Russian-Speaking Population in the Baltic States: A “Fifth Column” or An Integral Part of the Local Society?

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Abstract

The problematic relation between the titular nations (majority) and Russian-Speaking Population (minority) in the Baltic Republics is related with historical experience and also with the construction of the image of a “national enemy” among a certain number of the native populations. Are Russian-speakers a “fifth column”, or are they an integral part of the local societies in the Baltic States? This empirical study uses the methods of process tracing, analytical narrative, discourse analysis, and interviews to answer this question. It finds the latter to be the case. It also argues that (1) historical experience was decisive while elaborating the ethnic and citizenship policies of the newly-restored independent states; (2) centralization and “nationalization” of state powers were caused by the threat of potential external sponsorship of ethnic cleavages, and foreign influence on domestic and international affairs; and (3) accession to NATO and the EU became a strong facilitating factor for more inclusive citizenship legislation and integration of the entire Baltic society, including both titular and non-titular populations.
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Introduction

“We are not the “fifth column”!”¹

There are three of them: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. All of them are small, both in territory and population size, and they share more or less common history and modern development of statehood. Despite having the same problems and challenges (forceful incorporation in the USSR and decades under totalitarian rule, neighborhood with “not very friendly” Russia, domestic problems with ethnic minorities following the Soviet Union’s implosion) like other Post-Soviet countries, they managed to pass through the democratization process relatively successfully. They also met the main membership criteria, and together entered the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU) in 2004. Other Post-Soviet republics² are still in this process and no one could definitely say when they will be able to enjoy the security and economic stability guarantees provided by the membership in these organizations. The results of the April 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest have also approved this trend.

However, the road to affiliation in the highly respectable Western organizations has not been an easy one for any of the three Baltic States. All of them faced serious challenges after the restoration of state independence. One of the main problems was connected with the ethnic minorities residing in the states, and the interested political forces from the Russian Federation trying to achieve their geopolitical goals in the region with the help of these minorities that led to establishing of the perception of the “fifth column” towards Russian-speaking population in the Baltic societies.

¹ Interview with Irina Ivaskina, Project Coordinator, Latvian Transatlantic Organization, on April 14, 2008.
² Mainly Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova with the exception to membership in NATO of the latter, as the country is neutral under her constitution. (See Article 11, Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, adopted on July 29, 1994, Constitution Finder, University of Richmond http://www.confinder.richmond.edu/admin/docs/moldova3.pdf)
The problematic relation between the titular nations (majority) and Russian-speaking population (minority) in the Baltic Republics is related with historical experience and also with the construction of the image of a national enemy among a certain number of the native population (especially, Estonians and Latvians due to the relatively high number of Russian-speaking population, and problems related with them in Estonia and Latvia respectively). This issue has been investigated and studied by various scholars in recent years. It was discussed and studied by the authors of the Baltic, Russian and foreign (neutral to the issue) origin in their works. Hence, I will try to present the problem in the whole of its complexity and not only from the prism of one particular country, and while analyzing the works presented by different authors of different national origins and accordingly representing different schools of thought and national positions, to achieve maximum neutrality and non-biased approach towards the studying subject of my research. In this respect, extremely important was my field trip to Latvia and Estonia which gave me a chance to study the issue at the place of its origin, and to meet with the scholars studying the field, politicians previously and currently involved in elaborating of citizenship policies, NGO representatives and ethnically Russian-Speakers. These meetings and interviews enabled me to study the subject from a different point of view and make well-balanced deductions.

Historical experience and memory have constituted an important factor while elaborating the citizenship policies in the Baltic States, and the Russian-speaking population had to get acquainted with the reality that they were now living in the new states where they did not have the status of majority any more. In this thesis I will argue that despite the drawbacks, visible challenges and obstacles on the way of state formation, both parts of the Baltic society, majority (titular) and minority (Russian-speaking), have managed to avoid destructive and bloody development of interethnic relations, and have got a direction towards peaceful cohabitation and integrative processes inside the society. The way to this process and
overall integration of the society is, indeed, difficult, though the worst possible scenario has already been avoided and the societies in the Baltic States are on the right track of development.

While answering the main research question of the thesis, whether Russian-speakers are a “fifth column” or the integral part of the local societies, on the example of the Baltic Republics I will present the three main arguments:

1. Historical experience was decisive while elaborating the ethnic and citizenship policies of the newly-restored independent states;

2. Centralization and nationalization of state powers were caused by the threat of potential external sponsorship of ethnic cleavages, and foreign influence on domestic and international affairs;

3. Accession to the NATO and EU became a strong facilitating factor for more inclusive citizenship legislation and integration of the entire Baltic society including both titular and non-titular populations.

As my research is mainly based on the empirical studies and analyzing of the real facts from the history and the present political situation, I use the methods of process tracing, analytical narrative, and discourse analysis. The method of interview used during my field trip while meeting with academics, politicians and NGO activists was deeply valuable in order to collect new information and check the assumptions and findings already been made.

I would also like to point out potential limitations of the research. First of all, I do not know any of the state languages of the Baltic Republics (Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian respectively). This, of course, has limited my possibilities to get acquainted with literature, legal and archival documents in these languages. However, I know Russian, which is the second most spoken language in the Baltic region and has helped me to compensate for the lack of the other languages. In addition, due to the limit of funding and time I was not able to
make a field trip and conduct interviews in Lithuania that could be outlined as another possible limitation of the research. Nonetheless, taking into account the fact that the main scope of investigation and study of the thesis have been put on the two other republics – Latvia and Estonia due to the higher number of Russian-speakers and legal and societal problems with them in these republics, the latter possible limitation also does not seem to be crucial or to become a serious shortcoming for the thesis.

**Concepts and Definitions**

Before proceeding to the theoretical and empirical analysis, I feel it necessary to define two the most important and crucial concepts and terms I am using in my work, the “Russian-speaking population (minorities, or Russian-speakers” in some cases) and the “fifth column”. Clarification and further definition of these two terms is essential in order to avoid any misunderstanding and to show the limit of the scope of my research. Thus, in this section, I will explain the meaning and my understanding of the above mentioned terms I use in my research.

The European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) in its report “Minorities and Majorities in Estonia: Problems of Integration at the Threshold of the EU” states:

The term ‘Russian-speaking minorities’ denotes millions of former Soviet citizens who predominantly use Russian in their everyday life and who have been living outside the Russian Federation since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, mostly in the former Soviet republics. However, the term is not precise as to their ethnic origin, mother tongue or current citizenship. People are grouped together under the term because they have similar identity problems and have to cope with the official language policies of their countries of residence. The term is often criticized on political grounds for masking diverse needs of various ethnic groups and for promoting the hegemony of ethnic Russians in dealing with minority issues.\(^3\)

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I share the main concept and explanation of the term given by the ECMI and in my thesis will use the term “Russian-speaking population (minorities, or Russian-speakers)” while addressing the former Soviet citizens of various nationalities (including Jews and Poles as well), and not only ethnic Russians. The term itself is, indeed, problematic and not highly precise. That is why, in the later part of the thesis, I will turn back to the initial appearance and will discuss in more details the genesis and different views concerning the term.

The term “fifth column” originally appeared after the column of supporters which General Mola declared himself to have in Madrid (in addition to the four columns of his army outside the city) while besieging the capital during the Spanish Civil War. Later it gained the meaning of a body of one’s supporters in an attacked or occupied foreign country, or the enemy’s supporter’s in one’s own country, and is used to symbolize the traitor, spy, etc.\(^4\) This term is often used in both official and informal narratives while addressing the Russian-speaking population in the Baltic Republics. Here, I have to stress that in order to stay absolutely neutral and not show any preference to this term I will always use it in quotation marks that will signal to a reader the distance and no association of the writer with the terminology. While fully acknowledging how delicate the issue is, I see an extreme need to use exactly this term as the main goal of my research is to show the very fact that despite all the challenges faced, a great desire and efforts made by the interested external political forces, the Russian-speaking population in the Baltic States have not been turned into and used as the “fifth column”.

Here, I will also outline and determine the purpose of usage of quotation marks in this thesis. Wherever they are not being used to show the fact of citation from other source, the quotation marks in the text are used to indicate that the writer fully realizes that a word is not

being used in its current commonly-accepted sense, and he has a fully neutral attitude to the certain word.

**Thesis Structure**

The thesis proceeds as follows. In the next chapter I discuss the impact of the historical memory and present differences between majority (titular nations) and minority (Russian-speakers) while evaluating the past events, and also show the results of Soviet and Nazi occupations on the entire Baltic Region; in addition, I outline and further explain the main reason of differences of ethnic compositions of the populations in Latvia and Estonia on one hand, and Lithuania – on the other one. The second chapter finds the empirical explanation and approval for the first argument of the thesis that historical experience was decisive while elaborating the ethnic and citizenship policies of the newly-restored independent states. Chapter 3 examines the impact of mass media, and particularly ethnic minority media on interethnic relations from broader conceptual to the local (Baltic) level. Chapter 4 describes the triadic nexus relation on the example of the Baltic region and Russia’s as an external national homeland’s role in these relations. Together with the empirical and theoretical support presented in the previous parts of the thesis, Chapter 4 approves the validity of the second argument of the thesis that centralization and nationalization of state powers were caused by the threat of potential external sponsorship of ethnic cleavages, and foreign influence on domestic and international affairs. The last chapter explains the necessity of seeking security and stability guarantees provided by the European Union and NATO from the Baltic States side, and describes the process of affiliation in these organizations, thus, providing ground and support for the third argument of the thesis. In the concluding part, I outline the main findings of the thesis, and briefly discuss current democratic development in the Baltic States.
Chapter 1: History Matters: Impact of the Soviet and Nazi Occupations

There are still differences in interpreting the history and evaluating the process which was taking place during the previous decades (from the 40s till the late 80s of the twentieth century) between the titular nations of the Baltic States and Russian-speakers. These differences are strongly connected with two existing competing narratives – Occupation and Liberation. While for the Baltic national elites, and most of the titular population, the incorporation in the Soviet Union of the independent republics was understood and is still perceived as a forceful act equal to the occupation, the Soviet or current Russian officials have never used the word “occupation”.

Furthermore, the debate heats up concerning the assessment of the fact when Nazi troops had to leave the Baltic countries under the pressure of the Soviet Army in 1944. Most of the native Baltic people consider this as the re-occupation from the side of the USSR, while for Russian-speakers it is perceived as the liberation from Nazi occupation. The April, 2007 street clashes around the problem of dealing with the bronze statue of the Soviet Soldier in the centre of the Estonian capital, Tallinn, have shown extremely well all the deepness of the problem of interpreting and assessing the very facts of the not so distant past. As Pettai and Kallas describe, “While Estonians saw the monument – erected to commemorate the Soviets’ recapture of Tallinn in 1944 – as a painful reminder of the Soviet occupation of their country, Russian-speakers generally viewed the statue as an essential element of their historical identity – the Soviet Union’s victory in the Second World War.”5 Comments with diametrically opposite evaluation of the historical facts, left by the visitors of Russian origin in the book of the Museum of Occupation in Riga, made me think that, indeed, the two parts of the society are far away from consensus over the very problematic issue of assessment of

the history. Two comments left in Russian language about the Latvian nation in general and
the museum in particular furthermore strengthens such feeling: Comment # 1 - “Let the
diminutive, trifling nation burns in the hell. Waning whimpers. Stalin!!! USSR!!!” 6 Comment
# 2 – “Museum of being pity for oneself. It is disgusting.” 7 I have no intention to claim that
any of the above mentioned comments were made by a Russian-speaker living in the Baltic
region or by ethnic Russian at all, but still the fact and the content itself argues and shows the
whole complexity of the issue. The first Minister for Special Assignments for Society
Integration Affairs of Latvia, Nils Muiznieks, also states that it is very difficult to create some
kind of common narrative acceptable for the both parts of society due to the influences from
the family, school, media and surrounding community on the young generation.8

As Mertelsmann points out, “In contemporary Estonian society one may find the
image of a national enemy, the Russians. This image is not shared by everybody, but
prejudice, stereotypes and antipathy are widespread phenomena”.9 Traditionally, the Baltic
Germans fulfilled the role of a national enemy and the natives’ attitude towards Russians was
more or less neutral, even friendly when the situation was dealing with struggle for
independence against Germans, cultural or educational affairs. The shift from one to another
nation of the image of enemy occurred thanks to the occupation and annexation by the Soviet
Union and the years of authoritarian rule that followed.10

The process of Sovietization, which took place after the forceful incorporation of three
independent Baltic republics into the Soviet Union in 1940 and in 1944 after the Hitler troops
had to leave the territory, was identified as Russification; the personal experience of the Baltic

6 All the translation from Russian source to English here and henceforth is mine.
7 Comments made in the book of impressions at the Museum of Occupation in Riga.
8 Interview with Nils Muiznieks, Director, Advanced Social and Political Research Institute, on April 16, 2008.
9 Olaf Mertelsmann, “How the Russians Turned into the Image of the “National Enemy” of the Estonians”, Pro
Ethnologia 19, 43.
10 Ibid. 45-50.
people with Stalinist terror and crimes and the identification of “Russian” with “Soviet” triggered the development of this negative feeling.

