

Culture, state, and security in Europe:

The case of citizenship and integration policy in Estonia

ABSTRACT

In this article, I examine how a territorial imaginary conflating culture, territory, nation, and security allows “elites of statecraft” in Europe to frame citizenship and integration policy as (inter)national security matters. Focusing on post-Soviet Estonia, I argue that this imaginary legitimized the denial of citizenship to Soviet-era Russian speakers and enabled the government’s integration policy objective of creating the “Estonian cultural domain.” Drawing on historical, archival, and ethnographic research, I demonstrate how the invocation of national security justified these events and how the territorial imaginary structured the making of integration policy from the 1991 reestablishment of independence to E.U. accession in 2004. [*state, elites, policy, nation, security*]

In this article, I examine how E.U. accession normalizes the nation around the issues of citizenship and integration policy. Focusing on citizenship and ethnic-integration policy in post-Soviet Estonia, my central empirical concerns are (1) how the decision to deny citizenship to 500,000 Soviet-era Russian speakers was constructed as a security measure when Estonia regained independence in 1991; and (2) why the western diplomatic community endorsed this decision and the Estonian government’s 2000 ethnic integration policy aiming to create the “Estonian cultural domain” (Estonian Government 2000:sect. 3.4).¹ Addressing these issues requires an investigation not only of Estonia’s particular history but also of how an international group of “elites of statecraft” interpret and debate that history in light of their spatially conceived task of securing the European interstate system. I approach these questions by examining the discursive field in which these elites reproduce the Estonian nation-state by constructing Soviet-era Russian speakers as a particular problem requiring a particular policy solution. This discursive field consists of a territorial imaginary in which a secure European political order is composed of horizontally arranged, interlocking, and culturally homogenous states. This imaginary reproduces an isomorphic relationship between people, culture, territory, and state, and it renders minorities and noncitizens as potential threats by virtue of their putative cultural difference. I, thus, argue that Estonia’s main ethnic-integration policy, “State Programme: Integration in Estonian Society 2000–2007” (hereafter, the “State Programme”), which aims to have Soviet-era Russian speakers secure the Estonian nation by participating in its reproduction, should not be seen as a case of reactionary “East European” nationalism. Rather, it is a logical expression of European assumptions about nation, state, and security that are reinforced through the process of E.U. accession.²

My argument traces the historical trajectory from the denial of citizenship to Soviet-era Russian speakers in 1991 to the completion of the State Programme in preparation for E.U. accession in 2004. It proceeds in

six steps. It first explains that the study of policy involves not so much decoding the secret agendas of policy elites as showing how these elites construct and legitimize policy within hegemonic discourses of culture, power, and place (Gupta and Ferguson 1997a). The first section also defines the term *elites of statecraft* in relation to Estonia's State Programme, and explains why "polymorphous engagement" (Gusterson 1997) is a useful research strategy for understanding how those elites brought that policy to fruition. To situate the State Programme in a European context, the article next describes the territorial imaginary and explains its role in generating family resemblances among European states' minority policies.

The remaining four sections focus on the Estonian case by showing how elites of statecraft produced, defined, managed, and marginalized 500,000 stateless Soviet-era Russian speakers. The first of these sections explains how the pre-Soviet Estonian republic's status as an illegally annexed state rendered citizenship policy in post-Soviet Estonia both sensible and necessary in light of the territorial imaginary. To show how the Estonian government could clarify ambiguous legal terminology pertaining to national minorities, it next explains why the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) failed to pressure the government to treat noncitizen Russian speakers and Russian speakers with citizenship as legally the same. The article then focuses on how the territorial imaginary enabled Nordic and Estonian officials to dominate the process of developing integration policy. The last section analyses particular events in which elites of statecraft discuss integration. It shows how the territorial imaginary structured these events so as to preclude minority leaders from mobilizing western diplomats and OSCE officials to pressure Estonian officials to liberalize integration policy.

Although it takes Estonia as its case study, this article is not about Estonia per se. Instead, it is about how the territorial imaginary—a European spatial-cum-cultural discourse of international security—informs the ways in which elites of statecraft problematize particular cases of minority–state relations in Europe. The territorial imaginary is not a model for the specific Estonian case but, rather, a broader discursive field that makes particular models in Europe imaginable (e.g., the Estonian, the Swiss, the British, or the Bosnian model). The Europeanness of Estonia's ethnic-integration policy is demonstrated through its conformity to European law, conventions, and agreements as well as Nordic diplomats' foreign-policy agenda. These were not tailor-made for Estonia but, rather, for all of Europe (east and west) by European diplomats, civil servants, lawyers, state officials, parliamentarians, and so on. Thus, the point of focusing on Estonia is not to detail the idiosyncrasies of its case and then decide whether it deviates from a European norm. Rather, the point is to

show how such idiosyncrasies are possible in the context of European international relations. Only brief comparisons are made to show how the territorial imaginary contains differences among European cases of minority–state relations. As Caroline Humphrey argues regarding postsocialist societies, "It's not much good describing two different situations and then totting up, 'There is X here, but not there; there's Y here, but not there' and so on" (2002:13). She suggests that "one needs a relevant field for comparison" (Humphrey 2002:13), which can inform the analysis of any particular situation. For present purposes, that field is the territorial imaginary.

Two strands of anthropological research have inspired this article. The first reflects a growing sense that the nation-state is finding new ways to assert itself (cf. Aretxaga 2003; Cheah 1998:33; Ong 1999; Wilson and Donnan 1998), rather than retreating from globalization (cf. Appadurai 1996). In particular, Jutta Weldes et al. correctly note that matters of security can easily "entrench the state rather than 'deterritorialize' it or disarticulate it from the imagined community of the nation" (1999:8). Several anthropologists are now looking more closely at the intersection of security, nation, and state to understand how violence is produced (Denich 1994; Feldman 1991; Gusterson 1996; Hinton 2002a, 2002b; Malkki 1995; Nagengast 1994; Sluka 2000). The present article contributes to this literature by asking how Estonia's "return to Europe" renders citizenship and culture as matters of (inter)national security.

The second strand is anthropology's challenge to the postsocialist transition metaphor. Particularly in the early and mid-1990s, research on east European politics was defined by what Rogers Brubaker (1998:298) calls the "Manichean view" of nationalism in which "Western" nationalism (civic, liberal, modern, and good) is diametrically opposed to "Eastern" nationalism (ethnic, traditional, premodern, and bad). Anthropologists have since denaturalized the transition metaphor by illustrating how particular responses to changes in postsocialist Europe exemplify pragmatic reasoning in complex circumstances, rather than mere "backwardness" (Berdahl et al. 2000; Burawoy and Verdery 1999; Gal and Kligman 2000; Verdery 1997; Wedel 2001). From here, anthropologists can move a step further by demonstrating how taken-for-granted nationalist discourse in western Europe is implicated in eastern European efforts to protect the nation. Robert Hayden makes this point forcefully when arguing that the wars in former Yugoslavia were channeled through the political structures of modern constitutions adopted from western Europe. Far from resulting from ancient ethnic hatreds, these wars were the "logical outcome of a conceptual structure that is both central European in origin and central to European political and social thought" (Hayden 2000:8).³ I likewise argue that, although

in nonviolent circumstances, Estonian officials' effort to establish Estonian linguistic and cultural hegemony throughout the state's territorial space is not reducible to reactionary "East European" nationalism. Instead, it reflects conventional moves enabled by pan-European discourses of state, security, nation, and culture in which "civic" and "ethnic" are only rhetorical variations on the theme of national boundaries.

Policy, elites, and ethnography

I focus on policy making because policy constitutes a pivotal site in the regulation of mass society. It is a crucial target of anthropological inquiry, as it expresses in condensed terms the hegemonic forms of social order and reiterates their legitimizing narratives. It frames how individuals may legally and legitimately conduct themselves in public space, thereby rendering it of high anthropological importance. As Cris Shore and Susan Wright point out, "People are classified, shaped and ordered according to policies. . . . The study of policy, therefore, leads straight into issues at the heart of anthropology: norms and institutions; ideology and consciousness; knowledge and power; rhetoric and discourse; meaning and interpretation; the global and the local" (1997:4). Political anthropology has much to contribute to the question of how power relations are reproduced through public policy by asking what makes certain policies imaginable in the first place. Rather than limit the study of policy to its effects or (in)efficiencies, researchers must destabilize policy itself by situating it within its enabling discourses. The point is not to deny agency to the subjects of policy but to invert the usual approach to the study of power. Although examining how "local" people internalize, resist, or appropriate hegemonic discourse is a necessary task, asking how strategically positioned policy elites manipulate international power flows through policy making that limit local survival strategies is equally important (Greenhalgh 2003:197).

