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Introduction – Minority Participation in Estonia and Latvia

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High levels of active political participation are considered to be indicators of stable democracies. Low levels of participation, in turn, are related to disaffection with the political process and the political system more generally (Agarin, 2013; Pharr *et al.*, 2000). For individuals and groups, political participation has both a 'voice' and an 'identification' function: participants in democratic political processes have an opportunity to make their interests and concerns heard, and where they are able to, muster enough political power to influence the outcome of decision-making processes; effective participation and the understanding that their views are valued in society in turn is linked to enhanced feelings of belonging and identification of citizens with the larger community. Disaffection and disengagement from the political process have been explained as a result of non-responsive political institutions that—persistently—do not reflect minority preferences. Where political systems are not (perceived as) open and responsive, citizen and non-citizen residents who do not feel that the system reflects their needs and demands tend to disengage and withdraw from the political process (Offe, 2009).

Conversely, for democratic political institutions, the political involvement of their populations offers the opportunity to 'learn' about citizens' needs and preferences in order to improve government performance (Linz and Stepan, 1996); in turn, inclusion into the polity also leads to higher levels of satisfaction, trust and regime support, contributing to stability (Mishler and Rose, 2002). In ethnically-divided societies political structures tend to favour the dominant group's access to political agenda-setting and decision-making. This negatively affects the ability of

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non-dominant groups to influence policy-making, as well as their sense of belonging and regime/government satisfaction; it may also have negative implications for the stability of social relations and the political system overall. The contributions to this special issue do not simply bemoan how the political marginalization of minorities impacts the democratic credentials of political systems; rather, they discuss the long-term consequences for the dynamics of the political processes in two post-Soviet European Union member states, Estonia and Latvia, where the participation of ethnic minorities—largely the group of 'Russian-speakers'[1]—has been formally restricted and structurally marginalized. This introduction presents the purpose and focus of this special issue (section 1); discusses the context in terms of political membership (section 2); and provides background information about minority participation in institutional politics (section 3) in Estonia and Latvia. The last section outlines the contributions by the three authors.

1. Political membership and political participation

After 25 years of institutional change and democratic reform, Estonia and Latvia are no exception among the Central East European 'post-authoritarian' states that generally continue to have comparatively low levels of political participation (Quintelier and Hooghe, 2012).[2] As for ethnic minorities, the levels of participation are even lower (van Londen *et al.*, 2007). There is, of course, one obvious reason for the limited political participation of minorities in Latvia and Estonia: for two decades, large portions of the minority populations have been excluded from the formal political process by not having the citizenship of their country of residence. This lack of political membership has not only a direct effect on minority participation, such as by preventing individual minority members from taking part in elections or referenda, but also an indirect impact on the formation of political structures. This special issue addresses the question of post-Soviet citizenship policies in the two countries, and how these have affected political structures and thus shaped the conditions for minority participation in political processes in the long run.

A large body of literature considers the issue of political membership in Latvia and Estonia (Mole, 2012; Agarin, 2010; Barrington, 1995a; Barrington, 1995b; G. Smith *et al.*, 1998; G. Smith, 1996; Ginsburgs, 1990). These discussions are part of an even greater body of literature that addresses the creation of post-socialist polities based on emerging ethno-political division or deepening group boundaries. Indeed,

after the dissolution of the socialist state order, ethno-linguistic minorities across the former Soviet Union and other former socialist federations were subject to policies of 'nationalizing' states. This notion refers to states' attempts to remedy and redress a perceived threat to the 'core' nation vis-à-vis other ethnic groups on the state territory through policies that favour the titular group, primarily in ethno-linguistic terms (Brubaker, 1996). Some studies question how such policies affected minorities' opportunities to voice their policy preferences (Agarin, 2010; Galbreath, 2005); others analyse the effects of exclusive policies on identification, trust, support and disaffection of minorities in society (Agarin, 2013; Ehin, 2007); yet others are concerned with the potentially destabilizing impact of a disengaged minority with a powerful kin-state (Melvin, 1999; Melvin, 1995); lastly, the dynamics of political membership are perceived through the lens of external, international pressure for policy change (Agarin and Regelmann, 2012; Galbreath, 2006; Galbreath, 2003; D. Smith, 2003). With Estonia and Latvia entering their second decade of membership in the European Union (EU), external pressure has ceded and the region, with its particular problems of political membership, appears to now be largely off the radar of researchers.