The Museum of Occupation in Riga is the perfect manifestation of the whole deepness and complexity of the Baltic countries tragic and painful experience of occupation under the both Soviet and Nazi Regimes. The material presented at the museum is of direct importance for my research work. In accordance with the secret protocols attached to the covenant entitled the Treaty of Non-aggression between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact), signed in Moscow on August 24, 1939, the Northern and Eastern Parts of Europe were divided into Nazi and Soviet spheres of influence. Soon, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia faced an ultimatum to sign “Mutual Assistance” treaties with official Moscow, which granted the right to the Soviet Union to deploy its military bases in these countries. Military presence helped the USSR to conduct elections with the only alternative of the communist (workers bloc) partial list suggested to the voters in the Baltic republics under strict supervision and pressure in July, 1940. Accordingly, with an overwhelming majority in all three republics were elected governments loyal to the official Moscow that facilitated “voluntarily” incorporation of the republics to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. This is the explanation why the Soviet or current Russian officials have never used the word “occupation”, instead – “following the agreements and with the consent of the governments of the Baltic Republics”\(^\text{11}\) concerning the incorporation of the Baltic republics into the USSR in 1940.

Nevertheless, a number of countries refused to recognize the fact of incorporation of the Baltic republics into the Soviet Union, among them Belgium, Spain, the United States of America and the Vatican. Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian diplomatic missions were still recognized in many countries and continued their function in the name of the governments of

\(^\text{11}\) Russia denies it illegally annexed the Baltic republics in 1940, Pravda.Ru, http://www.newsfromrussia.com/main/2005/05/05/59601.html
independent (pre-1940) states. From their side, governments of the Baltic States also ensured the legal continuity of their power. For example, already on May 18, 1940 the government of Latvia gave special powers to its ambassadors. It was stated that “if the government is no more capable to execute its authority, the ambassador to the United Kingdom or the ambassador to the United States should represent interests of the Latvian state in the world.”\textsuperscript{12}

After establishing Soviet power in the region, people faced all the brutality of the new regime. Besides the repression against the members of the former governments and political activists, ordinary citizens accused of anti-state actions also became the victims of the cruel policy of establishing the Soviet order. On one night alone (the 13\textsuperscript{th} /14\textsuperscript{th} of June) were deported and placed in GULAG (The Chief Administration of Corrective Labor Camps and Colonies) camps 15,081 persons, 1,214 children among them only from Latvia to the Far East regions of the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{13}

In such conditions it is not surprising Mertelsmann’s claim that “One year of Soviet rule was enough to change the attitude of the population. As a result of Soviet terror, only two years after Estonians had been happy to get rid of the Baltic Germans, Hitler’s troops were greeted as liberators”.\textsuperscript{14} The same feeling was shared by other Baltic nations too due to the German rule which was less oppressive than Stalinism for the whole population except for Gypsies and Jews. However, the Nazi Germany had its own plan of colonization and “Germanization” of the Baltic region. The article “Germanise?” in the SS newspaper “Das Schwarze Korps” (August 20, 1942) shows that there was a plan to populate by Germans the majority of the towns and to deport 50\% of the inhabitants of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia to Russia; while the remaining should be “Germanised”. The Nazis planned to move 164,000

\textsuperscript{12} Information presented at the Museum of Occupation in Riga.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{14} Olaf Mertelsmann, “How the Russians Turned into the Image of the “National Enemy” of the Estonians”, Pro Ethnologia 19, 49.
German settlers to Latvia within 25 years.\textsuperscript{15} German regime was especially cruel against Jews and carried out their mass eradication. The picture was especially dramatic in Lithuania where was one of the biggest Jewish communities in the whole Central-Eastern Europe, especially after refugee fleeing from Poland by 1941.\textsuperscript{16} Therefore, I believe there could not be made any judgment about the relatively better conditions existing under any occupation regime, the only difference is that Nazi regime occupation lasted only for a few years in comparison with the Soviet one.

After recapturing the Baltic region in 1944 (which was called by the Soviets – liberation from Nazi Occupation and is still treated in the same way by the current Russian officials, while the Western and national Baltic elites see it in another way – as the re-occupation)\textsuperscript{17} total disappointment of the local people appeared. Red Army soldiers behaved like on enemy territory: they stole, raped, plundered and murdered; another negative factor became the refugees from starving areas in Russia, the so-called bag people appeared in the Baltic republics in 1946-47 and they committed a large number of crimes.\textsuperscript{18} In addition, the post-war years saw enormous in-migration, mainly of Russians and other Slavic nations (Belarusians, Ukrainians). One of the possible explanations of this large influx of immigrants could be the significant depopulation in the region after World War II. The resettlement of the Baltic Germans (especially from Estonia and Latvia), the war-time German eradication of Jews (especially in Latvia and Lithuania), the huge Soviet deportations of 1941, 1944-45 and 1949 (during the night of March 25, 1949 a total of 30 thousands families – 92 thousands individuals were deported from the Baltic countries\textsuperscript{19}), the flight of refugees westwards in 1944, the loss of men in Soviet, German and national military units and the transfer of former

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15 Information presented at the Museum of Occupation in Riga
16 Interview with Axel Kirch, Senior research fellow at International University AUDENTES, on April 11, 2008.
18 Olaf Mertelsmann, "How the Russians Turned into the Image of the “National Enemy” of the Estonians", Pro Ethnologia 19, 53.
19 Information presented at the Museum of Occupation in Riga.
Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian territories to the RSFSR combined to make the three countries’ population losses of the World War II period among the highest in Europe. In each case the depopulation process at first made the territorial population ethnically more homogeneous, but, more importantly, in the end it resulted in a huge loss of people for the eponymous groups.20

Table 1 shows the ethnic composition of the populations of three Baltic Republics in absolute numbers and outlines the great changes those took place after the Sovietization of the region, especially in Estonia and Latvia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Estonia</th>
<th>Latvia</th>
<th>Lithuania</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>977</td>
<td>1,473</td>
<td>2,075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>893</td>
<td>1,298</td>
<td>2,151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russians</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvians</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonians</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russians</td>
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<td>Lithuanians</td>
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The tendency was showing the growing number of newcomers and decline of the titular people. However, in Lithuania there was not such a dramatic decline of the proportion of the native people and even there was observed rising numbers of Lithuanians unlike those of Estonians and Latvians.

This difference in migration numbers which occurred during the Soviet rule in the Baltic Republics has resulted in different attitudes of national political elites while elaborating the citizenship policies of the newly restored republics in the beginning of 1990s. Van Elsuwege tries to explain the relatively small number of Russian-speakers in comparison to the other Baltic republics due to Lithuania’s specific historical and socio-economic

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development. First, Lithuania had a long tradition of independent statehood which went back to the middle ages. It came under Russian dominance after the disintegration of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795, more than a century after the incorporation of the Baltic provinces into the Russian empire of Tsar Peter the Great. Consequently, the northern part of the Baltic region had a longer tradition of Russian settlement. Secondly, Lithuania was not so much affected by the industrial revolution at the end of the nineteenth century. The Soviets considered the Lithuanian republic as a primarily agricultural area, which largely reduced the influx of Russian migrant workers. Finally, the higher birth rate of Catholic Lithuania in comparison to Protestant Estonia and Latvia guaranteed a consistent majority of ethnic Lithuanians. Parming also mentions the higher fertility in Lithuania as one of the reasons of the relatively stable proportion of Lithuanians in the whole population of the country, but he outlines a very strong resistance to Soviet rule displayed by Lithuanians during both the 1944-50 period and during the early 1970s. He adds that the 1972 unrest in Lithuania was so serious as to require the intervention of Soviet military units to restore order that was an unusual occurrence on the All-Union scale.

NATO Research Fellow Juris Prikulis, in the final report about migration and repatriation issues in Latvia, agrees this is one of the major obstacles to immigration and speaks about the anti-Soviet guerrilla activity; he believes that many potential immigrants thought twice about their move to Lithuania due to the guerilla activity.

The peak of anti-Soviet activities was in January 1991 when Soviet military troops made bloodshed in Lithuanian capital against peaceful demonstrators who protected the

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22 Ibid. 4.
Lithuanian radio and television centre. Just before the radio station was shut down, an announcer said: “We address all those who hear us. It is possible that (the army) can break us with force or close our mouths, but no one will make us renounce freedom and independence”. These words clearly show the level of struggle of the local people for freedom and sovereignty.

The conditions of growing number of immigrants, majority of whom were settled in the main cities of the countries and were given the positions in all spheres of industry, transport, communication and state governance, diminishing status of the native languages and raising of the Russian one, made titular people of the Baltic region to think that they were becoming guests in their own homes and the new-comers were the initial reasons of all their misfortunes. All these, indeed, contributed to establish in some parts of the society the image of the national enemies. Fresh memory of the concrete historical events (World War II) and personal experience like terror, violence and poverty triggered this image. Mass migration and historical myths were additional factors. Since “Soviet” was perceived as identical to “Russian”, the meaning of both words was mixed. To a certain extent, the fact was ignored that Russians also suffered from the same Stalinist dictatorship. Behind those images of an enemy there could be found ideas of collective guilt and collective responsibility of ethnic groups. The approval of the idea even more comes clear after taking into account the joint Estonian-Latvian samizdat document from 1975, which referred to the Russians as “civil garrisons” which are “an ominous tumor in the body of the Estonian and Latvian nations”. Thus, it is clear all these perceptions and historical memory, as well as behavior of some of Russian-speakers politically un-loyal to the Baltic States played a crucial role in establishing

26 Ibid.
and usage by some nationally thinking activists of the term “fifth column” in relation with the Russian-speaking populations.
Chapter 2: Citizenship Policies of the newly-restored independent Baltic States

Hughes and Sasse, based on the analysis of the previous works by Lipset, Stepan, Linz and others, report that the most widely employed paradigm for understanding the process of post-communist change is that of “transition to democracy”.\(^\text{29}\) As they state this approach to democratization stresses two key determinants: long-term structural development through modernization, and contingent actor-related strategies and elite bargaining.\(^\text{30}\) Hughes and Sasse outline that when transitology does address the issue of minorities, their presence in a transition state is viewed as a major obstacle to democratization; furthermore, minorities represent a challenge to democratizing nation-states that has serious potential for political instability and, consequently, are best managed by centralization and assimilatory policies.\(^\text{31}\) They also argue that the concept of “minority” and its antonym “majority” in international relations is a poorly defined nowadays (as when its use was first legitimated at Versailles in 1919); they also show that there is no agreed legal, or conceptual definition of what constitutes a “national minority”.\(^\text{32}\) And, it is absolutely true that ambiguity and contradictions between terms and definitions often creates additional challenges and problems for inter-ethnic relations inside the ethnically heterogeneous states.

2.1. Ethnic Control vs. Power-Sharing Approach (Consociationalism)

Graeme and Lofgren argue that the experience of Sovietization was critical in shaping the post-independence Baltic political, economic and societal landscape. The Sovietization project was advanced within the Baltic States on three key fronts: first, it was advanced in


\(^{30}\) Ibid. 2.

\(^{31}\) Ibid. 3.

