LANGUAGE POLICIES: INSTRUMENTS IN CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING

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ABSTRACT

Objectives. To measure social capital in one multilingual region of northern Sweden. Earlier studies have neglected the language aspect of social capital development. To map cultural production (song, literature, theatre) in Meänkieli, Finnish, Saami and Swedish in the Swedish Torne Valley.

Methods. Statistical comparison of regions. Cultural statistics from electronic libraries are related to language policies, density of voluntary associations, unemployment, sickness and life expectancy. Lists of voluntary associations from municipality authorities.

Study design. The multilingual region contains five municipalities which are related to each other. Two monolingual regions are cited as references for the study: Finnish Torne Valley and parts of county Västerbotten.

Results. Pajala has the best institutionalisation of the former vernacular Meänkieli. Saami gains best institutional support in Kiruna. Gällivare has the weakest interest to maintain any minority language, whereas Haparanda promotes Finnish in education and administration. Övertorneå has some interest in Finnish and Meänkieli.

Cultural production corresponds with the institutionalisation of Meänkieli and Saami and develops best in Pajala and Kiruna. Haparanda and especially Gällivare have weak cultural activities in Meänkieli, Finnish, Saami and Swedish. Finnish is a common, formal, administrative language in Haparanda, but is only occasionally used in cultural domains.

However, the monolingual regions have higher cultural production and seem to have denser networks of voluntary associations. Since the 1980s, the cultural index is highest in the multilingual region.

Conclusions. Former discriminative language policies have, most likely, hampered development of the civil society in the multilingual region, which has seemingly had an influence on unemployment and well-being. The monolingual region has less unemployment, (earlier) better health and better life expectancy for males. There are, however, indications that the revitalisation of the minority language effects positively on socio-economic conditions.

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Key words: social capital, ethnicity, minority language, cultural production, language policy, well-being
INTRODUCTION

In northern Sweden, the multilingual region of the mountain area of Västerbotten county was originally populated by Saami and Finnish-speaking groups (Figure 1). Swedish began to penetrate the region in the late 19th century when the ore fields began to be exploited and, thereby, the municipalities of Kiruna and Gällivare, located further north, also acquired a population of monolinguals in Swedish. Saami is spoken by a few thousand Saami in Kiruna and Gällivare, whereas Finnish and Meänkieli (a former dialect of Finnish) are spoken by some 25,000 Tornedalians in the municipalities of Kiruna, Gällivare, Haparanda, Pajala and Övertorneå (1). Those municipalities are situated to the west of the Torne river. Swedish was the only official language of education until late into the 20th century and the use of other languages was prohibited in schools and offices. The minority languages remained in the private domains and in traditional settings (2). Already in the early 20th century it was argued in a government investigation that the multilingual region had a weak civil society (3). Most of the Saami and Tornedalians are, in functional terms,
illiterate in their mother tongues (4). Competence in Swedish corresponded earlier with higher education, less unemployment, out-migration and a more pronounced involvement in public work. Finnish-speaking Tornedalians during the 1960s were less active in civil society than Swedish-speaking Tornedalians. Swedish was the main language in formal and semi-formal domains. Finnish Tornedalians, on the Finnish side of the national Sweden-Finland border, were more socially active in community life in the 1960s, despite being less educated (5).

In socio-economic terms, the Swedish Torne Valley has, been in a relatively weak position for a long time, with high unemployment, low income and shorter life-expectancy as compared with other Swedish rural municipalities (6).

In the early 20th century, the Saami were organized. In the 1980s the Swedish Tornedalians established an association promoting the minority Meänkieli language and regional ethnicity.

A change in the language ecology influences the social environment

Human capital is developed in education, whereas the social capital is imbued within social structures in family, in relations, in social organisation, in voluntary associations, and in the private and public communities (7). Relations imbued with norms such as authority, dependence and trust are claimed to constitute the social capital (8). Robert Putnam (9) argues that immigrants and majority groups who are socially well-organized have lower unemployment, higher education, less illness and higher income. A Swedish study argues that "unemployment, marginalisation and lack of integration in society are strongly and negatively associated with social capital" and mortality (10). Finland’s Swedes have better well-being and denser social networks and, hence, more social capital than monolingual Finns (11). Other studies concluded that indigenous and autochthonous minority groups in general have a weaker socio-economy (12) than comparable monolingual groups (13) and that cultural activity may have an impact on well-being (14).

