The Politics of Inclusion: The Case of the Baltic States

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ABSTRACT

In this article I examine the Baltic states' return to Europe through the prism of collective identity formation. I argue that the European Union during the 1990s has been articulating a 'politics of inclusion' *vis-à-vis* the Baltic states, a politics that is conducive to a strengthened independence for the latter. Inclusion in this sense is taken to mean an extension of a European political identity to incorporate the Baltic states. Emphasizing the social and discursive construction of identities — and consequently social reality — I introduce two conceptual categories, *inside–inside* articulations and *inside–outside* articulations, that may be used as points of reference when inquiring into the (re)construction of identities in world politics. By means of a discourse analysis of the foreign policy of the European Union towards the Baltic states, I provide a guide to the inscription of inside and outside as regards the European Self in contemporary European politics. I suggest that foreign policy is instrumental in writing state identities not only in relation to the state articulating the policy, but also in relation to a collective of states. I thus attempt to theorize the formation of collective political identity at a supra-state level.

'This suggests that amidst the ambiguities of life, the grounds that states would represent, far from being fixed, are socially, politically and discursively constructed.' — Roxanne Lynn Doty, 1996: 126

'Our identity — our image of ourselves — derives from many sources. It reflects what others say about us and how they respond to us.' — Walter C. Clemens, Jr., 1994: 186

Introduction

The two quotations above tell us something about the present state of the discipline of International Relations (IR). They reflect the fact that

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questions of identity and identity formation in world politics currently are receiving increasing attention by scholars of IR. The recent publications of three edited volumes (Katzenstein, 1996; Krause and Renwick, 1996; Lapid and Kratochwil, 1996), all giving primary importance to theorizing identity, seem to confirm this fact. The purpose of my article is to study a process of identity formation in the Baltic region that is currently under way, and which is conducive to the continued independence of the three Baltic states Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The analysis, which will be carried out within a constructivist framework using the method of discourse analysis, will show how the foreign policy practices of the European Union (EU) are stimulating the formation of a collective identity between the Baltic states and the EU through a (re)construction of boundaries between the European/Western inside and outside. As will be shown, the Baltic states are constructed on the inside of these boundaries, and this process is conceptualized as an inclusion of the Baltic states into the European Self. As will be explained in the next section, it is assumed that this inclusion and development of collective identity works to close off possibilities for Russia creating a sphere of influence in the Baltic states.[1]

In the next section I consider some theoretical issues underpinning the empirical analysis. The subsequent section draws on this discussion in order to make visible the 'politics of inclusion' *vis-à-vis* the Baltic states.[2] In summarizing and concluding the analysis in the last section, I also indicate how the findings relate to the body of constructivist scholarship that deals with sovereignty and identity.

Of Theory

In the first part of this section I discuss the notion of discourse and its relation to our action and to the world in which we act. In the second part, I briefly discuss the formation of collective identities and present a conceptualization of this process in terms of *inside–inside* and *inside–outside* dynamics, which will provide reference points around which to structure the empirical analysis.

Discourse and Social Reality

In analysing the inclusionary foreign policy practices and the process of collective identity formation between the Baltic states and the EU,

I focus on the latter's 'foreign policy' towards the Baltic states. As stated, this is done by means of a discourse analysis — a method that has become common among academics analysing the social construction of reality (Neumann, 1996b: 3). A tendency among IR scholars using this method, often inspired by Michel Foucault, has been to emphasize language in the form of speech and writing.[3] A primary purpose of such analyses has been to show how language structures the way we think and act, and that we would not be able to relate to the world were it not for the categories and signifiers that is our language. Such work has brought to the discipline of IR what Huysmans calls the 'linguistic turn for social theory' (1997: 6), which means that language is not seen as describing a pre-existing social reality, but as a medium through which reality is *created* and the material world is given meaning (ibid., p. 7).[4] This practice has privileged language (also termed linguistic practice) to action (behavioural practice), which has resulted in a portrayal of action as simply an extension or 'embodiment' of language.[5] While I do acknowledge the importance of these analyses (indeed, I draw upon their work), I intend to use a conceptualization of discourse that from the outset puts linguistic and behavioural practices on the same footing. This is the one that Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) propose and which has been applied in IR by Roxanne Lynn Doty (1996). Laclau and Mouffe argue against what they see as a tendency of Foucault to make a qualitative separation of language and action. Discourse for them is a 'structured totality resulting from ... articulatory practice' where, in turn, an articulatory practice is 'any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 105). They reject 'the distinction between discursive and non-discursive practices' (ibid., p. 107) and view discourse as an 'indissoluble totality [consisting of] both language and the actions interconnected with it' (op. cit., p. 108).[6] Discourse understood in this way includes the category language, but also the behavioural practices that are enabled by it. Thus, one arrives at a concept that fully acknowledges the generative capacities of language, but also one that does not seem to imply that language is of singular importance to the construction of social reality. Even though action may be secondary to language in the sense that it would not be meaningful were it not for language, it is not *qualitatively* secondary to language. Thus, to analyse the construction of identity only in terms of language and linguistic practices would leave out that which, in a

sense, closes the circle. The importance of action as more than just an extension of language is especially clear in cases where there are several linguistic practices competing for dominance and inscription of meaning in relation to one subject. It is perfectly plausible that language, its constructive powers notwithstanding, may not be followed by the action it implies (only in the case of a dominant discourse is such certainty approximated), but by an action altogether different. In this case, to say that language constructs identity is to jump to conclusions — it still has its generative capacities but its weight may be lessened by action enabled by other discourses. In every instance, language has to be weighed against action (and indeed speech and writing have to be weighed against each other as well).

