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When Languages Divide
A Qualitative Study On Linguistic Minorities and Separatism Movements

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Abstract

The importance of language rights in terms of minority groups has increased and is considered a key part of political studies of minorities. Some linguistic minorities show feelings towards secession from the state and desire to become sovereign. This study examines three linguistic minorities; French in Canada, Swedish in Finland, and Sámi in Norway.

To bring understanding to the research question; which factors inform linguistic minorities’ feelings towards secession, case study research was conducted. A certain focus was put on the regions Québec, the Åland Islands, and Sápmi. Québec is run politically by a pro-partition party; the Åland Islands has a separatist party in its Lagting; and Sápmi hosts a less organized separatism movement. The case studies were conducted through analysis of government documents, pro-partition party platforms, and complemented with interviews of members of the three minority groups.

The analysis of the material brought up in the case studies shows that a spatially cohesive minority, low levels of bilingualism in terms of additional knowledge in the majority language, and well-functioning provision of public services in the minority language are factors that largely inform on the groups’ feelings towards secession, and bring understanding to why some of these minorities wish to secede.

Key words
Åland Islands, Bilingualism, Canada, Finland, French, Language, Minorities, Norway, Sámi, Sápmi, Sovereignty, Swedish, Partition, Québec.
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1. Language, politics, and separatism

The importance of language rights in relation to linguistic policies have increased and is now considered a key part of political studies of linguistic minorities (Kymlicka & Patten, 2003). Separatism and pro-partition movements have gained space in the political discourse, particularly in bilingual states, and language and linguistic rights are often used to improve autonomy or sovereignty (Fishman, 1986). The fact that language politics, linguistic rights, and bilingualism are closely related to recent separatism contexts in democratic states raise the needs for understanding to what factors demarcate separatism movements in states with linguistic minorities.

To that end, this study will investigate three linguistic minority groups; French in Canada; Swedish in Finland, and Sámi in Norway comparatively using qualitative analysis through case studies.

1.1. Purpose, and framing of research question

If a clear reason for an event cannot be identified, the main purpose of a research project becomes to find a reason in order to explain or understand (Esiasson, Gilljam, Oscarsson, & Wägnerud, 2012). In this project, the identified event is presence of feelings towards secession among linguistic minorities. Canada shows high presence in the province of Québec, Finland medium presence in the province of the Åland Islands, and Norway low in the Sámi area Sápmi. By comparing a set of variables identified in the theoretical part of the thesis, the aim is to understand which factors inform linguistic minorities’ feelings towards secession.

1.2. Disposition

When the research question and purpose of the project now are mapped out, a literature review of current theories on separatism, language policy, bilingualism, and linguistic minorities will be conducted. This is followed by a methodology chapter in which the study’s operational aspects are covered, linking to the theoretical framework from chapter two. The analysis of the selected cases, along with complementary interviews, and application of the variables is conducted in chapter four. Finally, this thesis is wrapped up with a discussion, and a concluding section in chapter five.
2. Theoretical framework

Political theorists have historically given linguistic diversity and language rights little attention. However, the normative issues of language and linguistic identity have started to interest political theorists. Moreover, since language rights have become a political matter in several distinct contexts, the need to facilitate theoretical understanding has increased. Especially since language, socio-linguistic issues, and language rights do affect stability in certain political societies (Kymlicka & Patten, 2003).

2.1. Bilingualism; concepts and contexts

Bilingualism can generally be divided into three different types: personal, local, and official bilingualism. Personal bilingualism refers to a person’s ability to communicate perfectly in two languages, and manifest linguistic control over two languages perfectly and native-like (Hamers & Blanc, 2000). Local bilingualism is present in an area were two languages are used interchangeably by locals. A small per cent of the world’s countries are officially bilingual, meaning citizens of these have the option of using any of the two official languages in contacts with authorities (Mahrs, 2012).

Bilingual persons identify themselves with two languages and could even refer to both as mother tongues. Usually, persons who learn a second language at school or at older age, even if it is used with native-like control, seldom label themselves as bilinguals. This is because the language learned later does not comply with the person’s linguistic identity and sense of self. In the United States, bilingualism rather refers to membership of a certain ethnic group than actual linguistic skills (Fishman, 1986). Local bilingualism is common in former colonies, border regions, or in areas with a significant linguistic minority. Despite frequent everyday use of the two languages, one of these might not be recognized officially and cannot be used in public institutions (Mahrs, 2012).

Officially bilingual states, or regions within states, make the third of the three significant bilingual contexts. In such states, two linguistic groups face equal rights when it comes to using the languages officially. Government agencies must produce bilingual documents, and provide equal service in both languages. In bilingual countries or regions, most of the people still only have one single language preference and a minority of the population can handle both of the official languages native-like. Thus, a state or region being officially bilingual does not mean that its inhabitants are personally bilingual; actually the majority is not. The vast majority of all countries, however, recognize only one language as official and all citizens must gather around this in communication with the government (Mahrs, 2012). Commonly, officially bilingual
states are divided into unilingual language zones. This becomes especially clear in countries like Belgium, or Switzerland. Graubünden is the only officially multilingual Swiss canton recognizing Italian, German and Romansh; all other Swiss cantons are unilingual German, Italian, or French. At a federal level, however, Switzerland is officially multilingual and facilitates service in all official languages (Edwards, 1994). Belgium is also a country with stringent linguistic zones. Wallonia is a solely French-speaking province, whereas in the province of Flanders they speak only Dutch. The capital area Brussels is an exception, where both Dutch and French service is provided (Mahrs, 2012).

2.2. Language and power

Eriksen (2002) lists a number of criteria to demarcate cultural gropes, ethnicities, and distinct groups of people. Language, political influence, and spatial cohesion are all factors forming identity. Furthermore a shared language is often a strong identifier and a powerful cultural symbol of union. Language and linguistics is conveniently used to manage the administration of the nation state. Language has become a political power tool and is more often used to create or change political landscapes. For instance, in regions with clear minority-majority linguistic relations, language is often used as a way to gain control over other contexts, like the economy. This is visible in Québec, Canada; Flanders, the Netherlands; and in Catalonia, Spain. Strong pro-secession movements in Québec, Catalonia, and Flanders have complicated the political milieu at national level in the corresponding states. The power such movements gain in the region in which they operate and wish to make autonomous often spill over to national politics (Kymlicka & Patten, 2003).

The minority group in a minority-majority linguistic relation often bears the sense of being humiliated, which often upholds the separatism movement. Linguistic separatism often tends to appear during crises of some sort. The language issue itself is often latent, and the separatism thought is activated during recession, or other crises, often economic (Whitaker, 1998). Political and social satisfactions within a linguistic group are two principal factors when it comes to the discourse on separatism and partition. Social dominance of a language in a region does not alone promote, or prevent, secessionism movements (Laponce, 1984).

2.3. Linguistic contexts in politics

Some states consist of distinct regional minority language groups and often provide public service in at least some regions for those. Most such states consist of (at least) one dominant linguistic group, and one non-dominant minority. Countries where such systems are
clearly present are Canada, Finland, and Norway; all of which will be examined more thoroughly in this thesis (Kymlicka & Patten, 2003).

Non-historical immigrant groups often make new linguistic minorities, commonly not supported officially by governments. Immigrant groups integrating into new contexts often put aside their native languages as they learn the new homeland’s traditional language. Immigrant groups in already officially bilingual zones often face more difficulties gaining language rights than in unilingual regions (Citrin, 1990).