Studying the production of policy involves "studying up" (Nader 1972), but policy making itself is not simply an activity that furthers elites' particular interests.⁴ To assume so narrowly characterizes power as something emanating from the will of particular people. The operative question is not what hidden intents, agendas, and state secrets elites might be sharing in their policy meetings. As Philip Abrams notes, secrets are not to blame for the difficulty of studying the state, as they turn out to be either trivial or theoretically predictable "when the gaff is blown" (1988:62). Furthermore, the question is not how elites are constrained by pressures from below but, rather, how elites interpret what they see below as a particular policy problem. The key question is what broader discursive parameters bear on elites' policy decisions, publicly legitimize the actions they authorize, and produce any

given policy effect. The contours of that discursive field need illumination. As Michel Foucault argues, "Let us not, therefore, ask why certain people want to dominate, what they seek, what is their overall strategy. Let us ask, instead, how things work at the level of on-going subjugation, at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviors etc." (1980:97).

Like many policy processes, the relevant data addressing the question of how post-Soviet Estonia's citizenship and integration policy became logically possible are dispersed throughout space and time. Such processes do not lend themselves to traditional thick description (Geertz 1973), which assumes an anchoring in a particular place. The anthropological study of policy can, thus, benefit from what Hugh Gusterson has called "polymorphous engagement" (1997:116), that is, interacting with informants in a number of sites and using an eclectic mix of research techniques (see also Donnan and McFarlane 1997:262; Gupta and Ferguson 1997b:37–38; Nader 1972:307; Shore 2000:7). For my purposes, polymorphous engagement conducted from 1999 to 2001 involved participant-observation in Tallinn (Estonia's capital) among elites of statecraft in their policy meetings, in conferences on multiculturalism, in diplomatic receptions, and at the offices of numerous nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) contracted to work on integration. Immersion in these venues prepared me to critically interpret other kinds of data related to the same policy process, such as Estonian–Soviet history, diplomatic correspondence, European legal agreements, and policy documents.

The wide range of state and nonstate actors involved in public policy reflects the current neoliberal trend of delegating state tasks to the nonprofit sector. This trend offers new and varied ethnographic opportunities to study state processes (Verdery 1996:209). Statecraft is no longer a task restricted to diplomats and officials. Instead, it includes a wide range of individuals that are, at least rhetorically, involved in preparing society for a putatively better future (Shore and Wright 1997). Regarding Estonia's integration policy, elites of statecraft work to provide better life opportunities for minorities and noncitizens by equipping them with linguistic and cultural skills necessary to succeed in a western-oriented Estonian society.⁵ They specifically include NGO leaders, officials from international organizations, state officials, civil servants, western diplomats, and minority leaders.

My fieldwork from 1999 to 2001 was based at the Non-Estonians Integration Foundation, an NGO authorized to manage ethnic integration for the Estonian government and to specifically oversee the implementation of the State Programme. The State Programme aims to improve Russian speakers' Estonian language skills to increase these individuals' value on the job market, expedite their

naturalization rates, and expose them to Estonian culture and society, from which they were ostensibly shielded during the Soviet era. This is to be achieved through a breadth of activities including language-training programs, teacher-training activities, and language camps for Russian-speaking children. It also involves a media campaign designed to promote the virtues of ethnic integration to Estonians and Russian speakers alike. In short, the State Programme seeks to transform “non-Estonians” into citizens who can “competently” function in Estonian society:

Integration is expressed in the gradual disappearance of those barriers which today prevent many non-Estonians from being competitive in the labour market, taking part in the educational opportunities available here and participating in local cultural and political life. These barriers are above all connected with the shortcomings in the knowledge of the Estonian language and local culture, with uncertain legal status and also with fears and prejudices resulting from rapid social changes. [Estonian Government 2000:sect. 3.2]

This objective, however, was premised on a specific security concern, namely, that “the formation of a ‘two societies in one country’ model . . . may become dangerous both socially and from the point of view of security policy” (Estonian Government 2000:sect. 3.1). The alleviation of this threat, again, is to occur through the establishment of the “Estonian cultural domain” (Estonian Government 2000:sect. 3.4).

The Integration Foundation is the central node for these elites who discuss, debate, design, implement, and manage the numerous activities developed under the rubric of the State Programme. European Commission (E.C.) officials and Nordic diplomats were among the many western officials who routinely circulated through the Integration Foundation, as the E.U. PHARE Programme and the governments of Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark financially and politically support the State Programme. During the period of my fieldwork there, regular appearances were made by OSCE officials who monitored the integration process, by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) staff who provided administrative support, and by various Estonian- and Russian-speaking NGO leaders contracted to run particular projects.

These elites of statecraft were a cosmopolitan group, although they approached integration from different power positions. Most had master’s degrees, and more than a few held law degrees or doctorates. Rarely did any of them speak fewer than three languages fluently. Western diplomats in Estonia had varied international experience. Junior diplomats were often on their first overseas posting in Estonia, a point that some Estonian officials

took as an insult. “They send them here to cut their teeth,” remarked one. Senior diplomats and ambassadors often had prior experience in eastern Europe during the Cold War. The Finnish chargé d’affaires even had Tallinn under his diplomatic jurisdiction during a posting to Leningrad in the 1980s. OSCE staff in Estonia largely hailed from northern Europe, especially, Germany, Sweden, and Finland, as OSCE headquarters thought that regional familiarity best prepared its officials for the particularities of the Estonian situation. On average, younger than the staff at western embassies, OSCE officials also seemed more idealistic than the diplomats representing nation-states. Although they were diligent in monitoring Estonian policy and legislation for discriminatory potential, they were equally frustrated by the principle of state sovereignty’s limiting effect on their efforts. In contrast, western diplomats rarely seemed so bothered. If plainly asked what they thought about the status of Russian speakers in Estonia, their answer was equally bland and consistent with their policy agenda. One diplomat explained, “You have to remember that Estonia has only been independent for less than ten years. They [the government] have a tough job. The State Programme is a very good step in the right direction.”

Estonian officials, like their Russian-speaking counterparts, had either traveled, studied, or participated in conferences in western Europe and North America during the 1990s. Western governments and the European Union funded many such opportunities so that east Europeans could be introduced to “civil society” and learn how to carry out a smooth “transition to western democracy.” Both Estonian- and Russian-speaking leaders shared skepticism toward these opportunities, even if they enjoyed the trips. This was particularly the case if they were already young adults when the Soviet Union collapsed. Both saw the European Union not as a western saving grace, but as another megabureaucracy that they would have to manipulate to their own advantage, much in the same way they had done with Soviet bureaucracy. For example, an official working at Estonia’s Citizenship and Migration Board took a pragmatic approach to E.U. and OSCE presence in Estonia: “I think OSCE is good for Estonia because they say, ‘Well, Estonia is no Kosovo [*sic*]. It’s pretty peaceful, and so they give their approval to the European Union, which Estonia wants to join. The E.U. is just another empire. We are going from one empire to another.”

Estonian officials working on ethnic integration were not ardent nationalists. They commanded the theoretical complexities of multiculturalism and were skilled in public administration. They were committed to improving the life opportunities of Russian speakers so long as this occurred within the context of strengthening the link between the nation-state and the Estonian language and culture. They saw integration as a moral, reasonable, and

pragmatic choice for Russian speakers if they wanted to show respect for and to advance in Estonian society. In effect, they espoused a moderate nationalism that could include the Other as long as the Other voluntarily reproduced the nation in whose name the state exists. In the long run, therefore, Russian speakers were not marginalized by state officials' clever manipulations, although this behavior was certainly not beyond various radical nationalists. Rather, marginalization occurs by virtue of the normal principle of state sovereignty underpinning the European interstate system and by the hegemonic understanding that a particular national culture is morally entitled to a privileged relationship with the territorial state.

The territorial imaginary of interstate security

If state sovereignty and the right of the national majority to a privileged relationship with the state are normal European practices, then showing how these practices are logically possible and how they unfold in different cases is worthwhile. The aim here is to set up a field in which to compare different cases of minority–state relations and to show the “Europeanness” of Estonian citizenship and integration policy. Minority–state relations are conceptualized through a territorial imaginary of European security that conflates people, culture, territory, and the state. This imaginary—akin to what Liisa Malkki has called “the national order of things” (1992:37, 1995: 5)—informs European practices in the regulation of asylum seekers, immigrants, and national minorities, and it contains the range of models that European states use to deal with Others on their territory. To be sure, the “problem” is not the presence of Others in the territorial state per se but, rather, the putative need to regulate contact between those Others and the national majority. The state’s role (through which it legitimizes itself as protector of the nation) is to mediate that contact through law and public policy.

