

Impact of ethnic heterogeneity on party nationalisation in the Baltic states*

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ABSTRACT. Party nationalisation indices show divergent trends in the Baltic countries. In countries with geographically concentrated minorities we expect ethnic patterns of voting to have an effect on party nationalisation. We develop two curvilinear hypotheses linking the share of minorities in an area to electoral support for political parties with different positions on majority-minority political scale. A municipal-level database combining results of eleven Baltic elections with statistical control variables is used for analysing the models. We find some support for the hypotheses and argue that higher nationalisation in Estonia compared to Latvia can partly be attributed to the weakening of more radical minority/majority nationalist parties for the benefit of moderate parties, whose support is less related to ethnic patterns in settlement. Higher nationalisation in Lithuania can be attributed to smaller, more diverse and geographically less concentrated ethnic minority groups.

The three Baltic countries provide a good testing ground for hypotheses about the effect of ethnic pluralism on party nationalisation. Ethnic minorities (Russian and other Eastern Slavs) constitute from 17 (Lithuania) up to 40 percent (Latvia) of the countries' populations, and – since not all of them have obtained citizenships – some 17-25 percent of the voters in parliamentary elections.

Research on party nationalisation in Central and Eastern Europe has pointed out that in countries where ethnic minorities are not evenly spread throughout the country the level of party nationalisation is affected by the horizontal variance in support for ethnic parties or parties commanding major support among the minority population. A further dimension which is often employed to explain party nationalisation is the centralisation of government expenditures (Chhibber & Kollman 2004).

The three Baltic countries are interesting cases in point, because they are similar with regards to two dimensions which have been used to explain party nationalisation: the centralisation of government expenditures¹ and the ethnic structure. Despite that, party nationalisation has

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¹ Between 1997 and 1999 central governments accounted for 76-79 percent of the countries' public expenditures (Government Finance Statistics Manual 2001).

developed in different directions. In the latest few elections, party nationalisation was very high in Lithuania (in the PR tier of the mixed system), moderate and increasing in Estonia, and rather low in Latvia (see Bochsler 2008).

Our paper shall investigate two aspects that might explain the differences: the *politicisation of ethnic divisions* through political parties, and the *impact of electoral systems*, expecting to find interaction effects between the two. First, the political mobilization of ethnic minorities² has taken remarkably different paths in the three countries. Latvian party system has become clearly split along ethnic lines since late 1990s. The pattern in Estonia has changed from mid-1990s when ethnic Russian parties were mobilizing a bulk of Russian-speaking voters, to the disappearance of ethnic Russian parties from the parliament. The Russian population in Lithuania has mostly been voting for mainstream parties. Despite the salient issue of the impact of minorities on the Baltic party systems, research on ethnic patterns of voting has so far remained scarce (see discussion below). Second, we look at the so far neglected impact of candidate nomination rules on party nationalisation. The three countries appear as a laboratory for this study, because they all employ proportional representation systems³ with a five percent threshold, but different nomination rules. Namely, all PR candidates automatically run in every corner of the country in the Lithuanian countrywide electoral district, so that we do not expect to find nomination effects on party nationalisation. In Latvia, candidates can compete in several electoral districts, to the effect that party leaders often run in all five districts. In Estonia, each candidate can only be nominated in one out of the 12 electoral districts. Since all Baltic party systems have been leader-oriented, the candidacy patterns of prominent politicians might affect electoral strength of parties across the country. In Estonia, we expect the effect to be reinforced through the candidate-centred ballot design (open-list PR). We shall argue that such electoral rules might have a crucial impact on the strength of Russian minority parties in Estonia across districts.

We will provide a number of innovations in this paper. This is one of few studies and the only recent one that investigates empirically the impact of social divisions and voting behaviour in all three Baltic countries. In particular, we shed light on the influence of ethnicity. We show that ethnic heterogeneity of territorial units (see below) influences patterns of party support and hence contributes to the levels of party nationalisation. Besides showing the decisive impact of ethnic minority prevalence on the support levels for minority parties, we provide the first empirical evidence for Key's effect of ethnic radicalisation for proportional representation systems in post-communist European democracies. This study also goes beyond looking at differences in voting behaviour, looking also at variance in absenteeism.

For the empirical tests of our hypotheses, we employ census data and electoral results by municipalities or districts for our analysis. Analysis of aggregate data is the most suitable way to study the impact of the ethnic divide on the Baltic party systems, since good survey data is not available.⁴ The fact that major ethnic minorities in all three countries are territorially concentrated allows us to draw partial conclusions from an ecological analysis on aggregated

² In this paper, we understand ethnicity as a category of self-identification or collective identification of certain groups of the population, which are based on (real or fictive) kinship ties, race, language, religion, or other cultural features (Todorova 1992). In today's Central and Eastern European societies, ethnic identities appear to be very strong, and mostly not disputed.

³ Partially, in case of Lithuanian mixed system.

⁴ The only survey which has been conducted in all three countries, the European Election Study 2004, did not contain questions regarding ethnicity in Latvia and Lithuania.

data (see King 1997 and King et al. 2004). We put forward specific hypotheses on the impact of ethnic context based on theoretical models that go beyond simple directional hypotheses. These allow us to draw conclusions about the impact of socio-demographic divisions on territorial voting patterns and, as a result, on party nationalisation.

This paper is structured as follows: First, we will discuss the results of previous studies on party nationalisation, with a particular look on the Baltic states. Second, we will develop theoretical expectations for the effect of ethnic cleavage. This prepares the ground for a description of the ethnic dimension in the party systems of the three countries, and the quantitative analysis of the territorial differences in party support.

Party nationalisation in the Baltic states

Research on party nationalisation has followed two main lines which are commonly used in the comparative analysis of party systems: the social cleavage approach, that explains the party system as a mirror of organised social groups and social conflicts, and the institutional approach, that looks at the impact of institutions on the party systems. The probably most employed explanation of variance in party nationalisation today relies in the role of political institutions. Chhibber and Kollman (2004) and Cox and Knoll (2003) have argued that party nationalisation relies on the centralisation of government expenditures. The more a government is centralised, the more the parties' incentives to organise nationally, and the voters' incentives to vote for nationalised parties. Other authors have looked at further aspects of the institutional order, such as the impact of electoral systems (Cox & Knoll 2003) or of presidentialism and the linkage of presidential and parliamentary elections (Hicken 2003; Kasuya 2001; Samuels 2002; Cox 1997: 187-190), however, coming to different results.

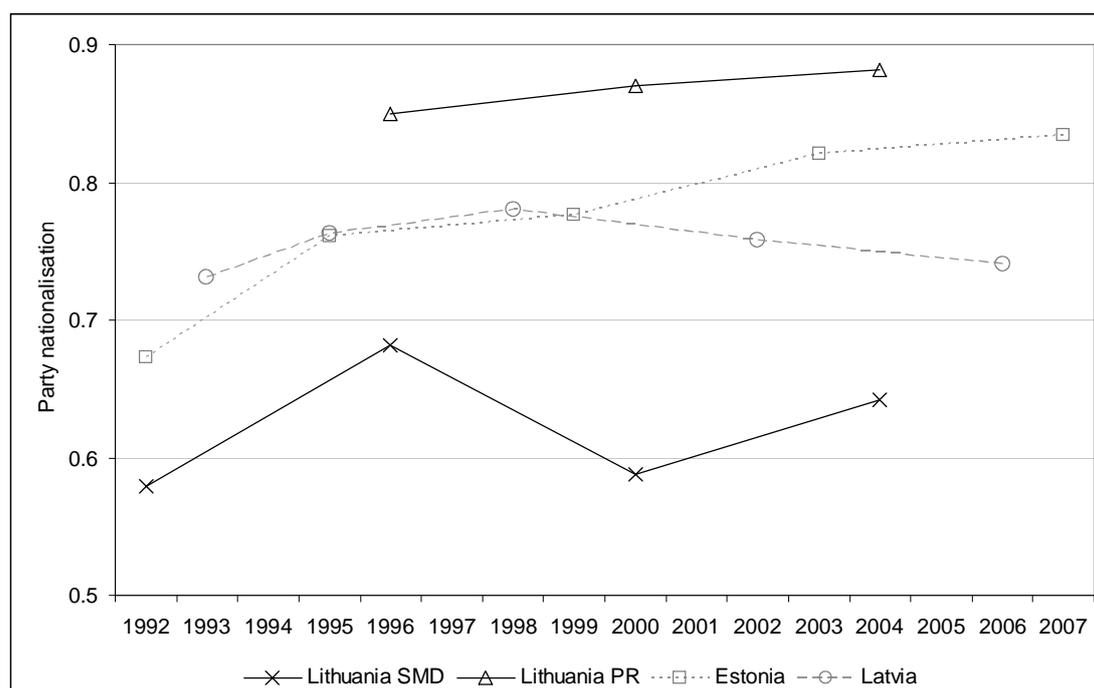
A different school has related party nationalisation to the territorial dimension of social cleavages. Namely, Caramani (2004) argues that party systems which are organised around '*functional*' social cleavages which crosscut (almost) every region and municipality lead to highly nationalised party systems. In contrast, when strong cleavages with a territorial character exist, namely relying on groups that are geographically concentrated, then the party system will be less nationalised. Research on party nationalisation in Central and Eastern Europe has pointed out that in countries where ethnic minorities are not evenly spread throughout the country the level of party nationalisation is affected by the horizontal variance in support for ethnic parties or parties commanding major support among the minority population (Bochsler 2008).

So far, Meleshevich (2006), Bochsler (2008), and Tiemann (2005) provide measures of party nationalisation for the Baltic states. Even on the descriptive level, their results vary substantially. While Meleshevich (2006) observes a decrease of territorial differences in all three countries over time, Tiemann (2005: 16) reports an increase in Latvia between 1998 and 2002, and a fluctuating development in Lithuania. Partly, these differences can be explained because they looked at different parts of the elections – PR and single-seat districts in the Lithuanian case. Partly, differences might rely on the fact that the authors did not employ the same indicators, and some indicators that were employed are biased through the number of parties that compete in elections, or the number of territorial units on which the results rely (see Bochsler 2008 for details). We orient upon the results provided by Bochsler (2008),

because the indicator employed in this study appears to be less biased by such factors, and for this reason be more convincing for the use in comparative studies.

Figure 1 shows the development of party nationalisation in the three countries. Party nationalisation is measured with the standardised party nationalisation score, which amounts to 1 in the case of perfect homogeneity of party strength across a country, while lower values indicate increasing differences in the electoral behaviour between territorial units.⁵ The figures reveal that the nationalisation of the Estonian party system has substantially and steadily increased, from 0.67 in 1992 to 0.83 in 2007. In Latvia, party system nationalisation has rather remained low about 0.73 or slightly above, with a maximum of 0.78 in 1998. With a level of nationalisation of 0.85-0.88, the Lithuanian party system appears as the most nationalised of all Baltic party systems, if the PR tier is employed to measure it. Nationalisation has been substantially lower in the single-seat district tier. This can however be explained through the frequent strategic agreements allied political parties, which resulted in withdrawal of candidates from certain constituencies, and what has led to differences in party support across single-seat constituencies (Bochsler 2008). In this paper, we look only at the PR tier of the Lithuanian parliamentary elections, because this allows best comparability with the two other countries that both elect by PR. (See Appendix B for the party nationalisation scores by party type for the elections that we investigated.)