Building upon the existing literature, the contributions to this special issue raise questions about the political dynamics that follow the long-term formal exclusion of large portions of minority groups. The three articles of this issue contribute to debates about citizenship in Latvia and Estonia by emphasizing two oft-neglected perspectives. First, their analytical starting point is the political participation of minorities and the limitations experienced, rather than minority policies and their restrictions *per se*. The contributions are decidedly agency-centred, focusing on mobilization as a response to, rather than an effect of, the politicization of ethnicity. They analyse domestic political processes and the dynamics of interaction of both majority and minority political actors within shifting institutional contexts. This allows the authors to draw attention to political actors' room for manoeuvre, however limited, when explaining variance in similar structural contexts. Importantly, the three papers do not rule out the prominence of political institutions. Indeed, all three articles clearly testify to the long-term implications of restrictive citizenship legislation. Yet, legislation alone cannot account for the different dynamics of minority political participation ensuing in the two countries. Therefore, the authors analyse the reciprocity of political membership and policy processes in order to question to what

degree citizenship policies have structured the political participation of minority groups. Although based on only two case studies, the differences between Estonia and Latvia—analysed in Nakai's and Cianetti's papers—point to the interaction of restrictive citizenship policies with other systemic aspects of institutional politics as mediated by minority participation. Thus, methodologically, they go beyond one-way explanations that understand (lack of) minority political participation as a function of their structural position or their preferences.

Second, the articles show that the participation of (increasingly greater numbers of) minorities in the democratic political process forms part of a specific political and normative order. It requires the acceptance on side of the majority to share political power with the minority. Through analysis of the variation between participation patterns of the majority and minorities within one county (Schulze's paper) as well as between minority political participation patterns in the two countries (Nakai's and Cianetti's papers), the authors make insightful statements about the depth and degree of consolidation of political community integration in Estonia and Latvia. In the early 1990s, politicians of both countries' governments openly referred to their plans for state policies to make as many Soviet-era migrants as possible leave the country and force the rest to assimilate (Budryte, 2005). Since then, naturalization and integration policies have opened more avenues for minority participation. However, these processes are insufficient, and formal access to political membership is often indispensable for active and legitimate participation in the political process. In both countries, in order to meet formal political membership criteria, minority members without citizenship need to develop 'immigrant-specific' (Zapata-Barrero *et al.*, 2014: 3) qualities, such as titular language proficiency, knowledge and acceptance of the national history curriculum, understanding of the political system of the country, and access to information vital for participation. State policies have increasingly put emphasis on enabling minority members to develop these competencies and access information about naturalization, thus formally altering the political order by increasing opportunities for minority political participation. The contributions to this collection question the centrality of many of these measures for political integration. In contrast to accommodation of structural properties, systemic aspects of institutional politics appear to have a much stronger impact on opportunities for and the practices of minority participation in the political process. Similarly, focusing solely on the political order as reflected in political institutions,

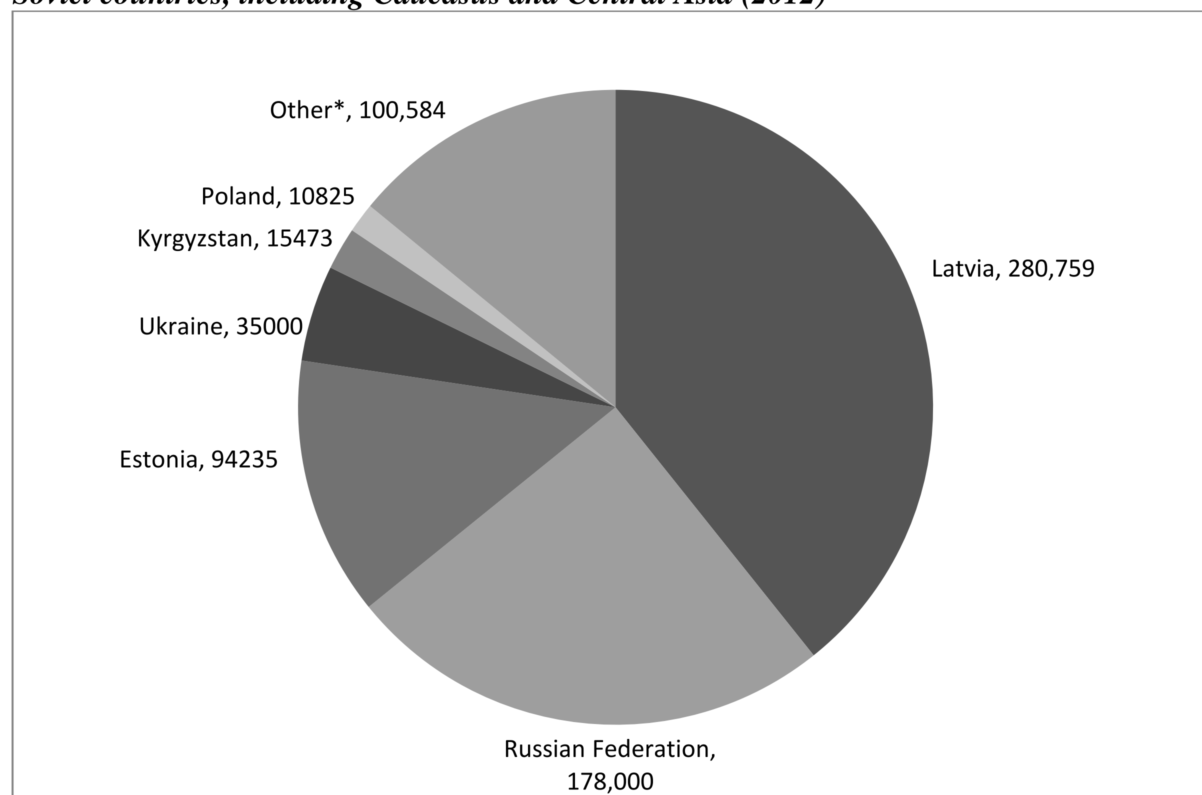
which in Estonia and Latvia are, in principle, open to minority participation, does not tell us much about the acceptance of this order among the polity. This special issue aims to bring together both the impact of the politics of membership on minority participation and the reverse impact of minority mobilization on the consolidation of the political system and the ensuing conditions for minority engagement in politics.