The concept of “state sovereignty”—and the affiliated concepts of “national security” and “minority rights”—genealogically derives from European practices of international relations, which are based on spatial-horizontal assumptions (cf. Der Derian 1987; Walker 1993). Tracing back to early modern Europe, these assumptions include an allegiance to the sovereign over God, a monolithic conception of citizenship, and the erasure of diverse and alternative identities within the flat, enclosed, Euclidean space of state territory (Walker 2000:24–25). These assumptions produce a territorial imaginary that is a horizontal grid of culturally particular units in which a state is authorized to protect the identity of the titular nation. As such, the interstate system has the effect of asserting boundaries along national lines between “us” and “them”—with varying degrees of success—rendering

nations outside the state as potential threats (Walker 1993). In this situation, the nation-state, lacking an ontological foundation, must inscribe its identity through the act of identifying nonnationals within its territorial space as threats by virtue of alleged cultural difference (Feldman 2005a). Through the prism of the territorial imaginary, this automatically renders minority rights, citizenship, and immigration as (inter)national issues, which can potentially destabilize state borders and the broader interstate system (Feldman 2005b). Picking up on just that implication, one Estonian official succinctly noted, “Sweden is, of course, interested in the State Programme because they don’t want our Russians showing up on their shores.”

This territorial imaginary is often most noticeable in moments of crisis, as suggested by Malkki’s (1992:32–33) observation that refugees are depicted as “uprooted” from their homelands, external to the “family of nations,” and “problems” to be solved. The identification of refugees as problems presupposes the coherence of interlocking nation-states with culturally homogenous peoples rooted in each of them.⁶ The Council of Europe subtly reproduces the notion of rootedness when writing that “it was agreed that the national minorities which the *upheavals* of history have established in Europe had to be protected and respected as a contribution to peace and stability” (1995a: para. 5, emphasis added). The construction of security threats arising from individuals uprooted from elsewhere and now an alien presence in a putatively homogenous state both enables and contains the range of policy options available to deal with such threats: normalization through naturalization, containment through limited autonomy, detainment in refugee centers, return to the “homeland,” and, in the worst case, extermination. Despite their wide moral variability, these options all reproduce, and are produced by, the territorial imaginary by rendering (inter)national security a matter of privileging a particular national culture on a particular territorialized state.

Whereas models of minority–state relations vary among states, they, nonetheless, bear family resemblances, as their particular historical circumstances are filtered through the territorial imaginary in the act of policy making. In eastern Europe, for example, David Campbell (1999) demonstrates how the territorial imaginary, or “apartheid cartography,” in his parlance, led the international diplomatic community to rebuild Bosnia as a composite of ethnic-based territorial units. Ironically, this community institutionalized the same categories that predicated Bosnia’s collapse. It reproduced the territorial imaginary below the state level by, first, dividing the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina into two entities, namely, the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska, on the basis of ethnic boundaries and, second, by subdividing the former into ten cantons with either Croat or Muslim majorities.⁷ Showing apartheid cartography’s broader influence, Campbell (1999:404) notes

that Belgium and Switzerland served as models for the Afrikaaner Freedom Front seeking a white homeland in postapartheid South Africa and for Serb and Croat nationalists negotiating peace in Lisbon in 1992. The former Soviet Union was also firmly organized in line with the territorial imaginary. Although antinationalist, it was highly committed to nationhood (Brubaker 1998:284) by aligning each of its 15 union republics, 20 autonomous republics, 8 oblasts, and 10 okrugs with a national group (Tishkov 2002).⁸ Similar to the peace brokers for Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Soviet Union institutionalized the divisions along which it collapsed.

In western Europe, Gerd Baumann (1996:24) describes how the spectrum of political views on immigration and multiculturalism in London are contained by the assumption of ontological territorialized cultures. Conservatives contend that immigrants are culturally ill suited to succeed in England and only generate social problems, whereas liberals argue that, with assistance, immigrants can overcome their own traditional customs and adapt to a pre-given English culture. The Danish government implemented an integration act in 1999 that aimed to convert immigrants into productive and equal citizens by providing them with courses on the Danish language and society as well as on job-market skills. Its passage was a victory for supporters of immigrants, who had been trying to thwart the rise of the anti-immigrant neo-Right (Hervik in press). As in the United Kingdom, however, Denmark's political debate pivoted on the question of whether foreigners could adopt the culture of the host nation, with neither side questioning the right to cultural hegemony for the national majority. In this vein, Verena Stolcke (1995:5) compellingly shows how cultural fundamentalists in western Europe make use of the territorial imaginary to push for stricter immigration control by claiming that humans are naturally ethnocentric, that different cultures are inherently incommensurable, and that national groups should be spatially segregated lest they lapse into hostility (see also Holmes 2000:7). The territorial imaginary does not compel states to pursue exclusionary policies. It only reiterates basic assumptions about minority–state relations, from a diplomatic perspective, that limit the range of “reasonable” integration models.⁹ Marilyn Strathern, commenting on Stolcke's discussion, indicates the territorial imaginary's role in producing nationalist policies of any degree of intensity:

One would not want to be carried (reassured?) by the idea that cultural fundamentalism is a right-wing plot. It may be very useful for right-wing political language, but such politics also draw on usages more generally current. . . . While immigration policies may offer particular evidence of right-wing political thinking, they hold water precisely because of their saliency. . . .

Different political regimes speak in its common language. [1995:16]

Thus, to assume that the territorial imaginary is a model for minority–state relations specific to the Estonian or even east European cases is misleading. This move reproduces tropes of east Europe as west Europe's Other. Instead, historically particular cases of minority–state relations are channeled through a broader discursive field that reifies assumptions about culture, state, territory, and security.

Producing the stateless: The restoration of the Estonian nation-state

Strathern's observation that cultural fundamentalism draws on “generally current” political discourse is apparent when one examines the mainstream diplomatic logic through which the pre-Soviet Estonian republic was restored and Soviet-era Russian speakers were denied citizenship in 1991. Estonian leaders declared independence in 1918, and the country joined the League of Nations in 1922. In 1939, the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany signed the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, which would have direct implications for post-Soviet Estonia's 1991 citizenship policy. This agreement contained a secret protocol permitting Nazi Germany to acquire western Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, and Hungary without Soviet interference, and the Soviet Union to acquire eastern Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Finland without German interference. With German complicity assured (for the moment), the Soviet Union coerced the Estonian government into signing a so-called mutual assistance pact one month later, which justified the entry of the Soviet army into Estonia as a security measure. Estonia was formally annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940. The governments of Great Britain and the United States immediately decried annexation as an illegal violation of state sovereignty and the mutual assistance pact as an agreement signed under duress. Nonetheless, the Allies' common cause with Stalin against Hitler rendered the matter of secondary importance (Vizulis 1985:59–66).¹⁰ Reaffirming moral support for Estonia in 1983, U.S. Secretary of State George Schultz wrote to Ernst Jaakson, Estonia's exile consul general, that “Soviet aggression stamped out Estonia's independence when Soviet armies invaded Estonia in 1940. We have never recognized the forcible incorporation of Estonia into the Soviet Union, and we will not compromise this principle” (Vizulis 1985:188).

Kind words notwithstanding, between 1939 and 1945, Estonia lost roughly 250,000 out of 1.1 million people (Raun 1991:181), largely through emigration, deportation, and execution and other war-related deaths. Deportations continued until the early 1950s, with as many as 83,000 more Estonians sent to the interior of Soviet Russia. The

eastward movement of exiled Estonians to Siberia was answered with the westward settlement of Russians speakers in Estonia for the next several decades.¹¹ This in-migration significantly changed Estonia's demography from 88 percent ethnic Estonian (of 1.1 million people) in 1934 to 65 percent (of 1.5 million people) just before reindependence in 1991 (Raun 1991:247; Statistical Office of Estonia 2001). The Soviet regime did not require Russian speakers to learn Estonian, so Russian—the “language of brotherhood”—became the lingua franca in communication between Estonians and Russian speakers, as Russian was extensively taught in Estonian-medium schools. This situation, along with Russification policies, in general, was a key factor in producing what Estonian scholars have called an “existential angst” about the loss of the Estonian language and culture (Endre and Laar 1997; Ruutsoo 1995; Trass 2000:177; Vihalemm and Lauristin 1997:280). In response, 40 Estonian writers sent an open letter to *Pravda* in 1980 (which it did not publish) asserting a list of complaints, many of which pertained to the survival of the Estonian language: restrictions on the use of Estonian in business and science, the growing scarcity of Estonian-language journals and books, continuing propaganda pushing the teaching of Russian, appointment of bureaucrats lacking Estonian language capability, and the unilateral demand on Estonians, but not Russians, to become bilingual (Misiunas and Taa-gepera 1993:269).

By the late 1980s, when the independence movement had gathered momentum, the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact's secret protocol became the key legal factor that underpinned the successful reestablishment of Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian independence.¹² Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of glasnost (openness) not only exposed the protocol but also made it a political issue. On August 23, 1989, the 50th anniversary of the pact, nearly two million Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians joined hands to form the “Baltic Chain” stretching from Tallinn to Riga to Vilnius in protest of the illegal Soviet annexation. It was one of the largest and most internationally witnessed expressions of nationalist populism on the road to independence. It directly called the validity of the secret protocol, and thus the Soviet annexation, into question. Sensing decreasing legitimacy inside and outside the Soviet Union, the Supreme Soviet in Moscow acknowledged the existence of the pact's secret protocol, and Alexander Yakovlev, an adviser to Gorbachev, “unequivocally” condemned it for its role in preparing Soviet annexation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania (Beschloss and Talbott 1993:101).

