ENCOUNTERING INVISIBLE BOUNDARIES
- Swedish-speaking Finns in Joensuu

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This work examines the language environment in Joensuu. The geographical position of Joensuu in East Finland makes it a unilingual Finnish speaking municipality, far from the traditional Swedish speaking areas of Finland. Still, Joensuu has a small number of Swedish-speaking Finns and they have established rights to assistance and service in Swedish. The responsibility, for the assistance and service, lies with the local authorities. They ensure the public sector is able to provide the assistance that the Swedish-speaking Finns are entitled accordingly to the law. If the local authorities, for one reason or another cannot provide the service it can result in cultural and linguistic boundaries for Swedish-speakers.

The focus of this work is on the interpretation of the Swedish-speaking Finns linguistic rights and cultural needs. How they are carried out in the public sector? Are the local authorities helping to minimize boundaries or contribute to them? Via interviews with Swedish-speaking Finns in Joensuu and local authorities this research tries to undercover, to the extent possible, how Swedish-speaking Finns and local authorities view one another’s attempts to bridge cultural and language divides.

In conclusion, it is seen that Swedish is absent from public offices in Joensuu. Furthermore, both the authorities and the Swedish speakers are contributing to the absence of Swedish but ultimately it is the responsibility of the local authorities to provide Swedish-language assistance. As a result, boundaries have been created and the situation only seems to deteriorate.

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PREFACE

Throughout history, the Finnish territory has been occupied by many different language groups and ethnic groups. Today Finland is officially a bilingual country although many of its citizens are not. Paradoxically, Finland is also one of the most homogeneous countries in the world. Finnish is often the lingua franca and knowledge of Swedish is diminishing as are the percentage of native Swedish-speakers. At the same time, the Swedish language is very well protected by law thus adding to the confusion.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my supervisor, Dr. Ari Lehtinen, for his comments and inputs along the way. His advice has kept me the right path. I also would like to thank the professors participating in the Human Geography research seminar, especially Dr. Jarmo Kortilainen and Dr. Paul Fryer as well as my fellow students for their comments and suggestions. Last but not least, I would like to thank my respondents for their time and effort, without them this research would not be possible.
1. INTRODUCTION

We are constantly being told that the world is getting smaller as a result of our advancing technology and globalisation. We are travelling further, mixing more often and keeping in touch daily with people, events and news from around the world. At the same time many people have started to fear the cohesion and assimilation that for many is synonym with globalisation.

In Europe, scholars increasingly have been addressing the issue of ‘borders’ and how they have been changing. Many countries in the world do not have explicit natural borders like mountains, river, and oceans; thus when constructed borders start to fade it brings forward the concept of a ‘borderless world’. On the other hand, some scholars have argued that although we are witnessing a declining in physical borders, like control posts\(^1\), we are experiencing a reinforcement of cultural borders through regional identity, and in smaller countries also national identity.

In Europe, there have been empires like the Roman, Austro-Hungarian, Third Reich and the Soviet Union all of which have split into several countries creating new borders and boundaries. Countries like Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia has also ceased to exist, and latest Serbian-Montenegro has parted on issues including religion, culture, and language differences. Some of these separations have happened in peaceful agreements others after bloody wars, underlining how far people are willing to go to defend their identity.

On the ninth of November 1989, one of the most famous borders in modern history, the Berlin Wall, fell and Germany reunified. The wall did not only split Germany and Berlin in two, but it had through decades manifested itself in the consciousness’ of millions around

\(^1\) The Nordic countries have not had border controls for many years and the land border between Sweden, Norway and Finland in some places is not marked thus the border can be crossed unknowingly. The situation with Denmark and Iceland in particular is a bit different since they are not connected to the other countries by land but only by sea.
the world, as both a physical, mental and ideological boundary. Furthermore, it had been dividing the world into two blocks, one with pro-communists and one with pro-capitalist. When the Soviet Union collapsed, a number of new states and borders emerged as the ‘Iron Curtain’ labelled by Winston Churchill in 1946 cease to exist (Paasi 1996: 121).

Today, some of these borders seem to have disappeared with the expansion of the European Union and the Schengen Agreement. The EU identification card and the common European currency have made national passports and state currency’s obsolete while opening Europe for many Europeans. These events are all signs that we are entering a borderless world where, economists claim that nation-states have already lost their leading role on the economic scene (Newman & Paasi 1998: 192). This is backed by the much discussed concept of ‘Globalisation.’ Brought forward by globalisation theorists and combined with the technological development; globalisation has made trade, communication and travel both faster and easier, not only within Europe, but in most corners of the world and thus a debate of a ‘shrinking’ world (ibid.).

However, it is far from all who agree with the concept of a borderless world or globalisation. Oommen (1995: 251) argues the emerging and disappearances of various types of boundaries are nothing new but merely a part of human civilisation and contemporary social transformation. Dating to the Second World War there were fewer than 70 states in the world; with the fall of Iron curtain, there were 160 states (Newman & Paasi 1998: 197-198). Today, the number of states is higher even with some weakened borders during the late decade. Furthermore, borders may not be what they used to be, but they have been reinterpreted many times with different conceptualisations of borders. Instead of having strong physical state borders, in forms of control posts we have social and cultural boundaries (Newman & Paasi 1998: 190). These new boundaries are different as they do not follow the traditional state borders but instead they follow cultural lines and thereby help to shape and form new political and physical landscapes (Huntington 1996: )

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2 The Schengen Agreement allows countries to remove their internal borders and allow people to travel without checks from country to country.
The new conceptualisation of boundaries means that they can be formed across national state borders, but also occur within a state.

1.1 Finland’s Swedish Speaking Population

Finland has experienced a fluctuating border for several centuries as Sweden and Russia fought to control the territory. The changing border has made Finland a melting pot with several different ethnic groups occupying the territory; Finns, Swedes, Russian, Sámi\(^3\), Balts etc. The Swedes, specifically, have left a trace of their presence in Finland best illustrated by the Swedish language. The language has been preserved and thus developed Finland into a bilingual country with Swedish and Finnish as national languages. Ironically, Finland is at the same time one of the most language homogeneous countries in the world (Beijar et al. 1997: 65). This paradox can partly be explained by the fact that Swedish, despite its role as a national language and language of the largest minority in any of the Nordic countries, is only spoken by approximately six percent of the total population. Furthermore, the Swedish speakers are found mainly on the South and West coasts as well as the Åland Islands. The Åland Islands are a special case as they enjoy some level of autonomy. All of these areas are known as the ‘Swedish-speaking areas’. Thus the discussion talks about internal language boundaries, but where do these boundaries come from?

The territorial principle in the Finnish legislation is of course contributing to this division however; the individual principle should in theory reassure equal rights for everyone regardless of national language. However, theory is one thing and practice is another. According to Liebkind, the monolingual rural Swedish speakers see the Swedishness of the big cities as doomed to vanish, and the bilinguals are fighting a battle which is already lost (Liebkind 1984: 111). On the other hand, urban Swedish speakers argue that it is quite possible to maintain bilingualism in generations to come if only there is enough motivation.

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\(^3\) Although the Sámi is a part of Finland and Finnish culture I have chosen not to include them or the language in this study for two reasons. First, Sámi is not an official national language like Swedish and Finnish. Second, there are not registered any Sámi living in Joensuu.
to do so. In this perspective, the survival of the Swedish-speaking minority is totally dependent on the retention of Swedish as a living language in Finland (Ibid.). However, Swedish is declining in both the urban areas and in general. Difficult tasks are ahead if Swedish is to survive in Finland as either a national or living language. In particular, this task is concerned with raising consciousness of the domination of space in its critique of the hegemonic culture (Sibley 1995: X). The simple questions we should be asking are: who are places for, whom do they exclude, and how are these propitiations maintained in practice? Although, we cannot completely avoid exclusions, we still need to face them and to challenge them (Massey 2009). The written and/or spoken language for public purposes is usually the important/controversial part of language. The language or languages spoken between and amongst friends and family usually raise no major problems even when co-existing with public languages, for each occupies their own space (Paasi 1996: 91-92).

When it comes to Swedish-speaking Finns, many studies have been conducted by scholars such as Karmele Liebkind (1984; 2007), Erik Allardt (1977; 1981), Tom Sandlund (1950; 1991) etc. However, what they all have in common is that they are all focused on the metropolitan area of Helsinki, and other so called Swedish-speaking areas. Although such research covers the majority of the Swedish-speaking Finns, they hardly express a grander picture about the Swedish-speaking Finns and the language climate in Finland. There are only around 11,500 (1980 number) Swedish-speaking Finns living in monolingual Finnish speaking municipalities (Liebkind 1984: 100). However, it is about much more than 11,000 people, it is about an entire ethnic minority and their rights to speak their native tongue in their native country.

1.2 LINGUISTIC RIGHTS AND CULTURAL NEEDS

The Swedish-speaking Finns are, to a certain degree, confined to the few unilingual Swedish-speaking municipalities or bilingual municipalities, if they want to uphold and pass on, a Swedish-speaking lifestyle both in terms of language and in terms of culture. This is highly harmful to the mobility of the Swedish-speaking Finns but also on a broader scale regarding workforce, education etc. The municipalities hold a key position when it comes to breaking down the linguistic and cultural boundaries (Oikeusministeriö 2009: 8)
and I therefore ask: *How are the linguistic rights and cultural needs of the Swedish-speaking Finns being interpreted and carried out in Joensuu?*

I aim to uncover whether the understanding and implementation of the Swedish-speaking Finns rights in the local public sector, contributes in creating cultural boundaries and/or cultural racism towards Swedish-speaking Finns in Joensuu.

1.2.1 *Hypothesis*

In order to answer my research question I draw upon hypotheses that will help me to structure, not only the analysis, but the theoretical and empirical work as well.

1. The public sector in Joensuu offers no service in Swedish.

2. In order to function on an equal level, Swedish-speaking Finns in Joensuu needs to learn/speak Finnish.

3. Because there are so few Swedish-speaking Finns in Joensuu, attitudes towards Swedish-speaking Finns is more negative compared to bilingual places such as Helsinki.

4. Swedish language as well as culture in Swedish is absent from the public sphere in Joensuu.

5. The lack of service in Swedish and lack of Swedish-speaking culture/cultural events in Swedish is a major boundary for Swedish-speaking Finns in Joensuu.

6. The lack of service in Swedish and lack of Swedish-speaking culture/cultural events in Swedish creates an identity crises for the Swedish-speaking Finns in Joensuu.

7. Local authorities are marginalizing the Swedish-speaking Finns.
1.3 TERMINOLOGY

Swedish-speaking Finn:

There are different interpretations to what a Swedish-speaking Finn really is. My perception of a Swedish-speaking Finn is relevant in this regard as it has influenced the research in for example, choice of respondents. The Swedish-speaking Finns are Finns that have Swedish as their native language instead of Finnish. There are many different ways of referring to the Swedish-speaking Finns. In their language, Finlandssvensk is used whereas different scholars use different terms to refer to Finlandssvensk in English. Although Finlandssvensk is also used in English text it is not the dominate term in English. Lars Vikør claims that, “the Swedish speakers of Finland are usually called Finland-Swedes…” (Vikør 2000: 118). I prefer to use the term which is also used by Karmela Liebkind et al. (2007) and others as I feel it is the most relevant; Finns who speak Swedish, thus Swedish-speaking Finns.
1.4 Research Design
This research consists of six chapters. Each chapter serves a function and contains different element of the research. Figure 1 is read from top to bottom and illustrates how the research is structured, what elements have been used, and gives an overview of the flow of the research.

Figure 1: Research design.
2. METHOD AND DATA COLLECTION

In this chapter there are accounts for the metrological approaches used throughout this research. In addition, some light is on the incentives that lie behind the theory choice, empirical data as well as how they are related.

2.1 PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

From a philosophy of science point of view this research lies within the critical-rationalistic approach. The research aims at uncovering whether the city authorities, through their actions are showing cultural racism against the Swedish-speaking minority in the Joensuu municipality, as well as address the hypotheses. When using hypotheses, the research leans towards an empirical use of the hypothesis-deductive method. Furthermore, the hypothesis-deductive method attempts to falsify the hypothesis by adjusting or completely eliminate false conceptions to reach a scientific conclusion. A verification of the hypothesis is in principle unreachable, within critical rationalism, as there is no final truth (Fuglsang & Olsen 2004: 33-34; Koch 2004: 88-90). At the same time, I as a researcher, acknowledge that there are details that I am unaware of and that I therefore can make mistakes in my assumptions.

The hypothesis deductive approach has its starting point in one or several theories, and from there it tries to reach logical explanations (Olsen & Pedersen 1997: 221). In addition it uses hypothesis. From the hypothesis one or several connections are predicted which then will be tested against the collected observation/empirical data. By doing so, it is testing the less secure, which is the hypothesis, against the more secure, which is the collected data (Gilje & Grimen 1993: 25).

Accordingly to critical rationalism, the observation/data being used to test the hypothesis cannot be neutral, which means that it is affected by theory or by the researcher. In this research I have also used secondary sources including: scholarly books, articles and relevant Internet sources. Primary data comes from interviews. In these interviews,
respondents answer questions from different categories. The categories are based on the hypothesis and therefore not from a neutral point of view but from a theoretical standpoint.

2.2 THEORY CHOICE

The theory choice is important as it is the tool that provides the information through senses, instruments or other kinds of collected data; meaning (Koch 2004: 96). Cultural Racism is a core theory in this research. Not only do I believe that cultural racism fits and exists in the context in which I am conducting this research; I also find it very interesting and to some extent overlooked in research where the term racism still leads one to think in biological terms. Although it has been a challenge to find sufficient work that deals with cultural racism in more details, James Blaut (1992) in particular has provided a solid base to build upon.

Other theoretical ideas like bilingualism and multiculturalism have been considered as well. Regarding bilingualism, it is a more technical approach that works best in comparative settings with other areas of Finland or other bilingual countries. I wish to approach this topic from a more practical angle drawing on local field research instead of a national comparative analysis of bilingual as a term and its use.

Multiculturalism provides an interesting option, and multicultural scholars like Tariq Modood (2009) are included in this work. However, it also leads towards a more technical discussion on what multiculturalism really is. Including multiculturalism will ultimately add unnecessary length to the research and shift focus from the topic at hand. Since this work focuses on two so similar groups, in could be also be questioned if even falls within multiculturalism.

A concept like cultural racism is hard to isolate and define without it spills over affect into other concepts. This is acknowledged; therefore other concepts that are strongly related or ever intertwined with cultural racism are incorporated. It helps develop a stronger and
better grounded theoretical base for the analysis. Some of the other concepts I have used are boundaries, language, identity and fear. Although it might seem as if there is a broad theoretical playground, these mentioned concepts are necessary for this research. The different theories are well linked with one another so that cultural racism leads to boundaries, which are based on language and so forth as shown in Figure 2. The figure is not meant to represent how all concepts are connected, for that it is over simplified. Instead it is merely meant to show how they are connected in the context which they are presented and understood in this research.

A part of the theory has been to establish the Swedish-speaking Finns as an ethnic group separate from the Finnish-speaking Finns. This is important in terms of upholding the Swedish language in Finland. If Swedish-speaking Finns are considered no different than Finnish-speaking Finns, then the entire foundation for having two national languages, one only spoken by a small minority disappears. This part could also have been a part of the “theoretical wheel” because ethnicity is connected to several of the other concepts (Jenkins 2004: 95). I have, nonetheless chosen to restrict the use of ethnicity to establishing the Swedish-speaking Finns as separate from the Finnish-speaking Finns.

Figure 2: Wheel of theory.
In addition to the theoretical chapter, I have include a chapter (chapter three) which I use to focus on the background of the Swedish-speaking Finns in Finland to highlight the situation as a whole and to help in the analysis.

2.3 CHOICE OF EMPIRICAL DATA

The primary data consists of six interviews conducted in Joensuu in the spring and autumn of 2009. All interviews were conducted face-to-face. The respondents are divided into two groups, Swedish-speaking Finns and local authorities (to be further explained). Initially, quantitative data was to be included in the form of questionnaires; however in this case the output would not match the input. A qualitative method, on the other hand, benefits this research with deeper and concrete examples whereas a quantitative approach is better at gather data used for statistics, which is not my aim.

My secondary data is made up of books, Internet sources, articles form journals, newspapers and a few statistics which are included in chapter three, the background chapter. Chapter three is part of the analysis, if nothing else then as my own understanding and thereby also my angle and highlights a personal approach to doing this research.

2.4 CHOICE OF DATA COLLECTING METHOD

As briefly started in the previous section, there are several ways of collecting data, both quantitative and qualitative. In this case an open observation, witnessing Swedish-speaking Finns as they approach the public servants in Swedish would be both useful and interesting. To a certain point I have used this technique, by being observant in local space to what information and events are available in Swedish. However, it can be too staged if I would accompany a Swedish-speaking Finn around the city. Besides, there is only so much I can observe without running into a language barrier of my own. Finally and most importantly, this method does not allow me to participate and thereby go into details which makes is uninteresting in this case. I therefore turned towards interviews, but also here there are different variations.
Uwe Flick has been working with a variation of focus group interviews. Focus groups provide a more conversational way of doing interviews but at the same time allowing the interviewer to keep a low profile and observe. This method is especially good if the research is somehow sensitive; because the group creates a dynamic that helps to build a safe environment in which the respondents might tell more than they would otherwise in a one-on-one interview (Flick 2006: 189-90). This research touches upon some elements that for some are sensitive. However, taking the number of Swedish-speaking Finns into consideration, it is difficult to gather a group large enough to create a focus group. Furthermore, the respondents can be affected consciously or unconsciously by one another and thus will be reflected in responses. Likewise gathering a group of city administrators is just as difficult.

Semi-structured interviews as inspired by Steinar Kvale and his approach are used for this research. An interviewer can be described as a mineworker, who is trying to uncover the valuable material which is the knowledge or information that the responded has, and the tools are different asking and interpretations techniques (Kvale 1996: 3-4). This method allows me to go one step deeper than any of the other methods, and therefore ultimately provides me with a result that is much closer to the truth.

2.4.1 Model for Interview

The interview itself can be as informal as a conventional conversation. However the difference lies in the specific aim and special structure of the interview (Kvale 1996: 131). A semi-structured interview requires a relatively high level of knowledge about the topic from the interviewer, compared to an open/explorative interview that is better suited to gain knowledge of a topic. Therefore my interviews lies relatively late in the process compared to an open/explorative interview.

Steinar Kvale talks about different types of questions that can be used when doing interviews. One way is to start by asking questions of a more general character and then,
accordingly to the answer, ask for an elaboration or examples (Kvale 1996: 133). Another type is the more narrative questions like how the respondent has experienced certain situation/event. Kvale calls these questions for *specific questions* (Ibid.). I have tried to use a mixture of these two types. Due to the nature of a semi-structured interview there are no rules for when or in what order the different types of questions should be used.

Steinar Kvale divides an interview into seven stages: *Thematizing, Designing, Interviewing, Transcribing, Analysing, Verifying* and finally *Reporting* (Kvale 1996: 87-89). With Kvale’s stages in mind, I have chosen to modify the process a bit by having only three stages but still using Kvale’s idea. First stage; *Before*: Finding respondents, creating the question and finally informing the responds about the themes. Second stage; *During*: Conducting the interviews, this will be recorded on tape. Third stage; *After*: Transcribing the interviews and writing a shorten version that is then send to the respondents to verify the content and finally the analysis itself.

It is important to acknowledge that in all stages, objectivity cannot be reached as each stage includes some level of interpretation. Case in point is the transcribing which is often believed to be the solid empirical date but that is not the case.

The transcripts are, however, not the rock-bottom data of interview research; they are artificial constructions from an oral to a written mode of communication. Every transcription from one context to another involves a series of judgments and decisions (Kvale 1996: 163).

By sending the interview back for verification any wrong interpretations or misunderstandings that might have occurred in the transcribing process can be minimize.

2.3.2 Themes in the Interview
Themes help an interview with a more natural flow and prevent any double questions. Before each interview, I have informed the respondent about the different themes but not
the question themselves. This approach allowed respondent a chance to prepare. The themes are different to better suit the two different group of respondent.