Linguistic diversity has become a major obstacle within the work of the European Union. The attempt to create and maintain a common EU identity is to a large extend prevented by the fact that EU acknowledges nearly 30 official languages, and hosts as many strong local linguistic minorities such as the Welsh, Catalan, Sámi, and tens of non-historical immigrant groups with non-European linguistic roots (Kymlicka & Patten, 2003).

2.4. Language rights

Many ethno linguistic groups were officially recognized and given language rights during the mid-sixties. This meant these groups could use of their minority language in contact with governments, and expect to receive some public services in their language (Fishman, 1986). Kymlicka and Patten (2003) conceptualize language rights as tolerance rights and promotion rights. Tolerance rights mean that one has right to use any preferred language privately without facing risks of being discriminated. Most democratic countries do not regulate how citizens use foreign or non-official languages, yet history tells us this has not always been the case. Sámi groups have reported discrimination to those speaking Sámi in public during the twentieth century (Svonni, 2004).

Promotion rights are what we often see in officially bilingual states or regions. The government sets the legislative framework to facilitate bilingual services and members of a linguistic minority group can expect to receive public services in their preferred language. Most minority language groups enjoy tolerance rights, at least in democracies. Typical promotion rights are found in traditional multilingual countries like Finland, Canada, and Belgium. However, some governments resist implementing linguistic promotion rights throughout entire countries, and often tend to keeping language rights unique in one or a few regions where a linguistic minority is strong, and the dominant/non dominant relation is less obvious (Kymlicka & Patten, 2003). Laponce criticizes the Canadian government’s promoting of mixing linguistics groups and bilingual areas, and the work for making bilingualism a natural part of the Canadian state (Laponce, 1984).
In some circumstances reducing the minority-majority relation can prevent roots of separatism to grow strong. Separatism movements seldom build their case on linguistic issues only, but on minority-majority relations and how more influence can be obtained by the minority (Fishman, 1986).

Language rights can differ from neighbouring countries where the identical language is used. In India and Pakistan, Punjab is widely spoken and dominates Pakistan in both numbers and influence. Yet, Punjab is not officially recognized and is seen as a ‘lower’ language. In India, moreover, Punjab is along with English one of many official minority languages and is officially spoken in vast parts of India. Whereas India have chosen to implement local and regional languages into its national plurilingualism, Pakistan has for practical reasons made English and Urdu the prestige languages. Consequently, the Pakistani government has forced the dominant Punjab group to adapt the ‘new’ languages (Ayres, 2008). In the United States, the rapid shift from monolingual non-English speaking immigrants, to a second generation bilinguals, to a third generation monolingual English-speakers show how immigrants of various linguistic backgrounds were assimilated into the American society, but lost their language heritage on the way (Citrin, 1990).

2.5. Linguistic conflicts, and possible solutions

Linguistic diversity is almost never the sole reason for secessionism movements and language conflicts. Interestingly enough, economic competition and cultural resentment is often a trigger for linguistic conflicts to blossom. Language conflicts tend to rise during recession, or other socially diversifying contexts, but are rarely the only point of conflict or clash (Citrin, 1990). Moreover, linguistic conflicts based on nationalism often rest on mythical conceptions of similarity and national homogenous entities (Stevensson, 2008). Jack Citrin (1990), furthermore, posits that linguistic diversity in the United States informs an increased national insecurity about English language cohesion throughout the nation. Recently, with Spanish and to some extend Mandarin gaining more attention, the political language map has been partly redrawn with movements lobbying for making English the sole official language of the United States. The confrontation between English-only groups and liberal pro-plurilingualism activists has deepened the debate over American identity and the means to preserve it (Citrin, 1990). The American debate on how government supported multilingualism by some is thought to threaten the national common sense of unity is present in most bilingual states, especially those with a clear minority-majority relation.

A view on possible solutions on linguistic conflicts is framed in Language and identity in Switzerland (Davidsson, 2010). Davidson suggests English should be the fifth official language
of the Swiss Confederation in order to solve internal linguistic conflicts and facilitate immigration and assimilation. Still, English has no cultural or historical role in Switzerland, whereas the four official national languages bear iconic status among the Swiss. Davidson’s suggestion raises the issue of finding a lingua franca to facilitate the state’s communication with all citizens. Some former colonial states in Asia and Africa have kept the former colonial language as a lingua franca making communication easy and equal (Davidsson, 2010).

The European Union has made attempts to increase the language knowledge among its citizens, especially through the M+2 strategy. The strategy focuses on the fact that that all citizens should have enough language knowledge to enable use of at least two other languages than the mother tongue. However, the EU has not paid similar attention to the promotion of minority languages, and most strategies focus only on official EU languages (Stevensson, 2008).

Language is a marker of ethnicity according to Eriksen (2002), and can be a factor in ethnic conflicts. Johnson (2008) and Kaufmann (1998) have positioned themselves more radically when it comes to issues on solving linguistic conflicts. Linguistic identities must be separated and given sovereignty to solve or prevent conflicts and produce long-term peace. Some supporters of partition theories have argued that spatial separation with regional autonomy is sufficient to stabilize the political landscape in a country. Johnson claims, moreover, that linguistic groups in conflict must be separated politically, and geographically (Johnson, 2008). Cyprus is exemplified as a bilingual region where partition itself did not increase the violence, but the fact that linguistic groups were not separated completely (Kaufmann, 1998).
3. Methodology

3.1. Qualitative method, an approach

A deeper analysis conducted via qualitative methods implies a focus on few cases, compared with quantitative analysis in which large numbers of abstract variables are used, as Repstad (1999) puts it. This project has a qualitative approach, and three cases of linguistic minorities are examined. The qualitative research method exemplifies a close relation between the researcher and the researched subjects, which refers accurately to this project and my own strong interest on the linguistic minorities, and personal ties to the three selected cases (Bryman, 2012).

Without doubt, one cannot generalize uncritically from a case study with only a few covered situations, like in this project. However, the results can be analyzed keeping in mind the question of representativity, and the fact that this project covers three highly contextualized cases. The research is still fruitful, even though precise validity of the results cannot be produced. The aim of the research is to gain understanding to what factors inform linguistic minorities’ feeling towards secession. Qualitative research often open new doors, and leave questions open for further research, perhaps with a more quantitative approach (Repstad, 1999).

3.2. Selection of cases and delineation

In order to understand why some linguistic minority groups have strong feelings towards secession while others do not, the selection of cases to study becomes relatively regular. I have chosen to emphasis on the Francophone group in Canada; the Swedish speaking Finns; and the indigenous Sámi in Norway. The three states Canada, Norway, and Finland, are to a large extent similar. They are all traditional well developed western democracies, with parliamentary systems, and solid linguistic majorities.

Similarities to the three chosen cases exist among other linguistic minorities. Europe itself hosts tens of linguistic minority groups, some recognized officially and provided with public language service, some not. Tens of cases could have been included. Yet, the three chosen cases are highly contextualized, for the purpose of understanding the relationship between linguistic minorities and the presence of feelings towards secession.

3.3. Operationalization

Every sense of empirical research has an implicit research design, a logical plan in which sequences connect research material to the initial research question, and eventually to its
conclusions, to get from here, to there. Yin (2003) lists five components that should be given certain attention in terms of designing the research:

- the research question
- intentions of the question
- units of analysis
- a logic link between the data and the proposition
- criteria for interpreting the results

The research question which has been covered in earlier parts becomes an important link throughout the project. As Yin (2003) highlights, if the question is to understand how or why something occurs, a case study is relevant. As mentioned, I aim to understand what factors are predominant in the context of separatism among linguistic minority groups. The research question, which factors inform linguistic minorities’ feelings towards secession will hence influence all parts of this study.