Estonian leaders finally declared independence on August 20, 1991, shortly after a failed coup led by conservatives in the Soviet army. The Dutch government, speaking on behalf of the European Community, announced on August 27 that “the Community and its member States warmly welcome the *restoration* of the

sovereignty and independence of the Baltic States, which they lost in 1940” (Rich 1993:38, emphasis added). President George H. W. Bush announced on September 2 the establishment of diplomatic relations with Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, noting that this marked “the culmination of the United States' 52 year refusal to accept the forcible incorporation of the independent Baltic States by the USSR” (Rich 1993:38).¹³ Crucially, western governments were not simply recognizing the independence of Estonia as if it were seceding from the Soviet Union but, rather, the restoration of the Estonian republic's sovereign independence. Their agreement about the illegality of the Soviet annexation allowed Estonian nationalist leaders to frame their drive for independence not as a vulgar nationalist attempt at domination but, rather, as an internationally justifiable effort to restore the sovereignty of the pre-Soviet nation-state. Therefore, despite the heightened drama of the (re)independence movement, its success hinged on the technical argument for resolving the Soviet Union's 1940 violation of international law (Pettai and Hallik 2002:510).

The legal restoration of the pre-Soviet Estonian nation-state would have negative consequences for Soviet-era Russian speakers, as it directly implicated post-Soviet Estonia's citizenship policy. Because the international community restored a state whose sovereignty was illegally held in abeyance, then, it followed that the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic (ESSR) never legally existed. Because the ESSR never legally existed, it also followed that Russian speakers who had arrived during the Soviet era had not been legally admitted into Estonia. They were, thus, denied citizenship in reindependent Estonia, classified as aliens, and required to apply for residency permits to legalize their status. Despite having been born or lived most of their lives in Estonia, they could only obtain citizenship through naturalization, and, in accordance with European norms, they were denied minority rights because these are only available to citizens.¹⁴ Only those who were citizens of the pre-Soviet republic, or descendants of citizens, were entitled to automatic citizenship in post-Soviet Estonia, as the logic of state restoration carried with it the restoration of citizenship.¹⁵ Some 75,000 Russian speakers received citizenship on this basis.

Although successful as a technical–legal argument, the denial of citizenship was understood as a necessary move to preserve the Estonian language and culture. At a western-funded 1999 conference boldly entitled “Integration, Education and Language: On the Brink of the New Millennium in Multicultural Estonia,” the Estonian scholar Priit Järve (1999:4) explained the prevailing logic behind citizenship policy: Naturalization is necessary to help Russian speakers develop ties to sovereign Estonia, to learn the sole official language of Estonian, and to become acquainted with Estonian culture, all of which would

prepare them to assume the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. In contrast, automatic citizenship would allow Russian speakers to elect enough members of parliament to pass a constitutional amendment declaring Russian a second official language. This would, presumably, lead to Russian becoming the *de facto* sole official language because far more Estonians spoke Russian than Russian speakers who spoke Estonian.¹⁶ If this situation were to occur, then it would moot the Estonian nation-state, as the ostensible purpose of a state is to protect the nation (linguistically and culturally defined) in whose name it exists. The argument registered with western officials. A Swedish diplomat sentimentally recalled what a senior Estonian official had once told him: “You must understand that the language is the only thing we have. People come from all over the world back to Estonia, but with different experiences. Language is what keeps us together.”

The technical–legal logic underpinning the restoration of Estonian sovereignty and the denial of citizenship contained within it the basic assumption that international security is a matter of aligning national cultures with territorial states. In effect, the object of state security was not cast as protecting the life and limb of individual Estonians but, rather, the putative cultural and linguistic milieu in which Estonians become self-actualized. In this context, the state could argue that Soviet-era Russian speakers were a threat not for any deed that they had done but, rather, who they were in cultural terms. Diplomacy’s cultural fundamentalist premise enabled this argument as it frames minorities and immigrants as a destabilizing presence in a putatively homogeneous state by virtue of carrying an alien national culture. By the end of the 1990s, therefore, security debates in Estonia were no longer cast in military terms but, rather, in terms of minority demographics and the divergent cultures of Estonians and Russians (Kuus 2002:299). In 2001, the Estonian Foreign Ministry’s National Security Concept explicitly stated that Estonia perceived no threat from another state (Kuus 2002:303) while, simultaneously, the Ethnic Affairs Ministry justified the State Programme on the claim that unintegrated Russian speakers were social and security threats (Estonian Government 2000:sect 3.1). In sum, the territorial imaginary reframes (inter)national security from a narrow question of military aggression to a vague question of one’s cultural disposition. Diplomacy assumes a national security risk when the sovereign state does not regulate alien individuals through immigration and naturalization procedures.

Defining the stateless: It depends what the meaning of the word *minority* is

By the early 1990s, OSCE missions had opened up in virtually every country of the former East bloc with the

task of identifying and resolving nationalist conflicts before they led to interstate violence. Max van der Stoep, OSCE’s former high commissioner on national minorities ([HCNM] 1992–2001), argued in 1993 that if the Estonian government tried to assert the “privileged position” of the Estonian population, then it would generate “considerable risk” of increased tension with the non-Estonian population as well as negatively affect relations between Estonia and the Russian Federation (OSCE 2004). Through “silent diplomacy”, OSCE pressured the Estonian government to legally treat its large noncitizen population as citizens (and therefore “minorities”) lest the predicted gloomier scenario materialize.

The crux of this matter unfolded according to state sovereignty in diplomatic correspondence between the HCNM and former acting Estonian Foreign Minister Riivo Sinijärvi in October and November 1996.¹⁷ The HCNM wrote that the Estonian prime minister had informed him that, on signing the Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the government would make a reservation stating that the document would only apply to nonethnic Estonians who were Estonian citizens. The HCNM put forth the following argument in disapproval of the government’s decision:

The Framework Convention was drafted with the aim to transform to the greatest possible extent the political commitments adopted by the CSCE (now OSCE) into legal obligations, (pursuant to Appendix II of the Vienna Declaration of 9 October 1993). It is also relevant to recall that Estonia, on acceding to the CSCE in September 1991, has not made any reservations regarding the political commitments relating to national minorities in the various CSCE documents . . .

I am making these remarks in order to make clear that many articles of the Framework Convention have a close resemblance to CSCE Commitments (especially the 1990 CSCE Copenhagen Document on the Human Dimension) while several resemble articles in the UN Declaration of 1985. Against this background there is in my view a risk that making the intended reservation to the Framework Convention without some clarifying remarks might lead to fears and concerns about an intended change of Estonia’s policies regarding non-citizens living in Estonia, which, I would hope and expect, are in reality unfounded. I would therefore recommend that your Government would make it clear that the intended reservation will not in any way change Estonia’s international commitments and obligations, and that the reservation does not signify that the Government intends to restrict the existing rights of non-citizens living on its territory. [Minelres 1996a]

Significantly, the HCNM was not appealing to Estonia’s explicit legal obligations but, rather, mustering an argument

on the basis of what he saw as a resemblance to a different international agreement. The Estonian foreign minister would not miss this point.

Sinijärvi's reply to the HCNM included an addendum commenting on Estonia's legal commitments under the Framework Convention. The first item in the addendum explained the difference between a "reservation" and a "declaration," according to international law. The HCNM incorrectly thought that the Estonian government was adding the former, rather than the latter. A reservation, the addendum explained, refers to portions of the legal text that will be excluded or modified during implementation, whereas a declaration specifies how certain terms will be understood during implementation (Minelres 1996b:sect. 1). The significance of highlighting the HCNM's error was much deeper than merely clarifying terminology. Sinijärvi's point acted as a reminder to the HCNM that sovereign states have the right to interpret certain passages in legal texts as they see fit. In this case, the Framework Convention cedes the authority to define "national minority" to the sovereign state and only requires that citizens of the state receive minority-rights protection.¹⁸

The foreign minister's addendum, then, pointed out that there is no universally accepted definition of the term *national minority* in international law. Instead, the international custom is to follow Francesco Capotorti's definition, written in his review of Article 27 of the 1966 UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights:

a group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State, in a non-dominant position, whose members—being *nationals* of the State—possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, as sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, tradition, religion or language. [Thornberry 1991:6, emphasis added]¹⁹

The addendum further notes that the Framework Convention refrains from defining national minority, which means "the Contracting Parties [may] define the exact scope of its application" (Minelres 1996b:sect. 3). It then explains that the 1990 Copenhagen Document did not solve this definitional problem either, which means that OSCE commitments are "of a strictly political nature" (Minelres 1996b:sect. 4). The addendum also cast a different light on the HCNM's claim that the Framework Convention was drafted to transform OSCE political commitments into legal obligations. It argues that "para 27 of the *Explanatory Report* [of the Framework Convention] merely states that the [Copenhagen] Document has provided 'guidance' for the drafting of the *Framework Convention*" (Minelres 1996b:sect. 4). The foreign minister, thus, argued that the Framework Convention does not

singularly derive from the Copenhagen Document, a point that further undermined the HCNM's attempts to force the Estonian government to give up its declaration. To be sure, the Estonian foreign minister and the HCNM both interpreted paragraph 27 reasonably, but the terms *political* and *guidance* are vague enough to have allowed the Estonian foreign minister to repel the HCNM's recommendations through his invocation of state sovereignty. Because of international law and diplomatic custom, the Estonian government never heeded the demand that its stateless population be treated as citizens of the republic.