There are two groups; the first group, Swedish-speaking Finns, and with two sub-themes, discrimination/boundaries and language/culture and the second group, local authorities, with two sub-themes; Swedish in the public sector and culture in Swedish⁴.

2.3.3 RESPONDENTS
In the search for respondents, the dominating criteria have been to get respondents that would help to bring forward as many aspects as possible for a sound analysis. Focus is on people who are close to the core of my research but on both sides of it. As I do not have any quantitative data I have tried to get a mixed group of respondents for the interviews. To begin with, the possible respondents was narrowed down to two groups, one being the Swedish-speaking Finns, as they have the firsthand knowledge on cultural and linguistic issues concerning Swedish-speaking Finns in Joensuu. As the group is so small the criteria is limited to get as many interviews as possible. The second group is the local authorities whom I have further divided into additional sub-groups; regional council, city board and city council. I have prioritized getting a wide representation from the different governing bodies over just getting as many respondents from the group as possible. The primary goal for this approach is to develop the widest ranges of respondents possible as the different authorities deal with different aspects.

2.5 PROBLEMS AND CRITIC
Problems have been encountered during this research; most have been sorted without compromising aim or scope. There have been, however some problems that is necessary to address because they in some way have influenced the research.

⁴ For more details see Appendix G.
The first problem is connected to language, which is quite a paradoxical as it underlines the importance of this research. I have not been able to use Finnish sources, thus limiting available information as well as previous research done on the topic. Nonetheless there is research material available in English and Swedish. However, most is limited to a bilingual focus on specifically the Helsinki area.

Furthermore, all interviews have been conducted in English; it is neither mine nor my respondent’s mother tongue. Therefore, details are not as clear as they would have been had I conducted them in Finnish or Danish. One respondent used some Finnish, which limited the ability to follow-up with in-depth questions. Therefore I focus on context of participant responses rather than analysing specific phrases.

In the process of finding and selecting suitable respondents, foreseeable problems cut the number of interviews. Both groups of respondents have been very difficult to contact but for different reasons. As mentioned earlier, the Swedish-speaking Finns are a very small group in Joensuu which means that it has been very difficult to find Swedish-speaking Finns. Fortunately, they have been willing to participate much unlike the second group. I contacted 16 members of the city board, council, administration and the regional council and only four replied (three positive) to my request. Some have been contacted several times by E-mail and phone yet unsuccessful. I would like to point out that I am very thankful for the respondents that chose to participate. Unfortunately, and despite countless efforts, an interview with a key member of the staff in Joensuu’s cultural section was not possible. The responses have degree of uniformity which is a strength and a validation of the research rather than a problem.

A final area of critic is sources. Several are of an older date, which can be seen as out of touch with the present situation. To some extend it reflects the need for more (or newer) research on the topic (at least in English). Nonetheless, scholars such as Allardt, Barth, Blaut, Liebkind and Sandlund have provided some of the key results on the topic and though of an older date, still valid.
3. SETTING THE CONTEXT

In order to get a better understanding of Finland’s background as well as the present day situation, this chapter goes through some elements of Finnish legislation and history. Together they shed light on the main issues involved in this research and help to set the right context.

3.1 THE FINNISH LANGUAGE LEGISLATION

Although I do not aim or wish to engage in a longer discussion on Finnish law, it is necessary for me to include law in my research in order to establish whether the understanding and implementation of cultural rights contributes in creating cultural boundaries and/or cultural racism for Swedish speaking Finns in Joensuu.

Language pops up in many different Finnish laws like the Education Act, the Act of Health Care, etc. This research focuses only on the Language Act; pivotal law in Finland when it comes to language (Allard & Starck 1981: 60).

In 1922 the Language Act of independent Finland came into use. The Act was in use until 2003, where it was replaced. However, the differences between the two Acts are so few that they practically are the same. A rather disappointing fact as many had hoped the new Act was the answer to a general decline in Swedish knowledge amongst the public employees (Andersson 2009). I have extracted some of the key elements from the Act which form the basis for the interview questions, and ultimately help draw a conclusion. I will focus on four chapters of the law and briefly point out the paragraphs that are relevant for this research.
3.1.1 GENERAL PROVISIONS

The Language Act states that the national languages of Finland are Finnish and Swedish, and neither outranks the other\(^5\). However, this does not mean Finnish and Swedish are equally used or spoken throughout the country, nor does it mean that it is intended to (Beijar et al. 1997: 65). Finland’s linguistic division is based on its municipalities, making it either unilingual or bilingual (Oikeusministeriö 2009: 8)\(^6\). In order to be bilingual, the minority of the municipality must constitute of at least eight percent of the total population or 3,000 in actually numbers\(^7\). In the beginning of 2009 there were 34 bilingual municipalities, 19 municipalities with Finnish and 15 with Swedish as the majority language (Oikeusministeriö 2009: 9). In the case of Joensuu, the Swedish-speaking population only accounts for 40 people out of a total population of 57,677 or approximately 0,07percent\(^8\). Accordingly, to the Language Act this makes Joensuu a unilingual Finnish-speaking municipality. However, the Language Act is suppose to ensure the linguistic rights for all notwithstanding speaking Finnish or Swedish and without having to refer to it\(^9\). Furthermore, and perhaps even more interesting is the following statement, “An authority may provide better linguistic services than what is required in this Act\(^10\).” This is particular interesting, as it opens up to individual initiative and interpretation of the situation. This highlights how much effort Joensuu puts into service for Swedish-speakers.

3.1.2 SECURING LINGUISTIC RIGHTS

When it comes to ensuring the linguistic rights the obligation lies with the authority, “An authority shall ensure in its activity and on its own initiative that the linguistic rights of

\(^{5}\) See Language Act (423/2003) section 1  
\(^{6}\) See Language Act (423/2003) section 5 §1  
\(^{7}\) See Language Act (423/2003) section 5 §2  
\(^{8}\) http://pxweb2.stat.fi/Dialog/Saveshow.asp Accessed last on the 22nd of January 2009 (the numbers are before the municipality merger in 2009).  
\(^{9}\) See Language Act (423/2003) section 2 §2  
\(^{10}\) See Language Act (423/2003) section 2 §3
private individuals are secured in practice\textsuperscript{11}.” As in other sections, it is also here pointed out that the authorities have to make sure, on its own initiative that the legislation is carried out in practice.

\textbf{3.1.3 PROMOTION AND FOLLOW-UP OF LINGUISTIC RIGHTS}

The Act goes beyond speaking about linguistic rights and also mentions cultural as well as societal needs.

In accordance with the Constitution, the Government shall provide for the cultural and societal needs of the Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking population of the country on an equal basis\textsuperscript{12}.

By including the cultural needs, it is implied that language is connected to culture and that the cultures of the Finnish speakers and Swedish speakers are different. It is not enough to provide just rights; they shall also protect and promote both languages, “In their activity, authorities shall protect the linguistic cultural tradition of the nation and promote the use of both national languages\textsuperscript{13}.”

\textbf{3.2 LEGISLATION IN THEORY AND PRACTICE}

Accordingly to E. Dahlström’s five point minority policy plan, there is no mistreatment or injustice done towards the Swedish-speaking Finns\textsuperscript{14}. On a comparative level, the Swedish-speaking Finns rights, as described in the Language Act, are considered to be very good (Edwards 1985: 83). The Swedish-speaking minority have in fact been called

\begin{footnotes}
\item[11] See Language Act (423/2003) section 23 §1
\item[12] See Language Act (423/2003) section 35 §1
\item[13] See Language Act (423/2003) section 35 §3
\item[14] Dahlström’s plan, which is referred to here, is mentioned in Liebkind (1984: 21) as it has not been possible to locate the original source.
\end{footnotes}
the most pampered minority in the world\textsuperscript{15}. However Dahlström’s model is focused on political acts, like the Language Act, and not how the politics transpire in real life. Although, it seems that the Language Act provides extensive opportunities and rights for both Finnish-speakers and Swedish-speakers, the intentions described in the Act are not carried out in practice (Raento & Husso 2001: 152; Berdichevsky 2004: 202; Andersson 2009). Arguments are being made that the actually linguistic reality lies far from that of the Language Act and that it, to a large extent, can be traced back to lacking language knowledge amongst public employees\textsuperscript{16}. The protection in the Language Act is only as good as it is in practice. This provides a real problem as the responsibility not only rests on the shoulders of the state but on the entire public sector. The same public sector which is being criticised for not possessing sufficient language knowledge itself\textsuperscript{17}. A lack of motivation has also been mentioned as a reason for the increasing difficulties of communication with the authorities in Swedish\textsuperscript{18}. Lacking motivation and lacking skills are very problematic in a case where the authority is obliged on its own initiative, to ensure the linguistic rights. Furthermore, it gives little hope in relations to the fact that the authority may provide better linguistic service than what is required.

On the positive side, the authorities are aware of the situation and in the Finnish Ministry of Justice’s repost on application of language legislation they write, “There is still room for improvement in the securing of the linguistic rights of the Swedish-speaking population...” [Original empathises] (Oikeusministeriö 2009: 79).

Finally, the Language Act has only been revised once since 1922 and it therefore does not reflect the struggle and debate that has taken place in the country. When it was revised, the changes were limited and it is very doubtful that anyone will experience any practical

\textsuperscript{15} http://www.thelocal.se/28470/20100819/ Accessed last on the 19th of August 2010

\textsuperscript{16} http://finland.dk/sporg/svensk/svensk_i_finland/idag.html Accessed last on the 15th of February 2009

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{18} http://www.finland.dk/sporg/svensk/svensk_i_finland/fremtiden.html Accessed last on the 15th of February 2009
difference. The handling of linguistic matters, have in fact been seen as encourage to language shift because of the lack of Swedish (Liebkind 1984: 99-100).

3.3 HISTORY OF THE SWEDISH LANGUAGE IN FINLAND

Swedish language and Swedish culture have a long history in Finland. However, it is undetermined just how far it actually dates back. Some scholars say that Swedish speaking people have been living in Finland at least since the beginning of the 13th century (Wolf-Knuts 2001: 144). Others suggest that the first Swedish speaking people arrived as early as the sixth century when including the Åland Islands (Beijar et al. 1997: 11; Allardt & Starck 1981: 113). To better understand the present situation of the Swedish-speaking Finns in Finland, it is worth to revisit the past in form of a short outline of events.

3.3.1 THE EARLY YEARS UNDER THE SWEDISH CROWN

Finland was under Swedish rule for around 600-650 years until 1809 when Finland became a part of Russia (Wolf-Knuts 2001: 145; Beijar et al. 1997: 11-14; Berdichevsky 2004: 199). During this time the Swedish influence was dominant as Sweden at that time was a European superpower (Alho 1999: 142-143). This is further illustrated by the prevalence of Swedish literature as compared to the almost non existences of written Finnish and the fact that Finland was very sparsely populated (Modeen 1995: 93). Finland continued to be very dominated by Sweden until the end of the 19th century (Modeen 1995: 95). During the entire time Finland was under Swedish rule, Swedish was the only official language: the language of administration, trade, culture, religion, and education (Wolf-Knuts 2001: 145; Modeen 1995: 95; Berdichevsky 2004: 200). Although German and Russian played a small role in education, trade and even administration, in the mid 18th century (Modeen 1995: 93); Swedish remained the language of state and the elite. Thus it was necessary to speak Swedish in order to advance both socially and professionally (Beijar et al. 1997: 14; Wolf-Knuts 2001: 145). The Swedish presence meant that Finland adopted a more Swedish (Scandinavian/Western) culture, legal system, social structure and Lutheran faith;

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19 Around 1540-1550 the first Finnish texts were published. Mikael Agricola is credited as the founder of the Finnish written language for his work translating the New Testament.
all which they have kept until present day (Engman 1999: 169; Beijar et al. 1997: 15). Over 90 percent of the two language groups belong to the same Protestant church (Sandlund 1991: 6). However, it is worth mentioning that there still exist an orthodox minority in Finland, which is very strong in North Karelia. In actual numbers, Joensuu ranks second in members of the Orthodox Church after the much more populated Helsinki area (Raento & Husso 2001: 157).

3.3.2 NATIONAL AWAKENING AND CULTURAL CLASH UNDER RUSSIAN RULE

When the Russian Empire assumed control, Finland experienced its first Finnish national awakening, to be followed by a second around 30 years later (Paasi 1996: 93). The awakening occurred despite the fact that under the Russian Tsar, Swedish continued the role as the dominating language as Finns regarded it a weapon against a Russification of the country (Modeen 1995: 93-94). Point in case, the Eastern part of the country was drawn towards Russia, as the East border remained in flux (see Figure 3), but continued to have ties to Sweden and the rest of the country because of the language (Alho 1999: 144).

Figure 3: The change in Finland’s territory. Source: www.virtualfinland.fi

However, it was also under, and with help from, the Tsarist Russia, Finland started to experience a polarisation between Swedish language and culture and Finnish language and
culture (Beijar et al. 1997: 16; Modeen 1995: 95-96). The situation was actually quite paradox as the Swedish-speaking Finns, after Finland’s separation from Sweden, started to identify themselves with Finland (Allardt & Starck 1981: 109). At the end of the 1820’s the only university in Finland was moved from Turku to Helsinki, a clear sign of separation from Sweden and Swedish influence. At the same time, the cultural position of the university change to a more Russian view (Klinge 1992: 77). A few years later, a Finnish national movement started amongst the members of the academic community. They began to demand rights, both linguistic and cultural for the Finish speaking majority. Johan V. Snellman was one of the most notables in the struggle to change the language from Swedish to Finnish in what is known as ‘Finnification’\(^\text{20}\) (Klinge 1992: 82-83; Engman 1999: 167). Like most of the supporters of the movement, Snellman was Swedish and born in Stockholm. Nonetheless he became a central figure for the Finnish-speaking majority (Berdichevsky 2004: 200; Beijar et al. 1997: 21)\(^\text{21}\).

The Tsar supported the idea, not because he wanted Finland to become more independent, but because he saw it as an opportunity to create tension between the Swedish and Finnish culture. This would eventually draw Finland further away from Sweden and closer to Russia (Beijar et al. 1997: 16; Modeen 1995: 94-95). The idea of Finnification continued and grew stronger during the 19\(^\text{th}\) century. In 1863 Finnish was awarded equal status as a second national language (Berdichevsky 2004: 200). The plan was that Finnish, within 20 years, should be implemented in the entire system. Resistance did occur however. By the turn of the century Finnish became the predominate language in several administrative matters, and at the university Finnish-speaking students outnumbered the Swedish-speaking (Modeen 1995: 96). In the period, from around 1860 to 1880 Finnish nationalism started to grow; which clearly shows an influence from Finnification (Paasi 1996: 95). With some delay the plan succeeded in 1902. In fact, 1902 is often mentioned as the year the language struggle tipped in favour of the Finnish-speakers (Allardt & Starck 1981:

\(^{20}\) There are several different ways of referring to this process; Kling (992) calls if Finnification, Beijar (1997) talks about Fennicization and Kirkby (2006) uses Fennomani. However the process itself is the same despite different labels.

200-201). During this time Finland grew strong as a nation both economically and culturally, which also meant that the country moved away from both Sweden and Russia symbolised in the motto “Swedes we are no longer, Russians we cannot become; Let us be Finns” (Klinge 1992: 94)\(^2\). Although many Swedish-speaking people were sympathetic towards the majority and their struggle, they were not prepared to cut the ties to Sweden in fear of a merging between Finland and Russia (Kirby 2006: 100-101). Thus, the Swedish-speaking Finns formed a Finland-Swedish national movement, which regarded people like Snellman as traitors (Beijar et al. 1997: 21-22).

3.3.3 **INDEPENDENT BUT DIVIDED**

Ideas behind Finnification were to become independent as a people and to become independence as a nation, and it succeeded (Beijar et al. 1997: 19). However, Finnification alone was not enough, World War I and the Russian revolution of 1917 created a window of opportunity for an independent Finnish state (Beijar et al. 1997: 25; Modeen 1995: 98). Following independence, a civil war between the *Reds* and the *Whites* broke out. During the war, most Swedish-speaking Finns chose side with the Whites while the Finnish-speaking Finns were divided between the two blocks (Modeen 1995: 97). The war was very short but also very bloody leaving the Whites victorious. (Kirby 2006: 162-163). Being aligned with the Whites may have helped the Swedish-speaking Finns in retaining Swedish as a national language in Finland (Modeen 1995: 98). However, it is also possible that much larger issues simply overshadowed the language struggle. By early 1920’s Swedish inhabitants of Åland were granted cultural autonomy as well as other special rights. Thus Swedish became the only official language of the islands (Berdichevsky 2004: 201; Beijar et al. 1997: 78). Furthermore, Swedish was given equal status throughout the entire country via the Language Act of 1922 (Beijar et al. 1997: 29).

Finnification started the independence process, separating Finland from Russia, and yet it also created a significant polarisation between the Swedish-speaking Finns and the Finnish-speaking Finns. This polarisation, which had taken root in the late 19\(^{th}\) century,

intensified during the interwar period and would continue until World War II began (Engman 1999: 172). The dispute focused on, not only language, but national culture (Klinge 1992: 70-71). Whatever goodwill the Swedish-speaking minority had received after independence was by 1930 almost non-existing as Finnification continued. At the peak of this language struggle, in the mid 1930s, it was not only a struggle on words but actual physical violence would occur in the streets of Helsinki (Beijar et al. 1997: 32). However, the situation changed when World War II reached Finland in 1939. The Swedish-speaking Finns showed the commitment to their country by defending Finland against the Soviets without any form of hesitation or special treatment (Berdichevsky 2004: 202).

3.3.4 NEW FINNIFICATION ON THE RISE

As the civil war had done, World War II showed the Finns once again that there were more profound differences in the world than that between Finnish-speakers and Swedish-speakers in Finland. Thus the language strife almost disappeared. Compared to other countries at the time, the relationship between the two language groups was quite good (Engman 1999: 174)\(^{23}\). The reason may be found in the new challengers that awaited the country in the face of post-World War II or the fact that the Swedish-speaking Finns had convinced the Finnish-speakers that they were loyal to Finland. However, history has a way of repeating itself and the language struggle would soon appear again. In the 1970s, a lively discussion of Finland-Swedish political and cultural strategies surfaced and by the 1980s, a rise of ‘New Finnification’ started (Engman 1999: 174). Since then it has been a rising discussion, which has not yet reached its peak. The Swedish speaking Finnish TV channel FST5 can exemplify the discussion. In the autumn of 2007, the channel had a series of talk-shows called *Tusen sjöar och en ankdamm*\(^{24}\). In the programme, a Swedish speaking person would debate a Finnish speaking person on the role and use of the


\(^{24}\) The show’s title, which in English means A thousand lakes and one duck pond, sends associations to Finland, known as the land of a thousand lakes, and the exclusion of the duckling in Hans-Christian Anderson’s fairytale, *The ugly duckling.*
Swedish language in Finland with the intention of highlighting issues like marginalization and exclusion. Furthermore, it was discussed if Swedish should continue to be mandatory in school and if it should maintain its status as a national language. In the show, claims were made that Finnish-speaking Finns have a much more negative conception of Swedish-speaking Finns than visa-versa. This attitude is suspected to be connected to the fact that the Swedish-speaking Finns used to represent the upper-class of Finland\textsuperscript{25}. Today there still exists an upper-class which is not very popular amongst the people and although it is not based on language like it used to be, it has an over representation of Swedish-speaking Finns (Allardt & Starck 1981: 194). There is also a reluctance to learn as well as use Swedish. This means that Swedish is almost nonexistent in the public sphere outside the traditional Swedish-speaking coastal areas (Sandlund 1991: 25)\textsuperscript{26}. This creates problems for the Swedish languages in Finland, as its survival not only is dependent on the language ability but also on the opportunities and willingness to use it (Sandlund 1991: 37).