Even though the research question itself can direct one to a certain study design, this does not point in any directions of what or who should be studied. In this case, when the research question is identified as to understand why some linguistic minorities strive for partition, the next step will be to identify what will be studied. The units of analysis for the study become crucial. The three selected bases for the case study; linguistic minorities in Canada, Finland, and Norway make the first delineation. Based on previous observations, the province of Québec, along with the Åland Islands are cases that both show high and medium presence of feelings towards secession, portrayed by pro-partition movements. Thus, it becomes relevant to define the cases Finland and Canada more specifically by focusing on Québec, and the Åland Islands. It is however, still of importance to cover the Swedish minority in Finland, and the French minority in Canada more thoroughly to understand why parts of these two seek partition more openly, and at the same time cover the Sámi group which only has a less organized separatism movement.

In this project, spatial cohesion, level of bilingualism, political representation of the minority group, provision of linguistic services, and recent immigration will be used as non-dependent variables with the intention to bring understanding to which factors inform on linguistic minorities’ feelings towards secession. The presence of the variables will be graded with high, medium, and low in the analytic part of this project.

According to Yin (2003), one approach described as successful in terms of linking data to the intention and finding relevant criteria for the interpretation of result, is the idea of matching patterns where several pieces of data from one case can be tied to a theory. At the same time,
using kinds of comparable analysis, one could look for similar patterns in the selected cases to develop the understanding for separatism among these groups (Yin, 2003). Here, the interpreted levels of the variables will be used with the aim to see patterns. This will be used to understand which factors inform on minorities’ feelings towards secession.

Since this paper does not build the question on quantity, numbers, or statistics, observation of reality of the linguistic minorities becomes primary. Observations have been made through my own experiences from traveling some of these areas where the groups are present; analysis of government documents and policies; analysis of separatism parties’ platforms; and complemented with interviews of members of these groups. Practically, as Repstad (1999) points out, it is hard and time consuming to make thorough observations of all fields of a study oneself, and interviews of members of the linguistic minorities becomes particularly important as supplementary to the document analysis. The selection of interviewees is made purposive through snowball sampling. Since the interviews will be used supplementary, I limit the number of interviews to six to eight in total for the whole research project. The interviews are made differently depending on the respondents’ locations. Telephone interviews, e-mail correspondence, and in-person interviews are conducted. A set of topics are covered in the interviews, based on the dependent variable, and the five independent variables. Respondents of the interviews will be anonymized in the text.

3.4. Case studies

It is important to tie the research question to a relevant and suitable research strategy. Robert Yin (2003) highlights that different types of methods should be used depending on the research question. If the aim is to know ‘who’ is affected from an event, or ‘how much’ the event has influenced something, surveys are likely the most suitable research strategy. On the other hand, if the question is to explain or understand why or how an event occurs, like in this thesis, a case study or field experiment becomes relevant.

Case studies are sometimes criticized for being narrow and not enabling scientific generalizations on the topic (Yin, 2003). In this case, the aim is not to generalize, but to understand a set of highly contextualized events. It can hence be considered motivated to use case studies as a tool of methodology in this paper.

The aim of this paper is, as said, to understand what factors are predominant in the context of separatism or partition among linguistic minority groups. According to Yin (2003), a case study is relevant if the understanding of a contemporary set of events is necessary since there is no clear explanation or understanding available in previous research. Yin lists some parameters that need to be relevant if the case study method should be fully applicable; the
research question, as previously mentioned, should consist of an explanatory or understanding form; how or why. The case study is processed through direct observations of the studied event, along with interviews of persons being involved (Yin, 2003).

When it comes to this project, all of Yin’s parameters are to be met. The research question is about understanding to separatism among some linguistic minorities; there is no behavioral events included; and I am dealing with events occurred during the later decades, contemporary events. To conduct the case studies I will map convergences and divergences concerning these three groups in the independent variables, identified earlier and expounded below.

*Spatial cohesion* refers to the geographical concentration of the minority group, how widely it is spread geographically. As pointed out by Eriksen (2002), and Kymlicka and Patten (2003) the spatial cohesion of the minority group impacts on its common sense of self, and identity. Furthermore, as pointed out by the pro-partition theorists Johnsson (1998), and Kaufmann (2008) ethnic and linguistic minorities should be held together geographically in order to maintain stability.

The variable of *political representation of minority groups* is likely, but not necessarily, linked to the dependent variable, feelings towards secession. As Whitaker (1998), along with Kymlicka and Patten (2003) highlights, the political implications on the issue of separatism get serious when separatist movements actually gain power politically. Yet, political involvement can vary and be anything from local interest groups to representation in a national parliament.

*Provision of linguistic service* in the minority language could be considered the core of linguistic policies and contextualizes political recognition of the group. Kymlicka and Patten (2003) refer to promotion and tolerance rights to highlight differences in the provision itself and the aim of the service. Is the provision of linguistic service actually formalized in the way intended, or is it a bureaucratic product not tied to reality?

*Level of bilingualism* will be analyzed as a variable based on the theoretical framework on bilingualism by Hamers and Blanc (2000) and how bilingualism can become a political tool (Fishman, 1986). Bilingualism in this case will be referring to knowledge in both the minority and the majority language among the minority group.

*Recent immigration* as a variable connects to theories on how recent- or non-recent immigrants enjoy different language rights. This comes especially interesting in the case of the Sámi, due to its aboriginal status.

The dependent variable, *feelings towards secession*, is identified in Norwegian Sápmi, Québec, and the Åland Islands, why additional focus is put on these, and not alone on the states
of Canada, Finland, and Norway. The variables will be graded with *high*, *medium*, or *low* depending on the level of occurrence in each case.

3.5. Source criticism

The methodology outlining interviews has been criticized for being idealistic or even individualized based on the fact that only a few persons are interviewed in depth, and that social factors affecting interviewees are not taken into consideration. Repstad (1999), however, highlights the importance of bearing this risk in mind when analysing the material.

However, primary sources as the interviewees do bring credibility to the research, based on the fact that persons who actually have experiences from these minorities and linguistic settings have higher trustworthiness than secondary sources who have only observed the settings from beside, so called centrality (Esiasson, Gilljam, Oscarsson, & Wägnerud, 2012).

Importantly, regardless of who are interviewed, the result of this study cannot, and should not, be counted as statistically representative for separatism among linguistic minorities in general, or representative for these particular minorities.
4. Analysis: linguistic minorities in Canada, Finland, and Norway

4.1. French in Canada

4.1.1. Bilingualism and language rights

“English and French are the official languages of Canada and have equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all institutions of the Parliament and government of Canada.” (Department of Justice, 2012, p. para. 16).

The Canadian Official Language Act ensures all entities within the government of Canada respecting the official bilingualism and provides French and English service, of equal quality, to all Canadians, in all of Canada. The government must also support the development of linguistic minority communities; English societies in Québec, and French areas elsewhere in the country. In addition, the language act also applies to crown corporations and formerly publicly owned companies like the railway VIA Rail and the airline Air Canada. Even though the latter two are now privately owned, both VIA Rail and Air Canada are constitutionally tied to provide equal bilingual service. Provinces like Ontario, Manitoba, and Prince Edward Island have voluntarily decided to offer some degree of provincial French language service to their French speaking population in traditional Francophone areas. However, bilingual service at municipal or provincial level is entirely voluntary and only the province of New Brunswick is constitutionally bilingual (Mahrs, 2012).