2. Permanent statelessness in Estonia and Latvia

Citizenship is, by definition, an important precondition for participation in institutional politics.[3] Schulze, in this special issue, demonstrates that citizenship status is also an important predictor for participation in non-institutional politics. Estonia and Latvia both took a restrictive approach to political community formation when the two states became independent from the Soviet Union. This, initially, excluded around a third of residents of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic (ESSR) and nearly 40% of the Latvian SSR from the early stages of institution-building and policy-making. Over time, as citizenship legislation was altered numerous times, formal membership in the political communities of the two republics has become more accessible. This has simultaneously increased the number of minority citizens able to participate in institutional politics. Despite the increase in formal membership in both countries, the number of residents without domestic citizenship remains high.

The high number of *de facto* stateless residents and long-term resident foreign nationals continues to make Estonia and Latvia exceptional cases in Europe (and beyond). The total number of persons under UNHCR's (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) statelessness mandate in the two countries is incomparable to any other country in the EU, and even wider Europe. The absolute numbers of stateless persons in 2012—in Estonia 94,235, in Latvia 280,759 according to UNHCR statistics—were exceeded, globally, only by countries that experienced violent conflict and the resulting (forced) displacements, such as Iraq, Myanmar, or Côte d'Ivoire.[4] The scale is even more noteworthy when we consider the population size of the two countries: as of 2014, Estonia had a population of 1,352,399 while Latvia had a population of ca. 2,005,200.[5] For a few years now, the proportion of residents without any citizenship in Estonia and Latvia has been quite consistent, at around 6-7% in Estonia and around 14.1% in Latvia, which is exceptionally high in global comparison. This proportion is unmatched by any other Soviet successor state where large numbers of Soviet-era migrants were 'stranded'.

Chart 1: Persons under the UNHCR statelessness mandate in Europe and post-Soviet countries, including Caucasus and Central Asia (2012)



