the Soviet occupation may be as important as the demographic composition of the population.

Citizenship rights, how liberal?

The crucial test for including the minority groups into the polity is to allow universal participation in national elections by granting citizenship. In Lithuania all residents were given the opportunity to choose Lithuanian citizenship in 1991, while in Estonia and Latvia the national elites were restrictive and liberalized the citizenship laws only reluctantly and only to a certain extent. Table 3 shows the elites' attitudes to granting citizenship to all permanent residents.

Moscow was behind [behind what?].

Table 3: Granting citizenship rights. 2000 and 2003. Percent.

	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	D/K N/A	N= 100 %
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*		
Estonia						
2000	13	22	45	20	2	281
2003	12	26	43	19	1	271
Latvia						
2000	8	15	60	17	0	285
2003	9	17	54	19	1	280
Lithuania						
2000	51	35	11	1	2	315

Statement: "All permanent residents of this country must have full citizenship rights"

A large majority of the Lithuanian elites agree on this issue (86%). They have nothing to fear, owing to the small size of the minority. And, also as expected, the leaders of the two other Baltic states express substantial opposition. Only 35% - 38% of the Estonian leaders would grant citizenship to all permanent residents and as few as 23% of Latvian leaders, increasing to 26% in 2003. Thus, the elites' political culture constitutes a massive hindrance to the liberalization of citizenship rights in these countries.

Comparing the three countries reveals a pattern that coincides with differences in the demographic structure. The Estonian elites seem to trust Russians to some extent (see Table 2) but they are not willing to include them in the polity. The Latvian leaders adopt the most cautious position: about three-quarters both distrust the Russians and want to bar them from becoming full members of the political community. And, in Lithuania equal political rights are not seen as a peril to the national interest.

The two thresholds of integration: from naturalization to inclusion

Having granted full citizenship rights, the next step towards political integration is to allow minorities to enter and make careers in government institutions previously dominated by members of the titular nationality. Achieving citizenship rights through naturalization is a necessary step but it is not sufficient to integrate minorities into the state. A crucial question is to what extent minorities have access on a par with that of indigenous groups to positions of power in the state. As Kymlicka (2001:78) argues, referring to Laitin (1998), a main concern about Baltic Russians is that even if they learn the titular language and declare loyalty to the state 'they still are not accepted or welcomed in public institutions'. According to this view, the legacy of the Soviet occupation and the indigenous people's inclination to define group membership in terms of ethnicity is prohibitive to Russian-speakers' entering leading positions in the state.

So far, few people from the Russian community have attained leading positions in politics and in the state machinery, although they often have prominent positions in private business companies. Passivity and the socio-economic background of Russian-speakers, manifest, for example, in lower levels of education, is one explanation; discrimination is another. From the indigenous perspective, suspiciousness, traditional national sentiments and fear of competition for higher positions will make national elites reluctant to recruit Baltic-Russian citizens for leading positions.

Since independence, an increasing proportion of the Russian-speaking population has acquired citizenship. Gradually more and more people have been motivated to pass the formal thresholds, such as language requirements and declare an oath of loyalty to the state. The younger generation, in particular, is keener to learn the national language and get citizenship in order to be able to compete on the labor market. One crucial aspect of an inclusive type of democracy is the extent to which national elites allow 'naturalized' Baltic Russians to obtain positions in political bodies or to advance to the highest ranks of government and public administration. The logic of fear of ethnic domination would predict skeptical attitudes.

Alternatively, if the 'naturalization' process is regarded by the elite as an instrument of *genuine* socialization into the national identity and indisputable state loyalty there should be no reason for alarm. Accordingly, when naturalization has been successful in terms of passing the requirements for citizenship, including learning the national language, one may expect elite attitudes not to present a hindrance to the minority's achieving leading positions in the state. That is what the following table actually reveals.

Table 4: Attitudes to allowing naturalized Baltic-Russians to obtain leading positions in the central administration. 2000 and 2003. Percent.

	Very much in favor	Some-what in favor	Some-what against	Very much against	D/K N/A	N= 100 %
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*		
Estonia						
2000	15	53	29	4	0	281
2003	15	57	24	4	1	271
Latvia						
2000	53	36	10	0	2	285
2003	58	34	7	0	1	280
Lithuania						
2000	32	43	20	3	1	315

Statement: "It has been discussed whether Russians who are citizens of this country and speak the national language should have high positions in our state and society: What is your attitude to having Russians who are citizens as leaders of the central administration in this country?"

According to the nationalist logic of fearing the undermining of indigenous domination, the pattern of attitudes presented in Table 4 yields an unanticipated picture. The Baltic elites are in general clearly positive to upward mobility for Baltic Russians. It is a radical change of attitude among national elites once minorities have passed the citizenship threshold: the elites suddenly accept them as equals. Why? One

may argue that the restrictive 'naturalization process' involving rigorous language tests, loyalty declarations etc. may reassure indigenous elites and engender a belief that comprehensive socialization has had profound effects and created a solid allegiance and devotion to the new state. The citizenship institution seems to be of major importance as a *political 'screening mechanism'* for certifying the 'national quality' of the minority and as a guarantee to the elites of the trustworthiness of the new citizens. The percentages in favor of allowing Russians to hold leading positions are very substantial and the trend is the same in all three countries. The same pattern also extends to political bodies, private business, local government and NGOs. As one would expect, the elites are most positive about accepting Russian-speakers in leading positions in business companies and NGO's.

This liberal attitude to inclusiveness and social mobility for the 'naturalized' minority does not contradict the national elites' resistance to granting automatic citizenship, shown in Table 4. It is fully rational for the elites to want to keep the non-qualified Russians outside the political-administrative system and at the same time set prerequisites for citizenship that are sufficiently strict to make the elites feel confident that those who manage to fulfill them have been sufficiently 'naturalized' to be regarded as equals. Only a smaller proportion is against including naturalized Russians in the state leadership and very few respondents said they were 'very much against'. Obviously, Kymlicka's (2001) non-welcome thesis for Baltic-Russian citizens has to be qualified to 'much welcome under certain conditions'.

Although all the Baltic elites answered this question positively there are some differences of enthusiasm among the countries. The Estonian elites are the least positive, the Latvians the most positive and the Lithuanians in-between. If a high proportion of Russophones among the population represents a threat to the interests of the titular nationality, one would have expected Latvians and Estonians to be the most critical and Lithuania, with its small non-indigenous population and inclusive citizenship policy, most approving. This is even more surprising when one compares these data with the previous tables showing that Latvian elites are most skeptical about the loyalty of Baltic-Russians and about granting them citizenship. However, if one takes into account the 'two threshold' argument, the apparent inconsistency

between wanting both *to exclude and to include* Baltic Russians makes sense. Barring many Russian-speakers from citizenship by erecting barely surmountable thresholds is fully consistent with the elite's strategy for safeguarding the nation-state by means of assimilating into leading positions only those who have sufficiently internalized national qualifications to pass the citizenship test.