4.1.2. Historical aspects

Canada is a strong Anglophone country thanks to its past as a British Commonwealth country and its neighbour the United States. French and English settlers reached Canada around the same period, during the late 17th century. The French incorporated parts of today’s Québec, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia. The two colonizing groups brought historical rivalry from Europe to the American continent and conflicts between French and English settlers continued. During the 19th century after decades of war and conflict, English colonizers finally conquered the last part of New France at the Plains of Abraham outside Québec City and incorporated Québec it into the new state of Canada (Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute, 2013).

New Brunswick and the other tree Atlantic Provinces (Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador) have traditionally hosted the Acadians, the second largest French group in Canada. Acadians came from France centuries ago, were foresters and
fishermen and settled in Atlantic Canada and show no signs of pro-partition movements (Interviewee 1, 2013).

4.1.3. **Linguistic spatial cohesion**

However, parts of Canada are yet left outside the strong Anglo society and make instead strong French linguistic pockets. Québec, the only officially French speaking province, is a province where the Francophones actually are in majority. Almost all provinces, especially Ontario, Manitoba and Nova Scotia offer some French language service to its Francophone population (Mahrs, 2012). The Acadian identity is still strong in parts of the four Atlantic Provinces. The Acadian tricolour is seen on many flagpoles and people's houses, and small pockets of Francophone are present in all provinces (Interviewee 1, 2013). My own experience from travelling in Atlantic Canada confirms interviewee 1’s story. In Prince Edward Island, Région Évangéline on the islands west coast made a group of small Acadian villages. Despite English dominance in the rest of Prince Edward Island, the Acadians in Région Évangéline kept their traditional traditions with Francophone schools, French newspapers, French signage, and the Acadian tricolor flying at every house. All of a sudden the invisible language border was crossed, and all the French was gone, and English was once again dominant language. The pattern is similar in all provinces where Acadians are present. Linguistic pockets are well kept, but entirely integrated in the English governing system with the result of most Acadians being bilingual.

Québec is Canada’s only province where the French population is in a clear majority and French is the only official language of the province. When I visited the provincial capital of Québec City I was struck by the French atmosphere and the Québécois nationalism. Besides the fact that Québec City looks nothing like a North American city, it also calls itself the Nation’s Capital, referring to Québec as if it was a sovereign state. The Canadian Maple Leaf flag is generally replaced by Québec’s blue and white fleur-de-lis. Street signs were entirely in French, croissant bakeries and crêpes restaurants made the street view and every person greeted me with a Bonjour. My observation is similar to the one of a French professor at University of Prince Edward Island: “… There is a stronger insecurity in Québec about surviving linguistically and culturally, and there is perhaps a stronger sense of their "national separateness" than in the English Canada. They see themselves as a nation within a nation, even driving by Québec City, a sign on the highway welcomes you to the "national capital" (clearly this is not Ottawa!) Extreme expressions of this sense of nationhood look with suspicion on foreigners (English or other) and call for a political separation from Canada.” (Interviewee 2, 2013). Over 80 per cent of all Québécois state French as their first language. Additionally,
about 40 per cent of the Québécois speak English as a second language which leaves us with the fact that nearly 60 per cent cannot communicate with their English Canadian neighbors with ease (Statistics Canada, 2007).

According to an Acadian from New Brunswick, Québec has got it certainties: “French are a minority in Canada, but in Québec that is not the case. New Brunswick is a more interesting case with true bilingualism, what you mean when you say bilingualism. There, we have said we should live together. In Québec they have said no, we will not live with the English.” (Interviewee 1, 2013). Even though the French group in Canada is homogenous linguistically spoken, one could clearly not talk about culturally consistent group. The two major minorities can be accounted for, the Acadians in the Atlantic Provinces, and the Québécois in Québec. The Acadians live side by side with Anglophone Canadians in de facto English speaking provinces and are in fact entirely bilingual. There is a strong cultural identity among the Acadians, yet no nationalism or separatism movement worth mentioning are present, according to interviewee 1 (2013).

More than 75 per cent of all 33 million Canadians state English as their first official language. 25 per cent of the Canadian are French-speakers, and the majority of whom are living in Québec. Yet, almost a million Francophone Canadians live in other provinces and territories, mainly New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Manitoba, see figure 1 (Statistics Canada, 2007).

Figure 1. Linguistic cohesion in Canada. 1. English areas; 2. Bilingual areas; 3. French areas. (Institut des langues officielles et du bilinguisme, 2013)
The federal government in Canada has traditionally put effort in supporting bilingual societies, and promotes second language education. The reception of educational efforts is not always positive, according to the French professor at the University of Prince Edward Island: “It’s crucial that Canadians learn the second official language. The government needs to improve education and encourage students all over the country to learn French, or English. … I believe most of the students who don’t like to learn French have gotten their hostile attitude towards French from their parents. And it is probably not only in English speaking provinces the resistance to “the other language” is present. It might be the same in the francophone parts of Canada. It is simply not in our culture to study languages.” (Interviewee 2, 2011).

The majority of Canada’s 13 administrative subdivisions are in fact English-speaking. Francophone groups are unquestionably present in all provinces and territories. However, their impact on linguistic policy making is often minor, in comparison with Québec or New Brunswick (Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, 2008).

Personal bilingualism is less common in Canada; with the exception of the province of New Brunswick where every third person speaks both French and English with native-like control. The French professor continues: “There aren’t too many true bilingual societies in Canada. I would say it is only in Ottawa [in Ontario], parts of Montréal [in Québec], Moncton and other parts of New Brunswick where you hear people simultaneously move between French and English. It is fascinating; people really are bilingual in those places!” (Interviewee 2, 2011).

4.1.4. Language and power

The Québec based pro-sovereignty party Bloc Québécois has gained enough votes in the province of Québec, to get seats in the federal Parliament in Ottawa. A strong pro-secession voice on the national level indeed influences the entire political landscape in Canada, especially in media (Bloc Québécois, 2013). The Québécois in general believe that they are paying more than enough of their share of the federal government and that they hence would profit economically from partition (Whitaker, 1998). This is also an argument the ruling party in the province, Parti Québécois is using in their pro-independence policies (Parti Québécois, 2013).

The Acadian person continues: “People from Québec are a bit different than in the rest of Canada. They are more direct, more French. Québécois have a strong identity, and they got their ideas of what they wish to do” (Interviewee 1, 2013). Québec is an outspoken distinct nation within the Canadian state and governs itself as if it was sovereign in many ways. For instance, the provincial parliament of Québec works under the name Assemblée nationale
[National Assembly] and reminds in many ways of the true national parliament in Ottawa both in structure and architecture (Assemblée nationale, 2013).

The Québec provincial government has twice held referenda asking the Québécois whether or not to stay in the Canadian federalism. Both referenda, in 1980 and in 1995, have ended in a Non-vote to the question whereas the province of Québec should gain sovereignty and separate from the rest of Canada. However, the 1995 vote was historically even with 50.58 per cent for the Non option, and 49.42 per cent in favor of the Oui option (Le directeur général des élections du Québec, 2013).