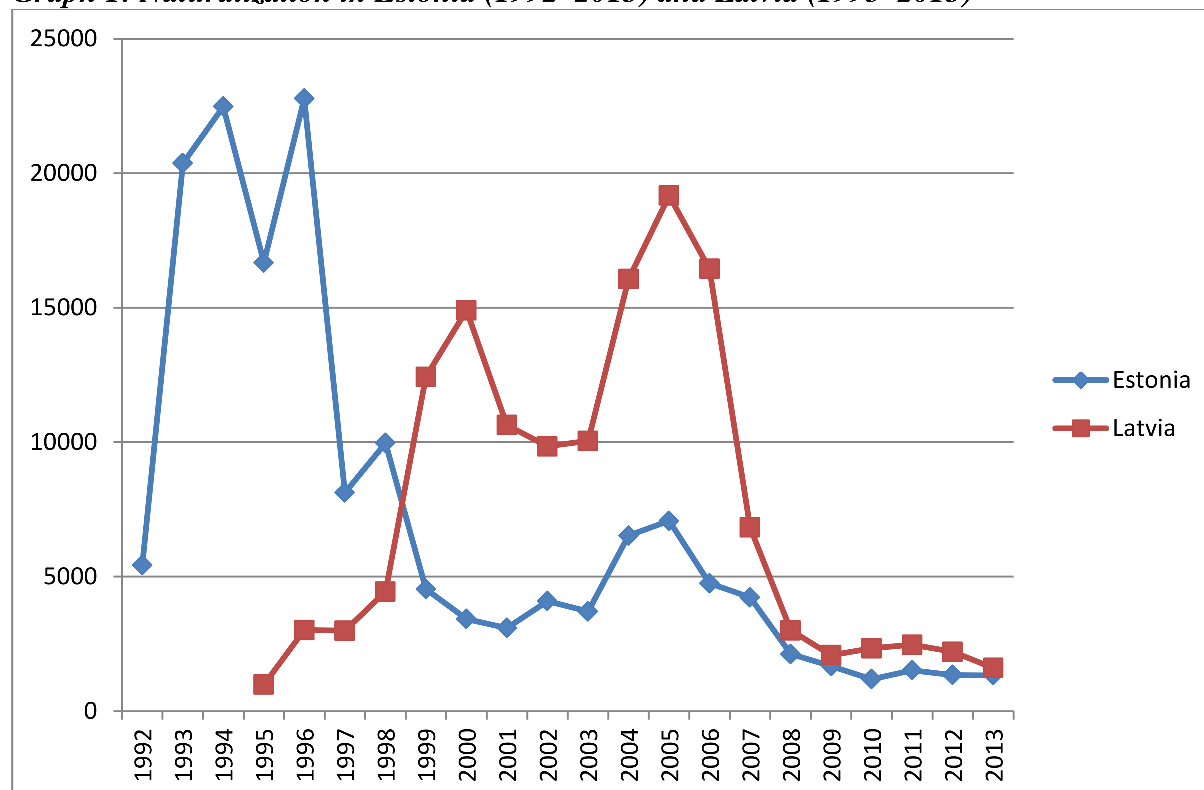
Source: UNHCR Statistical Online Database, Population Statistics (Time series), www.unhcr.org.
*Other: 46 countries where the respective number of persons under the UNHCR's statelessness mandate is below 10,000.

It is well-known that the high level of statelessness in the two countries is a consequence of post-Soviet state-building. The historical legacies and role of nationalist discourse have been discussed in great detail over the last two decades. Following independence from the Soviet Union, the emerging opportunistic elites opted for 'restorationist' state-building narratives, which viewed Estonia's and Latvia's Soviet pasts as illegitimate periods of occupation (D. Smith, 2002; Pabriks and Purs, 2002). Residents of the two republics who had arrived in the countries during, and thus as a result of, Soviet integration, were seen as equally illegitimate, as were their children even when they were born in the Baltic Soviet republics. Subsequent institutionalization of political membership followed this logic by excluding from unconditional citizenship those who had not themselves been, or descended from, citizens of the inter-war republics. Indeed, the constitutions of 1991 and the citizenship laws that were adopted in 1992 (Estonia) and 1994 (Latvia) reflected the idea of restoring inter-war republics rather than building new states.

These policies of the early 1990s left several hundreds of thousands of people with only the citizenship of the now defunct Soviet Union.

Clearly, much has happened between then and now. The proportion of residents without Estonian or Latvian citizenship has dropped dramatically. However, while the overall rationale behind the citizenship policies in the two countries is similar, from early on the policy particulars and their effect on minority populations differed. When the Estonian citizenship law was adopted, Soviet-era migrants were granted the possibility to apply for naturalization. In order to become Estonian citizens, applicants have to fulfil several conditions: permanent residence in Estonia for a minimum number of years, permanent legal income, passing an Estonian language exam, passing an exam testing the awareness of the constitution, and an oath swearing allegiance to the Estonian constitutional order. A simplified procedure was open to those who had registered with the Citizens' Committee, a movement that worked for an independent, restored Estonian Republic in 1989–1990. Some 80,000 Russian-speakers obtained citizenship this way in 1992 (D. Smith, 2002: 76). The criteria for naturalization in Latvia largely mirrored those in Estonia. In contrast to permanent 'alien' residents in Estonia, non-citizens in Latvia did not have to apply for a residency permit in the early 1990s, which arguably provided for a more secure status (Duvold and Berglund, 2014: 8). Apart from some differences in the details, the conditions for naturalization are similar in both countries. The precise criteria, specifically concerning language skills, were deemed ill-advised by international observers (Birckenbach, 2000), unrealistic by domestic analysts (Lauristin and Heidmets, 2002; Muižnieks, 2010), and unfair by affected groups (Poleshchuk, 2001a; Poleshchuk, 2001b; Poleshchuk, 2002). Nevertheless, naturalization in Estonia increased almost immediately and was at the level of approximately 20,300–22,700 in 1993, 1994 and 1996.[6] After the boom, numbers dropped. Around the time of accession to the European Union there was a slight increase in naturalised persons each year, but numbers have fallen since 2005. For years now the annual number of people adopting Estonian citizenship has been below 1500.[7]

Graph 1: Naturalization in Estonia (1992–2013) and Latvia (1995–2013)



Source: Estonian Police and Border Control Board, Statistics, http://www.politsei.ee/dotAsset/61217.pdf, retrieved: May 11, 2014; Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, Latvian Ministry of the Interior, http://www.pmlp.gov.lv and http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/sakums/pakalpojumi/pilsoniba/naturalizacija/rikojumi-par-uznemsanu-pilsoniba.html, retrieved: May 11, 2014.