Figure 1 Party nationalisation in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, 1992-2007.



The territorial differences in party strength in the three cases have been related to the importance of the ethnic conflict in Baltic politics and in the Baltic party systems and the geographic concentration of ethnic minorities (Meleshevich 2006; Kolstø & Tsilevich 1997; Clark 1994). Several contributions have stressed that issues which are related to ethnicity

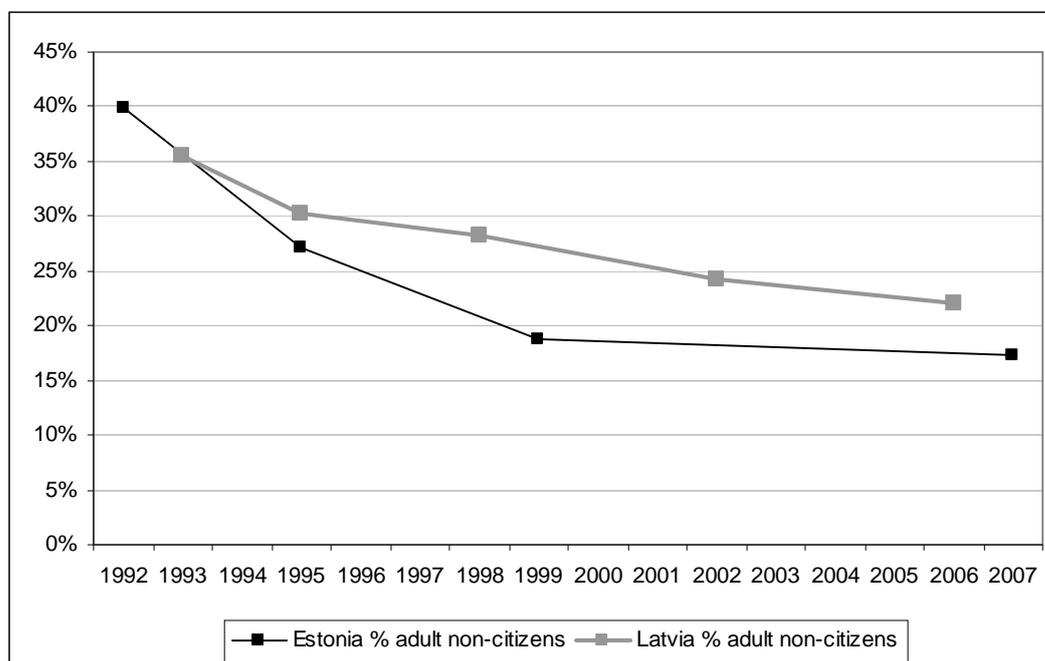
⁵ The score can be calculated with a Visual Basic program that runs under Microsoft Excel. It is available on <http://www.unige.ch/ses/spo/staff/corpsinter/bochsler/pns/>.

have a major importance for elections and political parties in the Baltic states (see for instance Martynova 1999; Pettai & Hallik 2002; Evans 1998). Pettai and Kreuzer (1999: 166) mention the division between “national majority and cosmopolitan ethnic minority groups” as one of the two main cleavages in Baltic party systems.

However, with exception of a short analysis of the ethnic cleavage in Latvia in the early 1990s (Kolstø & Tsilevich 1997), which was limited to the level of the five Latvian regions, no work has attempted to measure the ethnic divides in Baltic party systems based on aggregate electoral results. For the understanding of party nationalisation, the investigation of the impact of the ethnic structure of the countries appears to be of major importance.

Namely, the development of party nationalisation opens empirical questions: why do Estonia and Latvia show such a different development, with an increase of party nationalisation in Estonia, while it Latvia it remained stable on the long-run, and even started decreasing after 1998? And given that in first elections in Latvia and Estonia, a large majority of Eastern Slavic population was not entitled to vote and only gradually obtained citizenship (see Figure 2), one would expect that the ethnic conflict became more important in elections, and party nationalisation would have decreased. Against this expectation, how is it possible that we observe an increase in party nationalisation since 1992?

Figure 2 Share of non-citizens among adult (voting age) population, Estonia and Latvia 1992-2007



Notes: In Lithuania, an overwhelming majority of voting age population have been citizens. Source: Authors' estimations based on electoral registers and population statistics databases (*Vabariigi Valimiskomisjon*: www.vvk.ee, *Statistics Estonia*: www.stat.ee, *Centrālā vēlēšanu komisija*: www.cvk.lv, *Latvijas Statistika*: www.csb.gov.lv).

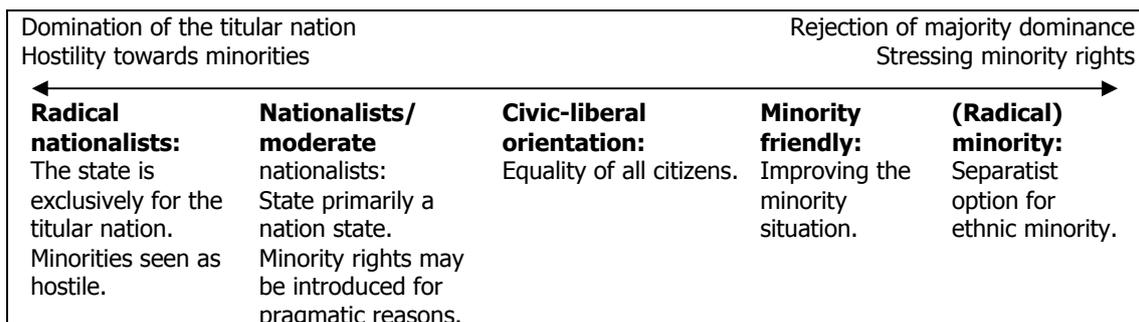
Party systems in ethnically divided democracies

Post-communist party systems in Europe have often been argued to lack strong social cleavages. During the communist rule differences in societies levelled off to form “flattened societies” (Wessels & Klingemann 1994) removing strong collective identities necessary for the formation of a cleavage-based party system (Elster et al. 1998).⁶ However, a dominant non-economic conflict dimension of ethnicity and ethnic nationalism has stood out across several post-communist countries (Moser 2001).

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe are ethnically more heterogeneous than Western democracies, and hence the ethnic dimension is more likely to be politicised there (Fearon 2003: 206-9). Whereas ethnic conflict was subdued under communist regimes, ethnic affiliations were well conserved, and in many cases had a certain importance in public life. Tensions were further based on the nationalist programs implemented by some of the communist regimes (Todorova 1992); in other cases legacies of the pre-communist period were re-activated after the fall of communism (Hockenos 1993⁷). The post-communist transition provided an opportunity for the activation of ethnic conflicts. In many countries, border and nationhood issues acquired significance during state and nation building processes. At the same time, the region experienced an “exchange of entire social systems” creating “high levels of social disorientation and ambivalence toward the new order” (Minkenberg & Perrineau 2007: 32). This was related to a climate of political and social insecurity, which may provide a basis for growing of ethnic tensions (Evans & Need 2002: 656).

Different from the duality that many of the cleavages discussed in the literature represent, we understand the ethnicity-nationalism dimension in terms of a spectrum of positions regarding the definition of nationhood and statehood, and the rights and inclusion of ethnic minorities. Figure 1 outlines the full spectrum with some positions parties might take along it.

Figure 3 The Ethnic-nationalist Dimension of Party Systems.



Source: Bochsler 2007a, modified.

On the extremes of the scale we find the nationalist positions of the titular nation (on the left) and of the ethnic minorities (on the right). Both types of parties can be seen as representatives of their ethnic group, and they want to maximise their groups’ interests. For this goal, ethnic

⁶ The hypothesis that post-communist rule leaves societies that are completely deprived of any social divides (“tabula rasa”) has however been contested in many studies. Particularly the non-economic political divides are present across Central and Eastern Europe; these are typically the conflict between the supporters and opponents of the old regime, the religious, ethnic-cultural, or the urban-rural conflict (Whitefield 2002; Tavits 2005: 287; Johannsen 2003).

⁷ Cited in Minkenberg (2002: 335).

majority nationalists promote the dominance of their ethnicity, culture, or language; in some cases that may include policies that have as their objective an increase of ethnic majority population or expulsion of members of the minority. They might even perceive the minorities to be a danger for national integrity and for the rights of the ethnic majority. Ethnic minority nationalists pursue the opposite policy, which in most radical cases results in separatist or irredentist claims. This group of parties consists of parties which are clearly ethnically defined.⁸

In between the extremes, there are less radical positions – parties that have a more conciliatory position in ethnic questions. There are moderate majority nationalists, civic-liberal parties and minority-friendly parties. Moderate nationalists share some ideas more radical nationalists, such as creation of a nation state with a strong denotation of the titular nation, but they are more attentive to the interests of ethnic minorities – either to ensure peaceful co-existence or due to international pressure. Civic-liberal parties promote policies that could be called ‘ethnically neutral’, or rely on a mixture of attentiveness to minorities and moderate version of nationalism. Some parties have considerable support on both sides of the ethnic divide, or even though mostly representing a section of ethnic majority, actively attempt to address issues close to the minority. We also count among minority friendly parties the ones that give any other specific reason for their inclusion, such as survey evidence of strength among ethnic minorities or prominent people of minority background among leaders.

This classification refers to certain typical positions of political parties the continuum. In reality, parties may be located in between categories, they may be difficult to classify because their leaders hold different views on ethnic affairs, or because their manifestos, enacted policies and positions of their voters may not correspond. Finally, parties can switch their position over time – possibly more often in post-communist than in Western democracies.

The ethnic-nationalist conflict and territorial voting patterns

Our study assesses the importance of ethnic conflict and ethnic structure of population for party strength. However, our expectations regarding the relationship between ethnicity and electoral geography go beyond a simple cleavage model. After the landmark study by Lipset & Rokkan (1967), an extensive literature has accumulated that discusses the meaning of a social cleavage and cleavage based voting. Even though we subscribe to views that there is little agreement over the meaning of the concept (Tóka 1998: 596), it is beyond our intentions to contribute to the discussion here. For the purposes of this study, it suffices to say that according to a pure form of social cleavage model of voting, there is a very strong relationship between social structures and party systems. Parties are clearly identified with social groups that support them, and members of a social group (e.g. ethnic minorities) vote quite homogeneously for “their” political party or an array of parties. Translated to the function of party strength over territorial units, the ethnic cleavage approach implies that the vote share of a political party (V) is a linear function of the share of ethnic minorities among the population (p_{\min}):

⁸ Clearly ethnically defined means that parties see themselves as representatives of an ethnic group and their program is focussed on a conservation or improvement of their group’s rights such as cultural rights, political autonomy, or – in the case of the most radical option of ethnic minority parties – the right of secession or irredentism; see Horowitz (1985: 291).

$$V = \alpha + \beta_1 \cdot p_{\min} + \varepsilon$$

Constant α represents support for the party in areas where no members of an ethnic minority live. The second parameter β_1 , indicates to what extent the vote share increases (or decreases) as the ethnic group share among the population increases. In the case of an ethnic minority party, we expect a positive value for β_1 , namely $0 < \beta_1 < 1$. Support for parties that mobilise ethnic minority voters would have a low constant and it would be positively correlated with the ethnic minority's share of population. Parties which get their support from titular ethnic group⁹ would have a positive constant and their vote share would be negatively correlated to the share of the minority among the population.