To some extent, the idea of the general effects of the social capital has been questioned in other studies, though there seems to be a general consensus that an abstract and complicated link exists between civil society, social capital and economy (7). We have little reason to believe anything else than that the social capital can also be a negative force in minority regions, for example, and that the language policies of a nation have an impact on the development of social capital in multilingual regions (9).

There is hardly any research on social capital in small minority regions/groups (7). Language is, without doubt, the most important instrument for transferring, developing and creating social capital. Language as a social phenomenon gives meaning, categorizes, filters, produces and develops common sense and understanding. The culture of language is the meaning developed in all oral and written settings which cannot be transferred, or understood explicitly, but is developed, used and applied subconsciously. Social capital is therefore contained in implicit, or tacit understanding which is transferred and acquired through pragmatic linguistic information.

Several studies indicate that languages are dependent on their original domains of usage (15). In oral cultures, the home environment,
agriculture, fishing, hunting, mining and religion are often the most important domains for many minority languages. The traditional setting of a minority language develops values, qualities and assets that may even hamper socio-economic development, but that are necessary in the traditional environment, depending on how these traditional social resources are acknowledged in society. It is common to speak about the ecology of literature and art (16), and this research perspective, as applied to minority literature, is developing in the Nordic countries (17).

Language policies regulate many attitudes in the community and influences on cultural activity, where the minority and the majority languages are media of expression. Cultural activity is one aspect of the civil society and impacts on socio-economic conditions.

According to these theoretical insights, the multilingual region should have fewer voluntary associations, higher unemployment and weaker health compared to monolingual regions.

Competence in Standard Finnish is best developed among Finnish immigrants and, as expected, interest for Meänkieli is weak in Haparanda and Övertorneå (Table I). Highest interest to study Meänkieli is found in Pajala. Kiruna has quite a number of pupils studying Finnish and some Meänkieli. Few pupils study Finnish, or Meänkieli in Gällivare.

Tables II and III reveal that the Swedish monolingual region has the lowest percentage of young people, due to the fact that it has no labour intensive industries, such as the mining companies in Kiruna and Gällivare, or the steelworks in Tornio (18).

| Table I. Participation in mother tongue instruction in the multilingual region a. |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Born abroad % of total inh. (mostly Finland) | Pajala | Kiruna | Övertorneå | Haparanda | Gällivare |
| % | 11 | 8 | 20 | 39 | 5 |
| Entitled to request mother tongue instruction (%) | 94 | 38 | 39 | 33 | 20 |
| Number of Saami schools (pupils) | 0 | 3 (73) | 0 | 0 | 1 (34) |
| Number of pupils studying Meänkieli (or Finnish) | 272 (15) | 64 (208) | 0 (56) | 0 (223) | 8 (7) |
| % receiving mother tongue instruction | 42 | 12 | 11 | 18 | 1 |

Table II. Number of inhabitants in the multilingual and monolingual regions.

| Region | Inhabitants |
|--------|-------------|
| Monolingual region | 37 837 |
| Finnish Torne Valley | 44 597 |
| Multilingual region | 65 443 |

Table III. Inhabitants aged 25-44 in the multilingual and monolingual regions a.

| Region | % of total |
|--------|------------|
| Finnish Torne Valley | 25.8% (1999?) |
| Multilingual region | 24.8 (1996-97) |
| Monolingual region | 23.2 (1996-97) |

*All statistics on cultural production is population-adjusted. Sources: www.fennica.net; SCB
Review of public language planning in the Torne Valley

Meänkieli, Finnish and Saami are, since 2000, territorial minority languages of Sweden in the municipalities of Jokkmokk, Arjeplog, Gällivare and Kiruna for Saami; and Kiruna, Gällivare, Pajala, Övertorneå and Haparanda for Meänkieli and Finnish (19). Support for Saami is best developed in Kiruna, with a number of public Saami institutions: e.g. the Saami Parliament, Saami Radio, Saami TV, three Saami schools and a Saami theatre (20). The lack of Saami institutions in Gällivare indicates a weaker interest to promote minority cultures. Pajala is the only municipality to have included one minority language, Meänkieli, in the school plan (21), and where almost every pupil has the right to request mother tongue instruction. Pajala has local radio broadcasting in Meänkieli and Finnish. An active bilingual (Meänkieli/Swedish) theatre has been permanent for a few years already, funded by local, regional and national authorities. Bilingual film production is in continuous progress (22).