The naturalization of around 156,400 persons since 1992, predominantly Soviet-era migrants to Estonia, was facilitated by some changes to the naturalization criteria. The Estonian state has also supported minority members in meeting the criteria as part of the national integration programme.[8] These included the change that children of stateless parents, born in Estonia after 1992, would be eligible for Estonian citizenship if their parents applied on behalf of their children. In recent years, most naturalization has been within this group, while older non-citizen residents have not changed their status.[9] As in the case of citizenship for children born in Estonia, policy changes were mostly responses to international pressures to drastically reduce the number of stateless persons in the country. It is important to note that policy changes have concerned the criteria for acquiring Estonian citizenship; the fundamental principles have not been altered. Overall, against the backdrop of a consistently high number of stateless persons in Estonia, the country's naturalization policy can be judged as a success of sorts at most.

Naturalization rates in Latvia have been even lower, while minorities make up a greater proportion of the overall larger population in Latvia than in Estonia. The 'window-system', which in contrast to Estonia's policy restricted naturalization to annual quotas for the years 1996–2003, after which naturalization should be open to all residents, was partly responsible. However, the number of applications for naturalization remained even below the quota (Kruma, 2013). In 1996 and 1997, the annual number of naturalizations was around 3,000. It peaked for the first time in 2000 at 14,900 and again in 2005 at 19,169. In between, and ever since, the numbers by and large have been significantly lower.[10] Latvia's citizenship criteria were only marginally altered over time, but the state also funds programmes that aim to enable minority members to meet the naturalization criteria.[11] Today, about a seventh or approximately 14% of the population (282,876 individuals)[12] still has no citizenship.

One contributing factor for the continuously slow pace of naturalization since the brief peak in the mid- to late-1990s and around EU accession is that viable exit options exist in both countries. Given the restrictive provisions of Estonia's and Latvia's citizenship policy that allowed for naturalization only after a specified date, one option was to adopt the citizenship of another state. The Russian Citizenship Act of the Russian Federation under President Boris Yel'tsin, amended in June 1993 to eliminate earlier ambiguities, granted 'citizens of the former USSR domiciled in other republics which are now, or were on 1 September 1991, a part of the USSR, if they are not citizens of these republics and express the desire to acquire the citizenship of the RSFSR within three years after this Act comes into force'[13] the right to apply for Russian citizenship (Barrington, 1995b: 740). Especially during the early 1990s, many stateless individuals residing in Latvia, but particularly in Estonia, applied for Russian citizenship; in a few cases stateless individuals applied for the citizenship of other former Soviet republics, including Ukraine and Belarus. Around a third of those who were made stateless with independence accepted Russian citizenship in Estonia (today 93,267); in Latvia, the number is smaller (approximately 2%). This reduced the number of stateless persons without increasing the number of foreign-born Estonian or Latvian nationals.

Significantly contributing to the phenomenon of permanent statelessness of a large portion of the population were steps taken by Estonia and Latvia to regulate statelessness by creating new legal categories: 'aliens' (Estonia) and 'non-citizens' (Latvia). The controversial Estonian Law on Aliens was adopted in 1993 to eradicate

the legal vacuum that had been created with the adoption of the citizenship law.[14] Over time, and under the conditionality pressure exerted by the international organizations which Estonia sought to join, namely the EU and NATO, 'aliens' were granted various rights (including the right to vote, though not to be elected, in local elections) and legal protection (such as when travelling abroad). Today, the status of aliens differs from that of citizens primarily with regard to their political rights: aliens cannot participate in national-level politics and cannot stand for election at any level of government. The regulation of 'alien' status has led to a near convergence of the social rights for citizens and for residents without citizenship. This similarity is what has deterred the various Latvian governments from granting more rights to non-citizens, as this would further blur the differences between this category and citizens and potentially reduce the incentives for naturalization. Still, in both countries structural differences between majority and minority members, such as in income or unemployment, are explained less by political membership and more by language proficiency (Aasland, 2002; Aasland and Flotten, 2001).