\(^{32}\) Ibid. 5.
political and economic terms through the vertical integration of the Baltic States by forced assimilation into the Soviet Union with the status of Soviet Socialist Republics; second, in psychological, cultural and linguistic terms, this project was advanced through horizontal competition that aimed to promote the Sovietization/Russification of all aspects of life within these republics; mass migration into the three Baltic States from the rest of the Soviet Republics, particularly the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic (RSFSR), reinforced this interlinked process.\(^{33}\) As Buzan claims, these processes were mutually reinforcing: “Although analytically distinct, in practice these three types of threats to identity can easily be combined”.\(^{34}\)

O’Loughlin points out that nationalism in the new states and territories which emerged from the former Soviet Union was not the result of a “sleeping beauty” phenomenon, awakening after decades of communism that submerged cultural loyalties to the ideological preference of the “Soviet Citizen”.\(^{35}\) He adds that “Soviet nationalities policy was instrumental in the making of nations and nationalism and as indigenes became more economically and politically mobilized as a result of the growth of educated indigenous elite, they became more nationalistic and pressed for more control of resources in the territory of indigenes”.\(^{36}\) This claim finds empirical support in the national movement in the Baltic States. As Muiznieks describes, with political liberalization in the late 1980s, demands to halt migration, upgrade the status of the eponymous languages, and make the titular nations “masters of their own land” exploded into the public realm of the Baltic society.\(^{37}\)

“What if a policymaker, charged with crafting a peace arrangement for an ethnic-conflict situation, asked an academic what practical wisdom the theories of ethnic conflict and


\(^{36}\) Ibid. 341.

nationalism could offer to help draft such a plan?”38 So asks Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, and she suggests a variety of answers as well. “If the academic is a constructivist, the answer might be that the groups involved should be taught a completely new version of their ethnogenesis and history of conflict, one showing that they belong to group a or group b merely by chance, and their ancestors killed each other because they had been taught an inaccurate history”.39 If the academic is a primordialist, the answer might be that “groups inherit a culture as a given and that solidarity within one’s cultural kin is so strong that ethnic groups are essentially unable to understand and show any sensitivity toward the need of other groups”.40 And finally, if the academic is an instrumentalist, the answer would be that because “ethnic enrollment is the shortest way to profit, maximizing groups are bound to mobilize sooner or later and try to get the spoils from other groups”.41

Indeed, due to the content of these answers and the legal framework existing in the beginning of the 1990s in the Baltic States (particularly, in Latvia and Estonia), it is difficult not to agree with Lind when she concludes that on the basis of the analysis of the Estonian legal frame and integration policy, “Estonian nation building strategy is primordial where blood ties are important and that the state building project is exclusive”.42

Pettai and Hallik argue that one of the key reasons for ethnic peace and stability in Estonia over the decade of the 1990s was a considerable degree of control instituted by the Estonian political community over its sizeable Russian-speaking minority.43 They analyze this control using Lustick’s three main indicators of segmentation, dependence and co-optation.44

39 Ibid. 13.
40 Ibid. 13.
41 Ibid. 13.
44 Ibid. 505.
For them, Estonian moves to restrict automatic citizenship after 1991 to only pre-1940 citizens and their descendants was an essential opening step toward segmentation of the non-Estonian minority. Secondly, they see economic changes in the country as a result of market transition altered considerably the economic resource base of both the Estonian and non-Estonian communities; here the net effect was a considerable increase in the dependence of the latter on the former. Lastly, they examine the extent to which the Estonian political elite have practiced a policy of co-optation among key non-Estonian leaders.45

For the theoretical analysis it is important to outline the difference made by Lustick between two theoretical approaches of consociationalism (power-sharing) and control. He argues that both of these approaches could be seen as alternative explanations for stability in divided and segmented societies; however, whereas consociationalism focuses on the mutual cooperation of subnational elites as decisive, a control approach would focus on the emergence and maintenance of a relationship in which the superior power of one segment is mobilized to enforce stability by constraining the political actions and opportunities of another segment or segments.46

In order to establish a clear conceptual distinction between two approaches, Lustick suggests seven important factors. The first is outlined the criterion that effectively governs the authoritative allocation of resources in the consociational system, the common denominator of the interests of the two segments as perceived and articulated by their respective elites, while in the control system, it is the interest of the superordinate segment and its elite.47

Secondly are mentioned the linkages between the two sub-units or segments in the consociational system those take the form of political or material exchanges; in the control system, the linkage is penetrative in character: the superordinate segment extracts what it

45 Ibid. 506.
47 Ibid. 330.
needs from the subordinate one (property, political support, labor, and/or information) and delivers what it sees fit.\textsuperscript{48}

Afterwards appears the significance of bargaining that is very different in the two systems. In the first approach, hard-bargaining between sub-unit elites is a necessary fact of political life; in the control approach, however, hard bargaining between elites would signal the breakdown of control as the means by which the political stability of the system is being maintained.\textsuperscript{49}

Another proposed distinction by Lustick is seen in the role of the official regimes. The one in the consociational system must translate the compromises reached between sub-unit elites into appropriate legislation and effective administrative procedure, and enforce these rules without discriminating, while the role of the official regime in the control system represented by the bureaucratic apparatus of the state, staffed overwhelmingly by personnel from the superordinate segments, uses what discretion is available in the interpretation and implementation of official regulations to benefit the sub-unit which it represents at the expense of the subordinate segment.\textsuperscript{50}

Lustick claims that in the consociational society, the political status quo is likely to be legitimized by vague and general references to the common welfare of both sub-units, and by specific and detailed warnings of the chaotic consequences, for each segment, of consociational breakdown. By contrast, the control system is likely to be endowed with legitimacy by an elaborate and well-articulated group-specific ideology.\textsuperscript{51}

The character of the central strategic problem that faces sub-unit elites is additional distinguishing feature. In the consociational system, the problem is symmetrical for each sub-unit: elites must strike bargains that do not jeopardize the integrity of the system as a whole;

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid. 331.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid. 331.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid. 332.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid. 332.
therefore, internal group discipline is a crucial and constant political challenge for both sub-units. The character of the central strategic problem facing sub-unit elites in the control system, though, is first of all asymmetric with respect to the superordinate and subordinate segments: for superordinate sub-unit elites, the main strategic problem is to devise cost-effective techniques for manipulating the subordinate group, while for the subordinate sub-unit elites (if they exist) the central strategic problem is to devise responses to the policies of superordinate groups which cope as satisfactorily as possible with consequences of subordination, and to evaluate opportunities for bargaining or resistance which may appear.\(^\text{52}\)

Finally, as Lustick points out, “the visual metaphor appropriate for a “perfect” consociational system is a delicately but securely balanced scale, while that appropriate for a control system is a puppeteer manipulating his string puppet.”\(^\text{53}\)

These conceptual distinctions, indeed, help to see the clear difference between the two approaches and the policies implemented in each of the system in a real life.

According to Lijphart the power-sharing can be defined in terms of four characteristics. The two primary characteristics are the participation of the representatives of all significant groups in the government of the country and a high degree of autonomy for these groups. The secondary characteristics are proportionality and the minority veto.\(^\text{54}\) It is clear that none of these characteristics has been present in the state-building process in any of the Baltic States. In this respect it is interesting to see the interview between his two terms as Prime Minister, Tiit Vahi cited by David Laitin. When asked whether the Belgian model (with each cultural pillar having autonomy) or the French (nationally homogenous) model was more appropriate for Estonia, Vahi responded:

Still I would propose for Estonia the French model. (…) I see the Estonian state as a model for such a nation state, where the dominant nationality is Estonian,

\(^{52}\) Ibid. 332.

\(^{53}\) Ibid. 332.

the state language is Estonian, where non-Estonians have been granted human rights, and also economic rights. (...) The integration of non-Estonians with Estonia, Estonian culture and language – I think is very important.\textsuperscript{55}

As Laitin reports, when he posed the same question to Juris Baldunciks, then a member of the Latvian Academy of Science, Baldunciks insisted that Latvians would never accept a “pillared” society.\textsuperscript{56}

Although it is very difficult to characterize any country with divided and segmented society and to state that it uses the pure model of any of the above mentioned two systems, nevertheless, it is obvious that Baltic national elites while restoring statehood of their independent republics completely refused any possibility of using the power-sharing (consociational) approach and more elements of control approach could be mentioned in their actions.

\subsection*{2.2. Restoration of State Sovereignty}

At the final stage of existence of the USSR, the titular elites in the union republics inherited the state apparatuses and gained the historical opportunity to set the national agenda. The same was true about the local Baltic national elites too. They had the power of initiative, to call referenda, to pass new laws, and to establish new nation-states. Meanwhile, the Russian-speaking populations had no organizational resources to take such initiatives, and they could only respond to the situations in which they would appear.

The independence struggle at the end of the 1980s had an ethnic coloring: an absolute majority of titular people were supporting state independence, while non-titulars (mainly Russian-speakers) were belonging to the pro-Soviet movement.\textsuperscript{57} Järve and Wellmann believe

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid, 94.
that demographic fears and political suspicions gave ammunition to those who wanted to limit the weight of Russian-speakers in decision-making. As Spruds reports, the new nationalistic political elite set itself a twofold task: to ensure its dominant position in the country, and to establish new forms of political and social life. He explains that given the high proportion of Russian-speaking people, granting citizenship rights to them would lead to a high proportion of representatives of this group in the national legislature; this, in turn, would limit representation of the national elite in the parliament, and would therefore reduce their influence on decision-making. Valdis Birkavs, the former Prime and Foreign Minister of Latvia, stressed in early 1993 that “the creation of a two-community state rather than a nation-state will entail the introduction of a second state language, of equal political rights, and…the possibility of dual citizenship in the future…This is no way acceptable to the Latvians”.

That was why the political choice that Estonia and Latvia made during the collapse of the Soviet Union was not only to restore the pre-war Estonian and Latvian independent republics but also to restore the citizenship and to follow the principles of *ius sanguinis* and naturalization in their citizenship legislation. As Järve and Wellmann explain, this meant that only those current residents of these two countries who were the citizens, or at least one of whose ancestors was a citizen of the Republic of Estonia or Republic of Latvia by 1940 when the republics were invaded by the Soviet troops, would be given citizenship. This process left hundreds of thousands residents of these two Baltic countries in the position of non-citizen with no political rights and accordingly no opportunity to take part in the decision-

60 Ibid. 9.
61 Ibid. 9.
62 Ius Sanguinis – (*lat. Right of the blood*), designates the principle, according to which a state lends its nationality to children, whose parents or at least one parents are citizens of this state. (See Descending principle, Economy-point.org, http://www.economy-point.org/d/descending-principle.html)
making process. In the proportional measures the non-citizen residents constituted nearly 40% of the whole population in the both cases.\textsuperscript{64}

In this respect it is extremely interesting to consider the official and legal argumentation given by the Constitutional Court of Latvia in one of its judgments:

Regaining of independence after the period of occupation of Latvia gave the legislator the possibility to determine the citizen aggregate of Latvia. Continuity of Latvia as international legal subject created the legal basis for not automatically granting the status of the citizen to a certain group of persons. The legal basis of continuity of Latvia is fixed in the May 4, 1990 Supreme Council Declaration of the Renewal of the Independence of the Republic of Latvia.\textsuperscript{65}

This legal argumentation given by the Constitutional Court clearly shows the great impact of historical experience and importance of continuity of the pre-1940 statehood on the state-building process in the beginning of the 1990s, also the fear of the possibility of using “a certain group of persons” as the potential “fifth columnists” by the interested external forces.

In the concluding part of its judgment, the Court states that after passing of the Non-Citizen Law appeared a new, up to that time unknown category of persons – Latvian non-citizens; Latvian non-citizens cannot be compared with any other status of a physical entity, which has been determined in international legal acts, as the rate of rights, established for non-citizens, does not comply with any other status. Latvian non-citizens can be regarded neither as the citizens, nor the aliens and stateless persons but as persons with "a specific legal status"; in addition, the Court mentions that non-citizens shall not be regarded as stateless persons, because – in accordance with Section 1 of the Immigration Law – alien is a person, who is not a Latvian citizen or a non-citizen of Latvia.\textsuperscript{66} The last statement is, indeed, of great importance when the state official authority declares that non-citizen status does not mean that a person is a stateless one. This declaration is a positive one in its legal nature, of course.

\textsuperscript{64} Graeme P. Herd and Joan Lofgren, \textit{Societal Security, the Baltic States and EU Integration}, SAGE publications, London, (2001), 278.