3.3.5 JOENSSU – ON THE PERIPHERY OF SWEDISH-SPEAKING FINLAND

Joensuu is geographically situated in Finnish North-Karelia, in the East part of present day Finland. Its location makes it very different from the Western and Southern areas of Finland, where most of the Swedish-speaking Finns live today. As mentioned earlier, the Eastern border has been fluid, due to sparsely population and changing border. The area where Joensuu is situated did not become a part of Finland until 1617 (as seen in Figure 2). Furthermore, Joensuu was established by Tsar Nikolai I of Russia in 1848, while Finland was under Russian rule\textsuperscript{27}. All of the factors mentioned have played larger or smaller parts in orienting Joensuu towards Russia, specifically St. Petersburg, which at that time was the capital of Russia. At this time Joensuu was becoming an important business centre with a diverse population, 11 percent foreigners (non-Finish speakers), and it even included a

\textsuperscript{25} http://www.finland.dk/sprog/svensk/svensk_i_finland/sproglige_klima.html Accessed last on the 15th of February 2009

\textsuperscript{26} http://da.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finsk-svensk Accessed last on the 15th of February 2009

\textsuperscript{27} http://www.jns.fi/Resource.phx/sivut/sivut-jns/index.htx?lng=en Accessed last on the 14\textsuperscript{th} of February 2009
Swedish school\textsuperscript{28}. In order to create better access for trade between Joensuu and St. Petersburg, as well as to the rest of Europe, the Saimaa Canal was built in 1856. The building of the canal meant that by the beginning of the 20th century Joensuu was one of the largest harbour cities in Finland\textsuperscript{29}. However, just as the rest of Finland, Joensuu suffered after World War II, when a portion of Karelia was ceded to the Soviet Union as a result of the peace treaty. A lot of Finland’s industry was located in the area and the access to St. Petersburg, Viipuri (now Vyborg) and Europe was cut off crippling the once flourishing economy of the city\textsuperscript{30}.

Joensuu remained isolated, especially with the border to the Soviet Union being closed. With the reopening of the border, Joensuu has experienced an influx of Russians coming for shopping, holiday and so forth. On a yearly basis more than a million people cross the border at Värtislå – Niirala which is only about one hour away from Joensuu. Thus, the border crossing has promoted and increased cultural diversity in the area\textsuperscript{31}.

\textbf{3.3.6 SWEDISH-SPEAKING FINNS IN JOENSUU – A RARE SITE}

Table 1\textsuperscript{32} shows, in actual numbers, how the population has developed in Joensuu from 1990 to 2008. The Swedish-speakers are read on the right side while the total population as well as the Finnish-speakers are seen on the left.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
Year & Swedish & Total Population \\
\hline
1990 & & \\
\hline
1995 & & \\
\hline
2000 & & \\
\hline
2005 & & \\
\hline
2010 & & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{28}http://www.jns.fi/Resource.phx/sivut/sivut/sivut-jns/generalinfo/history.htx Accessed last on the 16th of February 2009

\textsuperscript{29}http://www.jns.fi/Resource.phx/sivut/sivut/sivut-jns/generalinfo/history.htx Accessed last on the 16th of February 2009


\textsuperscript{31}http://www.jns.fi/Resource.phx/sivut/sivut-sivut-jns/generalinfo/history.htx Accessed last on the 14th of February 2009

\textsuperscript{32}The table is based on the numbers found on http://www.stat.fi/. It is on purpose that the table does not include the numbers from 2009 and 2010 as the municipality merged with others as of 1st of January 2009. The numbers would be change dramatically and it would be impossible to conclude on any development compared to previous years.
Table 1: Population development in Joensuu

The Finnish-speaking population has developed more or less like the total population, which to a large extend is expected considering that the Finnish-speaking population makes up for a large majority. However, it is interesting to see that the Swedish-speaking population has developed almost opposite that of the total and Finnish-speaking, except from a few years in the early 1990s. Furthermore, it is interesting to see how the gap between the total population and the Finnish population has grown in the period, illustrating a rise in non-Finnish population while the Swedish-speaking population has diminished. This shows that Joensuu is becoming more linguistically diverse as well as multicultural even with a decline of Swedish speakers. The increasing diversity can, as mentioned earlier, partly be explained with the border opening but also with Finland joining the EU both which happened in the 1990s. However, this only explains the increase in diversity and not the decline in Swedish-speakers. The fact remains that Swedish has become so rare in Joensuu that the city’s homepage seems to have sidelined the Swedish version with that of the English and Russian. This means leaving out information that, as a
consequence, only is available in Finnish so the page primarily appeals to tourists and short term visitors and not for permanent residents\(^{33}\).

The small group of Swedish-speaking Finns makes Joensuu a unilingual Finnish speaking municipality. Studies show that, in unilingual Finnish municipalities less than a third of the Finnish speakers feel confident in understanding, speaking, reading or writing in Swedish (Sandlund 1991: 19). Thus, it is not difficult to imagine that the small percentage of Swedish-speaking Finns can be over sighted, intentionally or unintentionally, when it comes to securing linguistic rights. In January 2009, a fire occurred on the company Abloy’s premises letting out possible poisons gasses in the air. Because of these gasses notice was send out encouraging people to stay inside. However, the notice was only transmitted in Finnish and not in Swedish, which lead to a reaction from Folktinget\(^{34}\) criticising the lack of information in Swedish. Response to this reaction was that there was no time to translate the message, which reveals the absent of Swedish knowledge in Joensuu (Karjalainen 2009).

### 3.4 Social Struggle and Attitude

Why is a historical background important? Because it can tell us much more that just who did what and when, it can help us to identify ‘rhythms’ which allows us to see how social life and power relations are constructed and reproduced (Paasi 1996: 31). In this particular case it reviles details about relations between the Swedish-speaking Finns and the Finnish-speaking Finns that otherwise would be very difficult to prove as they may be socialized. Furthermore, it is significant to understand that Swedish and Swedish-speaking Finns are an important in Finnish history (Allardt & Starck 1981: 108). It is worth noticing that the struggle over language in Finland was and still a struggle over social power (Paasi 1996:

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\(^{34}\) The Swedish Assembly of Finland, or Folktinget, protects the interests of the Swedish-speaking Finns and is a forum for political discussion and co-operation.
Finally, the history shows the importance of language both for ethnic identity and for nationalism which has created several clashes because “in many cases distinct language are by far the clearest feature distinguishing ones national or ethnic group from its neighbours” (Barbour 2000: 9).

Numerous factors have helped shape the attitude towards Swedish as a language as well as an ethnic minority in Finland. To a certain extend the history also reveals a love-hate relationship towards Sweden and Swedish language and culture. Sweden has helped develop many aspects that are still present in modern day Finland. “Finland is “Swedish” in many other respects [other than language], culturally and administratively” (Sandlund 1991: 35). Furthermore, Swedish-speaking Finns such as Mannerheim, Runeberg and Topelius are some of Finland’s most popular and celebrated historical figures (Berdichevsky 2004: 202; Vikør 2000: 118). On the other hand, Sweden occupied the country for more than 600 years. 600 years of imperial or even colonial oppression where Swedish was the only official language and it has brought about, not only, a resistance towards learning Swedish but also helped to develop or maintain a negative attitude towards Swedish-speaking Finns (Sandlund 1991: 35).

It is difficult to predict the future of the Swedish-speaking Finns. The percentage of the total population has dropped from 17.5 percent in 1610 to 5.3 percent in 2004, but their actual numbers have not declined in the same drastic way (Sundberg 1985: 3; McRae 2007: 17; Allardt 1977: 1; Liebkind 1984: 98). However, it seems that in the peripheral arrears, peripheral from the dense Swedish-speaking areas, there are very few opportunities to use Swedish and get information in Swedish even when dealing with the public administration. Finally, Swedish is in a unique situation, a small national minority of less than six percent speaks it but at the same time, it is one of two official languages. This fact


helps to create problems for the speakers as they are trapped between having equal rights and, in many cases, being too few to use their rights to the fullest extent (Cheesman 2001: 148-149).
4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this research revolves around cultural racism. However, as so many other concepts and theories within social science, a broader perspective needs to be applied in order to fully comprehend the theory and its relations. Therefore, this chapter also pays attention to culture, identity and language which all are very complex concepts and at the same time, broad and miscellaneous in their meanings. They are all studied within a number of different disciplines and therefore used in many different discourses. However, despite all of their differences they also share common ground, and it is within this realm, where language, identity and culture meet, that I seek the answers to my research question. I will account for my use and understanding of these concepts in addition to their coherence with each other and with their relationship with cultural racism.

4.1 SWEDISH-SPEAKING FINNS AS AN ETHNIC GROUP

It is important to acknowledge the Swedish-speaking Finns as an ethnic group just, like the Sámi people, instead of ignoring the obvious differences and problems that it accommodates. Many do not consider languages groups like the Swedish-speaking Finns to be an ethnic minority on grounds that languages is social inherited while race and skin colour are biological. However, all three factors are equalled relevant in ethnic group formation as ethnicity simply consist in being different. The confusion might occur because ‘ethnicity’ in some places has replaced ‘race’ in order to find a more neutral term (Ratcliffe 2004: 27). The key in defining ethnic groups is that someone needs to make the distinction between, for example, Swedish-speaking Finns and Finnish-speaking Finns in order for the groups to exist (Allardt & Starck 1981: 20-21). Others, such as Stephen Barbour, suggest that the only area where Swedish-speaking Finns is in fact different from other ethnic groups is that they share the same religion as the majority of the country in which they live. Furthermore, the religion is spread out worldwide, and the Swedish-speaking Finns almost exclusively live in one country (Barbour 2000: 8).
4.1.1 HOW TO DETERMINE ETHNICITY

The term ethnicity holds various differentiations and is as such difficult to tie it down with one meaning. In fact, many researchers do not even attempt to define the term due to two reasons; its fluctuating nature and its sensibility towards change and milieu (Liebkind 1984: 23). Nevertheless, ethnicity can if kept very simple, be interrelated as a “sense of group identity deriving from real or perceived common bonds such as language, race or religion” (Edwards 1985: 6). Though, religion is not always thought of as a pillar of ethnicity especially when it stands alone (Allardt & Starck 1981: 83). Some scholars also include nationality in their definition of ethnicity (Ratcliffe 2004: 28). However, in countries such as India nationality can include many different religions, skin colours, languages, cultures and so forth which make it extremely broad. Furthermore, in modern society many have dual nationalities thus; it is fair to say that nationality can be viewed as a minor factor at best.

Many definitions of ethnicity are connected to a subgroup within a larger society, also known as a minority. This might be the explanation why ‘ethnic minority’ is often connected to immigrants. Nevertheless, the word ethos is in Greek a word for nation or ‘where one lives’ and in that aspect there are no reason to associate it with minority as it merely signifies a common decent group (Edwards 1985: 6; Chambers 1994: 94-95). Allardt and Starck state, that individuals can belong to a certain ethnic group for different reasons but at the same time there are four criteria that need to be met in order to classify them as an ethnic group (Allardt & Starck 1981: 42-45). The first of Allardt and Starck’s criterion is self-categorisation or self-identification. The majority of the Swedish-speaking Finns must identify themselves with the group as it indicates a willingness to belong to the group. Although some people do not want to be identified with the group, they will be included anyway as they meet the other criteria. The second is origin. Allardt and Strack see origin as important because that is how you can separate religious groups, which they unlike others, do not count as ethnic groups, from the real ethnic group. Like with self-identification it is enough if the majority originates from the group as some will have joined through marriage etc. The third is special cultural traits. The group needs to have some cultural traits like language. However, language is not necessary as for example not all Irish speaks Gaelic. The Swedish-speakers in Finland have other traits than language
although few and mainly related to folklore, customs etc. The fourth and final criterion is social organisation. It is not an ethnic group before there exists social organisation that controls interaction. By following the norms of a social organisation you keep/uphold the special cultural traits of the group (Ibid).

As already touch upon, each individual does not have to fulfil all four criteria but the criteria themselves need to be fulfilled. This means, that if the group has no self-identification it does not exist despite fulfilling the other three criteria. The Swedish-speaking Finns are identified and self-identify as Swedish-speaking Finns or as they say in Swedish, *Finlandssvensk*. They (original) originate from Sweden, speak Swedish and have several social and political organisations with formal or informal rules. Thus, they comply with all four criteria making them a separate ethnic group from the Finnish-speaking Finns. Language can seem to be the only element that really separate the two groups as self-identification, special cultural traits, origin and social organisation can be traced back to language. Albeit, it does not change the fact as many scholars see language as the most important component in the construction of ethnic identity as well as crucial in maintaining the ethnic identity (Eastman 1997: 215; Anderson 1979: 67; Törnquist-Plewa 2000: 183). Therefore, there cannot and should not be any doubt that the Swedish language is the sine qua non of the Swedish-speaking Finns.

Peter Ratcliffe raises a very interesting point on ethnic groups and identities. He suggests that ethnicity can be seen as layered (Ratcliffe 2004: 30). Thus, if we look closer at a fictive Swedish-speaking Finns we will see that the first layer is European, based on geographical attachment and race. Second layer, is Finnish based on nationality, history and to some extend religion. Final layer is Swedish-speaking Finn based on language and culture. Ratcliffe’s suggestion brings in another valid point; ethnicity can change. Thus, it is important to keep in mind that today it is possible also to choose your ethnicity as people acquired new language skills, adopts new religion, and no longer are bound to one nationality. Nonetheless, we often chose our original group as it creates the social ties that we need. This is also referred to as *identity* and identity is best upheld when there are equals to reflect in one another and to measure one another (Allardt & Starck 1981: 47).
4.2 CULTURAL RACISM

Whenever we hear the terms ‘race’ or ‘racism’ it is often connect to skin colour. This is neither wrong nor surprisingly since race is used in the pseudo-scientific way of dividing humans into groups with specific traits depending on the colour of their skin (Wren 2001: 142). However, racism is not static but often considered to be a social construction that evolves over time and space in order to adapt to new circumstances (ibid; Jackson 1989: 179). Different people from different countries have started to take notice of the changes in racist discourse. Regardless of the fact that it has been evolving since World War II, and the idea behind it is believed to be old, it is still considered to be a fairly new phenomenon (Durrheim & Dixon 2000: 93; Paasi 1996: 13).

4.2.1 WHERE DOES CULTURAL RACISM COME FROM?

The history of social science indicates that most theories have a limited lifespan and are then replaced by new theories. New theories can either represent a complete break with the old theories or they can, which also is the most common, contain bits a pieces from previous ones (Koch 2004: 91). In his article The Theory of Cultural Racism James Blaut (1992) follows the change in the racist discourse over centuries from religious racism to a modern and refined version of biological racism called cultural racism. In the same process, Blaut accounts for the social and societal background that has caused racism to change. In the case of cultural racism he argues that it originally was seen as a way of defining European culture as better and more developed than non-European cultures and that it is still the core of cultural racism (Blaut 1992: 293). When biological racism started to lose its popularity amongst scholars, a new ‘racism’ was needed. Thus, cultural racism was ‘invented’ by Europeans to justify their dominance over other cultures (Ibid.). However, because European culture/Western culture is only one culture amongst many different cultures around the world, it cannot be regarded as a privileged representative of humanity or humankind (Sevänen 2004A: 51). Blaut’s exposition of cultural racism seems only to be focused on a macro scale. However, because it is a social construction and subject to change, cultural racism, like previous forms of racism, can also be found on a micro scale. Biological racism is not only ‘white vs. black’ but also ‘Northern European vs. Southern European’, ‘Finns vs. Sami’ etc. Likewise, cultural racism is not only restricted to work on a global level but can also be found on a national or even on a local
level, such as Joensuu. In fact, racism manifests itself, not across national boundaries, but within them. In other words, it does not justify so much foreign wars as it justifies domestic repression and domination (Anderson 2006: 149). Slightly paradoxical is the fact that, cultural racism adapts very well to countries with a very homogeneous population and where social equality and gender equality are relatively good, as it helps justify itself as being superior in relation to others. Because many of the North European countries are so homogeneous, the idea of a superior culture has been particularly strong there (Wren 2001: 143-147; Sevänen 2004A: 51-52). A point in case is from the Danish Peoples Party, EU politician Mogens Camre who said, that unsound and old fashion societies like the ones in Romania and Bulgaria should not have so much power in the EU as they are not as cleaver as Scandinavians. Furthermore, he found it unreasonable that Denmark, Sweden and Finland have fewer votes in the EU as their societies are better than those of Romania and Bulgaria (Lauritzen et al. 2009). The fact that he should use words like unsound is quite interesting as the exact same word is used in cultural racism to describe the ‘other’. Finland is, globally seen, a very homogeneous country and it is also considered to be an equal society which makes it very suitable for cultural racism In that light it is very plausible that cultural racism exists in Finland and in Joensuu. In fact, Paasi claims that descriptions of geographical teaching in the Finnish school system in the 1920s and 1930s strongly indicate elements of cultural racism (Paasi 1996: 149-150). Furthermore, he also states racist attitudes towards cultures other than Finnish were prevalent in school books post World War II and up into the 1960s albeit less obviously (Paasi 1996: 151).

4.2.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURAL RACISM

Cultural racism can in simple terms be seen as racism where culture has replaced religion and race thus, “we no longer have a superior race; we have, instead, a superior culture” (Blaut 1992: 290). Focus has been moved from religious beliefs and physical characteristics to cultural characteristics which include social customs and language. Furthermore, cultural racism seeks to explain and justify racist attitudes in cultural terms rather than biological or religious, and involves prejudice against groups and individuals because of their culture (Halstead 1988: 139-155). Like other forms of racism, cultural

37 Own translation: original; Dansk Folkeparti (DF).
racism also creates ‘us’ and ‘them’, legitimising exclusion of ‘others’ based on cultural differences (Wren 2001: 144).

Although cultural racism originates from biological racism and therefore shares some similarities, it is important to stress that there are fundamental differences. In cultural racism, the culture of the minority group/other is seen as unsound in some way. Unlike biological racism, in which people for obvious reasons have incapacity to change, cultural racism sought to change the culture of the minority. In fact, cultural racism encourages a minority group to turn their back on their original culture and instead be immersed by the culture of the majority (Durrheim & Dixon 2000: 94). This practice is different from biological racism and the gap increases as cultural racism is not aimed at people but at their culture. Thus humans are considered equal within cultural racism; cultures are not (Wren 2001: 143). Cultural racism also differs from biological racism in being subtle and almost invisible, which means that it works subconsciously where it is embedded in old routines and practices (Wren 2001: 146). Hence it is possible to have racism without having racists or race. Finally, the ultimate goal for cultural racism is not to create unbreakable boundaries between different groups, even if boundaries are created during the process. Instead it aims at creating homogeneity (Cheesman 2001: 147).