EU accession has provided a further alternative for non-citizens: In recent years, limited economic opportunities in Estonia and Latvia have driven a large number of people out of the countries to take advantage of the freedom of movement in the EU. Minority members are more likely to migrate, with early studies showing no major differences between minority members with or without citizenship (Ivlevs, 2013). Despite the restricted political rights at home, as things stand and with these various exit options in place, there is little to suggest that naturalization rates will soar again. As disaffection with the system and available exit routes play a role in individual decisions to apply for citizenship, large numbers of 'aliens' and foreign national permanent residents are going to be a feature of Estonian and Latvian society for the foreseeable future.

3. Dynamics of minority participation in institutional politics

Citizenship policies, including the specific regulations of non-citizen or alien status, have had a direct and an indirect impact on political participation. Directly, the policy excluded practically the entire minority population from the electorate in the first post-Soviet national elections in Estonia in 1992. This applied to a somewhat lesser degree in Latvia in 1993, where parties supported by Russian-speaking citizens made it into parliament. To compensate for the lack of or limited representation of

minorities in institutional politics, Russian-speakers, including non-citizens, in both countries formed organizations and movements to politically represent minorities and engage with political decision-makers and international actors. Some of these organizations did enjoy support and were part of roundtable talks where issues of statelessness and citizenship were discussed in order to make minority voices heard. Effectively, however, they lacked a formal mandate or institutional legitimacy, and had very little impact on policies. Despite a similar starting point, the ensuing political participation of Russian-speakers in Estonia differed from that in Latvia even at this early stage.

With increasing naturalization rates, in subsequent years the minority electorate grew. For the second post-Soviet elections in 1995, in both countries several minority parties had formed and some minority members were candidates on non-minority party lists, while there was a sizable minority electorate supporting these candidates. Russian-speakers' parties were represented in the Estonian parliament, the *Riigikogu*, for two consecutive election periods, but did not enjoy any significant support after 2003. In Estonia, minority members also joined non-minority parties in order to represent minority interests within more politically successful bodies. Several minority candidates entered parliament on such lists, primarily for the *Keskerakond* (Centre Party), the (self-styled) successor party of the Popular Front, but later also for the *Reformierakond* (Reform Party) and more recently the *Sotsiaaldemokraatlik Erakond* (Social-democratic Party).[15] Over the last two decades there have usually been 6 to 8 minority MPs in the *Riigikogu*. So far the only minority member who held a government position for *Keskerakond* was Eldar Efendijev, a Tallinn-born Azeri, who was Minister without portfolio for Population Affairs ('Integration Minister') for fourteen months from 2002 to 2003.

In Latvia minorities had more lasting success in the parliament. In contrast to Estonia, however, non-minority party lists do not generally feature minority members, partly due to ethnic favouritism that Latvian electoral regulations appear to have supported (Agarin, 2010: 271). Nevertheless, parties supported primarily by Russian-speaking voters have been represented in the Latvian parliament, the *Saeima*, since 1993. In successive election periods, these parties—in various formations or mergers—have been able to almost continuously increase their (joint) share of the vote, which translated in a gradually increasing number of seats for minority members. In 2011, the alliance party *Saskaņas Centrs* (Harmony Centre), which is supported by Russian-

speakers, became the strongest party in parliament, winning 31 seats. It failed to form a government, although for the first time there had been declarations of interests to form a coalition government with *Saskaņas Centrs* from the new *Reformu Partija* (Reform Party) of Valdis Zatlers (The Baltic Times, 2011). Needless to say, no minority member has been included yet in the cabinet and thus directly influenced policy-making at the government level.

In both countries, then, the Russian-speaking electorate has grown, but with significantly different outcomes, having different effects for minority participation and the dynamics of political interaction. In Estonia, minority parties in the *Riigikogu* have fallen out of favour with the electorate due to their limited political success. In Latvia, minority political representation has risen in popular esteem. The emergence of more paths for minority participation at the national and local levels as well as outside of institutional politics is, of course, welcomed by those who see this as indispensable for democratization and stability in the two countries. Yet, the above also suggests that, while state policies have become less restrictive and minority members make up increasingly large portions of the polity, minorities' effective impact on policy-making remains marginal.

4. The contributions to this special issue

The contributions to this special issue look at different dimensions of minority participation in Estonia and Latvia. **Jennie Schulze's** article focuses on the long-term consequences of Estonia's citizenship policies on individual participation in civic associations and local level institutional politics. Based on a survey conducted in Estonia from 2007 to 2008, she compares the political participation of Estonians and Russians born between 1972 and 1989 against a number of variables, including age, citizenship, income and language skills. Despite it presumably being much easier for this age group to meet the criteria for Estonian citizenship, Schulze demonstrates that a significant participation gap persists between Estonian and Russian youth. While citizenship is not required to participate in local elections or civic associations, the article shows that citizenship status is an important predictor for participation. However, status alone does not explain why Russians do or do not participate in civic associations. Although the survey she uses does not directly test attitudes, the author argues that feelings of political inefficacy and dissatisfaction with political institutions are likely to lead to disengagement. Indeed, the limited participation in Estonia's

institutional politics at the national level is mirrored at the local level and in the civic participation of Russian minority youths.