\textsuperscript{65} Judgment of the Constitutional Court of Latvia on Case No. 2004-15-0106, (http://www.satv.tiesa.gov.lv/)

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid.
Lithuania, with its much smaller and better integrated minority, chose a more inclusive approach to citizenship, adopting a “zero option” policy of granting citizenship to all residents on Lithuanian territory regardless of nationality and without any language requirements at the time of re-establishing independence. This stance could be explained by the relatively high number of ethnic Lithuanians (approximately 80%)\textsuperscript{67} for the moment of restoration of state sovereignty. During my interviews with scholars and politicians in Latvia and Estonia, I found an additional explanation for the difference between citizenship policies of Latvia and Estonia on the one hand, and Lithuania on another. As it was outlined, besides the demographic factor, Lithuania in the result of Soviet incorporation gained the territories (Vilnius and Klaipeda region) which were not parts of the pre-war Lithuanian Republic. These territories were inhabited by people those were not the citizens of the Lithuanian independent republic; that is why while restoring the state sovereignty, Lithuania was not so free to restore prewar citizenship as well.\textsuperscript{68}

However, it must be mentioned that even with its decision to choose the so-called zero option and grant citizenship to all her residents, some of the Russian-speakers were still dissatisfied by the politics of the new state and one of the explanations was that they did not have Russian citizenship as well,\textsuperscript{69} which shows that some part of the Russian-speaking population could never be satisfied with the state’s official policy towards them, especially while implementing citizenship policies.

As Lebedeva points out, the strong national movement for the state independence in the Baltic region brought official recognition of the state independence of all three republics by the act of the State Soviet of the USSR under the signature of Mikhail Gorbachev (then the


\textsuperscript{68} Interview with Axel Kirch; Nil Ushakov, Member of Saeima, on April 15, 2008; Dmitrijs Nikolajevs, President, the Latvian National Community “West Russians”, on April 15, 2008; Nils Muiznieks.

\textsuperscript{69} Nadezhda Lebedeva, Novaia Russkaia Diaspora (New Russian Diaspora), Moscow. (1997), 184.
President of the USSR) on September 7, 1991. The importance of this historical fact was highlighted by Aarne Veedla during an interview with him. As he underlined, for the moment of official recognition of state independence of the Baltic States by the Soviet Union (September, 1991), there appeared the citizens of Estonia and the citizens of USSR residing in Estonian Republic. Hence, as he argues, Estonia should not be blamed that after the dissolution of USSR in December, 1991 hundreds of thousands of people (former soviet citizens) were left without citizenship. Veedla adds, that from its side, Estonia created legislation that made possible to obtain citizenship through naturalization process. The same is the story with establishing Latvian republic and the residents left with non-citizen status.

Here, it is important to mention that Lithuania and Estonia adopted and nowadays exist under new constitutions adopted accordingly on October 22, 1992, and on June 28, 1992, while Latvia still lives under the constitution of its pre-war republic, adopted by the Constitutional Assembly on February 15, 1922, thus, once more emphasizing the legal continuity and ties between the pre-occupation and current republics.

It is also worth to analyze the legal framework regarding the citizenship existing in both Latvia and Estonia. The Citizenship Law adopted by the Saeima (Latvian Parliament) on 22 June 1994 and proclaimed by the President Ulmanis on 11 August 1994 (with several amendments) stipulates that Latvian citizenship is the enduring legal connection of a person with the State of Latvia. Among several other provisions, the law declares the Latvian citizens those persons, who were Latvian citizens on 17 June 1940, and their descendants who have registered in accordance with the procedures set out in law, except persons who have

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70 Ibid. 124.
71 A figure actively involved in the independence movement and nowadays advisor to the member of Riigikogu (Estonian Parliament) and former Minister of Foreign Affairs – Kristiina Ojuland.
72 Interview with Aarne Veedla, April 12, 2008.
acquired the citizenship (nationality) of another state after 4 May 1990.\textsuperscript{74} Latvian citizens also are Latvians and Livs\textsuperscript{75} whose permanent place of residence is Latvia, who have registered in accordance with the procedures set out in law and who do not have citizenship (nationality) of another state, or who have received an expatriation permit from the state of their former citizenship (nationality), if such permit is provided for by the laws of that state.\textsuperscript{76} As it could be seen, being ethnically Latvian or Liv is enough for the person to obtain the Latvian citizenship, while the former citizens of Soviet Union of different ethnic origin have to go through the naturalization process in order to be granted the citizenship. From the other side, a positive trend stated by this law is the fact that a child born in Latvia after August 21, 1991 shall be acknowledged as a Latvian citizen if he/she is a stateless person and his/her permanent place of residence is Latvia,\textsuperscript{77} that naturally means that number of non-citizens will decrease significantly in the near future.

The Law on Citizenship adopted by the Riigikogu (Estonian Parliament) on January 19, 1995 and proclaimed by the President Lennart Meri on January 31, 1995 besides usual preconditions set for naturalization process, also contains the special article which states the rule of receiving Estonian citizenship for special service:

Special service shall be accomplishments in science, culture, sports or some other sphere, which have contributed to Estonia’s international reputation. Estonian citizenship for special service may be given to no more than five persons in any one year. Any member of the Government of the Republic may make a proposal to grant Estonian citizenship for special service. The granting of Estonian citizenship for special service must be justified by the Government of the Republic.\textsuperscript{78}

Impact of this special article is outlined by Laitin as well:

\textsuperscript{75} The Livonians or Livs are the indigenous inhabitants of Livonia, part of today’s Republic of Latvia, (See Encyclopedi\a Britannica \ Online, http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9048608/Livonia)
\textsuperscript{78} See Article 10, Law on Citizenship of Estonia, proclaimed on January 31, 1995 http://www.uta.edu/cpsees/estoncit.htm
Prime Minister Tiit Vahi gave the gift of citizenship to people with whom he had good bargaining relations, much to the chagrin of the opposition. But when the opposition leader Mart Laar came to power, he sought to cultivate “his” Russians in the same manner, and Vahi, then out of office, criticized Laar for abusing the practice. Nonetheless, neither Vahi nor Laar gave citizenship to potential fifth columnists.  

As an additional positive factor from Estonian legislation, could be mentioned the fact of granting active voting right in the local elections to the non-citizens; however, they still were not granted the passive electoral right that meant they were not able to be elected for the local council positions. The same has not happened in Latvia, though, the country has no less portion of non-citizens. Dmitrijs Nikolajevs explained that in Estonia non-citizens, mainly Russian-speakers compactly live in two northern regions of the country and constitute a clear majority in those regions (that was why leaving them without voting right would mean that practically no one would be able to vote and accordingly, the local self-government would not be formed), while in Latvia, they (non-citizens) are spread all over the country and granting voting right to them would mean that they could change local political establishment in the whole Latvian state.  

Nevertheless, despite the positive provisions in the legislation, for the initial period of the state-building process in both Latvia and Estonia state policies stayed quite restrictive and this was mentioned by various international human rights organizations. Hughes and Sasse point out as an example of exclusive legislation, Estonia’s Law of October 1993 on “Cultural Autonomy for National Minorities” which was limited to Estonian citizens, thus, excluding the vast majority of its national minorities from the Russian-speaking population who were denied citizenship.  

80 Interview with Dmitrijs Nikolajevs.  
Spruds claims that the demographic situation played an important role in adopting less inclusive citizenship legislation in Latvia and Estonia; in the USSR Latvians and Estonians were the smallest among fifteen nationalities which nominally had their own republics, by constituting 0.5% and 0.4% of the total population, respectively.\(^{82}\) He shows that given comparatively unfavorable demographic tendencies among Latvians, the figures suggested that Latvians were about to become a minority in their own republic.\(^{83}\) This situation promoted rather unenthusiastic approach among considerable number of the titular people towards co-existence with Russian-speaking population.\(^{84}\) Furthermore, Spruds argues, that the perceptions of demographic threat to the national survival were strengthened by historical experiences that largely contributed to the formation of feelings of victimization and deeply entrenched national grievances within the Baltic societies; and Russian-speaking minority was perceived as a potential instrument for Russia to exert its influence on the new states.\(^{85}\) In 1993 the Latvian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Georgs Andrejevs stated that “Russia, by using [her diaspora] as a fifth column…is seeking to create a situation enabling forces which are not Latvian to come to power and to annex Latvia to Russia”.\(^{86}\)

Perceptions of nation and state largely derived from the above mentioned beliefs. An ethnically defined nation-state was considered the only possibility for the survival of Latvian and Estonian culture, language and nation itself.

Another important characteristic of the state-building process in all of the three Baltic Republics was a strong tendency towards the centralized unitary states despite existence of some towns and regions with compactly settled ethnic minorities. David Laitin outlines the processes taking place in summer 1993 and describes the picture many feared would bring

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\(^{82}\) Andris Spruds, “Minority Issues in the Baltic States in the Context of the NATO Enlargement”, Riga Stradina University, 6.
\(^{83}\) Ibid. 7.
\(^{84}\) Ibid. 7.
\(^{85}\) Ibid. 8.
\(^{86}\) Ibid. 8.
Estonia to the brink of war, when the north-east cities of Estonia (compactly settled by Russian-speakers) organized a referenda on autonomy but the Estonian government declared the referenda illegal on the grounds that the constitution had already stipulated that Estonia was a unitary state.\(^{87}\) In this case modern historical experience of other post-Soviet states was not promising: 4 of 22 new states, formed on the grounds of the ethnic federalism in the post-communist area by January 1, 1993, were Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Russian Federation and the Serbia and Montenegro.\(^{88}\) All four had already experienced or faced in a short period of time bloodshed caused by ethnic tensions in their countries. However, it is not the fact that the only factor causing ethnic cleavages in these countries was the ethnic federalism; hence, it cannot be argued that using federal system of state division is the threat to the unity of the certain country. Therefore, the Baltic political elites’ aspiration for establishing the centralized unitary states presents one more approval of using more ethnic control approach in the state-building process than the power-sharing one.

Despite President Putin’s claim that the Baltic States carried out a "discriminatory, reprehensible policy" against the Russian-speaking minorities in their countries,\(^ {89}\) and Russia’s general attempt to present the picture from a very negative prospective, currently there could be observed more inclusive citizenship policies, and the integrative processes inside the society from the both majority and minority sides. The former Minister of Justice of Latvia, and nowadays member of Parliament, Solvita Aboltina, points out: “the international monitoring groups coming to Latvia after having seen the real situation, are asking: ‘so, where are the ghettos?’.”\(^ {90}\) Vira Konyk, Chairman of the Ukrainians Congress in Estonia, reports that all of the minority groups, including the biggest one, Russian, are provided with the funding

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\(^{89}\) Bush denounces Soviet domination, BBC NEWS, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4521663.stm

\(^{90}\) Interview with Solvita Aboltina, member of Saeima and former minister of Justice of Latvia, on April 15, 2008.
from the Estonian government, thus, giving the chance to these minorities to freely express their cultural distinctiveness, organize various meetings, festivals and events.\textsuperscript{91} Existence of the same trend is confirmed by Dmitrijs Nikolaevs, the President of the Latvian National Community “West Russians”, (an ethnic Russian by his origin).\textsuperscript{92} Concerning the situation in Lithuania, as Freedom House reports, ethnic communities have active cultural and political organizations.\textsuperscript{93} According to Galbreath and Muiznieks, as of December 2007, the Naturalization Board had received naturalization applications concerning 138 074 persons; of these, 127 786 individuals, including 13 572 underage children, had been granted Latvian citizenship.\textsuperscript{94} This data, indeed, demonstrates a positive attitude from the state side while assessing the citizenship applications.

Hence, it could be concluded that currently citizenship policies while protecting and preserving titular nations’ culture and self-identity do not turn into the violation of the ethnic minorities, particularly Russian-Speaking minorities’ rights. Concerning the evaluation of the situation and state policy existing at the initial stage of formation of new republics, it is true that historical experience and temporary demographic picture were decisive while elaborating the ethnic and citizenship policies of the newly-restored independent Baltic States (especially those of Latvia and Estonia). The governments in order to ensure and preserve dominance of the titular nation, culture and language, and to carry out the desirable foreign policy as well, implemented policies guaranteeing these important goals on one hand, and restricting minorities, especially Russian-speakers in their political rights and freedoms.