4.3 Boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’
Boundaries come in many various forms and can be shaped by various factors (Oommen 1995: 252). They can have several functions and do as such not only bring about negative consequences like exclusion and separation. Indeed boundaries are also able to mediate contacts between different groups. By expanding the concept of boundaries we can see that boundaries can appear as open or closed and as hard or soft (Oommen 1995: 252-257). Hard and closed boundaries are seen as practically unbreakable whereas open and soft afford some level of contact between the groups on either side of the boundary (Newman & Paasi 1998: 190; Oommen 1995: 257). In addition, boundaries provide us with normative patterns that regulate and direct interactions between members of different groups including the ‘rules’ on how to cross them (Paasi 1996: 28). Nonetheless, as in any
Boundaries have often been understood and analysed from a national perspective but in this case boundaries are understood as something much less concrete. In cultural racism, boundaries are naturally based on cultural differences, and are therefore known as cultural boundaries. Like cultural racism itself, boundaries are also believed to be socially constructed as well as a part of human experience (Newman & Paasi 1998: 188; Khleif 1979: 159). In connection with being a part of the human experience, cultural boundaries are said to originate from history and are reproduced and kept alive through narratives (Jukarainen 2009). As a simple explanation it can be said that boundaries occur when and where one encounters ‘others’ and they help to protect and maintain the identity of the stronger group, “to sustain boundaries is to maintain identity” (Oommen 1995: 252). This means that boundaries are a question of cultural differences, but it also becomes a question of territorial power and identity. “To define the criteria for membership of any set of objectives is, at the same time, also to create a boundary, everything beyond which does not belong” (Jenkins 2004: 79). When we give identity or social meaning to something, we create boundaries, and the creating of boundaries is the same as claiming territory (Paasi 1996: 27-28). Accordingly to Paasi the power rests with the larger/stronger group as they provide the ‘rules’ for interaction (Paasi 1996: 28). However, according to Mathiesen, the power does not rest on the stronger group because of its size, but because the weaker group acts passive and powerless (Mathiesen 1982: 83). The stronger group will feed off the powerlessness of the weaker group as the power rests on the powerlessness and not vice versa (Mathiesen 1982: 76). In situations where boundaries have already been formed, newcomers become subject to the pressure of assimilation by the stronger part to fit in with the existing cultural identity (Newman & Paasi 1998: 190). The weaker will often find themselves in a situation where they do not see what is in their best interest or where the problem comes from. This limits opportunities to chance and creates powerlessness (Mathiesen 1982: 83-84). The dominating group can then use the power to create cultural values and exclude people on grounds of these values (Ahponen 2009).
As mention earlier, boundaries are not only negative; actually it has been suggested by several scholars that cultural border in fact are natural borders (Paasi 1996: 183; Barth 1969: 9). The continuation of an ethnic group is therefore dependent on the maintenance of boundary (Barth 1969: 14; Jenkins 2004: 98). Consequently, boundaries can be thought of as a double-edged sword that both have the power to sustain cultural groups with security and comfort (Sibley 1995: 32), and also to dissolve them as they protects and excludes at the same time (Massey 2009). If all boundaries disappear, if even the most subjectively or symbolically sustained group’s traditional markers disappear, for the Swedish-speaking Finns it would be the language, then the ethnic group itself would cease to exist (Edwards 1985: 9; Barth 1969: 15-16). Hence there are natural harmless, helpful boundaries and harmful boundaries. A helpful boundary can, for the Swedish-speaking Finns, be the secured status of Swedish as the lingua franca in the Åland Island, whereas it can be seen as a harmful boundary for the Finnish-speaking Finns.

4.4 LANGUAGE AND ITS ROLE IN CULTURE AND IDENTITY

Because language has proven to be important for both the Swedish-speaking Finns and the Finnish-speaking Finns, I will in the following take a closer look at language and its role in the context of this research. Several scholars agree that language is not merely or even primarily a medium of communication but a means of cultural construction. Furthermore they believe that language helps to form ourselves and our identity (Chambers 1994: 22; Giles & Saint-Jacques 1979: IX).

Language forms our thoughts. It determines the categories by which we experience the world. It reflects and reinforces the structure of social relations. It makes reality a matter of definition, a socially constructed activity; it makes identity a deadly game of recognitions, non-recognitions, and counter-recognitions... if boundaries create insiders and outsiders and separate – even through pollution barriers – in order to unite the in-group, then language becomes, by definition, the chief maker of boundaries and ethno linguistic labels the symbols and arbiters of distinctiveness (Khleif 1979: 159).
4.4.1 Language as a Bearer of Culture

If we peel through to the very core of language, linguists note that all spoken languages are built upon a combination of four elements. The elements are all culturally specific processes; sounds, patterning of the sounds, attribution of meaning to these patterns and the recognition of certain patterns as words. The cultural interpretation of meaning is the result of different events and processes in particular social settings. Even though meanings are standardised, they are subject to change over time as a result of social and cultural forces (Baldwin 1999: 44). Thus, language and culture help to define each other, and it is said that “language is at the heart of culture, and no culture exists without it” (de Blij & Murphy 2003: 112). There are innumerable examples on the strong connection that exists between language and culture and how language is the key to understanding culture. Not only is language an important tool in creating culture, it is also the primary resource by which cultural groups pass on cultural traditions from one generation to another making it the bearer of culture and cultural traditions (Jordan-Bychkova & Jordan 2002: 115). A very clear example of languages importance for people and their culture is found amongst the Inuit. Many Inuit live in geographical places with extreme weather conditions and their language reflects this. Instead of having just one word for what in English is simple referred to as snow; they have close to a hundred. It reflects the way environmental and habitual practice affects language because like racism, language is not static but changes and adapts to fit in with new circumstances (Edwards 1985: 19; Krishna 1991: 4-9). In Finland, there are signs that Swedish-speaking Finns are being recognized as having a different culture and therefore a different way of conceptualising the world. It is amongst other places reflected in national polls and researches. Here there are often differentiated between Swedish-speaking Finns answers and Finnish-speaking Finns answers just like there sometimes are done between the sexes (Harinen 2009). At the extreme, the role of language in culture can be interpreted as; the world is that is captured in the language in a way that the world is defined through the languages as well as the concepts used to discuss it (Baldwin 1999: 43). “The limits of my language are the limits of my world.”

38 Wittgenstein (1981), which is referred to is mentioned in Baldwin (1999: 45) as it has not been possible to locate the original source.
4.4.2 Language in Constructing National Identity

Language is among the most powerful symbols of national identity. Both historically and in the recent past, the feeling of common belonging that sustains nationalism has often been enhanced by a common language, which has, therefore, frequently been used as a means of identifying the community in question. …languages are often the marker that communities utilize to differentiate insiders from outsiders (Ruzza 2000: 168).

Because language is so important in culture and vice versa, language is a cornerstone in national identity, cultural unity and community cohesion (de Blij & Murphy 2003: 109). However, in relation to national identity the reliability on language has in some cases weakened and cannot be applied to all nations which have more complex concepts of national identity. Earlier, the idea of one nation, one language was widely spread especially in the 19th Century, where language and nation went hand in hand. National identity was therefore seen as closely related to language. However, identity is not different from cultural racism in terms of not being fixed and furthermore it is much more context dependent (Baldwin 1999: 224). As a result, the studying of identity is an ongoing process where the circumstances are in a constant state of change (Williams & Wanchoo 2008: 11; Krishna 1991: 2).

“…from the start the nation was conceived in language, not in blood… one could be ‘invited into’ the imagined community” (Anderson 2006: 145). Today, increasing mobility along with an increase in language education has changed these once so fixed language borders so that modern day Europe has a more complex understanding of a nation and national identity:

…a community of people sharing certain cultural and historical traditions, socio-political and administrative structures and enjoying some measure of autonomy. Additionally, a shared language has often been considered a crucial component of nationhood (Timm 2001: 105).

National identity consists of a number of common attributes that strengthen the bond of a people: their language, culture, history and political aspirations (Stebelsky 1994: 233).
Although the ‘new’ Europe is much more of a hybrid, made up by the elements mentioned in the two quotations; increasing immigration, globalisation and Europeanization has not only changed the identity but created new ones (Sevänen 2004: 19-21). Nonetheless, it is very important to stress the context dependency as a generalisation of national identity cannot be constructed to apply to all countries and situations, but must be constructed accordingly to the specific context. As chapter three reviled, language has played a large role in Finnish history, and has remained an (unsolved) issue ever since it first appeared. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that language is very important in the Finnish context and very likely to be more important than in other countries. However, Finland is not a unique case as there in other countries have been similar emphases put on language, especially the Balkans where war in the 1990s was on cultural lines not political lines (Huntington 1996: 253-254). In Finland’s neighbour country Estonia, a language fluency test is required in order to become a citizen (Stacul 2001: 128). In Finland it is also necessary to demonstrate language skills in order to obtain citizenship. It is perhaps one of the reasons why Finland belongs to a relatively small group of nations where more than 90 percent of the population speaks one and the same language (Beijar et al. 1997: 65). A quite remarkable fact when taken into account that Finland officially is bilingual. On the other hand, it is necessary to stress that although the dominate language in a linguistic state, like Finland, is a token of identity; no nation is completely homogeneous (Krishna 1991: 26). Although language is not the only factor in mapping identity, it is very strongly associated with identity.

The situation in India is quite different from that of Finland, and neither language nor religion can be used as a clear sign of national identity as the country has around 700 recognised languages and several major religions (Hudson 2000: 167-169). The lack of a single, unifying language has brought up other theories concerning nationality. Koskinen might have the answer to what unites India as he suggests that it is not language but national spirit that unites members of a nation. Trying to apply the same theoretical framework as used in this research would not work in India as place and space is quite different. Despite, of being so relatively homogeneously, the first step towards a more

39 Koskinen, which is referred to is mentioned in Paasi (1996: 93) as it has not been possible to locate the original source.
multicultural society seems to have occurred in Finland and in Europe. The shift is likely to have occurred with opening of borders inside the European Union as well as increasing mobility amongst people and culture. Unfortunately it has brought about an increase in suspicion between people leading to a general rise in negative attitudes towards ‘others’ (Wren 2001: 142).

4.4.3 FEAR OF A MINORITY

In an interview with Benedict Anderson, he states that people today no longer fear an outer power invading their country and that that fear instead have been replaced by the fear of an ethnic minority taking power from within the country. Power not only understood as political power, but also power in terms of dominating culture. Anderson is by far alone with his idea in the academic world as Jackson brings forward some of the same arguments in his paper on geography and racism (Jackson 1989: 178). The issue also surfaces in mainstream publications. In an issue of Newsweek, 20th of July 2009, the same notion on fear was brought up in an article on the general European fear of a rising ethnic minority taking over. The article brings forward some dominant ideas that Islam will impose its will on an ‘insecure’ and ‘relativistic’ European culture and that the Europeans, “need to defend their own values from a Muslim colonization of Europe as the Muslims resist to assimilate with our way of life” (Underhill 2009). The idea is not new, but it defiantly seems to have gained more ground since Wren brought it up in her research almost a decade earlier, talking about an imagined ‘other’ peacefully invading the country (Wren 2001: 147-148). Also Taguieff has detected the fear in his research on cultural racism in France and he talks about the fear of losing one’s specificity, one’s culture (Taguieff 1990: 116).

4.4.4 FINLAND’S FEAR

The present Finnish situation mean, that the threat of a military invasion from Russia or Sweden, who previously have been the great threats to Finland’s independence, is very unlikely contrasting what it was just 50 or even 25 years ago. Following the thoughts of Anderson and Wren, Finns nowadays fear that their language and summer homes will be

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40 The interview is in Hansen 2008.
overrun by non-Finnish speakers, “…to kill a nation there is nothing more deadly than to kill its national language” (Trudgill 2000: 284).

Benedict Anderson explains this new fear with; an increase in nationalism has hit especially smaller less religious countries as a result of the European Union’s development. As Finland can be classified as a small country, measured by population, and also a moderate religious country, Andersons ideas are very plausible explanations for the negative attitude towards minorities in Finland. In fact Finland, along with many other nations, has problems with intolerance towards minorities accordingly to the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights and national news. In connection to Finland being a smaller country it is believed that small countries in particular, pay special attention to strengthening their national as well as their cultural power by creating cultural values which can help them to justify the independence of their nation (Priedite 1999: 232). There are many extreme emotions connected to the nation, and what is perhaps most interesting is its power to stir passionate loyalties and hatreds that are exemplified in violence and courage; “people kill and die for their nation” (Barbour 2000: 2). In his study on the Nordic countries, Lars Vikør detects an ideology; linguistic nationalism, which stresses the difference from another linguistic entity based on fear that it is challenging one’s own autonomy (Vikør 2000: 109-110). Furthermore, Vikør’s observations are in line with those of Anderson and Wren.

In his book, National Minorities – who are they? Nicola Girasoli reaches some of the same conclusions as Anderson. He states that during the last century tolerance has been replaced by protection of the national character/identity (Girasoli 1995: 10). Girasoli also claims that the emerging of new frontiers and changing borders of states cannot change the national identity of the people living there (ibid.). However, Girasoli forgets one of the

41 The reference is from the same interview; Hansen 2008.
42 Accordingly to the U.S. Department of State’s homepage (www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3238.htm) Finland is less religious than other Nordic countries like Iceland, Denmark and Norway.
43 www.ihf-hr.org; www.yle.fi
fundamental points, that identity is not static and therefore subject to change and a changing border. Examples of this include Finnish-Russian border, Schengen and the disappearance of internal borders; which all have brought along a change in culture and population. This change will over time change the identity of the region and of the people living in it. However, this is not absolutely a negative or unnatural development although there in many cases will be a strong reluctance towards this change, which leads to the creation internal boundaries and an exclusion process.

As mentioned earlier, Finland is not a unique case as countries in the Post-Soviet realm have experienced similar languages and identity issues. Rebecca Golbert’s research on the Ukraine reveals just how similar the situation is:

…Russian was the high language, the language of high culture, art and literature. In the new Ukraine, Russian is the language of a large linguistic minority, which includes both ethnic Russians and other native Russian-speakers. It also refers to a regional designation… focusing on the southern and eastern regions of the country, which have felt a greater influence from Russia. Thus, for many native Ukrainian-speakers, the continuing presence of Russian and Russian-speakers… attests to the ongoing role of Russia in Ukraine and remains an impediment to full independence (Golbert 2001: 191-192).

Despite different circumstances the statement relates to Finland in the years after independence and to a smaller degree, present day. The similarities go even deeper as most Russians in Ukraine actually voted for Ukrainian independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union not unlike the Swedes in Finland who fought for Finnish independence (Hooson 1994: 138). In both countries, folklore written in Ukrainian and Finnish are also believed to have played a vital role in creating a national identity (Stebelsky 1994: 238-39).

In light the Swedish languages history in Finland and in combination with the construction of a national identity a pattern starts to emerge. In light of this pattern, we can argue that the Finnish-speaking Finns have a somewhat negative attitude towards the presence of
Swedish language, within the Finnish society. This is partly a result of the borders in Europe becoming increasingly fluid and national borders increasingly being replaced by regional borders, sometimes crossing national borders. This leads to fear of ‘losing’ all or some areas of Finland, especially if a particular area does not have a Finnish speaking majority as in the case of the Åland Islands. When Finland became independent, unity and homogeneity were key for the movement. If Finnish language disappears, how can the Finns justify to themselves let alone to others that they are a separate state (Vikør 2000: 105)? Some will argue that because the Nordic countries are so similar in religion, history and ethnicity a greater emphasis is put on language as a marker of different identity and nation independence (Golbert 2001: 196). Finally, the Finnish language played a large role in the construction of the Finnish nationalism as it was not until the language got official status as national language that Finland started to rise. At the same time, Finnish identity is believed to partly be constructed on the basis of opposition to the, at that time, dominating Swedish culture (Paasi 1996: 159).

4.4.5 THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE FOR SWEDISH-SPEAKING FINNS IDENTITY AND EXISTENCE

If the Finnish language is important to the Finns, then the Swedish language is very important to the Swedish-speaking Finns. As seen in 4.1.1, language is the main difference between the Swedish speakers and the Finnish speakers but also a key element in their identity. If that disappears, then they lose an important part of themselves. Despite the fact that language is not the only way to express ones identity, it remains the most obvious sign of distinctiveness and would be, for any group/person very important (Paasi 1996: 91).

No other factor is as powerful as language in maintaining by itself the genuine and lasting distinctiveness of an ethnic group. Indeed, all major works on nationalism have stressed the importance of language. The loss of a language or the acquisition of a new language might affect the identity of a social group; this is also true at the level of the individual (Giles & Saint-Jacques 1979: IX).
As Giles and Saint-Jacques points out, not only losing a language but also obtaining a new language can affect the identity of a group. Thereby they also indicate that obtaining a new language can be a steppingstone towards losing their original language and identity. Indeed all human societies have language and it can be difficult to imagine how a society would exist without language (Baldwin 1999: 44).

Some might argue that the Swedish language and its speakers in Finland already have extensive protection. A protection which reaches beyond what any minority language has elsewhere in the world, and that they therefore do not need any more protection or special treatment. To a certain extent this is true. Swedish is very well protected by legislation. However, the legal protection is necessary in order to maintain the language but it only works if the protection is enforced.

While a national language needs no special protection, a minority language does. The rights of its speakers must be respected and even defended in the face of the onslaught of majority language and culture (O’Reilly 2001: 93).

Furthermore, “identity is lived out through daily practice” (Paasi 1996: 254) which means that speaking Finnish and not Swedish on a daily basis is counterproductive in terms on upholding and remaining a Swedish-speaking Finnish culture.

4.5 SUMMERY
Some of the fundamental questions and concerns that the Finnish-speaking have towards the Swedish-speaking are about loyalty. Can a person be loyal to the Finnish state without speaking Finnish? Can the Finnish state survive without the Finnish language? History has shown where the Swedish-speaking Finns loyalty lies, and those they are in fact just as much Finns as their Finnish speaking compatriots.

There is no doubt that the relationship between language and nationalism is often strong and even essential. Nationalism from its modern inception was irreversible, connected with
language; and seen as “an outward sign of a group’s peculiar identity and a significant mean of ensuring its continuation” (Edwards 1985: 23). Although it may not be the case in all countries, there are strong indicators that language is connected to Finland and to the Finnish identities survival, at least in the mind of many Finns. However, it is important to keep in mind that ethnic groups are not completely coincidence of a nation (Barbour 2000: 6).
5. ANALYSIS

This chapter consists of two analyses. The first analysis is more predominant and structured accordingly to the hypothesis and not theory. The hypothesis is analysed separately. The second analysis examines interesting finds and suggested improvements that does not lie within my original hypothesis but still adds value to the research.

5.1 FIRST ANALYSIS

5.1.1 SERVICE IN SWEDISH

*The public sector in Joensuu offers no service in Swedish.*

All of my Swedish-speaking respondents seem to agree that it is not possible to get much if any verbal service in Swedish. “On the regional or the local level it’s really a lucky situation if you can find *anybody* who can serve you in Swedish” (Swedish-speaking Finn 1, male). Another busts out in laughter when asked about the service available in Swedish “[Laughter] There is none, none! [Laughter] that was almost a joke [Laughter]” (Swedish-speaking Finn 3, female). They do, however not deny that there are individuals, who occasionally speak Swedish, but even in those situations the public servant does not speak Swedish well enough and it actually delays the matter when it is handled in Swedish. One of the reasons why it gets delayed could be that there are not enough who can do the work in Swedish, so the task is dependent on maybe one or two servants:

No, not to any authorities in this town and area… No use. No chance. I mean there are single individuals who might be even good at Swedish but you can’t count on it at all and it has happened, maybe once or twice that some civil servant has been able to understand or even speak Swedish and that has been like a funny situation but we are not handling the matter in Swedish, maybe we have talked about some other things in Swedish but the real matter has to be discussed in Finnish to get it right (Swedish-speaking Finn 1, male).

…I can’t speak with the tax authorities, with KELA, [The Social Insurance Institution of Finland] no way. Or maybe they dig up some old guy from
the grave he comes and speak really old Swedish and everything gets delayed with five to six weeks (Swedish-speaking Finn 3, female).

One thing is that the public servants are not able to speak Swedish well enough to deal with the different matters, but it is something else when they do not want to speak Swedish:

No. Sometimes I might know that the person speaks some Swedish and wants to speak some Swedish to practice then I speak Swedish but otherwise never because I know that maybe, well almost everyone of them don’t speak Swedish and don’t want to speak Swedish so why would I make trouble because I speak Finnish so easily (Swedish-speaking Finn 2, male).

Although, not wanting to speak Swedish can be interpreted in many different ways, I think the most likely explanation is that they, the public servants, do not feel confident speaking Swedish due to their limited Swedish skills rather than they deliberately refuse to use Swedish due to political or racist reasons. Both the answer from the Swedish-speaking Finns and the people from the city authorities, which I have interviewed, have indicated that it is a question of language skills more than willingness:

…there are so few of us, that people working in authorities where that should be able to serve people, with Swedish as their mother tongue, they have not thought about it at all. Legally they should be possible to serve but practically they have not thought about it at all, they don’t oppose it but very few people can do it and most of them have never thought about it or been be even forced to think about it (Swedish-speaking Finn 1, male).

However, not wanting to speak Swedish, regardless of the reason, is a sign of cultural racism as it forces the Swedish-speaking Finns to speak Finnish and in that way, subtle makes them abandon their mother tongue. One of the Swedish-speaking Finns illustrates this by talking about the difference between Joensuu and for example Helsinki, where he does approach in Swedish.
...but if I am in Helsinki then I do it because there are so many Swedish speaking people and there are also tourist coming in from Sweden so there they should be ready to use Swedish but not here. I don’t want to demand such a thing from them (Swedish-speaking Finn 2, female).