However, the simple function neglects the character of ethnic-nationalist conflict as a continuous axis, where more than two positions can be taken by political parties. Namely, party strength might not only rely on group membership, but also on the degree of polarisation of ethnic-nationalist conflict: in an ethnically heterogeneous environment, the ethnic-nationalist conflict being more important than in an ethnically homogeneous environment.¹⁰ This may lead to a radicalisation of party politics in the former and parties with radical stands along the ethnic-nationalist axis might be more successful in ethnically heterogeneous than ethnically homogenous areas.

On the one hand, strong presence of ethnic minority has a substantial effect on the political position of the local ethnic majority. Some voters among local majority might strongly oppose or feel politically threatened by the local minority. Hence, they tend to vote for candidates not supported by minority voters. This may lead to an apparent paradox reported by Vladimir O. Key (1949) for elections in the Southern US states. Against the common sense expectation that the stronger a group of voters, the better its interest is represented in politics, Key showed that the contrary might be true. In elections where ethnic polarisation plays a major role the success of majority nationalist candidates might *increase* as the share of minority voters among the electorate *increases*. Such “*minority backlash*” (Glazer et al. 1998 referred to a special case of “racial backlash”) occurs because in ethnically heterogeneous constituencies moderate candidates often gain substantial support from ethnic minority voters. However, a part of ethnic majority voters might dislike voting for a candidate or a party supported in numbers by ethnic minority and they might switch their support from moderate to majority nationalist parties. If this group of voters becomes strong and the stronger (yet not overwhelming) an ethnic minority is in a given electoral district, the more the median voter of ethnic-nationalist axis moves towards a radical position (see Keech 1968: 100). Electoral effects of this phenomenon have been studied by Grofman et al. (1992) and Grofman & Handley (1995). African Americans tend to be of liberal disposition and support the Democratic Party, but the higher the share of them in a given district, the more conservatives tend to be elected. Glazer et al. (1998: 24-6) explain the occurrence of this shift in Southern US states by the presence of (ethnic) group oriented voters who detest candidates supported by disliked voters – typically, members of ethnic minority. The more minority voters there are in a district, the higher the share of group-oriented voters who might opt for a candidate opposed to the minority. If the share of group-oriented voters is large, the enfranchisement of

⁹ For the sake of convenience, we occasionally refer to the titular ethnic group as “majority ethnic group” below, even when discussing territorial units where the overall minority constitutes a local majority. Similarly, we use the term “majority nationalist party” to refer to nationalist parties of the titular group.

¹⁰ See Posner 2004; Glazer et al. 1998; Grofman et al. 1992; Grofman & Handley 1995; Key 1949; Keech 1968.

minority voters might counter-intuitively lead to radicalisation of the median voter and to a backlash against the interests of the minority. Only if the share of African American voters in a district is close to 50 percent or higher, could they determine the election.

On the other hand, minorities may feel more threatened by the ethnic majority in ethnically heterogeneous areas. This may lead to “*minority resistance*” – an increase of likelihood that ethnic minorities vote for an explicit ethnic minority party that promises to represent their interests compared to areas where minorities have a solid majority. The latter can experience a situation where parties that are ethnically mixed or not ethnically defined may have more success among ethnic minorities. In these areas, many party offices of minority-friendly or mainstream parties are held by those belonging to a minority, facilitating the identification of minority voters with a mainstream party. Making inroads to ethnic minority areas by mainstream parties is a special case of catch-all party phenomenon that has been a major cause behind weakening of cleavage based voting in general in Western democracies (Kirchheimer 1966, Oskarson 2005: 86).

Both effects – “minority backlash” and “minority resistance” – lead us to expect a curvilinear relationship between the share of ethnic minorities and party vote (summarised in Table 1 below). The vote share of *nationalist parties* is initially expected to increase as the share of ethnic minority population (and the importance of ethnic cleavage in heterogeneous municipalities) increases. Subsequently, their support is expected to decrease, because in municipalities with high share of ethnic minorities, nationalist parties lack a strong support basis. For *moderate nationalist parties*, the importance of heterogeneity might be weaker, because they promote less polarising policies. The support for *ethnic minority parties* would increase as the level of ethnic homogeneity decreases. In municipalities where the share of minorities increases further so as to constitute a local majority, the increase of their support may be lower as minority parties might benefit less from ethnic tensions. For minority-friendly parties, such an effect might be weaker, because they promote less polarising policies, and accordingly profit less from ethnic tensions. Finally, *mainstream parties* may have better results in ethnically homogenous than heterogeneous areas as they lose part of their support when the level of ethnic conflict is increased, and they might score slightly better among the ethnic majority, because the group-identity and identity-based voting patterns might be stronger, the smaller (and more threatened) a group is. This would imply that minorities rather vote for minority- or minority-friendly parties than for mainstream parties.

It can further be expected that the vote distribution of certain party families might depend on the presence of other, competing parties. Namely, when both a strong ethnic minority party and a strong minority-friendly party are present, they are competing against each other. In such case, the ethnic minority party is more likely to score well in heterogeneous areas, profiting from polarisation, whereas we expect the minority-friendly party to do better in areas where the ethnic minority is concentrated.

The same applies, vice-versa, for nationalist and moderate nationalist parties: if a *strong nationalist party* is present, then it gets a substantial part of the vote of ethnic majority voters, particularly in heterogeneous municipalities where the ethnically based polarisation is strong. This means that in such situations, the moderate nationalist parties rather get their votes among the titular nation in areas with a less strong polarisation. Accordingly, we would

expect that at the absence of strong nationalist parties, *minority backlash paradoxes* might occur for moderate nationalist parties (means: they get many votes in ethnically heterogeneous areas), while at the presence of strong nationalist parties, the moderate nationalist parties are not particularly strong in ethnically heterogeneous areas.

The curvilinear relationship can be added to the model by inclusion of the squared term for minority share among population.

$$V = \alpha + \beta_1 \cdot p_{\min} + \beta_2 \cdot p_{\min}^2 + \varepsilon$$

Table 1 Expectations of coefficients

	α <i>measures indirectly the support of the party among non-minority voters</i>	β_1 (pmin) <i>measures indirectly the support of the party among minority voters</i>	β_2 (pmin²) <i>measures curvilinear effects</i>
Minority parties	≈0	positive	neutral or negative
Minority-friendly parties	positive	positive; if a strong minority party is present, ≈0	neutral or – if a strong minority party is present – slightly positive
Nationalist parties	low, positive	positive	negative, β_2 > β_1
Moderate nationalist parties	positive	≈0 or slightly positive; if a strong nationalist party is present, slightly negative	negative (if $\beta_1 > 0$, then β_2 > β_1)
Mainstream parties	positive	≈0 or slightly negative	slightly positive

Operationalisation

For the operationalisation of our model, we have collected data on electoral results by territorial units in the three Baltic states for eleven elections. We have further collected data describing the structure of the population in the same territorial units. Mainly, we were interested in the ethnic structure of the population, but also collected additional data on the economic structure that can be employed as control variables.

For each country, we rely on electoral results and population data from 33 up to 234 territorial units (for units used, see Table 2). In case of Lithuania, we analyse only the party votes. In the mixed electoral system in Lithuania, voters have two votes: the party vote decides mandate allocation in the proportional tier, the district vote decides on which candidate wins the mandate in the single-seat district. Only the proportional part of elections and the party votes are comparable to the electoral systems in Estonia and in Latvia.

Table 2 shows the variables included in the database. While electoral results and the ethnic data is very similar for all three countries, the control variable (economic structure) varies slightly from case to case because, not in all cases, was the same data easily accessible on the level of municipalities or counties.¹¹

¹¹ For a later version of the paper, we might attempt to find more similar control variables, over a larger time span.

Table 2 Structure of the database

	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania
Territorial units	234: 33 urban [<i>linn</i>] and 193 rural municipalities [<i>vald</i>] and 8 Tallinn city districts. (1992: 226 units) ¹	33 counties [<i>rajons</i>]	60 urban [<i>miestas</i>] and rural municipalities [<i>rajonas</i>] ²
Elections	1992, 1995, 1999, 2003, 2007	1993, 1998, 2002, 2006	2000, 2004
Independent variables on ethnicity	Share of native speakers of Slavic languages in a municipality.	Share of ethnic Eastern Slavs (Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians) in a county.	Share of ethnic Eastern Slavs and ethnic Poles in a municipality.
Independent (control) variables on the economic structure	- Employment in the primary sector (agriculture/fishing) - Employment in the secondary sector (mining, industry, construction)		- Employment in the primary sector (agriculture/fishing) - Employment in the secondary sector (mining, industry, construction) (Data for 2000 and 2003)
Independent (control) variable on employment	Unemployment rate (Estonia: data for 2000; Latvia: data for October 2006)		Employment rate for 2001, 2004
Independent (control) variable on population density	Population density (inhabitants per 1 km ² of area) (Estonia: 2007; Latvia: 1995, 2000-2006)		
Dependent variables	Vote share of the party or electoral alliance and electoral turnout in a county or municipality.		
Remarks	1992: Socio-economic data on 8 Tallinn districts not available	1993: No data on turnout	

Notes: Data from electoral commissions (www.vvk.ee, www.cvk.lv, www3.lrs.lt/rinkimai/) and statistical offices (www.stat.ee, www.csb.lv, www.stat.gov.lt). Population census data of 2000 (Estonia, Latvia) and 2001 (Lithuania), unless otherwise noted.

¹ Analysis based on 2007 districts, adjustments made in cases of mergers and splits.

² Electoral results re-calculated by polling stations to match municipalities.

Our main interest is to establish how the ethnic structure of territorial units affects parties' vote distribution across the territory. The main expected cleavage is between the titular nation and ethnic minorities that have – particularly in Estonia and Latvia – substantially increased in the time when the three Baltic states were part of the Soviet Union. The largest group of these minorities are the ethnic Russians, but there are smaller populations of Belarusians and Ukrainians as well. The three groups do not have very different political identities and there is anecdotal evidence they act jointly in Baltic politics and we consider Russians, Belarusians, and Ukrainians as a single homogeneous group, Eastern Slavs. This corresponds to the common expectation of a homogeneous political behaviour of all Eastern Slavs, and furthermore, our results suggest that the cumulated population share of Eastern Slavs works well as an explanatory variable for the explanation of territorial differences in voting behaviour in all three Baltic states.¹²

¹² The population share of Russians, Belarusians, and Ukrainians is correlated in all three Baltic states, and furthermore, Belarusians and Ukrainians are only small communities, and there are no areas in which they dominate on their own. That explains why it is difficult, based on aggregated data, to distinguish the voting behaviour of these different groups of Eastern Slavs from each other. We have attempted to control for differences in the voting behaviour between Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians for some parties where such differences

Two dimensions of territorial differences in voting behaviour

So far, studies of party nationalisation have focussed on differences in party strength across territorial units. That approach, however, neglects that there are actually two dimensions of nationalisation of voting behaviour. Besides the electoral geography of *voters* we want to emphasize a second crucial aspect, the electoral geography of *absentees* or territorial differences in turnout. This appears as a crucial point for our investigation, because these aspects might be interconnected in different ways. Namely, differences in *absenteeism* might either overshadow or strengthen regional variance in voting behaviour.