Matarenki-Övertorneå has some support for Meänkieli and Finnish. Haparanda has the highest percentage of Finnish immigrants, and has developed extensive co-operation with its neighbouring municipality in Finland and promotes Finnish in administration and education. The attitudes towards Meänkieli are often negative among some groups, whereas monolinguals in Haparanda are often critical towards Meänkieli and Finnish (23).

Finnish is generally regarded as the more appropriate language for official and formal instrumental tasks, whereas a few voluntary associations and cultural activists consider Meänkieli as an important carrier of culture. Meänkieli is hardly used by local people in formal texts, except in the magazine Met-avisi and some light articles in the local newspaper. Formal texts in Meänkieli are written mostly by a few researchers in scientific articles and in some government/regional documents. Meänkieli is spoken in theatre, used in songs and in fiction, religion, books for children and the like. Finnish, on the other hand, is hardly used on stage, in song, or in literature in general (24).

Cultural development and revitalisation of minority languages

Until the 1980s, little literature and fiction was written in Meänkieli, or Finnish, and literature in Swedish was sporadic. Then a change occurred and more authors and artists became active in writing literature and in producing plays and songs in Meänkieli. These cultural activities coincided with the establishment of the ethnic-based NGO, Swedish Tornedalians' Association, STA, that promotes Meänkieli. The active Torne Valley Theatre, was established 1986 in Pajala. Bilingual performances (Meänkieli/Swedish) have been common since then in Pajala and, to a lesser extent, in Kiruna (25).

In the 1980s, the local radio station in Pajala began to broadcast in Meänkieli (4). The increase in cultural activities corresponds with bilingualism and the revitalisation of minority languages.

Saami literature, theatre and film in the Torne Valley

The Saami movement preceded the Tornedalian movement and, hence, the cultural development also started at least one decade...
earlier. According to Hansegård (26), the development of Saami literature began after 1950, and progressed especially during the 1970s. In 1971, the Saami theatre group Dalvadis was established, and founded a permanent stage in Kiruna in the 1990s.

The Saami have one society of authors founded in 1979 and had about 50 members in the late 1990s (27). There is no publishing company of Saami literature, or music, in Gällivare and Kiruna.

**Publishing company in the Torne Valley**

The relationship between the revitalisation of minority languages, cultural activity and attempts to commercialise cultural products is striking. Until the 1980s, there were no idealistic, or commercial publishers for literature in the region concerned.

In 1985, the author and Meänkieli-activist Bengt Pohjanen established the first publishing firm in the region, Kaamos, which was later taken over by STA, and has its office in Aapua, Övertorneå. Kaamos has produced about 25 books, mostly in Meänkieli (28), and markets "all" books with a Torne Valley perspective. One publishing firm (Birkkarlen) was founded in Haparanda in the late 1980s. The Gällivare local folklore society has published books in Swedish since 1982. Kiruna municipality has also some public institutions that support local publications in Swedish.

**Music associations and organisers**

The Torne Valley music club was founded in 1982 and is apparently the only music club with a regional/national spread of its members. In 1999, the club had 50 members from Sweden and 90 members from Finland (29). In the early 1980s, Pajala had the first music publisher in Norrbotten county (Ton i Norr), who produced altogether more than 60 cassettes (30).

**METHODS**

**Regions of comparison**

The interior parts of county Västerbotten (the municipalities of Dorotea, Sorsele, Vilhelmina and Storuman, Figure 1), Strömsund, and Överkalix in Norrbotten have been fused into one monolingual region. The Finnish Torne Valley is the second (nearly) monolingual region. The national policy for regions differ between Sweden and Finland and, therefore, Finnish Torne Valley is only included as a point of reference in the statistics for cultural production.

The level of education is fairly equal between the regions. It is a well-established fact that interest in reading and buying books corresponds with higher education and the size of the community (31). The cultural activities are expected to be best developed in more densely populated regions.

**Method and definition of author/writer and musician**

The aim was to map all authors/writers, amateur theatre associations, musicians and music groups. In other words, all activists in the culture fields where language is one medium of expression. The linguistic competence of the author/musician has not been a limiting factor. Thus, all books, cassettes, or CDs in Finnish, Meänkieli, Saami and Swedish are included.