Authorities acknowledge that there is not much service provided in Swedish “Only Finnish unless it is a special issue… It’s only in Finnish you can get all the services on everyday matters” (Member of the city council, female). However, some of them, surprisingly enough, show lack of knowledge or at least seems to be a bit confused when it comes to their responsibilities in providing service in Swedish as well:

...mainly in Finnish and of cause we should have in Swedish but it’s not like in Lapland for example, where the Sami mainly live. There they have to produce all their documents in four languages, in Finnish and three Sami dialects. On the West coast, Pohjanmaa they have to provide in Swedish, they are bilingual, but not here in Karelia we are not bilingual so we only have to provide in Finnish (Member of the regional council, female).

Her statement does not coincide with the Language Act; “An authority shall ensure in its activity and on its own initiative that the linguistic rights of private individuals are secured in practice".

Although all my respondents more or less agree that it is not easy or normal to be able to get verbal service in Swedish, they all seem to agree that forms and papers are available in Swedish. Thus, to say that there is no service in Swedish is not entirely true:

...most authorities in Finland have all their forms in both languages because the legislation says they have to have them, like these forms for your personal taxation. So I ordered all my forms and papers in Swedish because it is possible and I like to have it that way (Swedish-speaking Finn 1, male).

44 See Language Act (423/2003) section 23 §1
The answer from the Swedish-speaking Finns is clear; service in Swedish in Joensuu is limited to the written form with blank forms. However, from the city authorities there are some mixed messages both regarding what they do provide and what they have to provide. Logical explanation can be that it is so rare they encounter requests in Swedish that they do not really know what they can and cannot provide of service in Swedish. In fact, the member of the city council probably expresses it best when she is asked about how she thinks the city authorities is handling their job in providing service in Swedish, “I am afraid that that has not really been thought of because the need is so small that we haven’t had any need to pressure to develop it” (Member of the city council, female).

Although I did not expect all public servants to be able to speak fluent Swedish, it was a surprise to learn that the public servants in Joensuu do not seems to have any real Swedish skills, especially when taking into account that speaking Swedish and Finnish is a requirement by law when working as a public servant:

…it is passive [public servants knowledge of Swedish]. I think that most of the people here in the city organisation who are from North Karelia, they don’t like to try and speak Swedish because their Swedish is so bad and it’s so difficult (Member of the city council, female).

While it seems like the city does have all papers in Swedish, there is still a long way to go when it comes to verbal Swedish. Public servants do not want to, or simply cannot, speak Swedish despite clear signs from the Swedish-speaking Finns that they would prefer to speak Swedish. However, the Swedish-speaking Finns also needs to be stronger in their claim to use Swedish with public servants and not give the all the “power” away by not demanding their legal right. Swedish should be used in public service even if Finnish is still the lingua franca in Joensuu. Although the local authorities carry the greatest responsibility; Swedish-speaking Finns do not help the situation with statements like “I just function in Finnish” and “I don’t want to demand such a thing”.

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5.1.2 \textit{Equality and Assimilation}

\textit{In order to function on an equal level, Swedish-speaking Finns in Joensuu needs to learn/speak Finnish.}

Although the city authorities agree that service in Swedish is not common in Joensuu, some of city authorities seems to think that the essential service is available in Swedish; “Of course all the main areas like living and healthcare system and so on there should be information in Swedish too” (Member of the city board, female). However, it is not the reality that my respondents have faced:

The real demanding matters are healthcare, care for elderly people and then more demanding bureaucratic matters, court matters, social services and all those. I mean it is not enough that they can say hallo to you or if you have made a complaint and you are trying to make your point about your health situation and the person just can agree or follow you but should be able to really understand and ask and settle your case, then they really should know the language and that is really hard for them (Swedish-speaking Finn 1, male).

…if I remember correctly you can, in some of these places [healthcare service, and courts], find some individuals who might be able to handle our case, even in Swedish but that is more by accident than by purpose or by legislation imposed (Swedish-speaking Finn 1, male).

A Swedish-speaking respondents mentioned healthcare as a place where it might be possible to get service, but only by accident. One of these ‘accidents’ includes another Swedish-speaking respondent who has worked at the hospital in Joensuu “…I worked at the hospital before and I had a few Swedish speaking patients and they always called me “hi, come here now I need you”” (Swedish-speaking Finn 3, female). The last two examples are slightly ambivalent as they show; the need for more people with better Swedish skills but also that there are people with Swedish skills (the respondent herself). Though, it is obvious that only some are able to communicate in Swedish. One of the respondents says it best when he says that it is by accident more than anything else if you
find someone who can speak Swedish. Again it can be argued that cultural racism is behind, especially in terms of creating a boundary for the Swedish-speaking Finns.

I can imagine a future for myself where I try to get the personnel at a retirement home to understand me, I’ll explain in Swedish and they won’t understand me, that is a very possible situation and I know some of my Swedish-speaking friend in this area say that they will move to the south and western parts of Finland… to have the possibility to move into a place where the personal understand your Swedish and I am very conscience about that so I might be my future too (Swedish-speaking Finn 1, male).

The above quotation expresses some real concerns that he and other Swedish-speaking Finns have about the situation in Joensuu. This might not be enough of an issue and boundary to keep him and others from moving to Joensuu. Nonetheless, it can turn into a boundary for staying. To put it bluntly, the language situation in Joensuu pushes some Swedish-speaking Finns to move away once they get older in order to receive medical attention.

The health sector may perhaps be the most important area to have Swedish speakers. As pointed out in chapter three, Joensuu city’s homepage is in several languages. However, it is only in Finnish that current issues are displayed and as well as info on doctors etc. For example, the website only carries information in Finnish about swine influenza, H1N145. Internet homepages is a media that fairly easy could be kept up to date in Swedish as it does not demand much more than some computer skills and translating skills.

There are elements of cultural racism no matter how unintended they may be. When healthcare in unavailable in Swedish it is to neglect the Swedish-speakers and thereby force them to assimilate in order to receive attention.

5.1.3 ATTITUDE TOWARDS SWEDISH-SPEAKING FINNS

Because there are so few Swedish-speaking Finns in Joensuu, attitudes towards Swedish-speaking Finns is more negative compared to bilingual places such as Helsinki.

The Swedish-speaking respondents also highlight experiences with being a Swedish-speaking Finn in the 1970s:

There where situations [in Helsinki] in the streets or wherever, at that time, where you had to be a little bit careful not to speak Swedish too loudly because there where those guys who did not like Swedish to be spoken so they might come and threatened you or insult you or whatever, you learn to live with your language in a special way… (Swedish-speaking Finn 1, male).

In Helsinki I, in a way had double identity. I had to be Finnish in Helsinki in order to survive in the 70s because to be a Finlandssvensk in Helsinki you would get kicked and beaten up… (Swedish-speaking Finn 3, female).

It is surprising to find that violence occurred in Helsinki 40 years after the apparent language struggle peaked of the mid 1930s. Though it is even more surprisingly to learn, that some of the Swedish-speaking Finns believe this still is going on, although without physical confrontation; “…I have a lot of friends in Helsinki and it [negative attitude] still goes on…” (Swedish-speaking Finn 3, female). The situation mentally scarred her although it is a long time ago and although she has not had the same experiences in Joensuu:

[The situation is still] both taboo and hostile and I still have fear in me from when some of my friends got beaten up in the 70s because they were Swedish speakers. For example my daughter came home and said “I am Hurri, Hurri” and that was something that was really bad behaviour towards us when someone called you Hurri, it was like stabbing so when she came home and said that I was like “who said that?” and she just though it was funny because she didn’t have the same fear that I have. I had to learn Finnish very quickly not good to be a Swedish speaker (Swedish-speaking Finn 3, female).
It is clear that cultural racism has been and should be considered a real problem in Helsinki, and probably other places as well as it is difficult to believe that it is restricted to Helsinki alone. However, Joensuu does not seem to host the same problems since none of the Swedish-speaking Finns has had similar experiences, on the contrary:

…this is not how I live here [in Joensuu]. Here Swedish is so rare that people are not angry they are more wondering, they are more curious about you than anything else but it means that you can’t expect anybody to understand you so you can’t use your mother tongue anywhere (Swedish-speaking Finn 1, male).

…we are so few people so they don’t recognise us as a problem. We are such a small minority so we are more or less exotic but we are not dangerous, it’s different in Helsinki for example… (Swedish-speaking Finn 2, male).

…when I moved here I was exotic. It was like “Oh wow you speak Swedish, that fucking horrible language that no one knows” (Swedish-speaking Finn 3, female).

It is interesting to see that two uses the same word “exotic” to describe how they felt others were looking at them. Even though I mentioned in section 2.5 that I would not put too much emphasis on single words, it still shows just how rare it is to meet Swedish-speaking Finns in Joensuu and just how different they are considered to be. Despite having trouble with finding services in Swedish and experiencing boundaries, there does not seem to be any negative attitude towards the Swedish-speaking Finns in Joensuu. The reason seems to found in the small number of Swedish-speaking Finns, rather than a different attitude from that of Helsinki, which the respondents also pointed out. With language being one of the most powerful symbols of national identity (Ruzza 2000: 168), the high numbers of Swedish-speaking Finns in Helsinki can be seen as a threat or discomfort to the Finnish-speaking Finns and maybe even to Finland. Benedict Anderson’s ideas of fear also seem to comply with the situation described by my respondents.
However, the fact that the Swedish-speaking Finns, have not experienced similar violent behaviour from Finnish-speaking Finns in Joensuu as they have in Helsinki, resentment or cultural racism exist, although on a much more subtle level, “Yes of course [there is resentment towards Swedish-speaking Finns in Joensuu] but it is not very active, it’s more passive because we are not existing.” (Swedish-speaking Finn 2, male). A member of the city council (Finnish-speaking) agrees that there is some sort of resentment towards Swedish in Joensuu “…it is true than people here don’t like Swedish” (Member of the city council, female).

…in politics, yes of course if there is a debate they have very hard opinion but they don’t really think what the consequences are. When I tried to get my children into Swedish speaking groups in school it was hot, the discussion was like “Why? In Finland you speak Finnish” and that kind of things. So underneath the exotic there is some hardness somewhere (Swedish-speaking Finn 3, female).

The importance of language and the sensitive nature of the issue are again pointed out. As long as the Swedish-speaking Finns assimilate with the Finnish-speaking Finns and do not demand their right, there are no problems.

5.1.4 SWEDISH IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Swedish language as well as culture in Swedish is absent from the public sphere in Joensuu.

None of the Swedish-speaking Finns I have interviewed could remember any form of culture in Swedish or Swedish speaking culture in Joensuu although they all have lived in Joensuu for 20 years or more:

Not that I know about. In a way you could phrase it as this question is marginalized but it is more like non-existent because we are so few that most of us either don’t have any problem with it or don’t considerer it possible to considerer it a problem or too few to make any strong demands or to make any noise about it (Swedish-speaking Finn 1, male).
Maybe it is not so strange that the Swedish-speaking Finns have not experienced any typical Finlandssvensk events or cultural events in Swedish, since there does not seem to have been many, if any “...if we organize something like that there might come ten people.” (Member of the city board, female). However, the municipality supports such events, but it has to come from the Swedish-speaking Finns and not from the authorities.

...Pohjola-Norden association, the municipality and other associations are quite supportive of that but of cause it comes from the activity of the people so it is not that kind of activity that the city or municipality organizes but I think that almost all municipalities in North Karelia have a twin city in Sweden or another Nordic country so on a civil society level there is quite a an active cooperation and all kinds of cultural activities come from that direction (Member of the regional council, female).

We don’t have very much, but we do have one group mainly a bit older people go there. It is a kind of Swedish club where people can go to practice their Swedish (member of the city council, female).

Swedish seems absent from the public sphere in Joensuu, and for the most part it is absent. However, there are initiatives, although they might be few and limited, organized by Swedish-speaking Finns and not within everyone’s interest. However, these initiatives, like the Swedish Club, have several Finnish-speaking members which show that Swedish is not feared or resented by all. In fact, meeting the right people it is possible to speak Swedish with Finnish-speaking Finns who actually enjoy it.

...I know many, many Finns that want to practice their Swedish and when I walk around in the centre I sometimes run into these people more than once a week and then we stay in the market square and we speak Swedish together, just for a few minutes but it is really nice (Swedish-speaking Finn 2, male).

Of course we are in a time where it is very easy to get access to information and if you want to hear Swedish just turn on the FST channel. If you like to maintain your knowledge of Swedish culture it is easy to find it from the TV as well, so I think that at the moment it is enough for the people living here in this part of Finland (Member of the city board, female).
However, the authorities cannot just place the responsibility for all the initiative on the civic society. It is the authorities’ responsibility in their activity, to not only protects the linguistic cultural tradition of the nation, but also to promote the use of both national languages.

5.1.5 Boundaries

The lack of service in Swedish and lack of Swedish-speaking culture/cultural events in Swedish is a major boundary for Swedish-speaking Finns in Joensuu.

None of the Swedish-speaking Finns I have interviewed expressed any concerns about moving to Joensuu or that Joensuu’s status as a monolingual municipality had influence on their decision to move to Joensuu. Nonetheless, they stress that they do not believe it is the case for most Swedish-speaking Finns and that many would in fact have great concerns about moving to Joensuu or a similar place:

Swedish-speaking Finns, there are of cause many types of Swedish-speaking Finns as well as in any population and there are quite a lot of people inside that population that couldn’t imagine to move to a town like this… most of the Swedish speaking population lives in areas or town where they are the majority or there are a lot, so many that it can be considered bilingual to some extend so you have the signs [in Swedish], you can find people in the shops, library or healthcare centres who can at least understand you when you speak Swedish (Swedish-speaking Finn 1, male).

I am sure that the great majority of Swedish-speaking Finns would hesitate and even fight against having to move here. I would say maybe 90 percent at least, would not like the idea (Swedish-speaking Finn 2, male).

The Swedish-speaking Finns do not agree completely on what the main boundary is. One expresses that he believe the language to be the biggest boundary for the Swedish-speaking

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46 See Language Act (423/2003) section 35 §3
Finns, while another put more emphasis on culture as the main reason. Still, all agree there is a boundary:

Not so much the language but being too far away from your culture because it is a different culture. When the Swedish-speaking Finns are amongst themselves they have some special things that the Finns don’t have… (Swedish-speaking Finn 2, male).

While there seems to be no doubt in the minds of the Swedish-speaking Finns that there is a language and cultural boundary, the authorities do not seem to be so sure, although they do not rule out the possibility:

No, I haven’t heard that and like I told you earlier I have worked earlier for the city council and worked with international connections but at the service level, let’s say if you are a Swedish speaker and you need to go to the healthcare and so on, I can’t answer those question but at a general level I don’t think it is a problem because Joensuu itself is a very international place, in its context, so I don’t think it is a problem (Member of the regional council, female).

Yes I think so but of course there are not really any jobs where Swedish is required… I think that this part of Finland is not so popular amongst Swedish-speaking Finns because there are other areas where you really need Swedish and many municipalities that have both Finnish and Swedish, also in schools. I don’t think there are any specific areas that are very attractive for Swedish speaking Finns unless you are interested in Russia somehow. But if you are not at the university teaching Swedish there are not many areas (Member of the city board, female).

I think it can be the case, but Northern Karelia is so peripheral and I think that that is the main reason. We are far away and close to the Russian border, I don’t think that the Swedish-speakers in the south and west don’t know anything about Joensuu; they have never been here (Member of the city council, female).

In general it seems that the authorities believe the geographical location of Joensuu is the biggest boundary for the Swedish-speaking Finns. A perception which also is shared by one of the Swedish-speaking respondents:
Absolutely! Swedish-speaking Finns don’t know anything from outside Kehä III, [Kehä III is the outer highway surrounding the metropolitan area] that is a joke, but they know everything from Helsinki and down to France and so on but it is not media-sexy enough to come to Joensuu (Swedish-speaking Finn 3, female).

There is a boundary that stops Swedish-speaking Finns from moving to Joensuu. It also seems reasonable to call it a harmful boundary as it prevents Swedish-speaking Finns from moving to Joensuu and other areas like Joensuu. Furthermore, it is a situation that harms Joensuu as well. It hinders students and workers who develop the region through their investment, work, taxes and so forth. This is a losing situation for both partners.

5.1.6 IDENTITY CRISSES

The lack of service in Swedish and lack of Swedish-speaking culture/cultural events in creates an identity crises for the Swedish-speaking Finns in Joensuu.

Lack of available Swedish services combined with a general absence of Swedish in public sphere, has made the Swedish-speaking Finns more aware of their culture compared to Swedish-speaking Finns who live in more typical Swedish-speaking areas of Finland:

I am much, much more aware of maintaining and keeping a hold on my language and culture. I am much, much more aware than people who live in Turku or Vaasa, they just go on living their lives and they have no threats. At least if they feel some it’s very vague and far away. I have been very, very consequently using my language concerning my kids for instance because it has been an effort really. I had to, you know, forced to use my Swedish and to explain words, because I have been, more or less, the only person they hear (Swedish-speaking Finn 2, male).

Yes, absolutely especial after my kids were born then it really became a conscious thing speaking with them. I have always been very aware of talking Swedish when I have the possibility (Swedish-speaking Finn 3, female).
An increased awareness is not necessarily a bad thing. Living in Joensuu has demanded a larger effort in maintaining language and culture “…it is a very consciously effort, it has to be and it has taken some energy also” (Swedish-speaking Finn 2, male). The effort can most likely be traced back to the language, but a different culture has also brought around small crises that could be interpreted as identity crises:

During these 20 years I have had periods when I have felt that my Swedish language was a bit troubled, because I don’t use it so much. It is not a very big problem but I have felt it sometimes… what I felt like I lose when I live here is maybe about humour… some kind of difference in mentality… It’s difficult to say exactly what it is but… I feel homesick when I have problems to deal with people because they do it in a different way here (Swedish-speaking Finn 2, male).

…different cultural things and traditions, from music to having parties, celebrating different events… The food culture is also different and also the way of thinking, here in Joensuu people are so moody, everything is so negative and Swedish-speaking Finns normally always look for the positive things, mostly (Swedish-speaking Finn 3, female).

…I miss my daily paper and when my children were born I needed the school and the kindergarten and that kind of daily stuff… (Swedish-speaking Finn 3, female).

Two of the respondents express some sort of small loss compared to living in more Swedish-speaking areas of Finland. All three points out speaking Swedish at home with their families is very important for them and that without that it would be very difficult to continue to be a Swedish-speaking Finn.

…I would be a single person it could be a problem because it’s not so easy to uphold your language and your culture if you can’t speak your language… (Swedish-speaking Finn 1, male).

They also point out several differences between Swedish-speaking Finns and Finnish-speaking Finns that most outsiders would not see or experience so easily. Some might
argue that the differences are a result of different geographical locations more than a result of different ethnicity. However, the Swedish-speaking Finns mainly live, and have mainly lived, in the south and west coastal areas of Finland and I therefore believe that the Swedish-speaking Finns have influenced those areas to become different. Joensuu is not to blame for people having a different sense of humour or different food culture, but it can play a stronger role in celebrating or marking events, which the Swedish-speaking Finns typically celebrate or put more emphasis on having concerts and theatre plays in Swedish. The twin city cooperation with Linköping, Sweden could play a larger role in culture exchange, by exchanging theatre groups/plays, bands authors etc.; to come for special events but also in terms of personal exchange similar to the exchange between school children which have taken place. However, the nature of the co-operation has changed, into a more high-level co-operation:

I think nowadays the connection is not as strong as earlier and there were more co-operations back then, but that is the case with all or most of the friendship cities. Now we more work together on economic and EU issues (Member of the city council, female).