\textsuperscript{91} Interview with Vira Konyk, Chairman of the Ukrainians Congress in Estonia. On April 11, 2008.
\textsuperscript{92} Interview with Dmitrijs Nikolaevs.
2.3. Genesis of the new stratum – the “Russian-speaking population” and their identity problems in the Baltic States

While discussing the emergence of a new category of identity, the “Russian-speaking population”, David Laitin points out that this conglomerate identity includes Russians, Belarusians, Ukrainians, Poles, and Jews, all who speak Russian as their first language in republics outside their putative national homelands.\(^{95}\) He believes that the Russian-speaking population is not a nationality, but there is reason to think that it will take on the feel of a nationality, just as the Palestinians in the Middle East and the Hispanics in the United States, both conglomerate groups that formed under special political conditions, have done.\(^{96}\) Laitin reports: “In Latvia, the “Russian-speaking population” is a term in common use among foreigners observing the ethnic scene, among nationalist Latvians (who see nonnatives as a homologous mass), and Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians (who see the language law as one of the great threats to their future in Latvia, and feel that they all suffer from this common fate).”\(^{97}\)

While dealing with the former soviet citizens, particularly Russian-speakers in the Baltic States without legal and citizenship ties with local states, it is difficult to characterize them either by the term “indigenous minorities” or the “migrant minorities”. The possible solution seems to be to use the term “diaspora”. Here I will quote the defining criteria of diaspora given by William Safran:

1) they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original “center” to two or more “peripheral”, or foreign, regions; 2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland – its physical location, history, and achievements; 3) they believe that they are not – and perhaps cannot be – fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return – when conditions are appropriate; 5) they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of

\(^{96}\) Ibid. X.
\(^{97}\) Ibid. 283.
their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and 6) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship.\(^{98}\)

Of course, it is difficult to argue that this definition fully meets the nature of the Russian-speaking population but I believe in most of its parts this definition could be used in relation with these people, and thus, it is more precise to use the term “diaspora” in relation with them, than “indigenous” or “migrant” minorities. In addition, it is important to mention that Russian-speakers could not be characterized as the entire entity. As most authors report, there are three main settlement periods of Russian-speakers into the Baltic region: Tsarist period (18\(^{th}\) and 19\(^{th}\) centuries), after the Bolshevik revolution (the 1920s), and the Soviet Occupation (from the 1940s). For example, Lensment and Ahmet note that in 1881 Russians composed 3.3% of the total population of Estonia and they were mainly the religious groups called Staroveri and small part of Tsarist officials; in 1922 there were 8.2% of Russians – this rise in numbers was caused by the emigration from Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917; and in 1959, after only fifteen years of the Soviet re-occupation, the total share of Russians among the whole population was already 20.1%, reaching its peak in 1989 – 30% of ethnic Russians.\(^{99}\)

It was, indeed, difficult to believe for the people identifying themselves with Russian culture and language but living outside the Russian Federation to realize that after the dissolution of the USSR, their status had been suddenly changed from the majority all over the Soviet Union to the Russian-speaking minority in the particular new nation-state. It is necessary to mention that this process was equal to the cultural shock and psychological trauma for Russian-speakers when they appeared to be a minority after the decades of feeling


to be at home on the entire space of the Soviet Union, and had to learn a language (especially Estonian which is from a completely different – Finno-Ugric languages group) which was not their native one. Of course, for some of the people, especially in their late ages, it was very difficult to understand the necessity of studying another state language when they used to communicate only in Russian and it was very natural for them. In addition, the official and semi-official discourse of the nationalizing state – especially that coming from those radicals who had most actively pressed for independence and who had played key roles in the transition – was deeply offensive to Russian ears. As Lebedeva points out, there also appeared the self-segregation and negative characteristics from the side of the Russian-speakers towards themselves – “occupants”, “second-sort citizen”, “social outcast”, “alien”, etc.\textsuperscript{100}

It could be concluded that Russian-speaking minorities faced most widespread variety of nationalisms in the post communist world, what is called “conformist nationalism” by Mungiu-Pippidi: “the nationalism of majorities who identify themselves with their states, (…), and feel threatened by those who are different, especially when those people pose some challenge to the state and push for political or legal changes”.\textsuperscript{101} Muiznieks also agrees with this trend and even names a new concept – “defensive nationalism” – as the phenomena established to preserve and protect the national self-identification from the titular nations’ side which was under threat.\textsuperscript{102} It could be deduced that with the notion of “defensive nationalism” suggested by Muiznieks implementing in their citizenship policies, the Baltic States secured ethno-cultural survival and dominance of the titular language and culture in their states.

One factor showing the possible violation of one’s self-identity is presented in the Latvian legislation, according to which the name and surname of the both citizen and non-

\textsuperscript{100} Nadezhda Lebedeva, \textit{Novaia Russkaia Diaspora (New russian diaspora)}, Moscow. (1997), 133.
\textsuperscript{102} Interview with Nils Muiznieks.
citizen of Latvia has to be written according to Latvian language grammar rules, which in fact means completely different spelling from the original one. This issue was pointed out by the member of the Latvian Parliament, Nil Ushakov (an ethnic Russian) during an interview with him; his official name nowadays is spelled Nils Usakovs.

Indeed, not all the representatives of the ethnic minorities were against the state independence and even a considerable part of them voted positively in the referendum, still they were often treated as the “Trojan Horse” and the overall picture was drawn in accordance with some former representatives of the Communist Party (which was declared anti-constitutional by the Supreme Council of Latvia on August 23, 1991), the Soviet Armed Forces and the KGB (State Security Committee in the former Soviet Union). In the parliamentary election of March 1990, Neil Melvin reports,

The ethnic distribution of the deputies indicates that far more Russian-speakers voted for the ethnic Latvian candidates of the Popular Front than for the ethnic Russian candidates put up by Equal Rights. In the new parliament 74% of deputies were ethnic Latvians; the Russian-speakers had clearly voted for independence and trusted ethnic Latvians to represent their interests better than other Russian-speakers… Two-thirds of Latvia’s Russian residents indicated support for the Latvian Supreme Soviet and Council of Ministers in a poll taken two days before the Soviet crackdown in Riga in January 1991. The same poll indicated declining support among the Russians for the Soviet-inspired Interfornt and the All-Latvian Salvation Committee. In January 1991, many non-Letts were reported to be on the barricades in Riga when the Soviet internal security forces launched their attacks.

However, the problems in inter-ethnic relations appeared as soon as the new legislation was elaborated and Estonia and Latvia decided to keep the continuity with their

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104 Interview with Nil Ushakov.
106 “Trojan horse” – according to epic tradition, the hollow wooden horse in which Greeks were concealed to enter Troy; fig. a person, device, etc., insinuated to bring about an enemy's downfall; a person or thing that undermines from within. (See Oxford English Dictionary, entry on Trojan horse, http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50258582/50258582se1?single=1&query_type=word&queryword=trojan+horse&first=1&max_to_show=10&hilite=50258582se1)
pre-war republics, thus, granting citizenship to only the certain category of the permanent residents living by the moment of restoring state independence. All the complexity of the issue is nicely pointed put by Laitin with a quote of one of the Estonian MPs: “We Estonians don’t know how to write laws, but the Russians don’t know how to read them”.  

In the given situation the question concerning possible national or ethnic differences in the quality of life is very important. If ethnic differences do exist, it is necessary to know whether they are essential and whether they cause social inequality between ethnic groups within the standards of the quality of life.

According to Vladislav Volkov, the quality of life of a person, who is free from the pressure and obligation to provide physical and material security for oneself and one’s family, is aimed at social contacts, participation in political activities, creation of a favorable ecological, psychological, and cultural environment, and development of an unbiased opinion. At the same time, the quality of life is not just a growing interest in the social values of an individual’s life; it also develops social standards important for those who are willing to gain success in the individual process of socialization.

As Volkov finds, the case of Latvia shows the interconnection of ethnic stratification and social stratification; this phenomenon has a historical foundation in the system of the division of labor between Latvians and ethnic minorities, and as differentiation of social behavior and attitudes to the dominant values and standards of the life quality. Scholar also examines the three models of ethnic stratification suggested by Rothschild:

1. vertical model, in which ethnic stratification is based on the subordination of ethnic groups into economic life, as well as into the system of political power;

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111 Ibid. 335.
112 Ibid. 352.
113 Ibid. 353.
2. parallel segments, when ethnic groups exist as relatively autonomous social, economic, and political communities;

3. cross-patterned reticulation, in which each ethnic group has a range of economic functions and specialties, and each economic category and sector includes members of different ethnic groups.

The results of the sociological research conducted by Volkov shows different elements of ethnic stratification, hence, it is not possible to argue that there is any support to claim that there is vertical stratification in Latvia and people are segregated due to their ethnic origins. Similar results in the field of employment in Estonia are presented in the data of Labour Market in Figures 2006, published by Statistics Department of Estonia. In addition, Irina Ivaskina, pointed out that the situation is sometimes even worse for representatives of the titular population, especially of the young generation, due to the lack of knowledge of Russian language they are often refused to get job in the bank and other business sector in the capital cities of the Baltic States.

Coming from the examination of the above mentioned information it could be stated that Russian-speaking population faced double trauma after the dissolution of the Soviet Union caused by psychological problem of realization of the fact that they have to accommodate with new political and legal reality on one hand, and by statements and actions of some nationalistic political forces and sometimes self-segregation which appeared among Russian-speakers. Nevertheless, as the research and survey data suggests, there are not big differences in social equality and quality of life due to ethnic stratification of the society that remains the main positive factor for the peaceful development and coexistence in any ethnically segmented and divided society.

115 Interview with Irina Ivaskina.
After analyzing the citizenship policies and development of inter-ethnic relations in the newly-restored independent Baltic republics, it is extremely important to discuss the impact of mass-media and particularly, ethnic minority (Russian-speaking) media on the local societies, and what kind of role media could play in the development of integration process inside the multiethnic communities.
Chapter 3: Impact of Mass Media on Inter-ethnic Relations

In this chapter I examine the impact of mass media, and particularly ethnic minority media on inter-ethnic relations from broader conceptual to the local (Baltic) level. I suggest that both mainstream (majority) and Russian-language (minority) media did more in the past to segregate the society. Nevertheless, I point out that the Baltic society nowadays shows more integrationist rather than opposite trends, therefore, leaving less and less space for the militant media journalists. In addition, I show that official state policies also support more inclusive trend in the inter-ethnic relations.