Following the Baltic states' applications for membership of the EU and NATO, the formal qualifications for citizenship for the Russian minority groups became a major issue of negotiation. While the national elites and the indigenous part of the population wanted to keep the barriers to attaining citizenship as high as possible, the international community was urging liberalization. In the next section I show how the legal barriers for inclusion gradually became less rigorous as a result of the internationalization process.

National legislation and international 'conditionalities'

International organizations had active relations with the Baltic states during the 1990s though in different fields: the EU on political and economic issues, NATO on security matters and the OSCE and the Council of Europe on human rights in general and citizenship rights in particular. The effects of these international regimes on the national citizenship and language laws are not straightforward to assess. Although the Baltic state authorities were clearly responsible for the final outcome it is difficult to evaluate whether their actions represent a carrying out of recommendations issued by an international body e.g. as a direct result of criticism by the High Commissioner on National Minorities, are the consequences of negotiations and compromises or whether the changes would have come about anyway as a result of internal develops without international interference.

Kelley (2003), investigating how external actors have influenced ethnic policy making in the Baltic states, argues that Brubakers (1996) 'triangle' linking the nationalizing state, the ethnic minority and the minority's ethnic 'homeland' as causes of restrictive nationalizing policies, fails to take account of the role of international organizations. While not excluding domestic factors, Kelley argues that

external actors have been of particular importance for policy-making related to ethnic issues in Estonia and Latvia. As a result of the 'conditionalities' set for membership by international organizations it was possible for the Baltic governments to overcome the radical nationalist domestic opposition to liberalizing the laws.

Morris (2004) underlines more the importance of domestic political constellations for national legislation. The minority government's dependence on nationalist parties in the parliament and a reluctant state bureaucracy dominated by nationalists, are according to this author the main explanations for the slow pace of Latvia's adjustments of its citizenship law. The Latvian President, although formally politically weak, played a crucial intermediary role between the nationalist forces, the government and increasing international pressure. After the EU rejection of Latvia from the first round of admission talks it became clear around 1999 that the costs of a very restrictive citizenship law was denial of access to EU membership negotiations. As Morris (2004) admits, the partial liberalization of nationality policy would not have occurred without active pressure from outside. When confronted with international pressures combining 'soft' human right dialogue and 'hard' conditions for membership in EU extreme nationalist forces were marginalized and the more moderate often were compelled to make strategic compromises to meet the conditionality requirements (Kelley 2003). Also NATO membership became directly connected to democratic requirements. The US ambassador to NATO expressed that aspiring members, including the Baltic states, have to face two tests. 'Will they strengthen the alliance? And can we be assured that each new country is fundamentally committed to democracy and will achieve political stability?' (Financial Times April 10th 2002).

Then, how comprehensive were the changes in national citizenship- and language policies in the international context over the past decade, and how did the elite perceive the impact of international organizations on the legislation?

Amending the citizenship and language laws

Estonia

1991: In November the Estonian Supreme Council (the Republican Parliament elected under Soviet law) renews the Citizenship Law passed in 1938, during the previous period of independence. The provisions of this law exclude those who immigrated during the Soviet period and their descendants from citizenship. About half a million permanent residents or one-third of the population are affected. The majority of these people was either born in the country or has been living there for decades.

1992: The Estonian Constitution of 1992 grants voting rights in local elections to permanent residents who are not citizens. However, the election law adopted in May 1993 prohibits non-citizens from running for office in local elections and stipulates that candidates for the office of mayor must be fluent in Estonian.

1992: A new citizenship law is passed. Those who immigrated during the Soviet period are not automatically granted citizenship on the grounds that the Soviet occupation was illegal. The law requires non-citizens to pass an examination in the Estonian language; those who fail to pass this examination must establish ten years of 'legal' residence before applying again for citizenship.

1993: The Law on Aliens, requiring non-citizens to apply for temporary or permanent residence permits or 'face deportation' (Laitin 1998:94), is passed in July. Many observers interpreted these strict regulations as a clear signal that the indigenous Estonians want the Russians 'to leave rather than integrate' (ibid. p. 7).The law provokes major protests from the Russian community and also proves to be complicated to administer.

1995: A revised citizenship law is passed in January. Additional examinations are added to the naturalization procedure. The Law on Language is also passed.

1998: After international pressure The Citizenship Law is liberalized and allows children of non-citizens born after February 26, 1992, to apply for citizenship without first taking a language examination.

1998: Amendments to the language law, passed in December, demand parliamentary deputies and representatives in local government to be proficient in Estonian. The law requires the same level of linguistic skill for persons dealing with the public as those working in private businesses or non-governmental organizations. The law prohibits the use of other languages and makes Estonian obligatory on public signs, advertisements and notices, including election posters.

The amendment was seriously criticized by Moscow and the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and arouses major objections by the Estonian Russian community and Russian political parties in Estonia (Clemens 2001:121). Subsequently the language tests are divided into different levels: beginners, intermediate and advanced, and examination fees are reduced.

Latvia

1991: In October after independence the Latvian Supreme Council (the parliament elected at the end of the Soviet period) grants citizenship to all who were citizens of pre-World War II Latvia and their descendants, regardless of ethnicity. As a result two-thirds of the population became citizens and one-third remained non-citizen residents of Latvia. Since the Supreme Council had been elected in 1990, before independence and under Soviet law, the stormy debate on citizenship resumes after the election of the new parliament (the Saeima) in summer 1993.

1994: The new citizenship law proposed in June recommends introducing a system of annual quotas for naturalization. The quotas are to be fixed by the Cabinet 'based on the demographic and economic situation of the state, and geared toward the implementation of Latvia as a national, one community state' (Latvijas vestnesis 30.11.1993, quoted from Antane and Tsilevich 1999).

During its preliminary stages the law was strongly objected to by the Council of Europe and the Council for Security and Co-operation in Europe, CSCE, (later OSCE). Various elements of the law were changed but the quota system was largely preserved. Latvia ran the risk of being denied membership in the Council of Europe if the law was passed in its original form. The Latvian president used the constitutional

right to intervene, rejected the law and passed it back to parliament, which in the final amendment replaced the arbitrary 'quota system' with a 'time-table' or 'window' system based on age cohorts.