It is interesting to see that, even though the Swedish-speaking Finns experiences that it at times is somewhat of a struggle to be a Swedish-speaking Finn in Joensuu, they do not seem to ever make their complains public:

…they are [Swedish-speaking Finns in Joensuu] quite invisible. I have been in politics for 16-17 years and I can’t remember any discussing about Swedish language or improving knowledge of Swedish culture and so on. Of course we are in a time where it is very easy to get access to information and if you want to hear Swedish just turn on the FST channel. If you like to maintain your knowledge of Swedish culture it is easy to find it from the TV as well, so I think that at the moment it is enough for the people living here in this part of Finland (Member of the city board, female).

Whether or not it is the increasing access to information on the Internet or other mass media, is not clear. What is clear is that at least one of the Swedish-speaking respondents
have experienced that it has become easier to be a Swedish-speaking Finn in Joensuu, than it has been:

Well nowadays it’s okay, today I am a proud Finlandssvensk in Joensuu but for the first two years it was a real culture shock because I could not even hear the radio in Swedish and that is something that I have been brought up with, listening to the radio in Swedish so I really had to think how I could hear the radio (Swedish-speaking Finn 3, female).

5.1.7 MARGINALIZATION OF THE SWEDISH-SPEAKING FINNS

Local authorities are marginalizing the Swedish-speaking Finns.

Despite being denied entitled rights according to the Language Act, and the extra effort they have to put in to maintain their culture, it does not make the Swedish-speaking Finns feel marginalized to the extent where it become a problem, “…I just function in Finnish” (Swedish-speaking Finn 2, male). On the other hand, we have to ask if “just functioning in Finnish” is satisfactory when the individual principle in the Language Act ensures the Swedish-speaking Finns their right to speak and to be heard in Swedish:

Of course I could, I mean the term is formally correct but I don’t feel like that [marginalized] because when the amount of Swedish speaking people living in this area is counted in tens it’s in a way an impossible demand that you would find many people who are able to, really, communicate with you in Swedish (Swedish-speaking Finn 1, male).

He does indicate that there are reasons to feel marginalized but that he does not. One of the other Swedish-speaking Finns expresses himself similar “…I have felt it a few times but it’s just very slightly, not a problem really” (Swedish-speaking Finn 2, male). The last Swedish-speaking Finn has a different feeling when it comes to being marginalized. She completely dismisses being marginalized by the people in Joensuu, “No, no, no, no. On the contrary that was something that I felt in Helsinki and there you could feel the negative and kind of mean behaviour.” However, when it comes to the authorities she says that they
should do better to ensure the linguistic rights, and thereby indicating that they are not 
doing all that they can do, which can be understood as marginalization and cultural racism:

…they should be doing it better, I mean there is 40-50 of us here so they 
should be doing better, it is my right, and also Sami, both minorities but 
there is nothing, not the hospital no nothing (Swedish-speaking Finn 3, 
female).

The local authorities seem to be aware that there are some holes when it comes to service 
in Swedish. “I think it would be a little bit difficult to find people that can really help you 
in Swedish…” (Member of the city board, female). What is interesting is that the Swedish-
speaking Finns seem caught in a bind. On one hand, the region has to provide for the locals 
who almost all speak Finnish. On the other hand they are trying to become more 
international so the question of implementing Swedish in the service is not high on the 
priority list:

If I look at it from the perspective of the region I think that the Swedish 
speaking population is quite small here so it is not a problem, so in our 
field, regional council, it is not a problem, it does not appear. Of course we 
try to develop this region more and more international but because 
Swedish speakers are not international people but domestic they are not 
really involved, so honestly I haven’t faced that question (Member of the 
regional council, female).

The internationalisation of the region is something that many smaller linguistic and cultural 

groups face, as touched upon in the introduction. Here is an example on how an influx of 
international business and people slowly change a region. In addition, Swedish as a second 
language (or third after English) for the Finnish-speaking Finns is threatened by the 
emerging Russian language:

There is always the question, if Swedish should be replaced with Russian 
in school, here in North Karelia, because there is a much higher demand 
for Russian than for Swedish language here. My personal opinion is no. I 
speak Russian and Swedish but I think that Swedish has a different
position because it is our second domestic language and not a foreign language (Member of the regional council, female).

The regional council member points out the most important argument in the debate; Swedish is a domestic language, not a foreign language. Yet, local circumstances and geographical location make it more popular to learn Russian than Swedish:

Not Swedish school, but in the 80s when we had more money then we tried that you could start Swedish or German or French in the third grade if we could get enough people. Not in all schools but one would have Swedish another Germans and so on. I think that it lasted for some years but nowadays I don’t think there is anything anymore and the main reason is that we now need groups for 15 people where we only needed eight or six before. Now we only have in one school where you can choose Russian or German (Member of the city council, female).

Even though the local authorities may not marginalize the Swedish-speaking Finns on purpose, it is evident that they questions concerning Swedish-speaking Finns and their rights are a limited priority. To a certain degree it is understandable in regards to low numbers of Swedish-speaking Finns in the region and the large numbers of Russian speaking business partner. In fact, the geographical aspects of bilingualism in Finland play a large role and the complexity of the situation is very well summarized by one of the respondents:

…the question is tricky because legislation really says that people who work for the state or in public services on a local, regional or national level they should be able, to get their job, manage also in Swedish. In that way Finland really is bilingual by legislation but it is not true in practice, not in towns like this or places like this. It’s a little bit tricky, you can say that those authorities whose task it is to follow how legislation is working they have to, in a way forget or look through the fingers because they certainly know that this it is not how it really is but I will say that I think the legislation is ok but it is almost impossible to really impose it in practice all over a country like this where the biggest part of the country is almost empty of Swedish-speaking people. (Swedish-speaking Finn 1, male).
5.2 SECOND ANALYSIS

This analysis includes interesting finds unrelated to the hypothesis, as well as ideas for improving the situation better for Swedish-speaking Finns.

5.2.1 INTERESTING FINDINGS

Without dissecting bilingualism, I believe it is wrong to consider Finland a bilingual country when most of its inhabitants do not speak both languages and many have trouble even recognising Swedish-speaking Finns:

…most of the Finns here don’t even understand what I am when I speak Swedish because the Finn-Swedes language is so far away and strange for these people here (Swedish-speaking Finn 2, male).

Other Nordic countries offer services in other language than the native (such as English) without considering themselves bilingual. In addition, many public servants in Finland seem to be so disconnected to the idea of even using Swedish that it can completely take them by surprise if someone says or asks for something in Swedish:

We very seldom speak about Swedish because we don’t need it. We are so far from Swedish speaking Finland so here you almost get a bit startle if you all of a sudden hear someone speak Swedish (Member of the city council, female).

…When I ordered this form for my annual taxation, the so-called taxation card, then the person on the phone said: “But hey this is in Swedish now, I can’t understand it. Do you understand it??” And I said “I have not ordered it by accident, I am Swedish-speaking.” “Oh” the person said “So it is okay with you, it’s really okay that it’s in Swedish?” (Swedish-speaking Finn 1, male).

…just five – six days ago I was at the tax office, and the women was wondering why my papers where in Swedish and I said that is my mother tongue, I am Swedish speaking and she said “oh sorry, good that you didn’t speak Swedish” (Swedish-speaking Finn 2, male).
It seems to be the rule more than the exception that the Swedish-speaking Finns have at least one story where they have been mistaken for a foreigner and have experienced other misunderstandings because they asked for assistance in Swedish.

What is most surprising to hear, despite the lack of Swedish skills, is that there are good opportunities, at least for employees of the regional council, to learn or refresh their Swedish skills:

…they can also use their working time for it [study Swedish] and for example I myself have taught Russian here at the elementary level for our staff because they are interested in it and we can use our working time, I don’t get any extra payment for teaching but the house is paying for the books and material” (Member of the regional council, female).

With such resources it is difficult to see what more can be done to increase the knowledge of Swedish without forcing employees to learn Swedish. Maybe this is the core, that people themselves have to take the initiative “…it is up to the people themselves if they want to refresh their skills” (Member of the regional council, female). It seems obvious; keeping in mind the TV show on FST5 as mentioned in chapter three, that Finland needs an open discussion on its bilingual status. At the moment it seems like the Finns have placed themselves between being bilingual in theory but far from it in practice; a situation that does not serve anyone’s best interest.

5.2.2 POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
Respondents have varied responses when asked what they would want to change or improve: the answers span from a small change to a multicultural issue:

I have never thought of this but now that you ask I can think of one thing they could actively do. They could, in every office here in Joensuu, think “Do we have a person who speaks good Swedish? We have.” Then that person should be pointed out so everybody in this office knows that if something comes in Swedish then that’s the person to go to. I think that in
many places like the municipality office they might already know but it could be more consciously policy so it’s not just something people happen to know, like the same with Russia for example (Swedish-speaking Finn 2, male).

The above quotation is a simple idea that would be quite easy to enforce and might be a more realistic solution instead of demanding and forcing all employees to be fluent in Swedish; they could focus on designating one or two individuals in each area/office. This way the public servants dealing with the Swedish-speaking Finns and other matters in Swedish will not forget Swedish, as one member of the regional council highlights, “Usually it happens that people forget the Swedish language because they don’t have to use it…” (Member of the regional council, female). Therefore, a deliberate and focused targeting of employees with good Swedish skills, both native Finnish and Swedish speakers, could improve the situation.

A Swedish-speaking Finns believes that the problems can be traced back to education and that teachers therefore need to be the centre of attention:

Teachers, teachers who have a positive attitude towards Swedish language, that’s where it starts. Of course it would also be nice to speak Swedish at the hospital but it all starts with the teaching so I would start with the teachers to make the learning something fun. There is something wrong with the way they are teaching Swedish at the moment, I have had a lot of pupils coming to me and parents who say “hi the Swedish does works” and they come to me with very low grads and I help them for five-six months and then they get good grades so there is something wrong there (Swedish-speaking Finn 3, female).

In general it is difficult to argue against the schools influence in this matter. The schools play a key role for learning Swedish and for many if not most Finnish-speaking Finns the only place that they hear Swedish and are forced to speak Swedish:

…the kids who start class seven and they have to start learning Swedish at a very bad age, they should start three years earlier then they would not
protest; now when they are 12 they protest... (Swedish-speaking Finn 2, male).

This thesis does not go into detail whether or not education is plays a pivotal role in attitudes toward Swedish language. This is a matter on its own worth exploring.

One of the respondents does express how he believes that it is possible to raise consciousness about the Swedish-speaking Finns:

...I think the question about other languages than Finnish should in a way be handled not as one complex but I think if you want to raise any consciousness about Swedish-speaking population you have to do it together or beside raising consciousness about the other language groups that are also represented here [Russians, Somali, English etc.], most of them in bigger numbers than Swedish-speakers and that could be done, and should be done by city authorities and regional authorities... (Swedish-speaking Finn 1, male).

He goes on by saying that it should be done not just because legislation demands it, but because he believes that it is not only a local problem, but a general problem in the Finnish society that lies behind:

...and not because of legislation only but mainly because Finland has not learned to live with a multicultural situation which practically has been true for 20 years now and in a way even before in history because of all the Swedish speaker and Russian speaker people that live here in Finland... (Swedish-speaking Finn 1, male).

Tariq Modood, who does not hesitate to call the United Kingdom multicultural, believes that the difference between the United Kingdom and Finland is that The United Kingdom has had 50 years to become multicultural, Finland is still in its early phase (Modood 2009). With immigrants Modood is right. However, Finland has been facing questions of multicultural influence for centuries do to an influx from neighbours such as Russia, Sweden, and the Baltic States. In addition, there have always been Sámi peoples
populating the Northern part of today’s Finland. As mentioned in 5.2.1; a discussion on bilingualism seems to be needed and, as several the respondents have pointed out; it could and should include other groups like the Sámi. Thus, it would also be a discussion on multiculturalism.
6. CONCLUSION

There is a clear boundary for Swedish speaking Finns in Joensuu. However, it is unclear whether it is only created by the city authorities, or if the Swedish-speaking Finns own conception of themselves in Joensuu adds to this boundary. What is clear is that Swedish-speaking Finns cannot receive services that they, by law, are entitled to from the local authorities in Joensuu. Although some of the public servants speak Swedish, it is so rare that approaching the local authorities in Swedish creates conflicts in term of delaying the matter due to lack of language skills and miscommunication. It does not mean that there are no services available in Swedish as most official documentation is in Swedish. However, even submitting tax papers or moving forms in Swedish can cause misunderstandings. In addition, online information as well as important safety information, like in the case of the Abloy fire, is not always available in Swedish. As a result, Swedish-speaking Finns are almost forced to use Finnish when they are dealing with the local authorities or are searching for assistance. At the same time, the Swedish-speaking Finns do not promote their right to receive service in Swedish by insisting on speaking Swedish or likewise. They instead express a sense of overbearing by saying that it is not really a problem because they can just speak Finnish. By doing so they are contributing to the spiral because they do not give the local authorities any impression that they want or need better service in Swedish. This is not limited to Joensuu; only 39 percent of Swedish-speaking Finns living in bilingual municipalities say that they always or mostly obtain service in Swedish. At the same time, 22 percent say they obtain service in Swedish either seldom or never (Oikeusministeriö 2009: 22).

It is quite paradoxical because several respondents prefer to use Swedish in many of these matters and speaking Finnish only worsens the situation by further alienating the public servants from the Swedish language responsibilities. The lack of service in Swedish is, however not easily resolved as it can be traced 20 years ago to when the respondents first arrived in Joensuu.
There are two concepts of equality; right to assimilate to the majority or dominate culture in the public sphere, with toleration of difference in the private sphere and the right to have one’s difference recognised and supported in both private and public sphere (Modood 2009). Swedish-speaking Finns clearly falls within the first category of equality as the milieu in Joensuu pushes towards assimilation in the public sphere. However, the first concept is also the lesser equal of the two as it contains inequality within itself ‘forcing’ someone to use another language other than their native tongue, in order to be treated as equal, in their home country is far from ideal.

Negative attitude towards Swedish-speaking Finns is very real and existing in Finland. The history, fear and national identity is very plausible reasons as to why the Finnish-speaking Finns feel so strongly towards their Swedish-speaking compatriots. However, the only real problem seems to be the language, Finnish speakers simply do not want to speak Swedish themselves or even others to speak Swedish and therefore it is nearly impossible to avoid talking about cultural racism as well. The need to assimilate, the unwillingness to speak Swedish, no matter what the reasons are, and the negative attitude towards Swedish language are all indicators of cultural racism and are all found in Joensuu. The situation in Joensuu, is however, much better than that of Helsinki and the main reason is without a doubt related to the low numbers of Swedish-speaking Finns in Joensuu. The low numbers makes the Swedish-speaking Finns less of a threat towards the Finnification of the area.

It is also clear that there are language boundaries for Swedish-speaking Finns in terms of moving to Joensuu. Despite the fact that some of these boundaries have at best only very little to do with language but more to do with geography and job opportunities; most are direct consequence of the very few and limited opportunities there are in Joensuu to use and speak Swedish. The lack of service in Swedish can therefore be seen as a kind of ‘border control’ or a harmful boundary; a way of discouraging Swedish-speaking Finns from moving to Joensuu, although it might be a non-intentional ‘border control’.
The few who does cross the boundary often find themselves, at one point or another, in the middle of some sort of identity crisis. It might not be a big crisis but being a Swedish-speaking Finn in Joensuu does take an effort and demand special attention if the culture is to be passed on.

Swedish-speaking Finns do not seem to feel marginalized in Joensuu, but at the same time they do feel there are some issues regarding Swedish and other languages which could and should be addressed publicly. In a way it seems that the question of marginalisation should be broadened to multiculturalism and not just duo-culturalism with Swedish- and Finnish-speaking Finns.

The local authorities are, at least on the unconscious level contributing to creating cultural racism towards the Swedish-speaking Finns. However, they are in a difficult situation as people with good Swedish language skills are hard to come by in Joensuu. The situation where Swedish-speaking Finns cannot receive assistance should not be happening. Paradoxically, Swedish-speaking Finns are actively contributing to their own cultural racism as they do not challenge assimilation in the public sphere and succumb to, “I just function in Finnish”. Thus, they follow Mathiesens thinking by acting powerless and thereby playing into the hands of the Finnish speakers.

The Swedish language remains, the most important tool against assimilation. When the Swedish-speaking Finns are ‘robbed’ of the opportunity to use their language, their legal right, they have no other way of upholding their culture or identity and will eventually cease to exist as an ethnic minority. Therefore, it is important to actively promote Swedish amongst public employees to preserve the use of Swedish in public offices and thereby live up to the legal promises of the Language Act of 2003. It is not enough to have optional Swedish courses for public employees but instead it seems to be necessary to have obligatory courses to maintain the language in public offices. The mandate for this is already in the law. In doing so, it is important to underline that Swedish is not being used
or seen in any way as a weapon against Finland, Finns or the Finnish language by the Swedish-speaking minority, quite the opposite. It is a means to express Finnishness.

6.1 FURTHER RESEARCH

There are a number of issues, in connection to this research that would be interesting to investigate further. One of the issues which I would like to focus on here is the schools as they constitute the foundation of teaching and learning Swedish for most people, not only in Joensuu. The schools have already been mentioned by some of the respondents as a place where the discussion about Swedish language is taking place. Therefore, it would be interesting to see the attitude pupils have when commencing their Swedish studies; where they get it from and what the schools and teachers do to solve it or at least get around it. This is of cause presuming that there is a negative attitude towards Swedish as one respondent suggested. It would also be interesting to see how Swedish is doing in ‘competition’ with English, German and especially Russian which has gained a foothold in Joensuu, and other border areas. In addition, it would be interesting to see who chooses to continue studies in Swedish at university level and beyond. What reasons do students have for choosing Swedish and how can they be a part of the solution, as they finish their studies and become civil servants in public offices of Joensuu.

On a global level it could be interesting to compare Finland with other bilingual countries like Switzerland or Canada to see what they understand by bilingualism; how they deal with it and if there are any similarities with Finland.

Finally, bringing in other ethnic groups such as the Sámi, Russians etc., could open the research towards a multicultural discussion. It would make an interesting contribution to the discussion to the much needed discussion on multiculturalism in Finland.
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Appendix A

Summary of interview with male Swedish-speaking Finn (SSF1) living in Joensuu. 2-4-2009.

Background/Introduction

SSF1 spend his childhood and adolescents in Helsinki as well as education before, rather coincidently, moving to Joensuu in 1994.

The reasons for moving to Joensuu were many, although it at the same time was somewhat of a coincidence that it was Joensuu:

Well it’s a sum of many different factors. I met my wife, she is not from this area but she had been studying here [Joensuu] and I also knew this town from earlier and this was the compromise town for us. She did not want to live in Helsinki and I was ready to move and then we just decided let’s choose Joensuu, we didn’t have a very strong connection to the town – only those from her studies and my former visits here so it was in a way a coincidence.

Discriminations/boundaries

When it comes to adapting to life in monolingual Finnish speaking Joensuu, as compared to bilingual Helsinki, SSF1 points out that being able to speak Finnish is key. He also points out that Finnish is necessary also in Helsinki.

For me it is no problem because I was so bilingual even before moving here. In Helsinki, when I was young and even though I attended a Swedish-speaking school and most, or let’s say many of my friends where Swedish speaking and my family was it for sure, you could not live only in Swedish, so to say.
However, part of the reason why Finnish was necessary, can only be described as cultural racism, which does not seem to exist in Joensuu.

There where situations in the streets or wherever, at that time, where you had to be a little bit careful not to speak Swedish too loudly because there where these guys who did not like Swedish to be spoken so they might come and threatened you or insult you or whatever, you learn to live with your language in a special way – this is not how I live here because here Swedish is so rare that people are not angry they are more wondering, they are more curious about you than anything else but it also means that you can’t expect anybody to understand you so you can’t use your mother tongue anywhere.

Despite Joensuu’s status as a monolingual municipality, SSF1 did not have any concerns about moving there.

No, I did not think about it then and I knew very well before moving here that it is not possible to have service or very much communication in Swedish in Joensuu because I have travelled a lot inside Finland and know different regions and towns rather well so I knew very well how it is.

He does, however, believe that the language plays a role as a boundary for Swedish-speaking Finns.