Managing the stateless: Developing an ethnic integration policy

Even though noncitizen Russian speakers could not be officially classified as minorities (and, therefore, were not treated as citizens), by the late 1990s western officials pushed the Estonian government to develop a plan to integrate Russian speakers into Estonian society. This became a stated condition of E.U. accession (E.C. 1999). In effect, the E.C. urged that the Estonian government solve the "problem" that international recognition of Estonia's restored status had legitimized. Again, the territorial imaginary functioned as the prism through which this "challenge" was conceived and as the template by which Nordic and Estonian officials could dominate the integration process over the interests of Russian speakers.

The Nordic embassies in Estonia had pursued dozens of small-scale integration projects but found that running them overstretched their time and resources. One diplomat admitted, "I would never be able to know the individual organizations [that submit applications]. I run other programs in Estonia from the embassy, and it is difficult to know the local situation. Evaluating project applications is difficult." Simultaneously, the UNDP's deputy chief of mission in Estonia found that the government lacked the capacity to manage the funds offered by western donors:

The Estonian government did not, until 1997, see a need for an integration policy. "Integration" was not used. People talked about adult language learning, human rights, and discrimination. When I was at the Ministry of Education as an UN volunteer, we were subject to a barrage of projects with foreign aid funding and no Estonian organizations to implement them. What made the work difficult is that the Ministry did not give us guidelines. They thought the issue was only a fire that needed to be put out. We tried to use the resources the best we could. No one wanted to deal with adult language learning. . . . Donors were looking for a national partner to deal with. There was no one contact organization. It fell between the gaps.

Therefore, UNDP joined forces with the Nordic embassies in 1998 to create and fund a major integration project, based on the smaller existing projects, which they tellingly entitled “The Nordic/UNDP Project: Support to the State Integration Programme” (NUP). Among other initiatives, NUP funded a series of activities aimed at the “capacity-building of the Non-Estonians Integration Foundation” so that the Estonian government could absorb western funds and oversee the management of the integration on its own. It also identified the integration policy problem in the form of the “many non-Estonians still [living] in so-called micro-societies, the existence of which contributes to an undesirable model of ‘two societies in one state’ ” (UNDP 1998:7). NUP’s long-term goal testifies more clearly to the role of the territorial imaginary in conceptualizing policy solutions pertaining to minority–state relations: “preserving both stability and a commitment to the protection and continued development of Estonian culture” (UNDP 1998:13). In effect, the desirable model, like those in Denmark and the United Kingdom, is one in which minorities and noncitizens adopt the language and culture of the national majority rather than one that cedes cultural space to national minorities.

NUP’s administration also said much about how the territorial imaginary, particularly its emphasis on state sovereignty, informed the daily practices of these elites of statecraft. Despite being funded by western sources, the Estonian minister of ethnic affairs chaired its steering committee. Other committee members included the director of the Integration Foundation and two prominent Estonian sociologists. UNDP’s resident representative (akin to an ambassador) and program manager for ethnic integration were regular attendees. The ambassadors of Norway, Finland, Denmark, and Sweden were also on the committee. That their first secretaries—usually the highest-ranked officials in small embassies behind the ambassadors—attended on their behalf, however, suggests the low priority that these ambassadors gave to integration. Two Russian speakers were also on the committee, although they rarely attended meetings. One was a member of parliament (MP). Because his presence was regularly required in Tallinn’s Old Town, he found it difficult to attend meetings at the Integration Foundation, located in the suburbs. The other was a journalist who grew dismayed with the committee for not accepting his ideas for integration projects. He explained that “I’m very passive. Why to do decorative roles. My proposals and opinions don’t have any role. In the beginning, I was very active. . . . Really, this Integration Foundation, where there are no Russians [working], wants to control the integration process. Estonians make proposals and Russians must accept it.”

The weak presence of Russian speakers on the steering committee rarely came up during committee meetings. Only the technical, administrative questions were dis-

cussed: Are enough funds remaining to run a given language-training program for the fiscal year? Are plans coming along to hold the next conference on multiculturalism? Are the newspapers reporting on our integration activities? Tensions between western officials and their Estonian counterparts pivoted on finance and administration, particularly, on when the Estonian government would take over full responsibility for the integration process. The point was illustrated at one meeting when a diplomat asked, “What will be the role of the donors [Nordic embassies] after 2001?” The minister replied that “the integration budget for 2000 is 58 million Estonian Kroons. More than half is paid for by the donors. It is not possible that the state will finance the full 60 million after 2000. We still need donors.” The reply came with a smile conveying polite assertion, not embarrassment.

To be sure, the continuation of western funds for integration was never in serious doubt. In venues outside of steering-committee meetings, both Estonian and western officials were more candid about the availability of western funds. The same diplomat who asked about the donors’ role explained that “Norway’s money will continue for some time.” Indeed, integration fit into the Norwegian Foreign Ministry’s development objectives, which the diplomat listed in priority as northwest Russia, the Baltic states, and Poland. Integration in Estonia, he explained, fulfilled two ministry objectives, as it would reorient Russians in Estonia away from Moscow and toward Tallinn and western Europe, in general. Other officials were even more explicit about the link between integration and security, as shown by the reaction of a Finnish diplomat on the steering committee to a blunt comment from a vitriolic Estonian nationalist MP. The MP once remarked that the Nordic governments are not interested in integration for humanitarian reasons but, rather, for “their own security. They wish to have stability in northern Europe so they take interest in keeping ethnic relations regulated. Neither are there business interests because Estonia is too small; and nor labor, the country is, again, too small.” When I presented the Finnish diplomat with this viewpoint, he smiled curtly and said, “It’s pretty well put. Stability is a major part of our policy. And integration is essential in that context.” Recognizing the importance of that context, a leading Estonian sociologist on minority issues summarized it concisely when asked why western funding for integration was so easily attained: “[Relative] to other issues, it’s comparatively easy. They’ve been watching Yugoslavia. They are ready to pay because they are afraid.” A tacit understanding existed among Estonian officials and Nordic diplomats that western funding would continue largely because integration was a “problem” understood in terms of (inter)national security.

Ultimately, this culture-cum-security thesis premised the State Programme, which the government approved in

March 2000.²⁰ It also received considerable political and financial backing from the Nordic countries through NUP as well as the European Union through a separate large-scale Estonian language training program.²¹ On the one hand, the document framed the Estonian language as Russian speakers' "outlet to the rest of society" and their key to social mobility (Estonian Government 2000:sect 3.1). On the other hand, resembling the concern of cultural fundamentalists, it assumed that continued use of the Russian language would lead (stressed again) to "the formation of a 'two societies in one country' model in Estonia, which may become dangerous both socially and from the point of view of security policy" (Estonian Government 2000:sect 3.1).

This security premise, which had underpinned integration debates and policies in Estonia throughout the 1990s (Feldman 2005a), set up the State Programme's expected outcome: the creation of "the Estonian model of a multicultural society, which is characterized by *the principles of cultural pluralism, a strong common core, and the preservation and development of the Estonian cultural domain*" (Estonian Government 2000:sect. 3.4). "Cultural pluralism" is to occur under the conditions of the Framework Convention, which, ironically, states that "without prejudice to measures taken in pursuance of their general integration policy, the Parties shall refrain from policies or practices aimed at assimilation" (Council of Europe 1995b:sect. II, art. 5, para. 1 and 2). In other words, the Framework Convention itself is subordinate to the state's integration policy. "A strong common core" is to be based on the use of the Estonian language in the public sphere (Estonian Government 2000:sect. 3.4). The Estonian language is the tool by which society is to be united, lest distinct linguistic groups lapse into conflict. Public life is to be ordered through the use of the Estonian language.²² Hence, 81 percent of the 2000 budget for the State Programme was committed to teaching the Estonian language to Russian speakers. The phrase "Estonian cultural domain" signals the top priority given to the preservation and development of the Estonian culture (Estonian Government 2000:sect. 3.4), a constitutional objective of the Estonian state.²³ The government committee that wrote the State Programme circulated a draft to leaders of national-minority associations for their comments but only after its basic goals and premises were established. As a leader of a non-Slavic minority association joked, "It was funny to get acquainted with a document that was already resolved."