It is an un-deniable fact that the role played by media in public affairs is increasing worldwide. Ethnic minority media, reflecting and representing interests, needs and concerns of those who feel somehow to be minority in their home-state, is gaining a growing impact on both minority and majority groups day by day. It is obvious that the importance, the media carry in it, could turn into powerful weapon to achieve selfish goals for the politicians and various interest groups. Gagnon while speaking about the role of political elites in provoking and strengthening the ethnic conflicts, argues that in domestic political context information and control over information play a vital role; control or ownership of mass media, especially television, therefore bestows an enormous political advantage where the wider population is involved in politics, and is a key element in the success of these political elites.116

In multi-ethnic and ethnically heterogeneous states the role of media, both mainstream and ethnic minority, can be either conflict provoking or consolidating. Media can be used in a destructive manner, to feed and support nationalist feelings of either majority or minority group, and even confrontation of different ethnic groups in media could lead to ethnic conflict. However, media can also be used in a constructive manner, in order to consolidate opposing ethnicities and dissolve ethnic tensions in society. Hence, independently run

minority media could bring positive outcomes for the minority to feel more independent and free while operating. From this trend the majority could benefit as well because as many rights are given to minority and as they feel more protected and satisfied with their cultural self-expression, the fewer problems they could pose to the major part of the society. Nevertheless, some kind of limitless freedom of expression based on financial sustainability and legal guarantees could lead to promoting some kind of rebellious and separatist trends on the agenda of minority media, and accordingly from this prospective independently and separately run minority media could definitely carry out potential problems for the majority and minority themselves too. The term “minority neurosis” is often used to describe the constant dramatization of minority problems by the minority media.\textsuperscript{117}

Riggins outlines five models those might conceptualize the state’s multicultural strategies on which the development of ethnic minority media depends:

In the \textit{Integrationist Model} it might be assumed by state authorities that subsidizing minority media would not fragment the state but better integrate minorities into national life, because such policies would encourage them to perceive the state as a benevolent institution. At the same time the state would be able to monitor minorities more easily and, if necessary, curtail trends toward political independence. It could also be assumed that through minority media state control would reach those who had not achieved functional bilingualism or fluency in the majority language.\textsuperscript{118}

Due to their economic deprivation and often high rates of illiteracy, ethnic minorities are likely to be engaged in unskilled manual labor. However, as societies modernize, the percentage of the population holding such occupations declines and more people are required


who can work in positions necessitating higher levels of education and professional training. The state may view multiculturalism as educationally beneficial because it helps to develop literacy and to ensure that primary and secondary schools are more effective in reaching minority students. Thus, the state’s commitment may not be to multiculturalism per se but to the economic advantages that are perceived as being one of its consequences, according to the *Economic Model*.\(^{119}\)

*The Divisive Model* suggests that the state can also use ethnicity to maintain or create some levels of tension and rivalry in a country to further its own objective of social control either in the context of colonialism or geopolitical order. Algeria inherited a Kabyle radio channel devised by French authorities as part of a plan to foster disunity in the colonized country by encouraging ethnic rivalry. Not surprisingly, this created great ambivalence when Algeria became independent, and the role of the channel had to be reconsidered.\(^{120}\)

*The Preemptive Model* claims that it is not unusual for the state to establish its own minority media to preempt minorities from founding organizations which would be independent of the state.\(^{121}\)

According to *The Proselytism Model*, it is believed that the state or a transnational organization may explicitly attempt to promote values through the mass media and thus devise appropriate means for reaching minority audiences in their own language.\(^{122}\)

In general, two main options how to support minority initiative in media are shown from the side of the state: guarantee the access through special regulations or provide financial aid. States can concentrate on one of the two or incorporate both.

Generally, it could be deduced that the ultimate goal of minorities’ inclusion in the media should be integration and full participation in public affairs; however, sometimes it is

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119 Ibid. 9.
120 Ibid. 10.
121 Ibid. 10.
122 Ibid. 11.
difficult to distinguish integration from segregation or assimilation. Segregation concentrates mainly on the survival of the culture and it pays little attention to minorities’ integration within the overall society. Assimilation, on the other hand, emphasizes too much the equalization of minorities with the rest of the society, through the adoption of dominant social values, which will damage the cultural distinctiveness of minorities.

The threat of segregation is greatest when media policies are promoting separate papers and broadcast channels, leading to the fact that segregation becomes a major obstacle to ethnic consolidation in society and is therefore not desirable.

It could be mentioned that the mass media sources, especially some representing minority media sources in the Baltic States has done more towards segregation inside the society.

Sulmane shows that there is a conflict in the media space between collective Latvian and Russian memories – liberation versus occupation when assessing the Soviet times and also while evaluating the policies of the nationalizing states as well. As she reports, “nearly all of the Latvian language dailies no longer use negative concepts such as “occupant”, but Russian language newspapers have continued to present a negative and sarcastic self-identification – “occupants”, “second-class citizens”, and “Negroes” (the latter word applied to the country’s con-citizens).”¹²³ Russian media also uses terms such as “Nazis” and “Latvian Russophobes” to characterize all Latvian political establishments; moreover as scholar finds out, in one case a Russian newspaper wrote that “Latvia, by fleeing from the influence of Russia, looks idiotic”. ¹²⁴ From this last remark and other general examples it could be deduced that Russian language media not only acts as a minority media in the Baltic Republics but takes an active part in the political rhetoric often driven from the official Kremlin.

¹²⁴ Ibid. 71.
As Sulmane reports, currently the Latvian state (the same could be said about other two Baltic republics as well) tries to accommodate the interests and needs of the Russian-speaking population and wants to gain their attention (given mainly to the cable television which offers numerous Russian channels broadcasted from Russian Federation) by supporting the Russian language programs on official state broadcast: for example, the second channel of Latvian Television (LTV7) produces various programs, including a daily news broadcast in Russian for different social groups and ethnic minorities; Radio Latvia has news, music and talk shows for Russian-speakers on Channel 4; the commercial channel Radio SWH+ broadcasts in Russian; the privately owned Radio PIK, also in Russian, has even been used as a propaganda tool during local government elections. Nevertheless, sometimes this trend does not contribute to more integrative processes in the society and two information spaces forms two communities. As Sulmane points out, “Latvian journalists and media specialists, for their part, accuse Russian colleagues of being “outsiders”, of taking an alienated look from the sidelines, (…), that Russian journalists only defend the interests and former privileges of their own, narrow community, and are thus unable to take a wider, civic-minded approach.” Nikolajevs connects such an approach taken by the Russian-speaking media to the fact that editors of all the Russian-language press are members of the political parties (especially, FHRUL – For Human Rights and United Latvia) representing the Russo-phone intensions.

There is a need to mention about the rapidly growing internet media and its role for the ethnic minority media. Indeed, in conditions with lack of funding and restrictive policies from the side of the nationalizing state, internet media could appear as a very effective, easily accessible, more independent and relatively cheaper source of information for an ethnic minority. For example, according to Sulmane, the percentage of internet users in Latvia has increased quickly over the last few years; as she reports the percentage of Latvian and non-

125 Ibid. 73.
126 Ibid. 73.
127 Interview with Dmitrijs Nikolaevs.
Latvian users of Internet portals is 43% and 36%, respectively among the respondents.\textsuperscript{128} She shows that this growing resource is used by the both sides (majority and minority) to meet and debate over the socio-political issues and publish online publications.\textsuperscript{129}

Pretty much the same picture exists in Estonia. Russian-speakers have difficulties adjusting to the new reality. Their status has been changed from the position of the privileged majority within a Soviet Union to the status of an ethnic minority within a new nationalizing state. And Russian language media often contribute to the clash between the two groups while interpreting and emphasizing the official political discourse. According to Laitin, the Russian-language press had a regular column of translations from the Estonian press and had a knack for finding those most obnoxious to its readers.\textsuperscript{130} As Tanel Mätlik, Director of Integration Foundation and member of the President’s Round Table on National Minorities concludes, that to run programs, especially news in Russian on Estonian mainstream media channels is of immense importance, though, this will not be commercially beneficial but could greatly facilitate integrative stance in the Estonian society due to the fact that Russian-speakers will gain more objective and real picture about local news and developments.\textsuperscript{131}

In Lithuania, where are fewer number of Russian-speakers, still, as Tereskinas outlines, the characteristic tone of articles and reports published in mainstream press is one of relentless threat from the Russians, who might subvert the Lithuanian government and attempt to re-join “mother” Russia.\textsuperscript{132} The response from the Russian-speaking media’s side is the counter-blaming and often overestimation of some minor problems. As Tereskinas adds, there were a total of 22 stories about people of Russian ethnicity living in Lithuania published in

\begin{itemize}
\item Ibid. 72.
\item Interview with Tanel Mätlik, Director of Integration Foundation, April 11, 2008.
\end{itemize}
*Lietuvos Rytas* (The Morning of Lithuania) – the biggest mainstream daily during the researched period of November 27, 2000 – May 9, 2001; of those, nine focused on crimes, seven dealt with active Lithuanian-Russian politicians, four with culture and education, and two with historical justice.\(^{133}\) As it could be seen only a small part of press coverage deals with culture and education which could be mostly socially integrative and beneficial for the constructive dialogue inside the segregated society.

Sulmane notes that the Russian language media in Latvia do not fulfill the functions of typical minority media outlets as it represent not just the citizens of a certain minority with specific interests and needs but also non-citizens and aliens (citizens of Russian Federation mainly) who see Russian language media as a resource to access the public sphere and as a bastion during times of great changes.\(^{134}\) However, as Ivaskina points out, even among the Russian-language press could be outlined the so-called hard-liners and the moderates; she characterizes as the more “hard-liner” and “hunter” on sensations the newspaper “Vesti Sevodnia” (News Today) while the “Telegraph” could be considered as taking more neutral and objective position.\(^{135}\)

Nevertheless, with the joining of the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) by all of the three Baltic Republics in 2004, the official discourse of the governments and the state’s policies began to take more inclusive approach towards Russian-speaking minorities. As Freedom House reports, among the most positive developments in Estonia in 2006 were the continuing ability of the media to operate free of direct governmental regulation, the rise of Russian-language editions of portions of the national press\(^{136}\), the appearance of a special series entitled Remaining Russian on the state,

\(^{133}\) Ibid. 226.


\(^{135}\) Interview with Irina Ivaskina.

and the continued growth of Internet use in what Estonia is already one of the most online countries in the world.\textsuperscript{137} All of this contributed to a lively press and helped to strengthen the process of integration of Estonia’s Russian-speaking minority. From their side, Russian-speakers have also realized that it is much better to take an active part in the civil life and get the financial and social benefits suggested by the countries’ membership in the above mentioned, organizations, especially in the EU. Hence, the Baltic society nowadays shows a more integrationist, therefore, leaving less and less space for the militant media journalists willing to split the society in the two opposing communities. Accordingly, from the prospective of the five models of state strategies targeting the minority media, proposed by Riggins, hereby, I conclude that nowadays there could be mentioned more use of the combination of the \textit{Integrationist} and the \textit{Economic} models from the Baltic states’ side, that is, for sure, greatly beneficial for the further integration inside the disintegrated society.

It is clear that Russia influences internal public affairs in the Baltic region by means of both – Russian mainstream media broadcast in the Baltic States through cable networks, and Russian-speaking minority media existing in the region. It is obvious that using impact of mass-media is one of the consistent parts of Russia’s policies towards the Baltic States and Russian-speaking minorities living there. Therefore, it is worth to review Russia as an external national homeland for the Russian-speaking population in the coming chapter.

Chapter 4: Russia – external national “homeland” for “Russian-speakers”, and its role and place in the triadic nexus

Rogers Brubaker notes:

In cases where the triangular relationship is deeply conflictual, the new Europe, like interwar Europe, confronts a potentially explosive – and in some cases actually explosive – dynamic interplay between a set of new or newly reconfigured nationalizing states, ethnically heterogeneous yet conceived as nation-states, whose dominant elites promote (to varying degrees) the language, culture, demographic position, economic flourishing, or political hegemony of the nominally state-bearing nation; the substantial, self-conscious, and (to varying degrees) organized and politically alienated national minorities in those states, whose leaders demand cultural or territorial autonomy and resist actual or perceived policies or processes of assimilation or discrimination; and the external national “homelands” of the minorities, whose elites (again to varying degrees) closely monitor the situation of their co-ethnics in the new states, vigorously protest alleged violations of their rights, and assert the right, even the obligation, to defend their interests.138

It is obvious that there are all grounds and all the three essential factors (nationalizing states, national minorities, and external national homelands) presented in order to argue existence of triadic nexus inter-ethnic relations in the Baltic region.

According to Brubaker external national homelands are constructed through political action, and not given by only the facts of ethnic demography.139 As he claims, a state becomes an external national homeland for its ethnic diaspora when political or cultural elites define ethnonational kin in other states as members of one and the same nation, claim that they belong, in some sense, to the state, and assert that their condition must be monitored and the interests protected and promoted by the state; and when the state actually does take action in the name of monitoring, promoting, and protecting the interests of its ethnonational kin abroad.140 As Brubaker finds, homeland’s politics takes a variety of forms, ranging from

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139 Ibid. 58.
140 Ibid. 58.
immigration and citizenship privileges for returning members of the ethnic diaspora, through various attempts to influence other states’ policies towards its co-ethnics.\textsuperscript{141}

And, indeed, all the actions and politics implemented by the Russian Federation since the collapse of the Soviet Union, and its intentions to be the only protector of the interests of the Russian-speaking population in the Baltic States, lead to the deduction that Russia is represented as external national homeland for Russian-speakers in the Baltic region. Hence, it is extremely important and valuable to examine Russia’s official and un-official discourse and actions while acting as the homeland state.