All writers/authors/musicians/music groups born, or who have lived for a long time (> 3
years) in the three regions (Västerbotten, Finnish Torne valley and Swedish Torne valley) are included in the statistics if they have published literature, or a CD/LP/cassette during 19th and 20th centuries, though, most likely, there are some older unknown writers/musicians that are not included in general registers and databases. Every included writer/musician has produced at least one book/CD/LP/cassette at his/her own expense, or through a commercial publishing firm, and is included in the national, or regional electronic libraries (32). No anthologies, translations, or reprinted editions have been included in the statistics for the production of books. The 'literature' category includes novels, biographies, local history, descriptions of nature, amateur research, books for children, hunting and fishing novels. The most important category which is excluded is that of professional researchers, or specialists writing technical books. Amateur theatre groups who have set up at least one performance are included (33).

The register is based on information from local and electronic libraries, one lexicon (34), bibliographies on authors (35), informal observations from a number of sources, as well as additional information from local newspapers and publishing firms. A few overview articles have been written on the subject (36-39), as have some bibliographies (40-42).

However, electronic libraries do not indicate the birthplace of the author, but the regional lexicon and bibliographies of authors have been useful sources to control the home residence of particular authors. Translators, editors, or writers included in anthologies are excluded. While the list is not complete, the absences are estimated to be very few indeed.

### RESULTS

Written culture began to flourish in Pajala and Kiruna with authors/writers born in the 1940s. Pajala had only four authors/writers born before

![Figure 2. Index for literature in the multilingual Swedish Torne valley region.](image-url)
the 1940s and settled in the municipality; they wrote a total of five books. It is also noticeable that, of the four authors in Gällivare born in 1950 or later, two have an ethnic background: Saami and Rome. Furthermore, most books written in Meänkieli and Finnish are associated with authors from Pajala, mostly born in the 1940s and later. In Kiruna, several of the authors born after 1940 have written in Saami.

The bilingual Torne Valley Theatre (ToTe) in Pajala is in a class of its own and has no equivalence in the monolingual regions. The amateur theatre movement has attracted a number of musicians and music groups and stimulated many potential writers to become active. The amateur theatre has performances all over the multilingual region and is probably the most important institution for cultural production in the region.

**The impact of one ethnic organisation on cultural activity**

The establishment of the Tornedalian association, STA, with its work to get recognition of Meänkieli, is most likely an important influence on the cultural activities in the border region. Four of six presidents of the STA were born in Pajala. Two of the presidents have written film manuscripts and books in Meänkieli. One of the presidents is also the first president of the Torne Valley Theatre.

Of the texts and songs performed/written in Meänkieli, we found that the musicians predominantly live, or were born, in Pajala. There is only one group in Gällivare who sing in Meänkieli. Few use Meänkieli as a medium for artistic performances in Haparanda.

**Saami culture in Kiruna**

Apart from Kiruna’s more urban environment, a possible factor influencing the high culture index in Kiruna is its geographical location and the Saami culture, which has attracted a number of individuals and has had a positive influence on literature. In particular, a number of priests have written books on Saami culture.

Analogous with the cultural infrastructure in Pajala, there seems to be a relationship between Saami institutions in Kiruna and cultural activities. Almost all books in Saami have been produced in Kiruna.

The Saami represent a juridical indigenous minority in Sweden, and a minority in terms of population in Kiruna, as well as in the Torne Valley in general. One reason for the relatively active promotion of Saami culture is the state subsidies that are provided for the Saami and distributed by the Saami parliament. However, even this is a result of long-lasting efforts to promote Saami identity.

Cultural activity in the form of amateur theatricals and music also has a fairly extensive focus on Meänkieli, whereas literature in Meänkieli is not very salient in Kiruna.

**Weak cultural infrastructure of language in Haparanda and Gällivare**

Despite the arrangement of a number of summer-time, public cultural events, in co-opera-

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**Table IV. Musicians and amateur theatricals in the Torne valley.**

|                  | Pajala | Kiruna | Övertorneå | Haparanda | Gällivare |
|------------------|--------|--------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| Amateur theatricals | 311    | 83     | 50         | 28        | 28        |
| Musicians, music groups | 172    | 98     | 122        | 52        | 57        |
tion with Tornio, since 1973 (34), the efforts have not been translated into significant results in terms of voluntary culture activities. There is little interest in promoting Finnish as a cultural language in the voluntary sector, and the cultural production in Swedish is meagre. It is remarkable that Haparanda has no author writing in Finnish.