Swedish-speaking Finns, there are of cause many types of Swedish-speaking Finns as well as in any population and there are quite a lot of people inside that population that couldn’t imagine to move to a town like this but I can just say that, as a background, it’s true that even today most of the Swedish speaking population lives in areas or town where they are the majority or there are a lot, so many that it can be considered bilingual to some extend so you have the signs [in Swedish], you can find people in the shops, library or healthcare centres who can at least understand you when you speak Swedish.

When it come to using Swedish with the authorities in Joensuu the answer is very clear, there is no Swedish-speaking help.
No, not to any authorities in this town or area... No use. No chance. I mean there are single individuals who might be even good at Swedish but you can’t count on it at all and it has happened, maybe once or twice that some civil servant has been able to understand or even speak Swedish and that has been like a funny situation but we are not handling the matter in Swedish, maybe we have talked about some other things in Swedish but the real matter has to be discussed in Finnish to get it right. Let say a situation that has occurred more than once it that, most authorities in Finland have all their forms in both languages because the legislation says they have to have them, like these forms for your personal taxation. So I ordered all my forms and papers in Swedish because it is possible and I like to have it that way. When I ordered this form for my annual taxation, the so-called taxation card, then the person on the phone said: “But hey this is in Swedish now, I can’t understand it. Do you understand it?” And I said “I have not ordered it by accident, I am Swedish-speaking.” “Oh” the person said “So it is okay with you, it’s really okay that it’s in Swedish?” that tells a lot that there are so few of us, that people working in authorities where that should be able to serve people, with Swedish as their mother tongue, they have not thought about it at all. Legally they should be possible to serve but practically they have not thought about it at all, they don’t oppose it but very few people can do it and most of them have never thought about it or been be even forced to think about it.

On the regional or the local level it’s really a lucky situation if you can find anybody who can serve you in Swedish.

When it comes to how the local authorities, is handling their job at providing service in Swedish, the answer is not so clear but he does indicate that area has room for improvement.

…I have not been forced to take any problem to the court or any sever health problems but if I remember correctly there are in some of these places you can find some individuals who might be able to handle your case, even in Swedish but that is more by accident than by purpose or by legislation imposed.

He believes that the legislation is good but there are simply too few Swedish-speakers in the area to uphold the service. Also when asked where he thinks the city could improve he
indicates that the Swedish-speaking Finns are too few and that the question therefore needs to be combined with other language minorities.

Well I think that the amount of Russian speaking people in this area is at least 20 times bigger than that of the Swedish speaker and even that question is quite non-existing. Also the number of English speaking is much bigger than that of the Swedish speakers and now we have a large amount of refugee from Somalia again in this area, we had a big group 20 years ago but they have moved to other places but now we have a lot of Somali speakers again maybe only for a short while but I think the question about other languages than Finnish should in a way be handled not as one complex but I think if you want to raise any consciousness about Swedish-speaking population you have to do it together or beside raising consciousness about the other language groups that are also represented here, most of them in bigger numbers than Swedish-speakers and that could be done, and should be done by city authorities and regional authorities and not because of legislation only but mainly because Finland has not learned to live with a multicultural situation which practically has been true for 20 years now and in a way even before in history because of all the Swedish speaker and Russian speaker people that live here in Finland. I think the city authorities have some programs or plans for multiculturalism, how to approach it, but I don’t know those plans at all. They have done something, they could maybe have done more or should be doing more about it because the identity of this area has for a very long time been that we are homogeneously in many ways, not only linguistically, but also we are North Karelians and we differ from, especially those in southern Finland, but also from the people in Savo area, Savolaiset, then we have Russia, we differ from them of cause and we are, not isolated on an island, but in a way it is some sorts of island identity, “we are special in our own way but it’s a good way and we all understand each other”. That sort of identity is always a little bit risky because they exclude so much even though it is a homogeneously group it excludes quite many opinions and backgrounds and conscientious and so on. Especially it excludes people who don’t fit into it so that identity should be broadened and reflect the real situation where we today have around a thousand non-Finnish speakers in the town and it is growing, and will continue to grow.

Even though he thinks that there are unresolved issues when it comes to the minorities living in Joensuu, he does not think of himself as marginalized nor does he feel that it is reasonable to demand that the authorities live up to the legislation.

Of cause I could, I mean the term is formally correct but I don’t feel marginalized like that because when the amount of Swedish speaking people living in this area is counted in tens it’s in a way an impossible
Language/culture

The lack of Swedish language in Joensuu does seem to create some difficulties for the Swedish-speaking Finns in terms of upholding their culture.

...if I’m really, really longing to speak Swedish I can find certain individuals to do it with and I also have some friends who can do it but otherwise it just means if I want to use my mother tongue I have to find other ways for it but if I would be a single person it could be a problem because it’s not so easy to uphold your language and your culture if you can’t speak your language but I have two daughters they have been born here but I have been using my mother tongue with them since they have been born so for 15 years I have been speaking Swedish every day with them which I didn’t do before I had them and nowadays they even answer in Swedish, their mother is Finnish-speaking, so we are a bilingual family so that it is the basis for my bilingualism.

The difficulties of upholding identity and culture are not made any easier by the authorities as they, accordingly to SSF1 do not help to promote or uphold the culture of the minority,
but at the same time he points out that the small numbers of Swedish-speaking Finns makes it difficult.

Not that I know about. In a way you could phrase it as this question is marginalized but it is more like non-existent because we are so few that most of us either don’t have any problem with it or don’t consider it possible to consider it a problem or too few to make any strong demands or to make any noise about it.

He also has mixed feelings in regards to missing Swedish culture when asked:

No very much, because that culture was not that important for me even before. I didn’t have very many relatives so I didn’t have regular communication in Swedish, or not too much and what I had I could still uphold over the phone and by meeting my relatives in other places or here. Things that I of course miss is the possibility to go to the theatre or listen to discussions in Swedish not so much to talk it because I talk it with my children some friends and some relatives over the phone and so on and papers can be sent all over and since I had my children I started to read much more in Swedish than I did before because it just felt more important and more close to read in Swedish.

In addition, he has some reservations how the language situation in Joensuu could make him move back to Helsinki in the future:

I would say that the biggest question from this linguistic and cultural perspective is what I will do when I get old. It is quite typically that when you get really old you retire mentally and return more to your mother tongue and your original culture and it happens to many people that they forget their other languages even if they have been strong before. I can imagine a future for myself where I try to get the personal at a retirement home to understand me, I’ll explain in Swedish and they won’t understand me, that is a very possible situation and I know some of my Swedish-speaking friend in this area say that they will move to the south and western parts of Finland because of this, to be close to their relative and to have the possibility to move into a place where the personal understand your Swedish and I am very conscience about that so I might be my future too.
When asked about the future of the Swedish-speaking minority in Joensuu and if he thinks that they are in danger of disappearing completely, taking into account that the numbers have been dropping. He feels confident that although the numbers and people will fluctuate there will also be some Swedish-speaking Finns who will be attracted to the region for different reason, much like himself.

No I don’t think so because the Swedish-speaking do not come here as refugees most of them come here to study or to work but after the study they move somewhere else to work and those who come here to work, they will get older and might move somewhere else, or some move some stay but I think the amount of Swedish-speakers working at, especially university, will fluctuate but I see no reason why they would disappear totally because the amount is anyway quite small but I think they won’t disappear. Several of the people I know and I have met, who live in this area, they have some personal, mental or cultural reason to still live in this area, they all wanted to come here and original also to stay here. The reasons can be very different but what several of them have mentioned is that this area is cultural different from that of southern or western Finland where most Swedish-speaking people live so some Swedish speaking people like it because this is a little bit slower or more Easton in some way and also Finnish-speaking people from Helsinki or from Turku come here for the same reasons and some stay also because they like maybe the culture, the physical climate which is a little bit different, the differences are not big but depending on your personality and your personal history it can be deciding for you if you stay or leave. I don’t know about Denmark but inside Finland we have had this big move from the northern and Easton part to the south and western parts but there has also always been a counter move where especially northern Finland but also Easton Finland has been attracting people and the reasons are many but in the western population there are always people who are attracted by areas that are different from what they have become accustomed to and also Joensuu and North Karelia is an area that has been attracting for some people, some of those are Swedish-speaking.
Appendix B

Summary of interview with male Swedish-speaking Finn (SSF2) living in Joensuu. 29-4-2009.

Background/Introduction

SSF2 has lived in Joensuu for 20 years, but unlike many other Swedish-speaking Finns he has lived most of his childhood in Finnish speaking dominate areas of Finland. Although Swedish was always spoken in the family, there has always been a quite strong influence of Finnish from the society and friends around him. Much like SSF1, moving to Joensuu was somewhat of a coincident due to his wife’s work.

Discriminations/boundaries

SSF2 believes that his strong Finnish language skills and his own experiences with living in Finnish speaking areas is the reason why he did not have any concerns about moving to Joensuu, but he does think that most Swedish-speaking Finns would have concerns.

I did not have any concerns, because my Finnish is just as strong as my Swedish and because I knew what it is like in the Finnish part of Finland because I have lived several places when I was a child and a young man but I know that maybe 90 percent of the Finn-Swedes would say that they have problem to move to a very Finnish area.

I am sure that the great majority of Swedish-speaking Finns would hesitate and even fight against having to move here. I would say maybe 90 percent at least, would not like the idea.

He also finds it easy to be a Swedish-speaking Finn in Joensuu, even easier than in Helsinki, indicating that there exists a more hostile attitude towards Swedish-speaking Finns in Helsinki than in Joensuu. Nonetheless, you cannot have any problems with speaking Finnish.
It’s very easy for me because I have no problem with the language and also it’s easy because we are so few people so they don’t recognise us as a problem. We are such a small minority so we are more or less exotic but we are not dangerous, it’s different in Helsinki for example.

Just like SSF1, he does not speak Swedish with the authorities in Joensuu because they cannot and do not want to speak Swedish. In return he does want to demand it when he can just as easily speak Finnish. He does however, sometimes speak Swedish if the person there wants to.

No. Sometimes I might know that the person speaks some Swedish and wants to speak some Swedish to practice then I speak Swedish but otherwise never because I know that maybe, well almost everyone of them don’t speak Swedish and don’t want to speak Swedish so why would I make trouble because I speak Finnish so easily.

He does state that if he is in places with more Swedish speakers he then choose to speak in Swedish.

…but if I am in Helsinki then I do it because there are so many Swedish speaking people and there are also tourist coming in from Sweden so there they should be ready to use Swedish but not here. I don’t want to demand such a thing from them.

The lack of Swedish in Joensuu has, however not let him feeling marginalized.

…but sometimes when I work with people, I mean what I say now is not much it’s just a slight touch of what I am now trying to say, sometimes I have experienced that when I disagree with someone or we are a group of people working and I disagree about something I have noticed that when we look for solutions for the problem then one solution is that “Ok that guy comes from somewhere else and we don’t really understand him because he is a Finlandsvensk, he is strange” It’s an easy explanation… So I have felt it a few times but it’s just very slightly, not a problem really.
When asked about magnetization in terms of not been able to get service in Swedish the answer is quite the same. 

No, I just function in Finnish. 

Despite not feeling marginalized, he does fell and believe that there is resentment towards Swedish-speaking Finns, also in Joensuu.

Yes there is, there is resentment against the Swedish speakers. 

Yes of cause but it is not very active it’s more passive because we are so few. …the kids who start class seven and they have to start learning Swedish at a very bad age, they should start three years earlier then they would not protest, now when they are 12 they protest, there is the discussion about Swedish and it’s okay that it’s going on because of cause they should discuss it but only there not in the society, only in schools and in families that have kids that have to learn Swedish and their parents might be against… that discussion is going on…

Despite the fact that he does think the city has any policy on Swedish language in public service he does feel it is fair to demand the rights given in the Language Act.

…legally its fair but practically it’s not very fair. I have never thought of this but now that you ask I can think of one thing they could actively do. They could, in every office here in Joensuu, think “Do we have a person who speaks good Swedish? We have.” Then that person should be pointed out so everybody in this office knows that if something comes in Swedish then that’s the person to go to. I think that in many places like the municipality office they might already know but it could be more consciously policy so it’s not just something people happen to know, the same with Russian for example. The shops, that need costumers they do it actively. They take a person to work there because the person speaks Russian that could be done also.
…more focus on the possibility that somebody wants to write, phone or come in and talk Swedish. A more consciously approach and attitude to the possibility that would not be demanding very much of those in power, but I think it is not done…

Language/culture

Even though Swedish is almost non-existing in Joensuu, he stresses that he believes it is the culture more than the language that keeps Swedish-speaking Finns from moving to Joensuu.

…it’s too far away… Not so much the language but being too far away from your culture because it is a different culture. When the Swedish-speaking Finns are amongst themselves they have some special things that the Finns don’t have so it’s like coming partly to a new culture.

He further underlines the gap between Swedish-speaking Finns and the local population in Joensuu.

…most of the Finns here don’t even understand what I am when I speak Swedish because the Finn-Swedes language is so far away and strange for these people here…

He also says that he misses Swedish-speaking culture and the language after so many years in Joensuu.

Yes of cause. During these 20 years I have had periods when I have felt that my Swedish language was a bit troubled, because I don’t use it so much. That is not a very big problem but I have felt it sometimes… what I miss or what I feel like I lose when I live here is maybe about humour, not laughing humour but some kind of difference in mentality. My Finn-Swede work, before I came here, dealt with problems in a different way… It’s difficult to say exactly what it is but… I feel homesick when I have problems to deal with people because that does it in a different way.
SSF2 has like SSF1 been speaking Swedish to his children and have at the same time been in a lucky situation where he can use and speak Swedish in his working life as well. He has also met Finnish-speaking Finns who find it interesting to speak Swedish with him although it is just a few sentences.

Yes, I speak Swedish with my children – well they are already grown up so they don’t live here anymore but I have been speaking Swedish with them. I have a few friends who want to speak Swedish, so I speak Swedish with them. Then when I work I use quite a lot of Swedish, not every day but often because I make phone calls, I look for information, I have my Swedish-speaking network and quite often I speak Swedish on the phone and then I happen to have a guy working where I work and his mother is Swedish-speaking so we speak Swedish together, this has been going on just for two years but it’s really nice because almost every day I speak Swedish at my work, which is quite strange. People in the South of Finland or in the West will not believe it’s true but it happens to be true.

…I know many, many Finns that want to practice their Swedish and when I walk around in the centre I sometimes run into these people more than once a week and then we stay in the market square and we speak Swedish together, just for a few minutes but it is really nice.

Speaking Swedish is for him the most important way of maintaining his culture although he does have other means to express Swedish-speaking culture. At the same time he has become much more aware of maintaining his culture after moving to Joensuu.

I use my language very much when I work so it’s a natural way to keep it up and then of cause my kids speak Swedish because I have spoken it to them and of cause some traditions that come from my background we have kept alive.

I am much, much more aware of maintaining, keeping a hold on my language and culture. I am much, much more aware than people who live in Turku or Vaasa, they just go on living their lives and they have no threats at least if they feel some its very vague and far away. I have been very, very consequently using my language concerning my kids for instance because it has been an effort really. I have had to, you know, forced to use my Swedish and to explain words, because I have been, more or less, the only person they hear. Of cause they hear others sometimes but everyday only me. So when I speak I try to use a rich language so if I use a
word that I know or guess they don’t understand then I use it with synonyms or I explain it short in Finnish and then I go on with my Swedish so it is a very consciously effort, it has to be and it has taken some energy also.
Summary of interview with female member of the regional council 26-6-2009.

Background/Introduction

The Regional Council of North Karelia is a public regional authority and the respondent (RC) is working primarily with regional develop, regional strategy planning and international question.

Swedish in the public sector

Because there are so few Swedish-speaking Finns in Joensuu RC does not really see any problems in regards to implementation Swedish in the public sector

If I look at it from the perspective of the region I think that the Swedish speaking population is quite small here so it is not a problem, so in our field, regional council, it is not a problem, it does not appear. Of course we try to develop this region more and more international but because Swedish speakers are not international people but domestic they are not really involved, so honestly I haven’t faced that question.

For the same reasons service in Swedish is not something that the city, accordingly to her, is able to offer.

…mainly in Finnish and of cause we should have in Swedish but it’s not like in Lapland for example, where the Sami mainly live. There they have to produce all their documents in four languages, in Finnish and three Sami dialects. On the West coast, Pohjanmaa they have to provide in Swedish, they are bilingual, but not here in Karelia we are not bilingual so we only have to provide in Finnish. I think it is very rare, it has not happened to me in the six years I have been working here that we should have used Swedish because Swedish-speakers who live here they also speak Finnish.
Therefore she also points out that Swedish is not recognized as an important languages to speak when working for the city and that there have been talks of teaching Russian in schools instead of Swedish as well as experiments with implementing Russian in border municipalities.

Yes, English is the most important. Of cause Russian is nowadays becoming more important. Now, for example, in the room next to us there is a meeting between people who are working with external borders of the European Union they are having a meeting and the neighbours here are Russians and Russian speaking country but the common language is English. But if you think in common service here in North Karelia then Russian is more important… the municipality which is on the border to Russia here, they have started experiments of having Russian language, don’t remember what status, but using it on the same level as Swedish. It is an initiative that the regional council has supported. There is always the question, if Swedish should be replaced with Russian in school, here in North Karelia, because there is a much higher demand for Russian than for Swedish language here. My personal opinion is no. I speak Russian and Swedish but I think that Swedish has a different position because it is our second domestic language and not a foreign language.

Because Swedish is rarely used she does not think it is difficult to find staff with adequate Swedish skills.

…it is not really a problem for us because it is so rare, but usually we have, for our positions, a demand for upper high school degree and they usually have the Swedish degree because it is obligatory in Finland. So in practice it is not a problem.

There are no demands to improve or maintain language skills but the regional council supports the idea.

Usually it happens that people forget the Swedish language because they don’t have to use it and it is up to the people themselves if they want to refresh their skills. However in general our council supports everyone who wants to improve their language ability.
When asked RC even say that the regional council pays the costs.

Yes, and they can also use their working time for it and for example I myself have taught Russian here at the elementary level for our staff because they are interested in it and we can use our working time, I don’t get any extra payment for teaching but the house is paying for the books and material.

**Culture in Swedish**

Despite the fact that RC is well aware of the language situation in Joensuu, she has not heard that it stops Swedish-speaking Finns from moving to Joensuu, although she admits not have the insight on the service area specific.

No, I haven’t heard that and like I told you earlier I have worked earlier for the city council and worked with international connections but at the service level, let’s say if you are a Swedish speaker and you need to go to the healthcare and so on, I can’t answer those question but at a general level I don’t think it is a problem because Joensuu itself is a very international place, in its context, so I don’t think it is a problem.

When asked about demands for a Swedish school or day-care she again says that she does not have the insight on that specific topic but that she does not believe that the need for such an institution is present at this time.

Well maybe you should ask the city council or administration about that but what I think and what I know about that there are not any demands now for that. I have worked quite a lot with this English speaking school or actually international school, earlier and the demand mainly came from the European Forrest Institute that we have here and also from the university it brings a lot of foreign people here and they need to have this international school and the Russian language school is in a network of three school and working quite well now. So at least now I haven’t heard that there is a demand for a Swedish speaking institute right now, but I think that if there would be a demand these institutions would work to get it.
When it come to promoting culture, she say that much like with the language courses for staff, it has to come from the people but that the regional council supports such initiatives.

...Pohjola-Norden association, the municipality and other associations are quite supportive of that but of cause it comes from the activity of the people so it is not that kind of activity that the city or municipality organizes but I think that almost all municipalities in North Karelia have a twin city in Sweden or another Nordic country so on a civil society level there is quite an active cooperation and all kinds of cultural activities come from that direction.

She also elaborates on the twin city idea.