Elites of statecraft in Estonia did not envision that the State Programme's goal of an "Estonian cultural domain" would segregate Russian speakers from Estonians. Similar to liberals in the United Kingdom, their strategy was to increase Russian speakers' opportunities to learn the Estonian language and about the Estonian culture, thereby hastening their integration into Estonian society. Working

through the territorial imaginary, however, the State Programme's effect is still to make a single language and culture isomorphic with the state by co-opting minorities and noncitizens into reproducing them for the nation-state (Feldman 2005c). It is worth noting that minority leaders also viewed the security of the Estonian state in culturally fundamentalist terms, showing how disagreement is contained within a common discursive field. One prominent Russian journalist explained that

it's easier to assimilate a minority of 10 percent, but 30 percent is dangerous for the nation. This might cost both groups their identity. Estonians are afraid of the appearance of minorities but Russians here are not identifying with Russians in Russia. If Russians here do not have the chance to form a subnation . . . they might form criminal subactivity, and a shady economy.

What the journalist cited as a condition of intrastate security, however—the creation of a Russian subnation—the Estonian government cited as a security threat.

The Nordic diplomats' support for the Estonian government's State Programme (and, hence, its construction of a security threat) shows how their agenda differed from that of OSCE. The diplomats aimed to institutionalize ethnic integration, whereas OSCE officials focused more on how integration actually affects Russian speakers. In a group interview, the diplomats explained that they pursued a two-track strategy in Estonia: On one track, they supported the Estonian government's efforts to expedite the integration process, and, on the other track, they supported OSCE's efforts to ensure that the Estonian government meets international standards on minority and human rights. In practice, they left the latter track entirely to OSCE. One of them later explained, "We have to understand that [OSCE has] a mission to know the nitty-gritty, but for us and the other embassies we need to decide which places need institutional support. Really what is important is that there is a bag of money [for the State Programme]." When asked why establishing an "Estonian cultural domain" was an uncontroversial (and ironic) goal for a minority integration program, the UNDP deputy chief of mission succinctly explained that "most people have accepted the linguistic premise of integration. Every country draws the line somewhere. [Pressuring Estonia further] would violate sovereignty."

Marginalizing the stateless: Minority leaders among the elites of statecraft

In addition to policy meetings, elites of statecraft met in several different venues to either formally or informally discuss matters of ethnic integration. These events followed a routine format, demonstrating how the territorial

imaginary allows officials representing nation-states to assume a disproportionate amount of control over integration policy in comparison with noncitizens and minority leaders. Usually held in some landmark Estonian building, these events featured the regular circle of representatives from the Estonian government, western diplomatic community, and national-minority associations. Western diplomats would maintain a cool distance from minority leaders, whereas minority leaders would corner OSCE officials to press their case to liberalize the government's integration policy.

For example, the OSCE mission held a reception in March 2000 in Tallinn's Old Town Hall to introduce their new ambassador.²⁴ As the Estonian government had just approved the State Programme a few days earlier, much chatter among the guests was about the document. In the receiving line, I stood behind a western ambassador I had met at an earlier function. I asked him what he thought of the State Programme. His expression suggested that integration is not a high priority, and he responded, "The point is to put our full support behind it." (His first secretary later asserted that, because of the State Programme, "Estonia as a concept works. There aren't major ethnic problems.") I inched my way forward until I was greeted by the OSCE mission's first secretary from Finland, who specialized in education and integration in Estonia. She proposed that we meet to discuss integration, as it was an interest we shared. The new ambassador, whose hand I shook next, seconded the offer. After confirming the interview, I approached the buffet line and encountered a Nordic diplomat. I decided to see how he would respond to feedback I had received on the NUP media campaign to promote the benefits of integration in Estonia. "Oh, please tell," he said, feigning excitement but certainly interested. I told him that many Russians and Estonians that I had talked to saw the policy as "an E.U. version of Soviet propaganda." I added that "people joke that in the Soviet Union all languages and cultures were equal, but that Russian was more equal than others. Now they say that about Estonian." This feedback suggested to me that neither Estonians nor Russian speakers saw a basic difference between how the European Union and the Soviet Union managed language and cultural policy. I then reported that "someone else compared the media campaign to advertisements selling Palmolive soap." "Yeah, but soap sells," he replied, sniffing confirmation that his government's foreign policy in Estonia was working despite public skepticism.

Apart from polite introductions and pleasant small talk, little engaged discussion occurred between western diplomats and minority leaders. The latter, instead, seized the opportunity to launch their grievances to OSCE officials. Away from the buzz of the buffet table and the wet bar, two prominent minority leaders looked exasperated as they stressed a list of important points to a mission

member, a German lawyer who was fluent in Russian. His body language and facial expression revealed that he understood their position but could do nothing about it. Later, speaking with his Finnish counterpart, this official lambasted the Estonian government for not taking language training and economic development seriously enough. In reaction to his outbreak, uncharacteristic for an OSCE official, his Finnish colleague nodded her head in agreement, but, again testifying to the importance of state sovereignty, she stressed, "They are doing all that they have to, which is more than many E.U. countries ... look at France!"

The format was the same at events in different venues, as explicitly demonstrated at a 1999 Nordic-funded conference on multiculturalism entitled "Cultural Plurality in Estonia: Policies and Solutions." A British, a Canadian, and an Estonian scholar each gave keynote lectures. Only three Russian speakers and no noncitizens were included among the other 25 speakers. Very few were even invited to attend. The remaining speakers and attendees were Estonian scholars and officials as well as scholars and officials from the Nordic countries, United Kingdom, Holland, and Canada. One of the western keynote speakers, who regularly lectured on multiculturalism in eastern Europe throughout the 1990s, cynically remarked, "These conferences are 90 percent formality but 10 percent of the people are probably interested in hearing different ideas. At least, it's good for networking and trading business cards and meeting people. It's foreign funding so they have to bring in foreign experts. Most of the audience wouldn't mind if I wasn't here." A Russian-speaking human-rights advocate who attended the conference expressed similar skepticism about these types of events:

These conferences have the same format: Estonians present opening speeches and ceremonies, Estonians make their remarks and contributions, then they leave and don't wait for discussion. The Danes once tried to organize a dialogue between Russian and Estonian journalists with the same result. It reflects the real separation between the two communities.

Nonetheless, Russian-speaking leaders also organized events to which they invited western officials, but even in these venues they had limited ability to prompt these officials to seriously challenge the Estonian government's integration policy. For example, minority leaders convened a meeting of the President's Roundtable on Ethnic Affairs to openly discuss a draft of the State Programme in November 1999.²⁵ The advisor for ethnic integration to the minister for ethnic affairs was invited to present the draft to the roundtable. Western officials in attendance included an OSCE official as well as diplomats from the Danish, Norwegian, and U.S. embassies. Steering the

meeting toward administrative issues, the advisor started his presentation by saying that “we have to talk not so much about ‘what to do’ but ‘how to do it.’” After hearing his lengthy presentation, Estonian- and Russian-speaking members doubted that the state’s financial, administrative, and educational systems were capable of teaching the Estonian language on such a large scale. An MP from the nationalist Pro Patria Union asked how the State Programme would be funded, given the cutbacks in the state budget as a part of Estonia’s market reforms necessary for E.U. accession. The advisor assured him (if he was really concerned) that foreign aid was available.

A leader of a local ethnic Russian cultural society complained about the State Programme’s decentralized approach to integration, as its responsibilities are dispersed among four ministries over which the minister for ethnic affairs has no authority: “There is a Russian saying that ‘seven caretakers don’t take care of the child.’ There is not one organization in charge of integration overall.” She then added that “there is a pathological attitude about learning the language.” A prominent member then shifted the discussion from the administration to the politics of integration: “What is really behind integration for certain political forces? We have known ‘what’ and ‘how’ but not ‘what for.’ This document is to protect the Estonian language. They would like to create an assimilated not an integrated society. We must find from where these desires come. This is a seven-year version of a five-year plan.” In contrast to the advisor’s managerial approach, this member was not asking “how to do it” but, rather, what the government’s policy was for. His equation of the document with a Soviet five-year plan was a clever tactic that compared the government to the former occupying power in an attempt to delegitimize its authority. The fit between the State Programme and western diplomats’ vision of international security, however, undermines the charge that the policy is a legacy of Soviet public administration.

Ultimately, the protests from roundtable members had no impact, as the draft of the State Programme discussed in the presence of these diplomats differed very little from the final draft that the government approved. Western diplomats did not question the premises of the State Programme either in this meeting or in later meetings at the Integration Foundation. The only western official to comment at the roundtable meeting was a Swedish first secretary from the OSCE mission, who said that he looked “forward to seeing the budget. Values are expressed in terms of money.” (That the E.U. PHARE Programme and the Nordic countries pay for over half of its cost testifies to the value that western diplomats place on the State Programme.) The OSCE official also added that Russians in Estonia should be called “Russian Estonians,” rather than “non-Estonians,” just as members of the Swedish minority in Finland are called “Swedish

Finns,” rather than “non-Finns.” As evidence of the label’s positive effects on integration in Finland, he noted that Swedish Finns cheer for Finland, rather than Sweden, when the two countries’ hockey teams face off in the ice rink. Blank Estonian and Russian faces stared back at him, puzzling over the naive example he introduced. Minority leaders are less concerned with “hyphenated” nationalities than they are with influencing the objectives of the government’s State Programme.