Territorial differences in turnout are particularly relevant in the case of de-mobilisation along a territorial division. In this case, voters that belong to a specific social group abstain from voting. They either might feel not represented through national political institutions and the party system in particular, or the group can be difficult to mobilise for political action. Accordingly, in areas where such groups of voters are concentrated, turnout will be substantially lower than elsewhere. This implies that territorial differences that could be politically salient do not manifest themselves in differences of voting behaviour, but rather in differences in electoral turnout. The most extreme case of that would be a situation where political preferences of a territorially concentrated group of voters do not materialize in support for a specific regional party – that would lower party nationalisation – but are reflected in a boycott of elections by this group of voters. The opposite may occur when a territorial division leads to a particularly strong mobilisation of a territorially concentrated social group that would increase territorial differences in voting result across districts.

Explaining turnout is outside the scope of this study and we do not intend to present a coherent theoretical model here. However, as earlier studies have shown lower or varied levels of political activity among ethnic minorities in Baltic states (Karklins & Zepa 2001: 342) and elsewhere (Fennema & Tillie 2001), it is necessary to address the question whether the correlates of voting behaviour have significant impact on turnout levels, so as to allow us to take that into account later.

Differences in turnout can be assessed by using methods common in the study of party nationalisation. For analysing turnout we simply treat all participating voters as one (artificial) party and the abstainers as another.¹³ If neither of the hypothesized turnout effects appears, the scores for nationalisation of election turnout should be substantially higher than the nationalisation of political parties and the party systems.

Table 3 reports homogeneity of turnout across territorial units of the countries, and shows how turnout is related to the variables we later include in our model for explaining differences in party support. In all three countries, the “nationalisation” of the turnout (based on standardised party nationalisation score) is nearly perfect, with all values above 0.95. That indicates the presence of only minor variance in turnout across the countries.

might be plausible, but this did not lead to better results – there was no higher explanatory power, we found coefficients with unexpected signs (a consequence of high multicollinearity).

¹³ For Estonia, electoral statistics only included the number of valid votes and turnout. The number of registered voters was extrapolated, but we would not expect to find substantial differences in the share of invalid votes across the country.

Table 3 Degree of turnout nationalisation (grey shaded line), and OLS models for voter turnout.

	Estonia					Lithuania		Latvia		
	1992	1995	1999	2003	2007	2000	2004	1998	2002	2006
level of turnout nationalisation ^a	0.968	0.975	0.972	0.964	0.971	0.972	0.966	0.964	0.955	0.953
constant	.66 (.02)	.72 (.03)	.67 (.03)	.76 (.03)	.74 (.03)	.53 (.04)	.48 (.06)	.71 (.03)	.66 (.03)	.56 (.04)
e slav	.08 (.07)	.16* (.07)	-.06 (.08)	-.05 (.07)	-.09 (.06)	.21 (.23)	.11 (.17)	.09 (.19)	.24 (.20)	.37 (.27)
e slav ²	-.05 (.08)	-.14 (.09)	.10 (.09)	.03 (.08)	.05 (.07)	-.60* (.30)	-.54* (.23)	-.37(*) (.21)	-.63** (.21)	-.68* (.28)
e polish						-.11* (.05)	.04 (.04)			
unemp	-.10 (.08)	-.17* (.09)	-.24** (.08)	-.26** (.07)	-.31** (.07)			-.24 (.22)	-.29 (.22)	-.52 (.31)
emp						.09 (.06)	.02 (.09)			
sector 1	-.01 (.05)	.11(*) (.06)	-.11* (.05)	-.26** (.06)	-.21** (.05)	-.06 (.09)	-.13 (.09)			
sector 2	.02 (.06)	-.11(*) (.06)	-.17** (.06)	-.37** (.06)	-.27** (.05)	.00 (.03)	-.05 (.03)			
population density (log)								-.01 (.01)	.02 (.01)	.02 (.01)
adj. R ²	.048	0.131	0.172	0.475	0.514	0.305	0.267	0.422	0.670	0.645
N										

Notes: OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. ** significant at $p < 0.01$; *significant at $p < 0.05$; (*) significant at $p < 0.1$. Turnout figures not available for the Latvian 1993 elections. ^a standardised party nationalisation score.

In Estonia, rural and industrial municipalities and those stricken by higher levels of unemployment tend to have lower turnout. Apart from the 1995 elections, ethnicity has not had any measurable impact on turnout when controlling for other variables. In 1995, it appears that heterogeneous municipalities and those with a higher share of minorities had a slightly higher turnout. This might either be related to a minor mobilisation effect of ethnic polarisation at the time or to the surge of citizenship before 1995 resulting in a new cohort of minority voters. Arguably, the first to apply for and to be awarded citizenship were the ones most interested in politics. However, we acknowledge that the effect is quite weak and an analysis at the aggregate level can hardly explain the intricate individual motivations behind voting. On the other hand, we see a constant and very remarkable increase in the predictive power of the models. We contend it may be the result of crystallization of pattern of absenteeism. The agricultural, industrial and economically backward – as indicated by higher levels of unemployment – municipalities have become increasingly similar in their turnout levels. With some caution this argument can be extended to individual level so as to argue that the absentees themselves should have become an increasingly uniform group – perhaps we could even hypothesize that the artificial “party of absentees” could create a potential for a strongly cleavage-based party?

In Latvia, and Lithuania, turnout appears to be related to the ethnic composition of our units of analysis. In ethnically mixed areas, turnout increases somewhat compared to areas dominated by Latvians and Lithuanians; in municipalities dominated by ethnic minorities, turnout decreases substantially. Similarly to Estonia, unemployment has a rather negative impact on turnout, but the margin of error is very high. The negative impact of share of Slavic

population on turnout in Lithuania can perhaps be attributed to much more inclusive citizenship policies there than in Estonia, where higher rate of citizenship among Eastern Slavs might result in a negative relationship as well (recall the argument above). However, this line of reasoning would not apply for Latvia, where the rate of citizenship among non-Latvians is even lower than in Estonia.

In general, however, there is a low level of variance in turnout among municipalities. That enables us to assume that the analysis of party strength, which will be the focus of the next section, should only slightly be affected by turnout levels.

Analysing strength of political parties

Before moving on to the quantitative analysis of territorial patterns of party support, we categorise parties that have contested Baltic elections under study according to their placement on minority-nationalist dimension. That is important as we have formulated different expectations of support patterns for different kinds of parties.

Minority and majority ethnic parties in the Baltic states

For the purposes of this study, we did not have an authoritative classification covering all parties in all elections in all three countries at hand – that necessitated compiling our own. The list presented below is based on cross-checking a number of sources. Mostly, we have relied on well-informed country case studies that either give qualitative assessment of parties in question or present aggregate survey data showing the minority-friendly nature of certain parties.¹⁴

Several words of caveat are in order regarding any classification of political parties on minority-nationalist dimension. Only a few of the parties that have contested the elections under study are clear cases of minority or majority nationalist parties – that is limited to cases where a reference to a minority group or “nationalism” is included in the name of the party. Some parties that are rather clearly concerned with exclusive concerns of their ethnic group combine them with other no less prominent issues – that especially applies to the moderate nationalist parties that have become established actors in their countries’ party politics – Estonian Pro Patria, Latvian People’s Party and Lithuanian Homeland Union. All three have held the office of prime minister for more than four years and have made considerable concessions regarding ethnic minority issues, while at the same time retaining their rather mild but distinctive nationalist image. With regard to some other parties, the dividing line between nationalists and moderates or minority friendly and mainstream cuts right across a political party. The most remarkable example here is probably Estonian Res Publica that before 2003 elections tried to appease nationalist segments of voters, but at the same time tried to reach out for Russian voters – and arguably did both rather successfully. In some cases, party positions change. Two examples stand out among parties under study here. There is evidence that Latvia’s Way changed their orientation from (perhaps mildly nationalist) mainstream to Russian friendly before 1998 Saeima elections (Kelley 2004: 13, Smith-

¹⁴ The following sources have been consulted: Bottolfs (2000), Davies & Ozolins (2001), Duvold (2006), Frėjutė-Rakauskienė (2004), Ikstens (2006a, 2006b), Kasekamp (2003), Lagerspetz & Vogt (2004), Martynova (1999), Mikkel (2006), Muiznieks (2005), Pabriks & Štokenberga (2006), Political handbook of Europe 2007, Ramonaite (2006), Smith (2002), Smith-Sivertsen (1998, 2004), Taagepera (1995). List of news sources in appendix.

Sivertsen 2004: 108). In Estonia, the liberal Reform Party incorporated distinctively nationalist tones to its agenda in the run-up to 2007 elections (*Economist*, 5 May 2007). Mergers and electoral coalitions – like the one between Latvia’s First Party and Latvia’s Way in 2006 – further complicate the picture.

Table 4 Classification of Baltic parties

	Minority V%	Minority friendly V%	Moderate nationalist V%	Nationalist & radical nationalist V%	
Estonia	1992	-- 0.00	Popular Front 12.25 Left Alternative 1.61	Pro Patria 22.00 National Independence Party 8.79 Estonian Citizen 6.89	
	1995	Our Home is Estonia 5.87	Centre Party 14.17 Justice 2.27	Pro Patria & ENIP 7.86 The Rightists 5.00 Better Estonia/Estonian Citizen 3.61 Future Estonia Party 2.57 Estonian Nationalists Central League 0.64	
	1999	United People's Party 6.13 Russian Party 2.03	Centre Party 23.41	Pro Patria Union 16.09 Christian People's Party 2.43 Farmers' Union 0.50	-- 0.00
	2003	United People's Party 2.24 Russian Party 0.20	Centre Party 25.40 Social Democratic Labour Party 0.42	Pro Patria Union 7.31 Christian People's Party 1.07	Estonian Independence Party 0.55
	2007	Constitution Party 0.99 Russian Party 0.20	Centre Party 26.08 Left Party 0.11	Reform Party 27.82 Pro Patria & Res Publica 17.87 Christian Democrats 1.72	Estonian Independence Party 0.23
Latvia	1993	Harmony for Latvia 12.01 Equal Rights 5.76 Russian List 1.16 Democratic Labour Party 0.94 Latvian Unity Party 0.10	-- 0.00	-- 0.00	National Independence Movement 13.35 For Fatherland and Freedom 5.35 Our Land 0.78 Anti-Communist Union 0.53
	1998	People's Harmony Party 14.20 Latvian Unity Party 0.47	Latvia's Way 18.15 New Party 7.35	People's Party 21.30	TB/LNNK 14.73 National Democratic Party 0.31 Mara's Land 0.23 Helsinki 86 0.22
	2002	Human Rights in United Latvia 19.09 Social Democratic Welfare Party 1.34 Russian Party 0.48	Latvia's Way 4.89 Latgale's Light 1.61	People's Party 16.69	TB/LNNK 5.39 Latvian Party 0.40 Freedom Party 0.21 Mara's Land 0.15 Our Land 0.14
2006	Harmony Centre 14.42 Human Rights in United Latvia 6.03 Motherland 2.08	Latvia's First Party/Latvia's Way 8.58	People's Party 19.56	TB/LNNK 6.94 All for Latvia 1.48 Mara's Land 0.48 Our Land 0.23 National Power Unity 0.13 Latvian Latvia 0.12	
Lithuania	2000	Lithuanian Poles' Electoral Action 1.95	A. Brazauskas Socialdemocratic Coalition 31.08	Homeland Union - Lithuanian Conservatives 8.62	Lithuanian Freedom Union 1.27 "Young Lithuanians" 1.15 Lithuanian National Union 0.88
	2004	Lithuanian Poles' Electoral Action 3.79	Labour Party 28.44 Coalition of Brazauskas & Artūras 20.65	Homeland Union 14.75	Republican Party 0.36 Lithuanian Freedom Union 0.28 National Party "Lithuania's Way" 0.22 Lithuanian National Union 0.21