To preserve French as a ‘national’ language of Québec the provincial government has adapted a strong linguistic policy through la Charte de la langue française [Charter of French language]. The charter states that the Québec government must use French only in all communication with its citizens, and that all documents and information are to be in French only. The only exceptions when translations or the use of English is acceptable are when public health or the province’s security is at risk (Gouvernement du Québec, 2013). According to some, the Québec provincial government is overly protective in terms of the French language: “I know that over the years Québec has been increasingly protective of its language and understandably so, surrounded by English. Their language laws reflect this and in order to protect French in Québec, the laws increasingly limit and control posting signs in a language other than French … Some ridiculous situations have come up recently with restaurants not being allowed to have English on their menu or signage, taking offence at the word "Pasta" as a no-no! The language police in Québec is going too far.” (Interviewee 2, 2013)

4.1.5. Summary

The French and the English arrived in Canada within the similar time frame during the 17th century. Canada was at that time inhabited by native groups. French groups settled in today’s Québec, and on the Atlantic coast of Canada. It is no recent immigration per say, and the independent variable is thus set to low in both Québec, and in Canada.

Politically, the French speaking group in Canada is well represented both at federal level, and at the provincial level in Québec where the entire political landscape is influenced by the fact that the province is monolingual French. The Francophone group can be identified to have high political representation in both Québec, and in Canada.

Canada’s stronghold of the French is unmistakeably the province of Québec, why I rank it high in terms of the variable spatial cohesion. The obvious presence of Acadian groups in Atlantic Canada and pockets of Francophones in most provinces of Canada results in the spatial cohesion rank medium for the rest of Canada.
Many Francophones in Canada speak English well enough to be considered bilingual, and monolingual French outside of the province of Québec are rare. In Québec, however, 60 per cent have only little or no knowledge in English. The *bilingualism* rate among French is thus set to *high* in Canada, and *low* in Québec.

The federal government along with some formerly state owned nationwide corporations provide service equally in English and French. At provincial level outside New Brunswick, and Québec, the French service limited. Unilingual French policy Québec and offer provincial service basically in French only. Based on that, the variable *provision of linguistic service* is set to *high* in Québec, and *medium* in Canada.

See table 1 for a schematic summary of the variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Francophones in Québec</th>
<th>Francophones in Canada</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feelings towards secession</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent immigration</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political representation</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatial cohesion</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingualism</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of linguistic services</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.2. Swedish in Finland

#### 4.2.1. Bilingualism and language rights

Finland is considered a unitary state consisting of Finns, ethnically, linguistically and culturally. The language affiliation and lingo cultural ties to Sweden are however strong in parts of the country (Andersson & Herbergs, 1996). Finland keeps detailed records when it comes to language preference of its citizens. All Finns have to report their preferred language to the government: Finnish or Swedish. Hence, it is technically impossible to report personal bilingualism in nationally bilingual Finland. Government communication is provided in a citizen’s preferred language. Especially for Finland-Swedes the issue of reporting a preferred language turns out to be an important statement (Mahrs, 2012). This comes from the fact that if a linguistic minority group comprises more than 3000 persons, or eight per cent of the total population in a municipality, the local government must provide public services in both languages (Finlex, 2003). At the national level, however, all agencies of the government must
provide basic service in both languages, yet in areas with no or low numbers of the second linguistic groups, it might in fact be hard to actually get equal service in both official languages, regardless of constitutional rights. My own experience from spending time in the Finnish capital Helsinki is that Swedish in Finland is more of an academic or elite language used by educated, middle class Swedish minority. I heard interchangeable use of Swedish and Finnish only in political or academic settings.

The Åland Island makes a significant officially supported exception of the Finnish linguistic dominance in Finland. The group of islands is a unilingual Swedish-speaking autonomous province and enjoys constitutional support for its unilingual policy and the conservation of the Swedish linguistic culture (Olausson, 2008). The Åland Islands has historically been Swedish speaking and was incorporated with Finland after a decision by the League of Nations in 1921. The Åland Islands were, however, given rights in order to preserve and develop the monolingual Swedish culture and society (Ålands lägting, 2004).

Linguistically, the Swedish speaking Finns in mainland Finland have a closer relation to the Finnish than the Ålanders. Due to the fact that Finnish is the majority language in Finland, Finland-Swedes on the mainland have better opportunities to catch up and learn Finnish. The level of bilingualism is nearly complete among Finland-Swedes on the mainland. In contrast, the Ålanders generally only have limited knowledge in Finnish. Interviewee 5, an Ålander, gives her explanation: “On the mainland they definitely have a closer relation to the Finnish and most people have better knowledge in Finnish than us, Ålanders, have. They have mandatory Finnish classes at school, and live in a Finnish linguistic environment, which we in the Åland Island do not. They are easier off to catch up the Finnish. To us, it is much harder since the society is entirely Swedish. You do not get the language naturally since you do not watch Finnish television, not listen to Finnish radio. Finnish becomes like German, a language you learn at school but never hear or use. To those [Finland-Swedes] in mainland Finland, Finnish is like English. You learn it at school and then actually hear and frequently use it.” (Interviewee 5, 2013)

4.2.2. Historical aspects and linguistic spatial cohesion

After centuries of Swedish dominance in politics, economy and culture Finland is home to a strong Swedish speaking minority. Especially the finance sector and parts of the Finnish culture is partly dominated by well-off Swedish speakers. However, Finland has traditionally been Finnish speaking, and the Swedish influx has left traces only in limited areas of Finland (Sjöholm, 2004).
Kaj Sjöholm, Finland-Swedish historian and political scientist at Åbo Akademi University concludes: “This history tells us about two ethno-linguistic groups, one of which had enjoyed a higher status but was later caught up by the group of formerly lower status. Swedish, the once high-status language, moved to a clear minority position” (Sjöholm, 2004, p. 639).

The Finland-Swedes make about five per cent of the entire Finnish population, and 40 percent of all Finns state enough knowledge in Swedish to have a conversation in the language (European Commission, 2006). Less linguistically integrated Swedish societies are rare but do exist as farming dominated municipalities in Finland’s mid-west around Vaasa. Traditional Swedish-speaking minority societies are present in parts of Helsinki, in and around cities like Turku, Vaasa, and Oulu, see figure 2. The absolute majority of the Finland-Swedes has native-like control in both Swedish and Finnish and uses both national languages interchangeably on a daily basis (Sjöholm, 2004).

In the Åland Islands, the unique settings on monolingualism and the regulation on land ownership connected to Ålandic heritage and knowledge in the Swedish [hembygdsrätt] is regulated in Åland Autonomy Act. The act states that the province is monolingual Swedish, and that Finnish citizens can use the Finnish only in court and with national government authorities. Moreover, all bodies of the national government are ought to use Swedish in communication with Ålandic provincial agencies. Additionally, the schooling system is outspoken unilingual Swedish, and the central government has to secure that necessary information on goods and services to Ålandic consumers is provided in Swedish (Finlex, 1991).

One could claim that Finland consists of two subgroups of the Swedish linguistic minority, the Finland-Swedes in proper Finland, and the Ålanders in the Åland Islands. Interviewee 3 (2013) grew up in the Åland Islands and describes the Swedish speaking population of Finland as two separate groups: “My own family has very little connection to
Finland-Swedes in Finland. … To a large extent one could say that there are two minority groups in Finland speaking Swedish. It is not one large homogenous group”. (Interviewee 3, 2013).