The amended law, the Law on Naturalization, was passed by parliament in July. 'The window system' established that specific age groups could apply for citizenship after a certain period of time has elapsed. Since the system began with the youngest cohorts, the older ones were excluded for years from applying. Applicants from all age groups were required to fulfill the same conditions: five years of residence, command of the Latvian language, familiarity with the basic principles of the Latvian Constitution and the Constitutional law, knowledge of the text of the national anthem and of basic Latvian history.

1998: The Law on Naturalization became the target of heavy international criticism, especially from the OSCE and the High Commissioner on National Minorities, who urged the Latvian government to liberalize citizenship requirements. The government soon responded by passing an amended law in June that made naturalization easier and proposed abolishing the rigid 'window system' and granting citizenship to the children of non-citizens born after 1991. The proposal, however, arouse major protests from the nationalist political parties in Latvia, For Fatherland and Freedom and the Latvian National Independence Party. They collected signatures from more than 10% of the electorate and demanded a referendum on the issue in line with the Constitution. The nationalists lost by a small margin: 52% of the voters reject preserving the 'window system', not least due to support from Russo-phones who have already become citizens.

1999: The Language Law was revised and finally adopted in July, concluding discussions of the draft version that began already in 1995. The revised law prohibits use of the Russian language in the public sphere and even in private business. All documents submitted to government agencies must be in Latvian and discussions during private business meetings must be translated into Latvian if one of the participants requests this.

Once again, warnings were issued from the Council of Europe and the EU. Latvia's president refused to sign the law, arguing that Latvia has no choice but to

accept international criteria if Latvia wants to stay on the list of accession countries. Some provisions of the language law are softened and in December the president signs the law. The OSCE and the EU accept that the amended law is in line with international standards but officials in Moscow say the law is still 'unacceptable' (Clemens 2001:124).

In September 2000 the new State Language Law comes into force. Its main purpose is to strengthen the position of the Latvian language following the Russification process during the Soviet occupation. Russian is not referred to explicitly, but only implicitly as 'a foreign language' on a par with any other language. The nationalist parties succeeded in their urgent issue 'to ensure the language and education laws are strict enough to protect the interests of the Latvian nation' (Morris 2004:561).

In summary, the process leading up to the amendment of the citizenship and language laws in Estonia and Latvia may be characterized in three main points. First, the processes were highly confrontational, with radical and moderate nationals, Moscow officials and representatives of international organizations all taking up different positions. Second, representatives from international bodies were successful in persuading the Estonian and Latvian governments to make the citizenship laws more moderate, although they did not succeed in bringing about a radical change in the restrictive citizenship policy. The changes were directly connected to the EU and NATO-memberships. The salience of such 'hard conditionalites' is demonstrated with the language law in Latvia where the government finally decided to consider amending the law on the day before the EU would decide if Latvia would be in the first or second row of accessioning countries (Kelley 2003). The Latvian Prime Minister also assured that the law would be amended before the vital NATO summit meeting in Prague in November 2000 (RFE/RL Newsline, 27 February 2000)Third, the nationalists' partial retreat on the citizenship issue in the two countries seems to have been compensated for by more exclusionary measures in the language sector. As the chronology shows, after the passage of the amended citizenship laws, the nationalists, despite considerable international criticism, succeeded in reinforcing

nationality policies through the language laws. In Latvia, the nationalists 'saw the language laws as a way to balance the leniency' of the amendments of the law related to citizenship for stateless children (Kelley 2003:48).

The impact of international organizations

The effects of international regimes on national policies are not only a matter of changes in formal laws. Formalities are interpreted and reconstructed in people's minds. One may assume that people close to the public debate and political processes, like the elites included in this study, are well informed about these policy issues and the role of international organizations and have balanced opinions about their effects on the citizenship and language issues. The following tables show how national elites perceive the consequences of the activities of the EU, NATO, OSCE and CE at the end of the accession process[5].

Table 5: Estonia: impact of international organizations on the citizenship and language issues. 2003. Percent.

	Consider-able	Some	Minor	None at all	D/K N/A	N=100%
EU	39	42	15	2	2	271
NATO	23	29	31	14	3	271
OSCE	12	49	27	9	3	271
CE	11	38	34	10	7	271

Table 6: Latvia: impact of international organizations on the citizenship and language issues. 2003. Percent.

	Consider-able	Some	Minor	None at all	D/K N/A	N=100%
EU	20	51	21	3	4	280
NATO	15	30	34	16	5	280
OSCE	15	42	29	9	5	280
CE	9	53	29	5	4	280

Latvian leaders clearly believe that the EU has influenced the democratization process. As many as 71% said that the EU was exerting a considerable or some influence on citizenship and language issues. Obviously, the OSCE has also been an important actor in the democratization process, and 57% perceive this impact as significant. This organization had a high profile in the Baltics for most of the 1990s, with official representatives present at the local level during this period. The European Council's activities are evaluated as quite high, with 62% agreeing. NATO's impact is also substantial, with 45% agreeing about its importance, but here a higher percentage of respondents rates the impact as negligible. If one uses the elite's responses as mirroring the effectiveness of international organizations in advocating human rights, the picture looks quite impressive.

These findings are consistent with other observations of international influence on national citizenship policies. According to Gelazis (2003), the 'EU has more than any other international organization made a clear impact on raising the standards of human rights in the Baltic states' (p. 46), while the OSCE and the Council of Europe, although criticizing the minority policies of the Baltic states, have had less effect. The European Commission was active and issued specific proposals for improvements in human rights and also transferred substantial economic resources for 'institution building', e. g. support for language training programs. Both the 'stick' of being disqualified from the first round of accession negotiations and the 'carrot' of

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[5] Question: 'In recent years international organizations like the OSCE, Council of Europe, the EU and NATO have paid much attention to citizenship and language issues. What is your general impression of the importance of these organizations for resolving these issues in Estonia/Latvia?'

extensive aid prompted the Baltic countries to introduce reforms[6]. Yet the Commission did not impose the toughest citizenship requirements on these accession candidates, but simply urged them, for example, to sign the European Convention on Nationality, which obliged the signatories to introduce basic rights for long-term residents[7].

This is in accord with Checkel (2000) who underlines that the EU may be characterized as a 'strict conditionality regime', having a considerable impact, while the Council of Europe took a 'softer approach', which was less successful in Eastern Europe. According to Checkel, combining clear conditions related to economic and security benefits with dialogue and persuasion may have been the most effective approach. Demanding compliance with both 'hard' and 'soft' political standards naturally presupposes some degree of trust and participation in international structures. The next sections pose the questions of how integrated the Baltic elites are in international organizations. To which extent did the elite's participation in international meetings and their membership preferences had a bearing on attitudes to the democratization of ethnic rights. Did positive European orientations and taking part in the internationalization process change nationalist attitudes? However, before answering this question it is important to establish what the elites' attitudes to international integration are and in what ways they relate to the international arena.