The opinion in Haparanda seems to include an unresolved conflict between bi- and monolinguals and between Meänkieli and Finnish speakers. Bi- and monolinguals debating in the local newspaper tend to focus on whether the language policy of the municipality forces mono- and bilinguals to migrate, and whether the municipality is slowly being Finnicised (43). Övertorneå stands in a position between Pajala and Haparanda, and is also traditionally considered to be a stronghold of Swedish culture. For the same reasons discussed for Haparanda, the cultural activity in Övertorneå might be hampered by the language policy of the municipality. Both municipalities have had a relatively strong and influential Swedish-speaking, well-educated class, that almost exclusively promoted only Swedish during a long period and has thus been a normative element for cultural activity. An author proceeding from an aversion to the local culture can hardly find any creative stimuli from the home environment. Consequently, even literary activities in Swedish were hampered.

The highest percentage of monolinguals is probably to be found in Gällivare, which has the weakest cultural activity of all five municipalities. Swedish almost entirely dominates the whole public sector. For a long time, the local Gällivare Finnish has had the lowest prestige of all Tornedalen Finnish varieties (3). Linguistic stigma may therefore be one cause of the weak interest in promoting minority languages and this has affected the generally weak cultural activity.

Cultural production and opinion in favour of Meänkieli and Saami

In Pajala and Kiruna, amateur theatricals correlate with a higher interest for authorship. Both municipalities have bilingual performances. The Sámi Teáhter in Kiruna has successfully produced a few plays by Shakespeare. The audience did not, in general, understand Saami, but the performances attracted a large number of tourists (44). The Saami theatre works in close co-operation with the local tourist industry.

Furthermore, Kiruna and Pajala have considerably more authors/writers that produce more books than those of the other municipalities. Hence, texts and songs in Meänkieli, Finnish and Saami, as well as Swedish, are more frequent in Pajala and Kiruna. In the first decade of the 2000s, the commercialisation of ethnic identity and minority languages is in full swing in Pajala, and receives economic support from the EU, as well as from national, regional and local sources (22).

Comparison between regions and of socio-economic statistics

Overall, the multilingual region has a lower production of literature than the monolingual regions (Figure 4). This results from the limited cultural production during the period of discriminative language policies. Potential authors in the monolingual regions already became active when illiteracy was abolished in the late 19th century. However, the multilingual
The Finnish Torne Valley may gather statistics on voluntary associations in general in a different manner, because a more limited definition of cultural associations (music, theatre, art, literature, dance and film) indicates a pattern similar to that in the Swedish monolingual region. However, the simple method used, measuring social participation, excludes variables such as the number of members, rate of activity, forms of social participation etc.

Nevertheless, high cultural activity is seemingly reflected in the higher density of voluntary associations in the monolingual regions.

**Table V.** Density of voluntary associations in mono- and multilingual regions. Includes all registered voluntary associations in the respective regions.

|                     | Monolingual region | Finnish Torne valley | Multilingual region |
|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Inhabitants/associatios | 38                 | 81                   | 62                 |
| Inhabitants/cultural assoc./10 | 59               | 67                   | 132                |

**Table VI.** Unemployment in mono- and multilingual regions.

|                      | Multilingual region | Monolingual region |
|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1995                 | 15.0 %              | 10.1 %             |
| 2004                 | 13.6 %              | 9.8 %              |

**Table VII.** Sickness rates in mono- and multilingual regions *.

|                    | 1995 | 2004 |
|--------------------|------|------|
| Average Sweden     | 100  | 100  |
| Monolingual region | 143  | 142  |
| Multilingual region| 162  | 142  |

* Statistics include the entire group. Riksförsäkringsverket (The National Social Insurance Board), http://www.rfv.se/ovrigt/tabas.htm

* 40.8 days/year = Index 100

* 43 days/year (after 14 days) = Index 100
Studies of immigrant groups in Sweden show that low social participation associates with unemployment (10). The multilingual region has about 50% more unemployment. Statistics from 2004 indicate that the reduction of the unemployment has been somewhat faster in the multilingual region.

The sickness rate includes those aged between 16 and 64 years old who reported sick and people with an early retirement pension. Northern regions in Sweden generally have a higher sickness rate than southern regions. At the national level, the sickness rate is lower when unemployment is low, but this does not apply to northern Sweden (45). The sickness rate for the multilingual region in 1995 was more than 10% higher than that in the monolingual region. In the northern region, high unemployment is often associated with high rates of sickness, but, although the reasons behind this have been discussed frequently, no straightforward answers have been provided. The National Social Insurance Board argues that, to some extent, the high sickness rate is explained by the sick leave regulation, i.e. favourable sickness benefits promote sickness leave in regions with high unemployment (45). There is, however, no discussion on the possible relationship between language policies, social capital, sickness and multilingualism, nor about the fact that one of the highest sickness rates in Sweden is present in the multilingual region. We do not know if the high sickness rate is a result of the high unemployment, or whether high unemployment and sickness are, to some extent, results of the language policies. We could, however, expect lower unemployment in a region with an extensive mining industry. These differences in sickness rates and unemployment exist despite the fact that the multilingual region has a somewhat younger population and comparable levels of education and income/capita (46). Hence, the socio-economic model does not seem to explain the variation.