Thus, discourse is what gives the social world meaning. It creates, maintains, and relates different social facts (such as collective identities) to each other — it is the medium through which the construction of social identities and social reality takes place. The process by which this happens involves linguistic and behavioural articulations/practices. However, different discourses involving the same subjects may articulate contradicting identities for these.[7] In these cases, to the extent that one discourse becomes dominant, a more or less structured reality emerges and identities are constructed accordingly *but never permanently*. During interaction, identities are always in a process of construction (Wendt, 1994: 386), and though they are usually reproduced they may well be destabilized instead.

A dominant discourse structures the field of possible action by enabling certain acts and disabling others. This is the way the inclusionary practices, to the extent they are dominant, are assumed to constrain the possibilities for Russia to create an informal empire in the Baltic area. Emphasizing the connection between identity politics and social power Adler states:

> Because social reality is a matter of imposing meanings and functions on physical objects ... the ability to create the underlying rules of the game, to define what constitutes acceptable play, and to be able to get other actors to commit themselves to those rules because they are now part of their self-understandings is perhaps the most subtle and most effective form of power. (1997: 336)

It is important to note, however, that intentionality is not necessary for the construction of social reality. The generative powers of discursive

practices are just as powerful in the realm of the unintended side effects they often bring about. As I argue in the empirical analysis, what we may call the 'politics of exclusion' with regard to Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States is a politics mostly of an unintentional character (linguistic and behavioural practices here work in opposition to each other).

Thus, to summarize, a discourse analysis is an inquiry into the articulations by which identities and social reality are formed. I now turn to discuss this process of identity formation.

Identity and Inclusion

It is widely known that any and all identities are socially constructed (Anderson, 1991). They are 'about images, rather than realities' (Wintle, 1996: 5). Also, a vital feature of collective identities is that they are not mutually exclusive. To the contrary, today we see a development towards 'more complex and overlapping identities' (Booth, 1991: 315). This means not only that cultural identities overlap with political or ethnic identities, but also that different political identities overlap with each other. Alexander Wendt suggests that social actors' identification with each other can be 'located' along an identification continuum between the two end points of completely *positive* and completely *negative* identification (1994: 386), thus allowing for different degrees of identification. Accordingly, although there is much to suggest that political identification *vis-à-vis* the own state in most cases is closer to the positive end of the continuum than identification between/across states (and that the former is therefore more stable than the latter), this condition does not preclude the positive identification between states from taking place.

Benedict Anderson provides a stepping-stone for conceptualizing collective identification among states in his discussion about the impact of 'print-capitalism' on the imagining of the nation. This particular social and economic activity 'made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways' (1991: 36). Today, globalizing and localizing tendencies in world politics erode the traditional patterns of collective identification centred around the nation-state (Scholte, 1996). Changing dynamics in world affairs 'are sufficiently powerful to encourage imagining supranational, transnational, or subnational communities' (Rosenau, 1997: 129). Hence, changing cir-

cumstances in world politics favour the creation of a (supranational) European identity alongside traditional national identities.

There is a wide body of social theory and IR literature which describes how the notions of Self and Other are central to the construction of identities.[8] Accordingly, we can categorize discursive practices involved in collective identity construction with regard to whether they emphasize the dimension of the Self or if they focus on the existence of an Other.[9] Articulations in the first category — henceforth referred to as *inside–inside* articulations — express a vision of the Self, the inside. They articulate similarities and commonalities (and are silent regarding differences) and function to consolidate the feeling of belonging to the Self. Articulations in the second category — in the following referred to as *inside–outside* articulations — involve a distinction between the Self and an Other and establish a boundary between them. The former kind is found in a discourse of likeness, the latter in a discourse of differentiation. A crucial distinction between these two categories is that whereas boundaries between Self and Other are constructed as an effect of both types of discourse, only in the case of an inside–outside discourse is a boundary explicitly constructed within the discourse.

Taken together, these two dynamics constitute a process of inclusion and exclusion. Boundaries are constructed and referent objects are shifted to either side. The logic seems simple, but the practice and the resulting reality are very complex. The same referent object can be placed in the in-group in one discourse, while being categorized as part of the out-group in another. Recall that many discourses are competing for domination and inscription of identity.