In his article, **Ryo Nakai** is puzzled by this persistent disengagement of Russian-speakers in Estonia compared to those in Latvia, a pattern he observes not only in parliamentary politics but also in minority protest mobilization. He places minority mobilization in the context of both countries' party political systems. Analysing political processes of the 1990s and 2000s, Nakai argues that party politics have developed very differently in the aftermath of minority disenfranchisement of the early 1990s. In Latvia, where minorities were represented in parliament, the Latvian majority parties did not diversify much ideologically, creating conditions in which ethnic outbidding became instrumental for political competition. The growing strength of minority parties only contributed to perceptions of threat to Latvian identity and sovereignty, the major themes on which majority parties mobilized. In contrast, the absence of minority parties in the first post-Soviet *Riigikogu*, as well as in the post-2003 period, allowed Estonian majority parties to consolidate their ideological differences. Although nationalizing policies were on the agenda in Estonia and in Latvia, Estonian parties did not engage in the same degree of ethnic outbidding as their Latvian counterparts. This lowered the costs for Estonian policy-makers to adopt measures to liberalize some of their minority policies. In turn, Nakai argues, this had two decisive effects on minorities: even though they lacked representation in parliament, Russian-speakers in Estonia saw some of their concerns reflected and addressed in the policies of mainstream parties, while Estonian parties did not rely on minority-bashing to outbid rivals. Instead, the grievances of Russian-speakers in Latvia doubled: first, despite descriptive representation they have been unable to defend their interests in institutional politics, while Latvian parties also antagonize minorities in their efforts to outbid rival parties. Second, this reinforced minority protest mobilization in Latvia, while Estonian Russian-speakers did not engage much in popular protests.

Licia Cianetti contends, like Nakai, that high descriptive representation of minorities in Latvia has not led to effective minority representation, and that low descriptive representation has created conditions for more favourable minority policies in Estonia. She rejects the black-and-white interpretation of this situation often encountered in theories of political representation in ethnically-divided societies. Here, she suggests, ethnic polarization (such as in the Latvian case) is

depicted as generally problematic, while a lack of minority mobilization (like in Estonia) is seen as an indicator of minority integration. Cianetti discusses a fundamental theoretical puzzle about the implications of ethnic minority representation, namely if descriptive minority representation has positive or negative effects on the situation of minorities. Her analysis focuses on the decision-making processes related to the question of whether to grant the right to vote in local elections to non-citizen or foreign residents. Her discussion reveals that the positive and negative effects are not mutually exclusive, but are rather two faces of the same dilemma. The strong representation of Russian-speakers in Latvian institutional politics has enabled the group to continuously have a voice in the political process and has helped keep minority concerns on the political agenda. However, the ensuing polarization of political debate has made it hard for pro-minority parties to have real political influence by negotiating policies with potential coalition partners, as the concessions that would undoubtedly have to be made could weaken the parties' appeal to Russian-speakers. Conversely, while the absence of ethnic polarization in the Estonian party system has allowed for some 'minority-friendly' legislation, it can hardly be seen as effective representation when minorities are absent from the entire agenda-setting and policy-making process.

This special issue on minority participation in Estonia and Latvia confirms much of the literature on the subject, which has demonstrated that minorities, specifically Soviet-era migrants, are largely excluded structurally from the political process. However, far from depicting this exclusion as an automatic effect of the initial exclusion from citizenship, the articles trace how the initial exclusion has affected the formation of and competition between political parties and enabled or inhibited the formation of minority parties and their involvement in politics. The articles also give insight into how mass naturalization has broadened the conditions for minorities to mobilize politically, while not significantly altering their effective participation. Schulze draws our attention to the long-term impact that these policies have had on perceptions of belonging and experiences of exclusion. Nationalizing policies have had a disengaging effect not only on the generation of Soviet-era migrants, who were depicted by the Estonian state as representatives of an occupation regime, but have also fostered disillusionment and feelings of irrelevance for minority policy-makers who are too young to even remember the Soviet Union. All three articles also suggest that minorities do not necessarily respond to long-term

marginalization with ethnic mobilization. The early polarization of the Latvian political system provided the space for minority mobilization, while systemic factors in Estonia undermined it. This does not preclude the two countries becoming more politically integrated, i.e. that minorities in both states play a decisive role in shaping policy-outcomes, in the long run. In fact, some majority parties have become more open to responding to minority concerns in recent years. Given the insights from this special issue, it remains doubtful whether either mass naturalization or elite integration alone will increase effective minority participation in the short- to mid-term.