Fearon mentions that the biggest challenge to the relative peace could come due to Russia’s actions – “A more actively and openly irredentist policy might raise the value of military or secessionist option for “Russian-speakers”, thus raising the risk that the commitment problem between majority and minority could subsequently be activated. Alternatively, as the fear of Russian “fifth columns” grows, existing implicit bargains between majority and minority groups may be undermined”.\textsuperscript{142}

As Muiznieks outlines, the policy of the Russian Federation towards its “compatriots”\textsuperscript{143} in the Baltic States has taken place in three separate arenas: first, from 1992 through August 1994, Russia sought to use its military as a tool to affect the status of Russians in Latvia, attempting to link the issue of troop withdrawal to changes in Latvian and Estonian policy and even threatening military action; second, from 1992 to the present, Russia raised the issue of Russian-speaking minorities in various international organizations, seeking to exert pressure on the Baltic States to change their policies and isolate them diplomatically, also to stop their stream towards the NATO and EU affiliation; third, as of 1999, Russia

\textsuperscript{141} Ibid. 58.


\textsuperscript{143} Sootechestvenniki (compatriots) – term used by the Russian authorities towards ethnic Russians and other ‘Russian-speakers’ residing abroad. Compatriot - One who is of the same country with another; a fellow-countryman. See Oxford English Dictionary, entry on compatriot http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50045445?)
implemented a package of policy measures aimed at assisting certain categories of compatriots and maintaining their link to Russia.\textsuperscript{144}

It is important to mention that at the height of tensions with Gorbachev’s USSR in January 1991, Latvia along with Estonia signed inter-state treaties with Yeltsin’s Russian Federation which stated that both sides should allow individuals to freely choose citizenship, soon after independence most Baltic leaders reinterpreted promises made for tactical reasons and symbolic (never ratified) treaties, as the logic of restoring independence played out.\textsuperscript{145} Quite strict and offensive response from Russian side did not make Baltic States to wait for a long time – in October 1992, Sergei Zatov, Russia’s chief negotiator with Latvia, issued a barely veiled threat: “One should not forget that [Russia’s] military personnel in Latvia have access to weapons. If apartheid against inhabitants of Russian nationality continues, conflict is unavoidable”.\textsuperscript{146} In early November 1993, the “Main Provisions of the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation” were accepted stating that “the oppression of the rights, freedoms and lawful interests of Russian citizens in other countries would permit the use of military force to defend the interests of such citizens”.\textsuperscript{147}

As it was mentioned above, after the withdrawal of the Russian military troops from the Baltic countries, Russia did not make any direct threats of using military means to interfere in the domestic affairs of the Baltic States; though, Russia uses every opportunity to make a claim about violation of the Russian-Speaking population’s basic human rights at every level of international forum, and also implements programs of economic and cultural support towards its compatriots. Russia has also tried to take other measures as well to support the Russian-speakers in the Baltic States: the first one was granting citizenship, and

\textsuperscript{147} Ibid. 121.
another one – offering resettlement to the Russian Federation. As Pettai and Kallas show, by the mid-1990s, some 100,000 non-citizens residing in Estonia, roughly 13% of the population, had taken advantage of Russia’s simplified procedure for ex-Soviet citizens to obtain Russian Federation citizenship, making Estonia with the highest proportion of such applicants among any other former Soviet republics. Pettai and Kallas also point out that during the period from 1990 to 1996, a net of total 80,000 people left Estonia, the overwhelming majority of them moved to the East (Russia). As Aarne Veedla reported, most of these people were taken to Lipetsk Oblast (district) of Russian Federation and left in poor conditions; many of them wanted to return but they had already quitted their legal ties with Estonian state, therefore, did not have any chance to return. This clearly shows the controversial results of the Russian policy towards its compatriots in the Baltic States.

Brubaker argues that a national minority, a nationalizing state and an external national homeland should each be conceived as a field of differentiated and competing positions, as an arena of struggle among competing stances. As he suggests, a central aspect of the triangular relational nexus is reciprocal interfiled monitoring: actors in each field closely and continuously monitor relations and actions in each of the other two fields that often becomes the object of representational struggles among actors in a given field. Thus, according to the author, the struggle to mobilize a national minority may be linked to a struggle to represent the “host state” as a nationalizing or nationally oppressive one; conversely, proponents of nationalization may seek to represent the national minority as actually or potentially disloyal, or the “homeland” as actually or potentially irredentist. Indeed, it could

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149 Ibid. 7.
150 Interview with Aarne Veedla, advisor to the member of Riigikogu (Estonian Parliament) Kristiina Ojuland, April 12, 2008.
152 Ibid. 68.
153 Ibid. 68.
be concluded that interethnic relations in the beginning of the 1990s developed exactly in accordance with this definition of triangular relational nexus.

Laitin finds difficult the positions of each in this triadic nexus and recommends for the external national homeland’s government the following:

A more strategic analysis of this complex triadic field points out that if the government of the national homeland shows too great an interest in the national minority, it will give that minority an incentive to initiate violence, in order to produce martyrs, and thereby drawing in the armies of the national homeland to reincorporate their territory. Yet if the national homeland shows too little an interest in the national minority, it would be giving the leaders of the nationalizing state the courage to renege on their security commitments to that minority. This could heighten tensions and raise the probability of ethnic war. Consequently, if the government of the national homeland takes a middle path between solid support and complete indifference to their ethnic brethren now living in nationalizing states, it has, according to this logic, done its best to guarantee peace.  

It is difficult not to agree with Laitin’s recommendation; however, Russia’s policy still remains more than middle path and it actively interferes in the relations between Russian-speaking minorities and the governments of the Baltic States. An example given by Pettai and Kallas clearly outlines Russia’s current interests and involvement in the domestic issues of the Baltic States, when by allowing activists from the pro-presidential Nashi movement to besiege the Estonian embassy in Moscow, Russia also interfered in the crisis over the problem of replacement of bronze statue to the Soviet Soldier, and this fact only added to many Estonians’ preconceptions that the Kremlin was behind the disturbances in the Estonian capital.

After analyzing peculiarities of the relations between the actors of the triangular nexus on the Baltic arena, it is clear that centralization and nationalization of state powers in the Baltic States were caused by the threat of potential external sponsorship of ethnic cleavages, and foreign (Russian) influence on domestic and international affairs.

Chapter 5: Accession to the EU and NATO: Facilitating the integration inside the societies of the Baltic States

Taking into account the contemporary “positive” experience of Georgia and Moldova with Russian so-called peace-keepers and Russia’s open involvement in the armed conflict on the side of the rebellious regions, Baltic political leaders were strongly pushed to seek new security and stability guarantees under the “security umbrella” provided by the membership in NATO and the EU.

The Baltic States have all sought to “return to Europe” in the post-Soviet period, a project which has been variously conceptualized by the different political elites of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. For some, it has been considered a logical reassertion or restoration of their natural and rightful position within a “common European home”. President of Latvia, Vaira Vike-Freiberga explicitly underscored this perception when, following the European Union Helsinki Summit’s decision in December 1999 to open up negotiations with Latvia, she stated that Latvia had turned its back to and walked away from the post-Soviet realm forever, to become a democratic and open European Country. European Commission President Romano Prodi reinforced such a perception in an address to the Lithuanian Seimas (parliament) in February 2000: “When joining the Union, Lithuania will bring with it its love of freedom and democracy, which has been the basis of the restoration of independence”.

Rein Taagepera, an academic actively involved in designing the policies of ethnic integration in Estonia, clearly contrasts Estonia’s European character in comparison with other “non-European” countries, and argues that Estonia and its Baltic neighbors (Latvia and Lithuania) have less to do in order to transform themselves and become the part of the

158 Ibid. 274.
European Community than Russia or Serbia. Taagepera’s claim clearly presents all the
deepness of the nationalistic intentions of some of the politicians and academics in the
beginning of the 1990s and shows streaming to manifest the superiority of the Baltic nations’
cultures over the Russian one. David Laitin quotes a leading Estonian sociologist, Marika
Kirch, when she defines the cultural border and distinctiveness between Estonia and Russia:

If one supposes hesitatingly, that the civilizational border between Estonia and
Russia is anachronistic or negligible, one need only stand on the bridge over the
Narva river… and witness carefully the “overt civilizational confrontation” of
two cultures: on the Estonian side there is an historic fortress built by the
Swedes, Danes and Germans in accordance with the cultural traditions of
Western Europe; on the other [in Ivangoord], a primeval fortress as an exponent
of Slavic-Orthodox cultural traditions.

Besides identity narratives and idea of belonging to the entire “European family”, in
reality joining the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) had
been of paramount importance for strengthening the state sovereignty, territorial integrity,
societal, economic, and political stability for the all three of Baltic States.

However, the process towards membership in Euro-Atlantic organizations faced two
main challenges, and both were directly connected with the problem of Russian-speaking
minorities. On the one hand, Russian-speakers often driven by the Russo-phone political
forces were strongly against entering the Western organizations, especially NATO, that would
naturally mean for them to be cut off from the “motherland” – Russia. Tabuns quotes a
comment left by Russian-speaker at an internet-forum which makes the picture clear: “Latvia
is a country of frightened idiots – imagine paying such huge amounts of money for the
seeming promises of the bandits who occupy the White House!” On the other hand, EU and
NATO promoting democracy worldwide could not let themselves to accept states

160Marika Kirch, ed., Changing Identities in Estonia: Sociological Facts and Commentaries, in David D. Laitin,
3.
161Aivars Tabuns, “Attitudes Towards the State and Latvian Foreign Policy,” in *Latvian-Russian Relations:
(particularly, Estonia and Latvia) with restrictive citizenship policies towards the ethnic minorities’ rights.

To reach their ultimate objective of becoming EU Member States, the Baltic countries had to satisfy the political and economic criteria for accession as identified by the June 1993 Copenhagen European Council. This implied stable institutions “guarantying democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and promotion of minorities”.\textsuperscript{162} Indeed, neither Estonia nor Latvia was fully meeting these criteria by that moment. As Spruds points out, the Latvian legislature initially passed a law which envisaged a quota system which would allow only 0.1\% of non-citizens to be naturalized each year.\textsuperscript{163} Spruds reports that after the involvement of international organizations and the President, the quota system was abandoned and the so-called window system was introduced - this meant that persons from different age groups could start to apply in different years.\textsuperscript{164} According the scholar, the law stipulated restrictions on naturalization to persons who acted against Latvian independence, those who propagated fascist, chauvinist, national-socialist, communist or other totalitarian ideas, former employees of the KGB and security services, retired officers of the USSR Armed Forces and their spouses, and persons who had been sentenced for a term exceeding one year for an international crime; as result of this legislation, the majority of the non-titular population (more than 60\%) was deprived of citizenship.\textsuperscript{165}

Besides protests and civil complaints, Russian-speakers lodged several complaints at the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). One of the prominent cases was the so-called Silvenko Case when the Court found a violation of the principles stated in Article 8 of the European Convention, and concluded that the Latvian authorities “overstepped their margin

\textsuperscript{163} Andris Spruds, “Minority Issues in the Baltic States in the Context of the NATO Enlargement”, Riga Stradiuna University, 5.
\textsuperscript{164} Ibid. 5.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid. 5.
of appreciation” and awarded a compensation amount of 10,000 EUR to each of the applicants (Silvenko family).\textsuperscript{166}

This course of events demanded a clear response from international community. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) decided to establish permanent missions in Riga and Tallinn, operating in close co-operation with the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Max van der Stoel. As Van Elsuwege points out, this constant monitoring, in combination with the High Commissioner’s diplomatic recommendations, decreased the possibility of violent escalation.\textsuperscript{167} Van der Stoel’s positive involvement in this process, particularly during the tense dispute over the theme of referenda held by local councils of the North Estonian towns (mostly inhabited by Russian-Speakers) in summer 1993 is outlined by Laitin too\textsuperscript{168}. Pettai and Kallas also underline the positive recommendations and activities carried out by Van der Stoel.\textsuperscript{169} In addition, Pettai and Kallas quote Kelley’s conclusion in order to show the importance of the impact of united work of European organizations (OSCE – Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, EU – European Union, CoE – Council of Europe) for improving the legislative norms and make them more inclusive in Estonia: “while the OSCE relied mostly on persuasion, and the EU was the master of political conditionality, the CoE straddled the divide using persuasion at times, and conditionality at other times. However, often the organizations worked side-by-side exposing the governments to the interplay of persuasion and conditionality.”\textsuperscript{170}