The stereotyped pattern of these events reflects the structural marginalization of minority leaders in diplomatic affairs. Ethnic integration is just such an affair, given its implications for secure interstate borders in the diplomatic imagination. Minority leaders only have limited success in mobilizing OSCE’s support because OSCE is an intergovernmental organization that must honor state sovereignty. This fact frustrates mission members as well as minority leaders, insofar as they work hard to ensure life chances for minorities and noncitizens. They find themselves not simply running up against obstinate officials representing a nation-state, however, but against the obstinate principle of state sovereignty, which inherently privileges the lives of some national groups over others.

By 2000, the E.C. (2000:18) declared that Estonia had fulfilled OSCE recommendations on naturalization and citizenship. The following year’s E.U. accession progress report similarly noted that Estonia’s Citizenship Law “is generally in line with international standards” (E.C. 2001:21) and that the rights of Russian speakers “continue to be largely observed and safeguarded” (E.C. 2001:22). The report’s main concern was that the Estonian government continues “to devote adequate resources and give proper attention to all elements of the integration program” (E.C. 2001:23). Former Danish Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen even upheld the State Programme as a model for all of Europe (de Souza 2001). In 2003, Guenter Verheugen, E.U. commissioner in charge of enlargement, asserted during a speech at the Diplomatic Academy of Moscow that “it is internationally accepted that certain constitutional rights are reserved for those who are citizens of the country. . . . Stateless people in Latvia and Estonia will enjoy the rights of permanent residents in the EU, but they won’t have the rights determined by citizenship and cannot automatically claim the rights given to EU citizens under EU law” (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty 2003). Estonia completed accession negotiations in 2003 and joined the European Union in May 2004, at which point 160,000 Russian speakers were still stateless (Estonian Foreign Ministry 2004).²⁶

Conclusion: Images of Europe

This article has asked how it is possible to deny 500,000 Soviet-era Russian speakers citizenship in post-Soviet

Estonia and to subsequently develop an integration policy that seeks to establish the “Estonian cultural domain.” The answer requires situating Estonia’s particular citizenship and integration policy in a broader European discourse of state, culture, security, and territory to explain why the European Union and western governments so readily supported it. The relative ease with which policy makers implemented these decisions was enabled by the assumption that the unregulated presence of the Other in a state’s territory constitutes a(n) (inter)national security risk. State sovereignty plays a pivotal role in structuring interaction among elites of statecraft, as the territorial imaginary is built on the notion that states represent putatively homogenous national cultures. For western officials, it normalized the Estonian decision to deny citizenship to Soviet-era Russian speakers. It also allowed the Estonian foreign minister to repel OSCE pressure to include noncitizen Russian speakers under the same rubric as “national minorities.” Furthermore, it brought Nordic and Estonian officials together for the common purpose of establishing the Estonian cultural domain with the only point of contention between them being the speed with which the Estonian government would take full control of the process. The efforts of minority leaders and OSCE officials to liberalize Estonia’s integration policy were largely dashed, given the privileged position of the language and culture of the national majority in the diplomatic imagination.

The Estonian case is not remarkable for its own historical idiosyncrasies but, rather, for what it reveals about the European logic of international relations and minority–state relations. Estonia’s “return to Europe” consolidated the nation-state around citizenship and minority issues. The culturally exclusionist premise of the State Programme results from Estonia’s status as a basic European nation-state, rather than a particular, post-Soviet “East European” nation-state. To be sure, the State Programme aims to expand the life chances of Russian speakers. Yet this goal is based on the assumption that an (inter)national security risk is at hand if the “alien” population—even if it is from the country in which it lives—does not reproduce the language and culture of the national majority. This assumption warranted the denial of citizenship to Soviet-era Russian speakers not because of what they had done but, rather, because of the way they were classified in diplomatic practice. The question of how this situation was logically possible is of high anthropological importance, as it drives at issues of power, social regulation, and the use of “culture” as a securitized object in mass society. An examination of this issue, however, requires inverting anthropology’s preferred approach to the study of power. It asks not how individuals respond to their marginal position but, rather, how policy elites can legitimately place particular individuals in disadvantaged positions. The

territorial imaginary does not determine this outcome. Instead, it functions as a template of spatial order in diplomatic practice that contains the range of acceptable ways to interpret national history and classify an otherwise undifferentiated population.

Notes

Acknowledgments. This article would not have been possible without the assistance of the many people working on integration in Estonia who offered their time and insights. To them, I extend my deepest gratitude. Although they are too many to name here, they include the staff of the Integration Foundation, the UNDP Mission to Estonia, Nordic and British diplomats in Estonia, officials from the OSCE Mission to Estonia, officials from the E.C. delegation to Estonia, and the numerous people working in national-minority associations. I would like to thank John Borneman, Christian Joppke, Cris Shore, and Levent Soysal for their insightful comments as well as John Burdick and Hugh Gusterson for their encouragement along the way. A particular debt of gratitude goes to Virginia Dominguez and Merje Kuus for their strategic input. This article has also benefited from presentations at the Department of Social Anthropology, Stockholm University; the Culture in Global Affairs Program at the George Washington University; and the Departments of Geography and Anthropology/Sociology at the University of British Columbia. The usual disclaimers apply. Research was supported by a Fulbright Fellowship to Estonia (1999–2000) and a David L. Boren Fellowship (2000–01).

1. “Ethnic integration” refers to the Estonian government’s self-described efforts to bring Russian speakers into the mainstream of Estonian society by increasing their command of the Estonian language and knowledge of Estonian culture. I use the term *ethnic* not with the aim of reproducing the civic–ethnic dichotomy but to distinguish between the national groups living in Estonia: Estonians and the various groups of Russian speakers, mainly Russians, Byelorussians, and Ukrainians. Using the term *Estonians* without such a modification could suggest either ethnic Estonians or citizens of Estonia, who include many ethnic Russians and others. Furthermore, “minority” integration is not an accurate phrase, as a member of a minority is legally understood to be a citizen of his or her country of residence, regardless of national background. Integration in Estonia is not particular to citizens but, rather, to all nonethnic Estonians. *Nationality* is also ambiguous because this can refer to either citizenship or “ethnicity.”

2. I avoid capitalizing the terms *eastern* and *western* to avoid essentialist connotations. The terms appear in lower case to indicate nation-states or people representing nation-states on either side of the old Iron Curtain. This is not a statement about their essential qualities but, rather, a shorthand way of speaking about people from particular parts of Europe. When referring to an essentialist definition, as used either in scholarly writing or by the elites of statecraft themselves, I place the capitalized term in quotes to maintain analytical distance.

3. John Borneman makes a similar point when analyzing Yugoslavia’s violent breakup by suggesting that “Eastern Europe is engaged in a catching up process to the West, creating relatively homogenous nation-states as a precondition for entrance into the EU” (1998:281).

4. Studying up is still a fairly uncommon anthropological project. Exceptions include Abélès 1993; Abélès et al. 1993; Gupta 1995; Gusterson 1996, 1997; Herzfeld 1992; Kertzer and Aré 2002:6; Marcus 1983; Shore 2000; Wedel 2001; and Zabusky 1995.

5. I have modified the term *intellectuals of statecraft* put forth by Gearóid Ó Tuathail and John Agnew (1992:193). This term refers to the range of actors in academia, think tanks, and defense institutions that specialize in matters of security and state and from whom government officials draw their intellectual capital.

6. Similarly, throughout the post-Cold War era, minorities across Europe have been routinely framed as “problems” and “challenges” to the viability of the interstate system (cf. Ekeus 2003:1), much as they were after World War I (Arendt 1958:270; Azcárate 1945:3; Macartney 1934:179).

7. If a single Bosnian culture of multiculturalism, as it were, emerged across the territory of the entire republic, then an isomorphism between state and culture would still take hold at a higher level of order. “Bosnians” would become synonymous with the state’s territory, thus, transcending particular national identities (much as E.C. officials hope that a European identity transcends national identities across E.U. territorial space). Hayden’s (2000:111–122) detailed analysis of the constitution of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina suggests such transcendence would be difficult because of the federation’s administrative structure, which is compartmentalized along nationalist lines. For present purposes, however, the point is not to predict whether nationalist identities remain or a collective identity that contains national differences prevails. Rather, it is to recognize how the territorial imaginary enables these two options (over others), both of which assume that stability is a function of privileging one cultural identity within a territorialized state or otherwise bounded political unit.