The internationalization of national elites

The EU enlargement process is an illuminating example of how new institutions may affect national political cultures and institutions and the long-term prospects for federalization. The national elites' wish to join international bodies, their trust in these bodies and their attitudes to accommodating national ethnic differences are major indicators for understanding the viability and prospects for post-national, federation-like institutions, such as the EU.

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[6] Economic assistance was provided through the EU's PHARE program. The reform requirements included not only citizenship rights but a broad spectrum of human rights.

[7] As Gelazis (2003) argues, the reason for the Commission's restraint may have been that a tougher stance would have set a precedent, potentially putting pressure on EU states with large immigrant communities like Germany to follow suit.

The primary motive for elites in emerging nation-states applying for membership in international organizations, particularly when these states have recently been dominated by foreign powers, will be military protection but also the material benefits these international organizations can provide. At the same time, one may assume that national elites will not automatically are willing to accept democratic standards, such as including minorities in the political process, that may endanger indigenous control over the nation-state.

One major question is to what extent the elites' *trust* in international organizations, their wish for their countries to be *integrated* in international structures and their level of *participation* in EU and NATO bodies will have an impact on their nationalist attitudes. As will be discussed later, the elites' propensity to embrace international institutions may not necessarily lead to more democratic attitudes. Rather, integration in international structures seem to be motivated more by national security and material interests than by a desire to adopt certain Western values.

Before analyzing how the Baltic elites' attitudes to incorporating minorities into the political process are conditioned by the international context, it is essential to know how positively disposed they are towards international organizations, which is illustrated in the following table.

Table 7: Confidence, desire for membership and participation in the EU and NATO. 2000 and 2003. Percent.

	Having much confidence in 1)		Want their country to join 2)		Meetings with 3)	
	EU	*NATO*	*EU*	*NATO*	*EU*	*NATO*
Estonia						
2000	80	90	86	88	41	7
2003	92	88	93	94	41	5
Latvia						

Certainly if such a standard were made part of EU law, cases could easily be brought before the European Court of Justice with compulsory consequences for a state's policy.

2000	80	88	87	88	35	6
2003	85	79	90	85	39	6
Lithuania						
2000	84	78	90	85	18	6

1) Question: 'Please indicate how much confidence you have in the following international organizations on a scale from 1 to 4. 1 (a great deal), 2 (quite a lot), 3 (not very much), 4 (not at all). In the table 1 and 2 are merged. Response rate 97-99%.

2) Question: 'What is your attitude to Estonia/Latvia/Lithuania becoming a member of the EU/ NATO'. Scale from 1 to 4. 1 (very much in favor), 2 (somewhat in favor), 3 (somewhat against), 4 (very much against). In the table 1 and 2 are merged. Response rate 98-100%.

3) Question: 'How often do you normally travel abroad during a year in connection with your present professional work and what kind of activity is the purpose of your travel?' Possible answers: Taking part in EU/NATO-meetings related to politics or public administration a) once a month or more often; b) several times a year; c) once a year or more seldom; d) never. The table reports the percentage taking part in EU and NATO meetings monthly or several times a year. Response rate 96-100%.

Confidence

'Confidence' is a rather vague concept and one may ask what it really measures. Confidence has to do with 'attitudinal support', but support may be of various kinds--'diffuse support' for an institution as such or 'specific support' for institutional outputs and results. Various studies of post-communist countries have focused on mass public confidence in national institutions, like parliament, the government and the police (see, for example, Rose et. al. 1998), while a few studies have concentrated on the attitudes of the elites (see, for example, Steen 1997, 2003). Large-scale investigations of elite attitudes to *international* institutions are rare, despite the fact that a main feature of international relations is played out at the elite level.

The Baltic leaderships generally express a high level of confidence in the EU and NATO. However, while the EU is regarded with some reservations by some of the elites, confidence in NATO is very substantial. The Estonian and Latvian elites are, as expected, more positive than the Lithuanians, and NATO, in particular, seems to attract the leaders of these two countries. The reason for these national differences is rather obvious. The larger Russophone populations and harsher experiences during

the Soviet occupation in Estonia and Latvia have caused their elites to orient themselves more towards international organizations and in particular towards a security organization like NATO. In Latvia support for EU membership has remained rather stable since 2000, but enthusiasm for NATO has waned a little. The Estonian leaders are most keen for their country to become a member of NATO.

Membership

Only a decade after independence and against a background of very active state-building and a sharp rise in nationalist feelings, it is not self-evident that elites will be willing to submit national control to a new type of federation. While the EU is a political and economic body with supra-national institutions, whose main objectives are democracy and economic growth, NATO is a security organization based on a pact that ensures military assistance if one of the member-countries is attacked. The motives for membership in these organizations may therefore be different. One may argue that because of the history of Soviet occupation the Baltic leadership will be particularly concerned with national security and therefore more positively disposed to NATO membership than EU membership. Although the EU may provide substantial economic benefits, it also implies a considerable renunciation of national sovereignty.

A substantial majority, more than 85% of the elites in all the Baltic states, support EU and NATO membership. In all three countries the proportion 'very much in favor' is higher for NATO membership than for EU membership. This difference is especially large for Estonia in 2000: while 37% are very much in favor of EU membership, as many as 53% are very much in favor of NATO membership. In 2003 these proportions had increased to 62% and 63% respectively. Obviously, the EU negotiations had a positive effect on the elites' attitudes to membership. In Latvia the change is more moderate.

Thus the Baltic leaders share an almost unanimous aspiration to be integrated in the EU and NATO. Further, security seems to count more than economics. The harsh Soviet past and the Baltics' geo-political situation as neighbors of Russia

provide the main context for explaining the elites' propensity to underscore national security.

Meetings in international bodies

The extent to which Baltic leaders have been 'internationalized' and socialized into democratic thinking may be related to positive attitudes to international organizations, but the most important mechanism would be participation in meetings with EU and NATO representatives. According to Risse and Sikkink (1999), the national elites' international activities may be a mechanism for the socialization of ideas and transfer of democratic values. Such meetings may be of a political, administrative or more technical character.

A considerable share of the elite in the three countries has been active in the EU structures, but there are major differences between the countries. The Estonian elite have been the most energetic, with more than 40% having contact with the EU several times a month, once a month or several times a year. Among the Latvian elite 35% in 2000 and 39% in 2003 were active, while only 18% of the Lithuanian elite report such contacts.