4.2.3. Language and power

Politically, Finland-Swedes are privileged compared to other minorities and have seats in the Finnish Eduskunta through Svenska folkpartiet. Traditionally, Svenska folkpartiet supports any government in favor of conservation of the Swedish and has thus often seats in the Cabinet. Svenska folkpartiet has no policy for Swedish independence, but has confidence in in a functional bilingualism (Svenska folkpartiet, 2013).

Besides the Åland Islands’ autonomous status, and well developed Swedish linguistic rights, the Åland Islands have an active separatism movement. The pro-partition party Ålands framtid has seats in the Lagting and works actively for a peaceful secession from Finland. The party’s program on sovereign policy states Åland could function hassle-free as a sovereign micro-state, and even gain from it economically (Ålands framtid, 2013).

Both respondents from the province refer to the Åland Island as a strong nation with distinct symbols traditionally used to demarcate sovereignty. “There is a very strong national identity among Ålanders. We are not Swedes, we are not Finns, we are Ålanders. We have our own flag, our own license plates, a separate postal service, the Lagtinget. There is a very strong nationalism.” (Interviewee 3, 2013). The other Ålander gives a similar picture: “We believe that we are very peculiar. And we have been very loud as to our self-determination historically. … We are very proud of our flag and that we are autonomous and I consider myself as Ålander, first of all, and then as a Finn. But many Ålanders do not feel any affirmation with Finland and have maybe not even been to the mainland.” (Interviewee 5, 2013)

Since Ålands framtid entered the Lagting about a decade ago, the discussion on partition has become a natural part of the society. According to one of the Ålanders, the party’s separatism position has some support among the Ålanders. However, the most important input is made through getting the issue of independence on the agenda. “It is positive that the issue is raised, and that we discuss if we could manage being sovereign. And I would say that the thought of being sovereign is a natural part of our everyday life now. I often discuss it with my parents, about the language, and about the Åland Islands’ relation to Finland and Europe. … You have an opinion, even though you are not an academic or a politician.” (Interviewee 5, 2013)

Some theorists have claimed economic crises to be an evoking factor when separatism movements increase in popularity. According to one of the Ålanders, this is not the case with
the Åland Islands: “I experience the discussion to be more or less constantly simmering since the party Ålands framtid got in to the Lagting … the latest financial crises have not affected Finland in the same way as other countries and I do not recognize that the discussion has bloomed more the latest years. However, the party uses economic arguments in favor of sovereignty, for instance that the Åland Islands give more tax revenues to proper Finland than what the islands get in return…” (Interviewee 3, 2013).

4.2.4. Summary

Swedish linguistic groups have been present in the coastal parts of Finland for centuries. During a long period, the Swedish speakers ruled Finland politically and culturally, which still influences the Finland-Swedish society. There is no recent immigration tied to the Swedish group and the variable is set to low for both Åland, and Finland.

Politically, the Finland-Swedes are represented in the Finnish Eduskunta through the Svenska folkpartiet. In Åland, the entire Lagtinget consist of Swedish speaking parties, included the pro-partition party Ålands framtid. Both mainland Finland and the Åland Islands can be considered to have high political representation for Swedish speakers.

The Swedish group in Finland is basically concentrated to the west and south coastal parts with strongholds in some suburbs of Turku and Helsinki, and in and around Vaasa. The Åland Islands are entirely Swedish speaking. The variable spatial cohesion is set to high in the Åland Islands, and medium in mainland Finland.

In the Åland Islands, only few can handle Finnish good enough to be considered bilingual. In mainland Finland, this figure is totally opposite. Most Finland-Swedes on the mainland are close to fluent in Finnish. The level of bilingualism is therefore set to low for the Åland Islands, and high for Finland.

Since Swedish is one of the two national languages of Finland, Swedish linguistic service is relatively well provided in mainland Finland. Some municipalities also offer public services in Swedish, depending on the number of Swedish speakers in the subdivision. The Åland Islands are entirely Swedish speaking and basically only offer public services in Swedish. This gives the Åland Islands high ranking on provision of language services, and Finland medium.

See table 2 for a schematic summary of the variables.
4.3. Sámi in Norway

4.3.1. Bilingualism and language rights

In Norway, Sámi is traditionally used within the minority, with family and among friends, and as a working language in traditional industries, like reindeer herding, fishery, and agriculture. The last decades, however, the use of Sámi has spread and is now more commonly used in media, within public administration, and in the education system. Linguistic rights the Sámi enjoy have shifted from tolerance rights, to promotion rights since the seventies. Moreover, Sámi is in fact only used in Sápmi (Svonni, 2004).

Since the mid-eighties, Sámi in Norway have been able to enjoy linguistic rights under the protection of the Sámi Act. Nine municipalities in the northernmost counties of Norway are apportioned in linguistic administrative areas. In these municipalities all citizens can use Sámi language in their contact with the government, and the public must provide equal service in Sámi and Norwegian (Heahttá, Samisk språklov, 2010). The Sámi Act equals Norwegian and Sámi and gives the Sámediggi responsibility to promote and develop Sámi linguistic policies. Furthermore, all legal document produced by the government that could be of interest for the Sámi population must be published in Sámi, as well as in forms of Norwegian (Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs, 1987).

A Sámi living in northern Norway tells me that the use of the language in contact with municipalities and authorities is very random on the question how well it works to use Sámi with the public authorities: “… I believe it is very random and dependent on the person, so where there are Sámi working it works fine. If they have no Sámi hired it gets trickier. … I believe it is a lack of interpreters, there are not too many to use – and people are not aware of that they should get in touch with an interpreter if there is none available at site” (Interviewee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2 Variables</th>
<th>Swedish in the Aland Islands</th>
<th>Swedish in mainland Finland</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feelings towards secession</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent immigration</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political representation</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatial cohesion</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of bilingualism</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of linguistic services</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6, 2013). The second Sámi respondent gives a similar perspective: “... to use your mother tongue [Sámi] in contact with the municipality works so-so, as far as I know. There are some municipalities within the linguistic administrative area that don't even have any Sámi speaking among its workers.” (Interviewee 4, 2013). Even though basically every Sámi in Norway can communicative native-like in Norwegian, it does not say everything can be expressed. Some, especially older Sámi, have difficulties to explain or conduct conversations over serious issues in Norwegian, and would use Sámi more frequently if the service was provided by the government (Interviewee 6, 2013).

Growing up in the Swedish part of Sápmi, in the County of Norrbotten, I have also spent time in Norwegian Sápmi. Interestingly, I have never noticed any attempts of support of the Sámi language in Norway, besides bilingual geographical names on some road signs. There are to my understanding and experience few governmental strategies in place to promote or highlight the fact that Sámi is the aboriginal language of northern Norway.

Even though they are rare, it actually exist some societies in Norway where Sámi is the majority language. Especially in the county of Finnmark, in societies like Kautokeino, and Karasjok, the Sámi language is central and the Sámi speakers are in majority. In most other parts of Norway, however, where Sámi is spoken the Sámi speakers are always in a minority position (Vikør, 2000). Norway actually provides bilingual services in more than one way. At a national level, Norway is bilingual when it comes to written Norwegian, and recognizes the two language forms Bokmål and Nynorsk (Torp, 2004).