This conceptualization of the inside–inside/outside dynamics of foreign policy adds another dimension to David Campbell's (1992) retheorization of foreign policy. The emphasis in Campbell's account on how foreign policy represents danger and fear, and thereby works to construct a state's identity, privileges practices of differentiation and exclusion (ibid., pp. 3, 85). Foreign policy is relevant to identity theorizing through its 'boundary-producing practices central to the production and reproduction of the identity in whose name it operates' (op. cit., p. 75). The analysis of this article, on the other hand, emphasizes that foreign policy construct boundaries not only around the state in whose name it operates, but also around collectives of states in whose (collective) name it may also operate. Additionally, it also demonstrates the centrality of foreign policy in practices of inclu-

sion. It can thus be seen to contribute to the new thinking on 'foreign policy as social construction' (Doty, 1993) that has taken place in the discipline during the 1990s (e.g. Campbell, 1992; and Doty, 1993, 1996; see also Wendt, 1992).

Extending the European Collective Identity

So far I have argued that identities (understandings of inside and outside) are socially constructed. I have further claimed that collective identities are constructed by discursive practices. A question inevitably arising from these claims is the one of 'which particular discursive practices construct a certain identity?'. This is a question that may well be answered in empirical terms and therefore we now turn to the empirical analysis, which will show the constructive powers of EU foreign policy as regards collective identification with the Baltic states. It goes without saying, however, that trying to include all discursive practices of the EU relating to the Baltic states would not be possible in an article of such limited length as this one.[10] Thus, the findings of this study are suggestive rather than exhaustive.

Furthermore, the analysis below should not be read as interpretations of what policy-makers thought or why they said/did what they said/did. The following should be read with only one thing in mind — that discursive practices shape reality by defining the relationships between actors.[11] That is, they construct social reality by inscribing certain identities for certain subjects. The following analysis, therefore, is to show that the foreign policy practices of the EU stimulate a formation of collective identity between the EU and the Baltic states. The emphasis is on *process* (the politics of inclusion) not outcome. As Neil Renwick (1996: 155) puts it, since identity is socially constructed 'the process of identification is of as much interest to us as identity itself'. However, in the last part of this section I also suggest that the politics of inclusion is indeed successful — that we can see positive effects in European collective identity formation. This should not be read as a claim to the effect that the EU discourse is dominant. In order to assert such a claim one would need to widen the study to include other discourses as well. It is, however, in the opinion of the author, a testimony to some effectiveness of the politics of inclusion.[12]

The Inside–Inside Discourse

At the very beginning of independence for the Baltic states, a discourse on European-ness gained a momentum as independence meant that third-party actors could be more outspoken on issues relating to the Baltic states. During the 1990s a number of different articulatory practices constructing a European identity for the Baltic states can be identified. Articulations on 'geographical Europe' were to start the explicit process of positive identification between the EU and the Baltic states. The logic of these articulations has been one of tearing down barriers in Europe between East and West and transcending Cold War divisions in Europe. This inclusionary logic can be seen in a speech by Leon Brittan (Commissioner for External Economic Affairs), where he asserts: 'Our vision for our future relations should encompass the whole of Europe, the North, the Center and the East' (IP/93/328). Another example is the Treaty on European Union which specifies that any European state may apply for membership of the Union (Treaty on European Union, article O). However, who is to count as European is seldom well specified, with the result that the construction of geographical Europe has been very ambiguous. During the period we see articulations on a Europe that includes Russia and the more western states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). For instance, a press release of 24 February 1993 constructs Europe in wide terms by defining Central and Eastern Europe as the landmass west of the Urals (IP/93/137; see also SPEECH/92/7). But we also see a use of the geographical denomination Central and Eastern Europe as referring only to non-CIS states (IP/92/115). In spite of this ambiguity as to where Europe's borders should 'be drawn', the Baltic states are, in both cases, included in the notion of Europe, thereby inscribing their identity as such.

In February 1992, negotiations on trade and commercial and cooperation agreements were launched with Latvia (as with the other two states). The press release announcing this states that both parties considered this to be 'only the first stage in an ongoing process of building closer relations' (IP/92/86) in fields such as financial cooperation and political dialogue. This statement was reinforced by the fact that the prospect of renewed negotiations entered into the discourse at this time. A deeper relationship is articulated as positive, which explicitly constructs a positive identification with Latvia. Furthermore, the press release stated clearly that the process of building closer

relations included all three 'Baltic states', which not only articulated a positive identification with Estonia and Lithuania as well, but also constructed the three states as an entity (separate from Russia). These are examples of how discursive practices have constructed, (a) the concept of the 'Baltic states' as a signifier for a specific referent object, and (b) a positive identification with the Baltic states on the part of the EU.