Classifying Baltic parties on minority-nationalism scale poses further problems. Especially in Lithuania – where ethnic minorities are less numerous and ethnic policies figure less prominently in political agenda – there have been a number of parties that can be defined as anti-communist. As the Russian-speaking minorities in the countries are to large extent Soviet-time migrants or their descendants, the anti-communist and anti-minority agendas have a tendency to diffuse. However, we did not automatically classify anti-communist parties as nationalist, if no sources consulted made a clear reference to the latter. Similarly, we did not include parties exhibiting anti-Western or Euroskeptic nationalism in the nationalist camp if there was no specific evidence of mistrust or hostility towards local ethnic minorities.

We are using the classification presented below for distinguishing between the parties in broad terms and do not make assumptions about their exact placement in the following analysis. Crucially, the classification in Table 4 should not be used for making generalizations over time and over countries. In all three countries, there has been a general trend of moderation, marginalization or disappearance of large radical nationalist parties. The nationalist end of the spectrum seems to be stronger in Lithuania and Latvia than in Estonia. We contend that instead of being an indicator of stronger nationalist sentiments among voters it is an effect of more lenient party registration rules that enable more obscure formations to run on elections in the two southernmost Baltic states.¹⁵ In any case, the last category is not strictly comparable across countries, as because of party registration laws and other reasons that are not explored here there are remarkably more radical parties present in Latvia and Lithuania than in Estonia.

Party nationalisation in the three Baltic states

In terms of impact of ethnicity on party nationalisation, a major development in Latvia and Estonia has been the increase of number of ethnic minority citizens. Even though a considerable proportion of voting-age population remains without citizenship and right to vote in elections (Estonian local elections is an exception), the share of citizens among adult population has increased from an estimated 60 to 83 percent in Estonia (between 1992 and 2007) and from 65 to 78 percent in Latvia (between 1993 and 2006). Hence, we estimate the Eastern Slavs to constitute roughly a tenth of eligible voters in Estonia and one eighth in Latvia. That contradicts claims that citizenship laws exclude whole minorities from the electoral process (Moser 2005: 116). We are not making any claims the share of excluded voting age population is justifiable or not, but simply contend that it should be sufficient to guarantee ethnic parties a degree of representation if they successfully mobilize their potential electorate.

In Lithuania, an overwhelming majority of adult populations are citizens, and we can thus assume that both ethnic Poles and Eastern Slavs constitute about six per cent of the electorate each. According to 2001 census, 99 percent of the total population and 98 percent of inhabitants of Vilnius and Klaipeda city municipalities were Lithuanian citizens (*Statistics Lithuania*). Interestingly, minority parties have not been able to cross the Lithuanian electoral threshold of five percent. Only in 1992, a special lower threshold of two per cent for ethnic

¹⁵ However, this argument primarily applies for the *number* of parties rather than their *strength* – that may be a function of number if several small parties have territorial or otherwise very limited electoral appeal.

minority parties enabled the Polish minority seats in the PR part.¹⁶ Even though the ethnic division in Lithuania is politically much less significant than in the other two Baltic countries (Moser 2005: 129), the electoral threshold would only allow ethnic minority parties representation through PR part if they managed to mobilize virtually all voters of their referent ethnic group. However, that would require a very high vote discipline and a unity of the minority, which is not always achievable. Further, the mixed electoral system employed in Lithuania gives an additional counter-incentive to the creation of a Russian minority party. Such a party could barely pass the five percent threshold but it would fail in nearly all single-seat districts. This makes the creation of a Russian minority party less attractive. It is doubtful whether a party is able to survive in a mixed electoral system (almost) only based on the seats won in the PR tier, while fielding at best weak unpromising candidates in the single mandate districts.¹⁷

The situation for Polish minority parties in Lithuania differs. The Polish minority is heavily concentrated – mainly in the areas surrounding Vilnius – and they have been able to win up to three per cent of Lithuanian single mandate districts (2 seats out of 71). That is still lagging somewhat behind their strength in numbers, but we have no clear evidence that ethnic gerrymandering has occurred in majoritarian part of Lithuanian elections.¹⁸

Turning again to Latvia and Estonia, we see interesting differences between the countries. Parties representing ethnic Russians have maintained their presence in Latvia, but 2007 saw their disappearance from Estonian parliament. It is easy to explain the emergence of minority parties in mid-1990s – there was a temporary surge in the number of (ethnic minority) citizens (see Figure 2). It is more difficult to explain why Russophone parties saw a decline in Estonia. Their lack of success can partly be attributed to fragmentation: since 1999 two Russian parties have run separately (in Estonia parties cannot form electoral coalitions for parliamentary elections). Yet even their shared support has been far short of potential number of Eastern Slavic voters and the share of ethnic minorities among electorate seen a constant increase, the electoral fortunes of ethnic minorities' parties have been on the decline.

Empirical analysis

We have analysed the vote shares for all political parties that competed in 11 elections in the Baltic states, altogether for 180 parties or electoral alliances. For every party, we have estimated how its support is related to the ethnic composition and the economic structure of counties or municipalities.

Before aggregating the results in the next step, we present our results in an exemplary fashion. The Latvian 2006 elections appear to be best suited for such an analysis, because in these elections, major parties of all five proposed types were present (see Table 5 and Figure 4).

¹⁶ Despite being optimistic of crossing the threshold, the Polish Electoral Action protested the increase in electoral threshold from 4 to 5 per cent and removal of the special minority parties' clause in 1996 ("Polish Electoral Action Protests Against Lithuania's New Electoral Law", BNS, 27 June 1996, via www.lexisnexis.com, 12 March 2008).

¹⁷ This phenomenon has been discussed as *contamination* both regarding the strategic behaviour of parties and of voters (Cox & Schoppa 2002; Ferrara et al. 2005).

¹⁸ We have no evidence whether any ethnic gerrymandering has occurred in majoritarian part of Lithuanian elections. There have been accusations of gerrymandering in distant past (1921) when Polish diplomat Juljusz Lukaszewicz called the elections of 1920 to a Constituent Assembly "a mockery" as the Polish population in Lithuania deprived of their proper representation (Senn 1980). Lieven (1993: 169) that in 1991, the nationalists openly intended to change the Lithuanian districts so as to create a Lithuanian majority everywhere.

Our results show that ethnic composition – apart from economic differences – is indeed a very important factor behind territorial variance. The ethnic composition and economic structure explain vote shares of the parties quite well: for all six parties, the models explain from 52 up to 86 percent of the variance. Figure 4 shows that the vote shares widely vary in areas with different shares of Eastern Slav minorities. Since Latvia has no county with a share of Eastern Slavs of more than 66 percent, we show the results for our model only for a range from 0 to 66 percent of Eastern Slav minorities.¹⁹

We have classified three out of the six parties as minority or minority-friendly parties: Latvia's First Party/Latvia's Way (LPP/LC, minority-friendly), Harmony Centre (*Saskaņas Centrs*, minority party), and the "For Human Rights in United Latvia" (PCTVL, minority party). They all show a similar pattern of support. In mainly ethnic Latvian areas, they hardly get any votes; their performance relies on multi-ethnic areas and especially the counties where Eastern Slavs are a majority. In such areas – if all control variables are at their mean – LPP/LC and Harmony Centre get more than 30 percent of the vote, while the smaller PCTVL obtains some 10-15 percent. There is however a substantial difference between these parties: While LPP/LC and Harmony Centre show a clear curvilinear development of the vote share, in the case of PCTVL it is very close to linear. This emanates from the fact that PCTVL scores (relatively) better than LPP/LC and Harmony Centre in counties with an ethnic Latvian majority and a significant Eastern Slav minority. In such areas we assume the ethnic conflict to be more pronounced. On the other hand, PCTVL as a clear minority party might have the sharpest profile as defendant of the minority's interest in such areas. This would explain why minority-friendly parties, such as LPP/LC, that promotes conciliatory policies, might score worse in areas with high tensions than the clear minority party like PCTVL. However, it is unclear why the Harmony Centre, which can also be characterised as minority party, has a different profile.

One of the analysed parties, the Union of Green and Farmers (ZZS) is characterised as a mainstream party. Even if there is no explicit ethnic appeal in its program, it gets its support mainly in areas where many ethnic Latvians live. This pattern is slightly more pronounced, with an overall higher gradient, for the moderate nationalist party that we included in these results, the People's Party (TP). Furthermore the squared element in its OLS regression model is slightly more important than it was the case with ZZS. Hence, the curve is slightly more concave, and the moderately nationalist party gets relatively better results in ethnically mixed counties, possibly due to the more pronounced tensions in these areas. The nationalist For Fatherland and Freedom (TB/LNNK) shows a very different pattern – the party has its largest vote share in areas with a minority share of 20 percent. Both in counties with (almost) no Slavic minorities or where the minority share goes above 20 percent, its vote share is lower. This is an expected pattern for nationalist parties: they get their support from voters of titular ethnicity. These voters are particularly inclined to vote for nationalist parties in areas with high ethnic polarisation that are ethnically heterogeneous.