The differences tally well with the speed of accession and how these countries have adapted to EU measures and standards as preconditions for membership. Estonia's rapid acquisition of EU regulation and economic reforms put this country in the first wave of applicant countries. Latvia was among the 'second wave' countries together with Lithuania, which was among the most hesitant East European countries to start negotiations. Obviously, the momentum of integration affected the frequency of political and administrative elite contacts. It is interesting to observe that owing to the accelerating EU accession process in Latvia, leading officials' contacts with the EU had increased in 2003.

Only NATO membership can provide vital security for the Baltic states. NATO membership primarily raises the issue of defense capacity and involves an obligation to keep a minimum level of military forces. But NATO membership negotiations also dealt with 'security' in a broader sense, including conditions for democratic rule and the settlement of border disputes with Russia. As expected, the

narrower issue of security involves fewer international contacts than the broad range of issues arising in connection with EU membership. In all three countries 5%-7% of the elite were active, with several meetings a year, while about 10% report contacts with NATO once a year or more seldom.

In summary, quite a broad segment of Baltic leaders were active in preparing for EU membership, which became a reality in May 2004, while a smaller group vigorously pushed for NATO membership, which was realized in March 2004, twelve and a half years after splitting from the Soviet Union. However, did the aspiration and successful joining in these international organizations really instigate national compliance with democratic ideals?

Internationalization and nationalism

The acceptance and implementation of human-rights standards is a universal challenge that is always conditioned by local political culture. Addressing the issue of human rights in the African context, Ibhawoh (2000) asserts that the challenge is to understand under what conditions political culture adapts to or distorts human-rights norms. What happens to national democratic practice when international standards are implemented through a political culture dominated by negative elite attitudes to certain human-rights standards?

Writing in the mid-1990s, Linz and Stepan characterized the Latvian and Estonian elites as advocates of 'ethnic democracies' and they advanced the theory that international pressure from the EU might contribute to a more inclusive type of democracy (Linz and Stepan 1996). One main example of such pressure is the activities of the High Commissioner on National Minorities[8] van der Stoel, who maintained in a letter to the Latvian foreign minister in 1993 that:

> '...within the community of CSCE states, the solution of the citizenship
>
> issues is seen as being closely connected with democratic principles. If

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[8] The High Commissioner on National Minorities operates under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and addresses minority issues as problems of peace and security. Van der Stoel had a permanent office in Estonia and Latvia during the 1990s. The main normative documents of the OSCE regarding minorities

the overwhelming majority of non-Latvians in your country are denied the right to become citizens, and consequently the right to be involved in key decisions concerning their own interests, the character of the democratic system in Latvia might even be put into question. In this connection I refer to the 1990 CSCE Copenhagen Document which states that the basis of the authority and legitimacy of all governments is the will of the people'.[9]

In Estonia and Latvia, the states with the largest groups of Russian residents, the elites' initial strategy in the early 1990s was to return Russian-speaking non-citizens back to Russia. Later, owing to international pressure, their policies gradually became less restrictive. In their bid to become members of the EU and NATO, the Baltic elites were confronted with the fact that they would have to accept certain democratic standards, including more liberal citizenship requirements. Membership negotiations led to quite extensive international contacts, raising the question of the extent to which the elite's restrictive attitude towards the citizenship issue was moderated by their international activities.

These issues are directly related to how the international community may influence democratic development in multi-ethnic states through the national elites. The national elites are the main intermediaries between the nation-state and the international community and their attitudes to ethnic minorities are crucial for how international norms are implemented at the national level. Loyalty to overarching bodies not only presupposes certain national institutions but more basically a political culture that nurtures specific policies. One main problem is that a commitment to universal human-rights norms poses a basic *security dilemma* for newly independent states with large minorities who immigrated mainly during the occupation by the neighboring power, Russia. The task, as formulated by Brubaker (1996: 23-54), is to ask how such states aspiring to membership in super-national institutions based on the principle of universal participation respond to the norm of 'overarching identity' while also striving to protect their national 'sub-unit identity'.

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are the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, and The Copenhagen Document of 1990, which states that 'questions relating to national minorities can only be satisfactory resolved in a democratic political framework based on the rule of law' (Chapter IV).

International conditionalities

What happens to the political culture in these countries may be framed in terms of how international political 'conditionalities' challenge ethno-centric elites. Conditionalities may be of two types (Checkel 2001). The 'rationalists' will emphasize material incentives and security guarantees, while 'constructivists' will highlight the socialization of elites into new norms. Both mechanisms are important and in practice interwoven to a large extent. From a *constructivist* perspective, which argues that setting standards for human rights changes the elites' way of thinking, one might expect that the more positive the elites' attitudes to and participation in these organizations, the more open they would be to including minorities in their polities. In line with this, a change in citizenship laws would express a real modification of attitudes away from nationalism. Alternatively, from a *rational* perspective, one could argue that those who support and take part in these international organizations are motivated more by security and material incentives than by liberal democratic ideas. Consequently, changing of citizenship laws are more a result of strategic adaptation to international pressure than a transformation of thinking.

While conditionalities on the 'input side' of the process may vary considerably, the 'output side' yields a considerable range of responses that do not necessarily go in the same direction. Public policy and prevailing cultural preferences do not always coincide. There may be a considerable discrepancy between the establishment of liberal formal institutions, their performance in practice and 'true' attitudes to integrating minorities. Further, the rather crude 'exclusive' versus 'inclusive' dichotomy may conceal substantial nuances with vital consequences for ethnic integration. As will be discussed later, skepticism towards universal citizenship may be combined with positive attitudes to integrating those Russian-speakers who have already acquired citizenship.

How do attitudes change: conviction and incentives

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[9] Quoted from Zaagman (1999:36).

It quickly became apparent that excluding a major part of the Russian-speaking minority from the political process failed to meet the expectations of the international community, which asserted that citizenship rights were universal norms fundamental to political stability in all member-states. Although international pressure resulted in citizenship laws gradually becoming less exclusionary, as of 2004, about twenty percent of the permanent residents of Latvia and Estonia were still non-citizens. The reluctant and slow inclusion of minorities may be understood as a compromise between a nationalist political culture and international pressure. But, why were the democratic conditions set by international bodies not more effective?