The cooperation initiative that has evolved around the Baltic Sea since 1992 has been a site of strong inclusionary articulations. With the European Commission as the only non-state member of the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS),[13] the link between cooperation in the Baltic region and the 'European project' is underlined. In a very explicit inclusionary articulation, Hans van den Broek (Commissioner for External Political Relations) says that Baltic and European cooperation is part of the shaping of a 'common destiny' (SPEECH/93/26) for the EU and the members of the CBSS. It is noteworthy that in this speech and in subsequent speeches related to the CBSS, Russia is, on most occasions, included in the Self as seen from the EU perspective. That is, Russia as well as the Baltic states are encompassed by the inclusionary articulation. I mention this because, as we shall see below, articulatory practices that exclude Russia from the European Self exist in plenty. Such dual construction is a good example of how discursive practices may conflict with each other.

Finally, before presenting another type of inside–inside articulation found in the empirical material, we need to make a quick theoretical detour in order to introduce a slightly different perspective on the inside–inside/outside logic. As the old dichotomy between East and West is being discarded, frequent references to an inclusion into the West does not have the same impact as they would have had 15 years ago. In EU articulations, the eastern border of 'the West' has already been shown to be ambiguous. However, as Neumann has noted, in the European debate about Russia since the fall of communism, another mode of differentiation has taken centre stage, in that Russia is seen as a *learner* (on the outside), learning from the Western states (on the inside) in order to become one of them (Neumann, 1996b: 5; see also Neumann, 1997: 158). Turning its back on communism and embracing capitalism has not automatically made Russia either Western or European. In order to be counted as such, evidence must be provided to the effect that Russia has not just espoused market economy and democratic principles, but more importantly that the market and the democracy are actually being implemented and are functioning. And

the same goes for human rights, these must be honoured in practice as well as in principle. Thus, alongside notions of geographical and cultural affinities, European-ness seems to require fulfilment of certain political and socio-economic conditions as well. In the context of enlargement of the EU, this logic of learning can be applied to the entire complex of relations between the EU and the former Eastern bloc. Learning from Europe sets the grounds for whether final inclusion in the Union will be plausible. The concept of transition becomes central to the investigation. When applied to a number of states, this logic opens up a host of possibilities of identification, and in this context I would like to draw on another author (whose thought on the matter is inspired by Neumann's concept of learning). Ola Tunander introduces the categories *cosmos* and *chaos* as tools to use in the analysis of states in a transition process (1997: 18). In his framework, cosmos stands for the organized centre, in this case Western Europe and especially the EU. Chaos, on the other hand, is the location of Central and Eastern Europe, the CIS and Russia, where there is disorder, inflation and weak democratic institutions. It is worth quoting Tunander at length:

> [The East–West structure] would seem to have been replaced by a hierarchic Cosmos–Chaos structure, with an EU centre, a concentric circle of less integrated EU members, a circle of relatively stable states possibly joining the EU in the near future, an outer circle of states less able to adapt to EU standards, and a more chaotic periphery that will not be included in the EU in the coming decades. (1997: 32)

As a state successfully learns from the centre, it advances in its transition from chaos to cosmos, or in this article's terminology, from the outside towards the inside. Discursive practices of the inside–inside kind work to draw the referent object closer to cosmos, while those of the inside–outside kind work to push it towards chaos. And this brings us back to the empirical analysis and the strong articulations on the Baltic states' return to Europe. If we trace EU statements about the Baltic states' success in transiting from the communist to the capitalist system, we see clear articulations describing a movement from chaos towards cosmos — from Tunander's fourth circle to the third. The sequence of cooperation agreements (of varying depths) negotiated between the parties can be used as a yardstick for the EU's increasing positive identification with the Baltic states by involving them more and more in EU structures. Beginning in the outer areas of the fourth circle

at independence, tentative steps were taken with the already mentioned 'Agreements on trade and commercial and economic cooperation'. Relatively quickly these agreements were renegotiated to include political dialogue and were then transformed into Free Trade Agreements in July 1994. At a ceremony on the 18 July, there were declarations on the part of the EU that the occasion signified 'a vital step forward in the process of integration of the Baltic countries into Europe', and that the struggles of the Baltic peoples had enabled them to 'recover their place in the circle of the free peoples of Europe' (PRES/94/148). Even before these agreements came into force, negotiations on European (Association) Agreements were opened. European Agreements are concluded with states with the specific aim of integrating them into the Union. The parties came to an agreement after only two rounds of negotiations, and as emphasized in the subsequent press release a European Agreement for each of the Baltic states means that 'they are considered as potential future members of the EU' (IP/95/379). In the same statement it was also stressed (as if to underline the commonality between the signatories) that the 'three agreements are based on a shared commitment to democracy and human rights'. The signing of the European Agreements marked the Baltic states' move into the third circle. The EU made clear its view on the matter: 'After many years apart, that moment symbolized the return of the Baltic States to the European family' (PRES/95/173). Recently, Estonia has moved even closer into cosmos. 'Learning' has been so successful that it has been rewarded with a recommendation for membership negotiations: 'Estonia presents the characteristics of a democracy, with stable institutions, guaranteeing the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities. . . . Estonia can be regarded as a functioning market economy' (DOC/97/12). Although this particular reward has not been offered to Latvia or Lithuania (see, e.g., DOC/97/14; DOC/97/15), from what we have seen in the preceding analysis, discursive practices that stimulate collective identity formation in an inside–inside dynamic have been present in the EU debate about the Baltic states since the Baltic states' ascent to independence in 1991.