4.3.2. Historical aspects and spatial cohesion

In parts of northern Norway the Sámi have been present as nomadic reindeer herders for at least 6000 years and is considered the native people of Norway. The Sámi minority is wide spread, from parts of the Kola Peninsula in Russia, west through northern Finland, northern Sweden, to Norway; an area sometimes referred to as Sápmi (see figure 3). Linguistically, the Sámi speak up to ten varieties of what politically and in daily speak is called Sámi. East Sámi, Central Sámi, and South Sámi are the three most significant linguistic groups within the language family. Interestingly, no Sámi linguistic boundary reflects the international boundaries in the area. There is hence no connection between today’s countries, and the spread of Sámi varieties. There are approximately 60,000 Sámi living in Sápmi. 20,000 of whom have knowledge in the language, and the majority lives in Norway (Heahttá, Samisk språk, 2008).
4.3.3. Language and power

The Sámediggi in Norway consist of political parties representing different interest groups. There is no clear traditional left-right spectrum among the parties. Instead, diverse subgroups are represented through the parties. Sámi politics is basically limited to the Sámediggi, and there is no clear specific Sámi representation in the national Stortinget or in the county parliaments (Sámediggi, 2013). One of the Sámi confirms the fact that there is little political attention put on the linguistic issue of the Sámi. “Some people do work with these issues intensively with hundred persons, and they achieve a lot. But I don’t know of any broad coalition around it. It feels like many do say the right things about language, but it always becomes an issue on funding, or practical reasons like time. It gets too difficult.” (Interviewee 6, 2013).

There are a few different Sámi interest groups working politically, but no outspoken separatist movement. Yet, during the 1970s, the ČSV-movement gained attention for its revolutionary way of acting for Sámi recognition and sovereignty [ČSV translates freely to wise Sámi spirit] (Interviewee 6, 2013). Especially during the construction of hydro stations in the Alta River in Sápmi, Sámi protests led to a rise of the formerly oppressed pride and culture. It all of a sudden got accepted to use the Sámi language, and the government started to promote linguistic rights of the Sámi (Sveriges television, 2013). Recently, some Sámi interest groups, especially among youth, have made attempts to revitalize the ČSV movement and the way of thinking towards Sámi independence. Yet, there are few signs of political action on such a statement (Utsi, 2012). One of the interviewed Sámi confirms the increased activity within
some Sámi groups: “There are some things going on with ČSV … lots of small things, people who pop up, fractions, underground activities … but no united movement. … ČSV is the radical, the proud, the one at the barricades.” (Interviewee 6, 2013).

4.3.4. Summary

The Sámi people are the aboriginal group of Norway and have been present for thousands of years in the northern part of the country. There is no recent immigration to mention, the variable of recent immigration is set to low in both Sápmi, as in Norway as whole.

Politically, the Sámi group is to the most part represented through the indigenous Sámediggi where matters concerning traditional Sámi issues are brought up. However, at national and regional level the Sámi has no particular political representation. The variables are hence set at medium for Sápmi, and low for Norway in general.

Sámpi is the cultural and linguistic cradle of the Sámi and the Sámi group can be considered to be spatially concentrated to Sápmi, yet members of the minority live in all parts of Norway. Based on that, the variable for spatial cohesion of the minority is set to medium for Sápmi, and low for Norway.

The Sámi language bears strong cultural identifiers and is vital in the Sámi culture. At the same time, basically the entire minority group is fluent enough in Norwegian to be considered bilingual. The variable is set high in Sápmi as well as in the entire Norway.

Some municipalities in northern Norway have been designated linguistic administrative and must provide public services in Sámi. Contact with members of the minority group, however, gives the picture that the provision works unsatisfactory. In the rest of Norway, no service at all is provided in Sámi except some government document in interest of the Sámi group. The variable provision of linguistic services is thus set to medium in Sápmi, and low in Norway.

See table 3 for a schematic summary of the variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Sámi in Sápmi</th>
<th>Sámi in Norway</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feelings towards secession</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recent immigration</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Political representation</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spatial cohesion of minority</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level of bilingualism</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provision of linguistic services</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Results, discussion and conclusions

5.1. Results

In the previous chapter of this research project the independent variables recent immigration, political representation, spatial cohesion of the minority, level of bilingualism, and provision of linguistic services were covered and analyzed. At this stage, focus will be put on presenting patterns when it comes to convergences and divergences among the analyzed variables, presented in table 4. All in order to understand which factors inform linguistic minorities’ feelings towards secession.

A significant pattern becomes clear after the analytic and discussion parts of this thesis. Some of the variables can be linked to the dependent variable and the aim to understand why some linguistic minorities have stronger feelings towards secession than other.

First of all, the variable recent immigration has no significant impact on the groups’ feelings towards secession. Yet, the Canadian case is interesting since the two major linguistic groups, English and French arrived in Canada during the same period of time. The power relation between the two groups, and the implications that has on Québec’s separatism movement could be an interesting aspect for further research on the subject. Moreover, all other variables do bring some explanatory relevance to the understanding of what factors inform feelings towards separatism.

It has been shown that the spatial cohesion of the minority group inform feelings towards secession. The more cohesive the group is the more likely is it that the group hosts such feelings. The fact that the group has strong political representation at both national and provincial level could also be used to understand why they wish to secede, since they have the political tools to turn public opinion towards that direction, and a political platform to reach sovereignty. Well-functioning provision of linguistic services, both nationally and provincially, probably makes the linguistic groups feeling stronger of the fact that the next step on the public service ladder could be complete sovereignty. The feelings towards secession also seem to be linked to the fact that the group is monolingual in the minority language. Yet, within the immediate spatial settings of the group, the language is in majority.

Québec and the Åland Islands show convergences on all independent factors in this study. The minorities are both cohesive spatially in these areas; they show little knowledge in English, respectively in Swedish, meaning low levels of bilingualism; finally, public services by the provinces are entirely provided in French, and Swedish in these areas. These three variables can viewed as having a clear connection with the dependent variable feelings towards secession and used to understand the events.
Feelings towards secession are linked to the groups’ spatial cohesion, their levels of bilingualism, and the governments’ provision of linguistic services in the minority language.

5.2. Discussion

5.2.1. Feelings towards secession

Early in the project, the dependent variable ‘feelings towards secession’ was presented. It has been identified that the Canadian province of Québec hosts a strong separatist movement, which has yields political power in the area. Québec sends out signals that it is a culturally and politically separate entity and has twice held referenda on partition from Canada. The Francophones in the rest of Canada, for instance the Acadians, have no such aspirations and put their effort in a functioning bilingualism. The situation is similar in Finland, where the Åland Islands make a significant exception compared with the rest of Swedish speaking Finns. The pro-partition party Ålands Frantid has seats in the Lagting, and the province does host a strong Ålandic nationalism, according to the respondents. Finland-Swedes in mainland Finland show no signs of pro-partition feelings. Sámi also have groups in favour of some kind of sovereignty, yet it is basically in terms of less organized subgroups with no or little political impact.
5.2.2. Recent immigration

All entities have been graded low when it comes to the factor of ‘recent immigration’. None of the minorities examined in this study can be considered to be recent given the fact they have been present for at least a few centuries. The Sámi are native in Norway and have inhabited the area for millennia. The Finland-Swedes and Ålanders have, similarly to the French Canadians been a part of the cultural and political landscape long enough not to be considered recent immigrants. The Québécois, however, make an interesting case of having immigrating to Canada around the same time as the English, as stated previously. This probably adds fuel to the power inequality and the fact they have been in conflict for various reasons ever since they arrived in Canada hundreds of years ago. This does not, however, affect the independent variable. Recent immigration, or the lack thereof, does not seem to have clear implications to the understanding of the dependent variable, feelings towards secession.