By 2000 the negotiations on EU and NATO membership had already been going on for some time and Baltic leaders were actively participating in meetings dealing with the conditions for membership. According to constructivist theories, attitudes can be molded to fit in with common norms and may be changed by learning processes. One may argue that democratic expectations and human-rights thinking in EU and NATO forums will nurture an *inclusive* type of democracy in member-states. Accordingly, active participation in international meetings could be expected to soften nationalist attitudes among the elites. However, one could equally well say that the main aim of their Western orientation was to obtain security and economic prosperity, rather than to liberalize their ethnic type of democracy. For the national elites only membership in NATO and the EU could provide the necessary guarantees for the long-term survival of the new nation-states and these assurances made it easier to swallow the 'democratic pill'. According to this argument, liberalization of citizenship laws was more a question of a national strategy of survival and the procuring of material benefits than democratic convictions.

Risse and Sikkink (1999) argue that in the area of human rights the extent to which liberal values have an impact on states depends on certain 'diffusion processes'. Participation in international networks creates 'advocacy coalitions' that will put the violating states on the international agenda. International 'shaming' and domestic opposition will change the beliefs of the national elite and gradually human

rights will be internalized and implemented domestically. They argue that the model applies both to basic individual human rights, like protection of life and dignity, and to political rights. In the Baltic context, however, the mechanisms operating on the international level are different, since the Russian-speakers do not have a strong lobby campaigning for their rights; neither do these groups' leaders take part in international advocacy networks.

Despite the absence of 'advocacy networks' the general argument in socialization theory, which asserts that elites are receptive to criticism and expectations from the international community, is relevant. According to this theory, those who are skeptical but active in international networks will become sympathetic to international commitments and moderate their nationalist orientations to become more positive towards ethnic integration. In other words, elites will internalize the norms of international regimes, which will have a mitigating effect on their nationalist orientations.

The opposite thesis is that nationalist elite attitudes do not change very easily. According to this perspective, elites are above all pragmatic and make adaptations in national legislation primarily to pursue national interests. They see integration in international structures mainly as an instrument for security and economic growth. Accordingly, I argue, internationally active elites may develop strategies to bring formal institutions into line with minimum democratic minimum standards set by the international community while preserving a restrictive and nationalist political culture.

It is problematic empirically to separate compliance following 'socialization' from that driven by rational calculation or by the passive imitation of norms (Checkel 2001:566). In general, it is extremely complicated to assess all the factors, national and international, influencing attitudes and policies. The data presented in the following, however, give some indication of how the elites' internationalism may have a bearing on their nationalist attitudes. I argue that internationalization expressed in terms of national elites' embracing the EU and NATO and taking part in their meetings will not necessarily lead to more positives attitudes to including minorities in the state. International learning and socialization may be shallow, and

international meetings may actually encourage recruitment of nationalist oriented elites, making changes in the elite's basic preferences rather rare. While elites may favor membership in the EU and NATO because of the material and security advantages that this offers, they may for many reasons remain negatively disposed to the democratic conditions set by these bodies.

International commitments and ethnic integration

In line with the 'socialization thesis' positive attitudes to international integration and contacts with international bodies will have a 'learning' and 'persuasion' effect and are conducive to certain attitudes. Accordingly, one might hypothesize elites who are pro-EU/NATO and have contacts with these institutions to adopt certain Western values and to develop positive attitudes to including ethnic minorities in the polity. The alternative 'rational-choice thesis' argues that internationalism, participation and contacts are means for nation-interested utility maximization. According to this theory, political culture and elite orientations are quite stable and not amenable to social learning. Consequently, the alternative hypothesis is that Western ideals of equal political rights propagated in international bodies will not impress nationalist elites. Another possibility, in line with the rationalist argument I argue, is a negative relationship. Here internationalism triggers restrictive attitudes to citizenship through recruiting national oriented elites and appealing to nationalist oriented elites.

If this is the case the 'rational-choice' thesis also seems to prevail, suggesting that protecting ethnic sovereignty is a main incentive in the elites' desire for international integration. This argument is in accord with Mendelson (2002) who analyses the effects of international human right networks on Russian domestic politics. In the case of Russia participating in international bodies may produce mixed or even negative outcomes for human rights implementation. The author argues that international norms and networks have elements of 'organized hypocrisy'. Human rights and democratic norms are on both sides of the table basically regarded as 'strategic interests'.

Below international commitment are correlated with various nationalist indicators. 'Gamma' measures the strength of the correlations and may vary between -1 and +1.

Table 8: Estonia 2000: International commitment and nationalism. Gamma.

	Citizenship	Russians' loyalty	Fear of Russian culture	Naturalized Russians as leaders in the state administration
Participation				
In EU meetings	-.118	-.010	-.011	+.024
In NATO meetings	-.363**	-.058	-.037	+.064
Attitudes				
Confidence in EU	-.123	+.067	-.093	+.187*
Confidence in NATO	-.393**	-.174	-.084	+.087
Pro EU membership	-.189*	-.092	-.063	+.342**
Pro NATO membership	-.473**	-.280**	-.145	+.068

** significant on 0.01 level

* significant on 0.05 level

Table 9: Latvia 2000: International commitment and nationalism. Gamma.

	Citizenship	Russians' loyalty	Fear of Russian culture	Naturalized Russians as leaders of state administration
Participation				
In EU meetings	-.237**	+.125	-.185*	+.073
In NATO meetings	-.221	+.345*	-.148	+.319*
Attitudes				
Confidence in EU	-.249**	-.066	-.058	+.045
Confidence in NATO	-.523**	-.398**	-.345**	-.043
Pro EU membership	-.258**	-.050	-.241*	+.057
Pro NATO membership	-.587**	-.497**	-.510**	-.125

** significant on 0.01 level

* significant on 0.05 level

Table 10: Latvia 2003: International commitment and nationalism. Gamma.

	Citizenship	Russians' loyalty	Fear of Russian culture	Naturalized Russians as leaders of state administration
Participation				
In EU meetings	-.071	+.057	+.048	-.066
In NATO meetings	-.032	+.229	-.023	+.288*
Attitudes				
Confidence in EU	+.077	+.080	+.074	+.111
Confidence in NATO	-.497**	-.432**	-.135	-.016
Pro EU membership	-.172	-.008	+.122	+.195
Pro NATO membership	-.525**	-.448**	-.182	-.086

** significant on 0.01 level

* significant on 0.05 level

Table 11: Lithuania 2000: International commitment and nationalism. Gamma.