The Inside–Outside Discourse

As noted in the previous part, references to states as being European have been ambiguous. In the analysis from an inside–inside perspective this did not pose a problem as the Baltic states were included in

all cases. The question was whether to include Russia and/or the CIS. But from an inside–outside perspective these articulations are more problematic, as they apparently construct the same boundary in different places at different times. Looking at discursive practices not tied to the linguistic concept 'Europe', however, tells of something which has been going on at the same time and which has had a more coherent effect on the drawing of boundaries. It is clear that among the former republics of the USSR, the Baltic states were singled out for preferential treatment. On 9 January 1992 the Commission outlined its proposals for 'the Community's relations with the independent states of the former Soviet Union' (P/92/1). This is the only statement found in the material where the Baltic states are treated on the same basis as, for instance, Ukraine or Belarus. Already towards the end of the month, we see the first indication of the habit of separating the Baltic states from the rest of the former USSR. In a speech by the vice-President of the Commission, about proposed negotiations towards cooperation agreements (of a different kind from those concluded with the Baltic states) with Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, he states that towards these countries there 'must be a sharing of responsibility' with other Western institutions (SPEECH/92/7). This theme is taken up by Brittan in early 1994 when he states that the 'reintegration of these countries [of the CIS] into the global political and economic system ... is a task for the whole world community' (SPEECH/94/4). Thereby a boundary is tentatively established with, on the one side, those states the EU accepts the major responsibility for assisting and, on the other, those states for whom responsibility must be shared. If we go on to look at assistance schemes that the EU has initiated, this placement of the boundary is reinforced.

The EU is running two such schemes, PHARE and TACIS, which target different areas.[14] The aims of these two programmes are very similar but there is one big difference relevant to this study, namely that PHARE is to a larger extent targeted towards political reform, as it is given to countries that already have stable economies. There is therefore a hierarchy between the programmes, and thus the Baltic states (that joined PHARE in December 1991) belong to the top group. It may very well be the case that the grouping of states in this manner has nothing to do with a wish on the part of the EU to distinguish between 'Category A' states and 'Category B' states, and that it has simply been more functional to organize assistance in this way,

according to economic performance rather than special inclusionary intentions. However, the effects on identity formation are the same in either case. PHARE and TACIS represent a distinct separation of states into two groups, one of which has much closer contacts with the EU, and this is bound to affect the identification process. The logic here is that PHARE represents a position closer to cosmos. Furthermore, the fact that the EU deemed it appropriate to initialize a separate scheme for the CIS states is indicative. At the inception of TACIS and the Baltic states' ascent into PHARE, the economies of the Baltic states' were more or less on par with those of Ukraine and Belarus. In this light the inclusion assumes an intentional character. In addition, since 1995 a qualitative shift in the aims of the PHARE programme has occurred, bringing intentionality even more into the picture. Its aims were then redirected towards specifically providing assistance to European Agreement countries for their accession to the EU (ISEC/B15/95). The main aims of TACIS remained more or less the same.[15] The political significance of belonging to PHARE was thereby further increased.

Finally, if we return to linguistic articulations for a moment, during the first half of 1994 we can identify three crucial events (two speeches and one press release) which very explicitly construct the boundary between inside and outside, and which all place Russia in the latter category. The first occasion is the speech by Brittan (already quoted above) where he, in reference to Russian right-wing talk about the 'near abroad' (which is a euphemism for a sphere of influence), emphatically declares that 'the EU is responding to these concerns by making it clear that it foresees a common future for the EU, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltics' (SPEECH/94/4).[16] In May he returns to the same theme in the context of possible Russian ambitions outside its borders:

> Europe must therefore work to bind the Baltic States more closely to the West ... and clearly recognise the Baltic states as future members of the European Union [by negotiating European Agreements with them, which will send a] powerful message to the rest of the world about their future. (SPEECH/94/47)

The logic here is that of liminality.[17] Situated in a grey zone between inside and outside, the Baltic states are not to fall to the east but to integrate with the West. The aspect of the Baltic states' liminal status

is also central in a Council press release of 10 May about the retreat of Russian troops from Latvia. The troops are to leave the country, but a Russian radar station for civil use will remain in Russian ownership. This prompts the Council to state: 'The Union wishes to emphasise that these agreements do not limit Latvia's sovereignty and will not delay the development of closer ties between Latvia and the European institutions, for which the Union has often demonstrated its support' (PESC/94/47).[18] The message conveyed in these lines is that this association with Russia (through Russian ownership and operation of the radar station) could result in worsened relations, as it would be interpreted as a gravitation away from the EU towards Russia. That is, gravitating away from the EU would mean gravitating to something else — the Other. An analogy can be drawn to the analysis of competing future power centres in Europe by Wæver (1997). He posits a possible core (cosmos) in Moscow towards which other member states of the CIS would gravitate, rather than towards the 'European project'. Also in his model would the Baltic states be liminars, situated in the outer circles of both the European and the Russian cosmos (Wæver, 1997: 73, 77).