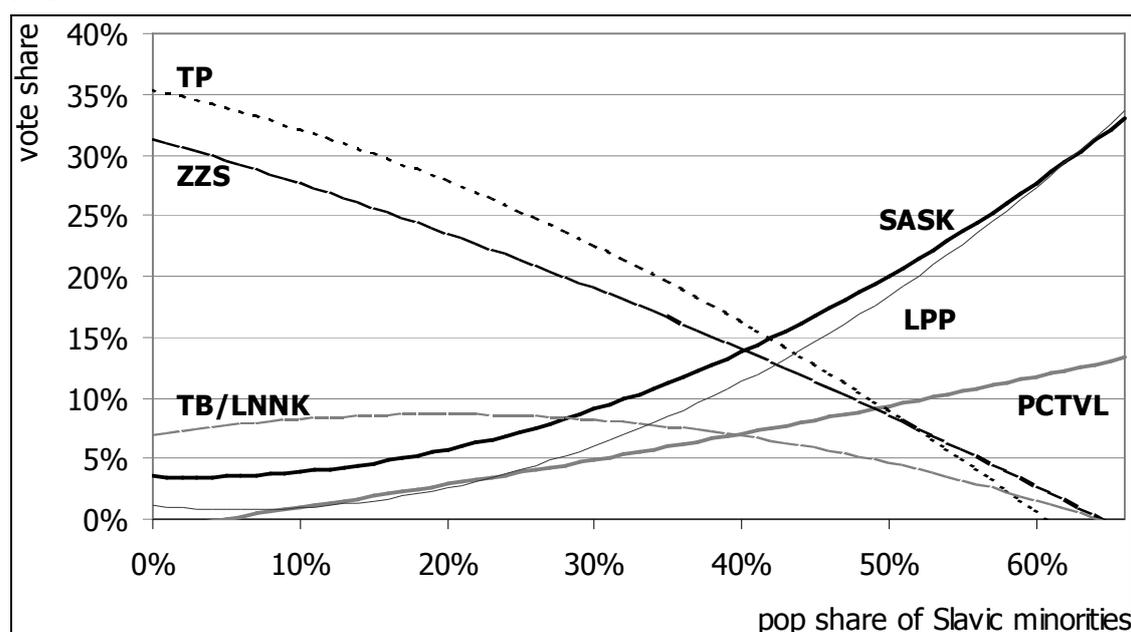
¹⁹ Apparently, there is correlation of the control variables and of the share of minorities. This can explain why our graph – that holds the control variable at their mean – drops slightly below 0 for constituencies with a very high share of Slavic minorities. If we would consider the economic situation in these constituencies, the expected value would be positive.

Table 5 OLS models for the vote shares of five major parties in the Latvian 2006 elections.

	TP <i>Moderate nationalist</i>	ZZS <i>Mainstream</i>	TB/LNNK <i>Nationalist</i>	LPP/LC <i>Minority friendly</i>	Saskaņas Centrs <i>Minority</i>	PCTVL <i>Minority</i>
constant	.22 (.05)	.24 (.05)	.04 (.02)	.20 (.03)	-.08 (.06)	-.00 (.02)
e slav	-.27* (.11)	-.34(*) (.20)	.17** (.06)	-.11 (.10)	-.04 (.21)	.17** (.05)
e slav ²	-.51(*) (.27)	-.22 (.33)	-.44** (.08)	.91** (.22)	.73* (.30)	.07 (.07)
unemp	.45(*) (.24)	.35 (.24)	-.08 (.15)	-.48** (.17)	.89(*) (.44)	-.01 (.14)
population density (log)	.02* (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01(*) (.004)	-.04** (.01)	.01 (.02)	-.00 (.00)
adj. R ²	0.796	0.639	0.529	0.729	0.863	0.888
adj. R ² before inclusion of ethnic variables			0.181			
N	33	33	33	33	33	33

Notes: OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. **significant at $p < 0.01$; *significant at $p < 0.05$; (*) significant at $p < 0.1$.

Figure 4 Vote share for five large parties in the Latvian 2006 elections, by population share of Slavic minorities, estimated model.

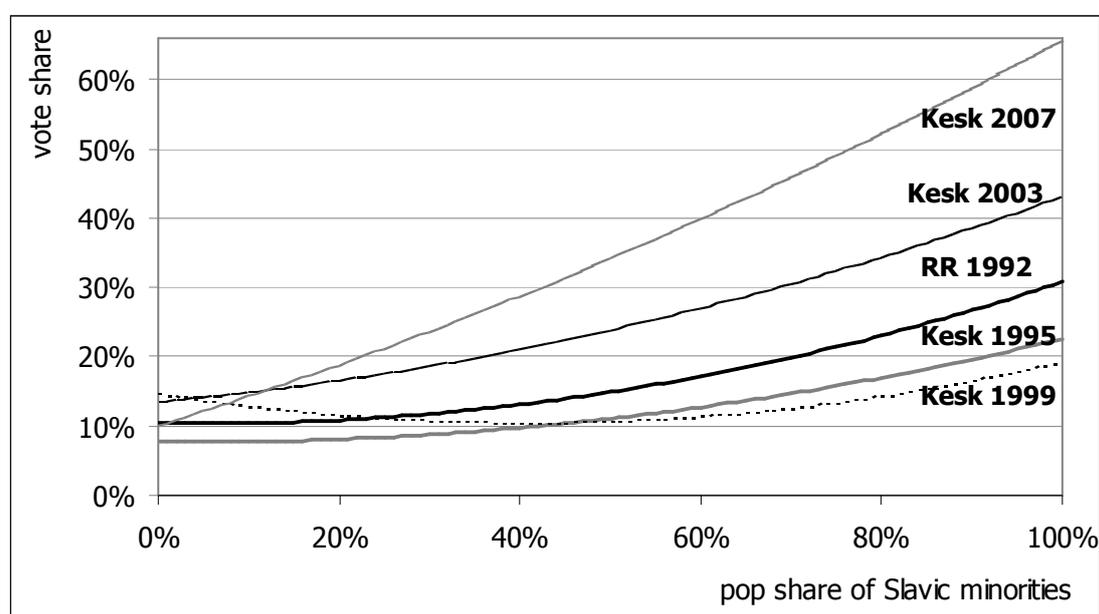


The decline of minority parties in Estonia

In 1995 and 1999, minority parties both competed *Riigikogu* elections in Estonia, and won seats. However, they lost strength in the 2003 elections. Arguably, that can be linked to the minority-friendly Centre Party gaining more ground among Slavic voters – Figure 5 shows an impressive surge in support between 1999 and 2003 in areas with high numbers of minority population. While during most of 1990s, the Centre Party had a rather homogeneous amount of support regardless of the ethnic composition of a municipality, 2003 saw a change when the Centre Party became particularly strong in the areas where substantial Slavic minorities

live. This tendency further accelerated in 2007. Why did the predecessor Popular Front score so well in minority-areas in 1992, if the surge in citizenship only took place later? On one hand, a part of minority population could not vote already then. A large majority of them had not obtained citizenship yet, but some had. Also, perhaps a number of ethnic Estonians was “integrated” to the local Russian communities in areas with minority concentration. North-East Estonian municipalities like Narva and Sillamäe had rather few voters, but among them the share of ethnic Slavs was still higher than in places where the share of Russians among population was lower. The lowering of Centre Party’s slope from 1992 to 1995 and 1999 is possibly due to the combined effect of extended franchise, emergence of Russian electoral coalition and the preference among new (post-1992) citizens for a clear minority party, possibly coupled with Centre Party’s initial incapacity to counter these pressures.

Figure 5 Vote share for Centre Party (1992: Popular Front) in Estonian elections, by population share of Slavic minorities, estimated model



Minority backlash effects

We have looked at all relevant nationalist and moderate nationalist parties – those with more than one percent of the national vote – in order to find evidence for the ethnic backlash effect. Indeed, among the nationalist parties, the larger ones show clear evidence for the minority backlash paradox (Figure 6). In the Latvian case, we see that the relationship of Eastern Slav minorities and the vote for the *largest nationalist party* in every election follows the shape of an inverted U-curve. For smaller nationalist parties (TB in 1993, and parties below one percent vote share in other elections), there would not be any visible minority backlash. Apparently, the large nationalist parties profit most from the polarising potential in ethnically heterogeneous municipalities, or the random factors are too strong for smaller parties to lead to a statistical significant curvilinear effect.²⁰

²⁰ Further checks, not reported in this place, show that for all parties where we have found a minority backlash paradox, $|\beta_2| > \beta_1$.

Different from Latvia, the minority backlash effect is not as clearly visible for the nationalist parties in Estonia. This might be related to the structure of the Estonian party system. Clear nationalist parties have remained weak in Estonia – after 1992, there is no party we classify as nationalist that has won more than four percent of the national vote. Instead, the minority backlash effect was clearly visible for the strong moderate nationalist party Pro Patria in 1999 (see below).

Figure 6 Vote share and share of Slavic minorities for the largest nationalist parties in Latvia in each election

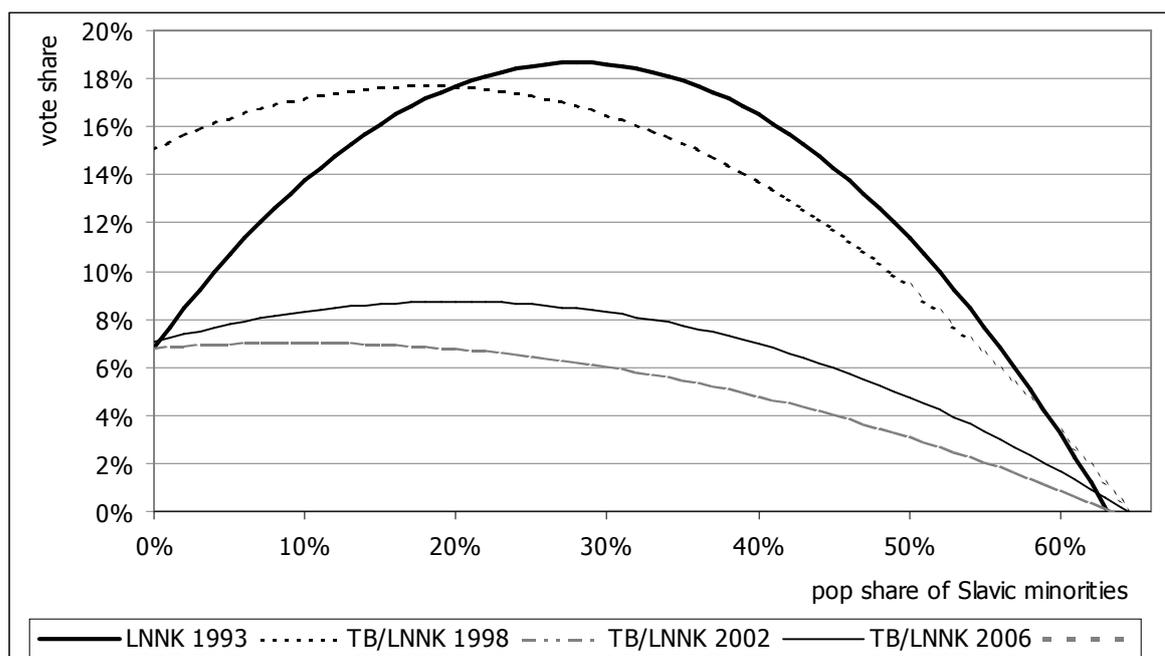


Table 6 OLS models for nationalist parties in Latvia, only parties above 5%.

	LNNK 1993 <i>Nationalist</i>	TB 1993 <i>Nationalist</i>	TB/LNNK 1998 <i>Nationalist</i>	TB/LNNK 2002 <i>Nationalist</i>	TB/LNNK 2006 <i>Nationalist</i>
constant	.02 (.06)	.02 (.02)	.04 (.02)	.03 (.01)	.02 (.02)
e slav	.84** (.22)	.05 (.10)	.17** (.06)	.05* (.02)	.17** (.06)
e slav ²	-1.51** (.39)	-.28(*) (.15)	-.44** (.08)	-.24** (.04)	-.44** (.08)
unemp	-.56* (.27)	-.05 (.12)	-.08 (.15)	.05 (.08)	-.09 (.15)
population density (log)	.02 (.02)	.01(*) (.006)	.01(*) (.004)	.01** (.002)	.01(*) (.004)
adj. R ²	0.522	0.449	0.529	0.598	.529
adj. R ² before inclusion of ethnic variables	0.265	0.261	0.181	0.124	0.180
N	33	33	33	33	33

Results for party groups

The previously presented results show certain effects for single parties, but they lack of comparability, because coefficients vary due to differences in party sizes and because the inclusion of both a linear and a squared term for the ethnic dimension makes the results

difficult to interpret. To avoid this problem, we have standardised the coefficients below²¹ and that allows us to locate the parties in two dimensions of the ethnic conflict, and we show them graphically.