Notes

1. ‘Russian-speakers’ refers to the large group of Soviet-era migrants who moved between Soviet republics and their descendants. While the majority of this group is ethnically Russian, not all of them are. However, Russian was the *lingua franca* of the Soviet Union and is still widely used by members of this group, hence the term Russian-speakers. The term also points to the core of nationalizing policies that targeted in particular the prevalence of Russian in parts of Estonia and Latvia.
2. Today the three Baltic countries—Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania—are conventionally categorized as CEE countries. Before and during the early 1990s, frequently, a distinction was made between the Baltic states or (post-)Soviet states on the one hand and CEE countries on the other. The second category included: Poland, Czechoslovakia/the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic, Hungary, sometimes the German Democratic Republic and occasionally Romania and Bulgaria (see for example Swain and Swain, 1993). Over the past twenty years or so, it has become almost ubiquitous to refer to all former socialist countries that joined the European Union since 2004 as CEE region.
3. European integration and the freedom of movement of people have altered this close relationship. Also, in many cases citizenship must coincide with residence in the respective country.
4. UNHCR Statistical Online Database, Population Statistics (Time series), www.unhcr.org; http://popstats.unhcr.org/PSQ_TMS.aspx?SYR=2004&EYR=2012&POPT=ST&DOGN=N&DPOPT=N, retrieved: April 29, 2014. In Europe only the Russian Federation has a higher number of persons under the UNHCR’s statelessness mandate than Estonia; the majority of this group in Russia are Roma, cf. The International Observatory of Statelessness, www.nationalityforall.org/russia, retrieved: May 11, 2014.
5. Data retrieved from the Official Gateway to Estonia (Estonia, 2012), ‘Citizenship’, http://www.estonia.eu, and the Latvian Statistical Database, http://www.csb.gov.lv/en, retrieved: April 29, 2014.
6. Estonian Police and Border Control Board, Statistics, http://www.politsei.ee/dotAsset/61217.pdf, retrieved: May 11, 2014.
7. *Ibid.*
8. The Estonian government’s third integration programme ‘Lõimuv Eesti 2020’ [The Strategy of Integration and Social Cohesion in Estonia] is currently in the phase of public consultation. It is the follow-up programme to two earlier initiatives, the state programme ‘Integration in Estonian Society 2000-2007’ and the Estonian ‘Integration

Strategy 2008–2013'. All documents can be accessed on the website of the Estonian Integration and Migration Foundation 'Our People' (MEIS) at http://www.meis.ee.

9. From 1999 to 2013 children of stateless parents made up 59% of all naturalized persons. In recent years, the proportion has risen to 86-91% (2011-2013). Own calculations based on statistics from the Estonian Police and Border Control Board, Statistics, http://www.politsei.ee/dotAsset/61217.pdf, retrieved: May 11, 2014.
10. As of January 1, 2014. The data is from the Latvian Ministry for the Interior, Office for Citizenship and Migration Affairs, http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/en/assets/documents/anglu%20val/Naturalizacija_1995_2010_eng.pdf, retrieved: April 29, 2014.
11. In the late 1990s, Latvia adopted the programme 'Integration of society in Latvia', cf. http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/usa/policy/integrated-society/integration-of-society-latvia-framework/, retrieved May 11, 2014. For a discussion of the programme cf. Agarin, 2010: 169–208.
12. Data retrieved from the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs, Latvian Ministry of the Interior, http://www.pmlp.gov.lv and http://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/sakums/pakalpojumi/pilsoniba/naturalizacija/rikojumi-par-uznemsanu-pilsoniba.html, retrieved: May 11, 2014.
13. Translation adopted from Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 1993; for the Russian version of the original law cf. Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, 1991. For a discussion of changes in the citizenship legislation of the Russian Federation cf. Salenko, 2012, esp. pp. 8–11.
14. Initially, the law was met with protests by local minorities and criticism both by international observers and Russian state officials. Among the most controversial aspects of the law was the requirement that the status of 'alien' was only granted to those who applied for a residence permit within a limited time or lose their residence status. The imminent threat of potential deportation if they failed to register was what caused accusations of 'ethnic cleansing', in particular from Russia (Budryte, 2005). It also further contributed to the alienation of Soviet-era migrant population that had been caused by the early legislation on statehood and language adopted since 1989.
15. Information obtained from the websites of the Estonian parliament http://www.riigikogu.ee and the Estonian Electoral Committee http://www.vvk.ee.

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