The third example of an instance of inscription of Self and Other is a speech by van den Broek in March. After having discussed the strategy for the accession of the Baltic states (as well as the other PHARE countries) to the EU, he goes on to discuss the future relations with the states of the CIS. Attempting not to construct a dividing line by stating that these countries are 'part of the overall cultural unity of our continent', he nevertheless does so by creating a distance to Russia by hinting that Russian membership may not be feasible because of its territorial vastness. Reinforcing this distance, he declares that:

> The challenge in our relations with these countries [of the CIS] is less, therefore, in preparing for membership than in finding a suitable way of involving them in Europe's future development. ... The Union has, I believe, found the right balance in proposing a relationship of partnership and cooperation to Russia and the other independent states. (SPEECH/94/25)

Thus, fallen prey to the logic of cosmos and chaos, even van den Broek inscribes otherness in Russia from the perspective of the EU.

Although most of the linguistic practices try to involve Russia in what has become known as the European security architecture, we

have seen that they also frequently establish a hierarchical positioning. This tendency is even more obvious when we look at behavioural practices. From the material it appears as if it is unintentional. It is nevertheless interesting to note how well the boundary that is constructed conforms to Samuel Huntington's and Norman Davies's fault lines of European civilizations (Huntington, 1993: 30; Davies, 1997: 18). The preceding analysis shows that the discursive practices of the EU favour a formation of a collective identity among the EU and the Baltic states to a much greater degree than it favours the formation of one among the EU the Baltic states and Russia. The resulting structured reality contains a conceptualization of the Baltic states as being part of a different political entity on the continent, and thus a new division of inside and outside is constructed.

A Successful Discourse?

So far, I have tried to map how the EU is promoting collective identification in its politics of inclusion. However, I now turn to discuss observed effects of the EU's politics of inclusion in order to sustain this argument and show that it appears as if the discursive practices of the EU are indeed reinforcing and deepening European collective identity formation.[19]

Since their struggle for independence started in the late 1980s, the Baltic states have articulated their European-ness in order to cut themselves off from the Soviet heritage and re-attach themselves to Europe. In the words of Toomas Hendrik Ilves, Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs: 'geographically and spiritually our European identity has never been in doubt' (1997a). Thus it is clear that before the EU discourse commenced there was a positive identification with Europe. Now, as positive identification was already present, and as this identification is an expression of Estonians' self-perception of European-ness, the reader may ask: 'Then, why bother about the politics of inclusion?'. There are two complementary replies to this question. First, as already mentioned, today there is more to European identity than geography and spirit of mind. 'Europe' of today also implies norms, values and rules of conduct (democracy, market economy and respect for human rights). Of these, especially the second has come to mean that belonging to Europe requires being a member of the EU. In this sense, there was still ground to cover for the Baltic states in 1991, and this is recognized by the Estonian Minister of

Foreign Affairs when he states in 1997 that there are *still* additional reforms to be undertaken before Estonia can be truly European (ibid.). Second, we need to consider the fact that identity change is not only about a polity changing referent objects for an identity — it is also about qualitative change with regard to the same referent object, it is about the depth of identification. In other words, it is not only about changing boundaries but also about reproducing and reinforcing existing ones.

If we shift positions and step outside the EU discourse, and take the position of Estonia, we have an opportunity to observe some effects of the politics of inclusion. In this context it is useful to think of the EU discourse as an opening up of a space where positive identification can take place. First of all, by not closing off the possibility for future membership of the EU, collective identification has been made possible. This is not very contentious but it is nevertheless important — the prospect of future membership has indeed affected Estonian reform policy considerably: 'we have in fact consciously tailored our reforms precisely with the Europe embodied by the EU in mind' (Ilves, 1997d). Furthermore, EU discourse has enabled Estonia to change its self-perception as reform progress has been made. Because, if membership is the yardstick for being European, approaching membership means coming closer to being European. Let us see how this logic is expressed in Estonian self-perception. For instance, Estonia recognizes that the EU has been instrumental for Estonia's rapid success at reform: 'The store of accumulated experience which EU member states share [for instance through various PHARE programmes] enables us to [carry through reforms] much faster than if we were to rely solely on our own experience' (Ilves, 1997c). And apropos the EU setting the standards against which Estonia's final return to Europe will be measured, and by communicating these to Estonia in the Commission *avis* (DOC/97/12), Estonia also acknowledges the central position of the EU and its policies in the further development of Estonia into a European state:

> The avis presents us [with] an idea of what an Estonia in Europe should be, and what we need to do to become this Estonia in Europe. ... Estonia has used the avis to map out our future activities in the integration process. (Ilves, 1997d)

Thus, in Estonia progress and becoming part of Europe is seen (not exclusively, however) to be a function of the politics of inclusion. We

can also find evidence to the effect that a change in Estonian self-perception has taken place. Again, the Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs:

> Estonia seeks to join the European Union at [a] time when it is convinced that it can be compared to member states, and at a time which [*sic.*] Estonia is capable of [fulfilling] the responsibilities and demands which the European Union membership introduces. (Ilves, 1997b)

In other words, Estonia will not claim to be European and does not intend to join the EU until it perceives itself as a truly European state. In this regard, applying for membership in 1995 must be seen as a change in self-perception, especially as Estonia in 1991 perceived 'the prospect of EU membership to be faint' (Ilves, 1998b). On the whole, the process of adapting has yielded positive results, and it is possible to identify a more secure posture of Estonian officials as regards the political and socio-economic belonging of their country. The European dimension of their self-perception seems to be more securely grounded since the formal application for membership was made.

A second way of grasping the effects of the EU discourse on European collective identity construction is to look at the politics of inclusion in temporal terms. In the previous discussion of the cosmos/chaos logic it was noted that the signing of agreements can be read as statements of the European-ness of the Baltic states. By each signing of a new agreement (with what they entail in the form of closer cooperation), the Baltic signatory is represented as having become more European, thus a change in the EU's perception of that state has taken place. Now, if the politics of inclusion has speeded up at least Estonia's reform process (which we have reason to believe, see above), and if reform progress means becoming more European also in the view of the EU, then this suggests the presence of a feedback into the original EU discourse. The relationship between Estonia and the EU would thus be developing dialectically in that the inclusionary practices on the part of the EU are having effects in Estonia which, in turn, triggers a deeper identification on the part of the EU, and so on. It seems reasonable to suggest that the politics of inclusion is having effects on collective identity formation between the EU and (at least) Estonia.

Conclusion

In conclusion, then, the stated purpose of the article has been to describe the foreign policy discourse of the EU towards the Baltic states, and to show that it has been and still is conducive to the formation of a collective identity between the EU and the Baltic states. In view of the above analysis, there should be no question as to whether in EU foreign policy there has been a strong presence of inclusionary practices during the 1990s — there has. It has been argued that these practices, intentionally or unintentionally, 'include' the Baltic states in the Western Self (and in some instances simultaneously 'exclude' in particular Russia but also the other states of the CIS), thus working to construct a social reality by which possibilities to lay claim to a sphere of influence in the region are constrained. Thus I have explicated the 'politics of inclusion' on the part of the EU. In relation to Estonia, I have also briefly suggested that we can observe effects of the politics of inclusion as regards collective identity formation in Estonia and the EU. However, as pointed out repeatedly, this politics is but one aspect of the construction of social reality in the Baltic region. If we want to move from suggesting to claiming that inclusion is the dominant discourse, a much more exhaustive analysis that incorporates alternative and competing discourses on the Baltic states is needed (for instance, the Russian discourse must be taken into account). The analysis carried out above only provides one piece of the puzzle.

This study has centred on dynamics of constructing identity and social reality. One aspect of these dynamics has an obvious and close connotation to recent discussions in IR about the social construction of sovereignty. As has frequently been pointed out, sovereignty is not a static condition of international life, but a social construction that needs continuous re-construction (Biersteker and Weber, 1996; Walker, 1993). By emphasizing the practices of states that consolidate the independent state-hood of the Baltic states, the above analysis sustains this claim. However, while IR scholars have often explored the connections between identity and sovereignty in terms of *national* identity as an underpinning factor of sovereignty, the present article suggests that there is also a dimension of *supra*-state identification that in some cases can be important for the (re)construction of sovereignty. If this seems paradoxical, which it certainly would in the light of analyses that assert the hegemony of sovereignty over other ways of conceptualizing political identity (see, e.g., Walker, 1993: 179), one

may have recourse to Wendt's identification continuum or John Ruggie's concept of 'unbundled territoriality' as a place where the re-articulation of political space is occurring today (Ruggie, 1993: 171) for support of the claim that even though the principle of state sovereignty and *its* division of inside and outside is still very strong and informs much of our thinking, there is a strong case to be made that other divisions of inside and outside are plausible and can co-exist with the principle of state sovereignty. Still, this co-existence indicates a complexity of social life that certainly needs to be investigated more closely in future research. Broad brush strokes, such as those above, are not sufficient to uphold the co-existence claim on their own. I do believe, though, that this can be a fruitful branch for future theorizing of collective identity in the discipline of IR, one that would allow us to take at least one more step on the ladder to understanding world politics.