When it began it was 1948 and in that time Finland was recovering from the war and Sweden was not. There was this kind of connection that was established because Swedish people wanted to help the Finns, there is even a day-care centre from that time, nearby the church, and it was a present from Linköping city to Joensuu. Of cause, afterwards, the cooperation has balanced and now I think the most important way to cooperate is the exchange groups of young people and that is of cause to learn the language, learn other cultures and of cause using the Swedish language because as I told you there are very few possibilities to speak Swedish North Karelia and it is a very big experience for the young people that they can go to Sweden and speak Swedish and see how important it is to have language abilities, that is nowadays the most common cooperation. It has changed a lot in the resent years after we joined the European Union this internationalisation has expanded so nowadays these old twin city contacts are not so important but earlier they where and I have kind of analysed this process and in the beginning it was kind of the start to this whole internationalisation process.
Appendix D

Summary of interview with female member of the City Board 17-9-2009.

Background/Introduction

Joensuu City Board is the municipality’s representative and responsible for that the decisions made by the Council are implemented in accordance with the law. The board has nine members. The respondent (CB) has been on the board around three years and has prior to that been in the culture and leisure time board as well as a member of the regional council.

Swedish in the public sector

CB does really see any challenges when it comes to implementation service in Swedish in Joensuu, mainly because it is not necessary in everyday life.

In this part of Finland we don’t normally need to use Swedish, everyone have learnt Swedish in school at least for three years but most of us have studied it for six years and if you have university degree you have also done basic studies there but we live it that kind of area where you do not need to use it in daily life.

She therefore also believes that good service in Swedish would be rather difficult to find and people might choose English instead.

Of course, some service is available in Swedish but it is very easy to find in formations in English and in Russian too because we have connection to the Russian border. But I think it would be a little bit difficult to find people that can really help you in Swedish so people normally select English if they can. Of course all the main areas like living and healthcare system and so on there should be information in Swedish too.
Like the regional council representative, she feels that Russian and especially English are more important in the everyday work than Swedish, which she seems to think is being replaced.

Actually it is not so important… Swedish is compensatory but we often switch to English even though it is a pity.

I think it is more important to speak English and Russian… But I think it is very useful that we have a common Scandinavian language like Swedish so when we travel to different countries we can understand what people say there but it is difficult for other to understand Finnish.

Because Swedish is so rarely used in Joensuu, she finds that it is difficult to find staff with good Swedish skills when hiring.

I think it is. Normally there are only a few people who use Swedish and I think that for example this kind of interview that you are doing, would be very difficult to find people who can speak Swedish good enough to do it here in Joensuu.

Consequently she also sees it as an advantage if you speak good Swedish, although still not in everyday life.

Of course, there can be some special areas where it would be useful to speak Swedish. If you have some common projects or at university there are some areas where they need Swedish speakers but not in daily life.

When asked if she knows of any opportunities or demands for public employees to improve or maintain their Swedish skills she indicates that using Swedish really is rare and that she have not heard of anything like that.
At the moment I can’t recall any… Normally you have to be interested in different language yourself, there are not any special areas here in Joensuu where it is compensatory to know Swedish, of course it is in our law that you should get every information in Swedish too and if you work in the state for Suomen hallitus or valtion for example then you have to have basic knowledge of Swedish but I think it is very hard to find those people.

**Culture in Swedish**

In relation to the lack of Swedish used in Joensuu she thinks that it can be a boundary for Swedish-speaking Finns to come to Joensuu.

Yes I think so but of course there are not really any jobs where Swedish is required… I think that this part of Finland is not so popular amongst Swedish-speaking Finns because there are other areas where you really need Swedish and many municipalities that have both Finnish and Swedish, also in schools. I don’t think there are any specific areas that are very attractive for Swedish speaking Finns unless you are interested in Russia somehow. But if you are not at the university teaching Swedish there are not many areas.

Though she does not think the region is very attractive for Swedish-speaking Finns, it is not something that is ever discussed in the City Board, only in relation to receiving a guest.

No it is not. Of course, if we have some guests coming from Sweden or our friendship cities in Scandinavia then we have to see who can speak some Swedish and actually there are not a lot. Of course, many of us can understand but for example me, I normally choose English.

Neither has she ever heard of any demands for a Swedish school or day-care.

No. There is no need for that kind of school… I have never heard that some wants to have a Swedish day-care for example.
In fact, she has never heard any requests from Swedish speakers about more cultural events or better service in Swedish in Joensuu, and does believe that there is a need for more than what already is available.

No, in this part of Finland it is not a part of our daily lives... if we organized something like that there might come 10 people. If you would have this kind of interview in for example Vaasa you would get totally different answers, there are huge difference. There might only be 500km but for us here in Joensuu, Swedish is far away when you compare to Russian, and as you have head there is a Russian school and at the moment it is very popular because when you study Russian here it is very easy to get for example a summer job in a shop.

...they are [Swedish-speaking Finns in Joensuu] quite invisible. I have been in politics for 16-17 years and I can’t remember any discussing about Swedish language or improving knowledge of Swedish culture and so on. Of course we are in a time where it is very easy to get access to information and if you want to hear Swedish just turn on the FST channel. If you like to maintain your knowledge of Swedish culture it is easy to find it from the TV as well, so I think that at the moment it is enough for the people living here in this part of Finland.

In regards to using the Swedish friendship city Linköping as cultural exchange she says that there is some but that the bond is deteriorating.

There is some, but not so often. There used to be meetings every second year in these friendship cities but not anymore and Linköping has a new municipality and they are thing right now about what kind of connection they want with us, so it’s kind of fading.
Appendix E


Background/Introduction

Just like the other Swedish speaking respondents, SSF3 is not originally from Joensuu but from Helsinki and have lived 24 years in Joensuu. The reason for moving to Joensuu was also somewhat of a coincidence and connected to family life. “I found my husband up here. I was on a tour and jumped of the bus here.”

Discriminations/boundaries

Even though it was a coincidence that she ended up in Joensuu, SSF3 did however intend to move away from the typical Swedish-speaking areas of Finland and had therefore no concerns about moving to Joensuu.

…I wanted to go far away from the Swedish speaking group I really wanted to get away, but it was not intended that it was Joensuu.

Despite wanting to get away from the Swedish speaking area, coming to Joensuu was quite a shock in the beginning.

Well nowadays it’s okay, today I am a proud Finlandssvensk in Joensuu but for the first two years it was a real culture shock because I could not even hear the radio in Swedish and that is something that I have been brought up with, listening to the radio in Swedish so I really had to think how I could hear the radio.
Despite the culture shock she has never felt discriminated in Joensuu, in fact just the opposite.

No, no, no, no. On the contrary that was something that I felt in Helsinki and there you could feel the negative and kind of mean behaviour.

In Helsinki I, in a way had double identity. I had to be Finnish in Helsinki in order to survive in the 70’s because to be a Finlandssvensk in Helsinki you would get kicked and beaten up but when I moved here I was exotic. It was like “oh wow you speak Swedish, that fucking horrible language that no one knows”.

SSF3 also explains that she thinks the whole issue of Swedish-speaking Finns is both taboo and hostile. Her past experiences still linger.

Both taboo and hostile and I still have fear in me from when some of my friends got beaten up in the 70’s because they were Swedish speakers. For example my daughter came home and said “I am Hurri, Hurri” and that was something that was really bad behaviour towards us when someone called you Hurri, it was like stabbing so when she came home and said that I was like “who said that?” and she just though it was funny because she didn't have the same fear that I have. I had to learn Finnish very quickly when I was a little girl because I knew that it is not good to be a Swedish speaking.

Accordingly to her, the negative attitude towards Swedish speakers is today still going on in Helsinki.

“…I have a lot of friends in Helsinki and it [negative attitude] still goes on…”

Despite the negative attitude in Helsinki she still thinks that Joensuu’s lack of Swedish and low numbers of Swedish speakers keeps Swedish-speaking Finns from moving in the city.
Absolutely! Swedish-speaking Finns don’t know anything from outside Kehä III, [Kehä III is the outer highway surrounding the metropolitan area] that is a joke, but they know everything from Helsinki and down to France and so on but it is not media-sexy enough to come to Joensuu.

Regardless of the fact that Joensuu is much less hostile than Helsinki she still expresses that there exists some sort of unconscious reluctance towards Swedish, even in Joensuu.

I don’t think that they really think about it, it is just an old saying, an inheritance in school that Swedish is so horrible and difficult to learn but then they learn English and German like “that” so I think that it is something that they inherit from their parents, it’s so difficult for them to learn because they don’t hear it anywhere. My daughter’s cousin just started Swedish at the university because she got inspired from hearing us talk so when they hear it it’s ok.

…in politics, yes of course if there is a debate they have very hard opinion but they don’t really think what the consequences are. When I tried to get my children into Swedish speaking groups in school it was hot, the discussion was like “why? In Finland you speak Finnish” and that kind of things. So underneath the exotic there is some hardness somewhere.

She has stopped trying to speak Swedish with the city authorities and now only uses it as a kind of torment because she knows no one understands her.

No not anymore. I have a couple of good stories, when I moved here I had to fill out some paper to the police that I was living here and of course I filled out all the papers in Swedish. Two day later the paper came back and it said that I had forgotten to write my nationality. So I had to call and say that I was Finnish. I also got Swedish tax papers, from Sweden when I asked for the tax papers in Swedish. And just five – six days ago I was at the tax office, and the women was wondering why my papers were in Swedish and I said that is my mother tongue, I am Swedish speaking and she said “oh sorry, good that you didn’t speak Swedish” so those are the days when I have to shake my head. So I don’t use Swedish anymore, only with the police, that is fun.

…I can’t speak with the tax authorities, with KELA, [The Social Insurance Institution of Finland] no way. Or maybe they dig up some old guy from
the grave he comes and speak really old Swedish and everything gets delayed with five-six weeks.

Like the other Swedish speaking respondents, she does not really see herself as marginalized when asked, at least not anymore.

Yes and no, all my friends know that I am Finlandssvensk so they call me when they need translation for school or something like that but no one really thinks that we are a minority and I don’t really think about it because this place is so Finnish. But if you had asked me 20 years ago I would have been screaming.

Even though she does not feel marginalized it is not due to the city’s way of handling their job of providing service in Swedish.

[Laughter] There is none, none! [Laughter] that was almost a joke [Laughter].

It is also an area where she not only thinks they can do better but that they should do better; like the other Swedish speaking respondents she also feels that other minorities should have better conditions.

Absolutely and they should be doing it better, I mean there is 40-50 of us here so they should be doing better, it is my right, and also Sami, both minorities but there is nothing, not the hospital no nothing. I worked at the hospital before and I had a few Swedish speaking patients and they always called me “hi, come here now I need you”.

When asked where she thinks the biggest problems is, she indicates that there is not just one problem and therefore points to what she believe there is a source to the problem.
Teachers, teachers who have a positive attitude towards Swedish language, that’s where it starts. Of course it would also be nice to speak Swedish at the hospital but it all starts with the teaching so I would start with the teachers to make the learning something fun. There is something wrong with the way they are teaching Swedish at the moment, I have had a lot of pupils coming to me and parents who say “hi the Swedish does works” and they come to me with very low grads and I help them for five-six months and then they get good grades so there is something wrong there.

**Language/culture**

Despite not seen herself as marginalized she does point out that she absolutely sees herself as a Swedish-speaking Finn and being a Swedish-speaking Finn is being a part of a minority with a different culture.

…different cultural things and traditions, from music to having parties, celebrating different events. What I have learned here is that they don’t have birthdays but they celebrate name days so I was really confused when I came here and had a big party on my birthday but not on my name day. That is just a small example. The food culture is also different and also the way of thinking, here in Joensuu people are so moody, everything is so negative and Swedish-speaking Finns normally always look for the positive things, mostly.

Consequently, she also misses different things when living in Joensuu.

…I miss my daily paper and when my children were born I needed the school and the kindergarten and that kind of daily stuff…

Moving to Joensuu has also made her more aware of upholding traditions, the language and of being a Swedish-speaking Finn in general.

Yes, absolutely especial after my kids were born then it really became a conscious thing speaking with them. I have always been very aware of talking Swedish when I have the possibility.
…my Swedish was really Helsinki-Swedish which was really bad. So when I came here I had to clean up my Swedish when I spoke to my children, because I realized that half of the words were Finnish.

…I talk Swedish. I also watch Swedish TV, I read a lot in Swedish. We have this Svenska klubben, not my idea of keeping up Swedish. It started sort of as a joke. I and a guy did a radio programme together and there it sort of stared as a joke at first. But I have Christmas traditions that are different, maybe some Easter as well. Some small things mainly in everyday life, the way my house is decorated and so on.

Although it is obvious that the language is the biggest issue, speaking Swedish conversation is almost limited to the children.

With my children, both of my children speaks Swedish and of course with two-three friends that I have known since school but I see them really seldom.
Appendix F

Summary of interview with female member of the City Council 30-11-2009.

Background/Introduction

The city council is the highest decision making body in Joensuu, and therefore decides how the city’s finances are used. Public servants suggest solutions but the decisions are made by the city council. The respondent (CC) is one of the council’s 51 members. There are currently six different political parties represented in the council.

Swedish in the public sector

When asked about what she considers the biggest challenges regarding the implementing the Swedish language in the public sector, CC indicates that although she does really see any problems, due to a low number of Swedish speakers, many public servants simply can’t speak the language.

Well we almost never need Swedish for anything. I think our public servants must have learnt Swedish in School but I think that most of them can’t speak Swedish fluently, they can read and they understand but they can’t speak fluently.

…it is passive [public servants knowledge of Swedish]. I think that most of the people here in the city organisation who are from North Karelia, they don’t like to try and speak Swedish because their Swedish is so bad and it’s so difficult.

For the same reasons she also says that the city normally only provides service in Finnish.
Only Finnish unless it is a special issue…all forms are in Finnish, but I don’t know if they find any in Russian if there are some Russians who need special service. I think there are some but I have never seen them. It’s only in Finnish you can get all the services on everyday matters.

To be able to speak Russian also seems to be more important than Swedish, because it has a much higher uses in everyday matters.

It’s more important to speak Russia, but very few are able to. Russian is everyday language here nowadays.

The importance of the Russian language has increased over the last two decades.

…in the last 20 years [Russian has become more and more important], and we now hear Russian everywhere.

However, English is still the number one foreign language.

English is more important, but many can speak English and try to speak English. It is much more popular than Swedish and young people can English but Russian is a problem, we ought to understand it but we can’t.

By saying that it sometime is necessary to raise the salary of a position in order to get applicants with good Swedish skills, she clearly signals that it is difficult to find/attract people with good Swedish language skills to work for the city.

I think that most people with good Swedish skills don’t even try to come here. If we really need someone we can try to get one or two with higher seniority but we need it so rarely. You don’t need Swedish in most of the jobs but some jobs you have to.
The city does not organise any language courses for employees to improve their Swedish skills, but they do demand Swedish skills and there are opportunities to take the required courses.

Not quite sure but it’s nothing that I have heard. We very seldom speak about Swedish because we don’t need it. We are so far from Swedish speaking Finland so here you almost get a bit startled if you all of a sudden hear someone speak Swedish.

The city does not organize but the adult education centre does have Swedish courses and there it is also possible to do a public servant language degree. If you want to have a public job you need to have that degree is Swedish. Immigrants can also study Swedish or Finnish there.

**Culture in Swedish**

CC does believe that Joensuu’s status as monolingual Finnish municipality stop other Swedish-speaking Finns from moving to Joensuu, although she thinks that the geographical location is the biggest factor.

I think it can be the case, but Northern Karelia is so peripheral and I think that that is the main reason. We are far away and close to the Russian border, I don’t think that the Swedish-speakers in the south and west don’t know anything about Joensuu, they have never been here.

When specifically asked if she believes language plays a role in it her answer is:

Perhaps not very much, but it is true than people here don’t like Swedish so much.

Furthermore, it is not an issue that is discussed politically.
We speak a lot more about attracting foreign English speakers and that we should have an English school for them. The Swedish is not so important in that context.

Despite talks of having an English school, there have discussions of a Swedish equivalent, nor a day-care. However at times there have been attempts of bringing more Swedish into the schools; but has been dropped due to financial limitations.

Not Swedish school, but in the 80’s when we had more money then we tried that you could start Swedish or German or French in the third grade if we could get enough people. Not in all schools but one would have Swedish another Germans and so on. I think that it lasted for some years but nowadays I don’t think there is anything anymore and the main reason is that we now need groups for 15 people where we only needed eight or six before. Now we only have in one school where you can choose Russian or German.

When asked about cultural arrangements in Swedish, CC says that it is very limited and that English has overtaken Swedish.

    We don’t have very much, but we do have one group mainly a bit older people go there. It is a kind of Swedish club where people can go to practice their Swedish. I think that maybe 20 years ago Swedish was more popular than nowadays, English has taken over in most cases. Also today no one can speak German anymore like they use to, especially young people.

In relation to the friendship city Linköping, one idea has been to have school exchanges however the cooperation now has changed.

    We have it in all Northern countries, and idea is 30 years old and it was that we should have one in all Nordic countries and Pohjola-Norden arranged some school exchange between the cities and also funded it together with the cities. I’m not sure if the system still exists.
I think nowadays the connection is not as strong as earlier and there were more co-operations back then, but that is the case with all or most of the friendship cities. Now we more work together on economic and EU issues.

When asked if she ever, as a politician, have experienced demands for more culture in Swedish, better service etc., the answer is quite clear.

They are very invisible so those things have not been so actual, I can’t remember any things like that.

In fact, the city has never really been forced to think about how they handle their job in providing service in Swedish.

I am afraid that that is has not really been thought of because the need is so small that we haven’t had any need to pressure to develop it.
Appendix G

By keeping my interviews semi-opened I have sometimes skipped, added or changed questions during the interviews or between interviews, depending on how the interviews has developed. The questions showed below is therefore not all the questions that I have asked but they represents the questions that I have prepared before the interviews.

Questions for interviews with Swedish-speaking Finns

- Have you always lived in Joensuu?
- Why did you move here?
- Did you have any concerns about moving to Joensuu (language wise)?
- Do you think that the fact that Joensuu is a monolingual Finnish-speaking municipality stops Swedish-speaking from moving here to study, work etc.?
- In your own words; what is a Swedish-speaking Finns?
- Do you call yourself a Swedish-speaking Finn?
- How is it to be a Swedish-speaking Finn in Joensuu?
- Do you miss anything? [Swedish in everyday life]
- Do you use Swedish when you talk with city authorities?
- With whom do you speak Swedish in Joensuu?
- Do you feel marginalized as a Swedish-speaking Finn in Joensuu?
- Do you think/ experience that there is resentment towards Swedish language in Finland and in Joensuu specific?
- Do you think that Finns in general feel more strongly/ protective towards their language, culture than other (Nordic) countries?
• Do you do anything to maintain your language and culture?

• How would you say the city of Joensuu is handling their job of providing service in Swedish?

• Do you think they could do more than they are during?

• If you could change/improve some things what would it be?

Questions for interviews with city authorities

• What does the regional council/city board/city council do and what do you work with?

• In what languages does the city of Joensuu provide service?

• What are the main challengers, as you see it, when it comes to implementation the Swedish language in Joensuu?

• How important is it to be able to speak different language when you work for the city of Joensuu?

• Is it more useful to be able to speak English or maybe Russian than Swedish in the daily work?

• Is it difficult to find people with good Swedish skills when hiring new staff?

• Are there any opportunities/demands for public employees to learn/improve their Swedish? (Organised by the employer, paid by employer, during working hours etc.)

• Do you think that the fact that Joensuu is a monolingual Finnish-speaking municipality stops Swedish-speaking people from moving here to study, work, live etc.?
• In Joensuu there is English speaking day-care, a Russia school and there also use to be a Swedish school. Has there or are there any talks or wishes of have a Swedish-speaking day-care or school again?

• Are anything special being done to promote Swedish culture/ music etc.?

• What are the main ideas behind the co-operation with Linköping (friendship city)?

• Are there any cultural exchange between Joensuu and its Swedish friendship city Linköping?

• Is there any co-operation which involves Swedish? (Theatre, music, exhibitions, language courses, school exchange etc)

• As a member of the city board/regional council/city council, do you experience requests from local Swedish speakers asking for more/better service/cultural events etc. in Swedish?

• Is the Swedish-speaker visible on the local politic scene?

• Is it your understanding/experience that Joensuu is living up to the language requirements when it comes to the SSF?