It could not be denied that pressure from Western society and the Baltic’s keen streaming towards the entire “European family” played a very positive role and contributed to


\textsuperscript{167} Ibid. 5.


the beginning of integration processes in the Baltic countries. As a result, in October 1998, the Latvian citizens (most of them ethnic Latvians) supported the idea of making the naturalization procedure to obtain citizenship easier at the referendum.\textsuperscript{171} Furthermore, the Latvian government eliminated restrictions preventing non-citizens from working as fire-fighters, airline staff, and pharmacists.\textsuperscript{172} At the end of 1998 the Latvian government approved the National Programme “The integration of Society in Latvia” which indicated that, “Latvia has never been an ethnically homogenous country. Society must take into account the current situation and future prospects... Latvia is a democratic, national state in which every resident, the Latvian nation, and each national minority has the right to preserve their own national identity”.\textsuperscript{173} In Estonia, similar processes have taken place and, in some instances, tendency towards more inclusive policy happened earlier than in Latvia. Already at the end of 1993, Estonian President Lenart Meri established the “Roundtable on Minorities” in order to facilitate inter-ethnic understanding; there was also removed the language requirements for local election candidates and modified controversial “Aliens Law”.\textsuperscript{174}

From the side of Russian-speakers it was also clear that it was better to take a seat in the “Baltic Train moving towards Europe” than to be associated with the “fifth column” or the “Trojan Horse” in Russia’s hands, which was no longer attractive in as much as Europe. Besides direct economic benefits of being members of the European Community and appearing of new stratum – the “European Russians”\textsuperscript{175}, they also strongly realized that within this new environment they would be better able to internationalize their own ethnic problems and therefore more protect their rights. The clear example of this “thinking in a right way” is the result of the European Parliament elections in 2004. The Russian political alliance – For

\textsuperscript{171} Andris Spruds, “Minority Issues in the Baltic States in the Context of the NATO Enlargement”, Riga Stradina University, 10.
\textsuperscript{173} Andris Spruds, “Minority Issues in the Baltic States in the Context of the NATO Enlargement”, Riga Stradina University, 11.
\textsuperscript{174} Ibid. 12.
\textsuperscript{175} Interview with Tanel Mätlik.
Human Rights in a United Latvia (FHRUL) did well, receiving 10.66% of the vote and Tatyana Zhdanok became a member of the European Parliament.\textsuperscript{176} This result provided FHRUL with another platform as well - Mrs. Zhdanok publicly called for the establishment of a pan-European Russian party and in June 2004, together with politicians from five other European countries, signed a manifesto in Prague establishing such a party.\textsuperscript{177} Party’s stated goal was to defend the rights of Russian-speakers in all EU member states, strengthen the status of the Russian language in the EU, as well as promote closer links between the EU and Russia.\textsuperscript{178}

From the perspective of membership in NATO, it could be deduced that collective security guarantees provided by this organization, made the Baltic States to feel more secure from the possibility of external influence on domestic affairs, and accordingly to make the legislation more inclusive.

However, no process could be outlined in its nature without potential drawbacks and shortcomings. Nil Ushakov pointed out a potential indirect negative impact of the EU membership on the integration processes inside the Baltic, particularly Latvian society. He mentioned that many Russian-speakers had lost incentive to obtain Latvian citizenship after country became affiliated with the EU as they could travel freely inside the EU zone even with their non-citizens’ passports.\textsuperscript{179} This deduction is supported by Galbreath and Muiznieks too, when they show that since January 2007 the labor markets of many EU member states have been opened to Latvia’s non-citizens, a powerful economic incentive for naturalization.

\textsuperscript{177} Ibid. 46.
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid. 46.
\textsuperscript{179} Interview with Nil Ushakov.
was eliminated.\textsuperscript{180} Therefore, it is true that accession to the EU could bring some minor negative impacts as well.

After having read the three scenarios of ethnic relations in Latvia by 2020 suggested by Muiznieks, I see one more minor and very hypothetic but still a potential drawback and obstacle for the naturalization process. In all three scenarios, Muiznieks mentions about the quota of refugees to accept set by Brussels (EU) for Latvia in the interest of “solidarity and burden-sharing”.\textsuperscript{181} Thus, hereby, I argue that in the future there could appear an incentive for the local government (Latvian in this case) to keep the number of own migrants (in this case Russian-speaking non-citizens) high in order to have an argument for refusing additional migrants and refugees in the frames of cooperation and common policy set by the European Union.

Nevertheless, despite the possible drawbacks of Euro-integration on the integration and naturalization process, the overall positive role of membership in the two Euro-Atlantic organizations (EU and NATO) in the integrative processes between the majority and minority groups inside the Baltic society is clear, especially in the process of making citizenship legislation more inclusive; Nils Muiznieks, the well-known scholar on this issue, who was the Minister for Special Assignments for Society Integration Affairs during the Euro-Atlantic accession period, also agrees with these findings,\textsuperscript{182} as do all the other scholars, active politicians and NGO activists with whom I had meetings and interviews during my field trip.

\textsuperscript{182} Interview with Nils Muiznieks.
Conclusion

The process of affiliation with Western organizations has really played a productive role and facilitated more integration and positive inter-relations inside the Baltic societies, even if former Russian President Vladimir Putin thinks in another way and makes a claim that despite affiliation of Latvia into NATO, has nothing changed with the situation of non-citizens and membership in NATO is not a guarantee for the democratization of the country.183

Nevertheless, the April, 2007 street clashes and protests against the moving of the statue of the Soviet Soldier in Tallinn, when the protesters were mainly Russian-speakers184 and Russian citizens coming from Russian Federation, shows that the dispute between nations around the interpretation of the common history and cleavages on this basis has not disappeared in the society, and that Russia is always ready to interfere in the domestic policies of the Baltic countries. Ijabs speaks about Russian civil organizations activities and mentions that “Combined with Soviet nostalgia and the orientation towards Russia, this activism remains isolated from the Latvian part of society, which tends to see in it evidence of a fifth column, rather than co-citizens with legitimate interests”.186 On the other hand, Baltic national elites ensured their dominant positions in the beginning years of the restored state independence and accordingly defined the mainstream of the foreign policy without involvement of ethnic minorities (who could be possible threats for the final goals of national

185 Nashi’s one-trick pony, Baltatlantis.com, http://www.baltatlantis.com/?id=10682
Finally, even after significant improvements in the legislation and general loss of interest of population towards nationalistic ideas in comparison with economic and social welfare interests, a high number of residents of both Latvia and Estonia remain non-citizen (18% in the Latvian case and 12% in the Estonian one).

While speaking about the process of integration, Evhen Tsybulenko, Head of Human Rights Centre, compares it with a very simple chair standing on four legs. One of these legs, he believes, is the knowledge of state language; and without one leg the chair cannot be steady. At the same time, Tsybulenko argues, it is impossible to stay on the only leg as well. Thus, he deduces that while keeping in mind the importance of the knowledge of the state language, there should also be taken into consideration other problematic issues such as the respect to the rule of law, democracy, equal rights, etc. He also finds very keen the problem of education of youth, and believes that school should take a more active part in the raising of legal-awareness and understanding of the main concepts of the state and law among the young generation. I absolutely agree with this, because building the common society and state, without tensions on the interpretation of the historical past which was controversial not due to ethnic but mainly because of political differences, is the very role which clearly belongs to the future generation. Maimone also points out the importance of speaking the same language; however, she notes that even if Estonians and Russian-speakers have the same language, it is not obvious that their attitudes and opinions would be any more similar than they currently are. And, she makes a comparison with the situation in the United States where the vast majority of African-Americans speak English, the same as the majority of other Americans,

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191 Ibid.
and concludes that the differences in the attitudes of Russian-speakers and Estonians are not that much larger than differences between African-Americans and Americans.\textsuperscript{193}

Undoubtedly, some Russian-Speakers do not constitute an integral part of the local – Estonian, Latvian or Lithuanian society but it is also obvious that many of these people have already integrated into the local societies and feel they belong to the states where they live in; therefore, they are not and should not be treated as a “fifth column”. Though the integration process is still going on and no one could definitely claim any concrete time when the titular and Russian-speaking minorities will live in an absolute harmony, one fact remains the most important - the worst possible scenario of interethnic relations has already been avoided. Nowadays both parts of society are building interethnic relations in constructive and legal framework, especially, the young generation which cares more about the social welfare and economic development of the country, where they all live and co-exist. In this respect, Pettai and Kallas’s report is extremely important, that although polls among Russian-speakers showed that almost 80% believed the decision to move the “Bronze Soldier” was wrong, nearly 70% still considered themselves a part of Estonian society.\textsuperscript{194}

From their side, the Baltic States have also ensured to make their legislation and policies in accordance with the high standards set up by the civilized community. The clear approval of this positive stance is the Democracy Score given for each of the three countries by Freedom House, which is considered to be one of the main watchdogs on human rights protection and democracy. The overall Democracy Score for Latvia shows that country further improved the main components for the democratic governance and strengthened its score on the scale\textsuperscript{195} from 2.29 in 1999 to 2.07 by January 1, 2007.\textsuperscript{196} The fact that Lithuania

\textsuperscript{193} Ibid. 24.
\textsuperscript{195} The ratings are based on a scale of 1 o 7, with 1 representing the highest level of democratic progress and 7 the lowest. The Democracy Score is an average of ratings for the categories tracked in a given year. (source: Freedom House, \textit{Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia}, (2007), New York, 391.
showed no significant improvement and had the same overall score as in 1999 (2.29), is not connected with poor conditions existing for minority self-expression or other general criteria for democracy evaluation, but it could be explained by the relatively high level of corruption assessed with 4.00 points that makes the overall score lower on the scale.\textsuperscript{197} As for Estonia, it is the leader from the Baltic region and raised its score from 2.25 in 1999 to 1.96 by January 1, 2007.\textsuperscript{198} With these Democracy Scores\textsuperscript{199} the Baltic States have the leading positions among 29 countries representing the New EU and former USSR and Yugoslav states (only Slovenia did better\textsuperscript{200}).

This democratic development is one more piece of empirical support that accession to the NATO and EU became a strong facilitating factor for more inclusive citizenship legislation and integration of the entire Baltic society including both titular and non-titular populations. The other two arguments presented in this thesis have also shown their both empirical and theoretical validity. Explanation given in the Chapters 1 and 2 clearly showed that, indeed, historical experience was decisive while elaborating the ethnic and citizenship policies of the newly-restored independent Baltic States. My second argument, that centralization and nationalization of state powers were caused by the threat of potential external sponsorship of ethnic cleavages, and foreign influence on domestic and international affairs, was elaborated and confirmed in the Chapter 4 while discussing the importance of the triadic nexus relations in the Baltic Region and the role of Russia in this nexus.

I began with a question: are the Russian-speaking population in the Baltic States a “fifth column” or an integral part of the local society?; and I have shown that Russian-speaking population in the Baltic States despite all the challenges faced, a great desire and

\textsuperscript{196} Ibid. 391.
\textsuperscript{197} Ibid. 415.
\textsuperscript{198} Ibid. 255.
\textsuperscript{199} The latest scores for the period from January 1, 2007 to January 1, 2008 have not been announced yet, even on the official web-site of Freedom House.
\textsuperscript{200} Freedom House, \textit{Nations in Transit, Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia}, (2007), New York, 42.
efforts made by the interested external political forces, have not been turned into and used as the “fifth column” against the states of their citizenship and/or residence. It was also shown that despite the drawbacks, visible challenges and obstacles on the way of state formation, both parts of the Baltic society, majority (titular) and minority (Russian-Speaking), have managed to avoid destructive and bloody development of interethnic relations, and have got a direction towards peaceful cohabitation and integrative processes inside the society.

It is very natural that there are ethno-cultural differences and distinctions in political beliefs and opinions between the representatives of the titular nations and the Russian-speakers; integration does not and should not mean assimilation. However, I believe the official discourse and legislative changes will make government policies even more inclusive. This will allow citizens as Muller points out “to-feel-at-home-in-the-state”. There still will exist for a long period of time distinctions along the ethno-cultural lines between the majority and minority groups, though these distinctions will not turn into a dangerous and destructive threat to society, thus, leaving no room for any further threat of using Russian-speakers as a “fifth column” in the Baltic States.

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201 In this case, I would add “non-citizens” as well.
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