8. The Bolshevik internationalist movement featured two postulates about the existence of ethnic groups: (1) that an ethnic group has a set of inalienable characteristics, including its own territory, common language, and a distinct sociopsychological mentality; and (2) that the existence and development of an indigenous nation depends on its own statehood (Tishkov 2002:29). This conceptualization is closely related to that of the Council of Europe’s 1995 Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, which seeks to create room for national minorities in a political territory to which they are presumably foreign. The Framework Convention’s understanding of this task is premised on a construction of minorities that is highly similar to the Bolshevik idea of ethnic groups: “The Parties undertake to promote the conditions necessary for persons belonging to national minorities to maintain and develop their culture, and to preserve the essential elements of the identity, namely their religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage” (Council of Europe 1995b:sect. II, art. 1, para. 1).

9. I do not argue here that members of different ethnic groups would not come into conflict if elites of statecraft did not assume that they would. Rather, that which is acted on as a national security issue depends on its definition as such (cf. Campbell 1998:9–13; Weldes et al. 1999:9–13).

10. In violation of the pact, Nazi Germany occupied the country for three years beginning in 1941 until the resumption of Soviet rule in 1944. President Franklin Roosevelt still objected strongly to the annexation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, but, sealing these countries’ fate, he confided to Stalin that he would not go to war with the Soviet Union over the issue (Vizulis 1985:72).

11. Most nonethnic Estonians (and their descendants) who arrived in Estonia during the Soviet-era speak Russian as a first language, regardless of their ethnicity.

12. For a detailed history of the restoration of Estonian independence and the formation of Estonia’s citizenship laws, see Lauristin and Vihalemm 1997 and Pettai and Hallik 2002.

13. The U.S. government officially recognized Estonian independence on September 4, 1991.

14. The guidelines for citizenship and minority rights are mostly found in a series of treaties and conventions produced by the Council of Europe, which is composed of 45 member states and is distinct from the European Union. OSCE is responsible for observing how well an E.U. applicant state adheres to these treaties and conventions, one of the most important being the Framework Convention. The E.C. makes its judgment about an applicant state’s preparedness for E.U. membership largely on the basis of OSCE reports.

Estonia’s Citizenship Law stipulates the requirements for naturalization: a five-year period of permanent residence in post-Soviet Estonia, plus one year of residence after application; successful completion of an Estonian language exam; successful completion of a civics exam; a legal income sufficient to cover subsistence for the applicant and his or her dependents; loyalty to the Estonian state; and an oath of loyalty to the Estonian constitutional order.

15. Stateless individuals in Estonia who are legal residents are guaranteed social benefits and the right to vote in local elections, but they lack the right to vote in national elections, to hold certain public-sector jobs, and to belong to a political party. Naturalization rates have slowed considerably since 1997 because those who learned Estonian during the Soviet era have already acquired citizenship. The remainder must learn the official language from scratch. Although many former military personnel and their families returned to Russia through repatriation programs sponsored by the U.S., Dutch, and Swedish governments, the majority of Russian speakers opted to stay in Estonia, as they had built careers, raised families, and, in most cases, been born there. The Estonian government ruled out territorial autonomy for the Russian-speaking enclave in Ida-Virumaa (a county in north-eastern Estonia adjacent to Russia), as it would violate Estonia’s territorial integrity.

16. Järve (1999:4) also points out that this argument remained intact despite the virtual impossibility that enough Russian speakers would ever be elected to parliament to carry out the process of establishing Russian as a second official language. To do so would require a two-thirds majority vote in parliament to put the matter to a referendum. Given that Russian speakers only form about one-third of the population and only 15 percent of the citizenry, that enough parliamentarians would even agree to the put the matter to the voting public is highly unlikely. Equally unlikely, even if it were put to a referendum, is that it would receive the requisite 50 percent of votes. Not enough Russian speakers have citizenship (i.e., are eligible to vote in a referendum) to pass the referendum.

17. Because OSCE relies on silent diplomacy to deal with politically sensitive matters, its major opinions on how well a government is meeting its international obligations are communicated through diplomatic correspondence to avoid direct confrontation. Silent diplomacy also allows OSCE to avoid embarrassing the host nation-state and tempting the media to sensationalize sensitive issues. Diplomatic letters offer rich ethnographic material, as they are the medium through which the E.U. accession criteria regarding minority rights are negotiated. The production of an OSCE opinion follows a circuitous path. The local mission first writes a report on the basis of its own fact-finding investigations. The mission has access to a wide range of people and information, including government data, government officials, local officials, school administrators, and minority leaders. This report is next sent to OSCE headquarters in Vienna for further legal assessment and then to the HCNM’s office

in The Hague. The HCNM will then author a letter to the foreign minister of the host country.

18. The Framework Convention's explanatory report points out that the authors of this text avoided trying to define *national minority*. Instead, they "decided to adopt a pragmatic approach, based on the recognition at this stage, it is impossible to arrive at a definition capable of mustering general support of all Council of Europe member States" (Council of Europe 1995a:para. 12).

19. The Estonian government's declaration, deposited on January 6, 1997, is as follows:

The Republic of Estonia understands the term "national minorities", which is not defined in the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, as follows: are considered as [*sic*] "national minority" those citizens of Estonia who

-reside on the territory of Estonia;

-maintain longstanding, firm and lasting ties with Estonia;

-are distinct from Estonians on the basis of their ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic characteristics;

-are motivated by a concern to preserve together their cultural traditions, their religion or their language, which constitute the basis of their common identity. [Council of Europe 2003]

20. The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities backstops the State Programme's security concern. The former's Explanatory Report makes clear that its call to protect minority "'traditions' is not an endorsement or acceptance of practices which are contrary to national law or international standards. Traditional practices remain subject to limitation arising from the requirements of public order" (Council of Europe 1995a:para. 44). The concern with "public order" testifies to the conceptual link between state security and a clear power differential between the majority and minority national groups. In effect, the Framework Convention secures the national majority as much as it protects national minorities, which traps the multicultural politics of inclusion within the framework of the nation-state's exclusivist agenda.

21. The ease with which the State Programme passed western standards and bypassed the concerns of Russian speakers indicates the pivotal position of the sovereign nation-state in minority-state relations in Europe. The precedent in European law and custom backstops the State Programme's strong emphasis on the Estonian language and culture. The Framework Convention's deference to state sovereignty begins in the preamble, which asserts the primacy of "the rule of law, respecting the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of states" (Council of Europe 1995b). The Framework Convention gives states "a measure of discretion" in implementing its objectives on the grounds that each state knows best how to manage minorities within its own particular circumstances (Council of Europe 1995a:para 11). Furthermore, it does not commit the signatory state to any financial obligation toward establishing minority educational and training institutions (Council of Europe 1995b:sect. II, art. 13, para. 1-2). Estonia had signed the Council of Europe's Framework Convention in 1995 and entered it into force in 1998. Meeting the conditions of this international agreement is among the most important steps in gaining E.C. approval on minority rights.

22. In March 2002, the parliament passed the Basic School and Gymnasium Act, which requires Russian-medium secondary schools to conduct 60 percent of their curriculum in the Estonian language.

23. The preamble to the Estonian Constitution guarantees "the preservation and development of the Estonian nation and culture throughout the ages" (Estonian State 1992). The official Estonian version uses the term *rahvas*, which in English means "nation" in the civic sense, rather than *rahvus*, which connotes the ethnic meaning of nation. Estonian administrators and officials, however, operate almost entirely on the basis of the Estonian *rahvus* when designing ethnic integration programs. This testifies to Hayden's (2000:15) point that nation-states may welcome minorities as citizens although never fully accept them into mainstream society. For a detailed analysis of the Estonian Constitution as it pertains to citizenship, law, and ethnic relations, see Ruutsoo 1998.

24. At an OSCE reception held the previous year in Estonia's national art gallery, I asked one mission member why the group did not hold the reception in the lounge of Tallinn's splendid Russian Drama Theatre. Smilingly, he answered, "That wouldn't be tolerated."

25. President Lennart Meri created the President's Roundtable on Ethnic Affairs in 1993 as a way to promote interethnic dialogue at a moment when ethnic tensions were high and the Red Army was still present on Estonian soil. It is composed of leaders of national cultural societies as well as Estonian and Russian-speaking politicians and academics. The roundtable, which has the power to submit legislation to parliament, is the most visible and vocal forum for minority leaders in Estonia to express their views regarding integration. The roundtable acts as the unofficial representative of minorities to western embassies and the E.C. Noncitizens may not join the roundtable because it is funded through the office of the president.

26. By 2002, out of over 550,000 Russian speakers, 75,000 had Estonian citizenship restored to them, 95,000 opted for Russian or Ukrainian citizenship, about 120,000 had become naturalized Estonian citizens, and approximately 9,000 were not registered with the state at all (Estonian Foreign Ministry 2002). Roughly 110,000 emigrated from Estonia back to Russia or Ukraine during the 1990s (Hallik 2002:69). The remaining 170,000 (as of 2002) are stateless and living in Estonia on the basis of temporary or permanent residency permits.

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accepted January 2, 2005
final version submitted March 1, 2005

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