Notes

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1. It is not my suggestion that Russia is a hostile neighbour or that formal independence is endangered, but signals have emerged from Russian military and political circles to the effect that a sphere of influence is aspired to. Given the uncertain future of Russian politics, such signals should not be discounted, and we have no secure ground for assuming that the independence of the Baltic states will be non-problematic. Therefore, an analysis of practices that construct the independent Baltic states is not deemed to be superfluous.
2. The 'politics of inclusion' can be explained as the structured totality of engagement with the Baltic states on the part of the EU, as seen in an identity formation perspective.
3. See, e.g., Campbell, 1992; Neumann, 1996a; Doty, 1993. Pauline Rosenau defines discourse as 'all that is written and spoken and all that invites dialogue or conversation' (Rosenau, 1992: xi).
4. To say that discourse constructs social reality is another way of saying that it is through discourse that we know the world and define subjects in it (give them identities) and we are thus given opportunities (and some are also closed off) to act upon social reality. Note, however, that for such a close match between a discourse and the action it enables/disables to occur, the discourse in question has to be *dominant*. Often in a complex world, there are several

competing discourses. The reality that results from this situation will be one of flexible borders and unstable relationships between subjects.

5. N.B. Even though these scholars' conceptualizations of 'discourse' may not privilege language (see, e.g., Campbell, 1992: 6, 246–7), the focus on language *in the analysis* leaves the impression that discourse does not include behavioural action.
6. Thus, discursive practice becomes synonymous with articulatory practice.
7. For instance, as we shall see in the empirical analysis, there are two discourses on Russia's relation to Europe, one inclusionary and one exclusionary. Neither is dominant.
8. See, e.g., Norton (1988) and Neumann and Welsh (1991) for two examples.
9. Although the dynamics of defining Self and Other are treated separately here, this is not to suggest that Self can be conceptualized independently of Other. To the contrary, the present separation of the two is only made for analytical and presentational reasons.
10. Even thus limited, it would be impossible to analyse all the instances of foreign policy-making in the EU. I have therefore had to limit the study further. Looking at the EU discourse, as visible in publications from the European Commission and the Council of Ministers (mainly press releases and statements), not all material relevant to this discourse have been taken into account. In addition, the documents cited in the analysis are only a small part of the documents studied, but they reflect the content of that whole corpus.
11. Intentionality is not unimportant, however. Constructivists argue that reasoning actors actively can influence the construction of social reality (see, e.g., Wendt, 1992). But, as noted above, the construction of social reality is also unintentional. Therefore a focus on the intentions of actors would leave one side of the coin unexposed.
12. Additionally, at the end of this section the reader will not be any wiser as to why a certain discourse becomes dominant in the competition of discourses, and succeeds in structuring the interaction of agents. This is a question (involving sociological as well as material dimensions of power) much too complex to tackle within the confines of this article.
13. The total membership consists of Finland, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Poland, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Iceland and the European Commission. Norway and Iceland, although not littoral Baltic states are members by virtue of the established close cooperation between the Nordic countries.
14. PHARE stands for 'Poland and Hungary Assistance for Reconstruction of the Economy' and associated countries are Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, the Baltic states, Albania and Slovenia. TACIS stands for 'Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States' and includes the countries of the CIS. Of course, there is to some extent an overlap in the targeting of countries, so that the Baltic states can in

some cases benefit from TACIS funds, but the lion's share of assistance to the Baltic states is given through PHARE.

15. '[TACIS] has three main objectives: to support the transition towards the market economy and democracy, to develop partnerships and foster links and networks at all levels, and to integrate recipient countries into the world economy' (MEMO/95/85). Note the aim to integrate TACIS states into the world economy rather than into the European economy.
16. Although he uses Central and Eastern Europe in a geographical sense, it is clear from the rest of the speech that Russia is conceptualized separately (thus not part of the geographical denomination). In addition, one might wonder why it would be necessary to explicitly mention the Baltic states if Russia was included in 'Central and Eastern Europe'.
17. Norton theorizes identity partly in terms of liminality. A liminar is situated at the junction of inside and outside, and is therefore a crucial part in the conceptualization of the Self as distinct from the Other (Norton, 1988: 53). The Baltic states are clearly liminars according to this logic.
18. This message is repeated seven months later in relation to transits of Russian military personnel through Lithuania to (and from) Kaliningrad (PESC/94/111).
19. Due to limited space, I concentrate on the experiences of Estonia. For the same reason, I have to disappoint the reader who is hoping for a presentation of conclusive evidence to the effect that all Estonians now consider themselves 'EUropean'. Again, this analysis is more suggestive than exhaustive. Briefly though, the *Central and Eastern Eurobarometer* no. 6 suggests that Estonians in 1997 to a lesser extent than in 1992 see the future of their country as lying with the EU. On the other hand, Estonian opinion polls of a later date suggest that this trend has been reversed, and that among those who consider themselves to have a good knowledge of the EU 68.4% would like their country to join (Ilves, 1998a).

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