5.2.3. Political representation

Politically speaking, all minority groups included in this study enjoy some form of representation in their countries. As indicated in the methodology section of the thesis, political representation can vary from anything from seats in a national parliament, to a less organized local interest group with no implications on the political landscape. Here, I focus on what possibilities the groups have to promote their political message.

Canada, bilingual at federal level, has hosted the pro-secession party Bloc Québécois in the federal parliament which obviously has been a result of the strong partition-movement in the province of Québec. A separatist party in the national parliament must, to my understanding, make impact on the political debate at all levels and to some extend fuel the partition movement in Québec. At the same time, most national parties have clearly identified the province of Québec as a distinct nation within the Canadian state, and no party is really questioning the bilingualism or strong support of the Francophones. At provincial level in Québec the French is in clear majority both in terms of population and political power, which implies on the Québécois’ strong feelings towards secession from Canada.

Finland, moreover, has relatively strong representation of the Finland-Swedes at national level. The liberal party Svenska folkpartiet runs the platform of benefits of bilingualism, and could be considered the Finland-Swedes watchdog in the Eduskunta. Similarly to Canada at a federal level, most traditional national parties in Finland do not actively work against the minority’s language and culture at a national level. Yet, the promotion of the group is not as clear as in the Canadian case. According to Laponce (1984), as covered in the theoretical
The political and social satisfaction of a minority group can be a trigger to fight for further benefits and, eventually, sovereignty. The Åland Islands show great similarities with Québec when it comes to political representation. All parties in the Lagtinget are supporting the Swedish monolingualism policy. However, only the party Ålands Framtid works actively to achieve sovereignty for the islands.

The Sámi in Norway enjoy political representation in some matters through the indigenous parliament Sámediggi. The Sámediggi, however, only deals with issues closely related to the Sámi culture, and traditional Sámi enterprise. There is no obvious Sámi political representation in the Stortinget or in regional parliaments.

5.2.4. Spatial cohesion

All three groups included in this study, Francophones in Canada, Swedish speakers in Finland, and Sámi speakers in Norway are in minority at national levels. In Canada and Finland, where this variable is ranked as medium, one could talk about belts where the minority languages are more frequently used. French in Canada is spread in all provinces, but by studying the map of linguistic cohesion (figure 1), a somewhat consistent belt of Francophones stretches from Ontario in central Canada, through Québec, and down through the Maritime provinces of New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia. In Finland, the Swedish linguistic belt stretches from Vaasa, along the coastal communities south to Helsinki (figure 2), including the Åland Islands. There is hence reason to talk about some kind of cohesion of the two groups geographically. The Swedish speaking Ålanders, and the Francophone Québécois are both in clear majority in their corresponding provinces, why the two are ranked high in terms of spatial cohesion. Sámi is, similarly, culturally present in northern Norway (figure 3) and especially in some communities in the county of Finnmark, but is in minority in basically all societal settings.

This variable does stick out compared to the others, especially in the cases Québec, and the Åland Islands where the minorities are highly spatially cohesive. It can be tied to the dependent variable and partly used to answer the research question.

5.2.5. Level of bilingualism

The pattern is similar when it comes to the variable level of bilingualism as to the previous variable on spatial cohesion. In areas where feelings towards secession are higher, the level of bilingualism is lower. Both in Québec and in the Åland Islands, the bilingualism rate is low. Both provinces have strict regulation on monolingualism, supported by the national governments. This naturally implies on the populations low knowledge in the states’ majority
languages. In other parts of the two countries, however, the level of bilingualism among the minority group is much higher. Francophone Canadians outside the province of Québec can in general communicate well in English, and Finland-Swedes in the mainland of Finland are generally speaking bilingual, as table 4 reflects. In Norway, only a very few Sámi are not able to conduct communication in Norwegian. Yet, many have a much stronger connection to the Sámi and would likely prefer to use the language more often in official settings.

Similarly as spatial cohesion, this variable sticks out in Québec, and the Åland Islands, and can be connected to the presence of feelings towards secession.

5.2.6. Provision of linguistic services

Linked to the previous variable, the official provision of language service is naturally related to the fact that some of the included cases are officially monolingual (Québec and the Åland Islands). At a national level the results vary widely. Canada and Finland are to a large extent similar thanks to official bilingualism at national levels. Finland keeps detailed records on how many of each linguistic group living in each municipality and province, and provides linguistic services subsequently. In the provinces of Québec and the Åland Islands, all public service at provincial level is basically only commenced in French, respectively in Swedish. This adds to the fact that especially Québec in many ways identify and communicate in ways as if it being a separate state.

In Norway, the government must provide some services and documents in Sámi, if the information is of certain interest to the Sámi group. Additionally, a few appointed municipalities in northern Norway must provide communal services in Sámi. The quality of this service is, however, questioned due to lacking quality by the interviewees from the Sámi group.

5.3. Conclusions

The aim of this thesis was to understand which factors inform linguistic minorities’ feelings towards secession.

The importance of linguistic rights in relation to language policies is considered a key part of political studies of linguistic minorities. Separatism movements and pro-partition parties have gained space in the political discourse in bilingual states, and enhanced linguistic rights are more often used to improve autonomy, or to gain sovereignty. The fact that language policies and linguistic rights are related to recent contexts of separatism in democratic states, especially Canada, raises the needs for understanding to what factors demarcate separatism movements in states with linguistic minorities.
This study has investigated three linguistic minorities comparatively using qualitative analysis through case studies; French in Canada; Swedish in Finland, and Sámi in Norway. The event identified as the dependent variable was feelings towards secession, portrayed by pro-partition movements among the linguistic minorities. The province of Québec in Canada shows high presence of such movements; The Åland Islands in Finland medium presence; and the Norwegian parts of Sápmi low presence.

Through a literature review, five variables were identified as important factors on linguistic minorities and separatism; spatial cohesion, political representation, provision of linguistic services, level of bilingualism, and recent immigration. The variables were later used in the case studies to map convergences and divergences corresponding to the three groups. The case studies were conducted through analysis of government documents, linguistic policies, articles in media, party platforms, and complemented with interviews of members of these linguistic minorities. The interviewees gave their view on settings related to the dependent variable, and the five independent variables. The case studies show that Québec’s and the Åland Islands’ presence of feelings towards secession can be linked to low levels of bilingualism, well-functioning provision public services in the minority languages, and to the minorities' spatial cohesion in these provinces. The low level of feelings towards separatism in Sápmi is explained with high levels of bilingualism, together with non-functioning provision of linguistic public services.

Findings of this study seem to suggest that the main factors informing minority groups’ feelings towards secession are low levels of bilingualism, high spatial cohesion, and high levels of provision of linguistic services. That is, the lower the level of bilingualism, the higher the spatial cohesion and the higher the levels of provision of linguistic services, the stronger the feelings toward secession.

5.4. Further research

This bachelor thesis in political science has preliminary covered issues involving factors affecting separatism among linguistic minorities. As indicated in the introductory parts of this project, the politics of linguistic rights and language policies is on the rise. However, according to some theorists covered in this thesis there are still research gaps within the field study of language rights and linguistic minorities that need to be filled. For further research, a quantitative approach could be implemented to get more reliable and general results. Also, the issue of nationalism, which has not been thoroughly covered this time, could be relevant to cover when it comes to pro-partition movements and linguistic minorities.
References


Interviewee 2. (2011, October 20). (P. Mahrs, Interviewer)