Our previous calculation has shown an estimated function of party strength in territorial units, given the share of Slavic minorities. However, the functions vary in two directions. On one hand, some parties get more support in areas with lower shares of minorities, while others are more strongly supported in areas with high shares of minorities. On the other hand, some parties profit in ethnically mixed units from ethnic polarisation, while others lose in the same situation.

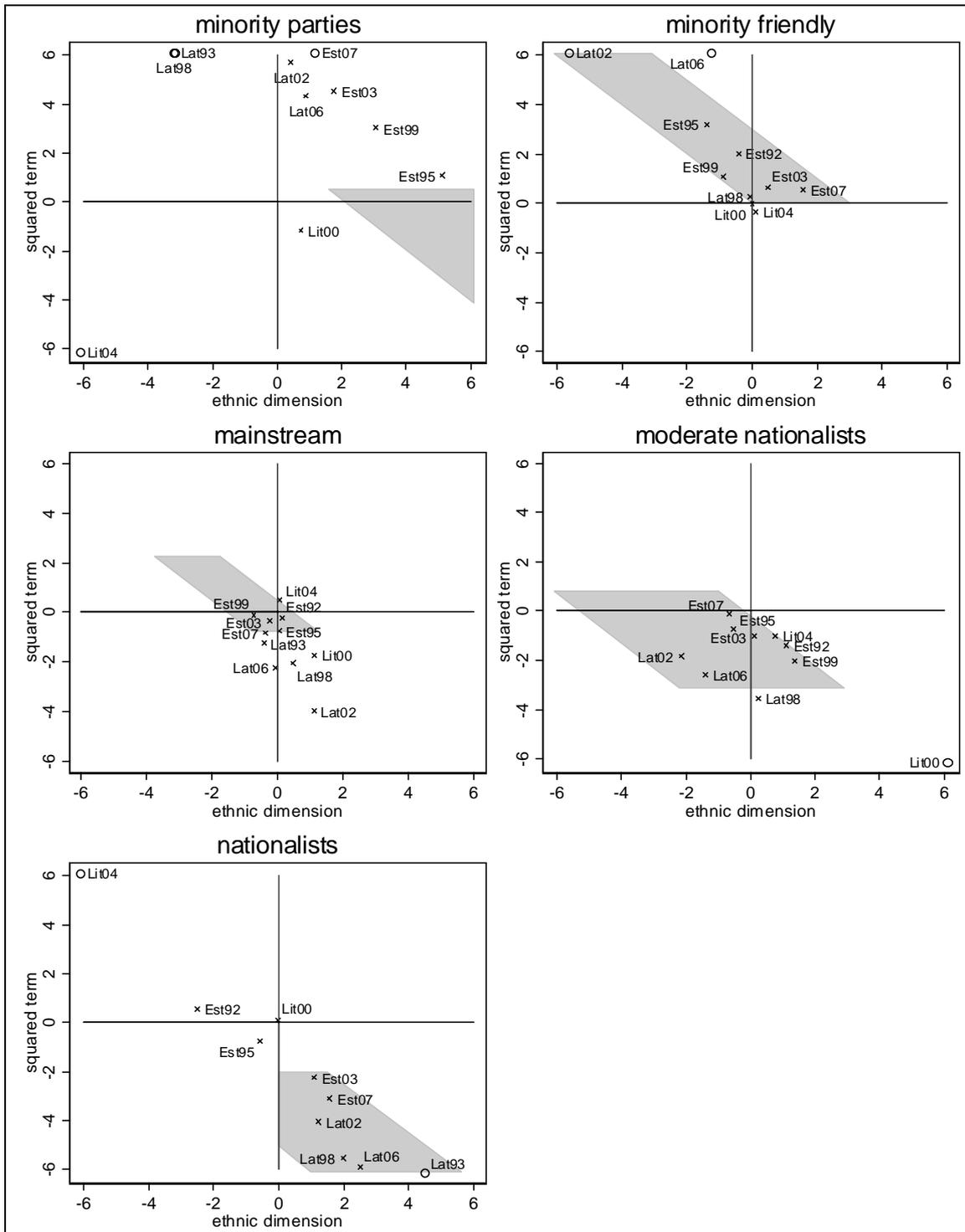
Table 7 locates all five party families according to their position in the field that is defined by their ethnic affiliation (horizontal axis) and the ethnic polarisation (vertical axis). 0 means that there is no systematic difference. The higher the value of a political party on the horizontal axis, the larger the share of its support in municipalities with large shares of Eastern Slavs, while parties with low values get most of their support in municipalities where the titular nation dominates. Parties in the middle have similar support both in majority as in minority areas. Vertical axis also shows party positions by their ethnic orientation, but with the squared term that we have employed in the OLS regressions. This allows us to check if our hypotheses about the location of the five party families correspond with the empirical reality. Positive values on the vertical axis mean that the function of the share of ethnic minorities and the party strength is convex, negative values mean that the function is concave, while 0 stands for functions that are close to linearity.²²

The figures show that for three out of five party families, our expectations correspond to a very high degree with the empirical results. For two other party families (minority parties and mainstream parties), our expectations are only fulfilled in one of both dimensions. And, the results for Lithuanian parties appear not to follow the expected pattern. Before addressing the Lithuanian outliers, we discuss the results for the five party families briefly.

²¹ The coefficients were divided by the overall (national) vote share of the parties / party families.

²² We intend to fine-tune the methodology for a later version of this paper. Either due to problems with the OLS regression models or the used formula for the calculation of the location of the points, some parties take up positions in expected corners of graphs, but are very far from the centre. Below, we have set all such values to 6 for large positive locations and -6 for large negative locations.

Table 7 Party groups: ethnic dimension and polarisation



Notes: X Party family within the area of [-6, +6] on both axes.
 O Party family with at least one very large or very low coefficient, outside the depicted area; such coefficients are set to -6 or +6.

Minority parties: We have expected that minority parties get more votes in areas with strong ethnic minorities than in areas with weak ethnic minorities. This would make us expect that minority parties are located in the right area of the graphs, with high values on the horizontal axis. They might both be not touched by polarisation (and accordingly have an approximately

linear development of the party strength related to the share of the minority), or profit from polarisation, in which case their graph would be concave, and the values on the vertical axis (squared term) negative. Since negative terms of the squared variable (vertical dimension) cancel out positive coefficients of the linear variable (horizontal dimension) partially, our expected area has the shade of a triangle. The first expectation is met, most minority parties (apart from the Lithuanian ones) have positive values in the horizontal dimension, what means that they get – little surprisingly – higher vote shares in minority-populated areas than in areas with a weak representation of Slav minorities. However, against our expectations, these are convex, instead of concave functions. Our second expectation about the impact of polarisation on the support of minority parties does thus clearly not correspond with the empirical reality.

Minority-friendly parties: For minority-friendly parties, similarly to minority parties, we expect a stronger representation with increasing shares of ethnic minorities. However, we expect that in certain cases – namely if the ethnic conflict is radicalised and radical minority parties get a substantial part of the vote in the areas with a strong concentration of minorities – then the curve would show a convex function: Thus, we suspect that minority-friendly parties would get particularly many votes in areas with a very high concentration of ethnic minorities, but be relatively weak in heavily polarised and heterogeneous areas. Since any positive coefficient for the squared variable partially might cancel out the positive coefficients of the linear variable, the expected area for minority friendly parties has the shape of a parallelogram. The expectations in both directions are clearly met: minority-friendly parties score better, the higher the share of ethnic minorities, and particularly in areas with a rather homogeneous population. Only the points for Lithuania in 2004 and Latvia in 2006 are not part of the shaded area. The latter can be explained because the value on the vertical axis is very high (outside the depicted area), and this distorts the values on the horizontal axis too.

Finally, we can observe impressively the impact of competition between strong ethnic minority parties and minority-friendly parties: In the cases where minority parties are strong, then the ethnic division gets less important for minority-friendly parties (they move to the left), and they lose in areas with high ethnic polarisation (they move to the top of the graphs). Namely, in Estonia in 1995 and 1999, minority parties were much stronger than in other years; in Latvia, minority parties were weakest in 1998, and stronger in 1993, 2002, and 2006. In both countries, the competition of minority and minority-friendly parties leads clearly to the expected changes in the profile.

Mainstream parties: Mainstream parties are not expected to be highly affected by the ethnic composition of an area. Accordingly, they are located close to the centre of the graphs. If there is an ethnic effect at all, they might score better in areas with low shares of ethnic minorities, for two reasons: First, the group identity of minorities and ethnic voting behaviour of minorities might be stronger than that of the titular nation, so that mainstream parties are slightly disadvantaged in areas with a high share of minorities (neutral or slightly negative values on the horizontal axis). Secondly, mainstream parties with no clear ethnic appeal might slightly lose heterogeneous and more polarised areas, so that we might expect either a neutral or a slightly convex curve (positive value on the vertical axis). While the Estonian data are within the expected area, the Latvian cases are not. Apparently, in Latvia, the functions for mainstream parties are rather concave, what means that mainstream parties are stronger in

heterogeneous areas. That could be attributed to the fact that some of the Latvian mainstream parties are in fact moderately nationalist.

Moderate nationalist parties. We would expect a pattern where there is a slight advantage in areas mostly inhabited by the titular group (neutral or slightly negative values on the horizontal axis). Furthermore, moderate nationalist parties might be slightly stronger in areas with ethnically heterogeneous population, because there, the ethnic dimension in party orientation is more important. This would result in slightly concave curves or possibly slightly negative values on the vertical axis (because axes are linked, this leads again to a parallelogram). These expectations are widely met by the empirical data, only the moderate nationalist parties in Lithuania in 2000 do not follow the expected pattern, and the Latvian moderate nationalists in 1998 profit a bit more from ethnic polarisation than other cases.

Finally, the expected competition effect with nationalist parties is only partially visible from the results: In the 1999 elections in Estonia, no nationalist parties were competing. As a consequence, the moderate nationalists could be successful in ethnically mixed areas and this leads to a slight minority backlash effect. By 2003 and 2007, the polarisation of the Estonian party system declined, perhaps helped by the weakening of minority parties, so that the backlash failed to materialise any longer. For Latvia, however, there is no expected impact of the strength of majority parties on the moderate nationalists, as sometimes what we have classified as moderate nationalist parties have more “moderate” scorings than mainstream parties.