	Citizenship	Russians' loyalty	Fear of Russian culture	Naturalized Russians as leaders of state administration
Participation				
In EU meetings	-.053	+.140	-.073	+.167
In NATO meetings	-.287*	+.187	-.074	+.177
Attitudes				
Confidence in EU	-.019	-.018	+.075	+.046
Confidence in NATO	-.191*	-.074	-.051	+.046
Pro EU membership	-.066	-.035	-.046	+.040
Pro NATO membership	-.140	-.164	-.154	+.009

** significant on 0.01 level

* significant on 0.05 level

There are two seemingly anomalous tendencies: First, the elites' internationalization is linked in a particularly substantial and significant way to the citizenship issue, but is also connected to distrust of Russians' loyalty to the state and worries about the impact of Russian culture. Second, these negative relationships do not apply to the issue of allowing naturalized Russians who have already attained citizenship to hold leading positions in the state apparatus. In fact, here the correlations tend to be positive, although not significant.

Concerning the first anomaly, a general and clear tendency for all three Baltic states is that the more their elites participate in EU and NATO meetings, the more positive they are about these organizations and the more negative they are about accepting Russophones as citizens. In particular, the elites' embracing of NATO correlates particularly strongly with restrictive attitudes to awarding citizenship to minority groups. This contradicts the Risse/Sikkink argument that internationalism leads to socialization of liberal norms.

One possible explanation is that the elites regard NATO and the EU primarily as security guarantees and bolsters against the threat from the east. The national elites see themselves as the guardians of fragile independent states and are heavily influenced by worries about ethnic survival and concern to avoid a repetition of the harsh experiences of the past. Thus, their ideal is to combine external security guarantees with internal exclusionary institutions. This relationship supports more a rationalist theory of elite behavior than the socialization thesis, which assumes the adverse outcome. The rational reason for international integration is primarily about ensuring the indigenous basis of the new state. Those who hold the most nationalist attitudes are those who are in control of national politics and who regulate access to international meetings. Therefore it is not very surprising that the nationalists who participate most eagerly in meetings also respond most negatively to international pressure to a straightforward inclusion of Baltic-Russians in the polity.

The second surprising finding is the absence of a negative correlation between the elites' internationalism and their acceptance of minorities in leading positions. As argued previously, the fact that a substantial majority of the elites accept *naturalized* Baltic-Russians as political, administrative and business leaders (see Table 4) shows that citizenship-status and language competence among minorities is regarded as a sufficient internal security guarantee by the national elites. Thus, the 'fifth column syndrome' ceases to be a serious concern for nationalists once naturalization is achieved. In particular Latvian elites who take part in NATO meetings tend to accept naturalized Russians as leaders. In fact, some 'positive socialization' of elite attitudes seems to have taken place when the conditions for inclusion is specified, but it is not easy to explain why 'NATO meetings' are more important for Latvian leaders than for the leaders of the other two countries.

A main unexpected finding is that resistance to liberal inclusive citizenship is accompanied by considerable acceptance for including those who already have passed the naturalization threshold and become citizens, and that internationalization affects these issues in different ways. Depending on what aspect of 'citizenship requirements' one emphasizes (Laitin 1998, Kymlicka 2001), the process of 'coming together' in international institutions produces apparently contradictory attitudes of

both *screening* 'outsiders' by erecting high barriers for access and *including* those who are accepted as 'insiders'.

Does the demographic situation have an impact on the correlation of elite attitudes? In other words, does the country with the largest minority groups have the most nationalistic *and* internationalist elites? The data illustrate that the overall correlation between internationalization and nationalism is strongest in Latvia, which has the largest non-indigenous population, not quite as strong in Estonia and much weaker in Lithuania. Demography apparently matters not only for the general orientations, as shown in the previous section, but also for how the international context impinges upon nationalist attitudes.

Has internationalism become stronger over time? One may assume that as the new states become consolidated and integrated in international structures the importance of 'rational nationalism' will be reduced and time will promote 'learning of norms'. During the final rounds of EU and NATO negotiations in 2003, the correlations seemed to become somewhat weaker in Latvia compared with 2000. As time goes by, positive attitudes to international bodies and active participation are still correlated with nationalist sentiments but not as strongly as before. While nationalism is still widespread, it has become more common to decouple nationalist attitudes from internationalist preferences and behavior. This trend indicates that the constructivist perspective should not be discarded. The optimist interpretation is that due to internationalization and that the first generation of nationalist hardliners is less dominating nationalist orientations have been moderated over time. The pessimist variant is that it remains to be seen if the more modest type of nationalism is only a question of pragmatic rational adaptation to external expectations in the last phase of membership negotiations.

Conclusion. Ethno-liberal democracy: assimilation and diversity.

During the 1990s nationality policies in the Baltic states were triggered by two waves of elite mobilization – a national and an international one. The first took place between 1989 and 1995 when widespread nationalist sentiments among the

population became instrumental to the indigenous elites' consolidating and achieving political control over the new nation-state. This was succeeded by a wave of internationalization from 1995 onwards, in which the elite embraced links with the West as a means of attaining national security and economic benefits for the emerging market economies. The negotiations on EU and NATO membership soon put human-rights issues in general and citizenship rights in particular high on the political agenda and brought about a certain liberalization of national legislations.

The political culture of the national elites, whose attitudes were deeply rooted in the experience of struggling for independence, came under dual pressure. While wishing to preserve indigenous control in states with large Russian minorities, they were now required to take account of international requirements for introducing democratic standards. The purpose of this paper has been to show how the Baltic elites dealt with the dilemma of building nation-states in a post-nationalist epoch. Their responses were threefold: adapting citizenship laws to meet minimum standards set by international organizations; preserving nationalist attitudes; and accepting assimilation of those who had been naturalized. I argue that these seemingly inconsistent elements have sustained a specific type of political regime which I characterized as an 'ethno-liberal' type of democracy. This type of regime enables the national elite to safeguard the nation state while at the same time open for the assimilation of non-indigenous people.

To recapitulate some main findings: As for *internationalization*, the elites wholeheartedly embraced organizations, like the EU and NATO. The referendums in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in 2003 confirmed that the elites' enthusiasm for these organizations was embedded in broad mass support. However, membership involved meeting some tough requirements, in particular those set by the EU. *The citizenship laws* of the accessioning countries gradually moved towards more liberal standards, albeit against considerable resistance from the elites and major part of the populations. Thus, the focus has moved from citizenship standards to what many Russophones experience as rigorous language requirements. The burden of proving the existence of a 'liberal democracy' was removed from the state authorities and the onus put on non-citizens' motivation and ability to learn the national language, which

in practice functions as a rather effective mechanism of exclusion. As the national elites' participation in international organizations increased, their widespread *nationalistic attitudes* actually became more pronounced. Although 'getting together' in federation-like institutions certainly, went some way to liberalizing the barriers to political access, rather surprisingly, it did not moderate political norms. On the contrary, nationalist orientations among elites related to citizenship in fact became more extreme the more 'international' they became.