Both regions have seen their sickness rates increase in 2004, but the multilingual region has had a slower increase, so that the two regions are currently at the same level. The reduction in the rate of sickness is more pronounced in terms of persons receiving sickness benefits in the multilingual region, especially in the Övertorneå municipality, whereas early retirement pensions reduce differences between regions (45).

Males in the multilingual region have a life expectancy about 1.5 year shorter than their counterparts in the monolingual region. However, such variation does not exist, or is not visible, when we compare the statistics available for females. According to a number of studies, regions with less voluntary work will most likely have higher illness and shorter life-expectancy (47).

**Table VIII. Life-expectancy, average 1991-2000 a.**

| Regions           | Male | Female |
|-------------------|------|--------|
| Monolingual region| 75.2 | 80.5   |
| Multilingual region| 73.7 | 80.4   |

*a Statistics include the entire group. Statistics Sweden, www.scb.se.*

DISCUSSION

The development of written culture is clearly associated with the Saami and the Meänkieli movements of the 1970s and 1980s. All theatre
demands authors and musicians, and it is therefore not surprising that Pajala has the highest relative number of musicians and authors, followed by Kiruna.

A striking feature in the cultural infrastructure of the Torne Valley is the informal network that integrates individuals engaged in theatre, song and literature. An author needs a market for his/her literary works, a musician wants to have an audience, and a theatre must have good manuscripts, actors and musicians in order to attract the local people. During its nearly 20 years of existence the Torne Valley Theatre has built up an informal network and integrated the three cultural forms into the local infrastructure. Pajala has become the centre of this movement, because of the work of the leading activists. Those writers, actors, artists and musicians who have rejected the local language have thereby excluded themselves from the networks that develop social capital. It is therefore not accidental that there is an almost complete lack of cultural products in Standard Finnish.

Meänkieli, Saami and Finnish have the strongest position in socially more homogeneous settings, which in turn have a striking influence on attitudes and linguistic behaviour. Meänkieli, like Saami in earlier times, has a stronger association with expressions of stigma in those villages with a visible and publicly dominating, educated middle-class speaking Swedish.

The multilingual region has a weak economy, and high out-migration, unemployment and sickness rates. It remains to be seen whether the social capital developed in the cultural movement will be transformed into a productive force in education, social development and general well-being, though any eventual relationship between civil society, cultural activities and socio-economy is most likely complicated. Local politicians have discovered, however, that ethnic identities and minority languages can act as instruments in the development of both the tourist industry and the local economy.

CONCLUSIONS

Municipalities in the multilingual region with cultural production in the minority Meänkieli and Saami languages also have higher than average cultural production in Swedish (song, literature, theatre). Language policies favouring minority languages also seem to support cultural activity in the majority language, Swedish. Municipalities that are reluctant to support minority languages also have a weak cultural production in the majority language.

Overall, the monolingual region has a higher culture index than the multilingual region, and about 50% less unemployment. However, the multilingual region has clearly been in a leading position in cultural production since the 1980s. High cultural activity is seemingly reflected in the higher density of voluntary associations in the monolingual regions. Low activity in civil society in the multilingual region can most likely be attributed to the former discriminative language policy of the Swedish government.

The sickness rate for the multilingual region was higher in 1995, but both regions have the same sickness rate in 2004. The reduction/harmonisation of unemployment and sickness rates may be consequences of the regional minority language revitalisation movement.
Long-term studies would provide more reliable answers.

We have indications of a relationship between a weak density of voluntary associations, unemployment, sickness and life-expectancy, for the residents in the multilingual region, but only for males. We cannot, however, pin-point a direct cause-effect relationship between language policies and socio-economic conditions. Closer studies of the situation, and comparisons with other minority regions, might help to explain the gender differences and, perhaps, to reveal whether these statistical relationships are possible results of the former language policies. Do monolingual Tornedalians have better health and a longer life-expectancy than bilinguals?

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