Nationalist parties: For this group we expected to find minority backlash effects. This means that nationalist parties get particularly strong support in ethnically heterogeneous areas, and in some parts of the graph, their vote share is even increasing with an increasing share of the minority population. The curve is clearly concave (negative values on the vertical axis) that might lead in many cases to positive values on the horizontal axis. Apart from the Lithuanian cases, and Estonia in 1992 and 1995, all cases correspond with our expectations, what means that the minority backlash paradox does occur in the Baltic states. The deviating pattern for 1992 and 1995 Estonian elections may occur because only few Slavs were enfranchised, so as to draw the nationalist parties towards a more mainstream position.

Lithuania as outlier: For several groups of parties, the results for Lithuania seem not to agree with the model. This might mainly be explained with the territorial structure of Lithuanian minorities. The Eastern Slav minorities in Lithuania have much less areas with a high concentration than their ethnic fellows in Latvia and Estonia. In most Lithuania’s municipalities, the share of Eastern Slavs is about 15%, or below this value. Only one municipality has a share of Slavs about 26%, and one about 67%. This means that there is not enough variance to show the effect of different degrees of polarisation of the ethnic issues, and possibly, any kind of ecological analysis of aggregate data would produce misleading results, simply because there are not very strong differences between the municipalities. On the other hand, the main political differences in the party system regard rather the Polish minority that is concentrated in very few municipalities. The Polish minority is organised in an own minority party. It does not come as a surprise that the *Polish* minority party obtains many of its votes rather in the areas with a strong concentration of ethnic Poles, than in areas with a higher share of *Eastern Slavs*. Since this is the only minority party in the Lithuanian 2000 and 2004 elections, the

results for Lithuanian minority parties are far away from the data points for Latvia and Estonia.

Conclusion

We have distinguished between five different types of parties according to their position on the ethnic-nationalist dimension. They range from nationalist parties (of the titular nation), over moderate nationalists, and mainstream parties (no particular programmatic appeal to either of the ethnic groups), to minority-friendly (but not exclusively minority-based) parties, and minority parties. In Estonia and Latvia, Eastern Slavs (Russians, Belorusians, Ukrainians) cluster politically together.

The ethnic dimension of the party systems has changed slightly from election to election, and this affects the strength of other parties that compete for a similar electorate. The more radical nationalist parties are particularly strong in ethnically mixed areas, where the ethnic relations are more polarised. This leads sometimes – notably in Latvia – to the minority backlash effect. From a purely cleavage-based perspective, we would expect that a decrease of the share of voters of the titular nation leads to a decrease of the vote share of nationalist parties. This has not been the case – due to the polarisation effect in mixed-ethnic municipalities, increases in the minority share initially increase the share of *majority voters* who vote for nationalists, and only as the minority becomes increasingly dominant locally, will the minority share and nationalist vote be negatively correlated. The shape of the function for moderate nationalist parties depends on the strength of the nationalist parties. If the latter are weak – such as in Estonia 1999 – the minority backlash effect might transfer to moderate nationalist parties. In the presence of strong minority parties, the minority-friendly parties will struggle hard in ethnically mixed areas. However, in the absence of a (strong) minority party, the minority friendly parties gain from ethnic polarisation in mixed-ethnic areas.

In Estonia, we see an increase in party nationalisation over time. In part, this has been a result of the change in ethnic voting patterns. In the 1990s, the ethnic divide led to more polarised results along the ethnic divide as there were moderately strong Russian parties. That changed from late 1990s on as the minority-friendly Centre Party has become stronger. The move towards the minority has on the one hand shifted its profile towards much better performance in minority-populated areas. On the other hand, this has created a fierce competition for the minority parties. As a consequence of this competition, the minority parties lost some of their votes, fell below the electoral threshold and became politically marginal. As the Centre Party does not only appeal to the Eastern Slavs, but also to other voters, it has a good support basis throughout the whole country. That results in a nationally rather homogeneous strength. Together with the decline of nationalist parties – and with weakening of centrifugal tendencies there – that has contributed to the overall increase in party nationalisation in Estonia. In contrast, we see persistently low party nationalisation in Latvia that has a strong division of parties along the ethnic line.

High party nationalisation in Lithuania is not surprising for a number of reasons. The Eastern Slavs are much less numerous and overall less concentrated than in the other two countries. Consequently, there are fewer municipalities with a high share of Eastern Slavs and no strong

territorial differences in support, at least for the PR part of elections.²³ The lower share of Eastern Slavs, combined with the mixed electoral system, has hindered the emergence of a strong minority party for this group. There is virtually no incentive for an Eastern Slav party to run, as the party would risk failing the five percent threshold in PR part, since the ethnic group itself is only slightly larger than this, and a spill-over effect of the mixed electoral system might decrease the parties' potential in the PR part. They are not territorially concentrated enough to win single-seat districts, and due to spill-over effect, that may entail losses in the PR part as well. The situation is different for the Polish minority. They have repeatedly been able to elect deputies in a few single mandate districts with a strong concentration of Poles. The Polish minority party could moderately succeed and survive, also affecting ethnic voting patterns in PR part. Still, the overall share of minorities among Lithuanian voters is low enough not to affect the nationalisation score considerably.

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²³ The territorial differences in the single-seat tier emerge rather due to strategic coordination of candidate entry of the parties (cf. Bochsler 2008).

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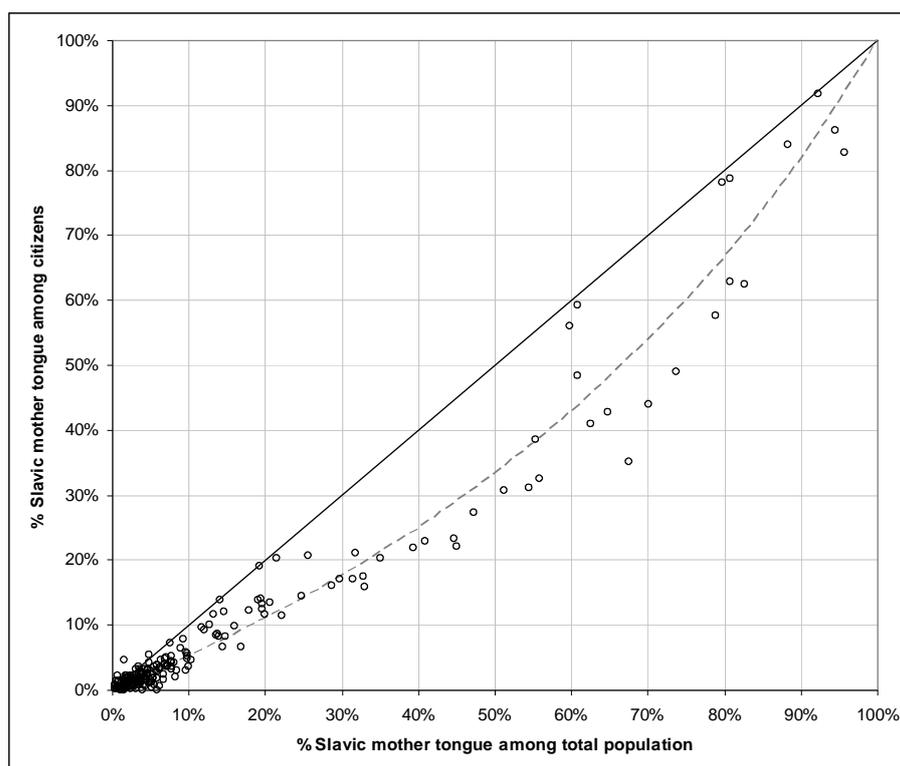
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APPENDIX A: Share of ethnic minorities and rate of citizenship

This paper uses an implicit and somewhat regrettable assumption that the share of ethnic minorities among the citizens is equal to their share among total population. We are fully aware that this should not be the case, except for the extremes of the scale. When there are no minorities living in a given territorial unit, we can assume that there are none among citizens – that for practical purposes also means voters in parliamentary elections. When all of the population in a given unit belongs to an ethnic minority, we can be certain that applies for the voters as well. In-between the extremes, the relationship between ethnic minority share among total population and among voters is more complex. That is even the case if the citizenship rate among the minority population was constant across a country. In the extremes, we would expect no minority representatives among citizens at all (if there are none among the adults) and only minority citizens (if they constitute 100 percent among the population) – regardless of ratio of citizens to non-citizens. In between the extremes we should expect lower percent of Slavs among citizens than among the population at large.

Figure 7 shows the empirical and theoretical relationship between the percentage of Eastern Slavs among population and citizens in Estonia. It is based on the number of people in parliamentary and local election registers (where all adults are included), 2000 census data on share of native speakers of Slavic languages and a simplifying assumption that all adult non-citizens speak a Slavic language. We do not expect the exact figures to be correct, but the assumptions should not distort the general picture. The dashed line indicates the percentage of ethnic Slavs among citizens if a constant citizenship rate of 50 percent applied. It is close to the quadratic estimation based on the data points, but some municipalities deviate from the pattern. That is mostly due to the fact that some municipalities have larger historical minority populations while in others the Soviet-time arrivals constitute a bulk of non-Estonians.

Figure 7 Population and voters with Slavic mother tongue – Estonian municipalities in 2005.



Note: Authors' estimations based on the number of people in parliamentary and local election registers, 2000 census data on ethnic composition and an assumption that all non-citizens speak a Slavic language.

APPENDIX B: Party nationalisation scores by party families

country	year	Party types					whole party system
		mainstream	minority friendly	minority	moderate nationalists	nationalists	
Estonia	1992	0.648	0.739		0.814	0.613	0.679
	1995	0.816	0.831	0.524	0.762	0.758	0.790
	1999	0.793	0.892	0.511	0.834		0.795
	2003	0.823	0.867	0.517	0.832	0.753	0.821
	2007	0.887	0.852	0.581	0.881	0.745	0.834
Latvia	1993	0.811		0.542		0.678	0.731
	1998	0.814	0.866	0.508	0.814	0.801	0.780
	2002	0.826	0.679	0.592	0.747	0.881	0.758
	2006	0.784	0.819	0.574	0.768	0.841	0.741
Lithuania	2000	0.842	0.934	0.352	0.882	0.872	0.870
	2004	0.865	0.930	0.409	0.880	0.866	0.882

APPENDIX C: News sources used for classification of parties

- “Latvian commentary no reason to ban planned nationalist parade on 16 March” BBC Monitoring International Reports, January 16, 2006 Monday (Latvian Power Unity – nationalist)
- “Latvian daily surveys politicians on TB/LNNK’s possible impact on naturalization”, BBC Monitoring Europe – Political, November 10, 2006 Friday (TS nationalist)

- “Latvian report many tiny parties crumbling parliamentary election electorate”, BBC Monitoring International Reports, August 18, 2006 Friday (Latviešu Latvija – nationalist)
- “Latvia’s Harmony Centre leader hopes to work with ruling coalition”, BBC Monitoring Europe – Political, October 11, 2006 Wednesday (LPP/LC coalition popular among Russians)
- “New political association established in Latvia”, Baltic News Service, January 14, 1998 (Helsinki 86 – nationalist)
- “New review of Latvian PCTVL politician's remarks finds no calls for violence”, BBC Worldwide Monitoring, August 17, 2006 Thursday (LVP 1998 nationalist)
- “Protesters almost outnumber commemorators of Latvian legion,” BBC Monitoring International Reports, March 16, 2005 (Dzimentene – minority)