In order to attend to their security and economic needs these states send representatives with outspoken nationalistic attitudes to EU and NATO meetings. As the data reveal, neither general pro-Western orientations nor participation in meetings with Western colleagues results in a socialization of elites into democratic values. Strangely enough, the effect seems to be the opposite. Elites do not change their way of thinking but adhere stubbornly to nationalistic preferences even as their international engagement increases: the more nationalist the elites, the more they are concerned with international integration and representing national interests in international bodies. Thus, the amendment of the citizenship laws is not the result of more liberal thinking but rather of pragmatic considerations of the national interest. It seems that the elites' rational calculation of security and economic benefits is a main driving force.

It is difficult to separate 'conviction' from 'rational adaptation'. It may therefore be useful, as Checkel (2003) proposes, to ask under what conditions 'constructivist' and 'rationalist' approaches are more appropriate for understanding national compliance with EU institutions. In the Baltic case demographic conditions and nation-building by small majorities in insecure environments seem to have paved the way for rational behavior among the indigenous elites. On the other hand, as the data show, one institution affects the elites' orientation: the naturalization tests. Attitudes towards including minorities in the polity seem to depend substantially on national institutions, not so much on international norms. In one sense, of course, this shows that elites are convinced that own institutions have a positive effect on democratization, which supports the constructivist view. However, on another level

such convictions can also have a clear *rationale* as part of a specific political strategy of nation-building.

The *ethno-liberal type of democracy* characterized by a stringent naturalization process and generous inclusion of those who succeed in passing the filtering test, relates well to the Baltic Russophones as a 'minority group'. Kymlicka and Norman (2000) identify four main types of ethno-cultural minority communities: national minorities, immigrant minorities, religious groups and *sui generic* groups. The authors categorize the Russian settlers in countries that seceded from the Soviet Union in the last group, arguing that they are not ordinary immigrants, since they did not leave their homeland to put down roots in another nation. David Laitin (1998:ix) asks whether they are really a people in *diaspora* since they cannot return to a 'homeland' many of them have never even seen. By contrast, the nationalistic elites regard those who arrived after World War II not only as immigrants but according to international law as occupiers. While the Russians who came prior to the incorporation of the Baltic states into the Soviet Union in 1940, many of whom have lived there for generations, were unconditionally accepted as citizens. The various amended citizenship laws during the 1990s reiterated the fact that pre-1940 citizens and their descendants were entitled to citizenship.

The explanation for the very high percentage of elites who want to exclude Russophones from citizenship and do not trust them to be loyal to the state is probably that the respondents had the post-1940 non-naturalized settlers or 'occupiers' in mind when answering the survey. Those who came before 1940 and they who later attained citizenship are not regarded as the same kind of security risk. As the data show, the elites assume this group to have become sufficiently assimilated to be entrusted with leading state offices.

Attitudes are seldom static, so it is important to see how elite norms change over time. According to Risse and Sikkink (1999), human-rights norms initially adopted for instrumental reasons--in the Baltic case as a means for guaranteeing national security and gaining access to economic resources--over time will be maintained and internalized as values in their own right. Consequently, although the national elites may not fully accept liberal democracy initially, over time institutions

may have a more profound impact on their orientations. According to this thesis, a large gap between formal institutions and dominant elite beliefs cannot continue for long. Although some indications exist, it remains to be seen whether the more liberal citizenship laws and more extensive international integration will modify the elites' resistance to liberal citizenship in a more substantial way.

Only more moderate attitudes make it possible to move from an 'ethno-liberal' to a 'liberal democracy'. The first prerequisite for this is the development of a relationship built on trust between the indigenous people and the Baltic-Russians who settled during the Soviet period. The foundation for such relations is not formal international standards but the extent to which minorities can prove that they are trustworthy by passing the screening test defined by the national elites. As documented previously, 'thick integration' by demanding sufficiently high standards of citizenship and language skills pave the way for potential and legitimate influence in politics and administration by the Baltic-Russians.

The problem is that narrow entry criteria may exclude minorities from even trying to apply for citizenship, since the personal costs will be perceived as too high. Further, careful 'screening' may easily be criticized for having a hidden agenda of both restricting access and assimilating the successful into the majority culture with negative consequences for cultural autonomy and pluralism. The main argument for 'ethno-liberal democracy' is the potential it offers for developing a common *political identity* that rests on acceptance among the indigenous majority of the inclusion of minorities into state structures. The challenge for society is the extent to which a common political identity based on majority norms will also result in minority cultures' obtaining equal status. In other words, is it possible to combine a single state identity with a plurality of *cultural identities*?

As Karklins (2000) argues the crux of the matter in these countries and for that sake in all multi-ethnic states, is to craft polities that are successful in balancing a political identity with several communal identities. The pluralist school of ethnic integration argues that harmonious political relations on the state level spontaneously evolve from tolerating cultural heterogeneity, because as Karklins maintains, all ethnic groups will perceive this situation as a win-win game. In this paper I have

argued that in states with a history of ethnic antagonism and an 'essentialist' understanding of ethnic belonging harmonious relations do not emerge organically. International institutions do matter for legislation but the crucial factor is to which extent the national elites entrust the socialization effect of the national institutions on the loyalties of the minority and pave the way for real minority representation in government. So far notable changes in representation have not taken place.

The test of the sincerity of the elites' intent to combine a common political identity with ethnic diversity is the implementation of administrative measures and providing resources that enable the minority to qualify for citizenship and also actively supporting cultural diversity, e.g. state grants to Russian-language schools and guarantees for using the language also outside the private sphere. If the national elites have a concealed agenda of permanently excluding Russophones from the political process, neither international human rights standards nor national institutions will have much impact on democratization. However, it seems unlikely that the EU and NATO will remain passive observers of such developments with potentially negative effects for ethnic relations and political stability in the enlarged EU and NATO. As Kelley (2003) illustrate international organizations achieved some of the goals because the national elites strategically changed their policies when linked to the membership issue. As shown earlier, the actual impact and also the elite-image of effects on national legislation first of all relates to the 'hard conditionality' organizations EU and NATO, while 'soft conditionality' organizations like OSCE and CE mainly raised the minority issue and maintained the pressure and dialogue.

The question is to which extent instruments of 'hard conditionalities' that obviously was quite effective in changing legislation during the accessioning processes is available also after membership has been attained. If dialogue and persuasion remain the only remedies, obviously it is an enduring task to change national legislation by the way of nationalist elites. On the other hand, changing of orientations by continuing dialogue, experiences and learning probably is the best way to establish legitimate representative institutions in antagonist multiethnic societies *and* to promote deeper commitment to international integration.

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